

The Geography of Gandhāran Art

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Edited by
Wannaporn Rienjang
Peter Stewart

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Finally, and fundamentally, we wish to express our sincere thanks to the Bagri Foundation and to Neil Kreitman, whose generous support has underpinned the Gandhāra Connections project from the outset.

Editors' note

Orthography

The editors have aimed for broad, but not dogmatic, consistency in orthography and use of diacritics, as well as some other conventions, throughout this book. We have endeavoured to apply a reasonable compromise between widely varying practices, embracing inconsistency where appropriate.

Provenance

The Classical Art Research Centre does not normally publish previously unpublished ancient artefacts which have no recorded provenance and have become known since 1970. We seek to avoid adding value and legitimacy to objects whose origins have not been properly documented. We have chosen to make an exception in the case of the heart-shaped lamp reported to have been found in Malakand District, which Stefan Baums interprets in his paper on the basis of a photograph and information provided to him. There are two reasons for this exception. Firstly, the challenges posed by the loss of provenance information are an explicit focus of the paper, which demonstrates how epigraphic evidence may be used to try and mitigate the problem and partially to re-contextualize unprovenanced objects. Secondly, the historical value of the inscription on this object makes it imperative that it should become available to scholarly discussion.

Contributors

Stefan Baums is lead researcher of the Buddhist Manuscripts from Gandhāra project at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and teaches Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit language and literature at the University of Munich. His research focuses on the edition of early Buddhist manuscripts and inscriptions, and on the linguistic description of Gāndhārī. His recent publications include a new corpus and translation of Gandhāran relic inscriptions, and the ongoing Dictionary of Gāndhārī.

Pia Brancaccio is a member of the Art and Art History Department at Drexel University, Philadelphia. She teaches courses widely across Asian art. Her research focuses on Buddhist art from South Asia. Her work has addressed various aspects of art and multiculturalism in the ancient world. She is co-editor, with Kurt Behrendt, of *Gandharan Buddhism: Archaeology, Art and Text* (2006).

Muhammad Ashraf Khan is Director of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, and Chief Editor of the *Journal of Asian Civilizations*. He was formerly Director of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, and former Deputy Director of Taxila Museum. He has conducted extensive excavations and preservation of the Buddhist sites in Taxila, particularly Bādālpur monastery complex and Jinnan Wali Dheri monastery. He is a co-author of *A Catalogue of the Gandhara Stone Sculptures in the Taxila Museum* (2005).

Zarawar Khan is an Assistant Professor of Archaeology at the University of Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, of Pakistan. He has participated in excavations at Chitral, Hund, and Sampur Dheri, Baja Swabi under the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His area of specialization is Buddhist Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Gandhāra. He has published research papers dealing with different aspects of Gandhāran art.

Muhammad Habibullah Khan Khattak is former Director of Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and Museums, and former Director (Heritage), Ministry of Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage, Pakistan. He is currently Chief Editor of the journal *Frontier Archaeology*. His most recent excavation and conservation project includes the Buddhist site of Takht-i-Bāhī. He is also involved in a research collaboration between Leicester University and Hazara University on the origin of the Kalash people (Black Kafirs) of Chitral.

Abdul Ghafoor Lone He has carried out excavations at Jinnan Wali Dheri, Badla Pur Taxila, Harappa and Ban Faquirna-Islamabad. His main research interests includes Gandhāran art and history. He is currently working on the documentation of antiquities of the Department of Archaeology and Museums. He is also a co-author of *A Catalogue of the Gandhara Stone Sculptures in the Taxila Museum* (2005), *Taxila, Home of Stucco Art* (2005) and *Gandhara: History, Antiquity, Art and Personalities* (2004).

Satoshi Naiki is Assistant Professor at the Center for Cultural Heritage Studies, Kyoto University. His research focuses on the artistic traditions and carving techniques of Gandhāran sculptures, particularly those from the sites of Thareli and Ranigat in the Peshawar valley. His publications include *Gandhāran Sculptures and Buddhism* (2016), which is based on his PhD dissertation at Kyoto University.

Jason Neelis is Associate Professor and Chair at the Department of Religion and Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University. His areas of expertise cover South Asian religions, history, literature and languages, Buddhist transmission across Asia, and Gandhāran manuscripts, epigraphy, and archaeology. He is currently directing a project on the Upper Indus petroglyphs and inscriptions in northern Pakistan, and has been working on projects involving avadānas in the first century AD Gāndhārī manuscripts and the Buddhist rebirth narratives in the literary and visual cultures of Gandhāra.

Luca M. Olivieri is director of the ISMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan. He has been working in Swat for more than thirty years. His main long-lasting project is the ongoing excavations at the urban site of Bazira/Barikot. His principal interests include excavation and heritage management methodologies. In 2017 he was awarded with the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz* of Pakistan for his three decades of archaeological work in Swat.

Jessie Pons is Junior Professor in South Asian History of Religion, KHK Research Associate and Project Leader of Digitalization of Gandharan Artefacts (DiGA) at Centre for the Study of Religions (CERES) at Ruhr University Bochum. Her research focuses on Buddhist art with special attention to the representation of Buddhist narratives in Gandhāra, in oases of the Silk Road, and in the Indian Subcontinent. Her DiGA project aims to identify workshops producing Buddhist sculptures, the geographical and chronological logic of the school, and the history of Buddhism in Gandhāra.

Wannaporn Rienjang is Project Assistant of the Gandhāra Connections Project at the Classical Art Research Centre, Oxford. She completed her doctoral degree in Archaeology at the University of Cambridge on Buddhist relic cult in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Before starting her PhD, she worked as a research assistant for the Masson Project at the Department of Coins and Medals, the British Museum. Her research interests include the art and archaeology of Greater Gandhāra, Buddhist studies, and working technologies of stone containers and beads.

Peter Stewart is Director of the Classical Art Research Centre and Associate Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology at the University of Oxford. He has worked widely in the field of ancient sculpture. His publications include *Statues in Roman Society: Representation and Response* (2003) and *The Social History of Roman Art* (2008). Much of his research concerns the relationship between Gandhāran art and Roman sculpture.

Alexandra Vanleene is an independent scholar specializing in Gandhāran Buddhist art and archaeology. Her research focuses on the artistic tradition of Gandhāran sculptures in Afghanistan, particularly Haḍḍa, the geographic expansion of Gandhāran art, and the development of regional characteristics. She worked in Afghanistan for eight years with the French Archaeological Mission for the prospection and excavation of Bamiyan.



Map of the Greater Gandhāra



region (copyright: Jessie Pons).

Differences and similarities in Gandhāran art production: the case of the modelling school of Haḍḍa (Afghanistan)

Alexandra Vanleene

During the earliest centuries of the Christian era, the territories of north-western India, the current states of Pakistan and Afghanistan, developed, along the Silk Road, a branch of Buddhist art with complex and fascinating aesthetics and stylistic characteristics: the art of Gandhāra. The expression of this sacred art in the service of the hagiography of the Buddha varies according to the regions where it developed. Thus, Gandhāran art is a result of so many artistic influences, peculiar executions, and iconographic specificities, that the sharing of academic ideas and cross-cutting research are essential for casting light on the problems, by pooling specialist knowledge and different perspectives. How were the ancient artistic workshops organized? Were there itinerant artists? Which paths were taken by the various artistic influences? Did they come in several successive waves? In which direction were they propagated? How can we explain their liveliness and longevity? It appears necessary to deal with our observations both individually and holistically in order to understand the evolutions, exchanges, and interactions that make Gandhāran art so alive. To this purpose, we will consider the case of the modelling school of Haḍḍa in Afghanistan – a ‘modelling school’ as opposed to a sculpture school, though it also expressed itself through sculpture in stone and painting, of which we will present some examples. The profusion of artistic production in Haḍḍa is such that many masterpieces could be used to examine the theme of the differences and similarities in Gandhāran art production. However, in this paper we will focus on selected examples which are both eloquent and representative.

