

# Migration, Trade and Peoples

## PART 2: GANDHARAN ART

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# *Gandharan Art: Issues in North-Western Art and Iconography*

## PREFACE

The conference panel *Issues in North-Western Art and Iconography*, held during the Congress of the European Association of South Asian Archaeology in 2005 at the British Museum, focused on new discoveries, observations and thoughts about the historically rich area of Gandhara. All eight papers presented during this half-day session underlined and reinforced the well-known fact that the North West, especially during pre-Kushan and Kushan times, was a region where several cultures and civilizations encountered each other and interacted in vibrant ways. The iconography of the coinage, jewellery and relief sculpture, as analysed in the papers by K. Tanabe, M. Zin, C. Fabregues and M. Carter, show the deep cultural marks made by Buddhism in Gandhara. All the papers also emphasise that outside influences from Rome, Greece and other parts of the world shaped the representation of deities, as shown in my own paper, and influenced town planning, as pointed out by R. Maris in her study of Taxila. Revisiting excavations of the former century, as C. Schmidt has done for Sahri-Bahlol, and exploring the routes in the footsteps of the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hsien, as done by H. Tsuchiya, are necessary to understand the past of a region that is now a tragic theatre of international conflict.

New discoveries have, of course, been made since 2005 and another Congress of the Association held in Ravenna two years ago. Nevertheless, the articles published here constitute a valuable contribution and were enriched by enthusiastic discussions and stimulating questions raised at that time. I am most grateful to all the contributors and especially to the authors for their scholarly efforts and patience while this part of the Proceedings was being prepared.

Christine Fröhlich  
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# *A Study of some Deities in Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian Coinages*

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Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian dynasties, in North West India are often considered as a transitional period, between Alexander's followers, the Indo-Greeks, and the well known Kushans. Working on their history mainly means answering to crucial questions such as: when did they arrive in North Western India, in the beginning of the 1st c. BC? Who was Azes? When were the Indo-Parthians expelled by the Kushans from their kingdom? To answer these questions, the main historical source is, as for their predecessors, some few kharoshthi inscriptions and coins.

Thus the Indo-Scythians and the Indo-Parthians are best known through their coins and through their chronology – which is still very controversial. Yet if the chronology seems to be the heart of each and every study on the Indo-Scythians and the Indo-Parthians, it is striking to note that there are very few studies about their artistic production: indeed we know very few about their art, religion but much more about Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek towns, sculptures, etc. and about Kushan art. Studies about Kushan art or excavations in different parts of India or Pakistan are numerous but, apart from rare specific articles (See O. Bopparachchi and C. Sachs, 2001; C. Fröhlich, 2004), there are no analyses about the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period. An explanation of this lack is easy to find out: Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian issues are considered only as a mean to find BC and AD dates. However, beyond this purely chronological aspect, coin types are also an essential part of their civilization that we do not know in other respects. As any numismatist knows, the choice of a design on a coin is also a political choice, if not at least related to the cultural background of the rulers. Analysing coin types and their significance is thus also a historical process.

It is usually assumed that the Indo-Scythians and the Indo-Parthians copied the Indo-Greek coin types — and this is true in a certain extent. But the deities found on their coinage show that their art is at the crossroads of different influences: Greek, Iranian, Indian.

## **MAIN GREEK DEITIES ON COINS**

As said above, the Indo-Scythians and the Indo-Parthians took a good number of Greek deities from Indo-Greek coin types. The aim of this paper is not to deal with all the gods and goddesses appearing on Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian issues, as Athena, who is one of the favourite goddesses of these rulers. She is depicted exactly in the same way as on Indo-Greek issues: fully armed, with a shield, a spear and the Gorgoneion (See for example in Azes coinage M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 752; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 90). Yet, along with purely Greek gods, there are some deities which were inspired by Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek issues but

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which have their own specificity in Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian coinages.

As for Athena, Zeus is well represented on North Western Indian coinages. He is of course associated with Victory: on Amyntas issues, he is depicted throning, holding a Nike (See O. Bopearachchi, 1991: Amyntas, series 1-12). The very same type is to be found on Maues and Azilises issues (Maues, M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 712-713; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 2. Azilises: M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 773; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 30). The association of Zeus with kingship is obvious and the fact that Maues and later on Azilises chose to represent him on their coin obverses is significant. Zeus Nikephorus standing is a type repeated in Gandhara, probably specific to Taxila mint (See on this particular point J. Marshall, 1951: 129-131; G.K. Jenkins, 1957), throughout the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period. It is found on posthumous Azes issues (M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 856; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 105) and on Indo-Parthian issues (Abdagases: M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 1123; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 231; Sases: M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 1125; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 243). On these issues, Zeus clearly remains a Greek god, his depiction remains Greek.

But on some Maues copper coins, if Zeus is easily recognisable throning to the left, there is a specificity: Zeus' thunderbolt is personified (Fig. 2. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 723; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 19). The whole coin type is perfectly recognisable: the king of gods is seated on a throne, a sceptre resting on his left shoulder and his right hand on the shoulder of a small character. This character is inside rays which take the shape of Zeus' thunderbolt. As far as our knowledge goes, there is no such depiction of Zeus' thunderbolt in the Greek world, neither on Indo-Greek coinage: it is typical to Maues issue. Unfortunately, it is impossible to find out the origin of this peculiar depiction.

Less frequent than Zeus on Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian coinages, the twins, the Dioscouroi, are also a coin type taken from the Indo-Greeks by the Indo-Scythians. They are to be seen on Eucratides I, riding horses, side by side (O. Bopearachchi, 1991: series 1, 2, 4-8, 11, 19-21 and 25), and in the same position on Azilises silver issues (Fig. 1. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 773-775; R.C. Senior, 2001: types 30-31). Another coin type of Eucratides I repeated by Azilises finds a parallel in two relief pictures coming from the Swat valley and published by Gnoli in 1963: the twins are represented side by side, wearing their typical hat, the pilos, holding a spear and a sword on one side (O. Bopearachchi, 1991: Eucratides I, series 17; Azilises: M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 777-778; R.C. Senior, 2001: types 36-37. Relief pictures: G. Gnoli, 1963: 29-37 and figs. 1, 3, 8 and 9. The relief pictures published by Gnoli are interpreted in another way by M. Taddei, who suggests the two young men are Iranian deities. See M. Taddei, 1966: 85-88). The author dates both relief pictures from the Indo-Scythian period because of their similarity with Azilises coins. This similarity could reinforce the idea that the Indo-Scythians and later on the Indo-Parthians just retained Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coin types and repeated them.

## FROM POSEIDON TO SIVA

But one phenomenon suggests that this is a just a part of the truth. One can notice the same change in Poseidon depiction during the Indo-Greek, the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period. As Gnoli (Gnoli, 1963: 33-35) and Marie-Thérèse Allouche Le Page (Allouche Le Page, 1956: 145-151) have pointed out, the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period is a transitional one: Indo-Greek coin types were transmitted to (or modified by) the Kushans through Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian issues. Thus it is usually assumed that the main changeover, from a purely Greek deity to an Indian or Iranian god (if not a Kushan god), took place during the Kushan period.

Poseidon on North West Indian coinages is a good instance of such a changeover. On square copper issues of Maues and Azes (I), Poseidon appears standing, his left foot resting on a small character, which is identified as a River God. On Maues issues, Poseidon's left hand either makes a gesture (M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 718; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 25) or holds a palm (M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 731; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 24). In this last case, a small character emerging from the bottom of the coin also holds the palm's end. The identity of this character is so far unknown and finds no parallel in Greek or Indian art. On some coins, Poseidon holds a thunderbolt in his right hand and a trident in his left hand – it means that Zeus and Poseidon iconography are mixed up (M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 717; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 27). The coin type taken by Azes from Maues represents Poseidon holding a trident in his left hand and the right arm resting on his leg (Maues: M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 704 and 721; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 28. Fig. 3, Azes (I): M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 740; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 77) .

These coin types raise many questions: such depiction of Poseidon is unknown in the Greek world or in North West India. Of course, the confusion between Poseidon (the trident) and Zeus (the thunderbolt) was quite common and it is well known that their iconography is very closed (See for example the Zeus-Poseidon of Sounion Cape). But on some Maues issues, there are flames on the god's shoulders. This particular aspect reminds of some Iranian gods associated with fire. Concerning the River God emerging from the bottom of the coin, it was compared to the River God Orontos appearing at Antiocheia's personification feet in Greek and Roman pictures (See for example J.C. Balty, 1984: 840-851 and Tigranus II issues: SNG Syria, Seleucid kings , n. 435 pl. 12). The position of the River God is similar in both cases: he seems to be swimming. And, as Paul Bernard rightly pointed out (P. Bernard, 1994: 97), the worship of rivers in Central Asia is well attested. The Oxus statuette found at Takht-i-Sangin is a good data of this worship (B.A. Litvinskij and I.R. Pitchikjan, 1980: 129-131; P. Chuvin, 1999: 85 and fig. 119; P. Bernard, 1994: 97), even if the iconography of this River God, depicted as Marsyas, finds no parallel on Indo-Scythian coinage.

Nevertheless, the association of Poseidon, as it is depicted on Indo-Scythian issues, and the small river god is new. Furthermore one more detail distinguishes the Indo-Scythian River God from his Greek parallels: there are two horns in his hair. Such a depiction is also unknown. Thus it seems that the god depicted is not Poseidon as the Greeks used to worship and that he is peculiar to the Indo-Scythians.

Poseidon was of course also known on Indo-Greek coins: for example, on an Antimachus I silver issue, he is represented standing, holding a trident and a palm (O. Boppearachchi, 1991: series 1-4). This coin type does not appear as such on the Indo-Scythian coins but was chosen by Gondophares on some of his Gandharan issues (Fig. 4. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 1112 and 1116; R.C. Senior, 2001: types 216-217): the god is standing, holding the trident and gesturing. But is the god depicted still Poseidon? As it is well known, the trident is the principal attribute of Siva on Kushan coins (See for example Wima Kadphises gold issue: R. Göbl, 1984, type 80. Siva is represented standing in front of the bull). Beside, Siva's worship is attested in Gandhara before the Kushan period (J. Rosenfield, 1957: 93-94). So the god depicted on Gondophares issues could be either Poseidon or Siva. As J. Cribb has already suggested (E. Errington and J. Cribb, 1992: 87-88), the Indo-Parthian coin type is a good example of how the Greek iconography was adopted by Indian gods from the Indo-Greeks to the Kushans. Two different gods, one Greek and one Indian, were represented in the same way in a same area. But I would add one more suggestion: it seems that the Greek deities were emptied out from their original meaning during the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period. That means that the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian god on coins is no more Poseidon as the Greeks conceived him but not yet Siva as the Kushans used to worship him.

## HERACLES AND BUDDHIST DEITIES

Amongst all the Greek deities appearing on the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian coinages, there are two more examples which are significant in this particular point of view. Heracles, the semi-god, is reknown in Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coinages, as well as in small bronze sculptures (see some examples of bronze statuettes in E. Errington and J. Cribb, 1992: fig. 102-105. Some of these statuettes date from the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian period, ie 1st c. BC- 1st c. AD), and in stone sculpture (See fig. 5: a capital from the Indian Museum, Kolkatta, dating from the 2nd c. AD). Heracles crowning himself on Maues and Azilises issues is directly taken from the Indo-Greek coin type (Maues: M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 724; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 10. Azilises: R.C. Senior, 2001: type 44. Indo-Greeks: O. Boppearachchi, 1991: Demetrius I, series 1-3; Theophilus, series 5). But Heracles' iconography is very similar to Balarama as he is seen on Maues and Azes issues: as Heracles, Balarama holds a club and a part of a plough on his shoulder (Fig. 6, Maues. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 727; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 20. Azes (I): M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 742; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 78). Interestingly, on an Azilises copper coin (Fig. 7. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 787-788; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 39), Balarama also holds a Nike: thus the Indian deity holds a Greek goddess, meaning the victory, and generally associated with Zeus. The frontier between Greek and Indian deities as we consider it does not seem to be very clear. Greek iconography is taken by Indian gods as soon as the Indo-Scythian period (ie from the beginning of the 1st c. BC onwards). The same phenomenon is observable in sculptures later on, where Vajrapani has seized on Heracles appearance and lion skin: in Hadda stucco sculpture 2nd c. AD, Vajrapani, looking exactly like Heracles, but holding the vajra instead of the club, is seated near the Buddha (The sculpture was found in Tape Shotor, in the niche V2, during the excavations conducted by Z. Tarzi in 1974-1976. See Z. Tarzi, 1976 and for a specific study on Vajrapani-Heracles, Z. Tarzi, 2000. For a good series of photographs, see Afghanistan, 2002: 82).

## TYCHE ON COINS AND BUDDHIST RELIEF PICTURES

The last example of such a syncretism is to be found in Tyche evolution. The observations that will be done now are mainly due to the researches I made with my friend Magali Vacherot, and I would like to take this occasion to thank her for her large contribution to this paper.

Tyche is sometimes considered as a city goddess; the city goddess is indeed often depicted with Tyche features on Greek coins and sculptures from the 4th c. BC (See for example gold and silver issues of Demetrius I of Syria in Antioch, on which Tyche is represented holding a cornucopia and a sceptre, and wearing a himation: E.T. Newell, 1918: 34-43 and pl. 5-6). But Tyche is also the goddess of good (or bad) fortune, of abundance. If in the Greek world her attributes are various (it can also be a sceptre or a rudder), the North West Indian artists have retained the cornucopia and the polos, a high cylindrical hat, or the turreted crown. She is often chosen by the Indo-Greeks, from Eucratides I onwards (See for example O. Boppearachchi, 1991: Eucratides I, series 24, where the deity is here Kapisa city goddess). She is represented throning, holding a cornucopia on her left arm, as on Greek images. This type was adopted by the Indo-Scythians, from Azilises onwards (Azilises: M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 795; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 41. Azes (II): M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 831-832, 839; R.C. Senior, 2001: types 101, 112 and 123. Fig. 8, Posthumous Azes issues. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 873; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 139). The deity holding a cornucopia, symbol of fertility, appears also in sculptures in Gandhara and North West India generally speaking. A bronze statuette found in Taxila shows the same features: a cornucopia resting on her left arm and a polos on her hair

(J. Marshall, 1951, vol. I: 192 and vol. III: pl. 211, n. 1). She might be the same deity as on the Indo-Scythian coinage, as she was probably created during this period. The great archaeologist Alfred Foucher had already noticed in 1913 (A. Foucher, 1913: 123-138) that the goddess appearing so often in Gandhara art and handicraft was no more purely Greek, but not yet purely Indian: during the Kushan period, from the 2nd c. AD onwards, Hariti, the Indian goddess of fertility, is represented in sculptures with a polos and holding a cornucopia in her left hand and wearing a Greek himation — a long tunic tightened under her breast. So is represented the Tyche in Hadda, on the other side of the Buddha in the niche V2 (See Z. Tarzi, 1976: 381-410 and fig. 12-13; Afghanistan, 2002: 82. For a specific study see B. Rowland, 1966: 183-189). In sculptures, Hariti takes Tyche's iconography, even when she is seated near her partner Pancika. Relief pictures depicting the couple are numerous during the Kushan period (See for example a sculpture found in Takht-i-Bahi, dating from the 3rd c. AD: J. Rosenfield, 1957: pl. 78; E. Errington and J. Cribb, 1992: 134-135, n. 136). If Hariti's iconography becomes more and more complex, it seems, as for Poseidon, that her specificity comes from the Greek deity Tyche, who lost her Greek meaning during the Indo-Scythian period, ie during the 1st c. BC. Furthermore, the goddess holding a cornucopia on the Kushan coinage has also Iranian features: she is Ardoshsho, the goddess protecting the realm, the goddess of wisdom, wealth and fortune on Kanishka I and Huvishka's issues (R. Göbl, 1984, type 876).

As said above, Tyche was also considered as a city goddess. The personification of a city is common in Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period, in Antioch in the first instance. But there are traces of such a deification of a town during the Indo-Greek period: on a Eucratides I copper issue the goddess is clearly identified as the personification of Kapisi-Begram (O. Bopearachchi, 1991: Eucratides I, series 24: the goddess is clearly identified because her name is cited in the kharoshthi legend). The type was retained by Maues associated with Machene, on a rare silver issue (M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 736; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 4.1. This type was repeated by Maues alone: M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 714; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 3). But on the Indo-Scythian coinage, the turreted crown is not specific to the city goddess. Marie-Thérèse Allouche LePage and other scholars stated that the city goddess as she appears on the North West Indian coinages is directly stem from the Greek city goddess (Tarn, 1951: 353; Allouche Le Page, 1957: 135-136). According to them, this is a proof of the existence of polis — in the Greek acceptance — at least during the Indo-Greek period. But was there any city goddess during the Indo-Scythian period? Marie-Thérèse Allouche Le Page interpreted the goddess engraved on a rare Azes (II) copper issue as Pushkalavati city goddess, as she holds a lotus flower (Allouche Le Page, 1957: 134-137. Fig. 9. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 841; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 120). But it is more probable that the goddess here depicted is Lakshmi: she stands half naked, a hand on her hips and the other one in front of her face, holding a lotus flower. The general attitude of the goddess shares more similarities with Lakshmi, as she is found on some Azilises silver issue (M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 785-786; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 33), and later on the Satrap Rajuvula lead coins (M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 907; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 154. Rajuvula's son, Sodasa, also retained this coin type on copper issues: M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 908-909; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 156).

## TYCHE AND CITY GODDESS

Nevertheless, it is probable that the Tyche appearing on Azes (II) coinage and some other deities with a turreted crown might have been a city goddess. There is no data to prove or invalidate such an hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is certain that it is during the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period that the Tyche gave her iconography to the Indian city goddess: two relief

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pictures published by Gnoli in 1963 show that Tyche was not just a coin type: it also existed in sculpture (Gnoli, 1963: 30-31 and figs. 5 and 6. The author dates these sculptures from the 1st c. AD. Another example of a head with a turreted crown was found in Butkara I: see M. Taddei, 1964: 138 and pl. CDL). If B. Rowland noticed the similarity of the Indo-Greek Tyche and other Indo-Greek city goddesses with the Kushan Ardoksho and the Indian Hariti (B. Rowland, 1966: 183-189), he surprisingly forgot to observe the continuity during the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period — when she was emptied out from her first meaning.

Furthermore, the existence of a city goddess in North West India — and maybe only there — is strengthened by the representation of Kapilavastu as a woman wearing a turreted crown only on North West Indian relief pictures depicting the Buddha's Great departure. On a good number of relief pictures of Prince Siddharta's departure from his palace, Kapilavastu is depicted in different ways. On certain scenes, she flies in the sky amongst other deities, looking at the future Buddha, sometimes with columns coming out of her shoulders (See fig. 10: a relief picture found in Loriyan Tangai and kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkatta. A. Foucher, 1905: fig. 182). More frequently, she stands behind Prince Siddharta, resting on a column in an affliction attitude (See for instance a relief in the British Museum: W. Zwalf, 1996: 166-167 and fig. 176 in a private collection in Japan: K. Tanabe, 1993/1994: fig. 9). Less often, she seats on a throne behind the future Buddha, two columns springing out of her shoulders (See for instance a relief in the National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi: K. Tanabe, 1993/1994: fig. 24). Her expression of sadness, her affliction is typical of these relief pictures and the association with columns reinforce the link between the personification of a city (an Indian city) and the Greek Tyche. Kapilavastu crying during the Buddha's departure is described in the *Lalita Vistara* (Chap. 15. See Foucaux, 1884: 176-196). Her iconography (a turreted crown or a polos, a Greek himation) is directly inspired from the Indo-Greek, later Indo-Scythian goddess. The filiation between the Greek city goddess and Kapilavastu city goddess is very clear throughout the Indo-Greek, the Indo-Scythian and finally the Kushan periods.

### TYCHE AND KINGSHIP

Notwithstanding this evolution, there is another aspect of Tyche which shows that there was more than one influence in the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian engravers art. Tyche — or sometimes an apteros Nike — is directly associated with the kingship on Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian issues. In a very peculiar mint, Azilises and later the satrap Zeionises chose to represent Tyche either beside Zeus, holding a crown (Fig. 11. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 781-782; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 34), or crowning the king (or the satrap) himself (Fig. 12. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 881-882; R.C. Senior, 2001: types 132 and 135: here Tyche is holding a cornucopia and wearing a polos). This must be an Iranian influence, as some Gondophares issues suggest: Tyche (or more precisely an apteros Nike) is depicted crowning the mounted king (Fig. 4, obverse. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 1112; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 216). The Parthian influence of the khvareno, the heavenly light, which illuminates all the gods, but also princes, is obvious. She appears on Parthian coins (See for example Phraates III: D. Sellwood, 1980: 119 type 39). She is also represented in a very similar way on a relief picture in Bisutun, where a flying apteros Nike crowns the king Gotarzes (See. R. Ghirshman, 1961: 52). To the Greek iconography and function, one has to add the Indian concept and the Iranian filiation.

### OTHER UNIDENTIFIED GODS ON COINS

However, if Heracles, Poseidon and Tyche are good examples of the complex evolution and



set of influences, they also suggest that the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period should not be considered only as a transitional one. During those two centuries, coin types appeared that did not exist before and were not retained by the Kushans. Often, deities chosen by the kings are difficult to identify or to analyse.

Some gods and goddesses cannot be identified, but present Greek, Indian or Iranian characteristics. This is the case of a veiled deity holding a torch and wearing horns or a turreted crown on a Maues copper issue (Fig. 2, reverse. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 723; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 19). The difficulty of the identification of this goddess stands in the impossibility of deciding what is on her hair: it could be either horns or a moon crescent or a turreted crown. Her identity depends partly on this detail. R.B. Whitehead thought she was a city goddess with a turreted crown (R.B. Whitehead, 1914: 98); but she might also be a Night goddess if the object in her hair is interpreted as a moon crescent. On Azes (I) and Azilises silver issues, a woman is holding a lamp and a palm (Fig. 13. See Azes (I): M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 743-744; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 82. Azilises: M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 801-802; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 56). Her identity and more precisely the object she is holding in her right hand is very uncertain. Sir John Marshall thought it was a burning lamp (J. Marshall, 1951: 780 and 811). J. Rosenfield prefers to see in the lamp the symbol of the Iranian khvareno by comparison with the Kushan god Pharro (J. Rosenfield, 1967: 128 and 198). The rest of her iconography – her dress, the palm – is directly inspired by the Greek Nike. But she is not a Nike, nor an Indian or Iranian goddess. Also mysterious is the deity similar to Athena but wearing a turreted crown on a unique Azilises silver drachm (M. Mitchiner, 1976: type 780; R.C. Senior, 2001: type 35). Should we consider her as a city goddess because of her turreted crown? Or as Athena because of the shield, the spear and her himation? There are no decisive parallels for this picture. In any case, she is a good instance of the convergence of different influences, including a local or Indo-Scythian substratum that is unknown in other way. Finally two very similar deities, with a swollen scarf, holding either a garland or a wheel, appear on Maues and Azes (I) issues (Deity with garland: fig. 6. See M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 727 and 742; R.C. Senior, 2001: types 20 and 78. Deity with a wheel: M. Mitchiner, 1976: types 720 and 722; R.C. Senior, 2001: types 22-23). They reveal again the complexity of the Indo-Scythian coin iconography. Like on some sculptures of the teaching Buddha, the wheel might be the wheel of the Buddhist law – but it is unknown in the hand of a female deity. The wheel could also be interpreted as the Greek wheel of Nemesis, the Memory. But such a representation is also unknown in the Greek world. Thus if it is possible to find parallels for some details, it is not for the whole picture. In my point of view, these gods are the testimony of a purely Indo-Scythian (or Indo-Parthian) substratum. In fact, scholars are always looking for Greek, Indian or Iranian influences in the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian coins, because they are well known and because they do exist. But it was never thought that Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians have their own culture – which is still unknown.

