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Hellenistic culture progress in Central Asia

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Abstract

The Hellenistic period, which spanned from the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE to the emergence of the Roman Empire in the first century BCE, witnessed the spread of Greek culture across vast territories. This article aims to explore the vibrant and diverse Hellenistic culture, examining its origins, key characteristics, and the impact it had in Central Asia. Signs of Hellenistic culture developed and were preserved in the Seleucids, Greco-Bactria, Parthia and partly in the Kushan state. This was evident in architecture and art.

Key words: Hellenism, Central Asia, Greek, culture, East, art, architecture, period, philosophy, science, literature.

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Introduction

The Hellenistic period emerged following the conquests of Alexander the Great, who extended the reach of Greek civilization across the Persian Empire and beyond. After Alexander's military movements and his death, political and economic conditions that shaped the Hellenistic world. It could be seen in that time the relationship between Greek and Eastern cultures during this period. One of the earliest interactions between Greek and Eastern cultures can be traced back to the Achaemenid Empire, which ruled over a vast territory including Persia and parts of Asia Minor. Greek city-states, such as Athens, had diplomatic[1] and trade relations with the Persian Empire, fostering cultural exchanges and influencing each other's artistic and architectural styles. Furtermore, this cultural growth affected other Asian countries in Central Asia which was occupied by Persia (Bactria, Sogdia). These states were first part of the Seleucids, and later became part of the Greco-Bactrian state and actively participated in mutual cultural processes.

THEORETICAL BASIS. Considered to be the cultural and scientific heritage of Ancient Greece, ancient culture had a significant impact on various regions. One such region is Central Asia. In turn, the Greeks also adopted and accepted certain aspects and achievements of the culture of the peoples of the East, including the peoples of Central Asia. Thus, the cultural life of the East and West was influenced by each other. This process is called Hellenism in science[2]. The military campaigns of Alexander the Great reached the Indus River in the east and led to the emergence of Greek cultural centers over a vast territory. Local rulers and political elites partially adopted Greek aesthetics and eventually incorporated them into their buildings and daily life.

Hellenistic culture was characterized by a fusion of Greek and Eastern influences, resulting in a unique and cosmopolitan society. The elements of cultural synthesis that emerged during this period, including the adoption of Greek language, art, and philosophy by non-Greek populations. There was the influence of Eastern traditions, such as Egyptian[3], Persian on Hellenistic culture. The relationship between Greek and Eastern cultures has a rich and complex history that spans thousands of years. The influence and exchange of ideas between these two cultural spheres have had a profound impact on various aspects of art, philosophy, religion, language, and politics. In the Hellenistic period after the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greek culture heavily influenced the Eastern regions that came under his rule. Greek language and philosophy spread throughout the conquered territories, blending with local traditions and creating a unique fusion of cultures known as Hellenistic civilization. This cultural amalgamation can be seen in the

[1] Eduard Rung. Athens and the Achaemenid Persian Empire in 508/7 BC: Prologue to the Conflict // Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy. 2015. Vol 6 No 3 S2. P-257.
[2] И.А.Ладынин. Понятие еллинизма в советской и постсоветской историографии стадиальность и закономерность или историческая конкретность и случайность? // из истории советской и постсоветской историографии. С-190.
[3] Эдвин Бивен. Династия Птолемеев. История Египта в эпоху эллинизма. Центрполиграф, 2011. С-85.

art, literature, and scientific advancements of the time.

