

Heliocles and Laodice of Bactria: a Reconsideration

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Abstract. The Heliocles and Laodice coins, usually attributed to Eucratides I, are unusual, although not unique, among the issues of the Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings for their depiction of two figures in jugate busts. They have traditionally been accepted as a ‘pedigree’ series of coins produced by Eucratides, who appears on the other side, to commemorate his parents. However their obverse has usually been misidentified as the reverse and vice versa. When they are correctly identified, their role in historical reconstruction should be reconsidered and the coins attributed to Heliocles and Laodice rather than Eucratides.

IN ATTEMPTS at reconstructing the history of the Graeco-Bactrian king Eucratides I one particular series of coins has played an important role. These coins, mainly tetradrachms (only three drachms are known), are unusual in the issues of the Hellenistic kings of Bactria in that they feature busts on both sides. On one side, usually assumed to be the obverse, one of two different depictions of the king Eucratides I appears. The king is shown either in bust form wearing a Boeotian helmet with bull’s horn and ear attached (**fig. 1**), or viewed from behind, naked from the shoulders up, wearing a similar helmet, and in the process of throwing a javelin (**fig. 2**). The legend of both series reads: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΣ / ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΗΣ (nominative case), ‘the great king Eucratides’. The other side of these coins has a consistent type, jugate heads of a man and a woman. The male figure is depicted, unusually for an Hellenistic royal coinage, without any particular headgear, while it has been suggested that the female figure wears the diadem, the traditional symbol of Hellenistic royal power.² Here the legend reads: ΗΛΙΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ / ΚΑΙ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣ (genitive case), ‘of Heliocles and Laodice’. This side of the coins includes the control mark, either  or .

[[Dick. Figs 1 and 2 near here](#)]

As so often with the history of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, very few historical details of the people illustrated on the coins are available. A well-known passage in the later epitomist, Justin (41.6), gives some probably garbled information on the reign of Eucratides, but Heliocles and Laodice are otherwise unknown in the historical record. One feature of the coins was identified by Cunningham and has heavily influenced many of the interpretations that have followed.³ The coins have Greek legends on both sides, a highly unusual feature throughout Hellenistic royal coinage, and one which is paralleled only on the ‘pedigree’ series of coins minted under Agathocles and Antimachus I. These coins feature a legend on the obverse that imitates the legend of the original coins, while the reverse identifies the king under whose authority the coin was minted. For example a ‘pedigree’ coin issued under Agathocles, but with the types of Diodotus Soter has a legend that reads: ΔΙΟΔΟΤΟΥ / ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ on the obverse with ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΟΝΤΟΣ / ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ / ΑΓΑΘΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ on the reverse (**fig. 3**). The whole legend is written in the genitive case and is to be read as: ‘[a coin] of Diodotus the Saviour [issued/struck] when Just Agathocles was ruling’. The reverse legend uses a genitive absolute construction with a participle to produce a temporal clause to identify the difference between the legend copied from a previous king’s coinage (although with ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ omitted), and the current issuing authority. Rightly or wrongly it has been suggested that these coins were issued by Agathocles and Antimachus as a way of

¹ I am very grateful to Joe Cribb for a preliminary die study of the Heliocles and Laodice coins. I also wish to thank Robert Bracey, Keith Rutter, Bert Smith, and the anonymous reviewer for their comments on the text.

² See for example Macdonald (1922), p. 454 and *BNBact*, série 13, p. 209.

³ Cunningham (1884), p. 163.

highlighting their pedigree as kings, since those rulers whose coin types were copied and included on these coins include earlier Graeco-Bactrian kings and even Alexander the Great. The Heliocles and Laodice coins have often been interpreted in the light of this model of 'pedigree' coins, on the assumption that some relationship between Eucratides on the one hand and Heliocles and Laodice on the other was being commemorated or manipulated for purposes of propaganda.⁴ [Dick. Fig 3 near here]

The Heliocles and Laodice series of coins, however, does not include the participle, and the legend of one side appears in the nominative case, rather than the genitive, in a construction different from that which appears on the 'pedigree' coins. The legend therefore reads: 'The Great King Eucratides / of Heliocles and Laodice'. In order to make sense of the two legends Cunningham first suggested that the word υἱός (son) be understood between the two sides of the coins: 'The Great King Eucratides / [son] of Heliocles and Laodice'.⁵ Such a reading has influenced much of the discussion of these coins.