Therefore it is obvious that the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian coinages are very rich in information about these two Nomadic dynasties in other terms than chronological questions. One has to remember that they were foreigners in North West India, as the Indo-Greeks and the Kushans were too. But they were also foreigners to the Indo-Greeks and to the Kushans.

If the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian period is indeed a transitional one, it is obvious, considering their coin art, that the syncretism observed during the Kushan times began under the Indo-Scythians and the Indo-Parthians. Greek, Indian, Iranian influences started being mixed up during the 1st c. BC and the 1st c. AD – and it is not only a phenomenon due to the Kushans. This shows the importance of those two centuries and the emergency to try to know more about the Indo-Scythian and the Indo-Parthian art and handicraft.

Finally, the Indo-Scythians and the Indo-Parthians had their own culture and the three cul-

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tures observed in their coin types are added to their own substratum — that we can suspect but that we do not know in other respects. This substratum is also visible in the legends and titles used by these kings and satraps, as well as in the monograms and mintmarks they used in a good number, which are very different from the Indo-Greek or from the Kushan systems — but this is a purely numismatist question and there is no place to deal with it in this paper.

FIGURES



FIGURE 1: AZILISES. ZEUS NIKEPHOROS/  
DIOSKOUROI. PRIVATE COLLECTION.



FIGURE 2: MAUES. ZEUS NIKEPHOROS/  
VEILED DEITY. ASHMOLEAN MUSEM,  
OXFORD.



FIGURE 3: AZES (I) POSEIDON/  
YAKSHI. FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM,  
CAMBRIDGE.



FIGURE 4: GONDOPHARES. KING MOUNTED  
ON HORSEBACK AND NIKE/  
SIVA. ASHMOLEAN MUSEM,  
OXFORD.



FIGURE 5: HERACLES. STONE., GANDHARA.  
2ND C. AD. INDIAN MUSEUM ; KOLKATTA.

A STUDY OF SOME DEITIES



FIGURE 6: AZES (I) BALARAMA/ DEITY WITH GARLAND. ASHMOLEAN MUSEM, OXFORD.



FIGURE 7: AZILISES. BALARAMA WITH NIKE/ DEITY . ASHMOLEAN MUSEM, OXFORD.



FIGURE 8: POSTHUMOUS AZES. KING MOUNTED ON HORSEBACK/ TYCHE. ASHMOLEAN MUSEM, OXFORD.



FIGURE 9: AZES (II)/ LAKSHMI/ BULL. ASHMOLEAN MUSEM, OXFORD.



FIGURE 10: THE GREAT DEPARTURE. STONE. FROM LORIYAN TANGAI. AFTER A. FOUCHER.



FIGURE 11: AZILISES. KING MOUNTED ON HORSEBACK/ TYCHE AND ZEUS. ASHMOLEAN MUSEM, OXFORD.



FIGURE 12: ZEIONISES. KING MOUNTED ON HORSEBACK/ NIKE CROWNING THE KING. ASHMOLEAN MUSEM, OXFORD.



FIGURE 13: AZES (I). KING MOUNTED ON HORSEBACK/ LAMP GODDESS. CABINET DES MÉDAILLES, PARIS.

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# *Vajrapāṇi in the Narrative Reliefs*

MONIKA ZIN

The following paper is a summary of a project I have been working on for two years, titled *Mitleid und Wunderkraft. Schwierige Bekehrungen und ihre Ikonographie im indischen Buddhismus* (= *Pity and Miracles. Difficult Conversions and their iconography in Indian Buddhism*). The main purpose of this endeavour, financed by the German Research Society (DFG), has been to analyse literary and pictorial representations of certain episodes in the life of the Buddha. All the episodes narrate incidents in which the Buddha converted, or rather tamed, violent and particularly stubborn individuals. Vajrapāṇi plays an important role in some of these stories.

The stories of conversions analysed in the book include narratives about the taming of evil godlings (Āṭavika, Hārītī, Apalāla, Black Snake from Rājagṛha), of the elephant Dhanapāla, and of the mass murderer Aṅgulimāla. There are also narratives about the conversion of the heretic Śrīgupta, of Brahmin Kāśyapas, and of Nanda, a person engrossed in the pleasures of a hedonistic life. These conversions are of considerable importance in the Buddha legend because all of them are difficult to bring about. The opponents of the Buddha in these episodes are represented as powerful antagonists: they are extremely dangerous, extremely cruel or extremely intelligent. Each conversion therefore confirms the Buddha's power and charisma.

In the episodes with evil individuals, the conversions are presented in a specific way. The attention given to the conversion of the individual is rather insignificant, given that this is the crux of the story from the point of view of Buddhist teaching. Instead the narratives focus on the people who benefit from the conversion of the malefactor and who will no longer suffer from the malefactor's negative actions. For instance, it is not important that Hārītī was saved and set on her way to nirvāṇa, what is of much greater importance in the story is that, thanks to her conversion, she will no longer kill the children of Rājagṛha (for summaries and analyses of texts and the list of known depictions cf Zin 2006: ch 2).

In these episodes, the Buddha is stylised as a protector of oppressed people. This role is frequently emphasised by the representation of the entreaties of the tormented people, asking the Buddha to save them from disaster. In such episodes, the Buddha plays the role of a saving hero which would more usually be fulfilled by a king. The authors of the texts, however, remind us that the fundamental task of the Buddha is the conversion of the malefactor rather than the relief of his or her victims. After hearing people's requests to help them in dealing with an evil individual, the Buddha often states, in dramaturgically improper moments, that the time has come for the malefactor to be converted and that therefore he is going to meet him/her. Immediately after the conversions, the former malefactors are venerated and the authors clearly seem to realise that the process of conversion requires a further explanation. They frequently incorporate additional motifs into the story, which explain the cruelty of the converted individual in terms



of their karmic past. For instance, in her previous life Hārītī was a pregnant woman who lost her child because of the actions of the citizens of Rājagṛha. The chain of cause-and-effect therefore starts prior to the events depicted in the conversion episode, and her present cruelty is just a reaction to the evil that she encountered before. Similar circumstances apply to the other malefactors. In his previous life, Aṅgulimāla died after 99 citizens had hit him with their fingers and so he now takes revenge on them, becoming a mass murderer and cutting off the fingers of his victims (for summaries and analyses of texts and the list of known depictions cf Zin 2006: ch 6).

The stories about conversions are based on narrative patterns known as *topoi*. Patterns of this kind are found throughout the world and include fable motifs, such as the monster that must be given a child every day to devour, the basilisk that kills with its looks, and the Sphinx and its riddles. In the conversion stories, the Buddha, as the hero, confronts a great evil and as a result the local population is liberated from a plague. The difference between these stories and other narratives of heroes delivering people from evil-doers lies in the fact that in the Buddhist stories the malefactor is not killed but converted. The Buddha counters his opponents with power that would be the envy of other heroes, that is, power combined with artfulness and magic. The power of the Buddha always overwhelms the power of evil; however, it is always, in a way, its counterpart. When the snake in the hermitage of Kāśyapa breathes out smoke, the Buddha breathes out smoke as well, when the snake emits fire, the Buddha enters a fire-meditation and defeats the snake (for summaries and analyses of texts and the list of known depictions cf Zin 2006: ch 8).

The profit gained from the conversion is the ultimate objective, and the end apparently justifies the means, even if these means break the existing rules of monastic life. Nanda is kept in the monastery against his will (for summaries and analyses of texts and the list of known depictions cf Zin 2006: ch 9); and violent individuals often receive no other choice than to take refuge in the dharma.

In the pictorial representations of the stories of conversions, Vajrapāṇi is usually present, and, importantly, he participates actively. Such scenes are rare. It is worth pointing out that the way in which we understand the figure of Vajrapāṇi nowadays, was by no means self-evident from the beginning. The person carrying a weapon near the Buddha has previously been interpreted as Devadatta (Grünwedel 1900: 84-92); as Māra (Burgess 1898: 30); as dharma, the third component of Buddhism, presented near the monks (*sangha*) (Vogel 1909); or as “Fravashi”, a Guardian Angel adopted from Zoroastrian religion (Spooner 1916). It is known from the research of Senart (1905), Foucher (1905-51 vol 2: 481ff), Lalou (1956) and, above all, Lamotte (1966) that Vajrapāṇi is a *yakṣa*, a protecting deity. Santoro (1979) interpreted Vajrapāṇi as a protector of legitimate kingship, while Tanabe (2004) took him for the equivalent of Hercules in his role as the guide and protector of the traveller. It is generally assumed that Vajrapāṇi was the Buddha’s guard.

Vajrapāṇi, who stands with his weapon next to the Buddha, does look like his bodyguard. The reliefs from Gandhara, in which scenes from the legend of Vajrapāṇi occur, enable us to investigate further. Vajrapāṇi is not present in the depictions of the Buddha’s childhood. Vajrapāṇi first appears in scenes of the Bodhisatva leaving his hometown of Kapilavastu and in scenes preceding his departure (for example, in the relief from the Private Collection in Japan, ill: Kurita 2003 vol 1 figure 134). From that time, Vajrapāṇi accompanies the Buddha and he appears for the last time in the scene of the Buddha’s death. The appearance of Vajrapāṇi, depicted as he is with a weapon, gives rise to the following question: whom exactly is Vajrapāṇi protecting? It is definitely not the Bodhisatva, if it were, Vajrapāṇi would have to appear by the Bodhisatva’s side in childhood; nor is it the Buddha, because in that case Vajrapāṇi would appear only after the Enlightenment. In fact, talking about protection at all (for instance the protection

in the wilderness after leaving Kapilavastu) is very risky. This is because common knowledge of the basic doctrine deems it to be impossible to wound or kill the Buddha, the Bodhisatva, or even his expectant mother.

From the point of view of Buddhist scholasticism, it is impossible to establish the reason for the appearance of Vajrapāṇi in the scene in which the Bodhisatva leaves Kapilavastu. The self-ordination of the Bodhisatva (by cutting his hair and accepting clothes from a hunter) provides a turning point in the attempt to explain the presence of the perpetual acolyte, but the leaving of Kapilavastu is only the moment when the Bodhisatva decides to abandon the possible role of the cakravartin king, the king of the turning wheel, for the sake of the role of the Buddha. The appearance of Vajrapāṇi at this exact moment may be connected with the Bodhisatva's decision to a certain degree, but understanding the connection is by no means an easy task. The Bodhisatva renounces the role of the cakravartin, instead he chooses the road that will lead him to Sarnath where he will turn the wheel, the dharmacakra (the Buddha after the Enlightenment would frequently call himself "dharmarāja" ie Lalitavistara XV, ed: 214; trad: 189). The only person apart from the Buddha who has a personal yakṣa is the cakravartin king Māndhātara. His yakṣa, Divaukasa, suggests the targets of his next conquests (for the Māndhātara story cf Zin 2001).

In the Buddha legend, Vajrapāṇi only actively protects the Buddha once. This is when Devadatta throws a rock at the Buddha from above and Vajrapāṇi crushes it into little pieces with his vajra (for various versions of the story cf Bureau 1991; Zin 2005). However, this example is not very telling; it is necessary to the story that the stone is crushed, because legend has it that a little splinter hurt the Buddha's toe. Vajrapāṇi is the only one who could crush the stone with his weapon. Moreover, it is yakṣa Kumbhīra rather than Vajrapāṇi who dies as the result of Devadatta's assault, so it is not Vajrapāṇi who protects the Buddha.

Vajrapāṇi first appears in art at the end of the 2nd century, in Gandhara, Mathura and Amaravati (see British Museum, no BM 11, ill: Barrett 1954, plate 29). Vajrapāṇi appears in the depictions of the stories of conversions in Gandhara and in some reliefs in Nagarjunikonda and Goli. In a relief from Goli, now in the Metropolitan Museum (no 30.29), which depicts the conversion of Nanda, Vajrapāṇi accompanies the Buddha through the streets of Kapilavastu. He is also present during Nanda's acceptance into the monastery and takes part in the episode in which the Buddha takes Nanda to heaven to cure him of his attachment to his wife by showing him divine damsels (Figure 1). In this episode it is suggested that Vajrapāṇi has a theriomorphic character: his hair is combed in the form of animal's ears which are sticking up. This relief is the only one, to the best of my knowledge, which portrays Vajrapāṇi in this way. Vajrapāṇi is not mentioned in any literary versions of the Nanda story and his appearance in the relief may have a special meaning related to the theme of conversion.

In Gandhara, Vajrapāṇi is, in fact, very frequently represented, and depictions of him are not restricted to the scenes of conversion. In the depictions of conversions, in which Vajrapāṇi does not participate actively, Vajrapāṇi is sometimes shown looking in a completely different direction, possibly suggesting that the Buddha does not need any protection (Figure 2). In his role as a passive companion of the Buddha, the manner in which Vajrapāṇi holds the vajra is significant. The vajra is not held aloft and, in most cases, it is in his left hand. The contrary iconography – vajra in the right hand, held over the head – signals the active participation of Vajrapāṇi in the plot. This is apparently an important sign in visual language: already in Ṛgveda Indra is described as vajradakṣiṇa (with the vajra in his right hand) before the assault at Vṛtra (I 101 1; X 23 1). The anthems also include requests to Indra to take the vajra in his right hand (VI 18 9; VI 22 9), that is, to go and fight.

In literature, Vajrapāṇi has an active role in stories of conversions, and in episodes in which terror is instilled into those who are disobedient. His most famous performance is during the

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FIGURE 1: GOLI, NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NO 30.29, AFTER RAO 1984: 435-39.



FIGURE 2: GANDHARA (CHATPAT), CHAKDARA MUSEUM, 134, PHOTO © WOJTEK OCZKOWSKI.

conversion of nāga Apalāla (for summaries and analyses of texts and the list of known depictions cf Zin 2006: ch 3). The story is related to the series of conversions in Gandhara, during which the Buddha managed to convert 7, 700,000 beings. The Buddha's journey to Gandhara, accompanied by Vajrapāṇi, is described in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*. This is preserved in the Gilgit Manuscripts as well as in Tibetan and Chinese translations (trad in: Przyłuski 1914). Five conversions are described here in detail, among them the taming of the malevolent nāga Apalāla. The king of Magadha Ajātaśatru asks the Buddha to tame this nāga, who damages crops by sending bad weather. The Buddha, accompanied by Vajrapāṇi, goes to Gandhara to deal with this problem. Apalāla becomes furious, rises into the air and continuously flings hail and pieces of ground at them. The Buddha enters into the meditation of love (*maitrisamādhi*), as a result of which hail and pieces of ground turn into sandal and other fragrances. The nāga

throws various kinds of weapon at the Buddha but they change into lotuses. The nāga sends a cloud of smoke and the Buddha responds with the same; he also sends a cloud of smoke. Seeing that, a furious and conceited nāga withdraws to his palace. Then the Buddha decides to threaten Apalāla seriously and orders Vajrapāṇi to attack him. Vajrapāṇi breaks off the top of the mountain using his vajra and it falls down into the lake of the nāgas, filling it completely. The Buddha enters the fire-meditation and fills the shores of the lake with flames, so that the only cool place remains at his feet. Apalāla, who has no other choice, kneels in front of the Buddha and asks why the Buddha hates him so much. The Buddha answers with a question; how could he as a dharmarāja hate anybody? Placing his hand on the nāga's head, the Buddha says that if the nāga quits his evil deeds, he will achieve a life in Trayastrimśa heaven. The nāga, together with his family, takes refuge in the Three Jewels. Vajrapāṇi and the Buddha leave Apalāla no choice but to convert when they damage the lake and set everything on fire. While Apalāla's conversion is clearly beneficial for his victims, the greatest benefit is to Apalāla himself as he only has to wait for a series of rebirths that will lead him to nirvāṇa.

In the scenes of the conversion of Apalāla found in Gandhara, Vajrapāṇi is frequently depicted in two different ways. In one, he is positioned near the Buddha with the vajra in his left hand. In the other, he has the weapon lifted up in his right hand and, hanging out of the rocks, he threatens the terrified family of Apalāla (Figure 3; in especially elaborate reliefs, the artists depicted the landscape with animals and a hunter [cf a relief from Barikot in Swat, ill: Kurita 2003 vol 1 figure 637]). Vajrapāṇi is quite often shown flying (Figure 4). In several reliefs, like in one from Sanghao Vajrapāṇi jumps from one rock to another while the nāgas flee the lake whose



FIGURE 3: GANDHARA, PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO 336 N.N. 98,  
PHOTO © WOJTEK OCZKOWSKI.

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shores are sprouting flames (Bombay, Prince of Wales Museum, no 17, ill ie Foucher 1905-51, figure 274; Moti Chandra 1974, figure 35). A particularly detailed relief in Calcutta (Indian Museum, no A 23 4575, ill: Kurita 2003, figure 456) even shows the lake with its burning shores completely filled with rocks, as it is written in the text. The lake is sometimes represented with water flowing out of it (Lucknow State Museum, no G 47 109, ill: Joshi and Sharma 1969, figure 20) – the nāgas as water creatures cannot live without it. Another representation of it is as a well with an outlet in the form of a lion’s head taken from classical art (about this *siṃhamukha* motif, as the origin of the so-called *Kīrtimukha* ornament cf Zin 2003: no 10).

The story of the conversion of Apalāla is also depicted in Nagarjunikonda (ill: Rosen Stone 1994, figure 211, 218-20). It is shown in three very similar reliefs. As with the journey of the



FIGURE 4: GANDHARA, PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO 428 N.N. 95, PHOTO © WOJTEK OCZKOWSKI.

Buddha to Gandhara, it is the version known nowadays from the vinaya of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* that must have served as a literary basis because the story is unknown in Pali literature. *Vajrapāṇi* is presented only once: he is in a dynamic pose having thrown the *vajra*, and is standing with his back to the spectators (Figure 5). The depiction of the *vajra* is unsymmetrical which must mean that the weapon is stuck in the rock.

The image of *Vajrapāṇi* throwing his weapon is encountered in some reliefs depicting another conversion, that of the evil yakṣa *Āṭavika* (for summaries and analyses of texts and the list of known depictions cf Zin 2006: ch 1). This story is less well-known and is preserved in no more than a dozen depictions, found in Gandhara and Central Asia. The primary motif of the story, the dialogue between the Buddha and yakṣa, is very old and already present in the *Suttanipāta* and the *Samyuttanikāya*. The developed versions of the narrative are preserved in numerous later versions; none of these, however, constitute a coherent story. The original narrative is no longer preserved. It does, however, seem to be depicted in reliefs. The reliefs correspond most closely to the version from T 212 and T 203, the commentaries on *Udānavarga*



FIGURE 5: NAGARJUNIKONDA, NAGARJUNIKONDA MUSEUM, PHOTO © MONIKA ZIN.

(trad Huber 1906 and Chavannes 1910-34 vol 3: 94-98). Both texts mention the parents who are depicted in the reliefs. However, the versions in T 212 and T 203 do not narrate all the episodes, so in order to understand the narrative, one must also resort to other texts. The story of the fight between the Buddha and Āṭavika is known in Pali and Tibetan and, in addition, from a manuscript in Old-Turkish. The story of yakṣa Āṭavika is as follows: everyday the citizens of a particular town send a man to be devoured by yakṣa Āṭavika; the monster eats the person he is offered but does not devour the rest of the people (in Pali: but does not devour the king). One day this fate touches the son of a citizen who decides to call the Buddha for help. When the desperate parents bring their child to the yakṣa (in Pali: the prince, as the very last child in the kingdom is brought by the soldiers), the Buddha states that the time has come for Āṭavika to be converted. When the Buddha comes to the yakṣa's dwelling place, the yakṣa is not there, but when he returns and sees the Buddha on his throne, he becomes furious. Flames belch from his eyes and he grasps various types of weapons, however, the flames are put out and his weapons come apart. Āṭavika threatens to drive the Buddha mad, and then to catch him by his feet and throw him over the Himalayas if he fails to answer certain questions. The Buddha replies that it is impossible to do him any harm but he agrees to answer Āṭavika's questions; as the result of his answers, Āṭavika is converted and returns the child. The reliefs from Gandhara show the child's parents – the mother's loose hair indicates her grief – on one side of the Buddha (cf Kurita 2003, figure 343-47). On the Buddha's other side is Āṭavika, after his conversion, bringing the boy back. In the unpublished relief from Peshawar the scene is laid out in a similar way – the doorkeeper of yakṣa, who is mentioned in the texts, is on one side of the Buddha (Figure 6). In the upper part of the Peshawar relief, however, something new appears: there is a fight taking place between two flying individuals. In the context of our story, it might be the fight between

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Āṭavika and Vajrapāṇi which is not described in any of the preserved texts. Other reliefs depict the scene going on over people's heads. In a relief from Calcutta it is possible to identify the person throwing the stone, despite a poor state of preservation of this piece – this is Āṭavika (relief from Jamalgarhi, Indian Museum, no G 21 (A23284) ill: Foucher 1905-51 vol 1 figure 253; Kurita 2003 vol 1 figure 345). The assault of Vajrapāṇi on Āṭavika also seems to be depicted in one relief in the Peshawar Museum (Figure 7). On the right-hand side, Āṭavika is bringing a boy to the Buddha, while on the left-hand side, a yakṣa-like person holds an unusual round object in his right hand. In my opinion, this is Vajrapāṇi with the vajra, shown from an extremely untypical perspective, that is, from the bottom.



FIGURE 6: GANDHARA, PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO 1.L, PHOTO © WOJTEK OCZKOWSKI.



FIGURE 7: GANDHARA (SAHRI BAHLLOL), PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO 471, PHOTO © WOJTEK OCZKOWSKI.

