

Laurianne Martinez-Sève. *Roi et cités en Asie Centrale : un roi indispensable ?*

Vitto Messina



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Laurianne Martinez-Sève. « Roi et cités en Asie Centrale : un roi indispensable ? », in: C. Feyel, J. Fournier, L. Graslin-Thomé, F. Kirbihler, eds., *Entités locales et pouvoir central. La cite dominée dans l'Orient hellénistique*. Nancy, 2011, p. 211-233.

- 1 The relations existing between the Hellenistic kings and the cities they founded in the remote regions of Central Asia are not well known, especially in comparison with the abundant documents regarding the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. This article purposes to provide some elements of reflection, so as to shed new light on this matter. The Greek presence in Central Asia did not begin there under good auspices: Alexander spent two very difficult years in Bactria and Sogdiana (329-327), occupied in overcoming the resistance of the local populations. As far as we know he did not hesitate to massacre those who refused to submit, set up garrisons everywhere, and divided his army to quadrille the country. Alexander encountered many difficulties in Bactria and Sogdiana, for he had as opponents local potentates, withdrawn into fortresses, which derived their strength from private militias, made up of peasants who worked on their estates. Further to this, Greek veterans and military colonists were settled in centres or *phouria* newly founded, many of which bore the name of Alexandria. For the whole of Central Asia, we know Alexandria of Aria, usually identified with the present Herat, Alexandria Prophtasia in Drangiana, Alexandria of Arachosia, the present Kandahar, Alexandria of the Caucasus, north of Kabul, Alexandria Eschatè, generally identified with the present Khudjent in Tajikistan, perhaps also Alexandria Margiana in the oasis of Merv. We also know an Alexandria Oxiana, which was sometimes located at Aï Khanoum, probably wrongly. In 325, believing that Alexander had been killed in India, and in 323 at the announcement of his death, the colonists revolted to return home. They would have been more than

20,000 in 323 according to Diodorus. By establishing themselves in these regions, the Greeks introduced new uses, including life in cities: this new mode of organization served as a basis for Greek domination. Perhaps it is necessary to imagine the relations between kings and colonies more in terms of partnership or mutual dependence than subjugation of the latter to the former.

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