

rivers. As a result they were able to sustain a more prolific agriculture. It was in such plains that some of the great historical cities of the region arose.

In the north of the region, in the valley of the Oxus River (Amu Daria), there were the important cities and centres of Bactra (Balkh) and Margiana (Marv); and archaeological sites, such as the important Greek city site at Ai Khanum, have also been found there. In the east of the region the Kabul River flows through the fertile plains around Jalalabad (ancient Nagarahara) with their many ancient settlements and sites. From the Khyber Pass it descends into Gandhara, the beautiful vale of Peshawar, home of other important ancient cities including Pushkalavati (Charsada) and Purushapura (Peshawar). Thereafter the Kabul unites with the Indus, on whose vast plains are further ancient cities, such as Taxila, Multan and Sehwan. In the south of the region the Helmand River flows westward past Kandahar out into the once fertile plains of Seistan, and here too there was anciently an inland delta supporting a mass of early settlements.

As well as the great plains there are also many smaller ones which permitted the development of agriculture and hence of small settlements matched to their individual extent and character. These too played a major part in the life and trade of our region in early times.

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1 The term *The Crossroads of Asia* has been adopted for the title of this exhibition from the book of a similar name by two former members of the Italian Embassy in Kabul, Caspani and Cagnacci, 1951.

2 Gansser, 1964.

1.2 The Historical Context

In spite of the volume of archaeological evidence for substantial settlements in many of the more hospitable parts of the region from the third millennium BC,¹ the Crossroads of Asia enters history comparatively late, and in a relatively inconspicuous manner. For many centuries thereafter the area seems to have been largely under the control of a series of foreign intruders, emanating from the west, north or east.

The sources for much of the area's history are, however, slight and often far from clear, and for this reason their interpretation is often problematic. These sources include textual references in early Indian, Chinese, classical Greek and – at a later date – Roman, Armenian and Arab literature, together with early Iranian, Greek and Indian inscriptions. Further evidence can be added from the discoveries of imported and locally produced Greek, Iranian and Indian coins.

The Achaemenid Empire

The earliest historical evidence dates from the period of the Achaemenids, the Iranian dynasty founded in 539 BC by Cyrus and extended, under Cyrus II, Darius and Xerxes, until it occupied at its height an area extending from Macedonia and Egypt in the west to the Indus River and the Aral Sea in the east. This empire is often known by western scholars as the Persian Empire. Several of its provinces, referred to in contemporary inscriptions,² can be identified as being in our region:

Sogdia, around Samarkand, in the Republics of Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan

Bactria, northern Afghanistan and the former Soviet territory on the opposite bank of the Amu Daria (Oxus) River

Aria, north-western Afghanistan, around modern Herat

Drangiana, south-western Afghanistan

Arachosia, south-eastern Afghanistan, around Kandahar

Sattagydia, central Afghanistan, the Kabul region (later known to the Greeks as the Paropamisadae)

Gandhara, north-western Pakistan, around Peshawar

India, northern Pakistan, on the banks of the Indus River.

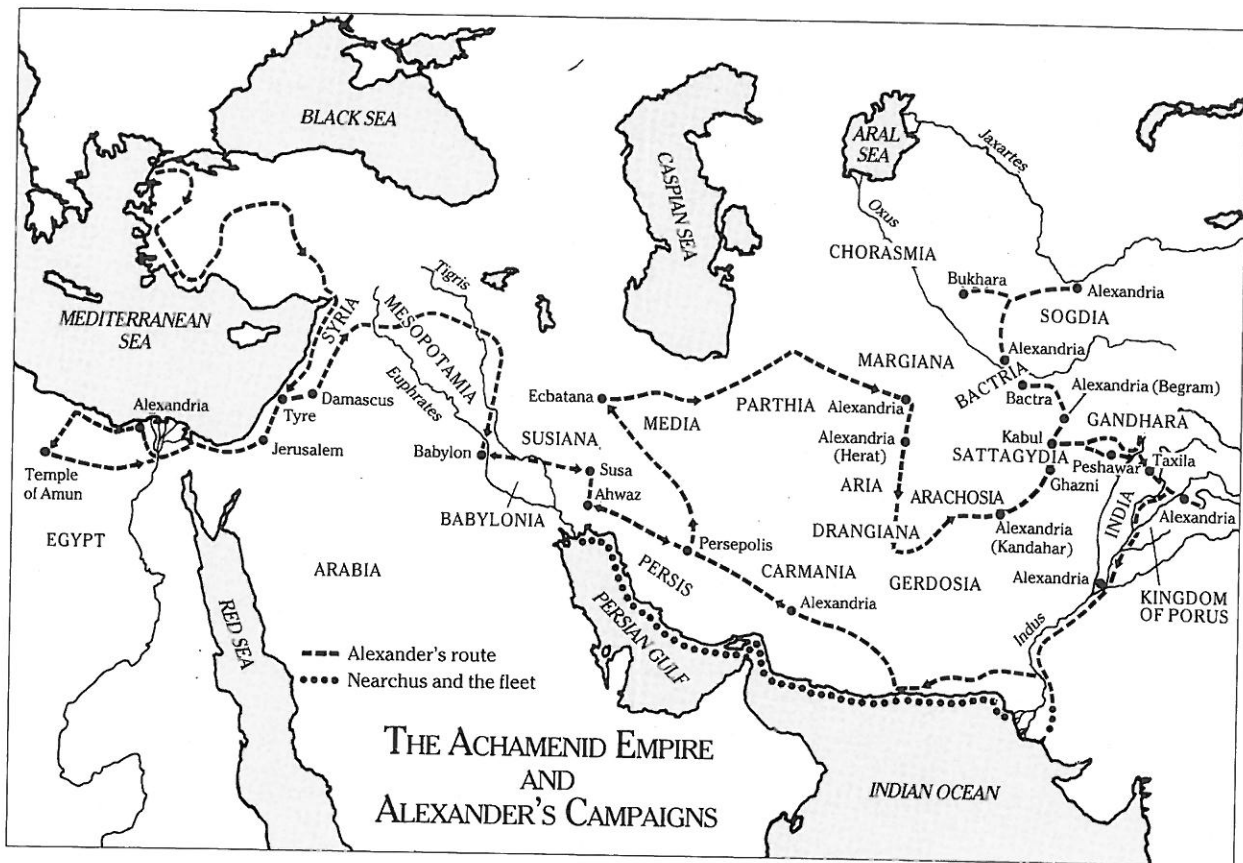
These territories were also described by the Greek historian Herodotus (c.480–420 BC) as paying tribute to the Achaemenid kings or as supplying troops to serve in their army.³