The vajra is depicted in this way very rarely: one instance of this perspective is found in the beautiful relief in the Victoria and Albert Museum (no IS 78-1948, ill: Ackermann 1975, plate 35; Kurita 2003 vol 1 figure 374). This shows two scenes: the conversion of Nanda and the conversion of the heretic Śrīgupta.

If there is a correspondence between representations of Vajrapāṇi participating actively in events and the stories of conversions, it is worthwhile considering his role and the meaning of the vajra in the Buddha legend. The two oldest references to Vajrapāṇi in literature (*Majjhimanikāya* ed vol 1: 231-32; transl: 285; *Dīghanikāya* ed vol 1: 95; transl: 117) are very telling about his character. One reference is the story preserved in Pali as well as in 'northern' sources about the encounter between the Buddha and a certain young Brahmin Ambaṭṭha (Sk Ambāṣṭha); in the *Majjhimanikāya* about a nirghranthaputra, that is Jaina. Ambāṣṭha and the nirghranta do not answer the Buddha's questions. Ambāṣṭha knows the answer, but he is in a quandary: if he gives the answer, he will con-

tradict his earlier argument and lose face in front of the Brahmins who are present. The text relates that, when Ambāṣṭha keeps stubbornly silent, Vajrapāṇi stands above him with the vajra and threatens to crush his head into seven pieces. Ambāṣṭha finally gives the answer because of this appearance by Vajrapāṇi (the threat to crush the malefactor's head into seven parts is also uttered by Indra [Jātaka 519, ed vol 5: 91, gāthā; transl: 50; about the motif of the shattered head cf Witzel 1987]). In the Mahāyāna-Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra (Lamotte 1966: 120) the monk Kāśyapa asks the Buddha how the doctrine of love towards all creatures can be reconciled with Vajrapāṇi's violent act, had he crushed the head of a young man. The Buddha explains that what Kāśyapa sees is a vision (nirmāṇa). However, the story proves that Vajrapāṇi's weapon was understood not only as a pure threat but also as a weapon capable of causing real harm. The story of Ambāṣṭha has not been identified among the reliefs in Gandhara. However, I believe that it is found in Kizil in Central Asia. In two of the paintings in Kizil, which are known from the drawings by Grünwedel (Grünwedel 1912, figure 353) (Figure 8), Vajrapāṇi is standing holding the vajra over the head of a young Brahmin who is surrounded by his colleagues.



FIGURE 8: KIZIL, HÖHLE 207 (MALERHÖHLE) = GRÜNWEDEL 1912, FIGURE 353.

As far as I know, Vajrapāṇi – apart from smashing the rock flung by Devadatta and the stories about threatening the disobedient beings – does not appear in the older literature. However, the reliefs from Gandhara and the paintings from Central Asia show him hundreds of times. In the scenes with the heretics, Vajrapāṇi is quite often depicted with the raised vajra and he seems to participate in events (ie Kizil Cave 80 ill: Xu 1983-85 vol 2 figure 46). He is not, however, mentioned in the texts, as if his presence in such situations was obvious for everyone.

So, what is the vajra? What is the object that Vajrapāṇi raises to strike horror into those who are disobedient to the Buddha's teaching. In the Veda, 'vajra' means thunderbolt and it is Indra's weapon. In the Vedic texts there are descriptions which enable us to make assumptions about the appearance, material and function of the vajra. From these descriptions it seems certain that the authors described Indra's particular metal weapon and not a mythological phenomenon. It is said that the vajra is made of metal, that its blade can be sharpened, that it is flung, that it revolves, and that it makes a noise while flying. Three types of artefacts are preserved from the Copper Hoard Culture (CHC), all of which have been identified as the vajra from Ṛgveda. These are the so-called harpoon (Rau 1973), an anthropomorphic figure (Das Gupta 1975) and a bar-celt (Falk 1993). Falk's identification of the vajra as a bar-celt seems to be the right one; the Avestan word vazra means a 'hammer'.

However, what is true for the Vedic epoch is not necessarily applicable to Buddhism. There is an enormous gap between CHC and the first depictions of the vajra in art of the 1st c BC. None of the three objects from CHC resembles the Buddhist vajra, as none of them is symmetrical. It seems that, by the time the vajra started to be represented in reliefs, there was no memory



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of the shape of a Vedic weapon. The oldest vajras are represented in Sanchi I (Sanchi I, Eastern gateway, ill: Marshall and Foucher 1940 vol 2 plate 49) and Sanchi III (Sanchi III, gateway, ill:

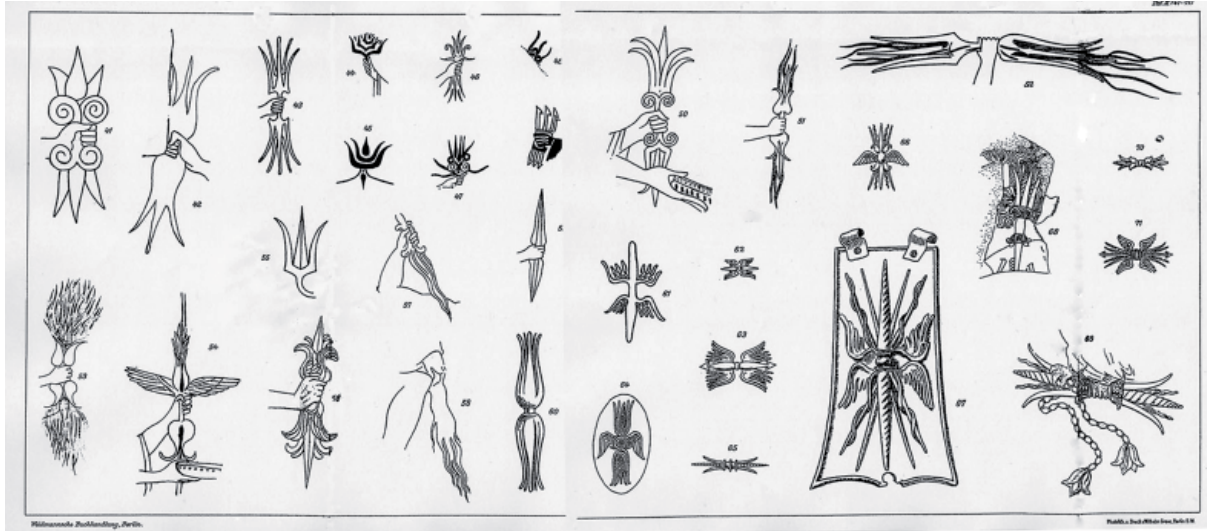


FIGURE 9: = JACOBSTHAL 1906, TAFEL 1.

ibid vol 3 plate 96). Several generations later, in Mathura, the vajra is depicted in three sculptures of Indra (Mathura Government Museum, no 00E24, ill: Vogel 1930, plate 38b; Lucknow State Museum, no B19, ill: Sharma 1995, figure 152). From these it is clear that the appearance of the vajra was not yet normalised, however, it was always a symmetrical object from which prongs come out in each direction. The further development of the form of the vajra in the hand of Indra, Vajrapāṇi, or later tantric deities, can be easily investigated on the basis of hundreds of preserved examples. In the paintings in Ajanta, it may be seen that the prongs actually correspond to rays. These are difficult to represent in stone (Zin 2003: no 43). Comparative research carried out during the 19th and early 20th centuries (see Jacobsthal 1906) discovered a striking resemblance between the weapon of Zeus, the keraunos, and Asian representations of the thunder weapon (Figure 9). These include the Indian and Tibetan vajras. Today, after 100 years, the accuracy of that comparative research must be confirmed: the Indian vajra does correspond to the keraunos. There is no other object which is symmetrical and has rays, which could be compared to Indra's weapon. The iconography may have been transported via coins and small objects of art. The loan is a very apt one: the keraunos of Zeus corresponds to Indra's weapon in most essential details. The difference lies in the fact that the keraunos only has a mythological meaning – as lightening in the hand of the God of Heaven – and does not have a material existence as a particular metal weapon, capable of being sharpened and so on. The keraunos is an object which produces heavenly fire and, it is depicted as such in art. In artistic representations, Zeus holds an object in his hand from which flames emanate. It is written in the Veda that the vajra shone while it was flying and also, that it could burn the enemy (Ṛgveda VII 104 4, cf Das Gupta 1975: 40), these, however, are apparently metaphoric expressions, as nothing is said about flames or fire. In Buddhist tradition, Indra raises the burning weapon over the malefactor (jalita ayakūṭa: Jātaka no 347 ed vol 3: 146 transl: 96-97). Likewise, Vajrapāṇi holds the vajra while he is standing above Ambāṣṭha and it is described as flaming, blazing and burning. Paintings from Central Asia, which in my opinion depict this story (Figure 8), show fire falling from the vajra. Thus the Buddhist vajra is not a particular weapon; rather it is a mythological object

producing flames. It is represented with the same form as the keraunos, with two exceptions: the image in Gandhara and a painting in Kizil that copied Gandhara.

It is precisely in Gandhara, where the contacts with Mediterranean art were the strongest, that this form of the vajra is unknown. The representation of Vajrapāṇi is also different here, as it is commonly acknowledged, and a lot has been written about what it shares with the iconography of Heracles (Vogel 1909; Flood 1989; Santoro 1991; Carter 1995; Schwab 1998). The Indian loan from Greek culture is again wise: Heracles – like Vajrapāṇi in the stories of conversion – is a hero with especially difficult tasks. The iconography of Vajrapāṇi wearing a lion's skin headdress makes it impossible to tell him apart from Heracles sometimes (ie the sculpture from Swabi, ill; Kurita 2003 vol 2 figure 919). This is unless he appears with the vajra, which is very different from Heracles' club (cf ie the Vajrapāṇi from the Kamakura Collection, ill: Sérinde, Terre de Bouddha, figure 75). The club is never symmetrical and looks like what it is, namely the irregular bough of a tree, often reinforced with stones or teeth. The Gandharan vajra, on the other hand, is always symmetrical and has a concave part in the centre. In well-crafted reliefs that are in a good state of preservation, it is possible to see that the sidewalls of the object are joined, creating sharp blades. There may be four or more of these sidewalls; if they are numerous, the bottom of the vajra takes the shape of a circle. Sometimes the top and bottom parts are depicted as the polished edges of a jewel. These precise representations of the vajra allow us to exclude the possibility that it is simply a form of the keraunos.

Indeed, I can only think of one explanation for the form of the vajra in these representations. The weapon of the Gandharan Vajrapāṇi derives from a different meaning of the word vajra; it is not a thunderbolt but a diamond. This meaning of the word 'vajra' is unknown in Vedic literature, but it does appear in the epics. In the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, the authors seem to describe the vajra like fire like (Mahābhārata V 9 22 transl: 203), like the vajra of hundred segments (Rāmāyaṇa I 45 18 transl: 212), a vajra which must be made from bones of the demon Dadhica is described like large, sharp, six-cornered, and with a terrifying sound (Mahābhārata III 98 10ff transl: 417) – but the references probably only repeated set epithets. The word 'vajra' is used in the epics for Indra's weapon, and in epithets of Indra, such as vajrapāṇi, vajrahasta or vajradhara are used repeatedly. The vajra is also encountered, however, meaning a diamond. In the Mahābhārata (II 27 26 transl: 82), it is mentioned in a list of "priceless gems and pearls, gold, silver, vajras and precious coral". In other places in epic literature, like in the Rāmāyaṇa (III 53 8 transl: 203), we find a reference to pillars ornamented with gold, silver, vajra and beryl, and also, (III 11 29 transl 113) to Viṣṇu's bow being inlaid with gold and vajra. In the epic poem it is used in a simile – as hard as vajra. This is written of the claws of Garuḍa (Mahābhārata I 218 20 transl: 156), and of someone's hands (Rāmāyaṇa I 39 18; transl: 99).

In the Buddhist texts vajra (Pali: vajira) is understood as referring to Indra and Vajrapāṇi's weapon, but 'vajra' also means a precious stone. In the Milindapañha (ed: 267; transl vol 1: 85), like in Mahābhārata, vajra is listed among other precious stones. This meaning also appears in later literature, like in the Commentary to Dhammapada (I 387 transl vol 2: 61), where the teeth of a beautiful girl are compared to a necklace made of vajra. The definition of vajra as the hardest element has been present since the epoch of canonical literature as can be seen from the following references (Dhammapada 161 ed: 45-46 transl: 45): "evil crushes the foolish like a vajira breaks a precious stone", in the Milindapañha (ed: 278; transl vol 2: 100): "owing to its exceeding sharpness vajira cuts precious gems, pearls and crystals". Only once is it suggested that there is something better than vajira: (Milindapañha ed: 118; transl vol 1: 165-66: "there are numerous stones from the ground, sapphire, emerald, lapis lazuli, vajira '...' but the Jewel of a cakravartin (cakkaratimaṇi) shines most brightly". Thus the understanding of vajra as a diamond was common and well known in the times of the art of Gandhara.

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Precious stones were presented as crystals in art. They may be observed in the example of depictions of the cakravartin king. In Amaravati, Mathura, Gandhara and Central Asia, his maṇiratna has the shape of a crystal with at least four walls with clearly marked edges (Zin 2003: 357, for Mathura Sanghol: Gupta 1987, figure 15; for Gandhara: Nishoika 2001, plate 1; Gandhara 2009, p.311, figure 6). From the stone, rays or flames often flare out. The similarity



FIGURE 10: GANDHARA PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO 1858,  
PHOTO © WOJTEK OCZKOWSKI.

of the Gandharan vajra to the representations of precious stones is considerable; the difference lies in the concave part which allows the vajra to be held in the hand. This relates to the shape of the vajra since first depictions at Sanchi.

In the Pali version of the Ambāṣṭha story there is a reference to a burning metal prong (*ādipta ayaḥkuṭa*), whereas in the same place in Sanskrit and Tibetan, a metal prong is not mentioned at all. Instead, the description is confined to a stereotypical image of the vajra as fire: vajra, flaming, blazing, burning, becoming a single flame (*vajram ādiptaṃ pradīptaṃ samprajvalitaṃ ekajvālībhūtaṃ Ambāṣṭhasya mānavasopari murdhino dhārayati*). The meaning of vajra as an object made of metal is not documented here.

In the art of Gandhara, the vajra is depicted with the meaning of a ‘diamond’ (Figure 10). The form of the Gandharan vajra failed to survive; however, the meaning of adamantite weapon which was depicted would become obligatory for the centuries which followed and would gain a philosophical meaning as the object crushing all obstacles and the very essence of the Buddhist teaching. Also, the Gandharan Vajrapāṇi, with his aggressive attitude towards stubborn candidates to conversions, is, beyond any doubt, a predecessor of the later vajra-bearer,

Dharmapālas. But perhaps something is depicted in Gandhara which we do not understand. The jewel-carrying person next to the Buddha, who appears when the Buddha leaves Kapilavastu and starts on his way to turn the dharmacakra, and who is especially active when the Buddha helps people tormented by monsters, may have a lot in common with the representations of the cakravartin king and his maṇiratna.

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# *Reliefs and Stelae from Sahrī-Bāhlol: a Typological Study*

CAROLYN WOODFORD SCHMIDT

## **INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL**

While almost one hundred and fifty years have passed since the publishing of the first report on the major Buddhist communities at Sahrī-Bāhlol, that by Dr. H. W. Bellew in 1864, the site remains one of the least well-understood complexes of the Greater Gandhāran Buddhist tradition. At the same time, the relative importance of Sahrī-Bāhlol to the history of Buddhism and its artistic legacy is unquestioned, attested by numerous well-known and widely published images, including the earliest extant examples of the use of colossal scaling for independently sculpted images of Buddhas and the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Sahrī-Bāhlol's significance is further demonstrated by numerous life-size images of Bodhisattvas including the enigmatic Bodhisattva image-type, which bears a wreath in his proper left hand (see *Annual Reports, Archaeological Survey of India, Frontier Circle, photographic records for years 1906-1912*; Tissot 1985: 575-79; Schmidt 2005: vol 2, 637-47). In addition to these extraordinary carvings, there is a relatively large corpus of formally ordered stelae, which is the subject of this essay and exemplified by Figure 4. With their permanent visual records of stylistic change and iconographic programming, the stelae in this corpus provide a wealth of evidence of major developments that is largely absent from other sites in the northwest. The evidence includes many examples that are fundamentally related to the *trikāya* (three bodies or three-fold nature of Buddhas) system, suggesting the site was a center for emerging Mahāyāna practices and beliefs. Moreover, provenance for these sculptures, a factor essential to research, is fixed absolutely.

### *SITE OF SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL*

Since the earliest phases of exploration, it has been abundantly clear that the large site of Sahrī-Bāhlol, located approximately seven miles northwest of Mardan and two and one-half miles south of the Takht-i-Bāhī hill range, had been an important Buddhist center in ancient times (Figure 1). In an early assessment, Sir Alexander Cunningham suggested that the site had been first inhabited at the beginning of the second millennium BCE, and had remained desirable for settlement and resettlement over the centuries due to inundations by floodwaters from the Murdara Stream, assuring agricultural fertility. In the middle of the 19th century, the centrally located village mound covered approximately twenty-four acres (Tissot 1985: 569-577 citing Bellew 1864 and Cunningham 1875). Visible across a landscape of cultivated fields, but within a radius of approximately one mile from the village, were numerous secondary mounds of varying sizes (Figure 3; Stein 1911-12: pt 1, iv).



## RELIEFS AND STELAE FROM SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL

### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CHINESE BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE REPORTS*

Unfortunately, neither the efforts of Bellew and Cunningham, nor the results of subsequent surveys and the excavations by Dr. D. B. Spooner and Sir Aurel Stein of eight additional mounds, once the locations of vibrant Buddhist communities, proved definitive (Stein 1911-12: pt 2, 10). Given the lack of stratification details, it is not surprising that the structural remains, inscriptions on potsherds, and the recovered coins, dating from the turn of the common era to the 10th century, offered no clear evidence as to the relative dates for the construction of, or for subsequent changes to, these Buddhist complexes (Spooner 1910: pt 2, 21-27; Stein 1911-12: pt 1, iii, v and pt 2, sec 5, 9-14). It appeared likely that some installations fell into ruin more than once prior to abandonment. According to the *Archaeological Survey of India*, Stein report for the 1911-12 season, reliefs and images were frequently found in positions inconsistent with an original installation. Evidence of certain locations having been used, subsequent to their construction, as repositories for miscellaneous statues and reliefs from the same or a neighboring complex was also forthcoming (Figure 3; Stein 1911-12: pt 2, sec 5, 10-11). The diversity in style, materials, subject matter, and of refinement in sculpting suggest that the sanctuaries were founded at different times and that the length of occupation varied (Schmidt 2005: 637-38 citing Spooner 1910: pt 2, 21-27; Stein 1911-12: pt 1, iii and pt 2, sec 45, 9-14; Tissot 1985: 568-76).

The difficulties associated with evaluating the original survey documents have been highlighted by the extended efforts of Francine Tissot, as summarized in her series of reports published in the proceedings of four South Asian Archaeology conferences from 1983 to 1993 (see Tissot 1985: 567-616; 1989: 417-25; 1990: 737-64; 1994: 733-44). Also difficult to evaluate, but of interest to this topic, are early Chinese Buddhist pilgrimage accounts of a town positioned some distance to the northeast of Peshawar on the central plain of Gandhāra. Elizabeth Errington, in her 1994 article, 'In Search of Pa-lu-sha,' presents a persuasive argument for identifying Sahrī-Bāhlol as the community Fo-sha-fu or Pa-lu-sha described respectively by the famous pilgrims Sung-yün for CE 519-520 and Hsüan-tsang for CE 632. Sahrī-Bāhlol appears to be the only town to the northeast of Peshawar with characteristics that accord with the Chinese accounts of a flourishing urban center surrounded by suburbs, which included a number of Buddhist stūpas and monasteries housing both Hīnāyana and Mahāyāna practitioners (Errington 1994: 55-66).

### **FORMALLY ORDERED STELAE FROM SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL**

With historical accounts, archaeological records and the results of more recent efforts remaining equivocal, and with scholars disagreeing on numerous points of interest, little increased understanding of the complex has been achieved over the years. In the absence of new excavations, as Sahrī-Bāhlol is currently occupied, it is apparent that it is through detailed analyses of the sculptural tradition that answers to many outstanding issues may be addressed.

It is the purpose of this study to evaluate a discrete corpus of hieratic, hierarchical stelae and correlated works in relationship to the introduction and modification of elements derived from both South Asian and Graeco-Roman cultural values and traditions. The analyses are presented in terms of iconographic content, stylistic characteristics, and relative chronological development. This type of stele was first introduced to Sahrī-Bāhlol sometime during the second-half of the 2nd century and continued as a focus through the 4th and 5th centuries (Figures 4, 7, 9-11, 14, 15). Examples of this type are often referred to descriptively as theophanies or visions-of-paradises or Pure Lands associated with Mahāyāna traditions where a Buddha teaches

the *dharma* (Law) to Bodhisattvas in their final or non-retrogressive stages of learning.

Alfred Foucher, having completed several studies of these works beginning in 1909, concluded that these stelae represent the greatest of the Miracles of Śrāvastī as explained in Chapter XII of the *Divyāvadāna* (Rosenfield 1967: 236 citing Foucher 1909: 1-78; 1905-51: vol 2, 206-210, 535-7; 1917: 147-148). During more recent times, this assessment has been the subject of a number of re-evaluations, as the stelae appear essentially related to the *trikāya* system. In his 1967 publication, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, John Rosenfield observed that Foucher's early efforts did not account for the number of variations found in, and the many miraculous settings for Buddhas provided by, the early Mahāyāna literature (Rosenfield 1967: 236-8). Juhyung Rhi, in his recent article 'Early Mahāyāna and Gandhāran Buddhism: An Assessment of the Visual Evidence,' highlights the many possible ideas and approaches that could have inspired any given work, reemphasizing the problems of identification without explicit literary and epigraphic evidence (Rhi 2003: 152-202, esp 154-55, 176-77). In addition to miraculous or visionary images of Śākyamuni found in texts, such as the *Divyāvadāna* and the *Saddharma-puṇḍarika-sūtra*, it appears probable that sculpted representations of the Pure Lands of the non-earthly Buddhas Akṣobhya, Amitābha, and Variocana would also have become suitable subject matter for the sculptors of Greater Gandhāra by the end of the 2nd or first half of the 3rd century, especially given that the texts related to these Buddhas were of such significant interest as to have been taken to China and subsequently translated into Chinese by this time (Huntington 1980: 657; Nakamura 1987: 177-78, 194-196; Xing 2005: 3, 182-183). Unfortunately, the carvings in this classification are characterized by a multiplicity of common features making identification problematic.

