

This paper will analyze the development and survival of a Greek identity in the alien region of Bactria following Alexander the Great's conquest and abandonment of the area.

The region of Bactria is a conundrum for anyone seeking to understand the history and character of the satrapy from the time of Alexander to the Greco-Bactrian fall in the second century. The land was considered the edge of the world, and the people there were lumped collectively with the "barbarians" of the Persian Empire, yet some of the most valuable stones and luxurious trade flowed west from its mines. The territory was allegedly beautiful, perfect for grazing, and rich in business potential, yet the Greeks and Macedonians stationed there fought twice to escape this paradise. These same Greeks, who were trapped by armies on all sides and forced to stay against their wishes, while trying to live in harmony with the barbarian locals, developed an epicenter for all things Greek long after the death of Alexander. The evidence of this Greek identity is found in the preservation of the Greek language, the foundation of Greek-style cities, and the depiction of Greek deities on coinage.

Relying on the historical work Frank Lee Holt and the archaeological contributions of Rachel Mairs, this paper will detail how the Greeks thought, lived and adapted during their exile. It will also explain how the Greeks were able to not only survive their Bactrian exile, but also eventually align with the surrounding peoples to form a cohesive hybrid identity and influence future generations ranging from the Hellenistic motherland, to the first emperor of China.

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