



SUSA IV. THE HELLENISTIC AND PARTHIAN PERIODS

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Susa is best known because of its role in the Elamite and Achaemenid periods, but the town remained a major urban center until the Islamic period.

SUSA AT THE TIME OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

[Alexander the Great](#) visited Susa twice, on the outbound and return legs of his expedition. The town was one of the Achaemenid capitals—the most important one from the administrative point of view. The kings had several palaces there, and all the Greek and Roman historians agree on the significance of the wealth preserved in them, in one or more treasuries (40,000 to 50,000 talents, Diodorus, 17.66.1-2; Strabo, 15.3.21; Curtius, 5.2.11; Plutarch, *Alex.* 36.1; Arrian, 3.16.7; Justin, 11.14).

Alexander passed by at the end of December 331, after defeating [Darius III](#) at [Arbela](#). [Abulites](#), the satrap of Susiana, surrendered the town without a fight along with its treasure, which included items that Xerxes I (r. 486-465) had captured in Greece during the Persian wars (for which, see [HERODOTUS vii](#)), among them statues of Harmodios and Aristogiton, which Alexander returned to the Athenians. He stayed only a few days and continued on to [Persepolis](#),



leaving Abulites in office, secure in his job, along with some men of his own to keep an eye on him: Archelaus became the town's *strategos* "military commander"; Mazarus, garrison captain of the citadel; Callicrates, warden of the treasury (Arrian, 3.16.9; Curtius, 5.2.16). Archelaus and Mazarus each had an armed troop to guarantee the safety of town and treasure, which may have subsequently been augmented by a portion of the wealth preserved in Persepolis (Diodorus, 17.71.2; Strabo, 15.3.9).

Alexander returned to Susa in January 324 and put Abulites to death. On that occasion he stayed in the town for several weeks, and at that time it served as his principal residence. It was where he lavishly celebrated the famous "weddings of Susa" in which he married his companions to daughters of the Iranian aristocracy, himself taking as brides two Achaemenid princesses. It was also where, drawing on the treasury, he paid the debts of his soldiers and conferred rewards on his companions and on men in his army of exceptional valor. It was where he made other decisions, such as reorganizing his forces by incorporating Persians, and ordering the Greek cities to reinstate their exiles. He also explored the region (Diodorus, 17.107-109; Plutarch, *Alex.* 70.3-6; Arrian, 7.4-7; Justin 12.10-12). Despite Strabo's assertion to the contrary (15.3.9-10), Susa never lost the rank of imperial capital, along with [Ecbatana](#) and [Babylon](#), to which Alexander next traveled, reenacting the traditional rotations of the Achaemenid court. His stay in those cities, however, was too short for him to leave his mark.

SUSA AT THE TIME OF THE DIADOCHS

The town retained its importance under Alexander's officers and successors, the Diadochs. It continued to house an extensive treasury and was a major prize in the wars they engaged in. It is not known which of the companions of Alexander inherited Susiana in 323; perhaps it was governed from the Persia of [Peucestes](#), since Diodorus (18.6.3) attaches it to this satrapy. After the partition of Triparadeisus in 321, Antipater bestowed it on Antigenes, commander of the Silver Shields (Argyraspides), who had participated in the disposal of Perdiccas (Diodorus, 18.39.6). He was at the side of Eumenes when he fought in Iran against Antigonos the One-Eyed. After leaving Babylon, Eumenes first returned to Susa during the summer of 317 to gather forces there and exploit the silver of the treasury (Diodorus, 19.12.3). He was also able to provision his army with rice, sesame, and dates, which grew abundantly in the region (Diodorus, 19.13.6, 19.15.6). The warden of the treasury, Xenophilus, agreed to hand over to him funds to pay his army



(Diodorus, 19.15.5). Fleeing the torrid heat of the summer, Eumenes and his troops left Susiana before Antigonus could enter. Antigonus, in turn, wished to exploit the royal treasury, but Xenophilus remained loyal to Eumenes. Antigonus made Seleucus satrap of Susiana and ordered him to seize the citadel where the funds were kept, whereupon he himself left in pursuit of Eumenes (Diodorus, 19.18.1).