#### THE RESEARCH CORPUS

There are twenty-eight stelae or stela fragments in this research corpus from Sahrī-Bāhlol. An expanded corpus includes an additional twelve examples from various sites in the region as well as eighteen unprovenanced sculptures from major museum collections around the world, including two that are probably from Sahrī-Bāhlol, for a total grouping of fifty-eight. Other examples, from private and antiquities dealer's collections, are not included. No two examples are alike, although they are clearly typologically related. The subject matter is presented in a hierarchically arranged, formal manner, dominated by a large figure of a Buddha seated in padmāsna (lotus sitting attitude) and displaying *dharmacakra mudrā* (gesture of setting in motion the wheel of the Law). Positioned beneath a jewel-bearing floral canopy or in an architectural setting, the Buddha image is consistently attended by a complementary pair of Bodhisattvas as manifestations of his *karuṇā* and *prajñā* (compassion and wisdom, the delivering knowledge) (cf Figures 4, 7). The Bodhisattva adorned with a *jaṭāmukuta* (crown of matted locks) is depicted with a *kunḍikā* or water flask in his proper left hand; the Bodhisattva adorned with a turban is depicted with his proper left hand placed on his hip or holding a lotus or a wreath. These sculptures vary in complexity, and in the total number of figures included in their iconographic programs (cf Figures 7, 9-11, 13, 14). In addition to being distinguished by their settings, the stelae in the research corpus (and larger examples) are further differentiated by the iconographic and stylistic features of lotus dais used for the Buddha images and by stylistic, morphological changes over time (see Figures 5 and 6). The lotus dais was used either as a single motif or in combination with other motifs. One arrangement is of the lotus supported by a set of elephants, perhaps intended to represent *diggajas*, guardian elephants of the quarters (Figures 4 and 9). A second arrangement is of the lotus supporting a second throne, which is rectangular in configuration, perhaps representing a *rājāsana* or royal seat of a sovereign (Fig-

ures 13 and 14). These dais styles, designated Styles I-VIII, may be separated into earlier and later groupings.

### THE LOTUS DAIS: A PRIMARY SOUTH ASIAN CHARACTERISTIC

The *padma* or lotus (*Nelumbium speciosum* Wild) is one of the oldest, most universally used and widespread symbols in South Asian iconography. From an early date, in addition to other concepts, it was used to represent the cosmic axis and was emblematic of divine creative essence and purity of descent. It also served as a symbol of transcendence or transcendent birth (see Liebert 1976: 202-05; Zimmer 1960: 141-142, 158 ff; Saunders 1960: 122-123). As far as is known in enduring materials from Buddhism's artistic history, the lotus flower was a corporal component of the iconographic repertoire. Often depicted as a pedestal or dais upon which divine beings stand or sit, it is sometimes shown as a fully mature, open blossom, and, at other times, as a less mature blossom with the pericarp just emerging from the petals (cf Figures 7-10).

Early researchers such as Emile Sénart, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Alfred Foucher noted a tendency in early Buddhism to adapt pre-Buddhistic iconographic traditions to its own immediate ends by infusing the traditions with new meaning (Coomaraswamy 1935: 13; Sénart 1875: 484; Marshall and Foucher 1940: vol 1, 183 ff; Zimmer 1960: 56-57, 160-62). The use of the lotus and the lotus dais for images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas provide clear examples of this disposition. In works from the northwest, lotus blossoms reveal many of the same stylistic features found in other early Buddhist contexts, such as those at Bhārhut and Sāñcī, although surviving works from Gandhāra and other communities active at the same time do not show Buddha images seated on a lotus throne until the 2nd century (Coomaraswamy 1935: 21-22). The inspiration for choices in the configurative style of lotuses, either partially or fully open, remains unclear. At the same time, image attributes and the characteristics of context, such as the lotus used in combination with a set of elephant supports or the lotus used to support a second throne, may offer insight into their significance.

The varied symbolic functions and connotations of elephants in South Asian history have survived from the very early periods and are traceable throughout the long and diverse courses of Hindu and Buddhist iconography (Zimmer 1946: 102-03; Zimmer 1960: 159, 250, 255-56). As portrayed in stelae from Sahrī-Bāhlol, the elephants that buttress the lotus suggest *diggajas*, guardian elephants who function as the supporters of the universe by bearing the firmament on their backs (Figures 1, 9; for mythological references to *diggajas*, see Zimmer 1946: 104-05; 1960: 241, 291). Seemingly, their symmetrical positioning beneath the lotus signifies the cosmic axis and emanation of, in all directions, the beneficent influence of the Buddha positioned on the lotus as the supra-human force of the universe (for references to the Historical Buddha as leader of all worlds, see Zimmer 1960: 79 citing Jātaka 1, 51-52). The second combination depicts the lotus beneath an additional throne, which is rectangular in configuration and supported by turned legs (and occasionally complemented with a back), perhaps in reference to a *rājāsana* or royal seat of a sovereign (Figures 13, 14). Stylistically, the turned legs distinguish this rectangular throne type from the *siñhāsana* or lion-throne, which is also known from Sahrī-Bāhlol, but not from stelae that compose the research corpus.

The earlier lotus dais types, referred to as Styles I and IV, were initially introduced during the apogee of the Gandhāran Buddhist tradition (Figure 5). The finest examples are characterized by refined technical skills in sculpting and by a naturalistic treatment of form associated with a new wave of Western stylistic and iconographic influences, that of the Graeco-Roman school of the 2nd century, the Hadrianic and Antonine periods. In examples belonging to the

later dais categories, Styles V–VIII, created from approximately the second half of the 3rd through the 4th or 5th centuries, there is a discernable loss in the technical skill in sculpting and in naturalistic grace (Figure 6). Given the number of monastery complexes at Sahrī-Bāhlol and the some two hundred and fifty years period under review, complexities in the development of iconographic and stylistic characteristics, such as these, are to be expected.

*EARLIER DAIS STYLES: STYLES I-IV*

In the examples of dais Style I, the Buddha image is positioned directly on the pericarp of a partially opened lotus (Figure 7). Only the outer edge of the seedpod can be seen above several rows of upturned petals. In what appear as the earliest examples of Style I, the petals display smooth surfaces terminating in points at the top of their outer edges. Several petals of the lower or outer-most row gracefully turn downward. In later Style II examples, the lotus is larger and more bulbous, while the upturned petals of the flower are defined by incised lines that border their outer edges (Figure 8b).

For dais Style III examples, in contrast to those of Styles I and II, the Buddha image is positioned directly on the pericarp of a fully mature lotus (Figure 9). Each of the smooth-surfaced, down-turned petals of the open flower terminates in a rounded point at its outer edge, while the relatively naturalistic, rounded configuration of flower itself gives the impression of being supported by four elephants, each holding lotus blossoms, although only the forelegs, heads and trunks of three elephants are shown. Although less skillfully sculpted, examples belonging to the Style IV category are stylistically and iconographically related to Style III (Figure 10). With the exception of a single row of short upturned petals, the remaining rows are turned downward, displaying smooth, un-ridged surfaces. Some examples show only the lotus pod; others show the lotus supported by elephants, as seen in Style III examples.

*LATER DAIS STYLES: STYLES V-VIII*

Examples belonging to the later dais categories, Styles V through VIII, display less-successful, more-stylized characteristics, which are also found in the treatment of images and other features (Figures 11-14). Even though Style V is closely related to Style I, in contrast to the uniformly smooth surface of the Style I lotus petals, for Style V examples, the center of each petal displays a convex roundness defined by a flat outer edging, which increases in width as it rises to a point at the top (Figure 11).

Although directly related to Style V examples, works belonging to the Style VI and VII categories display changes in both style and iconography (cf Figure 11 with Figures 12, 13). While the Style V lotus-dais type clearly served as the precursor to Styles VI and VII, the lotus blossoms are fully open in these later styles. The several rows of downward-turning petals recall the petals of Style V lotuses, but are given a more advanced decorative form, retaining the convex roundness in the center while displaying a double rather than single edging. Style VI examples show the Buddha image seated directly on the seedpod, but in Style VII examples, the Buddha image is seated on a rectangular dais, above the lotus pericarp (cf Figures 12, 13).

Style VIII is related to Style VII, in that the Buddha image is seated on a rectangular dais, which is positioned on a lotus (cf Figures 13, 14). However, as to the blossom itself, the treatment of the petals represents the introduction of a new stylistic feature. The outer edges of the upward-turning petals are given definition, as is the middle of each petal, by an incised line.

*STELAE CHARACTERISTICS REFLECTED IN INDEPENDENTLY SCULPTED IMAGES  
AND RELIEFS*

In addition to providing invaluable information related to further defining a relative chronology for the stylistic and iconographic development of the stelae, these sculptures provide insight, through their use as reference points, into the dating and reconstruction of larger installations, allowing for the possible reuniting of certain aspects of their long-separated components. Recovered from Sahrī-Bāhlol and the neighboring site of Takht-i-Bāhī are a number of independently sculpted reliefs and images, which correspond stylistically and iconographically to the primary features of the stelae (cf Figures 8a, 8b, 15-17).

The knowledge that may be achieved through analysis and the resultant reconstruction process is exemplified by a 24.5 cm relief of a lotus dais from Mound D (Figure 8b). Drilled into the top is a mortise, designed to receive a tenon from the bottom of a Buddha image, which, apparently, was not recovered. However, an appropriately sized Buddha image of the missing type was recovered from the nearby site of Takht-i-Bāhī (Figure 8a). Although they are from different complexes, the pieces serve to illustrate original usage. The lower portion of the Takht-i-Bāhī image would, most likely, have been secured within the recess of a base not unlike the example from Mound D at Sahrī-Bāhlol. The scaling of these pieces, suggests the possibility that they were originally the major components of similar, large installations, the additional elements of which, as far as can be determined, are missing from the archaeological records of both Sahrī-Bāhlol and Takht-i-Bāhī.

In addition to the independently sculpted base and teaching Buddha image, there are image fragments or images of Bodhisattvas, such as the fragments found in close proximity to each other at Mound C, which must have served as life-size counterparts to the diminutive images depicted in the stelae (cf Figures 15, 16). This assessment applies equally to a second, more-complete pair of Bodhisattvas, recovered under similar circumstances, also at mound C (Figure 17). While not fully explainable, it is of value to give consideration to the hairstyle depicted on the *jaṭāmukua*-wearing Bodhisattvas and the wreath depicted in the hand of turban-wearing Bodhisattvas seen in Figures 7, 11, 15-17. As with numerous other features in the early Buddhist art of Gandhāra, they represent elements borrowed and adapted from Western stylistic and iconographic conventions, a process not unlike that discussed above in relationship to the lotus dais.

### GRAECO-ROMAN CHARACTERISTICS

While, undoubtedly, many of the stylistic characteristics and ideas expressed in the sculptures were developed from the force of traditional South Asian eschatological concepts, as indicated above, the stelae display two significant elements that are clearly Western in their derivation, the knot-of-Herakles hairstyle for Bodhisattvas and the laurel wreath, shown as a hand-held attribute or suspended above the head of a Buddha (Figure 18). These distinguishing iconographic elements are not unique to the sculptures under study and occur variously in other works from Gandhāra. At the same time, they do predominate or are used repetitively in the research corpus of stelae and related works from approximately the 2nd century through the 4th or 5th centuries.

*THE KNOT-OF- HERAKLES HAIRSTYLE*

In stelae from all periods at Sahrī-Bāhlol, the knot-of-Herakles hairstyle is the preferred arrangement for one of the two primary Bodhisattvas and their larger, independently sculpted counterparts (see Figures 15-17, 19). The knot is fashioned of long clustered strands of hair from either side of the head, which are drawn up and secured on the top of the head by what is commonly known as the square knot. The popularity of the square knot throughout the millennia reflects its practical functionality (the greater the stress placed on it the more tightly it binds), and the apotropaic values of averting evil that came to be associated with it over time.

The name, knot-of-Herakles, seems to have been derived from its being used as the knot that secured the forelegs of the magically impenetrable Nemean lion's skin around the shoulders of Herakles (Niegorski 1995: 66). The arrangement, known as the knot-of-Herakles hairstyle, became increasingly popular, after the end of the 4th century BCE, for images of the Greek god Apollo in his capacity as the divine protector of young men during their transition into maturity, his presence in this form assuring successful achievement of the new status. In other capacities, he offered prophetic wisdom, healing and purging of malevolent forces (Niegorski 1995: 66, 161, 187, 200, 226-27; Burkert 1977: 144-145, 211; Harrison 1927: 376-381, 439-444; Boardman, et al 1990: 185; Bieber 1961: 63). The use of this fashion for images of Apollo is widely recognized today due to the famous Roman copy of the type known as the Apollo Belvedere, now in the Vatican Museum collection (Figure 20).

*WREATHS OF LAUREL*

Several stylistic types of wreaths and garlands (*mālās*) were used in Gandhāran art; some are composed of floral materials and others of beaded strands of jewels. One type, the wreath or crown of laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), is clearly derived from Western conventions. As depicted in works from Sahrī-Bāhlol and other sites, the Graeco-Roman style wreath or small garland (hypothymis) of laurel, appears to be tightly and densely bound to a fillet. At the center front of the larger examples, the wreath is ornamented with an open-faced flower, secured by a small band (Figures 21, 22). Wreaths with these characteristics figure prominently as an attribute, held in the proper left hands of numerous turban-wearing Bodhisattvas in the stelae and among the large Bodhisattva images recovered from Sahrī-Bāhlol (see Figures 7, 15, 17, 21; Schmidt forthcoming 2006: essay 28). Wreaths are also depicted above the heads of Buddha images, suspended by either fantastic, half-floral, half-human beings or a pair of erote-like figures or *mālādhārās* (Figures 11, 14, 22; Schmidt 2005: 645-47).

Just as the use of garlands and wreaths had long, complex histories in South Asia, they likewise had long, complex histories in the West. Throughout the Greek influenced world of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, floral wreaths had become part of a universal, symbolic *koine*, understood, in a general sense, to refer to concepts of victory and immortality. The types of materials selected were often embodied with meaning and sacred to a particular Greek or Roman deity, with specific values seen in relationship to the contexts in which they were used. Laurel, for example, an evergreen symbolic of victory and immortality, was sacred to Nike and Eros (Schmidt 2008: 331-333, sv 'Wreath in Western Culture'; Danielou 1964: vii, 8, 17, 19, 23; Eliade 1987: sv 'crowns'; Goodenough 1953: vol 7, 158, 161; Whittick 1960: 206). The prevalence of this subject matter has been particularly well documented in mortuary contexts in the Mediterranean region and in the trade-route cities, as exemplified by a Roman period sarcophagus from Italy, and by a relief from Dura-Europus, where it was used, not only to represent the hope of reawakening to a blissful immortal existence, but also as a reference to

## RELIEFS AND STELAE FROM SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL

divine authority and sanctification (Figures 23, 24; McCann 1978: 20-21; Ingholt 1954: 8, fig 17; Ingholt 1935: 68-9). Clearly, the ways in which these elements were used add insight into the long-recognized fact that, in cosmopolitan Gandhāra, the formal repertoire of the Western cultural tradition served as one source of inspiration.

### CONCLUSIONS

The analyses summarized in this effort establish guidelines for adding clarity-in-understanding to the stylistic, morphological sequence at Sahrī-Bāhlol and to the introduction, retention and collation of a number primary iconographic elements. While there is little possibility of fully comprehending the correlations between regional practices, lost oral traditions, texts and images, undoubtedly, the sculptors attempted to provide lucid visual complements to focused doctrinaire messages. The symbolic values of the elements, however, like words, take on different denotations and intensities depending upon context, and like words, evolve over time. Exploring the stylistic and iconographic specificity of the source motifs, whether South Asian or Western, is of value in defining chronological issues and in discerning some of the intentions behind the Gandhāran formal choices. Furthermore, these sculptures are of interest from many differing perspectives. Although their history and significance cannot be fully explained, they offer opportunities to supplement the region's limited historical and textual sources, to develop an understanding of the visual language characteristic of certain themes, and to identify regional iconographic and stylistic elements that are unique to the early Buddhist school in Greater Gandhāra. Most of the stelae in the corpus from Sahrī-Bāhlol are largely unstudied. Numerous opportunities for further research, both at Sahrī-Bāhlol and across the broader scope of Gandhāran Buddhist art, are suggested.

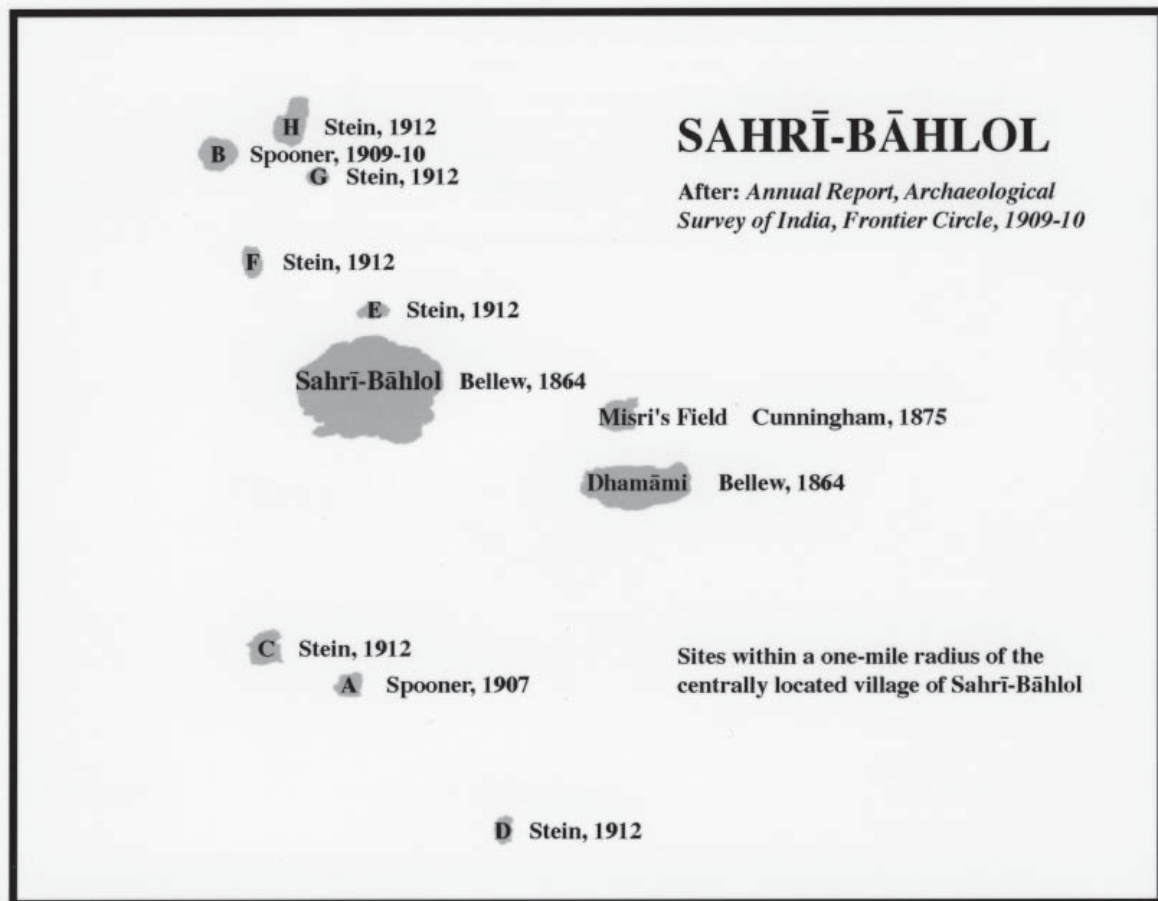
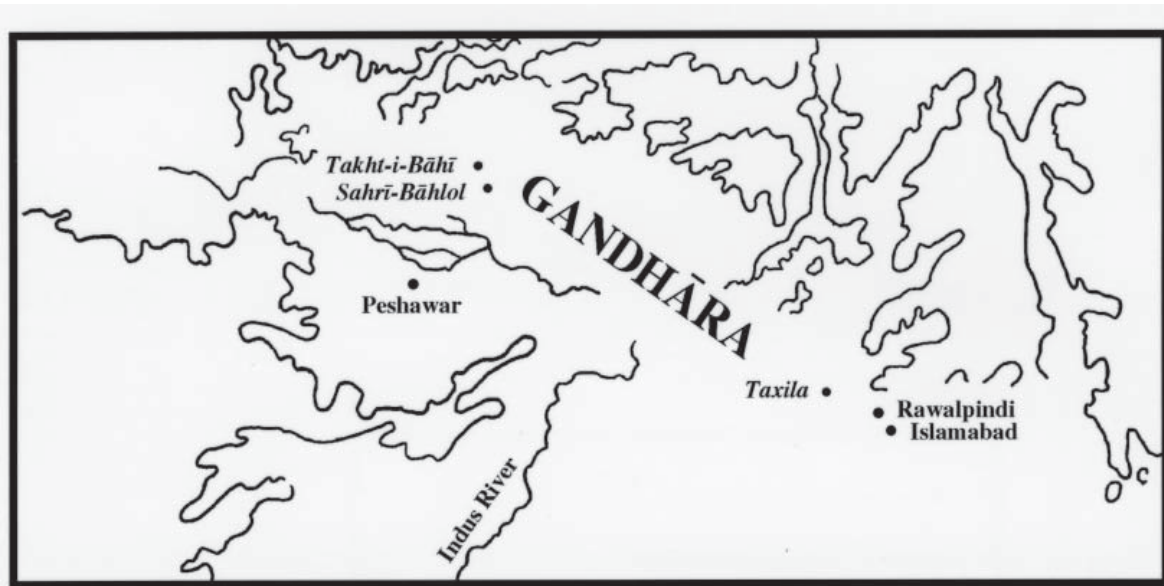


FIGURE 1 & 2: MAP OF GANDHĀRA. AND MAP OF SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL.



RELIEFS AND STELAE FROM SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL



FIGURE 3: SITE PHOTOGRAPH OF SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA, STEIN EXCAVATION, 1911-12. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.



FIGURE 4: STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND D. SECOND HALF OF 2ND OR 3RD CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 113.03 CM, W: 68.58 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO 1554. PHOTOGRAPH: AFTER LYONS AND INGHOLT 1957: PL 257.