Archaeological confirmation of Iranian rule in these provinces has come from the discovery at Kandahar of fortifications and pottery of the Achaemenid period,⁴ together with a fragmentary sixth-century BC cuneiform inscription written in Elamite (one of the official languages of the Achaemenid Empire).⁵ From Kabul and Taxila there have also been found coins imported from the western parts of the Achaemenid Empire.⁶

Alexander the Great

Iranian rule in this region ended when the Achaemenid Empire was destroyed by Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, in 331 BC at the battle of Gaugamela, and thereafter Alexander and his successors sought to maintain the world empire they had thus conquered. With Alexander's untimely death in 323 BC the empire rapidly fell apart, and within two decades more or less independent kingdoms emerged in several of its former provinces. For a time Seleucus, one of Alexander's officers, strove to regain wider control over the former Iranian Empire, but the attempt was short lived.

Following Alexander's campaigns in the East, a new Indian empire, based on the Ganges valley, was created by Chandragupta Maurya (c.311–287 BC). Chandragupta built a force powerful enough to drive the Greeks



out of north-western India. Seleucus was forced to cede to him the southern Afghan and Pakistan provinces of the Achaemenid Empire. It is to this that we owe the presence of inscriptions of the famous Buddhist king Ashoka, Chandragupta's grandson, in Prakrit (written in the local script, Kharoshthi), Greek and Aramaic (another official language of the former Achaemenid Empire), engraved on rocks at Kandahar and elsewhere, and the wider extension of Indian cultural influence in these areas.⁷

Greeks in Bactria and India

By contrast, Greek rule survived to the north of the Hindu Kush Mountains in Bactria and Sogdiana, at first as a part of the empire of Seleucus and his successors, but, following the revolt of the local Greek governor Diodotus, it became an independent kingdom c.255 BC, with Diodotus as its first king. The excavations at Ai Khanum on the Amu Daria River in Bactria have revealed the existence of what may have been founded in Alexander's time as a fully Greek city, and demonstrate the context in which Greek architecture, sculpture, inscriptions and other arts, and Greek coinage, could flourish in this part of Asia.⁸

During the early second century BC, evidence from the coins they issued show that Greek kings from Bactria extended their rule southwards into the Kabul area, where the city of Alexandria in the Paropamisadae

has been identified with the ruins around modern Begram. A further move to the south and east was made in the early part of the second century BC when a Greek state was established in north-west Pakistan. The Greek kingdoms south of the Hindu Kush are usually referred to as Indo-Greek to distinguish them from the Bactrian kingdom. Apart from Begram, the Indo-Greek kingdom is particularly associated with two cities, Taxila in the Punjab and Pushkalavati (Charsada) in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Buddhist literature has preserved an account of the most successful of the Indo-Greek rulers, Menander (c.155–130 BC).⁹

For more than a century after the death of Menander, parts of his kingdom remained under the control of Greek kings. During this time Greek rule was, however, gradually eroded by the arrival of three groups of invaders: Scythians, Parthians and the Yuezhi. The following account of this process is based in part on the Chinese sources and a handful of Kharoshthi inscriptions, together with numismatic and archaeological evidence found in the Kabul valley and the Ai Khanum and Taxila excavations.¹⁰

The End of the Greek Kingdoms

The process of reducing local Greek power had begun long before Menander's time, in the reign of the Bactrian Greek king Euthydemus I, c.230–200 BC, when

Sogdia had passed into the control of local kings. Soon after the Greeks had extended their domain southward, crossing the Hindu Kush, to take control of the Kabul region, Bactria began to be overrun c.145 BC by invaders, the Yuezhi possibly with some Scythians.¹¹ The Greeks had lost control of Bactria by c.130 BC. Greek rule in the Kabul region was yielded c.70 BC to the Yuezhi, who in their turn lost it briefly to the Parthians c.AD 30–50.

Even though a Scythian king, Maues, had already interrupted Greek rule at Taxila in the western Punjab c.90–80 BC, Greek kings continued to rule in Gandhara and the western Punjab until completely replaced by Scythian kings c.55 BC. Even after this a small enclave of Greek rule held on into the opening decade of the first century AD in the eastern Punjab until finally conquered by a Scythian prince c.AD 10.¹²

Parthians became an important force as one of the consequences of the fragmentation of the Achaemenid Empire after Alexander's death. Arsaces, the traditional founder of the Parthian kingdom, had been a servant of the Bactrian Greek ruler Diodotus. The state he founded came, by the mid-second century BC, to control a large part of modern Iran, together with parts of Iraq in the west and southern Afghanistan in the east. During the early first century AD the Parthians extended their influence further eastwards into north-west Pakistan.