Antigonus returned to Susa in spring 315, having killed Eumenes and strengthened his positions in Iran. Xenophilus, still in office, capitulated. Antigonus treated him with respect, thus demonstrating his importance. But, the wealth was considerably smaller than it had been in the time of Alexander: the contents of the treasury are estimated at 15,000 talents by Diodorus, (19.48.6-8). They were appropriated by Antigonus, who appointed as satrap Aspisas, who was not a Greek (Diodorus, 19.55.1). Susa was among the first conquests of Seleucus when he seized the upper satrapies: he took it by 311, along with Media and other nearby regions (Diodorus, 19.92.5), although he did not control all of Babylonia, and made a certain Euteles satrap (Diodorus, 19.100.5). Along with the other Achaemenid capitals, Susa constituted the framework of the first Seleucid administrative network (Capdetrey, 2007, pp. 34-35).

The only relics of this period are the coins: the first Susiana issues date to the end of the reign of Alexander or shortly after his death. Susa was a major center for minting coins until the end of the reign of Seleucus I. Tetradrachms in the name and in the types of Alexander were originally struck there (obv., head of [Heracles](#) with the lionskin on his head; rev., eagle-bearing Zeus seated on a throne). Some also bear the name of Aspisas, the satrap of Antigonus. The same tetradrachms were also struck by Seleucus I, but with the anchor or the horned horse as Seleucid symbols. His conquest did not bring about any changes; he even kept some of the previous staff at the mint (Kritt, 1997, pp. 48-49; Capdetrey, 2007, p. 34). Around 305-304, there appeared types specific to Seleucus. They diversified at the end of his reign, during the coregency of [Antiochus I](#), who may have stayed for a time at Susa (Kritt, 1997; Houghton, Lorber, 2002, p. 3-4, 67-77).

SUSA IN THE SELEUCID PERIOD

Susa remained Seleucid until around 150 BCE. This period is known from a number of primary sources, including several inscriptions (Canali De Rossi, 2004; Merkelbach and Stauber, 2005; Rougemont, 2012). The city underwent a



major transformation, because it became a Greek city, called Seleucia of the Eulaios, after the name of the present-day Kerkha river, which ran close by (Potts, 2001). The date of this refounding by the Seleucid kings is not known with certainty. The earliest attestation is no earlier than 205 BCE. Seleucia of the Eulaios appears in a list of cities in the region that, at the same time as Antioch of Persia, observed the games of Artemis Leucophryene celebrated at Magnesia on the Meander (*OGIS*, no. 233; Rougemont, 2012, no. 53). The name also appears in later inscriptions from Susa. It is believed that this reestablishment took place at the beginning of the Seleucid period, and that it was the work of Seleucus I (Le Rider, 1965, p. 280) or Antiochus I (Capdetrey, 2007, p. 365). There is no way to tell. It would be surprising if Seleucus I had thought it wise to change the name of one of the chief Achaemenid capitals. He did not do so for Ecbatana, Persepolis, *Pasargadae*, or Babylon. The refounding might date to the reign of *Antiochus III* (Tarn 1985, p. 27) or another of the Seleucids who was active in the 3rd century. It was accompanied by the settling of a Greco-Macedonian population. The new city functioned in the democratic manner familiar from all the Hellenistic cities, but the documents that inform us about these institutions date to the Parthian period.

Susa lost its rank of imperial capital and became one of the regional capitals that constituted the framework of the Seleucid kingdom. It headed the satrapy of Susiana and hosted the residence of officers who bore the title of *strategos* (Le Rider, 1965, pp. 273-74; Capdetrey, 2007, p. 252). One of them, Diogenes by name, appeared in the time of Antiochus III at the moment of the revolt of Molon, former satrap of Media. Molon attempted to take Susa but failed before the citadel to which Diogenes had withdrawn. After his defeat of Molon, Antiochus III made Diogenes *strategos* of Media and replaced him in Susiana with one Apollodorus, (Polybius 5.46.7; 5.48.13-15; 5.54.12). A poorly dated inscription mentions another *strategos* of Susiana, called Arrheneides. He held this position during the first half of the 2nd century, or a little after, when Susa was already under Parthian dominion. These *strategoï* represented the king and ran the regional administration. Other royal officials appear in a range of badly preserved inscriptions from the end of the 3rd or the first half of the 2nd century. An official termed *epi ton prosodon* “over the income” was involved with the treasury revenues and perhaps also the tax administration; an *archiereus* or high priest perhaps was in charge of the celebration of the royal cult, the finances of the sanctuaries, or their general management. This office could be assumed by the *strategos* himself, as is attested at other cities. Other public servants appear in lists of witnesses, including an *epistatēs* “overseer”