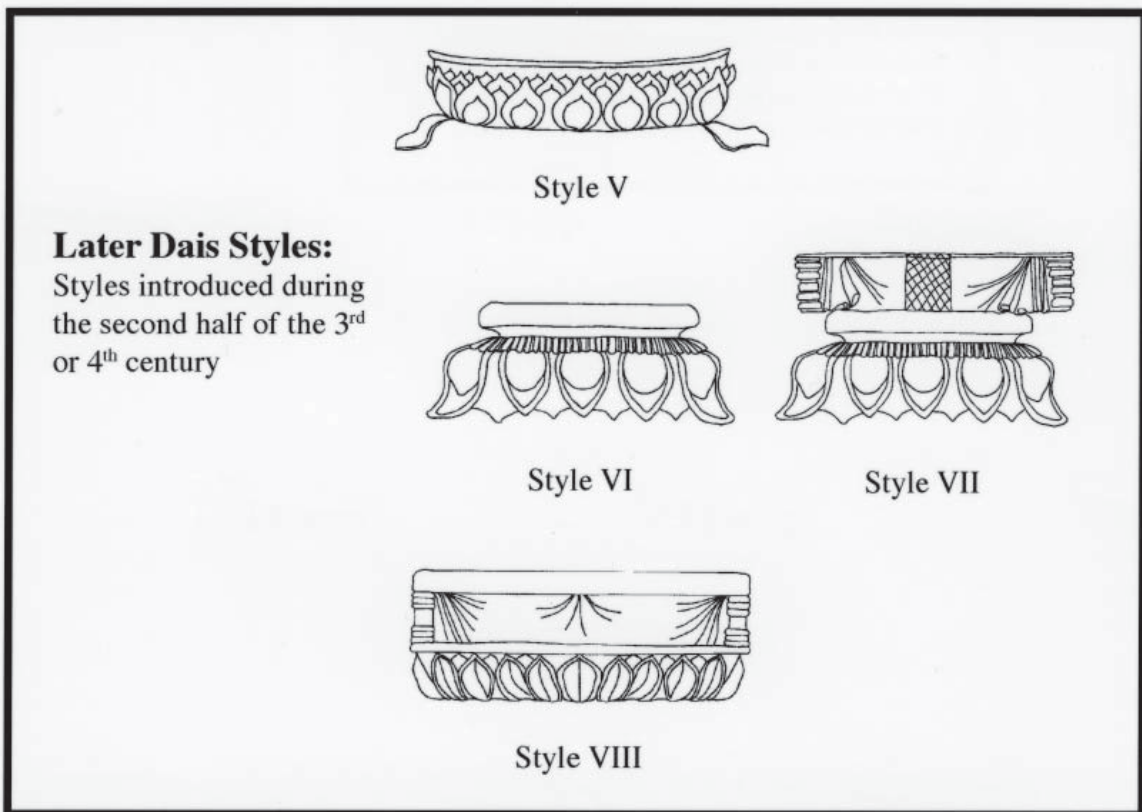
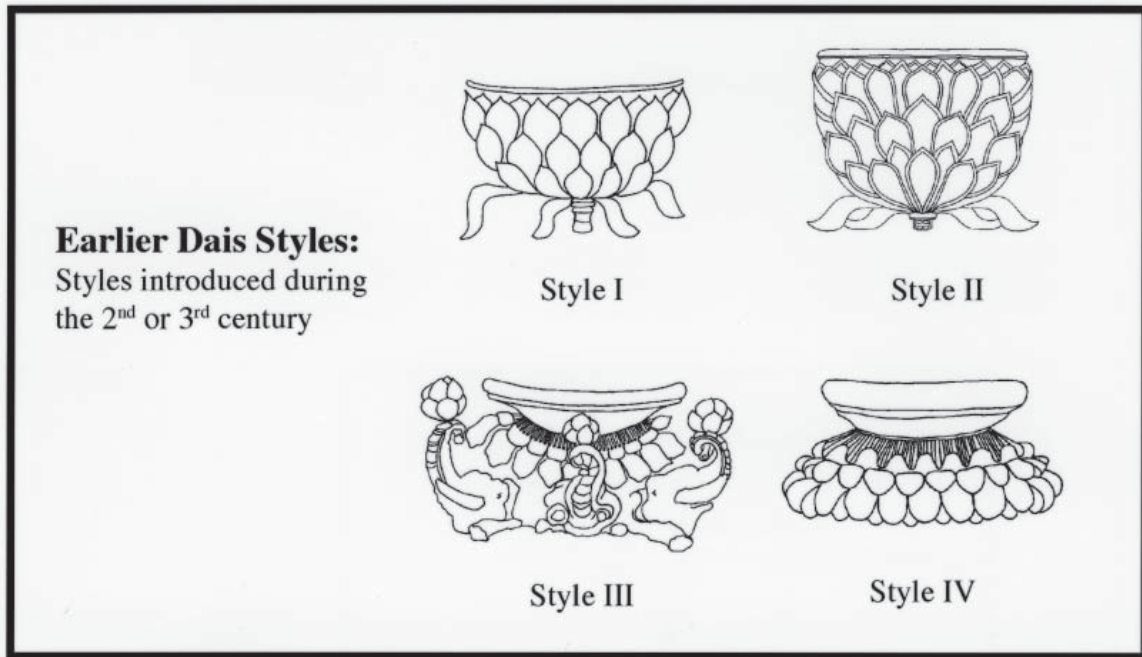


FIGURE 5: DRAWINGS OF EARLIER DAIS STYLES, STYLES I-IV (CF FIGURES 7-10).  
FIGURE 6: DRAWINGS OF LATER DAIS STYLES, STYLES V-VIII (CF FIGURES 11-14).

RELIEFS AND STELAE FROM SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL



FIGURE 7 (TOP LEFT): STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND A. SECOND HALF OF 2ND OR 3RD CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 60.3 CM, W: 47.6 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO. 158. PHOTOGRAPH: AFTER LYONS AND INGHOLT 1957: PL 254.

FIGURES 8A & 8B (TOP RIGHT): FIGURE 8A. IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. TAKHT-I-BĀHĪ. SECOND HALF OF 2ND OR 3RD CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: (INCLUDING TENON) 61 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY. FIGURE 8B. RELIEF WITH LOTUS BASE WITH MORTIS TO RECEIVE TENON FROM AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND D. CIRCA 3RD CENTURY CE. GRAY SCHIST. H: C 25.4 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.

FIGURE 9 (BOTTOM LEFT): STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND A. SECOND HALF OF 2ND OR 3RD CENTURY CE. PHYLLITE. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE PESHAWAR MUSEUM.

FIGURE 10 (BOTTOM RIGHT): STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. SECOND HALF OF THE 2ND OR 3RD CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 19 CM, W: 14 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.



FIGURE 11 (TOP LEFT): STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. CIRCA 3RD OR 4TH CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 94 CM; W: 81 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.



FIGURE 12 (CENTER LEFT): STELE FRAGMENT WITH IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA*. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. CIRCA 3RD OR 4TH CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 30.5 CM, W: 36.8CM. ORIGINAL HEIGHT OF BUDDHA IMAGE C 135-160 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.



FIGURE 13 (CENTER RIGHT): STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. THE DAIS IS COMPOSED OF TWO PARTS, A RECTANGULAR THRONE AND A LOTUS. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. CIRCA 3RD OR 4TH CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: C 44.5 CM, W: C 42 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.



FIGURE 14 (BOTTOM LEFT): STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKAKRA MUDRĀ*. THE DAIS IS COMPOSED OF TWO PARTS, A RECTANGULAR THRONE AND A LOTUS. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND D. CIRCA 3RD OR 4TH CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 50.8 CM, W: 48.9 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE PESHAWAR MUSEUM.

RELIEFS AND STELAE FROM SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL



FIGURE 15 (TOP LEFT): STELE WITH AN IMAGE OF A BUDDHA SEATED IN *PADMĀSANA* AND DISPLAYING *DHARMAKĀRA MUDRĀ*. THE DAIS IS COMPOSED OF TWO PARTS, A RECTANGULAR THRONE AND A LOTUS. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. CIRCA 3RD OR 4TH CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: C 58.5 CM, W: C 50.8 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.

FIGURE 16 (TOP RIGHT): TWO HEADS FROM IMAGES OF BODHISATTVAS, PROBABLY A COMPLEMENTARY PAIR. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. SECOND HALF OF 2ND OR 3RD CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: C 25.4 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.

FIGURE 17 (BOTTOM): SITE PHOTOGRAPH OF TWO IMAGES OF BODHISATTVAS, PROBABLY A COMPLEMENTARY PAIR. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. SECOND HALF OF 3RD OR 4TH CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: (FIGURE ON LEFT) C 144 CM, H: (FIGURE ON RIGHT) C 147 CM. RESPECTIVELY: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PAKISTAN AND PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.

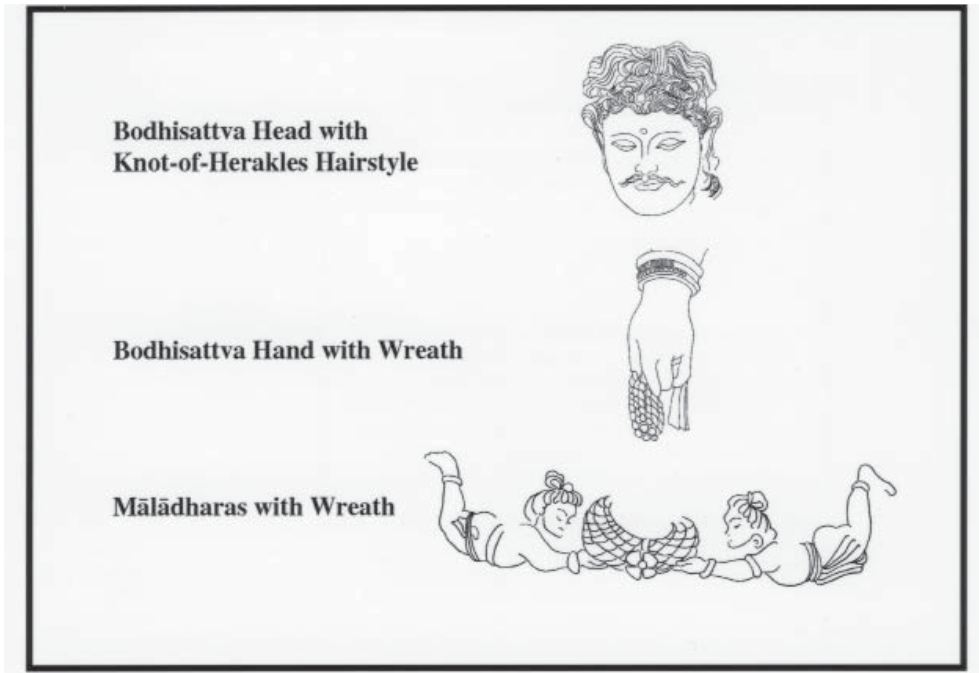


FIGURE 18: DRAWINGS OF ELEMENTS INFLUENCED BY GRAECO-ROMAN STYLISTIC AND ICONOGRAPHIC CONVENTIONS OF THE 2ND CENTURY CE (CF FIGURES 19-24).



FIGURE 19 (LEFT): HEAD FROM AN IMAGE OF A BODHISATTVA WEARING KNOT-OF-HERAKLES HAIR FASHION. SAHRĪ-BĀHLĪL. CIRCA SECOND HALF OF 2ND CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: C 30 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.

FIGURE 20 (RIGHT): DETAIL OF THE HEAD OF THE GREEK GOD APOLLO. ROMAN COPY OF AN ORIGINAL OF C 325-300 BCE. MARBLE. H: (OF COMPLETE IMAGE) 224 CM. VATICAN MUSEUM, CORTILE DEL BELVEDERE, NO. 92. PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.

RELIEFS AND STELAE FROM SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL



FIGURE 21 (LEFT): DETAIL OF A STANDING IMAGE OF A WREATH-BEARING BODHISAT-TVA. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND B. CIRCA 3RD CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 129 CM, W: 48.3 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM, NO. 1428. PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.

FIGURE 22 (RIGHT): DETAIL OF FIGURE 11 SHOWING AN IMAGE OF A TEACHING BUD-DHA WITH A WREATH SUSPENDED ABOVE HIS HEAD. SAHRĪ-BĀHLOL, MOUND C. CIRCA 3RD OR 4TH CENTURY CE. SCHIST. H: 94 CM, W: 81 CM. PESHAWAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPH: BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY.



FIGURE 23 (LEFT): DETAIL OF AN EROTE HOLDING A GARLAND (HYPOTHYMIS) FROM LEFT-FRONT SECTION OF A SARCOPHAGUS. CIRCA END OF 2ND OR 3RD CENTURY CE. ITALY. LIGHT COLORED MARBLE WITH DARK BANDS. H: 58 CM. J. PAUL GETTY MU-SEUM, MALIBU, NO. 85.AA.30. PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF THE J. PAUL GETTY MU-SEUM, MALIBU.

FIGURE 24 (RIGHT): RELIEF DEDICATED BY THE PRIEST MALKU TO THE GAD (PATRON GODDESS) OF PALMYRA. MALKU IS SHOWN WEARING A MODIUS AND A LAUREL WREATH WITH AN OPEN-FACED FLOWER. NIKE IS SHOWN CROWNING THE GAD WITH A SECOND WREATH. DURA-EUROPOS. DATED 159 CE. LIMESTONE. H: C 70 CM. PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF THE YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY.

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# *Indo-Scythian Buddhists in Han Dynasty China: the Visual Evidence and its Significance*

MARTHA L. CARTER

According to a number of later Chinese Buddhist accounts the Han Emperor Ming (AD 58-75) dreamed of a 'golden man' who was identified as Śākyamuni Buddha, and then dispatched an envoy to the West to seek more information. The envoy returned in AD 67 with two Indian monks, a famous Buddha image and a scripture carried on the back of a white horse. The White Horse Temple still exists outside Luoyang city. This seemingly apocryphal tale may not be totally inaccurate, however, since according to the Hou Han shu (ch. 42, bio. 32) a group of Buddhists, thought by most authorities to be foreigners, were first noted in the biography of Prince Ying who ruled a small fiefdom between AD 52 and 70. Among his many purported virtues, he was said to have followed the precepts of the Buddha and provided feasts for a colony of monks and laymen in his domain. His capital lay about 30 miles from the Chinese coast, close to the modern seaport of Lianyungang on the northern edge of Jiangsu close to the border of Shandong Province. Near this city there is an interesting example of what may have been among the earliest attempts at creating Buddhist imagery in China. This is an auspicious hill called Kongwangshan. (Wenwu 1981.7: 1-19; Wenwu 1982.9: 61-70) Carved in low relief on its rocky face is a crude hodgepodge of imagery, some Chinese such as the popular Queen Mother of the West at the highest point of the display, seated as if in her abode at the summit of Mt. Kunlun, with much below that is alien. (Figure 1) There are three Buddha images, (X2, X61, X76) and two Buddhist scenes: one a strange version of the Bodhisattva's sacrifice of his body to a hungry tigress (X82) found in the Mahāsattva Jātaka, and another a complex Parinirvāna group (X4-X60) with the recumbent Buddha carved out of a shelf of rock and onlookers' heads ranked in a simple isocephalic style (Figure 2) All have stylistic elements seemingly reminiscent of the shallow rock reliefs of Parthian Elymais, such as Tang-i Sarvak. (Vanden Berghe and Schippman 1985: 21-50, 59-92) This was noted by Marilyn Rhie (1999: 32) in her thorough compendium on early Buddhist art in China and Central Asia. Along with these Buddhist subjects are assorted representations of figures in Indo-Scythian costume, often having no apparent relationship to the Buddhist imagery. (Figure 3) The Buddha images are all distinct in appearance with X61 perhaps the latest in date. Here the standing figure is in abhaya mudrā with the head and hands somewhat enlarged and feet placed frontally, suggesting a somewhat sinified appearance. The other standing Buddha (X2) carved in a low relief niche sways somewhat to the right and has a flat featureless robe ending with a wide flare at the ankles. (Figure 4) The feet are small, rectangular, and turned outward. Like X61 the pose is in abhaya mudrā with the right hand turned awkwardly outward in a two-dimensional mode. The face is also flat with a small incised cusp of a mouth, deeply cut brows, large eyes, and a flat squarish nose. The ears are simple half lobes with no indication of elongation, and the hair and uṣṇīṣa look like a small brimmed hat. The seated Buddha (X76) also in abhaya mudrā, close stylistically to X2, and



FIGURE 1. DRAWING OF THE ROCK RELIEFS AT KONGWANGSHAN, LIANYUNGANG, JIANGSU, LATER HAN DYNASTY (AFTER WENWU, 1981.7, 2)



FIGURE 2: ROCK RELIEF IMAGE OF STANDING BUDDHA (X2), KONGWANGSHAN, LIANYUNGANG, JIANGSU. LATER HAN DYNASTY (AFTER WENWU, 1982, 61, FIGURE 1)



FIGURE 3: ROCK RELIEF IMAGE OF SEATED BUDDHA FROM LINTEL AT CAVE IX, MAHAO, SICHUAN. LATER HAN DYNASTY (AUTHOR'S PHOTO)



FIGURE 4: CERAMIC BASE OF A 'MONEY TREE' WITH A SEATED BUDDHA EXCAVATED AT PENGSHAN AND NOW IN THE NANJING MUSEUM (AFTER MUSEUMS IN CHINA, VOL. 4, NANJING MUSEUM, WENWU PRESS, BEIJING, 1984, PLATE 77)

similarly a flat figure incised in the rock. Here, however, there are some lines indicating folds of drapery and wide sleeves. Considering the haphazard layout of the carvings it appears probable that the rock art was created by different hands over a period of time perhaps stretching into the late second or early third century AD, but the earliest may not be too far removed from the era of Prince Ying. X2 and X 76 appear to be earlier and less developed than X 61. They are more two-dimensional and probably earlier.

The salient point I wish to make is that the Buddhists who inspired the rock reliefs seen here must have come by sea rather than overland. Sea trade between China and India in the first century AD expanded due to a period of internal political turmoil and natural disasters culminating in the Wang Mang interregnum (AD 9-25) that lost the Han Dynasty their military control protecting important routes of communication with the West. Trade with India and Western Asia became more hazardous by land across Xinjiang at the very time that the Mediterranean world grew more prosperous under the Roman Empire of the Julio-Claudian Era. During the first half of the first century AD the demand for sericum in fashionable Roman society became almost a mania. Although, according to Tacitus (Ann. ii.33), the senate under Tiberius issued a ban on silk garments for men, during the reign of Caligula ladies of imperial court accumulated vast quantities of luxurious silk robes, ribbons and shawls interwoven with gold embroideries. (Suet. Cal. 52; Dion Cass. lix.12) With demand for 'seric cloth' among wealthy Romans rising rapidly and supply by land from China diminished by unstable conditions in Xinjiang, sea trade between China and India with transshipment from there to the West became a more viable alternative. Bulky Western cargo ships could cross the Erythraean Sea on monsoon winds directly to India's western coast, but, according to Lionel Casson, (1991: 10-11) probably did not go further. The Indian middlemen of the China trade manned smaller, more flexible sailing craft to make the hazardous trips farther east. From the evidence of Kongwangshan it seems likely that Indo-Scythians were among the first Indian traders to reach the Jiangsu-Shandong coast; and that they were responsible for the Buddhist art created there, although much of the carving may have been a product of local commissions. If some of Prince Ying's Buddhists were Indo-Scythians during the first century AD they were most likely part of a network connected to ports of the Indus River mouth region's coastal Indo-Scythian territories. Minnagara, capital of the recent Indo-Scythian (ie Saka) conquests in region is recorded in the mid-first century Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (Casson 1989: 38; Schoff 2001: 37) as ruled at that time by constantly warring Parthian princes (ie Indo-Parthians). That city is also mentioned in the Acts of Saint Thomas as the seat of Gondophores around AD 30/40. Further south the port of Barygaza lay at '...the beginning of the Kingdom of Nambanus', possibly the Kshaharāta king Nahapāna, although his dates are disputed. (Rosenfield, 1967: 131; Senior 2001, I: 129-133) We do not usually think of Indo-Scythians of any stripe as venturesome sea traders, but it is possible that they were introduced to it by seagoing Iranians of the Parthian era who might have reached China by the late second century BC, as suggested by a three almost identical lobed decorative metal boxes of sub-Achaemenid Iranian style found in Chinese princely tombs of that era. (Laing 1995: 11-17; Harper 2002: 97-100) A silver one was found in Shandong Province on China's northern coast, another at Guangzhou on China's south coast, and a bronze version of the same box in Yunnan.

Surprisingly, at Kongwangshan there is no trace of early Indian Buddhist style or content such as that under the Sātavāhanas. The Buddhist scenes are closest in schema to early Kuṣāṇa style, although some may even earlier, belonging to the Saka /Indo-Parthian Era as suggested by their crude two-dimensional Parthian relief style overtones. The question of prototypes for this imagery is puzzling. Marilyn Rhie (1999: 33) has compared the X2 Buddha image with Kuṣāṇa 'Sakamono Boddo' copper coin reverse Buddha images, and notes (1999: 40) that one,

a carved profile bearded head with a high cap, resembles Vima II Kadphises' coin portraits. In addition to coins, however, the nautical Indo-Scythians may have carried figural amulets, small portable shrines, and pictorial illustrations that could have served as inspiration for Kongwangshan reliefs. By the early second century the land trade routes to China were gradually re-opening in Xinjiang much to the benefit of both Kuṣāṇa and Parthian caravaners. Nevertheless, sea trade once established continued to thrive.

I do not presume to delve into the complex question of Parthian Buddhism in this short paper. Worthy of mention, however, is an account in the *Mahāvamsa* (Geiger 1986: 194) of a large delegation of Buddhists from 'Pallavabhoga' who journeyed by sea to attend a council convened by the Ceylonese king Duṭṭhagāmani who reigned between 108 and 77 BC. Buddhism may well have penetrated the eastern Iranian borderlands under the tolerant Parthians by this time. Parthian stylistic elements occur in early Buddhist sculpture in the Gandhāran region, especially Swat. (Fabregues 1987: 37-41; Nehru 1989: 45-46; Carter 2005: 307-317) This strongly suggests that there is an underlying link with Iran and Western Asia under the Arsacids in the creation of Kuṣāṇa Buddhist art.