Archaeological evidence and the testimony of the Greek historian Herodotus show that nomadic Scythian tribes were present over wide areas of former Soviet Central Asia east of the Black Sea during the first millennium BC.¹³ They were frequently referred to as Shakas in Indian and Iranian sources, and seem in the main to have spoken Iranian languages. It is, however, difficult to determine where they originated or how and when they spread.¹⁴ From time to time they moved into new areas and in some instances established their rule over the sedentary population. It seems probable that during the second century BC they were among those who harassed the northern borders of the Bactrians and moved down into Bactria as the Greeks withdrew to the south. Another group of Shakas must have settled in southern Afghanistan, in the area known as Seistan (Sakasthana). In the first century BC Shaka rulers seem to have replaced the Indo-Greek rule in north-west Pakistan and India.¹⁵

The Yuezhi and the Kushans

It is not clear what relationship the Shakas had to the Yuezhi, who were their successors in many parts of our area. Most of our information about the people known as the Yuezhi and their activities comes from Chinese official histories,¹⁶ which begin their account with their departure from north-western China c.175 BC and their arrival in Bactria by c.145 BC. They then describe their domination of Bactria and the Kabul region and their

expansion into Gandhara and the Punjab under the leadership of a ruler named Kujula Kadphises, lord of the Kushan clan. Kujula brought to an end Parthian rule in the area. Once Kujula had come to power the Yuezhi came to be known as the Kushans.

The rise to power of Kujula Kadphises brought about a complete transformation in the role of the Crossroads of Asia, as he laid the foundations for the unification of the whole area into a single political entity, the Kushan Empire. By the early decades of the second century AD a state had been established, under the leadership of the third Kushan king Kanishka I, which stretched across the Hindu Kush, north-west through Bactria to Sogdia and south-west through the Kabul region and Gandhara to Kashmir, the Punjab and the Gangetic Plain of northern India.

As well as unity, the Kushan Empire brought stability and prosperity to the whole area. Under their rule there was a flourishing of international trade through the region, reaching as far as the Roman Empire in the west and China in the east.¹⁷ Stability encouraged Buddhist culture to flourish in the north-west and the growth of relations with the East allowed the Buddhist faith to spread into Chinese Turkestan and from there into China itself.¹⁸

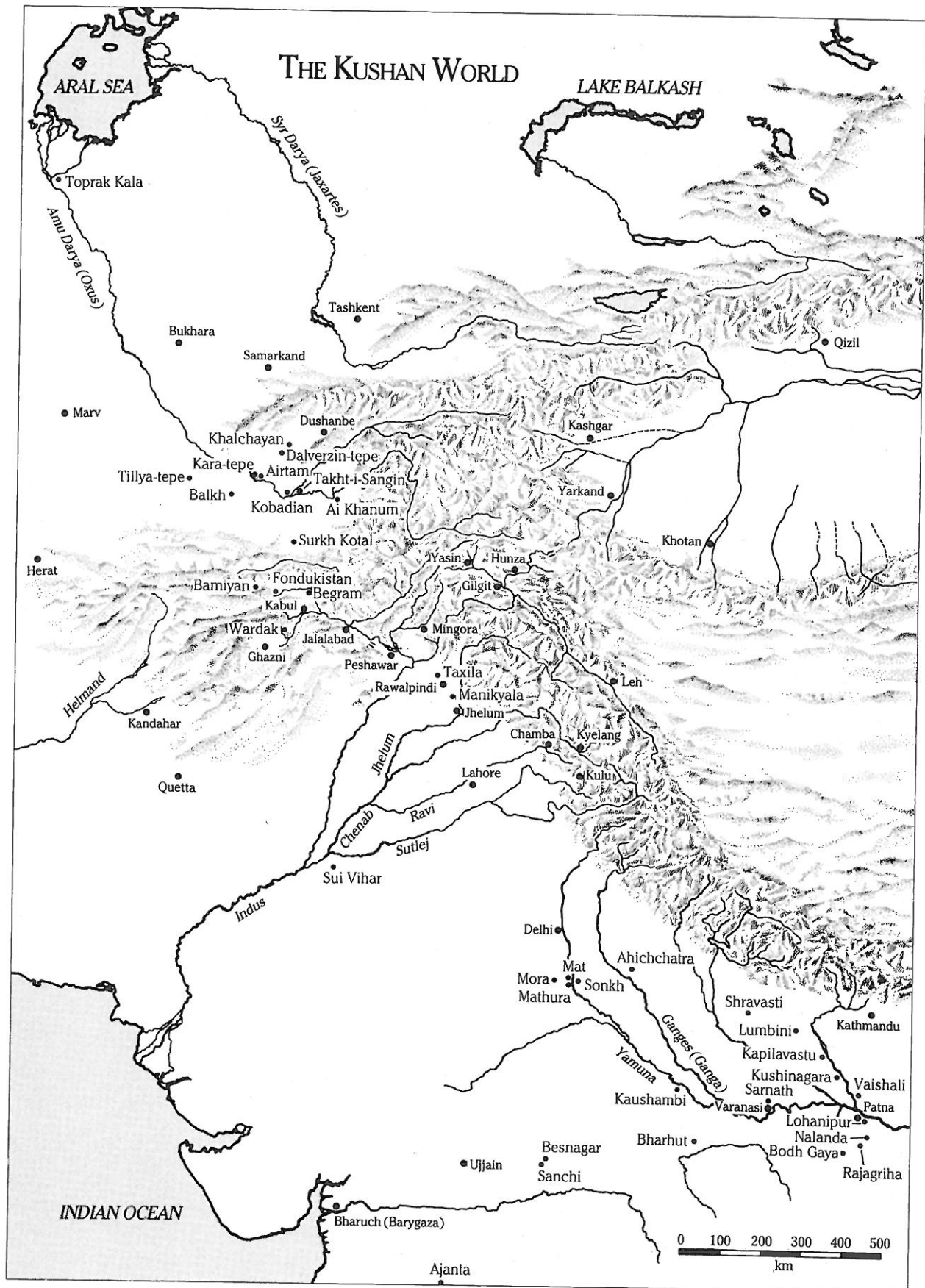
For almost a century and a half the Crossroads of Asia enjoyed the benefits of Kushan dominion, until the rise of another great eastern empire, the Sasanian Empire of Iran, initiated its downfall. As part of his attempt to re-establish the former Iranian Empire of the Achaemenids, the founder of the new Sasanian state, Ardashir I (c.AD 224–40), is reputed to have launched a campaign to the east and added Bactria to his empire. His son Shapur I included the land of the Kushans, as far as Peshawar, among his possessions.¹⁹