and a *chreōphylax* “records-keeper” (Rougemont, 2012, nos. 17, 25). The former was placed by the king in charge of the smooth operation of civic institutions; the latter was in charge of the bureau for registering legal documents.

The town always housed a mint. Until the reign of Antiochus III, it struck silver tetradrachms in the traditional Alexander types and in the name of Seleucus. They were subsequently replaced by the dynastic types similar to those issued elsewhere in the kingdom. There was also a garrison stationed there at all times. Several of its personnel are known by name. At the end of the 3rd or beginning of the 2nd century, Leon, the commander of a military detachment, dedicated a statue in honor of the daughter of a high official of the Seleucids called Timon. He was accompanied by his men and several officers: this unit, which comprised several divisions, was large (Rougemont, 2012, no. 7). In 183/2, a horseman called Calliphon, son of Diodorus, freed one of his slaves by dedicating him to Apollo and Artemis Daittai. Another emancipation by dedication, from the first half of the 2nd century, was carried out by one Bacchius, who may also have been a horseman.

The excavations carried out at Susa beginning at the end of the 19th century (see [SUSA i](#)) often reached Seleucid levels, but they were rarely careful enough to distinguish the remains of this period from Parthian remains. Especially well known are the residential quarters. No official buildings have been found. But the Achaemenid palaces do not seem to have been reused by the Seleucid administration (Boucharlat, 1990). They fell into ruin, were abandoned, and were only reoccupied by squatters, who left few traces, except in the palace constructed along the Šāhur river, below the [Apadana](#) mound. In this location, a house was built with Greek-style roofing elements (tiles, palmette facings; Labrousse and Boucharlat, 1972, pp. 95-96; Boucharlat and Labrousse, pp. 27-30). Based on the fact that Timon is called Marshal of the Palace (ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς) in Leon’s dedication, it is sometimes assumed that there was a royal palace at Susa. But this is primarily an honorific title, borne by those who are close to the king. It does not prove the existence of a palace (Rougemont, 2012, no. 7). Because many Greek inscriptions come from the southern point of the mound of the Royal Town, the Donjon, it has been thought that official buildings were located there (Boucharlat, 1985, p. 75; idem, 1990, p. 447). Rather than the palace itself, this should be taken as the sanctuary of Nanaia, who was one of the main deities of Susa (Cumont, 1931, p. 278-279; Potts, 1999, p. 369; Martinez-Sève, 2002b, p. 49; Martinez-Sève, 2008, p. 360). Of the fifteen or so known slave emancipations, 11 were found there. These were



accomplished by dedication to a god, following a procedure that was very widespread in the Greek world, which involved promulgation of the proceedings, in his sanctuary (Darnezin, 1999). Nanaia's sanctuary also played the role of *epiphanestatos topos* (lit., place in full view): it was there that the official acts of the city were published. Her temple at Susa was not recovered. R. de Mecquenem cleared the later structures, of which the most recent elements were Sasanian, and destroyed the older remains, on top of which they had been built (Martinez-Sève, 1996). This temple of Nanaia must be the one mentioned by Pliny as a temple of Diana as he described the course of the Eulaios (*Nat. hist.* 6.31.9), for Nanaia had been assimilated to Artemis. He indicates that it was one of the largest temples in the region.