Let us introduce the monastery of Haḍḍa and some general considerations about its associated school of art. Haḍḍa is a modern village in Afghanistan, located near Jalalabad and built on the ruins of a pre-Islamic city, on which a great Buddhist monastic complex depended, which flourished during the earliest centuries of Christian era. From the nineteenth century, the successive explorations and research of General Claude-Auguste Court (Tarzi 1976: 381), Charles Masson of the East India Company (Masson 1841), and William Simpson (Simpson 1879) lead to the discovery of many artefacts and ancient coins, from the Graeco-Bactrian to Huna periods, revealing that the monasteries had had a very long period of activity.

The first excavation was carried out in 1923 by Alfred Foucher at Tape Kalān, ‘the Great Hill’, for the French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan. The excavation unearthed many *stūpas*, and revealed a little known aspect of the art of Gandhāra: stucco modelling (Hackin 1928). From this moment, Foucher established a link between the sites of Taxila and Haḍḍa, to which we will return. In order to extend the research, Foucher commissioned Jules Barthoux to undertake further archaeological surveys in the area. Between 1926 and 1928, he almost completely excavated Tape Kalān and twelve other sites, including six important monasteries: Bāgh Gaï, Gār Naō, Pratès, Chakhil-i Ghoundi, Deh-i Ghoundi and Tapa-i Kafarihā. Adorning the *stūpas*, the chapels and the monasteries, Barthoux discovered a whole population of statues modelled in clay and stucco, more than 15,000 sculptures, apparently testimonies of Hellenistic-Buddhist art in its maturity, as well as limestone and schist sculptures (Dagens 1964) and a few paintings (Barthoux 1930; 1933).

After Barthoux’s mission, archaeological excavations in Haḍḍa stopped and did not resume until 1965, with the survey of Lalma by the Japanese team of Seiichi Mizuno (Mizuno 1968). The newly established Afghan Institute of Archaeology also commissioned Shaïbaï Mostamindi to survey Tapa-e Shotor, ‘Camel Hill’, where he conducted seven campaigns from 1965 to 1972 (Mostamindi 1968; 1969; 1971; 1973).



Figure 1. Stucco heads of bodhisattvas and 'geniuses' found at Haḍḍa in the 1920s. (Photo: after Barthoux 1930: pls. 31, 33, 35a, 38, 54d, 56a and 79d.)

Following him, Zémarylai Tarzi continued the study of Tapa-e-Shotor during six campaigns from 1973 to 1979, and carried out two campaigns of excavation in Tapa Tope Kalān from 1977 to 1979 (Tarzi 1976; 1990; 1991). The successive archaeological projects have established that the earliest remains dated to the second century AD and that a generalized fire destroyed the site around the ninth century AD, during the Islamic conquest.

The art of Haḍḍa is one of high quality. It bears the mark of many local and foreign artistic influences, Indian, Graeco-Roman but also Central Asian (Figure 1), and it depicted local and foreign figure types (Figure 3). Little by little, the technical choices of modellers

turned out to be daring and original, as we will see with Niche XIII, which was decorated with statues in the round, detached from the wall. It should be noted that, because of the predominance of modelling, it was first necessary for the early investigators to prove that the art of Haḍḍa was an integral part of the art of Gandhāra, which was mostly known through its schools of schist sculpture. The first assumption of Foucher and Barthoux in regard to this substitution of materials was that it was necessitated by the absence of stone in the region. However, specific studies later found that several quarries existed near the sites (Courtois 1962; see also Cambon & Leclaire 1999). Thus, the use of modelling seems to be a deliberate choice, an affirmed preference.

Modelled sculpture is now reported on Pakistani sites: at Taxila of course (Marshall 1918; 1951), but also Ranigat (Nishikawa 1994), Chārsadda (Marshall & Vogel 1904), Rokri (Cunningham 1881), Sahrī Bahlol (Spooner 1914; see also Stein 1915), as well as Takht-i Sangin in Tajikistan (Spooner 1909). It has also been found in many Afghan excavations, around Kabul at Tape Marandjān (Hackin, Carl & Meunié 1959: 49-58; Tarzi 2001: 41), Tape Narenj (Païman 2005; 2006), Xwāja Safā (Païman 2005), Qol-e Tut (Païman 2018), Mes Aynak and Goldara (Fussman & Le Berre 1976) in Logar Province, Tapa Sardār near Ghazni (Taddei 1968; Taddei & Verardi 1978; Filigenzi 2008; 2009), Bāmiyān (Tarzi 2006 ; 2007), Fondoqestan, Pāitava and Karracha (Cambon 1996), Surkh Kotal (Schlumberger, Le Berre & Fussman 1983); many sites in Uzbekistan: Dalverzin Tepe (Pugačenkova 1978), Xalčajan (Pugačenkova 1965 & 1966, see also Staviskij 1986), and Kara Tepe (Staviskij 1996); and in Chinese Central Asia, at Kucha and Qarachahr (Stein 1912). Nowadays, we consider that there were not just one but several manifestations of Gandhāran art, which is precisely the subject of the 2018 Gandhāra Connections workshop. The diversity that we can observe may result from many factors: the nature of materials, the origin of artistic influences, but also aesthetic choices, new compositional modes, and individual iconographic choices.

Most of the time, the composition of sculpted scenes discovered in Haḍḍa is quite similar to those found on Gandhāran stone reliefs. However, iconographic choices highlight regional preferences. There are indeed specific episodes that were widespread because of a regional predilection, such as for example the *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka*.¹ From our iconographic examination of the whole decoration of Haḍḍa's monasteries, it appears that the most represented canonical episodes of the Buddha's hagiography are scenes of *jātakas* on the one hand, miracles and conversions on the other hand (Vanleene 2011). In short, episodes from the 'third' part of his life, from the First Sermon (which seems to be by far the favourite subject) until the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*. As in the rest of Gandhāran production, protagonists of Buddhist legends are mostly represented with the familiar idealized appearance: an attitude of meditation, half-closed almond-shaped eyes, a placid expression, an *uṣṇiṣa*, and an *ūrṇa* for the Buddha and bodhisattvas (Figure 1).

Tarzi conducted a detailed study of modelling techniques with regard to the different materials used (unbaked clay, clay covered with stucco, lime stucco, and plaster stucco) and the settings and cores of the sculptures (Tarzi 1986). The discovery of the clay sculptures of Nisa by Ariela Bollati, dating back to the Arsacids around the middle of the second century AD, allows us to observe the continuity of this technique from the Hellenistic period to the Kushan period, which then developed in the direction of Gandhāra (Bollati 2005).

Tarzi has shown that some smaller heads discovered in Haḍḍa resulted from a moulding technique, obtained through the pressure of a mask on the clay/stucco (Tarzi 1986). Could these masks have been copied, or did they travel in the suitcase of itinerant artists? Pursuing this idea, we said earlier that from its first discovery, the artistic production of Haḍḍa was viewed in parallel with that of Taxila, in spite of the geographical distance between them. Foucher went so far as to declare that the excavations

¹ *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka* takes place in part in Afghanistan. In this episode, the devotee Sumegha spread out his hair spontaneously over a puddle, so that *Dīpaṅkara*, the *Buddha* of the past, will not get his feet dirty. Thus, Sumegha receives the prediction of his next incarnation under the appearance of the Buddha Śakyamuni.

of Sir John Marshall laid the foundation for the interpretation of Haḍḍa and that ‘from Djellalabad to Rawalpindi, we were dealing with the same school of art’ (Foucher 1942: 155). We will return to the issues and implications of such links for travelling workshops and artists. Note that the excavations of Tape Narenj, Xwāja Safā and Qol-e Tut around Kabul, and Mes Ayak in Logar Province, have recently brought to light examples of populated niches similar to those of Haḍḍa and Taxila (Païman 2005; 2006).