The End of the Kushan Empire

The easternmost provinces of the Sasanian Empire were under the direct rule of Sasanian princes, who adopted the title of Kushan King. They issued coins, mixing Kushan and Sasanian designs, which show them ruling Bactria, the Kabul region and Gandhara c.AD 230–360. During this period a remnant of the original Kushan kingdom survived in the Punjab and Kashmir, but it was also now under pressure from the local Indian tribes of the Punjab regaining their independence and later from the newly emerged Gupta Empire based in the Gangetic Plain of northern India.

The final death-blow to the Kushan Empire, which also brought about the collapse of Sasanian control in the east, came in the mid-fourth century with the rise to power of a new migrant force, the Huns, entering Sasanian territory from the north-east in several waves.

The first Hun group to appear seems to have been the Kidarites, who must have entered the area during the period of Sasanian dominance. The Kidarites are



shown by the coin evidence to have risen to power from a base within Kushan territory in the Punjab and from there to have taken over both the Kabul region and part of Bactria from the Sasanians by c.AD 370s.²⁰ About the same time a second group of Huns, variously known as Chionites or Hephthalites, already in conflict with the Sasanians, began to move into northern Bactria. During the fifth century their dominion spread southwards until, by the end of the century, they were ruling as far as the Punjab and posing a threat to the Gupta rulers of northern India.²¹

The Hephthalites controlled the Crossroads of Asia until they were overrun by the Turks, yet another wave of migrant invaders from the north-east. The Turks in alliance with the Sasanians of Iran finally broke the Hun control of Bactria c.AD 560,²² and they then pushed on south, taking the Kabul region and Gandhara under their control, and ruling there until the arrival of Islam during the late seventh to eighth centuries brought the ancient history of the Crossroads of Asia to a close.²³

FRA/JC

- 1 See for example: Frumkin, 1970; Allchin and Hammond, 1978.
- 2 See particularly the Behistun inscription of Darius I, which lists these regions among his possessions, Kent, 1950.
- 3 Herodotus, III, 90–5 (tribute list); VII, 62–8 (Xerxes' army).
- 4 Fraser, Whitehouse and McNicholl, 1977.
- 5 MacDowall, 1979, p. 78.
- 6 See commentary on nos. 5–9.
- 7 A summary list of all known Ashokan inscriptions with bibliographic references, including the Kandahar discoveries, was published in Allchin and Norman, 1985.
- 8 Bernard and others, 1973, 1983–7.
- 9 Bopearachchi, 1990.
- 10 The Chinese sources are summarised by Zürcher, 1968. The Kharoshthi inscriptions relevant to dating the Scythian, Parthian and Yuezhi presence in Gandhara and the Punjab are discussed by Fussman, 1980, 1984 and 1985. The numismatic and archaeological evidence from Ai Khanum is presented by Bernard, see footnote 8, particularly *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum IV: Les monnaies hors trésors*, Paris: 1985; for the Kabul region by Allchin and Hammond, 1978; and for Taxila they are summarised by Allchin, 1968.
- 11 Staviskij, 1986.
- 12 *BN*, pp. 137–41.
- 13 Herodotus, I, 104; IV, 1; VII, 20.
- 14 Sinor, 1990, pp. 97–109.
- 15 The exact context of the Shaka takeover was identified by Jenkins, 1957.
- 16 See Zürcher, 1968.
- 17 The extent of international trade at this period is best exemplified by the discovery of the so-called Begram Treasure, which contained Indian ivories together with plaster, glass and bronze objects from the Roman Empire and Chinese lacquerware. For a summary of the material in this hoard and of subsequent publications on it, see Allchin and Hammond, 1978, pp. 257–62. A contemporary account of trade between the Roman Empire and India during the mid-first century AD has survived in the anonymous Greek text *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, Frisk, 1927, and Casson, 1989.

18 Zürcher, 1968, pp. 356–7, describes the arrival in China c.AD 148 of a Buddhist text written by a monk associated by early Buddhist tradition with the Kushan king Kanishka I.

19 For the textual and historical evidence relating to the Sasanian rule in Bactria, the Kabul region and Gandhara, see Bivar, 1979. The numismatic evidence for the dating of this period is reviewed by Cribb, 1990.

20 The sources relating to the Kidarites are collected by Enoki, 1969–70, but the evidence for their role in former Kushan territory is reassessed by Cribb, 1990, pp. 179–81.

21 Göbl, 1967, and Biswas, 1973.

22 Sinor, 1990, p. 301.

23 Gibb, 1923.

1.3 Alexander and his Legacy

Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia (336–323 BC), played as important a role in the history of the Crossroads of Asia as he did in the rest of the Greek world. His conquest of the region (329–325 BC), taking control from its former Iranian rulers, brought about its first significant contact with Mediterranean culture. His stay in the region was brief, but initiated the process which was to provide it with its own distinctive culture, a mixture of Greek and eastern influences, which was to survive in part over the following centuries until the arrival of Islam in the late seventh to eighth centuries AD.