The mound of the Royal Town has provided the most abundant evidence of post-Achaemenid occupation. The later levels were less extensive on the Acropolis, but J. de Morgan uncovered several structures there that he considered of minor importance (Morgan, Jequier, and Lampre, 1900, p. 102-3; Martinez-Sève, 2002b, pp. 50-51), along with Greek materials, notably architectural terracotta. Most of the terracotta figurines found on the Acropolis also render Greek iconography (Martinez-Sève, 2002a, p. 82-83; Figure 1). This area was thus occupied during the Seleucid period. This was not the case at the mound of the Apadana, where only squatters were living in the palace of Darius I. In the Royal Town, R. Ghirshman uncovered Seleucid structures in the quarter of the old Propylaea of the Achaemenids, to the north of the mound. The only building with a coherent plan was a fairly large house (at least 26 m on a side), with features of Greek architecture, that belonged to one of the elite Greco-Macedonian families. It had a peristyle court, which was identified only after excavation had been done, onto which rooms opened whose walls were sometimes painted with monochrome panels. Its tiled roof was decorated with antefixes and a frieze of meander pattern (Ghirshman 1953a, p. 232; Ghirshman, 1953b, p. 255; Ghirshman, 1962, p. 102; Martinez-Sève, 2002b, pp. 39-44). Other buildings exist nearby, but they were not identified at the time of the excavations. The villa was thus part of a larger neighborhood. Found in it was a ceramic assemblage similar to that attributed by R. Boucharlat to the Seleucid period (Boucharlat, 1987, pp. 194-98; Boucharlat, 1993; Martinez-Sève, 2002b, pp. 43-44), and dated to the mid- or late third century.

Earlier, the quarter had not been inhabited, and only the Propylaea, which gradually fell into disrepair, had been visible. The remains of an individual,



perhaps Greek in origin, were even interred there, which shows that the area was not considered *intra muros* “within the walls.” It is possible that initially the Greco-Macedonian settlement had been restricted to the Acropolis. Some colonists, nonetheless, chose to settle in the suburbs. Another villa, also decorated with monochrome painted panels, was found on the southwest edge of the mound of the Craftsmen’s Town, which was not included within the urban area (Martinez-Sève, 2002b, p. 52). The mound included Seleucid levels in other locations, but no other structure is known as yet (Boucharlat, 2006, p. 448), except for the conglomeration called the “Perso-Achaemenid village” by R. Ghirshman, who uncovered it to the northwest of the mound; it may still have been in use at the beginning of the third century (Stronach, 1974). Lastly, one may mention the Ayadana, an edifice located 4 km northeast of Susa, whose earliest stage might go back to the Seleucid period. At first interpreted as a temple of the Achaemenid period, it has been redated, and there is disagreement as to its function: some say it is a temple, others a residence (Stève, Vallat and Gasche, 2002-03, p. 500).

Despite these discoveries, it is difficult to estimate the real importance of Susa during the Seleucid period. It is believed that it remained a prosperous and attractive regional center, the focal point of Seleucid dominion over the region (Capdetrey, 2007, pp. 364-65), even though its role had diminished and the Greco-Roman authors referred to it only in connection with the revolt of Molon. The territory it controlled, present-day Khuzestan, extended to the west as far as the Tigris, to the north and east as far as the Zagros and the Oroates River, and to the south as far as the Persian Gulf at first, and then as far as the satrapy of the Erythrean Sea that had been created under Antiochus III, or perhaps earlier (Le Rider, 1965, pp. 255-61). These authors stress the agricultural prosperity of Susiana, which yielded rice, cereal grains, dates, sesame, and grapes (Diodorus, 19.13.6; Strabo, 15.1.18, 15.3.10-11, 16.1.5; Le Rider 1965, pp. 271-72). Study of the period’s terracotta figurines has revealed its energetic crafts traditions. Its workshops, which were markedly innovative, influenced production in other regional centers. Susa also exported statuettes, which have been found elsewhere in Susiana, and in Failaka, Kuwait; in [Elymais](#) at Masjed-e Solaymān; and at the nearby site of Kalgeh to the southeast of it (Martinez-Sève, 2002a, pp. 735-39; Martinez-Sève, 2004). Relations with Masjed-e Solaymān were very close in other ways as well: Susian coroplasts went there, perhaps on the occasion of religious festivals, bringing with them some of their products, which they sold on the spot; but they also modeled other examples with local clay (Martinez-Sève, 2004).