A second and seemingly unrelated appearance of Buddha images during the Later Han Dynasty in China occurs in Sichuan, barely on the horizon of Chinese culture at the time, and far from the sea. The famous Mahao Cave IX tomb near Leshan, dated to the mid-second century (Edwards 1954, I: 5-28, II 103-129; Lim 1987: 194-99, Rhie 1999: 47-56), shows a seated Buddha carved over its middle doorway. (Figure 5) It faces north, while most Han Era tombs face south, and has an antechamber and three separate shafts, a plan that Rhie (1999: 48) suggests is comparable to Kuṣāṇa Era caves at Karatepe in Northern Bactria. The Buddha image here is more plastic than those of Kongwangshan, closer to Kuṣāṇa types, but lacks much detail, with hardly a suggestion of an uṣṇīṣa. Rhie (1999: 52) points to a fragmentary painting of a

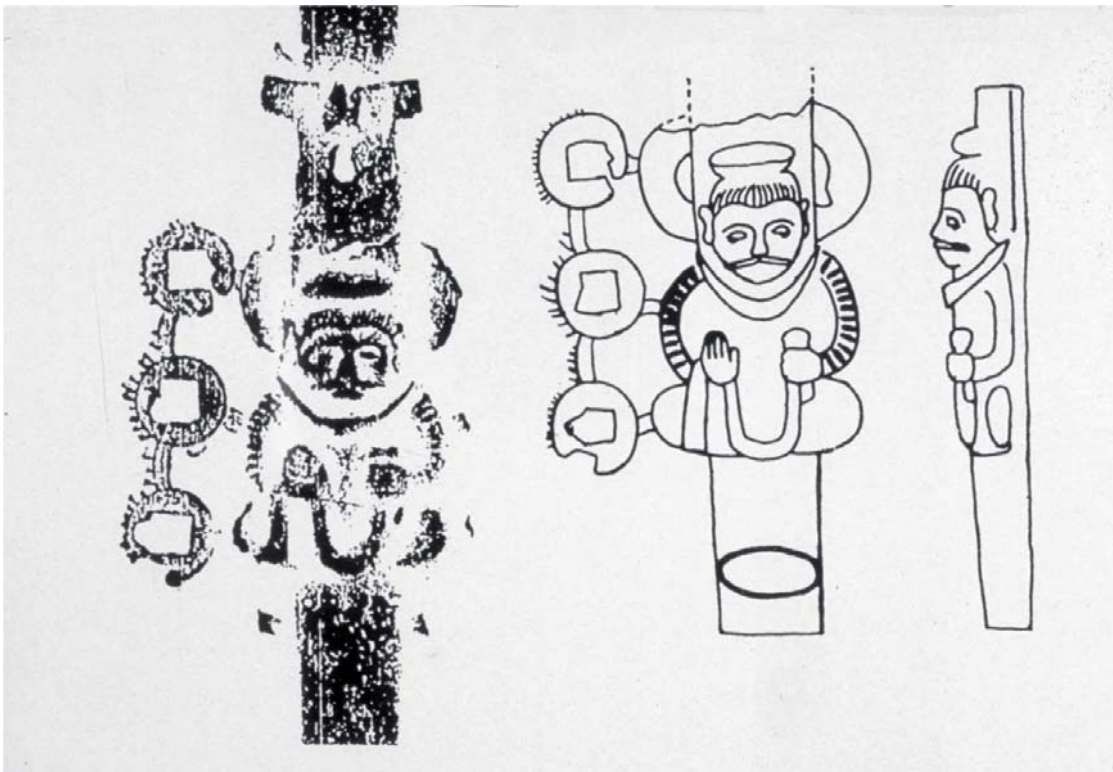


FIGURE 5: RUBBING OF A SEATED BUDDHA FROM THE POLE OF A 'MONEY TREE' AND A DRAWING OF THE SAME IMAGE (AFTER WENWU 1991,3, 6; 1992,11, FIGURE 1)

Buddha from Karatepe as a comparison. Another very different tiny seated Buddha with two attendants is found on the ceramic base of a funerary ‘money tree’ excavated from Pengshan, Sichuan and now in the Nanjing Museum. (Figure 6) One is a monk but the other is dressed



FIGURE 6: DRAWING OF PARINIRVĀNA ROCK RELIEF AT KONWANGSHAN, LIANYUNGANG, JIANGSU. LATER HAN DYNASTY (AFTER WENWU. 1981.7, 3, FIGURE 2)

as an Indo-Scythian. (Wu Hung 1987, 4: 33; Rhie 1999: 56-58) Here the Buddha has a robe with heavy folds, vertically striated hair and a very high, prominent *uṣṇīṣa*, more like a tall bun of hair. Significantly, it is distinct in style from that of the Mahao Tomb, suggesting a different source of inspiration, more like that of some earlier Gandhāran Buddha images. (Kurita I 1990: Figures P-2 VII, 164, 207, 210, 227, 254, 256, et al) Yet a third type of seated Buddha image may be found on the bronze ‘money trees’ themselves. One is repeated five times on the shaft of a ‘money tree’ found in a tomb at Mianyang near Chengdu. (Figure 7) Here the Buddha has a large flat *uṣṇīṣa*, a wide, prominent mustache and schematized folds of drapery forming a prominent U shape between the hands. Oddly, these little Buddhas most closely resemble some provincial Gandhāran varieties supposedly from Bajaur, a region that belonged to the fervently Buddhist Apraca kings of the first century AD. (Kurita II 1990: Figures 259, 260, 265, 266, 277, et al; Salomon 1999: 148, 180-182) The question remains as to the mode by which these varied images that seem to have inspired a fair degree of local attraction to Buddhism get to Sichuan, and who might have brought them.

According to the *Shi ji*, when Zhang Qian returned to China in 126 BC from his adventures in the West, he told the emperor Wudi that he found goods imported from Sichuan in Bactria that were said to have come from India. (Watson II 1961: 269) Excited about the possibilities of opening a new trade route to the west, the emperor sent him to the region where he spent



a frustrating year unable to discover where the route lay (Watson II 1961, 293-294); no doubt because local traders had no intention of sharing their secrets with a Chinese ambassador. In Sichuan and Yunnan examples of art closely related to Central Asian 'animal style' are well known. Chinese archaeologists have pointed to evidence suggesting that there was an influx of Central Asian tribal elements of Saka ethnicity into the region during the late first millennium BC. (Zhang Zengqi, 1994: 678-699; Chiou-Peng 1998: 280-304; Mallory and Mair 2000: 3228-330) Significantly, small ceramic figures of foreigners wearing trousers and pointed caps have recently been discovered there. (Hong Kong University Newsletter June 2004: 1-3) The most likely path of trade with northern India would have been some precursor of the Burma Road to river ports accessible from the Bay of Bengal. Hirth (1975: 179-180) notes that both the Wei-shu and Wei-liu mention goods from the West coming by sea to the coast of Pegu and up the Irrawaddy or Salween River to Yunnan. A combination of land and sea routes would likely have continued around the coast, up the Ganges and on to thriving emporia such as Mathurā. Trade goods destined for Mediterranean markets such as silk yarn could be easily transferred there to caravans bound for the Indus ports.



FIGURE 7: RUBBING OF ROCK RELIEF FIGURES AT KONGWANGSHAN, LIANYUNGANG, JIANGSU. LATER HAN DYNASTY (AFTER WENWU, 1981, FIGURES 3, 8)

Pliny (*historia naturalis* VI. 22-24) mentions a Ceylonese delegation to the Emperor Claudius in the mid-first century whose leader explained to the curious Romans that his father had actually met the mysterious Seres during a trading expedition at an emporium on a riverbank in what he evidently thought was China. This is suggested by the Pliny's statement that the Romans were told that the northeast coast of their island faced the land of the Seres. The traders found by the delegate's father were described to the Romans as blue eyed, red haired barbarians

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speaking in a guttural tongue. Although they were obviously non-Sinic in ethnicity, they could have been immigrant Central Asians from Sichuan or Yunnan trading in Burma. One may imagine that they would have welcomed their Indo-Scythian cousins in a trading relationship, and quickly learned that great profits could be made from the export of local silk and other luxuries to the West. If among the Indo-Scythians there were Buddhists, which seems probable, they could have traveled north to Sichuan to form trading colonies as they did in Jiangsu, and exerted significant influence there. Buddhism and its artist expressions entered a quiescent phase in Sichuan after the mid-second century, but reappeared with vigor in the sixth century under the Liang Dynasty. (Howard 1998: 119-120, pl. 1) A Buddhist stele from the Wan Fo Temple in Chengdu dated to AD 548 (fig. 8) shows Avalokiteśvara presiding over a rowdy group of musicians and dancers who, as Angela Howard suggests, are ‘foreign looking’. Perhaps they are a late offshoot of Saka elements in the local population.

There is a great deal that is unknown about trade between India and China in the first century, but the history of the Han dynasty clearly details the disasters that almost caused the dynasties downfall and lost its hard won trade routes at the turn on the first millennium. It would appear that Indo-Scythian traders among others, from India quickly learned to take advantage of alternate sea routes to China and may have brought the earliest influences of Buddhist art with them.

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*The Gates to the Darel Valley from the Singal Valley: the Batakhun & the Yajei Passes. Field Research in Northern Pakistan tracing Fa Hsien's route from Pamir to Darel: 2003 & 2004.*  
HARUKO TSUCHIYA

The present paper is the result of work conducted as part of Haruko Tsuchiya and Ajmad Ayub field research, on the area between the heads of the Singal and the Darel Valleys in 2003 and 2004, particularly focusing on the Batakhun and the Yajei Passes, the two gateways to the Darel Valley from the Singal Valley.

Our field research is based on the account by Fa Hsien (Legge 1886, 24-25, Adachi 1936 & 1940) that the first country he reached after crossing Pamir was Darel, since Darel was renowned for the 24-meter colossal image of Maitreya Buddha (Tsuchiya 2006 b). In search of the direct route to Darel from Pamir, we have discovered the route from the Khora Bhort Pass, along the Karambar and Ishkoman Valleys to Gakuch on the Gilgit River and then through the Singal Valley to reach Darel (Tsuchiya 1999 a & b, 2000 a, 2001, 2002 a). This route differs from the so-called established route from the Mintaka-Killik Pass, via Hunza and Gilgit to Darel as presented by Kazutoshi Nagasawa (Nagasawa 1979 map). Had Fa Hsien crossed Gilgit, he should have referred to it since Gilgit was already known as a strategic point called Nantou in the Han Shu of the 1st century AD (Han Shu, 1977, 963, Shiratori 1941, 387, 652). The outcome of the various stages of our field research has already been presented previously at the Rome, Leiden (Tsuchiya in press) and Bonn meetings of the EASAA.

The field research of the Singal Valley in 2001 covered almost the entire valley except for its head beyond the Patharo Chowki (Tsuchiya 2006 a). The field work in the Darel Valley (1998-2000) started from the mouth of the valley on the Indus, towards Pouguch and Rajikot, but was halted at Harone, as it was deemed too dangerous to continue (Tsuchiya 2002 b). The area between Patharo Chowki in the Singal Valley and Harone in the Darel Valley had remained a no man's land for non-Darelis. In our present field work (2003, 2004), we could finally cover the two entrances to the Darel Gates, the Batakhun and the Yajei Passes, as the first scientific fieldwork ever to have been made of this area.

The Darel Valley covered by our field work is considered, among the people of the northern areas of Pakistan as the most dangerous, inaccessible and remote territory, completely closed off to the outsiders. Even the people close to Darel, from Gilgit or Puniyal along the Gilgit River, never intend to visit Darel. Intermittent tribal feuds and conflicts within the Darel Valley discourage any visitors. It took us eight years to have the closed door of the Darel Valley opened for us. Only by good fortune we did make acquaintance with some people from the Darel Valley. Through several years of acquaintanceship, we gained their trust, and eventually an invitation to the Darel Valley was extended to us.

The only prior exploration of the Darel Valley with a focus on Fa Hsien's T'o-Li or Darel was conducted by Sir Aurel Stein in 1913 (Stein 1928, 13-32). Aurel Stein, coming from Chilas via the Hodur and Khanberi valleys, reached Yashot in the Darel Valley by tracing the Ishkobar

MIGRATION, TRADE AND PEOPLES, PART 2: GANDHARAN ART, THE GATES TO THE DAREL VALLEY FROM THE SINGAL VALLEY: THE BATAKHUN & THE YAJEI PASSES. FIELD RESEARCH IN NORTHERN PAKISTAN TRACING FA HSIEN'S ROUTE FROM PAMIR TO DAREL: 2003 & 2004., 1-17; ISBN 978-0-9553924-5-0

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Valley, then went toward its mouth by visiting Rajikot and Lohilo Kot (the University site at Pouguch). From Gayal, he then took the route via Shardai Pass to Tangir. Therefore, he neither reached the mouth of the Darel Valley nor covered the area towards the head of the Darel Valley beyond Yashot, where the Batakhun and the Yajei passes lie.

From our initial visit to the Pouguch site in the Darel Valley in 1998 we gradually extended our field work toward the head of the valley, covering Rajikot, the fortress castle of Darel, and the Yashot village, the last permanent village at the head of the valley (Tsuchiya in press). Our aim was to reach the very head of the valley, where two passes, the Batkhun and the Yajei, stand as the gateways of the valley.

### THE FIELD RESEARCH, 2003

The exploration made in July and August of 2003 covered the area from the mouth to the head of the Singal Valley and through the Maja Sagar to the Darel Valley (see map). By this field work, it was possible for the first time to complete the route throughout the Singal Valley to the Darel Valley by covering the area between the Police Chowki at Patharo in the Singal Valley to Harone in the Darel Valley, which had remained unexplored by the previous field efforts.

At the very head of the Singal Valley, beyond the Police Chowki to the end of the Patharo Gah, the path is flat and easy, surrounded by grasses and flowers. The grazing rights of this area are said to be owned by the Darelis and this is extended to the heads of Satachao and whole Totori and part of Patharo up to the Police Chowki. Before the Patharo Pass, a small stream of the Singal River flows out of the Paro Sarsar meaning lakea round lake, deep but with no fish and no glaciers. Beyond the southern end of the Paro Sar, a gentle slope rises toward the Patharo Pass (Figure 1), which is easily passable, covered partially by snow only on the Singal side.



FIGURE 1: THE HEAD OF THE SINGAL VALLEY, WITH THE PARO SAR LAKE AND THE PATHARO PASS ON THE RIGHT.

The Patharo Pass is not connected directly to the Darel Valley. A high plateau of pasture land called Maja Sagar-Yajei extends westward from the glacier-covered Kini Chish Mountain, at a height 4940 meters. Kini Chish Mountain (meaning black mountain both in Shina & Kala Pahar in Urdu) is the highest mountain in the area, the watershed of the Singal and the Batraith rivers, located at the heads of the Singal, Batraith, Darel and Khanberi valleys, Kini Chish's northwest side has a perpendicular cliff covered by hanging glaciers standing like a shield at the eastern coast of the Maja Sar Lake, the largest in the area with a 2 to 3 km diameter and the source of the Batraith River (Figure 2). As more streams from Shatao Gawolo and Gali Sar join the Bathraith River, the rich supply of water produces meadows full of alpine flowers in various hues. The majority of these grazing meadows are under the control of the Darelis. Therefore, people in the adjacent area, such as at Patharo in the Singal Valley, are compelled to be cautious of any imminent attacks on their cattle by the Darelis.



FIGURE 2: THE HEAD OF MAJA SAGAR: THE MAJA SAR LAKE AND THE KINI CHISH MT.(4940M)

Maja Sagar (meaning pasture-in-between) is owned exclusively by the Darelis, and not by the people from the Bathraith and Singal valleys. Here three families from Darel spend their summers grazing cattle and growing maize. Maja Sagar and its surrounding area, Maja Sar, Kinichich Mountain, and Mayornote, Shataro Gawolo Sar, and Kolibari Valley, can only be reached after crossing passes at the head of the Singal Valley by way of the Patharo Pass, and at the head of the Darel Valley by way of the Batakhun, the Yajei and the Moshadogan passes. Mayornot is a grazing pasture for the Darelis on the upper Batraith River near Maja Sagar.

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There are five or six summer houses at Mayornot (Figure 3). The Darelis go up in April or May and return at the end of October. Groups of rocks and natural caves scattered in the area are used as refuges for cattle from rain, snow and wind. A small stream of the Batraith River flows out of the Maja Sar Lake, south of Mayornot.



FIGURE 3: MAJORNOT IN THE BATHRAITH VALLEY: A DARELI FAMILY NEAR THEIR SUMMER PASTURES.

These Darelis use the Yajei Gali (gali meaning pass), and not the Batakhun Pass, to reach Mayornot. They consider the Yajei Pass the common route. Hence it was decided that our field work in 2003 would cover the Yajei Pass route, and, subsequently in 2004 the Batakhun Pass route. The way to the Yajei Pass starts to the west of Mayornot, from the mouth of the Kolibari Valley at Alai Patharo towards Moos and Narkanoi. A gradual slope continues along the Kolibari stream, flowing out of the Gali Sar Lake. The Kolibari Valley is a narrow but open valley, filled with green pastures along a stream, flowing from Gali Sar, located immediately below the Yajei Pass (Figure 4). Gali Sar Lake is almost the same size as Paro Sar and Shatao Gawolo, but is the deepest. Gali Sar, like Paro Sar, is frozen but walkable during the winter season.

The Yajei Pass (Figure 5) is an open pass, flat only for a few meters, but passable all year-round where snow does not remain. This pass was found to be a regular route to reach Darel, more popular than the well-known Batakhun Passes which are covered by snow until the months of April or May. Neither snow nor glacier remain on the Yajei Pass, making it possible for traffic to cross throughout a year. The Darel side of the Yajei Pass was relatively gentle and the devoid-of-stone descent was preferred for loaded animals (Figure 6). Fountains, here and there, provide enough water for travelers but there are no streams. Two difficult points needed to be maneuvered but, overall, the valley can easily be negotiated.





FIGURE 4: THE KOLIBARI VALLEY LOOKING TOWARD THE YAJEI PASS.



FIGURE 5: THE TOP OF THE YAJEI PASS, WITH THE GALI SAR LAKE IN THE BACKGROUND.

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FIGURE 6: FROM THE YAJEI PASS, LOOKING DOWN LUREI AND GOTOBO, THE HEAD OF THE DAREL VALLEY

The Moshadogan Pass is located further northwest of the Yajei Pass and can be viewed from Shallpakar, halfway down the Yajei Ghali on the Darel side where the Moshadogan Valley meets the Yajei Valley. The Moshadogan Pass, opened throughout the year, is said to be slightly steeper and more rugged than the Yajei Pass but not as difficult as the Batakhun Pass. The local people, including Tangiri of the upper Batraith River, use the Moshadogan Pass, but the Singal people do not.

Throughout the year, both the Moshadogan and the Yajei Passes can be used by a large herd of cattle without difficulty. It is quite important to have these two passes for the Darelis to take their cattle for grazing in their summer pastures at Mayornot and Maja Sagar, located in a high plateau above the passes.

Shallpakar, the middle way from Yajei Pass to Lulei in the Darel Valley, is a small grazing pasture with two huts (dukuri), which can be used by any resident of the Darel Valley. From Shallpakar, a picturesque scene of the Shosharepati and Googli mountains, including Lurei and Gotobo of the upper Darel Valley, can be viewed. Looking up from Gotobo, the Yajei Valley and the Yajei Pass can be viewed. The vegetation becomes scarce towards the head of the Darel Valley beyond Lurei and Gotobo. Lurei, with 20 dukuri-style huts, and Gotobo, with four or five huts, are the summer villages of Mankial, but cattle can move onto Maja Sagar. Conifer trees and cedar, are growing at Atth along a small stream of the Darel River as well as at the side of the mountains (Figure 7). Behind the cedar trees is a polo ground.

### **THE FIELD RESEARCH, 2004**

The Batakhun Pass was covered in the 2004 field research efforts which also included the entire course of the Batraith River and the Maja Sagar-Yajei region. On the Batraith River, Hamaran is the last permanent village, while Ushkur, reached by jeep (24 km from the mouth), has only two or three houses and after that is an area solely for summer villages.



FIGURE 7: LOOKING TOWARD THE HEAD OF THE DAREL VALLEY FROM BERAOUS AND ATTH.

There are nine sub-valleys and five summer settlements on the Batraith River.

The sub-valleys of the Btraith above Ushkur are (1) Gailo N (left bank), (2) Kushkui area (left), (3) Hangudas (right), (4) Chuno Batraith (left; reaching Chileli Gali to the very head of Darel), (5) Duboga (left), (6) Kasfira (right), (7) Moshadogan (reaching Moshadogan Gali to Darel, Yajei, used by Batraith people), (8) Roshana (right; reaching Roshan Gali to Roshan Gah), (9) Gulmucha (right; reaching Glumti Gali to Glumi Gah). From there, Batraith continues toward the head water, while Shen Gah continues to reach the Brishardai Gali to the Singal Gah. On the Batraith, there are five summer settlements to be reached: Dalamai Athar, Mayarnot, Bari (ponds), Amir Hayatai Athar, Howlet Khan-e-Athar before arriving in the Maja Sagar area. Tracing up the Batraith Valley, the Maja Sagar area starts on the right bank of Batraith River after Howlet Khan-e-Athar and ends at Maja Sar Lake, at the foot of the glacier-covered Kini Chish Mt (4940m).

The Batakhun Pass is located to be southwest of the end of the Maja Sagar plateau (Figure 8). The steep climb toward the Batakhun Pass starts from its foot at Maja Sagar. Had we come from the Singal Valley via the Patharo Pass, it would have taken one and a half hours to reach the foot of the Batakhun Pass from the Patharo Pass; namely, from the top of the Patharo Pass to Maja Sagar requires 30-40 minutes, crossing Maja Sagar to the foot of Batakhun Pass requires one hour. The north side of Batakhun is rocky, steep and dangerous and partially covered by snow with no vegetation. Despite being hampered by difficulty, one can step aside from the snow and walk to the top in an hour and half. For a few meters the Batakhun top is flat (Figure 9).

In contrast to the relatively easy climb to the Batakhun Pass from the north side, the descent on the south side along the Batakhun valley, a sub-valley of Chirah Valley, is lengthy and exhausting. Climbing down the extremely steep and rugged slopes of the Batakhun Valley is also very dangerous (Figure 10). The descent from the Batakhun Pass to Matic on the Darel Valley, it took four hours and 20 minutes; from the Batakhun top to Sonibas one hour; Sonibas to Rai-

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FIGURE 8: FROM THE BATAKHUN PASS, LOOKING TOWARD THE MAJA SAGAR AND THE PATHARO PASS.



FIGURE 9: THE TOP OF THE BATAKHUN PASS, LOOKING TOWARD THE MAJA SAR LAKE.



FIGURE 10: LOOKING DOWN THE STEEP SLOPES OF THE CHIRAH NALAH FROM THE TOP OF BATAKHUN PASS.

bas 20 minutes; Raibas to Dhat one hour; Dhat to Chirokhun one hour; Chirokhun to Madre/ Kasholi 30 minutes; Kasholi to Matic 30 minutes.

The climb up to the Batakhun Pass from the Darel side starts from Kasholi. There are two or three huts along the Chirah Valley. At Madre, the Chirah Valley is very narrow but then it opens up and is flat up to Dhat. It takes one and a half hours from Kasholi to Dhat, which is the junction of the Chirah Nala and small Batakkun sub-valley, where the steepness increases. It will take four hours to cover from Dhat to the top of the Batakhun Pass. There are two spots in the Batakhun sub-valley, Raibas (King's camp) and Sonibas (Queen's camp), where people normally stay overnight before reaching the Batakhun Pass. Only goats can go over the Batakhun pass in April and May. Smaller in size, a special species of cow and buffalo in the Darel Valley will go up the Batakhun pass only in June or July or , if earlier, by way of the Yajei Pass. Cattle have difficulty coping with the steep slope of the Batakhun Pass and are often lost on the way.