Before the arrival of Alexander the borders of the Achaemenid Empire of Iran, the 'Persian Empire', extended to the eastern boundaries of the Crossroads of Asia, north beyond the Oxus (Amu Daria) and east beyond the Indus. Its local governors (satraps) ruled the region in a tolerant manner, so far as we can judge, and enjoyed, without imposing, the trappings of Iranian religion and court life.

Alexander determined to fulfil his father's ambition to avenge the fifth-century Achaemenid invasion of Greece. He marched as the self-appointed champion of the Greek people who were generally unwilling to recognise his claim to lead them. The expedition started in 334 BC and four years later Alexander had decisively defeated the Achaemenid king Darius III and sacked his capital at Persepolis.

Alexander was drawn farther east, in pursuit first of the defeated king and then of a new Achaemenid pretender. By 329 BC he had reached Kandahar, then crossed the Hindu Kush Mountains and the Oxus, campaigning northward to capture Bactria and Sogdia in the following year. He then turned his attention eastward to cross the Indus in 327 BC. After a decisive

battle beyond the Indus against the Indian king Porus in 326 BC, he returned west, to die in Babylon in 323 BC aged thirty-two. He seems to have been respected as much as he and his armies were undoubtedly feared.

Greeks at the Crossroads of Asia

The only Greeks Alexander found so far east were peoples already displaced there by the Achaemenids. Parts of the region were, however, by no means uncongenial to Mediterranean folk, either in climate or in their local means of subsistence.¹ Alexander had no difficulty in founding new cities (more Alexandrias, in Aria, Seistan, Arachosia, the Paropamisadae, Bactria, Sogdia and India) and encouraged his followers and the garrisons he left behind to accommodate themselves to local ways. He himself married a Sogdian princess, Roxana.²

After Alexander's death the eastern empire was briefly ruled by the administration he had established, former local Iranian satraps and Indian kings with Greek lieutenants. By c.310 BC, it fell to the lot of one of his generals, Seleucus, who ruled from Babylon, but his and his successors' hold on the farthestmost areas faltered. In the mid-third century BC the Parthians began to take control of Iran, while the local Greek rulers of Bactria broke away from Seleucid rule to found their own dynasty. The southern part of the Crossroads of Asia was taken from the Greeks and their local allies by the invasion of the Mauryan kings of India, who by c.303 BC had captured the provinces south of the Hindu Kush.

Although Greek rule in the southern provinces had survived less than twenty-five years, Greek culture was more permanent. When the Mauryan king of India, Ashoka, published his Buddhist inscriptions at Kandahar in the mid-third century BC they were inscribed on stone in both Greek and Aramaic (an official script of the Achaemenids). The Greek used in the Kandahar inscriptions shows a profound knowledge of Greek philosophical terminology.³

Of the northern provinces Bactria continued to flourish as a purely Greek state on either side of the Oxus down to the mid-second century BC, but its kings had already extended their interest south and east, over the Hindu Kush and beyond the Indus, where their rule obtained still into the first century AD. This unusual and geographically isolated Greek realm must have adapted as readily to local conditions as did its Achaemenid predecessors, but its rulers continued to see themselves as the inheritors of Alexander's legacy⁴ and their Greekness was infectious.

The excavations at the Bactrian Greek city site at Ai Khanum on the Oxus have illustrated not only the strength of Greek culture in the region, but also its adaptation to local demands. Evidence of the direct transmission of Greek culture is to be seen in the discovery at the site of an Aristotelian literary text and

stone inscriptions in Greek, including one erected by the Greek philosopher Clearchus; in the Greek buildings: a gymnasium, an amphitheatre; and in Greek architectural ornaments, as well as in the numerous statues of Greek gods and other figures in Greek dress. Fragments of a larger-than-life statue of Zeus, however, were found in situ in the remains of a purely oriental temple with evidence of non-Greek forms of worship.⁵

South of the Hindu Kush physical traces of the Greek kingdoms, other than coins, are few, but the Buddhist tradition has preserved a vital record of the most important of the Greek kings there, Menander (c.155–130 BC). A Pali text, *Milindapanha* (The Questions of Menander), describing the discourse between the king and a Buddhist sage, Nagasena, was a respected document of Buddhist doctrine.⁶ What further intellectual intercourse there may have been between West and East is hard to judge, except in the arts where the imagery of Greek religion was later pressed into the service of Buddhism.

Greek Language, Greek Script

Apart from the many appearances of Greek religious and mythological themes in Gandhara sculpture,⁷ the most permanent and most visible manifestation of Greek culture in the Crossroads of Asia is the use of Greek script. Although it is likely that the Parthians, Scythians and Kushans who succeeded the Greeks as rulers of the region brought a fresh influx of Greek culture into the area from their contacts with the Hellenised kingdom of Parthia in Iran, there is little to show for it. On their coins, however, it is clear from their introduction of Greek words and grammatical constructions not previously used on local coins that Greek was in some sense still a living language in the region.⁸ Evidence of this kind is still to be found down into the second century AD, when the Kushan king Kanishka I (c.AD 100–26) introduced a variety of new Greek inscriptions onto his coins.⁹ After Kanishka the use of the Greek language disappeared from the coins, but not Greek script, which was now used by the Kushans to transcribe their own language (an Iranian language, commonly called Bactrian). Inscriptions written in Greek letters appeared not only on coins, but also on manuscript documents and stone inscriptions, down into the period of the Islamic conquest of the region.¹⁰