The bronze coins found at Susa seem to provide additional proof of its commercial zeal. Beginning with the reign of Antiochus III (r. 223-22 to 187), by far the largest number of them come from Seleucia on the Tigris and, according to G. Le Rider, would have been brought there and spent by Seleucid merchants who had come looking for wares from the Indian world. This would have been an outcome of Antiochus III's policy designed to increase commerce with the Orient (Le Rider, 1965, pp. 302-9). These commercial interactions would have lasted, while suffering slow decline, until the reign of Demetrius I, under whom the Seleucid bronze coins were replaced by Susian bronze coins. The growth of Susa thus took place during the second half of the 3rd century, as is also shown by archeological excavations: urban space appears not to have covered a great expanse at the beginning of the Hellenistic period. At least until the reign of [Seleucus II](#), Susa's mint does not seem to have been especially productive, even though it was continually in operation (Houghton and Lorber, 2002), and the oldest securely dated epigraphic inscriptions are no earlier than the end of the 3rd century. But it is not certain that the growth of Susa resulted from the economic policy of Antiochus III, as G. Le Rider thought. The Seleucid bronze coins found at Susa could have been used to pay soldiers stationed at the garrison (Le Rider and De Callatay, 2006, p. 130, n. 1). No matter where they came from, their increase in number shows that the royal administration had to deal with increasing expenditures. The Seleucid kings endeavored to reinforce their presence in the region, and they did so in a variety of ways: bringing in new populations, military or civil; financing construction; concern for commercial matters. This is also the context in which to understand the military expeditions mounted by Antiochus III and [Antiochus IV](#) in Elymais (Martinez-Sève, 2010; Martinez-Sève, 2014). It was not until about 143 (following the new chronology established by Assar) that Kamniskires, who came from that region, proclaimed himself king in Susa. But the secessionist tendencies that the kings had attempted to suppress were visible earlier (Dabrowa, 2004). Before that date, in fact, Susa had already briefly fallen under the control, first of Kamniskires (148), and then of one Okkonapses (144), during the usurpation of Alexander Balas and the reign of Demetrius II (Le Rider, 1965, pp. 346-47; Assar, 2004-2005). In the end, Kamniskires took Susa in order to found a new dynasty, while laying claim to the Seleucid dynasty and presenting himself as its continuation (Invernizzi, 1998; Martinez-Sève, 2004).

SUSA IN THE PARTHIAN PERIOD



The Elymeans did not prevail long at Susa: they were driven out around 140 by the Parthian Mithridates I (see [ARSACIDS ii](#)), who also led an expedition against Elymais. Despite a recovery by the Elymean king Tigraios (138-132/131) and, after that, by the Seleucid king [Antiochus VII](#) during his campaign against the Parthians in 130-127 (Assar, 2004-2005), the Parthians managed to hold on to Susa at least until 45 CE, while the Elymean dynasty controlled the region to the east, around the town of Seleucia on the Hedyphon and in the Zagros. The dynasty of [Characene](#), founded by Hyspaosines, controlled the region farther to the south, around the former Alexandria of Characene, which had become Spasinu Charax. The Parthians appear to have reconciled themselves to these regional dynasts, so long as they were recognized by them, but the history and political organization of their kingdom are not well known, and it is not easy to describe their relationships. It is unlikely that Susa would have been separated from the areas under the control of the Elymeans, with which it constituted a single regional entity. Beginning in the second half of the first century CE, it fell under their dominion and may have become their capital. But it became Parthian once again in 215 CE and was conquered by the Sasanians in 224 (Le Rider, 1965, pp. 349-430).

The political situation of the town does not appear to have undergone much change, in comparison with what had happened during the Seleucid period. It remained the residence of a *strategos*, whose responsibilities are not well understood. Besides Arrheneides, who ruled in the 2nd century BCE, we know the names of three of them. Two are mentioned in two epigrams composed in the first decade of the 1st century CE, one by the city, the other by the garrison of Susa. They honor one Zamaspes, who held important positions in the retinue of the *strategos* Tiridates and conducted irrigation projects, before in turn being named *strategos* by the king (Rougemont, 2012, nos. 11-12). The third is the satrap Xwasak, named and pictured alongside the king [Artabanus IV](#) on a stela (Kawami, 1987, pp. 164-67), which is inscribed in what can be termed an Elymean monumental style of Aramaic script, with a date interpreted as 462 Arsacid/215 CE (Henning, 1952, p. 176; script table, p. 168). This is how we know that Susa became Parthian again in 215.

