



Lost World of the Golden King: In Search of Ancient Afghanistan

By Frank L. Holt

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Drawing on ancient historical writings, the vast array of information gleaned in recent years from the study of Hellenistic coins, and startling archaeological evidence newly unearthed in Afghanistan, Frank L. Holt sets out to rediscover the ancient civilization of Bactria. In a gripping narrative informed by the author's deep knowledge of his subject, this book covers two centuries of Bactria's history, from its colonization by remnants of Alexander the Great's army to the kingdom's collapse at the time of a devastating series of nomadic invasions. Beginning with the few tantalizing traces left behind when the 'empire of a thousand cities' vanished, Holt takes up that trail and follows the remarkable and sometimes perilous journey of rediscovery.

Lost World of the Ancient King describes how a single bit of evidence—a Greek coin—launched a search that drew explorers to the region occupied by the tumultuous warring tribes of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Afghanistan. Coin by coin, king by king, the history of Bactria was reconstructed using the emerging methodologies of numismatics. In the twentieth century, extraordinary ancient texts added to the evidence. Finally, one of the 'thousand cities' was discovered and excavated, revealing an opulent palace, treasury, temple, and other buildings. Though these great discoveries soon fell victim to the Afghan political crisis that continues today, this book provides a thrilling chronicle of the search for one of the world's most enigmatic empires.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Holt has done a service in summarizing the scholarship about this outpost of Hellenism. Well written [and] of interest. . . . Recommended."

(K. W. Harl, Tulane University *Choice* 2013-04-19)

From the Inside Flap

"Delightful and learned, and written in a crisp and vigorous style, this book will be read with great interest and profit by both scholars and general readers."

—Stanley Burstein, author of *The Reign of Cleopatra*

About the Author

Frank L. Holt, Professor of History at the University of Houston, is the author of *Into the Land of Bones*, *Alexander the Great and the Mystery of the Elephant Medallions*, and *Thundering Zeus*, all published by UC Press.

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