What strikes the spectator in Haḍḍa’s art is the apparent opposition between idealized canonical figures and characters full of vitality and realism. The faces of secondary figures were certainly sometimes executed with a mould, but every detail of the face and the hair was reworked while the material was still soft, thus offering an astonishing variety of types as a result. Stucco allowed the coroplasts to give free rein to their imagination and to take the liberty of representing donors, monks, and demons with increasingly individualized or caricatured faces (Figure 2).

Note that the confidence of the artist-modellers allowed them to marry in the same space idealized and realistic types. Their works reflected the desire to capture and touch the viewer through an exaggeration of feelings, by accentuating the violence of the facial expression. The variety of physical ethnic types echoes



Figure 2. Stucco heads of monks and demons from Haḍḍa. (Photo: after Barthoux 1930: pls. 45, 60c, 60d, 100a, 100b, 100d.)



Figure 3. Modelled stucco sculptures representing donors and a Brahmin. (Photo: after Barthoux 1930: pls. 42, 64b; author; Barthoux 1930: pl. 48a.)



the variety of artistic influences: local/Afghan, Indian (Figure 3), and Chinese Central Asian (Figure 1). In the same way, artists did not hesitate to mix in the same place figures from various artistic traditions.

Let us take a closer look at some eloquent examples of the original and unique artistic expression of the Haḍḍa modelling school. They belong to a stucco niche representing the Renunciation, also called the Sleep of Women, the episode preceding the Great Departure (Figure 4). This scene is extremely refined, reduced to its main actors. The sleeping Yaśodharā/Gopa supports her head with one hand, wearing a necklace and bracelets. Her moon and solar disc headdress emphasizes a Sasanian influence, perhaps Hephthalite. Behind her is the squire Chandaka. He wears an unusual-shaped cap, a turban that goes back and forth on the front of the forehead. His features are highly

individualized. His depressed eyes and emaciated face give him a tormented expression, as he presents his helmet to Siddhārtha. The hairstyle of the prince is peculiar. It is neither a turban nor a diadem but a helmet with a circular ornament incised with concentric circles. This type of headdress is often encountered in representations from Mathūra (Hackin 1928: 73). Siddhārtha is in the position of relaxation, *lalitasāna*, ready to get up. Unfortunately his head and part of his arm are missing. He is shirtless, his lean body wrapped in an *uttariya* that rolls up and back around his shoulder. The faces, the jewels and the rendering of the bodies testify to an Indian and local influence more than of a Graeco-Roman one, and the torso of the prince, round and hunching forwards, is reminiscent of the later art of Fardoqestan.

The composition of this niche is resolutely unconventional, reduced to its main protagonists. Furthermore, in Buddhist composition, it is usually the Buddha who occupies the centre of the scene. Here, however, it is Siddhārtha's headdress that occupies the main spot, and catches the viewer's eye. It is an original dramatic device, which focuses not only on the depicted scene - that decisive and heart-breaking moment in which Siddhārtha will abandon his family - but also on a symbolic object, the turban, whose worship was widespread in Gandhāra. We will discuss a painted representation of this cult a little further on. Note that this tendency towards simplification is found



Figure 4. Scene of the Renunciation, TK71, stucco niche.
(Photo: after Barthoux 1930: fig. 46.)



Figure 5. Scene of the First Sermon at Benares, Tapa-e Shotor, Niche V2
(1.25 x 1.40 m), clay. (Photo: Z. Tarzi, personal photographic archive.)

on several reliefs and constitutes an original characteristic of Haḍḍa.

Little by little, the artistic audacity of the school also becomes evident through the modelling technique itself, giving birth to works almost completely detached from their support, in very high relief, and more and more monumental. Many examples of three-dimensional representations occur in niches and *caityas*, depicting characters marked by a strong Graeco-Roman heritage. Decorating the courtyard of *Vihāra* I in Tapa-e Shotor, niches V2 and V3 represent the First Sermon at Benares. The Buddha is enthroned with colossal proportions, surrounded by acolytes (Figures 5 and 7).

Excavations and study of these niches were conducted by Zemaryalai Tarzi. 1.40 m wide for 1.30 m deep, *caitya* V2 is dated to period TSh II (second half of the second century AD) (Tarzi 1991: 27). The centre is occupied by the Buddha seated on a high base covered with foliage while other figures are standing on a low bench leaning against the side walls: five monks, tutelary guardians, deities, and donors. On each side of the Buddha, the bottom corners of the niche feature two particularly interesting protagonists.

On his right is Vajrapāṇi represented as Herakles (Figure 6) (Tarzi 2000). Bearded and wearing a mustache and short curls, his face exudes gravity. He sits on a rock, his torso pivoting to present him three-quarter view and his face turned to the Buddha. With one hand, he holds the *vajra* on his knee. He is dressed with the lionskin, knotted at the hips and covering his thighs, while the head of the animal lies on his shoulder. The Herakles who lent his type to this Vajrapāṇi was identified by Tarzi: 'It is about the reappearance of a type that goes back to the Herakles Epitrapezios of Lysippus, and more particularly to its greco-bactrian variant that we found on Euthydemus coins² (last third of the third

² In this connection, and concerning a comparative study of this type of Herakles in Hellenistico-Buddhist art, see Tarzi 1976: 396; 1991: 29-30.