One of the most influential historians in the field, W.W. Tarn, built greatly on his own and Macdonald's earlier reconstructed historical narrative of Eucratides in the *Cambridge History of India* and claimed him as a member of the Seleucid royal house. Tarn used the Heliocles and Laodice series of coins as the basis for this interpretation. The coins have a very distinctive 'bead and reel' border, which Tarn identified as a particularly Seleucid feature based on its supposed introduction on the coins of Antiochus III.⁶ Further, Tarn continued to follow Macdonald in his observation that of the jugate heads, only one, that of Laodice, wears a diadem, while Heliocles is shown as bare-headed. Since the coins themselves have a feature identified as Seleucid, and 'Laodice' was 'a common name in the royal house of Syria', Macdonald suggested that Laodice was in fact a Seleucid princess. Coupled with Cunningham's earlier reading of Heliocles and Laodice as the parents of Eucratides this led Tarn to construct a significant narrative around these coins. On the basis of the apparent appearance of Eucratides on coins that Tarn assumed to have been issued c.165, Eucratides was said to have been born 'somewhere around about 210-205'. His mother Laodice, being married to a 'commoner' (a point inferred since Heliocles wears no diadem) would not have been married 'till well over twenty', leading to the year of her birth falling somewhere between 235 and 225. She was therefore, Tarn suggested, a daughter of Seleucus II, or perhaps Seleucus III. Seleucus II issued coins featuring the Dioscuri, Eucratides' chosen reverse type, making the genealogical connection 'practically certain' according to Tarn. As a 'commoner' marrying into the royal family Heliocles was presumably of relatively high social standing, 'not merely the general of a satrapy, but governor of the upper (eastern) satrapies.' His supposed son, Eucratides, is said to have held a similar position when he was chosen by Antiochus IV to lead a Seleucid army to recapture the Bactrian kingdom for the Seleucid Empire. It is here that Tarn neatly works in the so-called 'pedigree' coins issued by Agathocles and Antimachus. They are said to be propaganda against Eucratides, who came to restore to Antiochus IV the lands over which the two kings ruled. Agathocles and Antimachus, Tarn suggests, were demonstrating that, as Euthydemid kings, they were Seleucids and 'claimed to descend from Alexander'. The Heliocles and Laodice series was therefore Eucratides' response to their genealogical claims. Tarn states that Eucratides highlighted his own more immediate connection to the Seleucid royal family through his mother in an attempt to win the loyalty of the users of the coins in Bactria.

A number of problems immediately arise from such an interpretation of the coins, which A.K. Narain was among the first to highlight. While happy to accept that the coins were 'commemorative pieces of Eucratides representing his parents', Narain rejected Tarn's

⁴ Tarn (1951), p. 201.

⁵ Cunningham (1882), p. 163.

⁶ Tarn (1951), p.196 ff; Macdonald (1922), pp. 453-4.

Seleucid connection.⁷ Since the ‘bead and reel’ border is found on the coins of other Graeco-Bactrian kings (Demetrius I, Antimachus I, and Demetrius II), and the name of Laodice is said to be common to all Greek royal families, any link to the Seleucids was disregarded.⁸ The Heliocles and Laodice series did not otherwise figure in Narain’s narrative.

