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**REVISING THE CHRONOLOGIES OF THE HELLENISTIC  
COLONIES OF SAMARKAND-MARAKANDA  
(AFRASIAB II-III) AND AĪ KHANOUM  
(NORTHEASTERN AFGHANISTAN)<sup>1</sup>**

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Afrasiab, the site of ancient and medieval Samarkand, is situated in the northern part of the modern city. The site is surrounded by the remains of ramparts and contains a citadel (90 m x 90 m) in the north. It is delineated in the east by an irrigation canal and in the west by a deep ravine, which in antiquity served as a moat. Although archeological excavations of Afrasiab began at the end of the nineteenth century, the site remains poorly understood. There is, for example, only a basic chronology of the site's history starting with its original inhabitants in the seventh-sixth centuries B.C.E. In western sources, the city was called Marakanda as a result of Alexander's Sogdian campaign in 329–327 B.C.E.<sup>2</sup> During the Hellenistic period, the city served as the capital of Sogdiana. The excavations of this epoch have been concentrated primarily along the city's walls adjacent to which were dwellings. The ceramics reveal numerous techniques derived from Mediterranean prototypes with one goblet even bearing the Greek name of *Nikias* (Νικίας), while other cultural remains attest to craftsmen famil-

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank my colleagues, James Powell and Susan Rupp, for their helpful assistance and most especially to the anonymous reviewers of the journal for their keen insights and rigorous comments. Naturally, any shortcomings with the text remain my responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Arrian 3.30.6; 4.3.6, 5.2, 16.2f.; Curtius 7.6.10, 6.24, 9.20; 8.1.7, 2.13.

iar with Hellenistic and Near Eastern traditions, including coins of Seleukid and Graeco-Baktrian origin.<sup>3</sup>

In 1950 Terenozhkin established a ceramic periodization of the different archaeological epochs of Afrasiab which ever since has served as the standard, albeit loose, chronology of the site: Afrasiab I (6<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) designated the Sako-Achaemenid era, followed by both Afrasiab II and III (4<sup>th</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E.) for the Sako-Hellenistic period, and Afrasiab IV (2<sup>nd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.E.) used for the Kangju-Yuezhi phase.<sup>4</sup> What concern us in this chronological scheme are the designations Afrasiab II and Afrasiab III, because they lack a fixed chronological point for when Hellenized materials first appear in the archaeological record. For example, the pottery of the Hellenistic period was initially viewed as a sophisticated continuation of the earlier Afrasiab I epoch,<sup>5</sup> but as more material was unearthed it became apparent that the thin tableware in red slip, usually polished, was derivative of Hellenistic models corresponding to those found at Aï Khanoum, unlike the older, heavier shapes that preceded them.<sup>6</sup> Even so, our knowledge about Hellenistic Afrasiab and the succeeding period remains extremely limited with much of the archaeological record confined primarily to different sites excavated along the city's wall and observations about the city's material culture confined primarily to military affairs and ceramics.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, features such as the masonry used in constructing the ramparts have come to serve as the basis for establishing much of Marakanda's chronology.<sup>8</sup>

## B. Lyonnet's Chronology

Almost a half-century following Terenozhkin's work Lyonnet in 1998 published an article on the Hellenistic and nomadic phases of Marakanda (Afra-

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<sup>3</sup> For a succinct overview of the site's history in English, see Shishkina 1994, 81–99 and in French up to the Hellenistic period, Bernard 1996, 331–365. A fuller account in Russian can be found in Shishkina 1969a, 3–121 with Shishkina 1969b, 122–136.

<sup>4</sup> Terenozhkin 1950, 153, 156–158, fig. 69; *cf.* Terenozhkin 1947, 128; Masson 1950, 157–158.

<sup>5</sup> Nemtseva 1969, 165–172; Filanovich 1969, 210–216, 220; Terenozhkin 1972, 90–99; Kabanov 1973, 53–73; Buriakov 1981, 30, fig. 13.

<sup>6</sup> For a general discussion on the matter, see Shishkina 1969c, 226–233, 238; Shishkina 1974, 28–30, 49–51; Shishkina 1975, 60–78; *cf.* Shishkina 1969d, 65–66, 68–75.

<sup>7</sup> For a succinct overview of Hellenistic architecture unearthed from excavations at Afrasiab, see Kirillova 2005, 61–64.

<sup>8</sup> The ramparts are divided into eight types conforming to three general building periods. They along with ceramics form the underlying basis for establishing the city's chronology. *E.g.*, Kabanov 1964, 83, 85; Kabanov 1969, 183–187, 196–197; Filanovich 1969, 210–216, 220; Kabanov 1973, 16–23 for an overview, 30–45, 53–68; Filanovich 1973, 90–94; Shishkina 1976, 101–104; Kabanov 1981, 23–59; Chichkina 1986, 73–74, 76–77.

siab II-III) based on her analysis of the ceramics found at the site coupled with the record of two obols issued by Eukratides I recovered in 1911. By drawing primarily on the typo-chronology that she and Gardin had established in 1978 for Aï Khanoum, Lyonnet attempted to create a similar arrangement by forming a comparison and contrast based on the ceramics from both sites.

While there was a tacit agreement that Afrasiab's Hellenistic stratigraphy corresponds to Afrasiab II, no private house or public building has ever been excavated apart from the city's ramparts to aid in support of this argument. Moreover, prior to Lyonnet's work, no one had ever succeeded in differentiating Afrasiab II from Afrasiab III. Lyonnet, however, has proposed to see in Afrasiab II two waves of Greek colonists who settled in the city which she denotes as Afrasiab IIA and Afrasiab IIB. Between Afrasiab IIA and Afrasiab IIB there is a "gap" in the archaeological record.

She designates Afrasiab IIA as the earliest Hellenistic phase based on excavations made along the city's walls at zone N and the potter's workshop at zone S. The ceramics of this phase are characterized by analogous ceramics attributed to periods I-III at Aï Khanoum as well as certain types associated with the preceding Achaemenid period. By synchronizing the typological and stratigraphical remains of Aï Khanoum's ceramic periods I-III with Afrasiab IIA, she concludes that they began during Alexander's Baktrian and Sogdian campaigns in 329–327 B.C.E. Moreover, she understands the monotonous, rudimentary nature of the material as evidence of what she would expect from a military garrison.<sup>9</sup> As such, she uses the material from both sites to synchronize the histories of Samarkand and Aï Khanoum in the early Hellenistic period.