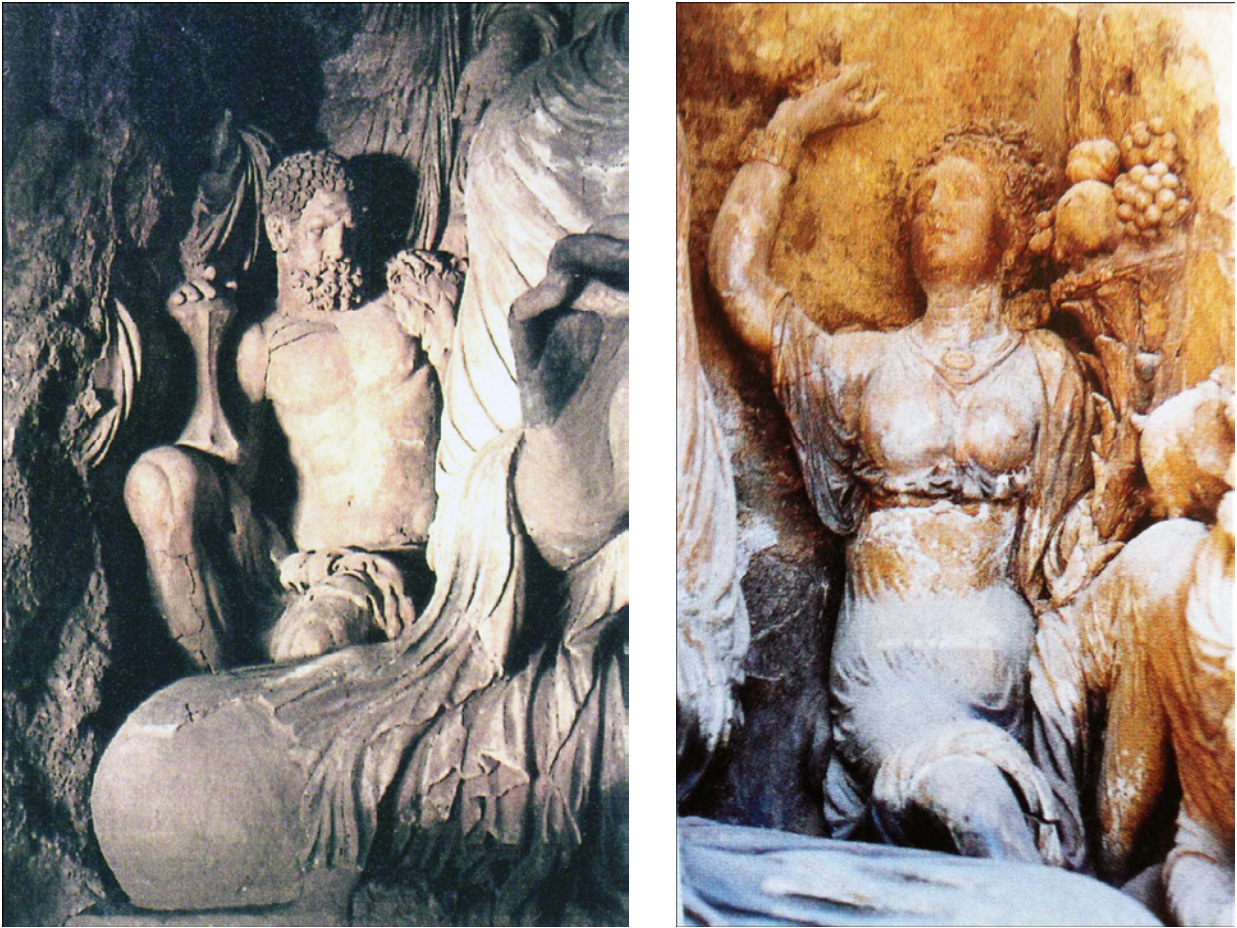


Figure 6. *Vajrapāṇi-Herakles and Hārītī-Tychē, Niche V2, clay.* (Photos: after Tarzi 1991, unnumbered fig.; Z. Tarzi, personal photographic archive.)

century BC)'. The representation of the anatomy, both in proportions and musculature, the flexibility of the garment, and the serious expression of the face make it a masterpiece of the art of Haḍḍa (Tarzi 1991: 30). The female figure arranged symmetrically, mirroring Vajrapāṇi, reveals the same degree of classical influence (Figure 6). Her head, slightly inclined backward, looks towards the Buddha. With one hand raised, she throws flowers at him, while her other hand holds a vegetal cornucopia overflowing with fruit. She is wearing a long *chiton*, knotted under the chest by a belt and a mantle covering her legs and back rests on her shoulder. The style of this woman is that of Tychē³ or Fortuna, who lends her type to representations of Hārītī, deity of abundance and fertility. The drapery is of Greek or Roman influence while the necklace and the bracelet are of Kushano-Parthian type.⁴

Caitya V3 is similar to the previous one, but Vajrapāṇi is represented like a Hellenistic king⁵ (Figure 7). His long curly hair, adorned by a diadem, frames a beardless but virile face, marked by *pathos*.

The adaptation of tutelary guardians reveals the virtuosity of the artists of Haḍḍa, borrowing foreign motives at leisure to adapt them to Buddhist legend. Note that in no case are we dealing with the

³ Concerning the Greek type of Hārītī, see Tarzi 1976: 400.

⁴ For indepth comparison in respect to Hārītī's jewels and ornaments, see Tarzi 1991: 37.

⁵ On the different types of Vajrapāṇi ('Alexander', Herakles, Zeus) and more on the similarities between the representation of Vajrapāṇi and Herakles, represented sometimes mature and bearded age, sometimes younger and beardless, see Foucher 1918: 48-63.



Figure 7. *The First Sermon, Vajrapāṇi-Alexander, Tapa-e Shotor, Niche V3, Clay (1.20 x 1.30 m).* (Photos: Z. Tarzi, personal photographic archive; after Tarzi 1991, unnumbered fig.; Tarzi, personal photographic archive.)

phenomenon of *interpretatio*. Although the artists make comparisons with the classical figures by analogies between attributes and functions, it is indeed the Indian characters of Buddhist legend who are represented with these features.

The realization of populated niches reaches its most successful state in the niche of the *nāga* (Figure 8). A jewel from the campaign of Mostamindi, Niche XIII was executed during TSh II but was remodelled during the TSh V period (second half of the third and first half of the fourth century AD): the floor was elevated by 40 cm and all surfaces were fully decorated. It is 2.40 m wide by 2.90 m deep. The entire niche was badly damaged by a fire that caused the roof to fall down, and the disintegration of statues by the internal combustion of their wooden core; however, it is preserved to a height of about 2 m. Of the thirteen or fourteen characters measuring about 1.50 m, and modelled in-the-round or in very high relief, six were still partially preserved: the Buddha, the *nāgaraja*, Vajrapāṇi, and a few *devas* or *bodhisattvas*.

The scene was set in an aquatic context: the walls and floors were covered in sinuous waves, representing swirls from which emerged flowers, lotuses and wriggling fish, associated with their monstrous marine relatives: serpentine fish with double heads and formidable teeth. Clothes seem 'wet' and the hair 'waved' under the effect of water. This is an innovation: the scene is taking place underwater and not just near the basin where *nāgas* live, as is it usually the case. The *nāgaraja* occupied the middle of the composition, off centered to the left. Dressed in a long wet *uttarāsaṅga*, clinging to his body, he is kneeling, and a snake is climbing up his back, revealing his nature.

The location of the Buddha is not certain but I agree with Tarzi's demonstration that he was probably standing in front of the *nāgaraja*.⁶ Several interpretations have been made to identify this scene. It could be the representation of the Tribute of the *nāgaraja* Kālikā to the Buddha, but another view supported by Mostamindi is that the scene depicted a local adaptation of the legend of *nāga* Gopāla, reported by Xuanzang in his *Si-Yu-Ki* around AD 629 (Beal 1906), Songyun around AD 518 (Beal 1869) and Shih Faxien, c. AD 400 in the *Fo-wo-ki* (Beal 1869).⁷

⁶ On this subject and the identification of characters see Kuwayama 1987; Mostamindi 1969 and Tarzi 1991: 166.

⁷ This legend, supposed to take place near Nagarāhāra, is about a destructive dragon inhabiting a cave seeping with water,



Figure 8. Niche XIII of Tapa-e Shotor (2.40 x 2.90 m), clay. (Photo: after Mostamindi S. & Mostamindi M. 1969: fig. 13.)



Figure 9. Characters in very high relief and monstrous fishes, Tapa-e Shotor, Niche XIII, clay. (Photos: Z. Tarzi, personal photographic archive; after Mostamindi & Mostamindi 1969.)

In addition to its iconographic interest, the artistic quality of this niche is remarkable. The undertaking is very bold, and is an accomplishment in itself. It involves populating a three-dimensional space with life-size statues, arranging them on several planes in respect to depth. The artists have invented various attitudes. Kneeling is represented at different moments of the act. Mostamindi writes of a ‘supremely refined art’, an ‘attentive realism of human forms’, a ‘science of drapery’ with ‘sets of fabrics falling in masses dripping or plated’ on bodies that we might think naked (Mostamindi 1969: 22). These features, again, will be found later in the art of Fondoqkestan. According to Mostamindi, this niche is to be considered under the direct influence of Hellenistic art.

The composition of niche XIII is still unparalleled in Gandhāran art. As our iconographic investigation, intended to search for precedents and correlations cannot be presented in detail here, we will summarize it through three examples.