More recent scholarship has stayed within the narrative created by Macdonald and embellished by Tarn. The theory that Heliocles and Laodice were the parents of Eucratides found its most expansive iteration, again on the basis of an analysis of the supposed age of the king on his ‘coin portraits’, when Hollis identified Laodice as a daughter of Antiochus III.⁹ However, the relative position of the Heliocles and Laodice series within the output of the mint under Eucratides has been shifted. The inclusion of ΜΕΓΑΣ in the legend suggests at the very least that these coins cannot have been minted at the beginning of Eucratides’ reign as Tarn suggested. [Dick: Figs 4, 5 and 6 near here]

Under Eucratides three series of tetradrachms were produced (*BNBact*, séries 1, 6, 8). Types from the second and third series are imitated on the Heliocles and Laodice series: the helmeted bust of the king and the javelin-thrower type (figs 5 and 6). Both these series have legends in which the epithet μέγας appears. However, on the first series the king appears on the obverse bare-headed except for the diadem, and the reverse legend lacks the epithet, simply stating ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ (fig. 4). It seems highly likely that the coins of this series were produced before the others. Graeco-Bactrian coins produced before the reign of Eucratides, with the exception of the ‘pedigree’ coins, did not include an epithet with the king’s name on the reverse. However, coins produced by the kings who follow Eucratides invariably include an epithet. Since the transition took place in the reign of Eucratides, and is clearly visible on some coins where the longer legend was initially engraved horizontally rather than in a semi-circle (*BNBact*, série 4), a chronological order for these coins is certain. Such an observation means that the Heliocles and Laodice coins are best placed at the end of the series of Eucratides’ issues since they include the epithet and appear to imitate the other types. Holt noticed this and most recent catalogues have placed the Heliocles and Laodice coins last in Eucratides’ output, although their classification as ‘commemorative issues’ has remained.¹⁰

A further reevaluation of the Heliocles and Laodice coins was undertaken recently by Jens Jakobsson. He raised a number of objections to the current historical interpretation.¹¹ The coins were of regular denominations (tetradrachms and drachms), and should therefore not be seen as ‘commemorative medals’. Jakobsson also noted that the coins should be placed ‘among Eucratides’ later issues’, negating their apparent role as propaganda pieces. He objected to the reading of an extra word to connect the legends on the two sides of the coins. Finally Jakobsson correctly observed that ‘the diadem was not a symbol of royal birth, but of royal office’. In his historical reconstruction this last point led to the suggestion that Laodice was in fact Eucratides’ widow, and that the coins were issued after the death of Eucratides by Heliocles and Laodice using the dead king’s ‘name to legitimise their own rule’.¹²

A full reconsideration of these coins is long overdue. The first assumption upon which their use in historical narratives relies is that Heliocles and Laodice were the parents of Eucratides. Since Cunningham suggested the word υἱός should be understood to connect the legends on the two sides of the coins, the assertion has been unchallenged. Although he provided epigraphic evidence from Egypt as a comparison to support this reading, it still

⁷ Narain (1957), p. 55.

⁸ Narain (1957), p. 54.

⁹ Hollis (1996), pp. 162-3.

¹⁰ Holt (1984), p. 78.

¹¹ Jakobsson (2014), p. 23.

¹² Jakobsson (2014), p. 24.

seems quite unlikely, as Jakobsson has suggested. The accepted convention for legends on Greek coins, whether they were ethnics or personal names, was to write them in the genitive case. The Hellenistic practice was established when ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ was included in the legend to precede Alexander and further cemented when Ptolemy, followed later by the other successors, put both his own name and the royal title on his coins. Occasionally names in the nominative case do appear on Greek coins.¹³ Often it seems likely that such names are those of magistrates, whose names appear on other coins in the genitive, but preceded by ΕΠΙ, presumably as a reference to a city official as a dating technique.¹⁴

No other examples of a construction of the kind suggested by Cunningham (The Great King Eucratides [son] of Heliocles and Laodice) exist in the Graeco-Bactrian series.¹⁵ However, it is quite possible to read the two legends separately without leaving a word to be understood in a way that links the two sides of the coin. The legend ΗΛΙΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣ may perform the usual function of a legend on Hellenistic coins, and is therefore to be understood as '[a coin] of Heliocles and Laodice'. This leaves the legend on the other side of the coin, in the nominative, and therefore not dependent on any other words; it is merely to be read as a label of the type with which it shares that side of the coin: 'The Great King Eucratides'. Such an appearance of words in the nominative case on Greek coins is not unknown, often being used to identify new types, or in some cases old types that were presented in a radically different way.¹⁶ However such a phenomenon is not found on Hellenistic royal coinages.