As for the period between Afrasiab IIA and IIB, she infers that this period may have begun at some point during the reign of the Seleukid king Antiochos I (c. 280–260 B.C.E.) and lasted until that of the Graeco-Baktrian king Eukratides I (c. 171/0–c. 145 B.C.E.). Since the ceramics of Afrasiab IIA evolved little from the preceding period, she speculates that either this stage only lasted for a relatively limited amount of time or that quite rapidly there were no longer any contacts between Marakanda and other territories under Graeco-Baktrian control. Moreover, she proposes that Afrasiab IIB should be associated not with Aï Khanoum's ceramic periods IV-VI (c. 280 – c. 170/1 B.C.E.) but with Aï Khanoum's ceramic periods VII-VIII (c. 170/1 – after 145 B.C.E.), the last two phases of the city's ceramic production. This leads her to conclude that there was a hiatus in the Graeco-Baktrian occupation of Marakanda between Afrasiab IIA and Afrasiab IIB, thereby implying that Sogdiana,

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<sup>9</sup> Lyonnet 1998, 143, 151–152.

or at least the region of Samarkand, had already become independent during the reign of Antiochos I in c. 280 B.C.E.<sup>10</sup>

Afrasiab IIB is associated with the second stage of Greek fortifications. Among the pottery identified with this period is moldmade bowls. Previous scholars found it impossible to delineate Afrasiab II from Afrasiab III, because the ceramics of both periods appear identical. Nonetheless, Lyonnet concludes that after more than a century of independence gained during the reign of Antiochos I in c. 280 B.C.E., Afrasiab IIB was conquered by Eukratides I at some point in his reign (c. 171/0 – c. 145 B.C.E.). The ceramics of this period are analogous with the two last ceramic periods of Aï Khanoum which she associates with Eukratides I, except that Afrasiab IIB lasted longer than periods VII-VIII at Aï Khanoum. That Eukratides I successfully reconquered Marakanda is tentatively indicated by two of his obols,<sup>11</sup> although their provenance remains speculative and there are too few to permit a better articulated theory. Lyonnet dates this period as having begun during Eukratides I's reign and probably lasting for a long time based on the introduction of nomadic shapes, such as a type of stemmed beaker (*goblet sur piédouche*) that she takes as the defining characteristic of Afrasiab III. She is unable, however, to determine whether Afrasiab came under nomadic hegemony before or after the abandonment of Aï Khanoum by its Greek inhabitants, since this particular type of nomadic stemmed beaker is rarely found in eastern Bactria but is ubiquitous to the north and west of it, especially in the nomadic cemeteries of the Zeravshan valley and Bishkent, whose late dates begin in the first century B.C.E. and extend into the second century CE.<sup>12</sup>

Lyonnet's reading of the material has become the standard basis on which to reconstruct the history of Hellenistic Marakanda and indeed the whole of the Samarkand region, if not Sogdiana itself up to the nomadic conquest by the Śaka and/or the Yuezhi.<sup>13</sup> Chronologically, she dates Afrasiab IIA from Alexander's campaign in the region between 329 and 327 B.C.E. to the reign of Antiochos I in c. 280 B.C.E., coinciding with ceramic periods I-III at Aï Khanoum.<sup>14</sup> A hiatus then follows in which the site was apparently abandoned by its Graeco-Baktrian inhabitants until Afrasiab IIB when the city was resettled by Graeco-Baktrian

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<sup>10</sup> Lyonnet 1998, 152–153. On the problem of coins attributed to the site, see n.64. She also concludes that Rapin's work on the Iron Gates at Derbent has shown that the first phase of its construction was in the Hellenistic period as he found ceramics characteristic of period IV of Aï Khanoum, but she does not rule out the possibility that an even earlier phase of the wall's construction might be found and dated to Antiochos I's reign. Cf. Rapin 2007, 45, 47, 48.

<sup>11</sup> See Lyonnet 1998, 157 n.75.

<sup>12</sup> Lyonnet 1998, 143, 147–151, 153–154.

<sup>13</sup> See most recently, Widemann 2009, 163ff.

<sup>14</sup> Lyonnet dates ceramic period I of Aï Khanoum as having lasted from 320 to 300 B.C.E. (Lyonnet 1998, 141–143, 144 *figs.* 1–1 and 1–2).

colonists as a result of the Sogdian conjectured conquests of Eukratides I. Afrasiab IIB thus began in Eukratides I's reign, after c. 171/0 and before c. 145 B.C.E., and extended throughout the epoch of the nomadic conquests in the decades that followed prior to the establishment of Kushan Empire by the first century C.E. This period also corresponds to ceramic periods VII-VIII of Aï Khanoum, which by comparison to Marakanda were short-lived. This reconstruction, however, raises a number of disquieting inconsistencies, not least of which concerns the proposed "gap" in the archaeological record amounting to at least a century that would have elapsed from the reign of Antiochos I (c. 280–261 B.C.E.) to that of Eukratides I (c. 171/0 – c. 145 B.C.E.) when the site was presumably abandoned by its Graeco-Baktrian inhabitants.

It is instructive to note that on page 147, when discussing the distinction between Afrasiab IIB and Afrasiab III she writes that in 1995 and 1996 on the backside of the rampart with a pebbled foundation in an older trench dug by Kabanov and Lebedeva, a second group of excavators, whom she does not name,<sup>15</sup> unearthed a series of graves and a tomb through which a hut was subsequently constructed. This group also found material that she attributes to Afrasiab IIB, but notes that the excavators found no evidence of the nomadic type of stemmed beaker, which she regards as the hallmark of Afrasiab III. Yet, the positive features that serve as the evidence for establishing the chronology of Afrasiab IIB are the two obols attributed to Eukratides I, the building phases of the city's walls, and a variety of ceramic shapes and decorations which are new to the site, most notably ("Megarian") moldmade bowls. Ironically, while the obols of Eukratides I are treated somewhat dismissively, they serve as an important source for attributing this period to his rule and hence the synchronization of Afrasiab IIB with ceramic periods VII-VIII at Aï Khanoum.