The aquatic element represented by sinuous waves is not new. The relief of the eastern *Toraṇa* of Sanchi (third panel of the east side of the east face) depicts the Miracle of the Walk on the Water, during which the Buddha saves instruments of worship that the Kāśyapa had left behind, from Nairāñjanā in flood. We can note the similarity between the representation of the lotus profile on this relief and in the niche XIII: the long, sinuous stem emerging from the water and the blossomed flower, triangular in shape.

We also find this type of waves out of the Buddhist religious context: for example, on the *iwān* of Pendjikent, whose date was lowered by Giovanni Verardi to the fourth century AD, executed with the same material and technique (Verardi 1982). The scene features *nāgas* represented as fish-tailed men in an aquatic environment. The sinuous, modelled waves evoke swirls of water, as in the niche XIII.

Cave number 5 of the Udayagiri complex, located in Bhilsā, not far from Sanchi, and studied by Arthur Basham, also presents many similarities with niche XIII. Cave No. 5 is dated to the fifth century AD. It is decorated with a large carved relief about 4 m wide. The scene also unfolds on the side panels, which gives it a depth although it remains in low relief. It is a representation of Varāha, the incarnation of Vishnu as a wild boar, rescuing the goddess of the earth (Bhūdevī, also called Prithvi) from being engulfed by the Ocean. Varāha stands with his left foot resting on a rock. A female figure stands to his right, carrying a lotus stem that wraps around him, and a little Bhūdevī is holding onto the flower at the boar’s shoulder-level. In the lower register, in front of them, stands the *nāgaraja*. Water is depicted by sinuous lines representing the swirl of waves, and flowers and lotus stems decorate the scene. On the left side panel, the goddesses Yamunā and Gaṅgā stand in the middle of waters, represented by undulating lines converging and separating to meet again. According to Basham, the imagery of the aquatic world and the way of representing water by incised undulating lines has a classical western origin, as was suggested for niche XIII (Basham 1976: 132).

To conclude this short comparative iconographic study of aquatic representations, we can mention the Buddhas of Mathurā and their ‘wet’ drapery echoing the outfits of the characters of niche XIII.

How to determine the path taken by artistic influences? Did they travel from Bactria to Gandhāra and then India, or from India to Gandhāra and then Bactria? Or in many directions, back and forth? Based on the oldest dating of the aquatic niche of Tapa-e Shotor and of the *iwān* of Pendjikent, it would be tempting to think that this type of composition was the result of a Graeco-Bactrian influence. So why, then, have we not found more? We perhaps just have to keep in mind the fragility of such niches

defeated by the Buddha who left his shadow there. This interpretation raises several objections: on the one hand, the absence of what could evoke a rocky setting; on the other hand, as Tarzi points out, it is legitimate to ask whether it was necessary to illustrate a scene when the faithful had the possibility of visiting the place. On this subject, see Mostamindi 1969 and Tarzi, 1991: 166. Unfortunately, more than half of the characters in this scene are missing, so it is not possible to identify clearly the legendary episode depicted.

decorated in high relief. They might have existed in large numbers, but have not survived the passage of time. We can only hope that future discoveries will help to answer these questions. Let us go back to the composition of niche XIII in a more general way. To our knowledge, there are no parallels for three-dimensional representations populated by statues in-the-round from the same period and geographic area. The caves of Mogao at Dunhuang, discovered by Sir Aurel Stein (Stein 1912) and dated to the fourth century AD, have undoubtedly been inspired by this type of three-dimensional representation. Numerous artistic influences travelled from Bactria to the Central Asian regions, and Stein very early established a parallel between the stucco-work of Qarachahr (the Black City) in Xinjiang and the stucco-work of Haḍḍa, which deserved to be examined more closely.

Let us consider an enigmatic iconographic choice: the unfinished painted representation of the Conversion of Aṅgulimāla, discovered by Barthoux. Vihāra 56 of Bāgh Gai, containing *stūpa* B55 and dating to TSh V/TSh VI (second half of the fourth century AD until beginning of the fifth century AD), was entirely decorated with paintings and modelled sculptures, from the retaining walls to the enclosure and from the inside to the outside. Its iconography is dedicated to the *mokṣa* ceremony, a ritual of giving and redemption during which the king, the prince, or the noble donates all of his wealth before redeeming everything by prayer. On the exterior facade, the spaces between the pilasters were painted. The first bore a sketch of the Conversion of Aṅgulimāla, literally ‘wreath of fingers’ or ‘necklace of fingers’. We do not have any photography, but fortunately a drawing by Barthoux exists (Figure 10).

Tradition presents Aṅgulimāla as being inclined to violence. In his previous life, he was a man-eating *yakṣa* and in the ones before, he was mostly characterized by his strength and lack of compassion. This highwayman killed travellers and mutilated their bodies, keeping their fingers mounted in a necklace as a trophy. When the numbers of his victims reached 999, the inhabitants of the region, in revolt, asked the king of Kośala for the death of Aṅgulimāla. While his own mother was trying to save his life, he conceived the idea of making her his thousandth victim. Thanks to his omniscience, the Buddha became aware of his intention and went to the scene. As soon as he appeared, Aṅgulimāla tried to kill the



Figure 10. Unfinished painted representation of the Conversion of Aṅgulimāla. Exterior facade of Vihāra 56 at Bāgh Gai. (Drawing by Barthoux 1933: fig. 142.)

Buddha. A pursuit and a verbal battle ensued, from which the Buddha came out victorious. Confused, Aṅgulimāla embraced the *Dharma* and joined the community. He was then called Ahimsaha, the non-violent, and quickly reached awakening despite his heavy karmic charge.

In this sketch drawn in red ochre, the Buddha in motion stands at the centre of the scene. Aṅgulimāla, wearing a simple *dhotī*, is ready for the attack, his left hand raised and the right hand firmly clutching his sword. As often, this episode is represented through the process of continuous storytelling. At his feet, the same Aṅgulimāla prostrates himself after his conversion. His mother stands on the far left, her arm raised as if to stop the murderous gesture. Vajrapāṇi is represented standing behind the Buddha, the *vajra* leaning on his shoulder. At his feet, a haloed figure kneels in *añjalimudrā* towards a *Buddha* seated in meditation on a throne, probably Aṅgulimāla once again, after he joined the *Samgha*. Figures are lean, their graceful attitudes are tilted. The proportions and physiognomy are faithfully rendered, the body of Aṅgulimāla carried forward, leaning on one leg, and the torsion of Vajrapāṇi are delicately represented.

Barthoux writes that the location of the wreath of fingers was indicated by painted dots. He emphasizes the skill of the artist who realized this drawing with a confident and fast hand, without retouching or resumption of work. The sketching stage was probably intended to represent proportions and positions effectively. In a second version of the scene the protagonists would have been dressed. Unfortunately in this case, the work was never finished (Barthoux 1933: 163-164).

Let us finally ask ourselves about the symbolic significance of the decoration of *Vihāra* 56. It is necessary to wonder about the iconographic choice of the Conversion of Aṅgulimāla, which is enigmatic to say the least. How should we understand the symbolic association of these two themes, the *mokṣa* ceremony and the conversion of a murderer saved by the Buddha? Because of the extreme nature of this conversion, at the height of Aṅgulimāla's violence, it would be ambitious to imagine that this episode could have had a particular renown for a powerful family of kings or princes. And yet... maybe they did compare themselves with Aṅgulimāla. Indeed, who can deny this down-to-earth and very human observation: after all, if the worst of criminals can attain awakening, why not me? A fortiori, why not a king, having committed some slight misdemeanours, perhaps responsible for a few murders, certainly unfortunate, but inherent to his function? Anyhow, the choice of this scene is quite original.