Another important feature of the Heliocles and Laodice series, which plays an integral role in their use in the construction of historical narratives is the assumption that Laodice wears the diadem, while Heliocles does not. Certainly Heliocles does not wear anything on his head, but Laodice's headgear is less clear. On many of the dies there appear to be two parallel lines running over Laodice's hair visible from the top of her head until they are obscured by Heliocles' bust. However, on other examples the lines are barely, if at all, to be seen. Hellenistic queens are depicted on coins, but are often shown to wear the *stephanē*, a metal crown with a very different appearance from the diadem.¹⁷ Here, however, the headgear must be a diadem. Laodice's hair is seen to run uninterrupted under the band and behind it further back on her head, making it clear that this is not a veil, but the simple strip of cloth of the diadem. One of the few comparisons of an Hellenistic male and female jugate bust is the depiction that appears on the coins of Cleopatra Thea and Alexander Balas.¹⁸ On those coins the queen is clearly shown to be wearing a diadem. She is also, however, shown in the foreground, with Alexander Balas behind. If Laodice were queen, why is she relegated to the background with the bareheaded bust of Heliocles at the front?

One point of confusion about the coins of the Heliocles and Laodice series has been the identification of the obverse and reverse sides of the coins. Although Macdonald suggested that the side of the coin depicting Heliocles and Laodice is the obverse, his observation has often been overlooked.¹⁹ Recent catalogues have listed the side of the coin with Eucratides as

¹³ The names of the famous Sicilian 'signing artists' appear on their coins, although often partially hidden in the type.

¹⁴ Mørkholm (1991), p. 32.

¹⁵ Jakobsson (2014), p. 24, found a similar legend arrangement on 1st century AD coins from Commagene. Civic coins were issued with the name of the citizens in the genitive ('of the Commageneans') and the king's name, along with his portrait in the nominative ('Antiochus the Great King').

¹⁶ For example Syracusan coins of the late 5th century, on which the goddess Arethusa is first shown facing as opposed to in profile, label her in the nominative (Kraay and Hirmer (1966), nos 122 and 123).

¹⁷ Smith (1988), p. 81.

¹⁸ Kraay and Hirmer (1966), no 755.

¹⁹ Macdonald (1922), p. 453.

the obverse.²⁰ In fact Bopearachchi observed in his *catalogue raisonné* that the obverse and reverse were wrongly attributed ‘du point vue technique’, but still preferred to label the side with Eucratides’ bust as the obverse.²¹

From the results of a die study which I have undertaken on this series of coins it is clear that Macdonald’s and Bopearachchi’s observations were correct. The process of hand striking these coins involved the use of two dies: one, the obverse, was set into an anvil, a blank placed over it, then a second die, the reverse, applied on top and hit with a hammer. Since the obverse die was shielded from much of the force of striking by the anvil into which it was set, it tended to last significantly longer in the production process than the reverse die, which would degrade relatively quickly because of the repeated direct hammer blows. By dividing the number of coins by the number of dies for each side of them it is possible to identify conclusively which side is the obverse, and which is the reverse.

Number of coins (n)	Heliocles and Laodice dies (d _o)	n/d _o	Eucratides dies (d _r)	n/d _r
73	28	2.6	51	1.4

Out of a total of 73 coins in the die study 28 dies of the Heliocles and Laodice side (d_o) and 51 dies of Eucratides (d_r) were identified. The higher number of Eucratides dies suggests that this side is indeed the reverse as the dies would have worn out more quickly than their obverse equivalents, so that more were required in the production of these coins. From the results above it is clear that the Heliocles and Laodice side of the coins is the obverse while the side featuring Eucratides is the reverse. The results are supported by a preliminary die study of Eucratides silver tetradrachms which found similar n/d values for obverse and reverse. However, is such an observation merely relevant ‘du point vue technique’ as Bopearachchi suggests?