## Coins

Two obols of Eukratides I were found at Afrasiab.<sup>16</sup> Apparently, the obverse of the two coins is different:

Obverse: Diademed bust of the king facing right; fillet border.

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<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the excavations conducted by Bernard and his team, see Bernard, Isamididov, Rapin, Sokolovskaja 1990, 358–370 for the Hellenistic and Achaemenid walls, respectively; see the later excavations of the team in Bernard, Grenet, Isamididov et al. 1992, 281–297, 299–300.

<sup>16</sup> Shishkina 1969c, 245, fig.5; Ernazarova 1974, 162; Bernard, Isamididov, Rapin, Sokolovskaja 1990, 359 n.5; Shishkina 1994, 87, fig.3 which contains a drawing of the second obol. Cf. Lyonnet 1998, 152 n.64.

Reverse: Two upright palms and the pilei of the Dioskuroi surmounted by two stars; ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ//ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ. Monogram, Mitchiner 1975: 180a.

Obverse: Diademed bust of the king facing right, wearing crested helmet adorned with ear and horn of bull.

Reverse: as above. Monogram, Mitchiner 1975: 181a.

In 1990 Zeimal published a short piece about the histories of the four largest numismatic museum collections in Central Asia, including the Samarkand Museum.<sup>17</sup> Of interest to us is the museum's early history, which was founded in 1896. In 1911 amateur numismatist G.M. Ponomarenko gifted the obols he found at Afrasiab to the museum, which in that same year was "completely robbed" of its coins. The information compiled about the collection prior to the theft in 1929 cannot be trusted since the museum staff at the time was entirely new and presumably ignorant of what it originally contained. Moreover, the museum was again plundered, this time on 10 December 1919, necessitating for a second time in its brief existence a newly reconstituted numismatic collection. In 1920, when M.E. Masson was appointed acting manager of the museum, additional coins were added to the collection lacking information about the circumstances of their provenance. We simply do not know whether they came from donors, or from the confiscation of personal collections by various "investigative agencies," or from the common practice of museum directors exchanging coins among one another. Thus numerous entries that form the Samarkand Museum's archival inventory are almost always devoid of documentation regarding how a coin made its way into the collection. All of this is quite significant, because, even though Shishkina provides the archival citation of Ponomarenko's donation, she does not include each coin's inventory number. We are thus uncertain whether the coins that Shishkina published<sup>18</sup> are intended to be the actual coins themselves or merely representations of what Ponomarenko might have given to the museum. On this point, she is silent, while Ernazarova sheds no light on the matter as she simply cites Shishkina. Thus we are uncertain as to whether or not the coins are still in the collection having survived two devastating robberies and exchanges with other museums.

For my part I was allowed to examine the collection for a few hours one day in the spring of 1990. I found recorded in the museum's inventory twelve obols attributed to Eukratides I. All were absent from the collection itself. The archive supplied no information about their types, provenance, or any other substantive information, save their weight, diameter, and monogram. I was, however, able to

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<sup>17</sup> The proper name of the museum is Museum of the History, Culture, and Art of the Uzbek People (Музей истории культуры и искусства узбекского народа in Russian). Zeimal 1990, 10–14 with p. 12 n.10 for information on the catalogue composed in 1920–1922.

<sup>18</sup> Shishkina 1969c, 245, fig.5.

track down what I believe to be the whereabouts of one coin taken from the collection. It appears in the 1983 seminal work by Zeimal as an example of an “authentic obol” that he identifies as a likely “prototype” used in the production of imitative Eukratidean obols.<sup>19</sup> As a result, were we able to identify indisputably the two obols in question, we would be in a better position to know if they are genuine or later “barbaric imitations.” We would also have a better notion of how to place these coins chronologically and thus assess more clearly what is believed to have been their context.<sup>20</sup> As matters stand, we are compelled to dismiss the value of these coins altogether for they obfuscate rather than illuminate the chronology of Afrasiab II.

## Ramparts

Rapin<sup>21</sup> has argued that the city’s walls have yielded evidence of a second wave of Graeco-Baktrians who resettled Marakanda in the wake of the presumed

<sup>19</sup> Zeimal 1983, 106–107 no.1 (weight 0.65; diameter 10.2; axis 12:00; listed by Zeimal as inventory number CM H–89. I think, however, that this inventory number is mislabeled and should be CM H–87, not H–89. The coin corresponds to the second example listed above, including the monogram [Mitchiner 1975, no. 181a]). Apparently, Zeimal kept the coin in his office at the Hermitage. The following are my notes about all twelve obols listed in the archives as I have them:

Inv. No. KII–1026	Weight	Diameter	Monogram
79	0.55	10.20	not recorded or lacking a monogram
80	0.58	11.0	as in Mitchiner 1975, no. 180d
81	0.56	11.0	as in Mitchiner 1975, no. 180d
82	0.56	10.80	as in Mitchiner 1975, nos. 180a, 181a
83	0.55	10.0	as in Mitchiner 1975, no. 180d
84	0.44	10.30	not recorded or lacking a monogram
85	0.60	10.40	as in Mitchiner 1975, nos. 180a, 181a
86	0.62	10.0	as in Mitchiner 1975, nos. 180a, 181a
87			as in Mitchiner 1975, nos. 180a, 181a
88	0.62	10.10	as in Mitchiner 1975, nos. 180a, 181a
89	0.56	10.20	as in Mitchiner 1975, nos. 180a, 181a
90	0.51	9.20	as in Mitchiner 1975, nos. 180a, 181a

Without the coins themselves, let alone the obverse and reverse types or any comment about them, it is impossible to determine whether or not any of these coins could in fact be those deposited by Ponomarenko. Shishikina herself does not include any helpful remark about the coins that she lists in both publications that might otherwise lead to their identification. Recent finds from Afrasiab of Hellenistic coins and imitations of them have unfortunately not brought about any clarity to the matter (Atakhodzhaev 2005: 33–35, figs. 1–8).

<sup>20</sup> Lyonnet 1998, 154; cf. Lyonnet 1997, 148–149.