However, the Batakhun Pass is still considered the quickest and the shortest way linking the Darel and the Singal Valleys. It is used for emergency. In the months of July, August, and September, a man with a light load or cattle can go by the Batakhun Pass reaching Kasholi (Chirah) 90 minutes faster than those coming from the Yajei Pass.

The Batakhun Pass can be considered a strategic route rather than the normal trail. In this regard, a legend on the goat at the Batakhun Pass, collected during our field work reads as follows: 'Once, there was a famous goat at the top of the Batakhun Pass. The goat had a capacity to send signals to the Darelis concerning any possible invasion by kicking her feet on the ground. By doing so, it created the sound of drum. Being alerted, the people would light a fire to make the whole Darel Valley aware of the danger and assembled at Darband, their defensive gateway.' This legend reveals how the Darelis were prepared for any imminent invasion, and how

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they were depending on the Batakhun Pass as a strategically important point. From the top of the Batakhun Pass, almost 80% of the entire Darel Valley up to Samigiyal, close to Pouguch, can be viewed.

A network of the 'Batakhun Pass Defense System' in the Batakhun area, including Darband at the head of the Darel Valley, seemed to have existed. It was a defensive system, protecting the entire Darel Valley, including Pouguch, a possible Buddhist establishment, where Fa Hsien must have made the pilgrimage (Tsuchiya 2002 b). Watchmen were said to have been posted at the strategic points around the clock to look out for any sign of smoke from the Batakhun Pass at the mouth of the sub-valleys, such as Brigah (Barigah), Gharicot, Lati, Bonil and Shadorghah (near by Samigal Pain) on the left bank of the Darel River. When the smoke was spotted, fires were then set at each watch-point. Fires were made with wood but smoke (dua) was important rather than fire itself. No watch towers were built since there was no space available in the mountains.

Darband (dar meaning gate, band meaning close), the most important defense location in the Darel Valley, was established at the point where all the routes to the Darel Valley from Tangir, Batraith, Singal, and Kargah valleys came together. The Brigah, the last valley to join the Darel Valley at Matic, links Kargah and Darel. Darband was constructed just 1 km south of Matic.

Darband consists of a gate and wall on the right bank and a long wall on the left bank of the Darel River along the slope of the mountains reaching to a cliff. Harone was the farthest point we could reach during the previous field trip made in 2000, from which we could sight the wall of Darband, about 1km away. The location of Darband seems to have been aptly chosen by the presence of a high cliff, towards which a wall was constructed so that the path could be directed towards the gate. The gate was at the foot of the precipice soaring close to the right bank of the Darel River. Though diminished, as piles of rubble have fallen from the old wall, a portion of old wall near the gate remains, and an open space, where the gate (darband) was standing until 1980s, is recognizable (Figure 11) A long defensive wall, reaching to the side of the mountains where the valley is wide and open, was constructed on the left bank of the Darel River (Figure 12). The wall must have been 2 to 2.5m high and 1m wide. But at present, it is only 1ft high just enough to indicate the location of the wall. The wall ended at the point where it touches the cliff of the mountain. However, traces of the wall, climbing up the side of the mountains for a considerable distance, can still be discerned.

The gate of the Darband existed until the 1980s. Taj Rahmat, our research assistant from the Darel Valley, remembers, as a young man, that the gate was still standing. It was a wooden frame of pine without a door, which must have already been lost at that time. The frame was carved with a floral design. The up-right was 30cm wide, slightly less than 3 meters high; the width of the gate was enough for a laden animal (horse or donkey) to pass through. A man on a horse-back could also go through. The gate staff seemed to have been removed by people who, for the sake of the floral decorations, sold it.

These remnants of Darband provide us enough information to assume that the above mentioned defensive system of Darband did exist in the upper Darel Valley. The scale of the Darband system suggests that the defense of the Darel Valley was a very serious matter and a considerable effort was given to maintain constantly this defensive line as a FDL (forward defended locality).

Darband, stretching on both sides of the Darel River at the narrow point in the upper Darel Valley, is strategically located below the mouths of the various sub-valleys which led to the passes where an enemy might venture an invasion to the Darel Valley from the side of the Gilgit River Valley. Any possible attacks, attempted by crossing several passes into the Darel Valley such as Batakhun Pass, Yajei Pass, Moshadogan Pass and Chileli Pass, could be shielded off at



FIGURE 11: THE GATE SITE AT THE WALL OF DEWAR DARBAD ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE DAREL VALLEY



FIGURE 12: THE DEFENSIVE WALL OF DARBAND AT NELEEGUL ON THE LEFT BANK OF THE DAREL RIVER.

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Darband, because the routes from these passes are all located to the north of Darband. Therefore all the routes coming into the Darel Valley from the Batakhun, Yajei, Moshadogan and the Chil-  
leli Passes and Chuno Batraith from the Batraith Valley, had to pass through Darband in order to enter the Darel Valley. In other words, any possible attacks coming from the Gilgit Valley sides, such as Gilgit, Kargah, Singal, Glumuti, Roashan or Bathraith valleys, which have their mouths on the Gilgit River, can be defended at Darband.

The only exception is the Ishkobar Valley, reaching the Darel Valley south of Darband at Yashot, but it is connected to the Khanberi Valley which has its mouth on the Indus, a natural defense line and less threatening. The Ishkobar Valley is not used frequently by the Darelis because their grazing area is at the head of the Barigah, so they go by the Barigah Valley to the Khanberi Valley and not by Ishkobar Valley.

The presence of Darband, near the head of the Darel Valley, clearly indicates that the entrance to the Darel Valley is at the head of the valley, and, not at its mouth, where the Darel River joins the Indus River and where no defensive system has been found so far. The Indus River must have been the major factor which discouraged any attacks from the mouth of the Darel Valley. Therefore, the safest place in the Darel Valley was close to the mouth of the valley.

Pouguch, which we consider to be the site of a temple where Fa Hsien made his pilgrimage, is located only 15.3km from the mouth of the Darel Valley. This location itself may reflect the nature of the site as a suitable location for a religious institution, which requires tranquility and peace, far from the defense line. Judging from the red clay, the material used for the construction of a wall of the site, it could be discerned to be a temple and not a for a structure used for a defensive purpose such as a fortress. The material of the wall at Pouguch, not stone as in Rajikot but a red clay, is only available at Ath and beyond at the upper valley as well as on the Maja Sagar plateau. The clay used for the wall construction must have been transported from the upper valley, which is more than 40km from Pouguch. This indicates that special consideration must have been given to the construction of the wall at the University site at Pouguch; not using stone but clay, which is less defensive, suggests that the site was not meant to be a fortress, as Stein considered (Stein 1928, 32) but was originally designed to be a religious site.

## CONCLUSION

The present field research provided us a vista of the Maja Sagar area on the roof of the Gilgit Mountains, where we under normal circumstances normally are unable to travel for security reasons. The Maja Sagar area is much more vast than we had imagined.

Traffic to summer villages in the upper Patharo, Kurguzi and Satachaw valleys, sub-valleys of the Singal Valley, seemed to present an option for the travel conditions Fa Hsien might have experienced. Food supplies for summer villages and pastures have to be transported frequently and this incessant flow of traffic necessitates the maintenance of the roads. It was already clear at the time of our field work of May 2001 that recent landslides and falling rocks would not stop the flow of traffic of transhumance from their permanent villages to their summer villages. This indicates that the road in the Singal Valley must always be kept passable from spring, when the cattle is driven to summer pasture, to autumn, when the cattle must be brought back to the permanent villages before winter starts. This pattern of traffic in relation to transhumance must have been in practice from ancient times as the most basic system in the semi-nomadic style of living. It could be discerned that even at the time of Fa Hsien, the road in the Singal Valley must have been kept functional for the traffic, not only for cattle but for those heading towards the Darel Valley.



The Yajei Pass proved to be the alternative to the Batakhun Pass. Coming from the Singal Valley via the Patharo Pass, it would take much longer to detour and cross the Yajei Pass, but it seems that a large amount of traffic tends to choose the Yajei because of its easy approach and crossing. All the passes are closed during the winter by snow except for the Yajei Pass. The Batakhun Pass, on the other hand, is difficult to cross even during the summer season when the loaded animals and cattle can not negotiate the steep climb.

We could cover the entire course of the Batraith Valley which was gradual and easy. However, the way from Gakuch via Gupis to the end of the Batraith Valley was almost twice as long compared to Gakuch-the Singal route to the Yajei or the Batakhun Passes. Hence, the Batraith route has been dropped from the exploration of Fa Hsien's route.

Up to the present exploration, the Batakhun Pass had been regarded as the normal route from the Singal to the Darel Valleys. However, it was verified by our field research that the Yajei Pass, an open pass having neither snow nor glacier, makes an ideal pass for traffic heavy with loads or with a big herd. In contrast, the Batakhun Pass is closed from November to April or May. Additionally, with its ruggedness and steepness being a hazard, we now consider the Batakhun Pass to be inappropriate for normal traffic. The Batakum Pass seems to have been used only as a quick route for emergencies and was regarded an important strategic point in defense of the Darel Valley. To have these alternatives, either the Batakhun or the Yajei Passes, must have given more expediency to the traffic - quick but dangerous for the Batakhun Pass and slow, long but easy for the Yajei Pass.

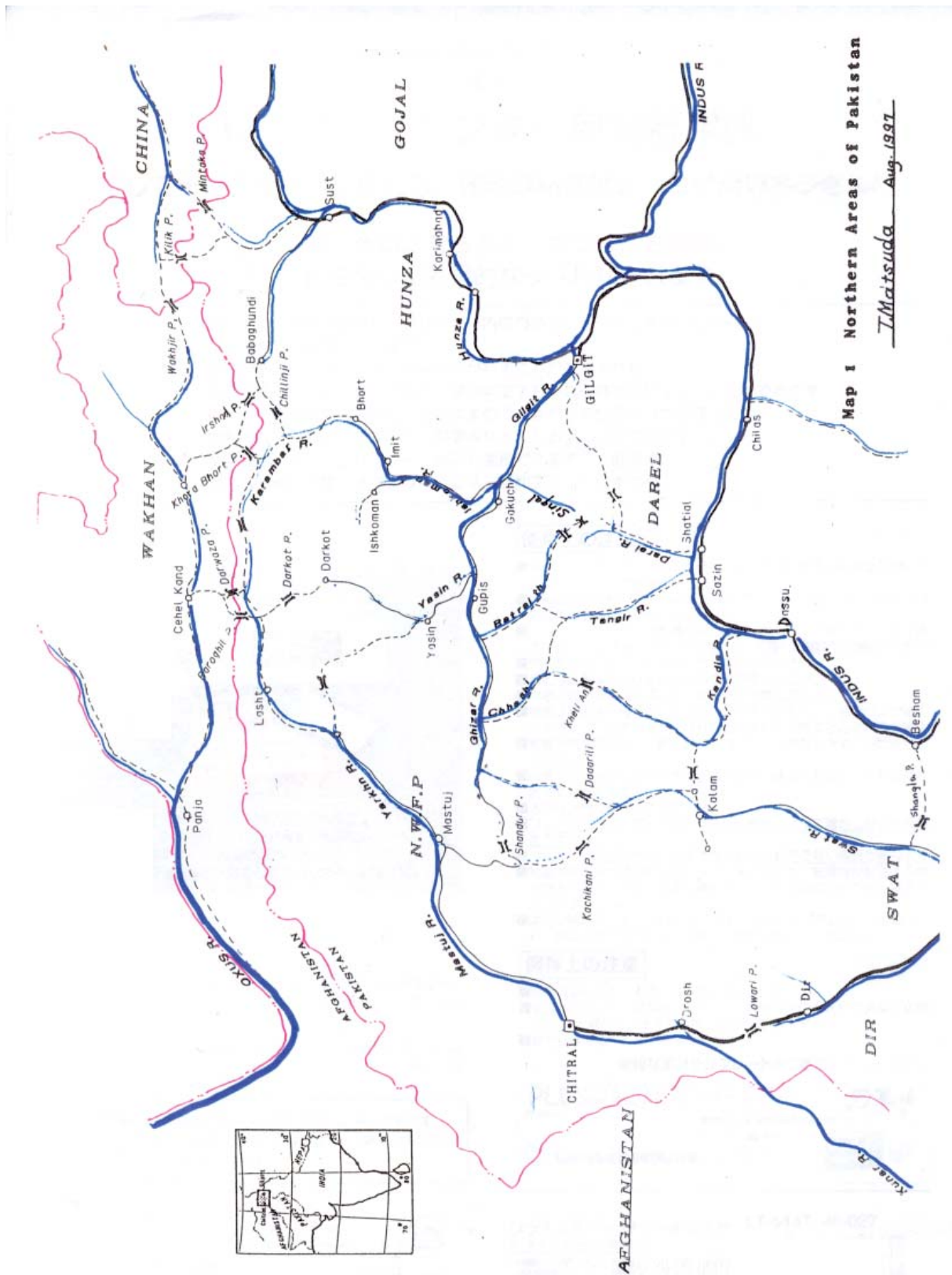
The present field work made clear that the head of the Darel Valley was used as the entrance of the valley in ancient times. The geographical, topographical and social features had established the two gates, the Yajei and the Batakhun passes, connecting the Singal Valley to the Darel Valley. The Batakhun Pass had been well known being the pass at the head of the Darel Valley, but now the Yajei Pass should be regarded as the common pass, linking the Darel and the Singal Valleys.

Previously, we thought that the route Fa Hsien took from the Singal Valley to the Darel Valley must have been through the Batakhun Pass. After the field work of 2003 and 2004, we are in a position to propose a new route for Fa Hsien via the Yajei Pass, the pass which had been left in obscurity and had never been highlighted historically. However, the Batakhun Pass has always remained important strategically. The presence of the Batakhun Pass, standing like a shield, must have served to the Darelis as a powerful defense location for the Darel Valley. The Yajei Pass and the Batakhun Pass, with their respective functions, stand always as the two gates of the Darel Valley.

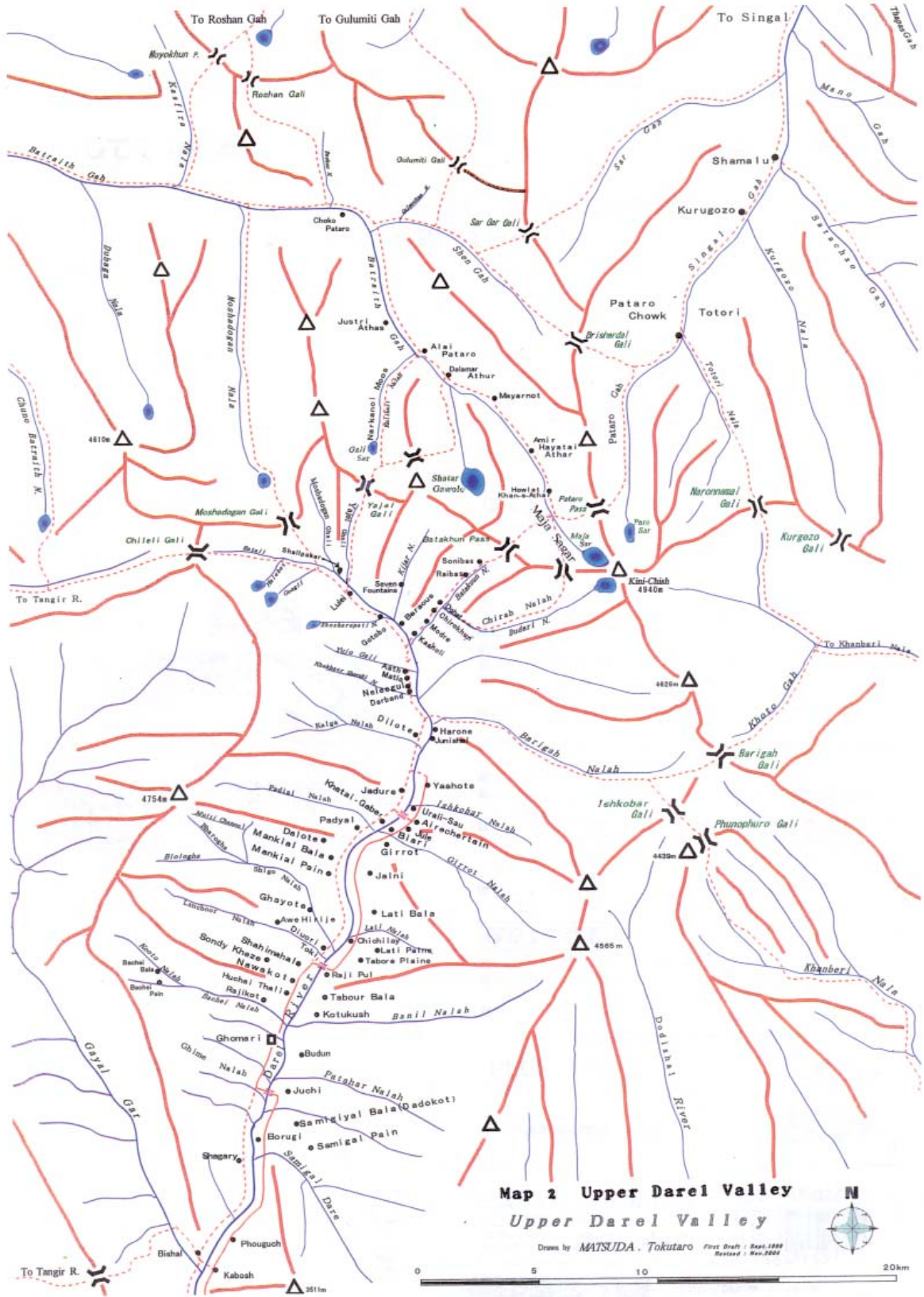
[The present field research was directed by Haruko Tsuchiya and Amjad Ayub, Research Associate, assisted by Taj Rehmat, Field Assistant. Editorial assistance was provided by Patrice Fusillo and maps were prepared by Tokutaro Matsuda.]

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MAP 1 NORTHERN AREAS OF PAKISTAN



MAP 2 UPPER DAREL VALLEY



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# *The ‘Greek Grid-Plan’ at Sirkap (Taxila) and the Question of Greek Influence in the North West*

RACHEL MAIRS

Sir John Marshall’s excavations at Taxila (1912-1934) revealed a distinctive, regular street-plan in the city of Sirkap, which he attributed to the influence of Greek theories of town-planning:

the city was laid out on the typically Greek chess-board pattern, with streets cutting one another at right angles and regularly aligned blocks of buildings. Notwithstanding that the city was several times destroyed and rebuilt and that many transformations were made in individual buildings, this Greek layout was on the whole well preserved down to the latest days of the city’s occupation (Marshall 1960: 5).

In Marshall’s assessment of the three successive cities of Taxila, at Bhir Mound, Sirkap and Sirsukh, this rigidly-planned Hellenistic city stands in neat contrast to its ‘irregular, haphazard’ (Marshall 1960: 22) Indian predecessor and its Central Asian successor. Even where scholars now adopt a more nuanced approach to interpretation of the data from Taxila, tacit acceptance of Marshall’s theory of Greek influence on the urban plan at Sirkap has tended to be the rule (Ghosh 1948: 4; Puri 1966: 115; Sharma 1987: 11; Dani 1988: 65; Erdosy 1988: 135). The influence of Marshall’s view may also be seen in interpretation of the city of Shaikhan Dheri, at Charsada (Wheeler 1962: 13-14; Dani 1965/66: 24).

Without the benefit of a site-plan to hand (Figure 1), the descriptions applied to Sirkap could lead to a misleading impression of the actual city layout. ‘Grid-plan’, or ‘gridiron’, (eg Erdosy 1988: 135; DK Chakrabarti 1995a: 177, 179) and ‘chessboard’ (eg Marshall 1960: 5, 22; Sharma 1987: 11) are the terms which occur with greatest frequency. Some studies do reveal a certain unease with the conventional ‘grid-plan’ or ‘chessboard’ descriptions of Sirkap - even if they do not abandon them altogether - and appear hesitant to overstate the case (eg Ghosh 1948: 4; Tarn 1951: 179; Puri 1966: 115; Ghosh 1973: 61). Erdosy notes that ‘while the layout of streets indeed recalls the gridiron plans of Hellenistic towns, in other respects the classical precepts are not followed’ (Erdosy 1990: 668). Castagnoli, whose work on Hippodamian town planning in the Greek world will be discussed below, limits himself to describing Sirkap as ‘one of the last echoes of the city patterned per strigas [“in rows”]’ (Castagnoli 1971: 92). The layout of the excavated sector of Sirkap is regular, revealing some degree of internal planning, but this is a regularity of reasonably straight streets and rectangular blocks, not of even, chessboard-like squares. Although the contrast with the winding lanes of Bhir Mound (Marshall 1951: Plate 2) remains a stark one, it is possible to go too far in emphasising Sirkap’s regularity.

