



EUTHYDEMUS

EUTHYDEMUS, name of two Greek kings of Bactria.

Euthydemus I (ca. 230-200 B.C.E.), considered the real founder of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, was of a family originally from Magnesia-on-the-Meander (apparently not Magnesia-under-Sipylus; Polybius 11.39.1). When Antiochus III (q.v.) invaded Bactria in 208 B.C.E. as part of his attempt to reconquer the eastern satrapies, Euthydemus was defeated in a cavalry engagement on the Harīrūd (Polybius 10.49; cf. Strabo 11.514 and 516) and was besieged in Zariaspa-Bactra (Balk) until 206. In negotiations, he denied that he was a rebel against the Seleucids, saying he “had eliminated the descendants of rebels” (that is, the younger Diodotus). Then, threatening to withdraw his defences on the Jaxartes (Syr Daryā) and admit Scythian invaders, he obtained recognition from Antiochus after surrendering his elephants.

Euthydemus’ portrait coinage, both in gold, which includes a unique gold octadrachm in Paris, and the impressive and copious silver, has on the reverse a seated Heracles. It is chronologically divided by the change of die-axis from opposed to upright. The previous identification as his of a marble bust in the Torlonia Museum, Rome, is rejected by Bernard.



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Euthydemus II (ca. 190-185 B.C.E.), presumably (from the nomenclature) the second son of Euthydemus I, or less probably (cf. Tarn, p. 76) eldest son of Demetrius I, is known only by his coinage, which is closely linked with that of his presumed successors Agathocles and Pantaleon. The reverse type of his silver is a standing Heracles, who wears one wreath and holds out a second. These three rulers also struck coins of nickel-bronze (80 percent copper, 17 percent nickel) corresponding in value to bronze denominations. The use of nickel was otherwise unknown in antiquity. This unusual metallurgy should perhaps now be compared with recent evidence of zinc production under the Mauryas and Indo-Greeks in Rajasthan. The old theory that the nickel for coinage was imported from China has now been refuted; probably it was a natural admixture in copper ore mined in the Hindu Kush region, though such lodes are still unlocated.

The successors of the Euthydemid dynasty long struggled with the heirs of Eucratides for control of the Indo-Bactrian kingdom.

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