<sup>21</sup> Rapin 2001, 76; Rapin 2007, 48.

reconquest of the city by Eukratides I. The reconstruction is based on his contention that the colonists as a first priority undertook repairs to the older Achaemenid and Hellenistic walls which in the intervening century had fallen into disrepair. Apparently, following the supposed first abandonment of the site by the Graeco-Baktrian population, the citizens who remained in Marakanda felt safe enough not to repair its walls even as they began to crumble around them. The city thus seemed to have enjoyed an unprecedented period of peace that lasted for about one hundred years while south of the Oxos in Baktria the same period is marred by political turmoil and warfare. That the work of this second group of colonists was short-lived is purportedly reflected by a gap in the northern wall<sup>22</sup> “and in the rapid destruction of the most recently built sections” that Rapin and Isamiddinov had excavated.<sup>23</sup> The proposed date of these events occurred during Afrasiab IIB based on Lyonnet’s chronology of the site’s ceramics with the sole caveat that she prefers to date this period as extending to c. 130 B.C.E., while he prefers a date closer to the presumed death of Eukratides I in c. 145 B.C.E.

Lyonnet’s assignment of Afrasiab III, the nomadic occupation of Marakanda, stems from her work on ceramics found on the Dasht-i Qala plain in which she compared them with others from various regions in eastern Baktria and Central Asia. She extrapolated from this ethno-chronology that the ceramics reflect the region’s political history and thereby enabled her to postulate the identities of those who produced the ceramics, including the geographical region from where they originated. Of the two ceramic types that Lyonnet identified as nomadic are a stemmed beaker and tripod pots. She concluded that the former were produced by the Śaka or Sai, and the latter by Yuezhi tribes which invaded Baktria and settled in Ai Khanoum and the Dasht-i Qala plain, respectively.<sup>24</sup> All told, her analysis rests on twelve shards belonging to the former and twenty classed as the latter.<sup>25</sup> Since the nomadic type of stemmed beaker was not found in the excavations at Marakanda, she, therefore, attributed this period in the archaeological record to Afrasiab IIB, contending that the presence of the nomadic type beaker is indicative of Afrasiab III.

Although Gardin’s<sup>26</sup> skepticism of accepting Lyonnet’s attempt to formulate a system based solely on an ethno-chronological classification of these ceramics is directed toward her work in Baktria, it rings equally true for her classification of Afrasiab IIA-IIB. He views the material as representing an intermediary stage between the end of the Graeco-Baktrian epoch and the rise of the Kushan period,

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<sup>22</sup> Filanovich 1973, 86, 90–94.

<sup>23</sup> Rapin 2007, 48 and 50; based on his earlier work, Rapin, Isamiddinov 1994, 557.

<sup>24</sup> Lyonnet 1997, 147–149; 157–172; Lyonnet 2001, 143.

<sup>25</sup> Lyonnet 1997, 385, fig. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Gardin 1998, 25, 114–115.



because the archaeological record is neither complete nor is it clearly delineated. Indeed, he has maintained that nothing from their survey has ever yielded anything that could serve as a definitive chronological marker, since as a corpus the samples that he and his team recovered amount to a mere three ceramic types. He has been especially pointed in his remarks about ceramics of Greek origin, because they continued to be produced in this region long after the “Graeco-Baktrian” period had ended, while other ceramics whose origin is attributed to either the Hellenistic or Kushan periods, might in actuality belong to a different epoch altogether. Yet, it is precisely this analysis that Lyonnet and Rapin use to date the abandonment of both Marakanda and Aï Khanoum as well as in the case of the former the second period of its recolonization.

### (“Megarian”) Moldmade Bowls

According to Rotroff, moldmade bowls were invented in Athens at either the Workshop of Bion or the Workshop A. Initially, she was inclined to date the beginning of their manufacture in 224/3 B.C.E., but now holds that they were first produced closer to c. 200 B.C.E.,<sup>27</sup> but “do not begin to become a substantial part of the archaeological record until as late as c. 180.”<sup>28</sup> One reason that the chronology of this ware has so far proven illusive is that it was extensively exported throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. This is especially true of various Ionian cities in Asia Minor whose height of distribution occurred during the second half of the second century B.C.E.<sup>29</sup>

In order to understand the role that moldmade bowls (147, fig. 3 nos. 15–16) play in comprising part of Lyonnet’s Afrasiab IIB, we should note that by 1978<sup>30</sup> she and Gardin had worked out for Aï Khanoum a typo-chronology which, even though it has yet to be published, nonetheless has been used for years to establish the site’s chronology.<sup>31</sup> They distinguished eight successive ceramic periods, each of which is linked to an architectural stage and is based on local models stemming from Achaemenid or Hellenistic types.<sup>32</sup> Each period is set with modi-

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<sup>27</sup> Rotroff 1982a, 6–13, 26–29; Rotroff 1982b, 329–335; Rotroff 1997, 38–43, 72–73; Rotroff 2003, 91–92; Rotroff 2006, 7–8.

<sup>28</sup> Rotroff 2005, 24.

<sup>29</sup> For the overall distribution see Guldager Bilde 1993, 195–206, figs. 1–3; Guldager Bilde 2008, 1987–188 with nos. 12 and 20 as addenda to the maps.

<sup>30</sup> Gardin, Lyonnet 1976, 45–51; Gardin 1985, 449 no. 4; Gardin 1990, 187; Lyonnet 1997, 147; Gardin 1998, 25.

<sup>31</sup> For example, for the city’s walls, see Leriche 1986, 67–70, 105–106; and for the *gymnasium*, Veuve 1987, 95–101, 103–110.

<sup>32</sup> For a concise overview, see Lerner 2005, 468–470.

fications arbitrarily at twenty-five years,<sup>33</sup> except in the article under consideration (144–146, figs. 1–4) wherein Lyonnet introduces two revisions to the Aï Khanoum chronology: she dates ceramic period I as 320–300 B.C.E. and ceramic period VIII as 160–145 B.C.E. In a subsequent publication, Lyonnet dates ceramic period IV at Aï Khanoum as beginning in 260 and extending to some point after 220, while the succeeding phase, ceramic period V, is placed at after 220–200 B.C.E.