Among the ancient Hellenic states that occupied part of Central Asia, signs of Hellenistic culture were more clearly visible, especially in the state of Southern Bactria. This manifested itself in architecture, sculpture and pottery[4]. Alexander' patronage of other religions, Zoroastrianism, is a guide to his goal of gaining a strong foothold in these lands[5]. In addition, he established kinship relations with the courts to control the outlying areas[6] and resettled many Greek-Macedonians, especially the military, there. The aliens formed the basis of the Hellenistic culture that would flourish in the future.The Hellenistic period witnessed a flourishing of artistic expression, marked by a departure from the classical Greek aesthetic. We can see a lot of innovations in Hellenistic art and architecture, including the development of realistic portraiture, the creation of grandiose monuments and sculptures, and the fusion of Greek and Eastern artistic styles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. Among the countries of Central Asia, especially in Bactria, Hellenism quickly spread[7]. The reason for this can be attributed to the region's importance on trade routes. During the reign of the Greek kings of Greco-Bactria Diadotus, Euthydemus, Eucratides and Antimachus, these processes became especially active. The fact that there are many militants living in this country has accelerated this process. The emergence of the Greek state in the country partly led to the development of a slave economy. Many cities similar to the polis were built by Greek kings. Their construction combines Oriental and Greek building styles. Among such cities, the ruins of which are still preserved, we can mention Alexandria Oxiana (Oikhonim)[8], located in the north of Afghanistan. The discovery in this city of the remains of a theatre, palaestra, library, temple of the Greek gods and statues built over an area of over 400 hectares proves that it is a prime example of Hellenistic culture.

In addition to Aikhonim, traces of Greek culture can be seen in the cities of Kofirkala, Kholkhayon, Yerkurgan and Kanga. Images of Greek rulers are also minted on state coins, and on metal coins they are depicted with a large skill. In addition to the ruler, the coins also depict fictitious images of gods worshiped by the Greeks and mythological heroes. Thanks to this, we can say that the coins reflect examples of folk art and religious content. Hellenism also reflected a mixture of religious beliefs; the gods of Greece and Zoroastrianism were compared. For example, Ahuramazda was compared to Zeus, Anahita to Athena, and Mithra to Helios[9]. The discovery of fragments of a huge statue of Zeus at Aichonim, as well as the discovery of plaster molds suitable for making statues of the 12 gods of Olympus, prove how strongly the local

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population was influenced by Greek religious teachings.

Halls with columns - an introduction to the construction of colonnades; new styles in the layout of utility and administrative premises were also borrowed from the Greeks. In the Alexander Empire, and then in the anti-Hellenic states, the Greek language expanded its scope as the official language. In science and literature, Greek was recognized as the leading language. However, because of the Arabs, most of the written sources that should have served as clear evidence of our opinion have not reached our time.

The fact that many Roman soldiers captured as a result of the Parthian-Roman wars settled, started families and lived here has a positive effect on the development of Hellenistic culture in this country. The discovery of stone and pellet clay statues and the preservation of seals during excavations carried out at Nisa, the residence of the Parthian kings, is proof of the rapid development of relations in this country[10]. Luxurious marble statues depict gods. The discovery of the remains of statues of Aphrodite, Artemis and Athena is also a sign of strong religious influence. Parthian coins also depict Nike, Zeus, and later an eagle[11]. Coins with the image of Nike in a wreath on the king's head were also found in other countries of Central Asia. The core of the Kushan state was the territory of Bactria, one of the centers of civilization. Compared to other countries, there was a stronger synthesis of Greek and local culture.

CONCLUSION. Hellenistic culture was a vibrant and dynamic fusion of Greek and Eastern influences, driven by the conquests of Alexander the Great and the subsequent spread of Greek civilization. This work has explored the historical context, cultural synthesis, art and architecture, philosophy and science, literature and theater, and the lasting legacy of Hellenistic culture. The Hellenistic period stands as a testament to the cross-cultural exchange and the enduring impact of ancient Greece on the development of human civilization. Overall, the relationship between Greek and Eastern cultures has been marked by mutual influence, cultural exchange, and the creation of unique and vibrant artistic, intellectual, and religious traditions. It is a testament to the power of cross-cultural encounters in shaping the historical and cultural tapestry of the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond. A unique feature of this period was that Greek and local culture, mutually enriching each other, created a unique Hellenistic art.

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