All preceding tetradrachms in the Graeco-Bactrian series followed a simple model for their types: a bust of the king appeared on the obverse with a Greek deity on the reverse. This model was remarkably consistent; even the ‘pedigree’ coins of Agathocles and Antimachus I, despite their unique legends, conform to this typological model. However, the coins of the Heliocles and Laodice series clearly do not. The obverse features a jugate bust with a legend in the genitive, which may be read as: ‘[a coin] of Heliocles and Laodice’, while the reverse shows a bust of Eucratides with a legend that is simply a label in the nominative case: ‘The Great King Eucratides’.

Underlying the tradition of consistently placing the image of the king on the obverse of the coins was a technical consideration on the part of those employed to make the coins. Since an obverse die, protected as it was during the striking process from the full force of the hammer blow, tended to last longer than a reverse die, it would make sense to place the more significant type on it. This choice of position for the king’s bust on the obverse and a deity on the reverse was prevalent throughout the Hellenistic world, not only in the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom.²² From the earliest issues of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids the king was shown on the obverse of the coin, and a god on the reverse. The role of coin types can be seen as a

²⁰ SNG ANS, pl. 24 nos 526-9; *Coins from Asia Minor and the East: Selections from the Colin E. Pitchfork Collection*, p. 177, no. 96; Hoover (2013), p. 49, nos 132 and 133.

²¹ Bopearachchi (1991), p. 209.

²² Mørkholm (1991), p. 27.

balance between authority and tradition.²³ The authority (almost always royal) that gave the coin its set value and allowed its users to trust the quality and quantity of the metal was relatively transient. Kings died regularly and their successor would begin to issue coins with a different name in the legend and a different depiction of the king. On the other hand the coins of the new king were still coins and as such were placed in a coinage tradition. Those who used the coins were familiar with the features they saw on them. Any drastic changes could easily cause difficulties in acceptance. A balance therefore had to be struck between the change of authority and the inherent conservatism of the coinage tradition. This need for balance lay behind the consistent practice of king on obverse, deity and the king's name in the genitive on reverse.

However, the coins of the Heliocles and Laodice series are clearly different from this tradition. Here it is jugate busts of a man and a woman that appear on the obverse, while the reverse has a bust of Eucratides copied from that king's coins of Series Two and Three. Since Heliocles and Laodice appear on the obverse and it is their names that are written on the coins in the genitive, it seems highly likely that in accordance with the entire tradition of Hellenistic royal coinage, the coins were issued under their authority. However, since the reverse of the coins is so different from the rest of the tradition (a king is shown rather than a deity), Heliocles and Laodice's authority under which these coins were minted must have been quite different from that of other Graeco-Bactrian and Hellenistic rulers. It was not felt to be enough to simply place their jugate busts on the obverse and a god on the reverse, as would have been expected. Instead, the great king Eucratides was used on the reverse with a nominative legend, labeling him, and making it impossible to be ignorant of who was depicted.

On the Heliocles and Laodice coins then, it is Eucratides whose authority is being invoked. As mentioned earlier, the silver coins of Eucratides can be divided into three series based on their depiction of the king: bareheaded; with a Boeotian helmet with bull's horn and ear attached; wearing the helmet, but shown from the back heroically throwing a javelin. A preliminary die study of the silver tetradrachms of Eucratides has shown a large coinage, with similar output across all three series. However, the only two types that were chosen to be imitated on the Heliocles and Laodice coins are of the two later series. On both of these series, the king is shown with some kind of divine attribute. On the second series the bull's horn and ear on the helmet fit into a wider Hellenistic tradition of such attributes appearing as part of depictions of kings on coins. Various Ptolemies were shown with a ram's horn representing their relationship with Zeus Ammon, while Demetrius Poliorcetes was given a bull's horn, perhaps as a connection with Poseidon, or more likely as a suggestion 'of unspecified Dionysos-like powers peculiar to the king'.²⁴ However, the depiction of Seleucus I (or possibly Alexander) wearing a helmet with bull's ears and horns on the 'Victory' coinage of Susa must be the direct predecessor of Eucratides' image.²⁵ Whatever the detailed implication of the appearance of the bull's horn and ear on Eucratides' helmet, the addition of divine attributes is certainly a clear indication of his great power.