**Figure 1. Lyonnet’s chronologies of Marakanda and Aï Khanoum**

Marakanda	Aï Khanoum	Date
Afrasiab IIA: First Hellenistic Period	Periods I-III	c. 320 – c. 280 B.C.E.
Second Hellenistic Period (Antiochos I [?]) to Eukratides I	Periods IV-VI	c. 280 – c. 170/1 B.C.E.
Afrasiab IIB: Third Hellenistic Period (Eukratides I), Nomadic Invasions, Downfall of the Graeco-Baktrian Kingdom	Periods VII-VIII – and afterward	c. 170/1 – after 145 B.C.E.

This is precisely the same kind of reasoning that she employs for establishing her revised chronology of Marakanda (figure 1). Thus Afrasiab IIA is dated from c. 320 to c. 280 B.C.E., that is from Alexander’s anabasis in the region to the reign of Antiochos I, thereby coinciding with ceramic periods I-III at Aï Khanoum. The period from c. 280 B.C.E. to the reign of Eukratides I in c. 171/0 B.C.E. is marked by the absence of Graeco-Baktrians in Marakanda. The last phase of Hellenistic Marakanda, Afrasiab IIB, begins with the reign of Eukratides I and lasts to some still undefined point during the nomadic domination of the region by the Śakas and Yuezhi/Kushanas until imperceptibly it became Afrasiab III. While this phase began in ceramic period VII of Aï Khanoum, it lasted beyond ceramic period VIII, because Aï Khanoum according to this scenario was abandoned by its population and resettled by nearby peasants and transient nomads, unlike Marakanda whose population never left it, save the presence of Greek or Hellenized citizens who disappeared for about a century.

In terms of the remains of the red moldmade bowls found in the excavations at Marakanda, we are confronted with myriad questions and uncertainties. We do not know, for example, whether they were made locally or imported. If the latter holds true, we do not know from where they originated – perhaps from another site in Central Asia, such as Aï Khanoum, or from some workshop in the eastern Mediterranean. If the former is true, we do not know the source from which the technology to produce these bowls derived –

<sup>33</sup> The use of the chronology has been uneven over the years, especially by Gardin. See Gardin, Lyonnet 1976, 45–51; Gardin 1985, 449–450; Gardin 1990, 187–188.

whether in Central Asia or some point further to the west, perhaps as far as the Mediterranean. We also lack a precise understanding of when these relief bowls appeared in Marakanda, how prevalent they were, who made them, or how long they continued to be manufactured among other unresolved problems. Adding to the confusion is our inability to know the answers to such basic questions as how long a mold lasted, as we might at least have some idea of the relative chronological range of their use.

On one point, however, we glean some insight. There is no doubt that the bowls first appeared in Aï Khanoum in ceramic period IV, whose dates unfortunately remain elusive.<sup>34</sup> Yet, even if we were to accept the implausible scenario that moldmade bowls appeared at the site in c. 200 B.C.E., Aï Khanoum itself would still have to have undergone four additional ceramic periods in about a fifty year span prior to its abandonment. Certainly, this scenario is unacceptable. We are left with only one real possibility: Aï Khanoum was inhabited far longer than currently imagined. In terms of Lyonnet's postulated chronology for Marakanda, we are left wondering why she perceives a hiatus of about a century in the archaeological record that she terms "Second Hellenistic Period" whose chief hallmark is, ironically, the disappearance of its Hellenic and Hellenized population. This is particularly worrisome given the nature of the characteristics of the first four ceramic periods at Aï Khanoum that form the basis of her comparison with the materials found at Marakanda. Ceramic periods I-III at Aï Khanoum correspond to the ceramics that compose her Afrasiab IIA. Likewise, one would think that the moldmade bowls of Aï Khanoum's ceramic period IV should be synchronized with Afrasiab IIB without interruption, but this is not the case because she proposes that more than a century had yet to elapse before they finally made their way into the city. The implication is that throughout this period there is no evidence of trade between both cities, even though each remained fully inhabited and Aï Khanoum maintained trade relations with the Mediterranean world as well as India and elsewhere. A simpler explanation would be to eliminate the conjectured lacuna in her chronological scheme and allow Afrasiab IIA to proceed directly into Afrasiab IIB without interruption. In doing so, we would still not be able to provide a date for the appearance of the moldmade bowls in Marakanda or know when Afrasiab IIB began or ended, but we would have the benefit of a relative understanding of the historical development of Hellenistic Marakanda based on a typo-chronology of its ceramics.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For a full discussion with bibliography, see Lerner 2003–2004, 380–381.

<sup>35</sup> It is with apologies that I must pass in silence M. Kh. Isamiddinov's work published in 2002 (M. Kh. Isamiddinov, *Istoki gorodskoï kul'tury Samarkandskogo Sogda*, Tashkent 2002) as I have been unable to obtain a copy of it. I am thus unable to discuss why he dates Afrasiab IIA to

## Aï Khanoum

It is apparent that the absolute dates assigned to the various stages of Afrasiab IIA-B are based more on conjecture than on incontrovertible evidence. The dates of Afrasiab IIA (c. 320 – 280 B.C.E.), corresponding to ceramic periods I-III at Aï Khanoum, are arbitrary. While it is reasonable to suppose that Greeks were in Marakanda following Alexander's campaign in 329–327 B.C.E. and quite possibly Seleukos I's attempt to reunite his eastern satrapies in 311–303 B.C.E., there is no compelling reason to associate 280 B.C.E. or any other date with the end of this period. The fact that it is made to coincide with the beginning of Antiochos I's reign is as meaningless for Aï Khanoum as it is for Marakanda. Elsewhere Lyonnet changed the end date of Aï Khanoum's ceramic period III and thus the beginning of period IV to 260 B.C.E., just as she has adjusted others as well.<sup>36</sup> Yet, the date for the beginning of ceramic period IV at Aï Khanoum needs further revision in light of the new date of c. 200 B.C.E. for the invention of moldmade bowls, while their appearance in large numbers at Athens did not occur until c. 180 B.C.E. and they were not manufactured elsewhere in the Mediterranean in great quantity until the second half of the second century B.C.E. In terms of Marakanda, the discovery of moldmade bowls attributed to Afrasiab IIB provides neither the beginning date of their production nor the end of their manufacture. We can only conclude that their presence is indicative of a date that lies somewhere in the second half of the second century B.C.E. when they should, according to the current theory, not be there. As a result, it is impossible to disentangle the three phases conjectured for Afrasiab II, because they do not exist. There is no chronological gap separating Afrasiab IIA from Afrasiab IIB. Indeed the archaeological record is quite clear: the ceramic typo-chronology of Marakanda follows that of Aï Khanoum for the first four ceramic periods.