At least until the beginning of the 1st century CE, Susa also preserved the institutions of a Greek city and continued to operate democratically, as is shown by a letter addressed to it by the Parthian king [Artabanus II](#), in 21/22 CE, to confirm the election to the position of treasurer of Hestiaios, son of Asios (Merkelbach, 2002). He had held this office for less than four years, and the



city had reelected him, heedless of the rules regarding self-succession to the magistracy, for he had distinguished himself in the job and had led embassies for the city. He was close to the king and held the court titles “Friend of the First Rank” and “Bodyguard.” The city, which would be able to count on his influence with the king, thus had a great interest in making him a magistrate. Everything in this text agrees with Greek practice and with the values of civic life. Relations of the Parthian king with Susa were similar to those of the Seleucid kings with the cities of their kingdom, especially those which they had founded. He had a representative on the spot, Antiochus by name, who played the role of *epistatēs* “overseer” and is listed in the address of the letter (Rougemont, 2012, no. 3). The only noteworthy development is the change of the name of the city: “Seleucia of the Eulaios” was replaced by “the city of the Phraateans of Susa.” The alteration is due to Phraates IV, who had refounded the city in 31/30 BC at the same time he had awarded it the right to strike coins for the city, which it did for several years (Le Rider, 1965, p. 429). This refounding attests to the interest of the Parthian kings in the city, which remained a major provincial center. Susa kept its mint in operation until 53 CE, producing bronze coins in particular, and then once again under the kings of Elymais in the second half of the 2nd century CE (Le Rider, 1965, p. 13).

If we are to believe the archeological discoveries, the prosperity of Susa even increased by comparison with the Seleucid period. Beginning in the second half of the 2nd century BCE, the mounds of the Apadana and the Royal Town are covered with residential neighborhoods (Figure 2); these are primarily known from the excavations of R. Ghirshman and J. Perrot. In the area of the old Achaemenid Propylaea, the Seleucid villa was replaced by a large structure, no doubt comprising several adjacent houses, including one that contained a bathhouse. One of its floors was decorated with a mosaic bearing the Greek word Μοῦσα “Muse.” Other houses, which coexisted for a while with those, replaced them during the first half of the 1st century. At the same time, the built-up areas spread out to the west, on top of the old Propylaea. These houses always had a central court surrounded by rooms, including a large one on the south side of the court, and had an upper floor. This quarter lasted a long time without major change, but it was periodically renovated, and the replacement walls were often of lower quality than the earlier ones (Martinez-Sève, 2002b, pp. 44-45). During the course of the 2nd century CE, a very large building was placed among those houses, and the latter in due course disappeared. The building has been interpreted as a Mithraeum; but in fact, it was an imposing residence, perhaps an official one, still there at the beginning



of the Sasanian period (Stève, Vallat, and Gasche, 2002-03, p. 509).

On the mound of the Apadana, the area of the old Gate of Darius is especially well known (Boucharlat, 1987, pp. 158-63). Buildings with rooms 3 to 5 meters on a side were built on the gate's remains, which sometimes were incorporated into the new structures. During the 1st century BCE, they were replaced by new houses, of lower quality. The earliest excavations here also encountered Parthian levels, but the archeologists did not manage to isolate consistent assemblages. Parthians remains were numerous in the southern half of the Royal Town, where R. de Mecquenem identified them in all of his work sites (Martinez-Sève, 2002b, p. 45-49). They yielded abundant material—pottery, but also coins, sometimes in hoards, figurines in a variety of materials, and sculptures in varying states of preservation. The head of a man comes from area 4 (eastern flank of the Royal Town), and the head of a woman encircled by a turreted crown, sometimes identified as the queen Mousa, was discovered close to the Donjon, in the area of the Isthmus (Amiet, 2001, nos. 9, 33). In the Donjon itself the sanctuary of Nanaia continued to exist, and major official inscriptions have continued to be discovered there. The many graves found everywhere also attest to the density of Parthian settlement (Boucharlat and Haerinck, 2011). Among them were infant jar burials, interred within the houses, and others were interments in anthropoid sarcophagi or in burial chambers. Several of these, containing furniture, have been excavated in the Craftsmen's Town. A cemetery has also been found 1 km south of the Donjon (Stève, Vallat, and Gasche, 2002-2003, p. 506-512).