The third series of Eucratides' tetradrachms goes further in its heroic representation of the king. Here, not only does the king wear a helmet with the taurine elements, but he is also shown unclothed, and is presented in an unprecedented fashion. Instead of the usual bust form familiar from coinage from around the Greek world, the king is shown from behind with a portion of his muscular back visible, diadem ties flowing down it, and in the process of throwing a javelin. Such a pose had appeared on coins before, although the whole body was shown. Demetrius Poliorcetes issued coins with a naked Poseidon thrusting his trident on the

²³ Cribb (2009), p. 498.

²⁴ Mørkholm (1991), p. 27; Smith (1988), p. 41.

²⁵ Hoover (2002), p. 55.

reverse.²⁶ The first king of the independent Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, Diodotus, also produced coins with a similar reverse. Here, however, the god depicted was Zeus, without clothes other than the aegis and in the process of hurling a thunderbolt (**fig. 7**). The throwing pose is also known in sculpture, most famously from the bronze deity (thought most likely to be Zeus) found at Artemesium and now in the National Museum at Athens.²⁷ The subjects shown in this way were gods, and Zeus most often since he would be depicted throwing a thunderbolt. To show Eucratides in such a way, although only from the chest up, was a noticeable departure from the depiction of other Hellenistic kings and this novel heroic image would have been particularly memorable for the users of the coins. [\[Dick: fig 7 near here\]](#)

There do not seem to be dramatic differences in output between the three series of Eucratides' tetradrachms, so that all three different types would have been visible in circulation. However, it is significant that it was the types with the divine attributes on the helmet, and the ground-breaking heroic depiction of the king in the third series that were chosen for the reverses of the Heliocles and Laodice coins. In this way the model of Hellenistic royal coinage was partially adopted. The issuer(s) of the coins appeared on the obverse while a king, with clear divine features, was placed on the reverse. What is different from the model is the need to include Eucratides, and to show him in two ways that emphasise his own authority. Heliocles and Laodice's authority was not enough on its own to guarantee that the coins were accepted in circulation; it was also necessary to depict Eucratides. What the relationship between the three would have been is, of course, impossible to know. It is unclear even whether the coins were produced during or after the reign of Eucratides. Eucratides is the only person featured on these coins to be given a royal title, so it may be likely that these coins were issued while he was still on the throne, with Heliocles and Laodice in a position that afforded them enough authority to issue coins, but not in their own right; they were still reliant on Eucratides. Earlier in the Bactrian series the deceased kings whose coin types and legends were copied on the 'pedigree issues' were not given the title 'king', which only appeared as part of the temporal clause on the reverse of the coins. It seems likely that the title βασιλεύς was not used to refer to previous kings, only current ones.

The next questions then are: who were Heliocles and Laodice? What was their relationship to one another? Why was it necessary for it to be depicted on these coins? Issues of a later Heliocles are known and although some have seen similarities between the depictions of this king on his own coins and those on the Heliocles and Laodice series,²⁸ such a connection seems unlikely for stylistic reasons. Neither a Heliocles nor a Laodice appear in the few literary sources that deal with Hellenistic Bactria. It is an interesting feature of these coins that, although Eucratides requires a nominative legend as a sort of label to identify him, the relationship between the two figures on the obverse is assumed to be understood. There are several possible relationships between Heliocles and Laodice that would have involved them having the authority required to have coins struck in their names:

1. Husband and wife
2. Guardian and mother of an unborn child
3. Father and daughter
4. Widow of Eucratides and male relative
5. Mother and son

The first relationship was that suggested by Tarn, with the addition that they were the parents of Eucratides, and although his addition of a Seleucid connection has been shown to

²⁶ Kraay and Hirmer (1966), p. 574.

²⁷ Athens NM Br. 15161; Stewart (1990), pp. 146-7.