Part of the reason that the chronology of Afrasiab II-III is so difficult to disentangle is due to certain conclusions that have been reached about Aï Khanoum and unjustly superimposed on the archaeological record at Marakanda. In addition to the problems associated with the two types of nomadic ceramic ware found near Aï Khanoum, the nomadic type of stemmed beaker and tripod pots, there are three other sources that have been used incorrectly to reconstruct the abandonment of Aï Khanoum by its Graeco-Baktrian inhabitants. In the mid-second century B.C.E., so it is believed, Baktria was overrun in successive stages by different nomadic tribes. The consequence of this influx presumably wrought

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327–200 B.C.E. and Afrasiab IIB to 200–100 B.C.E., if it requires a correction, and why he has closed the temporal gap between both stages in the period of Afrasiab II.

<sup>36</sup> Lyonnet 1997, 127, 148; Lyonnet 1998, 143 n.24.

by the Śakas and soon afterward by the Da Yuezhi, or vice versa,<sup>37</sup> was the overthrow of Ai Khanoum and its resulting abandonment.

Bernard concluded that coins found in and around Ai Khanoum reflect the chronological history of the city and the country: the Graeco-Baktrian population abruptly left Ai Khanoum following the death of Eukratides I, the last Graeco-Baktrian king to have ruled a unified Bactria. A few years later in c. 145 B.C.E. his sons and successors were conquered by various nomads, perhaps Śaka tribes, who in their turn were overthrown by the Da Yuezhi whom the Chinese Han ambassador Zhang Qian would subsequently meet.<sup>38</sup> In 1980 two publications announced the discovery of a vessel with a text found in the palace's treasury stating that the contents had been of olive oil. The first line of the inscription, reads: [Ἔτους κδ' . [ – – ], "Year 24."<sup>39</sup> It was decided that this inscription was written just prior to the Greek abandonment of the site. Based upon their interpretation of the numismatic data, Bernard and Rapin concluded that the Greeks had left Ai Khanoum soon after the murder of Eukratides I, since none of the coins found in the city at that time were thought to have been issued by his successors. They, therefore, reasoned that the date must coincide with a passage in Justin<sup>40</sup> which they inferred implies that Eukratides I of Bactria and Mithridates I of Parthia ascended their respective thrones in the same year. By subtracting 24 from the first year of Mithridates' reign of 171/0 B.C.E., they arrived at the date of 145 B.C.E. for Eukratides' death.<sup>41</sup>

Unfortunately, there are a number of methodological difficulties associated with this historical reconstruction that make it unsustainable. The first concerns finds of net pattern ware in red glaze.<sup>42</sup> According to Gardin,<sup>43</sup> the decoration of the dozen summarily relief-decorated shards of hemispherical bowls in red-slipped ware at Ai Khanoum testify that they were produced locally, including a local imitation of a hemispherical bowl with polygonal incisions in red-slipped ware.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, he<sup>45</sup> has proposed that the red-slipped barbotine decorated

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<sup>37</sup> Bernard 1987, especially 759–760, 766–768.

<sup>38</sup> Bernard 1975, 65–69 and Bernard 1985. Cf. the Quduz Hoard that contains numerous specimens of Eukratides' sons and successors, Eukratides II, Platon, and Heliokles I (Curiel, Fussman 1965).

<sup>39</sup> Bernard 1980, 442–444, 448; Bernard, Rapin 1980, 23–27, 35–36, 38.

<sup>40</sup> Justin 41.6.1: *Eodem ferme tempore, sicut in Parthis Mithridates, ita in Bactris Eucratides, magni uterque viri, regna ineunt.*

<sup>41</sup> On the dates of Eukratides' reign including references to previous works, see Bernard 1985, 97–99, 102–103; Rapin 1992, 96, 114, 281ff.; Boppearachchi 1991, 66–88.

<sup>42</sup> Gardin 1973, 171, pl. 125 a-f; Gardin 1985, 453–454.

<sup>43</sup> Gardin 1973, 141; Gardin 1985, 454.

<sup>44</sup> Liger 1972, 629.

<sup>45</sup> Gardin 1973, 139, 170; cf. Bernard 1965, 682, fig. 24 no.81.

bowls found at Ai Khanoum and elsewhere in Bactria are imitative of Pergamene relief-decorated pottery.<sup>46</sup> According to Jones and Schäfer, production of these bowls in Pergamon began in the middle of the second and continued well into the first century B.C.E.<sup>47</sup> Given the unsatisfactory dating of both the invention and dissemination of the technology for manufacturing this ware, it seems reasonable to place its production at Ai Khanoum as having begun at some point either in the last quarter of the second century or more probably in the first half of the first century B.C.E. Thus in the first half of the first century B.C.E. there were still people in the city obtaining this new technology from the eastern Mediterranean and producing a local brand of this type of red-slipped ware, precisely at a time when the city was supposed to have been abandoned by its Graeco-Baktrian population.

Two further problems are associated with the inscription, “Year 24.” First, the date does not “refer to an era but to a year of an unknown reign” and this regal year cannot serve “as evidence for the existence of an era.”<sup>48</sup> We may understand it, therefore, as a reference not to Eukratides I or an unknown era, but to the reign of an unknown sovereign who was Ai Khanoum’s last king. Second, given that the inscription was written before the Greeks of Ai Khanoum left the city and that this abandonment may well have occurred in the first century B.C.E. and not in the middle of the second, it cannot refer to Eukratides I. On one point, however, there is agreement: the Greeks of Ai Khanoum abruptly and unexpectedly abandoned the city at a time of apparent economic prosperity. But to identify a particular group of pastoralists as responsible is – as Fussman has rightly observed – to do so without any “inconvertible evidence” that the city had been “attacked, burned, or sacked” and, while five arrowheads and two lance-heads were unearthed against the northern wall, they may well have belonged not to some enigmatic enemy but to Greek troops or Central Asians in the service of the city.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the coins found in and around Ai Khanoum should be extended chronologically beyond the reign of Eukratides I to include the emissions of Eukratides II and even of a later coin, an Indo-Greek drachma, produced by Lysias whose reign is thought to have ended around 110 B.C.E.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the inscriptions found in the palace’s treasury detailing the kinds of coins that were stored there record that there were 70,000 Indo-Greek drachmas (*taxaênas* and *kasapana taxaênas*) and Indian punch-marked coins (*nandagachoragas* and

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<sup>46</sup> Gardin 1973, 171 ns. 132–133.