The same dynamic is observed in Susiana, where surveys have brought to light a sizable increase of occupation and major improvements to the irrigation network (Wenke, 1975-76, pp. 115-31). This is the sort of work for which Zamaspes was recognized by the city of Susa and the soldiers of the garrison. He had increased the output of the *Gondeisos* (which is hard to identify) by means of diversion channels, which enabled the irrigation and cultivation of abandoned fields, including some that belonged to the soldiers. It has been thought that these soldiers were descendants of the military colonists who settled in Susa at the foundation of Seleucia of the Eulaios, who were given *klēroi* “field allotments” for their support. But we know nothing of the conditions under which the city had been founded by the Seleucids and then refounded by Phraates IV. In any event, a garrison remained at Susa, which had preserved the Greek custom of paying homage to its leaders by the erection of a statue in their honor.



GREEK CULTURE IN THE SELEUCID AND PARTHIAN PERIOD

Throughout the 1st century CE at least, Susa was deeply marked by the influence of Hellenism, which was introduced by the Greco-Macedonian colonists and reinforced by its integration into the Greek *koine*. Even though the legends on the coins of the kings of Elymais continued to be in Greek (Le Rider, 1965, p. 428), these traditions weakened and finally disappeared when the town came under their dominion—there is nothing Greek about the stela of the satrap Xwasak (see above). The penetration of Hellenism can be observed through the inscriptions. Most of the people mentioned have Greek names, including those during the Parthian period, except for the administrative staff of the Arsacids (Le Rider, 1965, pp. 280-87). The bureaucratic organization of the city and its civic life were no different from those of traditional Greek cities. The citizens embraced a set of shared values that led them to serve their community and to recognize the most worthy by voting them honors. The inscriptions include all of the stereotypical speech formulas that are commonly found in Greek epigraphy. The fact that these values remained intact during the Parthian period testifies to their dynamism during the preceding, Seleucid period.

Greek culture was the mark of the ruling elite, who nurtured it and passed it on to new generations. The mention of a gymnasiarch in the Parthian period proves the existence of a gymnasium, locus of the diffusion and perpetuation of these values during the time of life when the youths were receiving their intellectual and military education simultaneously. A certain Nikolaos may have been crowned during games important enough to be called *stephanitēs* “with a wreath as prize” (Rougemont, 2012, no. 10). Thus, participation in religious festivals remained a way of expressing one’s allegiance to the panhellenic community. Several documents also reveal the preservation of Greek literary and artistic culture in scholarly and subtle form. A sculptor named Chaireas himself composed the dedication on one of his statues of Apollo, written in the long popular meter of elegiac distich (Rougemont, 2012, no. 5). He did so to thank the god for saving his wife Antigone and his daughter Clio. Another poem, inscribed on a terracotta plaque, was inspired by Homeric verse to evoke the deeds of warriors. Herodoros, a virtuoso poet from Susa or a nearby town, also composed a hymn to the Sun. His poetry, which is quite esoteric, is written in Priapean verse (Rougemont, 2012, nos. 32-33).

This taste for scholarly culture also explains the appearance of some types of figurines very rarely found in Greek terracotta, such as Phryxus and Helle



(Martinez-Sève, 2002a, pp. 706, 728). The material remains confirm the widespread penetration of Hellenism. The shapes of ceramics are characteristic of the assemblages of the Seleucid kingdom (Boucharlat 1987). A very large number of the terracotta figurines also reveal Greek iconography. They were made by craftsmen trained in the Oriental milieu but who were able to express themselves in the Greek manner (Martinez-Sève, 1998; 2002a). It is thus clear that even those who were not among the elite were marked by Hellenism. But its diffusion did not entail the appearance of an artificial, deracinated culture. The local traditions remained energetic and promoted the emergence of a new culture peculiar to Hellenistic Susiana (Martinez-Sève, 2003, pp. 159-60). While many divine images represented Greek gods, the cults of the Eastern gods remained predominant: Nanaia occupied a major position in the local pantheon, which also incorporated Elymaic gods (Martinez-Sève, 2008).

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