Further examples of painted scenes unfold in the cave A (Figure 11). Situated next to the watertank of Tapa-e Shotor, discovered and studied by Tarzi (Tarzi 1976), its construction dates back to TSh IV (second half of the third century AD). The painting was executed around TSh VI, during a repair following a collapse. It was located in a vaulted gallery 9.60 m long by 2.85 m wide and 2.20 m high. The lower part of the room was decorated with drapes of alternating colors surmounted by a vegetal frieze made of leaves and fruits to which were suspended pairs of phalluses.⁸ Ten monks were depicted in the upper part of the walls, dressed in *saṃghātī* and seated in meditation, each under a tree and on a flower bed, their names written in *brahmi*. Flames were bursting from the shoulders of eight of them.

The wall facing the entrance was occupied by a skeleton standing within a black frame, between two monks, Śariputra and Maudgalyāyana. According to Tarzi, this cave was most likely a place of meditation where the monks came to ponder the cycle of life and death. The scene depicts the Protecting Monks of the Law, ten great saints of Buddhism. According to literary tradition, these *arhats* were direct followers of the Buddha and the Protectors of the Law after his *Mahāparinirvāṇa*. Depending on various sources their number and names vary, but the personalities common to these different 'lists' are those of Mahākāśyapa, Ananda, and Rahula, the son of Śakyamuni.

⁸ Note that several scenes of 'bacchanalia' were found in Haḍḍa. Like the motif of the phallus, surprising in our context, or the cornucopia held by Hārīti, they are supposed to reinforce the dimension of fertile renewal. Nevertheless, it is difficult to understand their presence in this place. This iconographical point remains to be clarified.



Figure 11. Tapa-e Shotor, Cave A. (Photo: after Tarzi 1991, unnumbered fig.)

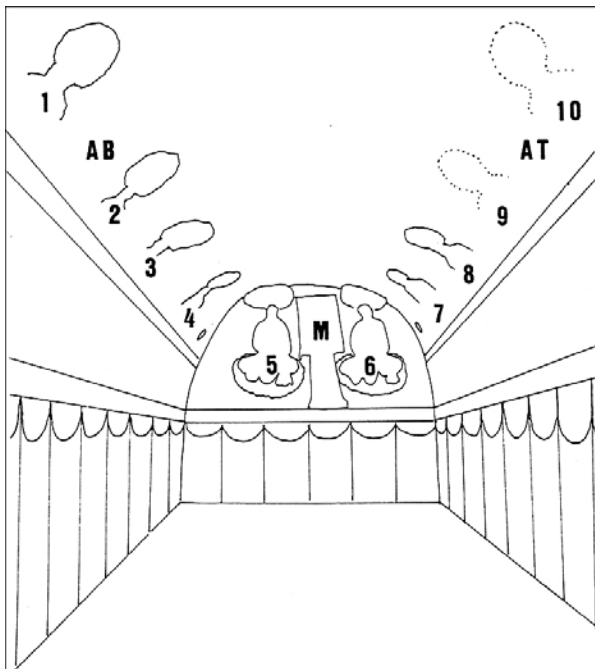


Figure 12. Drawing of Cave A. (After Tarzi 1988.)

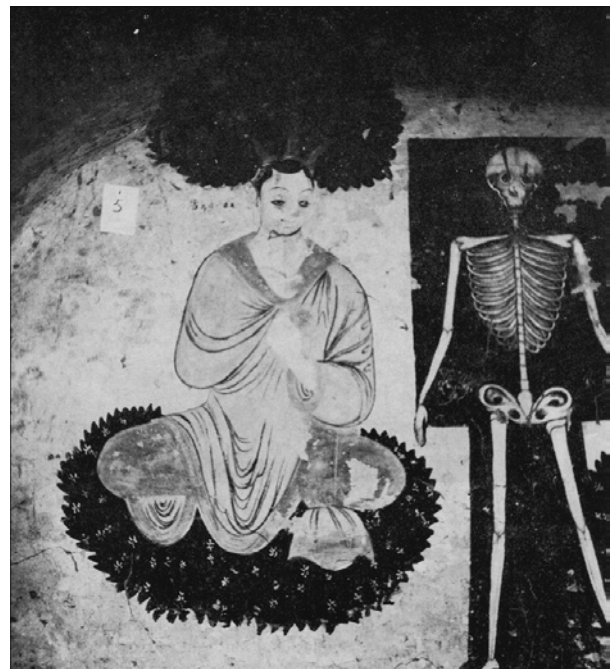


Figure 13. Tapa-e Shotor, Cave A. (After Tarzi 1976: fig. 21.)

In his article on the subject, Greene questions the identification as a meditation hall. He notes that according to Sarvāstivādin treatises, the *aśubha bhāvanā*, the contemplation of foulness and impurity, regardless of how it was practised, did not necessarily take place in a meditation hall (Greene 2013: 268). He adds that according to the *Mūlasārvastivāda-vinaya*, skeleton representations were not reserved to

meditation places but appeared in other type of rooms, notably toilets and monastic living quarters, and he put forward the hypothesis of a usual figure to inspire dispassion. He further notes that in cave A, Śariputra and Maudgalyāyana are not in *dhyānamudrā* but in *dharmacakramudrā*. It seems like they are not meditating about the skeleton, but discoursing about him. He advances the possibility of a Cloister of Impermanence, a room which could have housed deathbed ritual practice, and puts forward an argument concerning the flames burning from the shoulders of the great saints. He relates these to the concept of *tejodhātu samādhi*, the ability of *arhats* to end their lives and enter *mahāparinirvāna* in a self-generated fireball (Greene 2013: 291). Thus, this room decorated with the Great Monks entering *mahāparinirvāna* could have been the accompaniment for dying monks in their final contemplation. As Greene concludes, one function does not exclude the other.⁹

We notice immediately that the representation of the skeleton is quite approximate: the anatomy is doubtful, especially in terms of the proportions of the bones, with the skull, pelvis, and joints (Figure 13). But the virtuosity is exhibited better in the faces of the monks. Tarzi makes various observations about the technique: first, the drawing was sketched in red ochre, then the artist applied solid colors that he diluted to create shades, and finally he completed it through the addition of black touches (Tarzi 1991: 223).

Between Monks 1 and 2 was a scene depicting the Adoration of the Buddha's *Pātra* (AB on Tarzi's drawing, Figure 12). We know the importance of the bowl, which symbolizes the basis of the *dharma*.¹⁰ The *pātra* was decorated with four incisions at its neck, reminiscent of the Offering of the *Cāturmahārājika*, and contained a reddish protruding element, identified as flowers by Tarzi (Tarzi 1991: 225). The *pātra* was flanked by two banners ending in curious winged disks and decorated with flying ribbons. At least three characters were represented on each side of the bowl, under this banner. The best preserved is a man painted in profile, of which only the face remains. He is moustached, and a large tonsure leaves the top of his head bare. From the presence of the other characters, the scene could probably be identified as the representation of the presentation ceremony of the 'true' Buddha's *pātra*, as reported by Xuanzang.

Symmetrically, between monks 9 and 10, was the scene of the Adoration of the Turban (AT on the drawing of Tarzi, Figure 12), which we can put in parallel with the representation of the Renunciation that we saw previously, itself focused on the Turban. A fragment depicts three female devotees, coming to pay homage to the Turban, which consisted of a huge winged crown adorned with beaded crescents (Tarzi 1991: 227). Represented in profile, they all had large almond-shaped eyes, and prominent noses. They were wearing long red dresses, and their curly black hair was coiffed in such a way that ringlets framed their faces, leaving the ears visible, a hairstyle often found on Haḍḍa's female donors. A diadem of white pearls was placed on their hair and they were also wearing large red earrings and necklaces. It may be noted that the style of these figures is quite different from that of the monks and donors, and more reminiscent of artistic influence from painting of the Hellenized East.