²⁸ von Sallet (1879), p. 24; Jakobsson (2014), p. 23.

be unlikely, there is no evidence that positively excludes it. However, for such a relationship to appear on the coins Laodice's position would presumably be important in its own right since Graeco-Bactrian and Hellenistic kings in general did not make coins with a jugate bust of themselves and a female relative. In fact there are only three examples of jugate busts on Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins. However every other male/female jugate bust depiction from the Hellenistic world features a husband and wife.²⁹ Many of these cases involved brother-sister marriages, but it was the marriage itself that was the important relationship referred to with the jugate bust. There is no evidence of a tradition of sibling marriage on the Ptolemaic model in the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, but on the evidence of other Hellenistic jugate busts it seems highly likely that Heliocles and Laodice were indeed husband and wife.

A second explanation for the appearance of the jugate busts is that Laodice was the mother of an unborn regal child, and that Heliocles held some role as guardian during the pregnancy. This would explain the lack of royal titles on the obverse, and the need to invoke Eucratides, although there is no further evidence to support this proposal. The third potential relationship between the two, that of father and daughter, seems highly unlikely. There are no parallels for such a relationship being portrayed on coins, and there is no obvious reason why a daughter would be included alongside her father. The fourth suggestion appeared recently in Jakobsson's article on the identity of Eucratides, that Laodice was the second wife and widow of Eucratides, and Heliocles a relative of hers.³⁰ As mentioned earlier, Jakobsson sees the diadem as a symbol of royal office, not royal birth, and suggests that the coins were struck after the death of Eucratides by Heliocles and Laodice. This would explain the need to include Eucratides on the coins, to bolster their authority. However, Jakobsson does not offer an explanation as to the relationship between Laodice and Heliocles, other than suggesting that he was not Eucratides' son. In fact the son who, according to Justin, eventually killed Eucratides is said to have been the result of a first marriage. Jakobsson explains the lack of royal titles of Heliocles and Laodice by suggesting that they submitted to the Parthians as a way of obtaining protection against Eucratides' parricide son and against nomadic invasions. On the basis of his interpretation of the physiognomy of the coin portraits Jakobsson identifies this Heliocles with the Heliocles I known from later coins.

The final possibility is that Heliocles was the son of Laodice and that she appeared on the coins as a regent since Heliocles was too young to rule. This explanation apparently has a parallel in the issues of the later Indo-Greek rulers Strato and Agathocleia. These coins also feature jugate male and female heads with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΩΝΟΣ / ΚΑΙ ΑΓΑΘΟΚΛΕΙΑΣ (**fig. 8**). As one would expect, the legend here appears in the genitive and is reproduced in the Kharosthi script on the reverse of the coin. Strato and Agathocleia appear on these coins as the issuing authority. However, in this case we have coins issued by both Agathocleia (although with Strato's name in the reverse legend) and Strato alone.³¹ Rapson arranged these coins in a way that allowed an historical narrative to be created. He placed coins with Agathocleia's portrait, but Strato's name on the reverse first, suggesting that these coins were issued when Agathocleia was regent for her young son Strato. Next, according to Rapson, came coins with a jugate bust, indicating that Strato was now older and that both he and Agathocleia held power. Finally coins with Strato alone were said to have been struck when he was old enough to be king in his own right.³² Such an interpretation now

²⁹ Alexander Balas and Cleopatra Thea (Kraay and Hirmer no 755), Antiochus VIII and Cleopatra (no 760), Mithridates IV and Laodice (no 772), Ptolemy I and Berenice I (no 801 rev.), Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II (no 801 obv.) were all depicted in jugate busts on coins.

³⁰ Jakobsson (2014).

³¹ Bopparachchi (1991), pp. 251-65.