The Memory of Alexander

Much of the later Greek involvement in eastern affairs depended little on Alexander and the Bactrian kingdom, but more on Greek exploitation of the passage to India once the monsoon cycle had been understood. This maritime trade flourished with the stimulus of Roman gold and of the Roman appetite for Indian jewels, spices and other eastern exotica.¹¹

Any specifically Alexandrian heritage seems not to

have been prominent, or perhaps was simply dormant, since Greek intervention in India was never forgotten. The Sultans of Delhi, the first Muslim rulers of northern India, adopted for themselves, in the thirteenth century, the title *Sikander el-sani*, the second Alexander, symbolising their role as conquerors of India.¹²

The fact that in Iranian Islamic literature and art Alexander could be adopted as a hero-prince, or that even in the present century in the Kafiristan and Hunza regions (north Pakistan) he can be claimed as ancestor by the fair-skinned and fair-haired inhabitants, speaks as eloquently for the Alexander legacy as does the detection of Greek style in the arts of ancient India.

JB/JC

1 Narain, 1957, pp. 1–6.

2 Among the many recent studies of Alexander and his career may be mentioned Lane Fox, 1973, and Bosworth, 1988.

3 A bibliography of the Ashokan inscriptions has been made by Allchin and Norman, 1985. A detailed commentary on the nature of the Greek language used in one of the inscriptions is to be found in Schlumberger and Robert, 1964.

4 The Bactrian Greek king Agathocles included Alexander among the kings he depicted and named as his predecessors on a special series of coins. Alexander was depicted as the young Heracles who was featured on the obverse of his own coins, but with the identifying Greek label 'of Alexander, son of Philip' (*BN*, pp. 60–1, and Agathocles 12).

5 Bernard and others, 1973–86; Descoedres 1990, pp. 329–42.

6 Bopearachchi, 1990, pp. 39–85.

7 For examples of Greek motifs in Gandhara sculpture, see nos. 125 (Atlas), 126 (Centaur), 128 (Triton), 129–30 (Greek columns with Corinthian capitals, figures in Greek dress), 133 (Trojan Horse), 134 (Heracles), 136 (Tyche), 153 and 155 (Aphrodite), and 154 (Actaeon); see also below, 2.2.

8 Several Parthian coins from Gandhara introduce the Greek title *basileuontos*, a present participle form of the verb to rule in the genitive case, meaning the one who is ruling (*BMC* Abdagases 5–15). Another (*BMC* Abdagases 16) uses the word *adelphideos*, nephew, not otherwise known on a coin from the region.

9 As well as introducing a Greek inscription naming himself as king of kings in the nominative, Kanishka also featured deities with Greek names on the reverse, Helios (the sun, no. 66), Selene (the moon) and Hephaistos (the fire-god).

10 The latest use of Greek script on a coin is on the coins of the Turkish Shahis of Kabul, c. AD 850. A full account of the manuscript texts and stone inscriptions has been made by Humbach, 1966. The latest non-coin inscriptions are the famous Tochi Valley inscriptions, of the same period as the Turkish coins, published by Dani, Humbach and Göbl, 1964.

11 The conduct of this trade is recorded in a contemporary Greek text, datable to the third quarter of the first century AD, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, text published by Frisk, 1927. For a masterful translation and commentary, see Casson, 1989.

12 Used on coins of Sultan Mohammad I, AD 1295–1315.

1.4 The Spread of Buddhism and of Indian Culture

Speaking in very general terms the Crossroads of Asia forms just as much a distinct cultural region as it does a geographical one. An archaeological overview suggests that this region, which abuts on three major neighbouring cultural regions – those of Iran, India and the steppes of Central Asia – shared at one time or another, to a greater or lesser extent, in elements of each, but at the same time developed and maintained its own individual character. Buddhism, a special but typical manifestation of Indian civilisation, played a key role in forming that character.

The Emergence of Indian Culture

The classical civilisation of India emerged during the course of the first millennium BC and may be viewed as one of the direct results of the rise of the cities and states of the Ganges system. This gave rise to a distinctive pattern of life and culture which seems to have been established between c. 700 and 300 BC, and to have spread out from the Ganges valley towards the north-west probably from the fifth century BC onwards. At least this is the pattern which is visible in the archaeology of the north-west frontier area of Pakistan, where the very local cultural style is augmented and overlaid by a Gangetic style during these centuries. We believe that this involved the spread of the emerging Indian tradition into this region.

In the newly emerged city culture of the Ganges valley a series of major cultural developments took place, some of which were to be of almost worldwide significance. One by-product of this process was the emergence, out of the Brahmanical religion of the Late Vedic period with its emphasis on ritualism and elaborate sacrifices, of the orthodox speculation and theology of the early Upanishads.¹

Alongside this development, and also as an outcome of the rise of cities and states, these centuries witnessed the emergence of a whole series of unorthodox (or Nastika) sects whose promulgators shared a general rejection of the revelatory authority of the Vedas and their prescribed sacrifices. As a general rule these sects adopted theological positions which were non-theistic, if not positively atheistic. Among these we may note the fatalistic Ajivakas, founded by Makkali Gosala (Makkali of the cowshed); the frankly materialistic Lokayatas of Ajita Kesakambali (Ajita of the hairy blanket); Jains, devotees of the teachings of the ascetic Mahavira; and Buddhists, followers of the Buddha (the Enlightened One). Of all these heterodox sects only the last was to penetrate to any extent into the Crossroads of Asia, or to achieve a wider expansion in other parts of Asia.² It is on Buddhism therefore that we shall now concentrate our attention.