It is unfortunately difficult to apprehend painted works, as they are under-represented, often unfinished, and poorly preserved. As it in the case of modelling, we can observe several styles and influences mixed in the scenes. In Cave A, monks and donors seem to reproduce a local or Indian type, female donors echo Graeco-Oriental painting, and the guardian deity can be compared to the paintings of Bāmiyān and those of Xinjiang, Mirān, and Bezekli in the region of Turfan and Kucha. Michael Rostovtzeff noted that the painting technique of Haḍḍa was similar to the one used in

⁹ See further Greene 2013: 293.

¹⁰ According to Chinese testimonies, the Buddha's *pātra* was exhibited in Puruṣapura. At the time of Xuanzang's passage, it had disappeared, taken to Persia by a Ta-Yuezhi king. According to Kuwayama, the establishment of the *pātra* in Gandhāra by the Kushan is perhaps the *raison d'être* of Buddhism in this region. It had become the symbol of the *Dharma*. Because of its imperishable character, it represents the basis of the Law that will be transmitted to the future (Kuwayama 1990: 963).



Figure 14. Symbolism of Atlas-like figures: Tapa-e Shotor, Stūpa 26; Tapa Kalān, Stūpa 95 (Photo: Barthoux from personal photographic archive of Z. Tarzi.)

Palmyra and Dura Europos (Rostovtzeff 1935: 242; 1938). According to him, these works could thus be dated from the period of the last Parthians or the first Sasanids. Hellenistic influence through the Parthians seems a possible origin. However, India also had its specific schools of painting. On this subject, everything remains to be determined.

Finally, I should like to introduce some considerations about the symbolism of Haḍḍa's monastic decoration, and the emergence of what I propose to consider as 'symbolic' or 'atmosphere' scenes.

I have hazarded an hypothesis about the representation of the warriors of Māra's army in the form of Atlas-like figures on *stūpas* (Figure 14). From the *Lalitavistara* sūtra passage describing the fight between the God of Pleasure and the Buddha, we know that cohorts of 'sons' of Māra, his warriors demons, successively submitted to the power of Śakyamuni. In this context, the representation of Māra's army on *stūpas*, in the form of Atlas-like figures, does not seem to me innocuous and purely decorative. Their situation of submission in the architectural role of support element for the *stūpa*, itself decorated to the glory of the Buddha with reliefs celebrating his life, or with the multiplication of his images, could symbolically recall the victory of the *Buddha* over these armies, and so the Enlightenment episode.

Ancient texts commonly refer to different metaphorical notions, all rather vague, such as Buddha's Lands, Buddha's Fields (*Buddhakṣetra*) and Worlds of Bodhisattva (*Bodhisattvabhūmi*), in which are integrated series of 'successions of Buddhas', the thousand Buddhas, or the seven Buddhas of the past, whose lists differ slightly according to different monastic schools (Kapani 1980: 264; Lamotte 1976: 759, 693; Robert 1990: 121; Baums, Glass & Matsuda 2016). These conceptual places and lists are part of a vertical Buddhist cosmology, giving rise to a very complex staged deployment of 'heavens' and 'worlds'. These notions exist from the beginning in the decoration of Buddhist monasteries, as evidenced by the representation of heavens observed in Sanchi (Marshall 1960: 13, pl. 7, fig. 9).

Considering the exuberance of the decoration of Haḍḍa, these descriptions find an echo in the multiplication and superposition of statues (Figure 15). Almost all the public parts of monasteries, *stūpas*, *caityas*, enclosures and niches, were decorated with Buddhas, bodhisattvas, *devas*, worshippers, and 'geniuses'. During the late repairs, artists added benches populated with large standing statues, sometimes elbow to shoulder, and did not hesitate to slip smaller Buddhas in meditation between two statues.

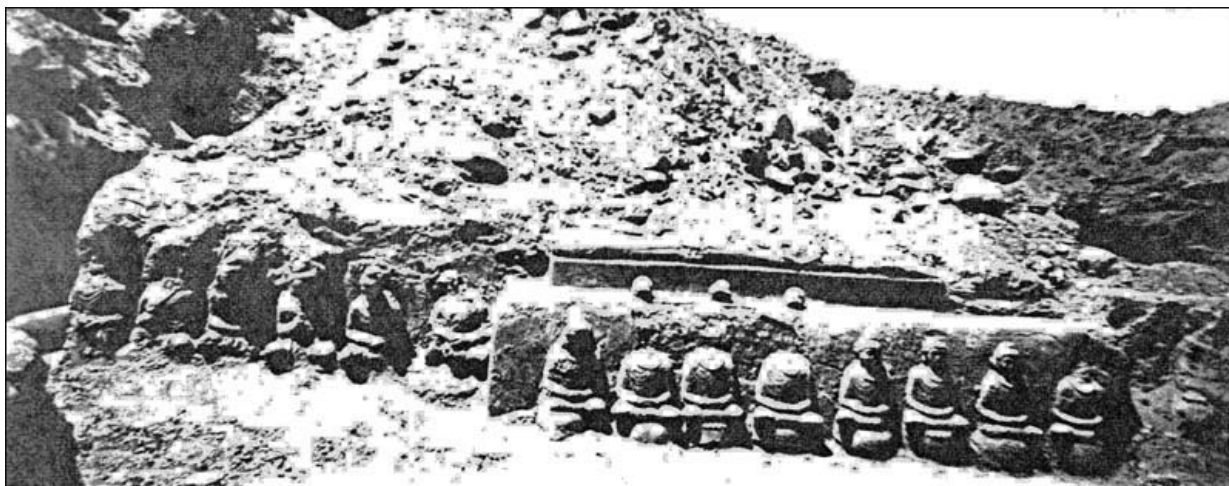


Figure 15. Buddha's Fields. Tapa Kalān, Stūpa 116 bis. (Photo: Barthoux from personal photographic archive of Z. Tarzi.)



Figure 16. Buddhist Heavens. Tapa-i Kafarihā, Gallery 45. (Photo: Barthoux from personal photographic archive of Z. Tarzi.)

Some instances of re-use show that, if necessary, artists did not hesitate to break a piece of modelling to place a figure elsewhere, in a more confined space (Figure 16). This artistic 'horror vacui' betrayed by such juxtaposition of figures appears to be a desire to represent symbolically the Buddhist cosmology. It seems that the decoration of the *saṅghārāma* considered as a whole, could thus be perceived as an atmosphere scene, which is not narrative but symbolic: here are Buddhist heavens, bodhisattva's worlds and Buddha's fields, sheltering *stūpas* in a kind of cosmological 'mise en abîme'.

We know Haḍḍa's monasteries were occupied by the *theravāda* Sarvāstivādin sect. Could we consider that its decoration attests to an evolution towards a *mahāyānist* iconography? The manuscripts of Bajaur (Khan & Khab 2004; see also Strauch 2008; 2009; 2010) revolutionized our ideas about the two great schools of Buddhism, for a long time considered opposite and incompatible. Indeed, in the Bajaur library, *theravāda* and *mahāyāna* documents existed side by side (Fussman, course in Collège de France, June 7, 2011).

The profusion of images refers to late speculations with their source in the development of the *mahāyāna* concept of *rasa*: the ‘aesthetic feeling’ capable of interrupting the *samsāra* cycle of the observer, throughout the duration of the aesthetic emotion.¹¹ As we saw in Haḍḍa, devotees were immersed in the Buddhist universe, no matter where they laid their eyes. If we refer to the concept of *rasa*, the more images there were, the longer the contemplation and interruption of the *samsāra*.