<sup>47</sup> Jones 1950, 172ff.; Schäfer 1968, 64–89.

<sup>48</sup> Bopearachchi 1998, 179; cf. Bopearachchi 1999, 104.

<sup>49</sup> Fussman 1996, 247 with ns. 25–28; cf. Leriche 2007, 135 n.37.

<sup>50</sup> Narain 1982, 414 with n.159.

*kasapana nandênas*), but only 619 Greek drachmas.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, the treasury was increasingly dominated by the influx of smaller denominations based on a non-Attic standard minted south of the Hindu Kush in Taxila and other locations in the Indian sub-continent. Since they were accumulated well after the reign of Eukratides I, we can only conclude that the city did not produce coins of its own at this time. By dating Ai Khanoum's abandonment toward the middle of the first century B.C.E., we may conclude that at least since c. 130, coinciding with the visit of Zhang Qian, the citizens of Ai Khanoum, like other Bactrian centers, paid tribute to the Da Yuezhi. If the inscriptions found in the city's palace treasury are any indication, the tribute was in the form of silver coins that originated south of the Hindu Kush.<sup>52</sup>

As to the circumstances that precipitated the abandonment of the city, it is well known that the city's merchants were part of an extensive trading network that included Central Asia to the north, the Mediterranean to the west, and India to the south<sup>53</sup> and it is not difficult to suppose that their imports were of sufficient quantity as to satisfy the Da Yuezhi for purposes of trade and tribute. The problem for the city occurred when this trading network to the south collapsed and silver could not be obtained to pay tribute to the Da Yuezhi or to trade with them. The result was a crisis. Undoubtedly, there was socio-economic upheaval and turmoil among the ruling clans of the Da Yuezhi who competed amongst themselves for a swiftly disappearing supply of silver. It may well have been this event that propelled the Da Yuezhi to cross the Oxos into Bactria proper in search of new sources of revenue and caused the Greeks of Ai Khanoum to abandon the city in the mid-first century B.C.E., coinciding with ceramic periods VII-VIII of the city. For Marakanda this chronological revision of Afrasiab II means that it may well have lasted into the third quarter of the second century B.C.E. or even beyond and that there is no evidence that the city was abandoned twice of its Greek inhabitants. As for Afrasiab III, denoting the nomadic phase of its existence (second-first centuries B.C.E.), it undoubtedly began well before Ai Khanoum was ever abandoned and continued unabated until the early decades of the first century C.E. in the Kushan era. Consequently, we must continue using Terenozhkin's typo-chronology of Afrasiab until evidence compels us to do otherwise.

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<sup>51</sup> For an overview of the so-called 'economic labels' found in the Ai Khanoum palace treasury, see Rapin 1992, 95–114. The identification of these terms, however, is based on my analysis.

<sup>52</sup> It is from these two denominations that elements of the Da Yuezhi produced, for example, imitations of Eukratides' obols (see Zeimal 1983, 93–109; cf. Rtveldze 2007, 390–391). One consequence of this new chronology is that Ai Khanoum continued to flourish well past the reigns of Eukratides II and even Heliokles I whose reign is believed to have ended about 90 B.C.E (Cribb 2005, 212–214; Cribb 2007, 364–365).

<sup>53</sup> Rapin 1992, 143–152.

## Conclusion

By way of ending this brief essay, I would be remiss should I not reference the recent work by L.M. Sverchkov in which he has attempted to synchronize four Hellenistic sites – Kampyrtepa, Old Termez, and the fortress of Kurganzol in Uzbekistan and Dzhigatepa in northern Afghanistan – based on a comparison of their ceramics.<sup>54</sup> He chose these four, because in his view their stratigraphy is the best known for this period in Central Asia. He concludes that these sites at different stages in their ceramic, and hence historical, evolution overlapped one another chronologically. He demarcates four broad periods for when these points occurred. Imbedded in this analysis is the assumption that the chronology of the ceramic periods of Aï Khanoum are established well enough so as to serve as a backdrop for him to make his comparison. Yet, ironically he purposefully omits Aï Khanoum in his analysis without comment.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, there is one period in his synchronism that warrants attention. This is period three which encompasses three of the four sites under consideration: periods 2–3 of Kampyrtepa (KT-2 layers 16–20 and KT-3 layers 21–33), Termez-3, and period 3 of Kurganzol (KZ-3). Only the last two sites are provided explicitly with dates: the last quarter of the third century B.C.E. to the first half of the second century B.C.E. for Termez-3; and the second half of the third century B.C.E. for KZ-3. According to the table provided on page 108, these stages at all three sites definitively ended in 200 B.C.E.<sup>56</sup>

Surprisingly, one ceramic type that he mentions only in passing here and elsewhere and could help in establishing the third stage of this chronological scheme is the appearance of (“Megarian”) moldmade bowls in period KT-2 of Kampyrtepa.<sup>57</sup> It is worth emphasizing that the dates associated with moldmade bowls have undergone serious revision in recent years: their invention at Athens is now placed as having occurred in c. 200 B.C.E., not becoming a substantial part of the archaeological record until c. 180 B.C.E., while the height of their dissemination in the Mediterranean was achieved only in the second half of the second century B.C.E. The implication for Kampyrtepa periods KT-2 through KT-5 is that their dates must be moved lower. It is simply impossible for the moldmade bowls found in layers 20–20a of Kampyrtepa KT-2 to be assigned a date prior to their invention. The same can be said of another locale where

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<sup>54</sup> Sverchkov 2006, 105–124, for the chronological table, see 108.

<sup>55</sup> The work is a continuation of the previous article that appears in the journal (Sverchkov 2006, 105); for references to Aï Khanoum, see Sverchkov, Voskovskii 2006, 21ff.

<sup>56</sup> Dzhigatepa only figures in periods 1 and 4 of the table.