The Buddha

The main events of the life of the Buddha are reasonably well known from the early scriptural accounts, but there is considerable lack of unanimity regarding the dates at which they occurred. There are various traditions about the date of his death, the Mahaparinirvana, placing it c.543 BC, c.486/3 BC, or c.370 BC, but no agreement has yet been reached.³

The Buddha was born at Lumbini, near the small city of Kapilavastu on the borders of Nepal and India, the son of a local ruler. As he approached manhood he was profoundly struck by the evidence he saw on all sides of suffering, sickness and decay. He renounced the life of the palace in favour of that of a homeless wanderer and travelled southwards to Bodh Gaya in southern Bihar, where he meditated and achieved Enlightenment. From there he travelled to the city of Kashi (Benares, Varanasi) and on to Sarnath and the Deer Park outside this city. There he preached his first sermon, proclaiming the central elements of the Buddhist Dharma, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. For the remaining years of his long life he travelled about, teaching and winning adherents to the Buddhist Sangha (monastic community). In the course of these wanderings we learn of his visits to Rajgir (Rajagriha), the capital of the state of Magadha, and his temporary residence in other important cities, Shravasti, Kaushambi, Vaishali and Varanasi. At the age of eighty he entered Mahaparinirvana at Kushinagara in north Bihar. This suggests that during his lifetime the Buddha moved about spreading his message in a fairly circumscribed area, in the middle of the Ganges valley, mainly in the modern states of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. There are relatively few early references to his travelling far beyond these boundaries, either to the east, south or west.

After the death of the Buddha his followers gathered at Rajagriha for the first general council at which the *Vinaya Pitaka* (monastic rules) and *Sutta Pitaka* (the Buddha's sermons) were recited. One may infer that the process of maintaining the canon of the Buddha's teachings was thus established. There followed other great councils: four are mentioned in different sources, but doubts have been cast on the authenticity of some of them. A second council is said to have been held in Vaishali one hundred years after the death of the Buddha, and probably coincided with the great schism between the newly developed Buddhist sects, the Theravadins and the Mahasanghikas; a third is said to have been held in Pataliputra in the time of the Mauryan king Ashoka, when some final additions were made to the canon and when it was decided to send out missionaries to neighbouring countries; and a fourth is supposed to have been held in the time of the Kushan king Kanishka I (i.e. c.AD 100–26) in either Kashmir or the Punjab, when the canon of another sect, the Sarvastivadins, was recited.

The Spread of Buddhism

It seems probable that from the beginning Buddhism was a proselytising movement, and that teachers spread out ever farther from its original homeland. Even in the earliest texts there are suggestions that during the lifetime of the Buddha converts were already made from far beyond its central homeland. One of the significant features of the rising states of the Ganges system was that they too seem to have felt the need to expand outwards and hence to establish colonies in remote regions. In this process the colonists must have carried with them the seeds of the new faiths which were emerging in the Ganges valley. Thus there is every likelihood that the beginnings of Buddhist teaching may have reached Gandhara before the end of the fourth century BC.

But it was particularly with the Mauryans that Buddhism became an India-wide creed, and that Ashoka sent his missionaries to Sri Lanka, Burma and other distant lands to the west. Reference to a distribution map of Ashoka's rock edicts would show the likely extent of Mauryan, and hence Buddhist, influence during the first half of the third century BC.⁴

This is also the time when many Buddhist monuments were first established in these regions. At Taxila in Pakistan we know that the Dharmarajika stupa⁵ was established at that time. Further sects developed in Buddhism in the period of the third council summoned by Ashoka. Among these the Sarvastivadins and the Dharmaguptakas seem to have moved westwards, and thereafter to form an important presence in Mathura, Gandhara and Kashmir. This development was to have great significance for the particular direction Buddhism was to take in the north-west. Historically this may be regarded as another step in the process, begun with the secession of the Mahasanghikas, the earlier splitting of the Buddhist monastic order, which progressed towards the establishment of Mahayana Buddhism.

Buddhism under the Kushans

The further spread of Buddhism in the Crossroads of Asia and beyond was undoubtedly the product of the Kushan age. With the conquest of Bactria by the Kushans and their subsequent expansion south of the Hindu Kush into Kabul, Gandhara, northern Pakistan and north-western India, the conditions were set for their control of the growing trade between India, China and the Mediterranean world under the Roman Empire. This provided an ideal medium for the further spread of Buddhism. Throughout our region there is evidence of large numbers of flourishing monasteries and related activities of all sorts. This was the period when there was also a great expansion of whatever Buddhist links had by that time already been established with China.

During the first centuries AD the Buddhist com-

munities in the Crossroads of Asia were enthusiastic promoters of their faith, and were patronising the newly emerging Buddhist art of Gandhara and the surrounding regions. In this way Buddhism, born in eastern India and present in the Crossroads of Asia by the third century BC, continued to grow and flourish there, developing for itself and for the region a character of its own.

Buddhism in the Crossroads of Asia played a major role in the complex interaction of Indian, Iranian and Greek and Roman cultures which took place there during the opening centuries of the Christian era, and this interaction is nowhere better represented than in the works of art which it enlisted to its service.

FRA

1 Although not certainly dated, the Upanishads may be expected to have been composed between c.750 and 400 BC.

2 Bechert and Gombrich, 1984; Zwalf, 1985.

3 Broadly these are the three main alternatives:

- (i) the longer chronology, based on the Sri Lankan chronicles, which would suggest that the date of the Mahāparinirvāṇa, the Buddha's death, took place c.543 BC;
- (ii) the 'corrected' longer chronology which, by removing sixty years from the first alternative, produces a date of 486 or 483 BC (this incidentally coincides with the Chinese 'Dotted Record');
- (iii) the shorter chronology which is derived from the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the *Vinaya Pitaka* (monastic rules), and which suggests that the event took place one hundred years before the consecration of Ashoka, i.e. in c.373–368 BC.