Nevertheless, I consider that the art of Haḍḍa is far from being repetitive and idolatrous, and that the narrative tendency does not disappear and is not replaced but, on the contrary, coexists with these ‘atmosphere scenes’, as attested by the narrative decoration of niche XIII, dated to TSh V, and the fresco of the Conversion of Aṅgulimāla of *Vihāra* B56, dated to TSH V/TSh VI. Thus, despite the repetition of the figures, one cannot speak of a radical transformation of sacred language, of a passage from a narrative art to an iconic decoration, since even later on, the art of Haḍḍa retains a narrative tendency, although it is expressed in a different representational mode from that of the schist sculpture of Gandhāra, a logical consequence of the generalization of stucco.

So many questions remain surrounding the issues of dating, Graeco-Roman influence, and ancient workshop operation. The work of Mostamindi, then Tarzi, established the chronology of Tapa-e Shotor and Tapa Tope Kalān. Unfortunately, Barthoux did not share his observations on stratigraphy.¹² The absence of these data prevents us from more clearly apprehending the different stages of construction, and establishing the dating of modelling from the monasteries he excavated. An alternative approach could be an aesthetic study, based on stylistic analogies, but this type of approach is always perilous. Our lack of knowledge concerning ancient workshops makes this solution complicated, since it is problematic for now to match a particular work to a specific workshop. Furthermore, idealized and realistic works that seem diametrically opposed to each other were often created side by side, while studies have shown that they could come from the same workshop and period (Tarzi 1991: 25).

¹¹ Note however that it is probably the multiplication of images that inspired the development of this concept and not the opposite. On this subject, see Bussagli 1996: 192.

¹² Circumstances led Barthoux to leave his work unfinished. At the time of the sharing of the finds, specified in the agreement signed in 1922 between France and Afghanistan, a large number of objects, about 90% stucco, was sent from the Kabul Museum to the Guimet Museum. Disagreements arose with Hackin, then chief curator of the Guimet Museum. Hostility grew among them until Hackin tried to keep Barthoux away from the objects he had discovered, by sending hundreds of stucco statues to museums around the world, deposited by ministerial order. An abbreviated list of these deposits is below:

- September 1934 : letter of thanks from the Director of the Istanbul Antiquities Museum for receiving four small stucco heads from the Barthoux excavations at Haḍḍa.

- 1935, order of 23 May, 25 stucco objects from the Barthoux excavations at the Royal Museums of Belgium are placed in storage.

- 1935, order of May 23, deposit of 20 stucco objects from the Barthoux excavations at the British Museum.

- 1935, decree of 23 May, deposit of 20 objects in the Musée du Grand-Ducal du Luxembourg.

- 1935, order of May 23, deposit of 20 stucco objects at the Yale Museum.

- 1935, June letter of thanks from the interim director to Hackin for the receipt by the Istanbul Museum of Antiquities of 7 stuccoes to complete the series already acquired.

- 1936, order of 17 January, 20 objects, most of them in stucco, were placed in storage at the Stockholm National Museum.

- 1936, order of January 17, 20 stucco and limestone objects deposited at the Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City.

- 1936, order of 17 January, 20 stucco and schist objects were placed in the Hermitage Museum.

- 1937, order of February 1st, removed from the Guimet Museum for the legation of Iran of 16 terracotta (actually stucco) and 2 schist sculptures.

- 1939, order of August 1st, 10 stucco objects placed in storage at the Buffalo Museum.

- 1939, order of November 28, deposit, without date limit, at the Buddhist Institute of Phnom Penh (Karpelès) of 13 objects including 12 in stucco.

- 1939, order of 28 November, 20 objects, most of them in stucco, were placed in storage at the Museum of the Thai-Thailand. Discouraged, Barthoux never wished to return the photographic album which illustrated the volume on *stūpas*, nor the text corresponding to the album of figures and figurines. On this subject, see Tarzi 1996. A *récolement* (collection audit) file was created thanks to the important photographic background collected by Pierre Cambon in 1994. None of the items on deposit had a Guimet Museum inventory number. They were sent with a handwritten red label glued to the back with the part number, in accordance with the ministerial order and its measures. Activity Reports of the Guimet Museum (available on their website <<http://www.guimet.fr/collections/documentation/rapports-dactivite/>>, last accessed 3rd March 2019) recount the progress of the *récolement* missions.

It appears that artists of Haḍḍa wanted to affect the lay faithful, marking their imagination with transcendent images of faith, and subjugating them with new and original representations. In addition to their talent and verve, they had a perfect knowledge of classical themes that led to creation of masterpieces. This vigorous Graeco-Roman heritage in Haḍḍa's monastic art could be explained by the existence of numerous Graeco-Bactrian workshops capable of transmitting a solid and lively Greek tradition, as supported by several bits of evidence, particularly Greek inscriptions testifying to a living Greek-speaking community and the presence and establishment of Greeks in Bactria (Bernard & Rougemont 2005: 134). Based on the similarity between Tapa-e Shotor and Sahrī-Bāhlol, Tarzi considers that the great activity of modellers can only correspond to a period of political stability and economic prosperity, allowing exchanges between workshops (Tarzi 1991).

Francine Tissot has written about this perspective. According to her, permanent demand drew artists to settle in Gandhāra for more than five centuries. We can assume that, in contact with travellers and travelling artists from India, China, or the West, Gandhāran artists remained aware of fashions, foreign models, and new techniques. Masters appeared among them, creating prototypes admired and reproduced, no doubt increasing the fame of some workshops. The number of monasteries and the incessant passage of pilgrims certainly led to a multiplication of workshops, which had to settle in the valleys and spread, consequently working on their own. Adding to this Greek heritage, it can be argued that there were later waves of Roman artistic influences, especially via art-objects and the circulation of coins. It is not easy to understand the vehicles of transmission. I agree with Tissot's view that we have to imagine a complete system, with patronage, projects, coordinated artists, and teams. The first works of art commissioned by the monks were probably subject to strict requirements. Then Gandhāran artists found inspiration in everyday life, that they combined with the exigency of the canonical narrative to create new reliefs, and other modes of composition (Tissot 2002). We have mentioned several times the similarities between the artistic production of Haḍḍa and Taxila. Should we consider that there might have been a special link between these two workshops, ignoring the intermediate school of arts situated along the way? If so, what could have been the form taken by these direct contacts? Perhaps exchanges of models, masks, and objects, perhaps even exchanges of artists and masters? Only a thorough comparative iconographic and stylistic study will allow us to judge.

In conclusion, we can assert that the vigour and autonomy of Haḍḍa's art is sufficient to explain its influence, which can be followed from Kapiṣa to Chinese Central Asia, through Bactria and Bāmiyān (Vanleene 2012: 285). These links, however, remain very imprecise. It is undeniable that a better understanding of stucco Buddhist statuary, a significant part of the varied identity of Gandhāran culture, would allow the more complete comprehension of Gandhāran art. Thanks to crosscutting studies and scientific exchange, and through working groups, we have the possibility to discuss and develop ways that could be put in place to facilitate multi-disciplinary research, in order to clarify these questions. What means could be put in place in order to help and improve fundamental archaeological research? I believe that a first step should be the establishment of archaeological databases, which would provide support for the examination of artistic influences and iconographic themes, and facilitate access to scientific data for researchers and students. The provision of all scientific data, for some unpublished, or difficult to access, would contribute to providing rich documentation and would allow authentication of new fundamental knowledge concerning the art of Gandhāra and its related problems. The transmission of all this valuable knowledge will allow a better understanding of the relationships and chronology of art production in the different regions of Gandhāra and can serve as a basis for more extensive comparative studies. In that respect, the establishment of a database of the archaeological material of Haḍḍa has been the focus of my work in recent years.

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