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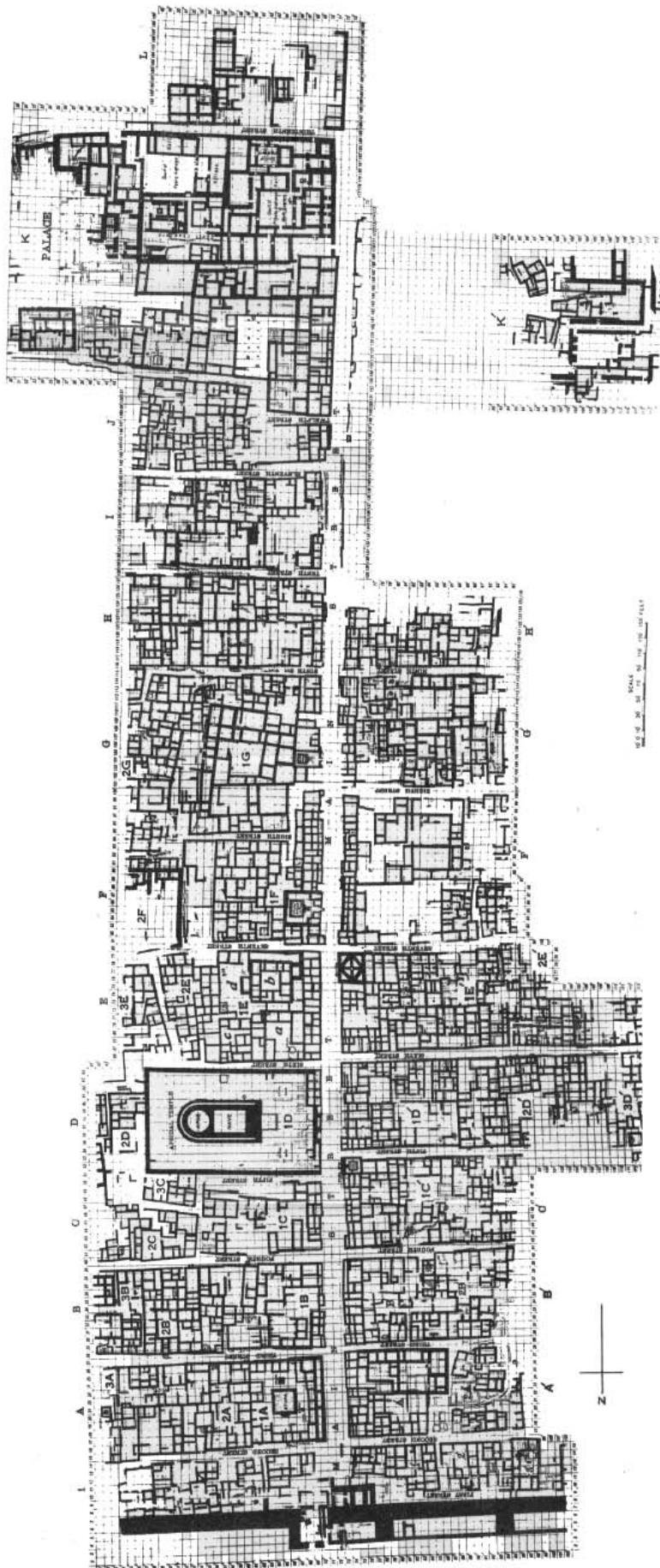


FIGURE 1 PLAN OF SIRKAP: MARSHALL (1960), FIGURE 2. (FULL PAGE)

The issue here is not merely one of semantics. The idea that Sirkap possesses a ‘grid-plan’ comes with a certain weight of cultural baggage, in particular the notion that such a plan must be Greek in origin, associated with the spread of Greek influence in the North West under the Indo-Greeks. It is possible to set Marshall’s ‘typically Greek chess-board pattern’ in a wider context of Classically-influenced, colonialist interpretations of ancient Indian art and archaeology (Sharma 1987: 1; DK Chakrabarti 1997). The motivation behind such Classical comparisons may have been as much a matter of didactic technique as of cultural chauvinism. Citing examples where discussions of columns in Indian architecture introduced Graeco-Roman comparisons, V Chakrabarti suggests that ‘here the instances are used to familiarise the reader with a classical style of Indian architecture via European examples’ (V Chakrabarti 1998: 23-25). Marshall’s own background was in Greek archaeology, and he found ‘something appealing Greek’ (Marshall 1951: Preface) in the countryside around Taxila. Scholars inevitably conduct their analysis in a particular social or political milieu, but it is also important to remain aware of how such analyses can continue to hold influence. This paper aims to address the question of the regular layout at Sirkap and its origins; examine the basis for the argument that this represents the application of Greek urban planning; and finally discuss the implications for how we conceive of the spread of cultural influence in the North West. I do not aim to provide in-depth consideration of the archaeological evidence and all its ramifications. Rather, I suggest that more thorough exploration of the reasons why the ‘Greek grid plan’ interpretation cannot be substantiated, may provide greater insight into the assumptions underlying our analysis of ‘Classical influence’ in the North West.

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Marshall’s full publication of the site of Taxila appears in the three volumes of Marshall 1951, with Marshall 1960 (fourth edition) providing a shorter guide. Subsequent excavations were undertaken by Ghosh (Ghosh 1948). For a brief outline of successive excavations at the site, see Allchin 1993: 69. Callieri 1995 provides wider coverage of the archaeological evidence from the North-West in the Indo-Greek period.

Although Marshall revealed a wide swath of the urban layout at Sirkap, there are major problems with his control of the stratigraphy and chronology (Coningham and Edwards 1997/98: 54). The exposed ‘grid-plan’ was much later than the strata identified as ‘Indo-Greek’, but, on the basis of limited exploration of the lower strata, he concluded that the city-plan had remained basically unmodified (Marshall 1951: 56; Marshall 1960: 81). In fact, it is possible to see considerable change in the layout of the city over time (Coningham and Edwards 1997/98: 53). The regular street-plan excavated by Marshall is to be dated to the successors of the Indo-Greeks at Taxila (Erdosy 1990: 658-659, 667) and, although it clearly has its basis in a similar, earlier plan, much about the material culture and urban dynamics of the Indo-Greek period city remains unknown (Rostovtzeff 1941: 545; Narain 1957: 60 n170).

## **ANCIENT TOWN PLANNING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

The following sections will examine traditions of regular urban planning in the Greek world and South Asia, and question the idea that the plan of Sirkap is an exclusively Greek phenomenon, attributable only to Hellenistic planners. ‘Grid-plans’ were neither exclusive to the Greek world, nor universal within it and, as comparison with other regions will demonstrate, in any case provide a poor index of cultural influence. In addition, excavations at Graeco-Bactrian cities in Central Asia, such as Ai Khanoum, now provide a repertoire of potential comparisons for



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Sirkap. If we were to posit that the plan of Sirkap replicates a specifically Greek model, it is these to which we ought to look for prototypes. The only pressing reason for the regular layout of Sirkap is, in fact, provided by pragmatic considerations, and the position of the city as a new foundation on a 'green-field' site.

### *Greece and the Hellenistic World*

In the Greek world, the introduction of the grid-plan is usually credited to Hippodamos of Miletos (early 5th century BC). Although the archaeological record reveals a longer tradition of Greek urban planning, Hippodamos' theoretical writings mark a watershed (Shingley 2000: 89; Aristotle, *Politics* VII 1330b, 21). 'Hippodamian' planning, strictly speaking, is more than simply parallel streets demarcating regular blocks. At Miletos, one of Hippodamos' major projects, we find a 'real chess board pattern' (Castagnoli 1971: 12-13); Castagnoli notes with concern the lack of distinction usually made between simple, regular layout in rectangular blocks and true grid-planning on orthogonal principles (Castagnoli 1971: 56).

The application of this strict Hippodamian plan was at best inconsistent in the Hellenistic period (3rd – 1st centuries BC). The number of new Greek foundations in the territories conquered by Alexander the Great created considerable scope for town-planners. Priene, laid out in square blocks on an east-west axis, is the example par excellence (Wiegand and Schrader 1904; Castagnoli 1971: 84). Although the city was built on a steeply sloping site, the grid-plan was applied regardless, so that some of the streets had to be made into flights of steps (Shingley 2000: 89, 90, Figure 3.7). From the same period, Magnesia-on-the-Meander and Herakleia-under-Latmos are also strikingly regular (Castagnoli 1971: 84; Shingley 2000: 90).

Some adaptation to the constraints imposed by the site was, however, more common. At Olynthus (Cahill 2002), Castagnoli prefers to describe the rectangular residential blocks as 'longitudinal strips' (Castagnoli 1971: 14). At Ptolemais in Cyrenaica, the approach taken was quite flexible: 'the grid plan served as an allocation and planning device, as a skeleton to be fleshed out, and not a corset constraining building efforts' (Mueller 2002: 137). Pergamon, despite being a carefully planned city with exceptional monumental architecture, was forced to abandon the grid-plan altogether, terracing itself into the craggy terrain (Shingley 2000: 92, 97, Figure 3.12).

If we are to regard the regular plan of Sirkap as part of this same tradition, then there are other issues which must be considered besides plausible similarity in form. If a city on the plan of Sirkap were to be excavated in, for example, Asia Minor of the same period, we would doubtless regard it as within the tradition of the Hippodamian model, and be able to cite other examples of Hellenistic cities where the ideal paradigm of the grid-plan had been applied with similar casualness. The oblong blocks of Sirkap were, in fact, more normative in the Hellenistic world than the square blocks of Priene. In South Asia, in a region which has so far failed to reveal any really substantial presence of Greek material culture, more caution must be exercised in making any such identification. Long-distance contact with the Mediterranean world was possible, and is attested from the Graeco-Bactrian site of Ai Khanoum (Bernard 1980: 442; Robert 1968: 445-450; Gardin 1990: 190-191). Sirkap, however, is later and further east than Ai Khanoum: the direct transmission of Greek urban planning is not implausible, but additional evidence would be required to make it a compelling theory.

### *South Asia*

The evidence from South Asia reveals a similar picture of the confrontation of theory and

practicality in urban planning. There is a significant body of ancient Indian literature on principles of architecture and town-planning (in general, V Chakrabarti 1998). In addition to texts specifically of this genre (eg *Mānasāra*, *Mayamata*), more general treatises (eg Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*) include sections on the planning of settlements, and literary or philosophical works (eg *Milindapañha*) often contain accounts of cities, although these may be little more than conventional descriptions.

These texts do not formulate a unified, coherent theory of urban planning along grid-plan lines, and it would be a futile endeavour to attempt to extract one from them. The emphasis is generally elsewhere, whether on fortification and political organisation (*Arthaśāstra*), or on providing an evocative picture of a bustling, prosperous city (*Milindapañha*). Instructions on how a city should best be laid out bore in mind practical concerns, such as topography of the site (Joshi 2000: 34) and civic function/location of key buildings (Acharya 1927: 143-144). Even so, the passages which do refer to city layout are highly suggestive of regular planning as an ideal (see eg Dutt 1925: 15, 117; Ghosh 1973: 51; Shukla 1993: 268-269; Allchin 1995: 229-231; Sachdev and Tillotson 2002: 13). The question, of course, is to what extent these strictures were ever followed.

Jaipur provides a well-documented later example of the application of Indian architectural theory. The city was founded in the early 18th century, on an unoccupied site (Sachdev and Tillotson 2002: 33ff). It is divided into square blocks, although some irregularities are present within the broad structure (Dutt 1925: frontispiece; Sachdev and Tillotson 2002: 42). It is nevertheless clear that the regular pattern of Indian architectural texts could not always be applied so successfully as at Jaipur, by a single ruler on a 'green-field' site (Malville and Gujral 2000: 27). The grid-pattern 'represents a concept; it is not a plan' (Sachdev and Tillotson 2002: 26).

Gathering data from Early Historic city sites to test any theory is notoriously problematic (DK Chakrabarti 1995a: 263-278; Erdosy 1987: 2). Taxila is, inconveniently for our present purposes, the only Early Historic city to have been subject to sustained and extensive horizontal excavation. Scholarly opinion is divided on what can be inferred from the information available on ancient city layouts, ranging from the negative (Ghosh 1973: 60: 'of town-planning in the cities of the Ganga valley there is no evidence'), through the noncommittal (Erdosy 1988: 135: 'beyond residential zoning little can be said of the form of Early Historic cities, due to the lack of adequate exposure'), to the cautiously positive (Malville and Gujral 2000: 28: there are 'a few old excavated city sites with fortifications that answer to the shapes recommended by the architectural texts'). There are a couple of sites, however, whose layout has attracted particular attention. Bhita displays some evidence of internal planning, with houses of uniform size and orientation (Marshall 1912, but see the cautions stated by Erdosy 1995: 111-112). At Sisupalgarh, although the interior is still largely a blank, the square fortifications, oriented approximately along cardinal directions and with gates at regular intervals, suggest that the streets inside can only have been similarly regular (Lal 1949; Ghosh 1973; Erdosy 1988: 135; Joshi 2000: 36). We should not necessarily consider these sites as typical, and Allchin notes that 'little or no problem-oriented research has been made on this matter' (Allchin 1995: 207). A considerable disjunction might exist between theory and practice, and pragmatic considerations will always have been key in dictating a city's layout.

### *'The Central Asian Connection'*

Any theory that the urban plan of Sirkap derives from Greek prototypes must make reference to the excavated Graeco-Bactrian sites of Central Asia, the point of origin of the Indo-Greek invaders of the North West. A key contribution to this is made by Fussman's (1993) study of

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Taxila's Central Asian context. Without a demonstrated connection to the Greek cities of Central Asia, any supposed link between Taxila and the Greek Mediterranean becomes tenuous in the extreme. The question of how much contact with the western Hellenistic world – and, indeed, 'Greekness' – the Bactrian and Indo-Greeks retained in the 2nd century BC North West is one which deserves much more space than is practicable to devote to it here. The political and social framework within which any Greek-style town planning may have been applied at Sirkap is largely unknown. What we can do, however, is attempt to trace the diffusion of Greek town planning on the ground.

In the Seleucid empire, Dura-Europos and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris were both laid out on a grid-plan pattern, with some irregularity incorporated (Colledge 1987: 140-141, Figure 4; Castagnoli 1971: 90). There is, however, a considerable 'jump' across the Iranian plateau from these Mesopotamian cities to Central Asia. Here, Ai Khanoum is the only well-excavated major urban site (Bernard 1982; full publication: Bernard (ed) 1973, and subsequent reports). It possessed many of the key civic institutions of a Hellenistic city, such as a gymnasium and theatre, but it does not follow any grid pattern. The central palace is the most important feature, and the main street lies to the east of this, along the foot of the acropolis. Parallel streets are to be observed only in the (partially-excavated) south-western residential sector (Bernard 1990: 109). Elsewhere, the evidence is sparse. Balkh (ancient Bactra), Herat, Begram and Old Kandahar have not been excavated in such a way as to reveal anything of their internal layout in the Hellenistic period, although the regular ramparts and gates of Herat suggest to some 'the topography and grid pattern typical of Hellenistic cities' (Bernard 1994: 92; cf Lezire 1964). At Alexandria-in-Margiana, two main streets intersect in the city centre (Bernard 1994: 91). If anything, Sirkap conforms more strictly to a regular plan than its nearest Hellenistic neighbours across the Khyber Pass and Hindu Kush (Fussman 1993: 95).

What the absence of strict Hippodamian grid-planning in Greek Central Asia suggests is that the emphasis on such urban planning as a defining feature of Hellenistic city sites can be – and has been – taken a little too far. Although 'outside Greek-speaking areas, a rectangular street layout can be seen as a conscious embracing of Greek style, a sign of the extension of Greek tradition to new environments' (Shipley 2000: 92), the absence of such a layout should not be taken as a comment on the extent of Greek power and influence in the city. There are better indicators of Greek presence or influence than 'Hippodamian' grid-planning. What make a city identifiably 'Greek' (aside from the evidence of pottery types, coins, etc) are undoubtedly its civic features: theatre, gymnasium, public inscriptions. None of these have so far been identified at Sirkap. Although, of course, much of the site remains unexcavated, the highly debatable 'evidence' of Hellenistic-style grid-planning (which in its excavated form derives from post-Greek period strata) cannot be used to support Greek inspiration behind the city's structure and to ascribe to it a clearly-asserted Greek cultural identity.

### *Pragmatism?*

Caution must therefore be exercised in attributing the regular plan of Sirkap to any particular cultural group. I provide here two examples to illustrate the ubiquity of regular town-planning, and the dubious interpretations which can result from over-emphasis on the cultural background of a city's foundation.

Several sites of the Indus civilisation, most notably Mohenjo-daro and Kalibangan, are laid out on a regular plan – although nothing resembling a chess board. We encounter here the same problem of terminology as with regard to Sirkap. Beg, for example, refers to the 'checkerboard or grid pattern of town planning which originated in the Indus valley' (Beg 1986: 53). DK

Chakrabarti corrects such descriptions of the regular plan often encountered in Indus sites as follows:

Among the hypotheses thrown out of gear by modern research on the Indus civilization is the premise that its cities are based on chess-board patterns. The roads do not always move straight, nor do they criss-cross at right angles. At the same time there is clear evidence of centralized planning at all the major excavated sites (DK Chakrabarti 1995a: 115).

Whilst this provides the important evidence on urban planning in South Asia which we lack for the Early Historic period, it has also been used to support excessively diffusionist theories. Yonekura, for example, imagines that the Indus civilisation was the ultimate source of all grid-planning in the West, and that Taxila therefore ‘followed the Greek plan that was originally started in the Indus towns and then reimported there’ (Yonekura 1986: 137; for the development of the grid-plan in the Mediterranean world, see Castagnoli 1971: 2-7.). The idea of building in straight lines is surely not a concept so radical that it can have been developed only once.

Pharaonic Egypt provides a series of good examples of regularly-planned settlements. The greatest concentration of such sites before the Hellenistic period is in the Middle Kingdom. Kahun (Petrie 1891: 5-8, Plate XIV), Tell el Dab’a (Czerny 1999: 17-29, Plate 2) and Qasr el Sagha (Sliwa 1992: 179, Plate 1) are all laid out on an extremely regular plan, with straight streets and houses in blocks. At the pyramid town of Kahun, which was, in Petrie’s estimation, ‘laid out evidently by a single architect’ (Petrie 1891: 5), the town is divided into two zones, with large houses in one and smaller houses in the other, all built on identical plans, although these were modified over the period of the site’s occupation.

In Hellenistic period Egypt, rigid grid-planning again came into use for new foundations, raising the question of how far the respective Greek and Egyptian traditions of town planning can be said to have been an influence. Pragmatism seems to have been the major factor influencing the choice of regular city plans, and there is no need to see Greek triumphing over Egyptian, or vice versa, in the final choice of design (Mueller 2002: 133-134, 143). This is a point which may well be equally applicable to Taxila. In both Greek and Indian traditions, we find evidence of regular urban planning as a theoretical ideal alongside a more complicated archaeological picture. In these circumstances, applying the model of the encounter of differing traditions of urban planning in Hellenistic Egypt is a more useful approach than subjecting Sirkap to yet another academic ‘custody battle’ between Greece and India.

The question of why regular city plans should be designed in the first place may be answered very simply: ‘such plans seem to hold too many advantages for planners to have ignored them’ (Erdosy 1987: 9; cf Erdosy 1988: 135). Patterns of usage may require the alteration of regular layouts over time, whether extending houses or widening streets to cope with increased traffic, but for an architect laying out a new urban centre to deliberately give it winding streets and irregular blocks seems perverse. Even the more organic growth of a settlement at the intersection of two roads predisposes itself to some degree of regularity (Castagnoli 1971: 124). In certain types of urban settlement, straight roads and square or oblong blocks are very much the norm (Haverfield 1913: 15; Dutt 1925: 117; Jain 1972: 458). Things, naturally, are not always so simple:

The great majority of towns and cities in India (as elsewhere) have grown incrementally over long periods not from one pre-ordained plan. The opportunities for new, planned cities are comparatively rare, and even then no site

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is wholly without features (Sachdev and Tillotson 2002:26).

Essentially the same point has been made from a Classical perspective:

The regularity or irregularity of town forms depends entirely on the presence or absence of spontaneity in their birth and growth. The irregular city is the result of development left entirely to individuals who actually live on the land. If a governing body divides the land and disposes it before it is handed over to the users, a uniformly patterned city will emerge (Castagnoli 1971: 124).

A settlement's layout (regular versus irregular) is therefore largely decided by the circumstances of its growth, and particularly by the presence or otherwise of any centralised political authority overseeing urban development (Joshi 2000: 34). The Egyptian town of Kahun, for example, was constructed specifically to house workers on the royal pyramid complex. Joshi views the establishment of Sisupalgarh also within a very specific political framework: 'in terms of the history of Kalinga, the construction of this fortified town in the early second century BC represented a great event, i.e. the establishment of an order under a local monarch following the political chaos during post-Asokan times' (Joshi 2000: 39).

Sirkap fits within this general scheme of regularly-planned cities as functional layouts favoured by a centralised authority establishing a new political or military centre. At Sirkap, the area in which a regular city plan was imposed was on level ground, a suitable and convenient 'green-field' site (DK Chakrabarti 1995a: 177). The location offered many natural advantages, including the raised 'citadel' to the south (DK Chakrabarti 1995b: 286). Taxila was re-founded on adjacent sites by successive Central Asian invaders – whether these were Bactrian Greeks, Sakas, Parthians or Kushans is largely immaterial. The planners of each new city were presented with a fresh site on which to impose the urban plan they found most convenient. It is unnecessary to ascribe additional motivations to the planners, based on their cultural background. Incoming groups simply sought to enhance their prestige, or perhaps remove the prestige of a previous occupier of the region, by re-establishing urban centres. Ethnic and cultural interplay is something we should look for elsewhere, in areas such as art, iconography or language.

Although attempts have been made to reconstruct it (Coningham and Edwards 1997/98), the urban character of Sirkap remains elusive. Something which would tell us more about the city and its inhabitants – including the question of their cultural or ethnic identities – would be to focus rather on the city's dynamics, how it functioned on a day-to-day basis, and its institutions and how people used and related to them. Or, as Fussman puts it, with reference to a later period and with a slightly different ethnic slant, 'would a Central Asian traveler entering Taxila around the Christian era have felt at home?' (Fussman 1993: 87). If we were to re-phrase the question for our own purposes, we might ask 'would an Indian or Greek traveller have felt at home in Taxila of the 2nd century BC'? The supposed 'grid-plan' is unlikely to have struck either as inherently alien. The encounter, and later fusion, of Greek and South Asian culture may appear exotic to modern scholars with a Classical (Indian or European) education, but there is no need to impose this sense of alienation back onto the Taxila region under Indo-Greek domination. For a 2nd century BC resident of Sirkap, Greek-speaking or otherwise, to hear their city described as possessing a classically-Greek Hippodamian grid-plan would, it is quite possible, have been something of a culture-shock.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The layout of Sirkap was argued by Marshall to be based on a ‘Greek grid-plan’. As I have suggested above, this description misrepresents the rather looser regularity present in the city’s urban structure. That this amounts to the application of any culturally-specific system of urban planning is a dubious proposition. Cities with such regular layouts occur in many different regions and historic periods for pragmatic reasons. Those responsible for designing and constructing Sirkap laid it out in this way, not necessarily because of any overwhelming cultural reasons, but because it was a new foundation, on a new site.

Although attacking Marshall’s theories on ‘Greek grid-planning’ at Taxila runs the risk of degenerating into tilting at academic windmills, the exercise has greater heuristic potential. In areas where disciplines such as South Asian archaeology and Classical archaeology intersect, it is important that analogies should not always be accepted at face value. As discussed above, further examination of Greek practices of urban planning reveals the stark contrast between the Hippodamian model and the layout of the city of Sirkap. Although many Greek cities followed a regular plan, the same is true of settlements in any number of regions and historical periods, and we cannot, therefore, afford to consider Sirkap in a solely Greek context.

Another wider question which might be addressed is that of Greek influence in the North West. What are the essential mechanisms by which culture spread, and in what areas might we expect cultural borrowing or encounter to have been most active? Cultural connections may be highly visible in the art or material culture of a region – and the North West is a prime example of this – but how can we go about relating this to the people who created this material culture, and their social and ethnic identities? Without a more detailed cultural context, the urban plan of a city cannot be used to address these questions. Yet the site of Taxila, with its long history of occupation by diverse cultural groups, evidently offers much prospect for further work in this direction.

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