<sup>57</sup> The bowls were found in layers 20–20a. Sverchkov 2006, 107, figs. 2.30–34 and 3.14–16; Sverchkov, Voskovskii 2006, 25, fig. 8.18.



these bowls were found: the site of Erkurgan in Uzbekistan from complex EK-6, which Suleimanov dates to the first half of the second century B.C.E.<sup>58</sup> Here, too, the reckoning for their appearance likewise needs to be lowered. It seems more plausible to place the manufacture of moldmade bowls at Kampyrtepa and Erkurgan near the time when they began to be produced at Ai Khanoum and Afrasiab, for which the general date of the second half of the second century B.C.E. has been adopted. Thus Ai Khanoum ceramic period IV, Afrasiab II, Kampyrtepa KT-2, and Erkurgan EK-6 should all be regarded as contemporaries of the same stage in their respective ceramic development, a historical phenomenon that Sedov terms as a “moment” in his special study devoted to the typochronology of the ceramics of southern Central Asia based on pottery assemblages that he calls the “Ai Khanoum type.”<sup>59</sup> If Sverchkov is correct in his attempt at synchronizing Kampyrtepa KT-3, Termez-3 and Kurganzol KZ-3, within stage three of his chronology, thereby making them contemporaries of Kampyrtepa KT-2 (save KT-3 which would still follow), then it stands that the dates of each of these periods at these sites must also be revised downward to the second half of the second century B.C.E. It is important to note that the appearance of moldmade bowls in a particular ceramic period does not attest to its beginning, middle, or end. Rather they indicate a relative not an absolute date.

While it lies beyond the scope of this article to rewrite the ceramic history of Hellenistic Central Asia, we can consider as an example one site whose chronology might change due to this chronological readjustment: period KZ-2 of Kurganzol, a fort that Sverchkov proposes was founded by Alexander in c. 328 B.C.E. during his anabasis in Baktria and Sogdiana. He contends that the pale-slipped vessels of period KZ-1 lack parallels in any known assemblage save those that have a hand-molded shape which are found at a number of sites dated to a variety of periods. He favors, however, the so-called “transitional period” at Dzhigatepa where red and black slips were used as a contemporary of Kurganzol. Although Pidaev had dated this period of Dzhigatepa to the end of the fourth or beginning of the third century B.C.E.,<sup>60</sup> Sverchkov is inclined to date period KZ-1 of Kurganzol to 328 B.C.E. and to ascribe its founding to Alexander.<sup>61</sup> Without evidence either to the contrary or in support, the assignment remains arbitrary. One might only add that a similar slip was used at Ai Khanoum in periods I-III whose dates have ranged from the end of the fourth to

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<sup>58</sup> Suleimanov 2000, 165–166.

<sup>59</sup> Sedov 1984, 175–176. In subsequent studies, Gardin seems to have adopted this approach in his articulation of ceramic types at Ai Khanoum (e.g., Gardin 1985; Gardin 1990; Gardin 1998).

<sup>60</sup> Pidaev 1984, 112–117, fig. 1.1–35; cf. Pidaev 1991, 211, 222.

<sup>61</sup> Sverchkov 2005, 84–85, 97–98; Sverchkov 2007, 35–36, 59; Sverchkov 2008, 127–134, 185. For a general overview of the site with superb illustrations, see Swertschkow 2009.

the third quarter of the third century B.C.E.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, he dates period KZ-2 of Kurganzol to 280–250 B.C.E. based on the obsolete and unclear system that Guillaume had employed for the Aï Khanoum *propylaea*.<sup>63</sup> According to Sverchkov, the pottery at Kurganzol now in black slip occurs at the same time as when it appears at Aï Khanoum in ceramic period IV, the same period in which moldmade bowls turn up in the second half of the second century B.C.E. Sverchkov, however, has period KZ-2 of Kurganzol coincide with period KT-1 of Kampyrtepa dated in the beginning of the third century B.C.E. and overlapping with Termez-1, the first half of the third century B.C.E., and Termez-2, the second half of the third century B.C.E.<sup>64</sup> Clearly, periods KZ-2 and KZ-3 of Kurganzol call for revision as do periods KT-1 of Kampyrtepa and Termez 1-2. For example, if the early date for period KZ-1 of Kurganzol is retained, then the interval between it and period KZ-2 might have to be increased, suggesting a prolonged period of abandonment. Similarly, if the date of period KZ-1 of Kurganzol is brought up into the third century B.C.E. and made into a Seleukid foundation under Antiochos I, then the duration of the fortress' abandonment until period KZ-2 might have to be shortened, and even more so should the fortress turn out to be a Graeco-Baktrian foundation. Naturally, this will also effect the early periods of Kampyrtepa, Termez, and quite possibly Dzhigatapa.

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<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of the chronology of the ceramics, see Lerner 2003–2004, 377–381.

<sup>63</sup> Guillaume subdivides the archaeological stages of the *propylaea* into periods I and II, corresponding to ceramic periods IV–VIII (Guillaume 1983, 28).

<sup>64</sup> Sverchkov 2005, 85–94, 98; Sverchkov 2007, 37–49, 59–61; Sverchkov 2008, 134–147, 185–186.

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## Abstract

The current dating system of Hellenistic Samarkand (Marakanda, Afrasiab II) and Ai Khanoum, two Greek cities in the Hellenistic Far East, stems from the 1998 work of B. Lyonnet. The present article questions the basis of her proposed chronology and introduces new evidence for revising it. The article relies primarily on archaeology, ceramics, numismatics, and epigraphy. The result is a different interpretation of how long both sites were under Greek hegemony. In the case of Samarkand, there is not sufficient evidence to warrant Lyonnet's notion that the Greeks abandoned the city on two different occasions with an interval of about a century separating each event. The archaeological record does not allow for the clear distinction between Hellenistic Samarkand (Afrasiab II) and Samarkand under nomadic control (Afrasiab III). As such, we are compelled to retain the chronology of the site as it was initially conceived in 1950 by Terenozhkin for Afrasiab II-III. In order to place this material in a wider historical context, I have followed Lyonnet's convention of drawing upon relevant comparisons from Ai Khanoum. The Greeks of both cities may well have enjoyed a political autonomy far longer than is currently believed.

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