³² Rapson (1908), pp. 247-51.

seems unlikely and recent research has shown that the differences in legends and portraits was more likely due to the existence of two separate mints than any period of regency and joint rule.³³ We are unfortunately now as uncertain about the relationship between Agathocleia and Strato as we are about that between Heliocles and Laodice. However, the depictions of the two women on their coins are useful comparisons. Agathocleia appears on coins by herself with the royal title βασιλισσα (**fig. 9**). However, it does not necessarily seem that she wears the diadem. The enlargement of the type (**fig. 10**) shows Agathocleia's hair plaited behind her head, but with no evidence of a diadem. A second comparison of jugate busts appearing on coins of still later Indo-Greek rulers, Hermeus and Calliope (**fig. 11**), provides no further comparative evidence. Nothing is known about their relationship and, like Laodice, it is far from clear whether Calliope wears a diadem. What prompted the appearance of another woman in a jugate bust, and the authority it gave to the coins in circulation is, of course, unknown. [Dick: figs 8-11] near here]

Unfortunately therefore the available comparisons do not provide much further insight into the Heliocles and Laodice series of coins. What does seem certain, however, is that they were issued under Heliocles and Laodice, and although they invoke Eucratides I in some way by placing him on the reverse, they should no longer be counted among his issues. What role Heliocles and Laodice played in the history of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom is impossible to say on current evidence, although their lack of royal titles on the coins seems to suggest that they were not necessarily rulers in their own right, a fact supported by the prominent position of Eucratides on the reverse. Of the options discussed above, that of Heliocles and Laodice as husband and wife producing coins while Eucratides was still ruling seems particularly attractive. The other examples of jugate busts on coins from elsewhere in the Hellenistic world all depict husbands and wives, and it seems highly likely that Heliocles and Laodice were married. The inclusion of the title βασιλεύς on the reverse of the coins suggests that they were produced while Eucratides was alive, although the relatively poor imitation of the king's own coin types suggests a different mint. Why Laodice is shown wearing the diadem is unclear and further historical reconstruction is impossible.³⁴ One thing is certain: these coins should be taken away from Eucratides, and Heliocles and Laodice should be added to the already extensive list of enigmatic and ephemeral Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek rulers.

Abbreviation and Bibliography

BNBact = Bopearachchi 1991.

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³³ Bracey (forthcoming).

³⁴ One particularly distinctive feature of these coins is the position of the monograms that appear on all Graeco-Bactrian silver coins. On every other issue the monogram appears on the reverse of the coins. Here, however, they are included on the obverse with the portraits of Heliocles and Laodice. This is yet another way in which these coins are so different from the rest of the Graeco-Bactrian series and defy simple explanation.

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Illustrations



Figure 1: Heliclos and Laodice tetradrachm of Series One, 16.88g (Classical Numismatic Group MBS 72, 14th June 2006, lot 1035)



Figure 2: Heliclos and Laodice tetradrachm of Series Two, 16.96g (Classical Numismatic Group Triton X 8th January 2007, lot 455)



Figure 3: Agathocles 'pedigree' tetradrachm with Diodotus Soter, 17.37g (Classical Numismatic Group Triton VIII 10th January 2005, lot 635)



Figure 4: Eucratides tetradrachm of Series One, *BNBact*, série 1, 17.01g (Classical Numismatic Group 85, 15th September 2010, lot 561) Diameter 34mm



Figure 5: Eucratides tetradrachm of Series Two, *BNBact*, série 6, 16.99g (Classical Numismatic Group Triton XVII, 6th January 2014, lot 443) Diameter 32mm



Figure 6: Eucratides I tetradrachm of Series Three, *BNBact*, série 9, 17.00g (Classical Numismatic Group 75 23rd May 2007, lot 642)



Figure 7: Tetradrachm of Diodotus II (*BNBact*, série 6), 16.67g (Classical Numismatic Group 85, 15th Sep 2010, lot 552) Diameter 26mm



Figure 8: Tetradrachm of Strato and Agathocleia, 9.11g
(Classical Numismatic Group 88 14th September 2011,
lot 609) Diameter 26mm



Figure 9: Drachm of Agathocleia,
2.42g (Classical Numismatic Group
91 19th September 2012, lot 433)
Diameter 18mm



Figure 10: Enlargement of obverse of
Figure 4.



Figure 11: Drachm of Hermeus and
Calliope, 2.47g (Classical Numismatic
Group 81 20th May 2009, lot 693)