We cannot here discuss the rival merits of these three alternatives, except perhaps to note that the first is generally discounted outside Sri Lanka; the second has been widely favoured in recent decades; and the third has recently found considerable new support. In the absence of any solid data, or of any conclusive attempt to use archaeological data to solve the problem, it remains impossible to determine which date is the most likely to be correct, although archaeological and other evidence seems to support the third. Recent research on the question has been assembled by Bechert, 1991.

4 A bibliography of the Ashokan inscriptions has been made by Allchin and Norman, 1985.

5 This stupa probably takes its name from Ashoka, the 'Dharmaraja', i.e. the religious king. According to the tradition gathered by the Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang, other monuments in the north-west also claimed descent from an Ashokan foundation. Among these was almost certainly the great stupa of Butkara I, at Mingora in Swat (north-west Pakistan), which also bore the title of Dharmarajika.

1.5 Coins and the Reconstruction of History

Coins are of service to the historian for the role they can play as part of the evidence available for historical reconstruction, because they can often supplement, give precision to, or even correct other sources of information. For the Crossroads of Asia this role is a vital one. Coins provide a framework for our understanding of the chronology and location of the Greek and barbarian kingdoms which flourished there after the death of Alexander the Great, whose invasion (329–325 BC) completed his destruction of Iranian (Achaemenid) rule in the area. Reconstructing the history of ancient Afghanistan, Pakistan and north-western India therefore depends as much on the evidence derived from the coins found in the area as it does on ancient texts and the varied data obtained from archaeological excavations.

Non-numismatic Sources

Written testimony is very fragmented and requires considerable speculation by historians to render it useful for the purpose of writing a history of the Crossroads of Asia. From a handful of Greek and Latin writers – Polybius, Strabo, Ptolemy, Justin and the anonymous author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* – references to occasional events and the names and actions of a few local Greek and Indian rulers during the centuries after Alexander have been gleaned.¹ Allusions to the military actions of the Greeks against India have been found in ancient Indian literature. A Buddhist text describes the encounter between a Buddhist teacher and the Greek king Menander, but provides few historical data.

Equally brief references to the Kushans and the other nomadic peoples who succeeded the Greeks as masters of the region are to be found in Chinese historical texts, particularly the official chronicles of the Han Dynasty.² For the later period down to the time of the Islamic invasion much information has been gained from the reports of Buddhist pilgrims travelling from China to India, particularly Fa Xian (written c.AD 413) and Xuan Zang (AD 629–45). Indian, Armenian and later Arab authors also provide a little information and two classical authors contribute short notices on the activities of the Huns on the eastern borders of Iran during the fifth century AD.

The modern attempt to reconstruct a history of the Crossroads of Asia during the ancient period began with the publication by T.S. Bayer of his *Historia Regni Graecorum Bactriani* (A History of the Bactrian Kingdom of the Greeks), St Petersburg: 1738. Using the ancient classical texts he was able to name six of the Greek kings who had ruled in Bactria and India after Alexander, but had little to report on their dates or the

distinctive dress of the Kushan kings probably owed more to Parthian precedent than nomadic, and the continuing use of Iranian forms for vessels was likely to derive from the same source.

The Sasanian dynasty that took over the Parthian Empire from the early third century AD encouraged more distinctive artistic activity, based no less on earlier Iranian (and to a lesser extent Greek) practice. The Sasanian kings showed a clear attempt to emulate the Achaemenid achievement in monumental art. The effect in the east was not marked, but in metalwork especially the products of the two areas came very close to each other.¹⁰

Nomad Art

Nomad arts naturally did not tend to the monumental but were decorative, expressed in textiles or metal attachments to dress, weapons, harness or portable furnishings. Those of the eastern steppes are expressed in an 'animal style' that had a long currency across Asia and northern Europe. They did not compromise easily with the arts of the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia or India. The almost incessant nomad invasions to the south through the Crossroads of Asia seldom had much artistic impact on the peoples they met and often conquered. There may be traces of the Scythians (Shakas) on their way south in this exhibition (nos. 95–6), but their occupancy of Pakistan and north-western India in the first century AD left no real mark of their origins.

There is rather more to show for nomad art in Bactria, perhaps the result of the arrival of the Yuezhi, and there are examples of mixed Greek, Iranian and nomad motifs in some of the jewellery from Tillya-tepe and the Takht-i-Sangin hoard. But by the time the Yuezhi had come under the leadership of the Kushans, it is hard to detect much of their nomad northern heritage except, as with the Parthians, in matters of dress. The arts of the Crossroads of Asia may have become cosmopolitan in their sources, but they were also eclectic, and not all newcomers had much of substance to contribute to a style which was set to acquire an idiom of its own.

JB

1 The best general account of the arts of Persia in all periods considered here remains Porada, 1965.

2 Jettmar, 1967; Rudenko, 1970.

3 Dalton, 1964.

4 Tillya-tepe: Sarianidi, 1980 and 1985. Takht-i-Sangin: *Oxus*, 1989, pp. 29–50, 171–5.

5 Bernard, 1976.

6 Nos. 95 and 101.

7 e.g. Harle, 1986, figs. 7–8; Irwin, 1973–6.

8 e.g. Harle, 1986, figs. 12–15. A possible alternative source is Hellenistic archaizing figures, current in Bactria.

9 Fabrègues, 1987.

10 Useful sources for Parthian and Sasanian art are Porada, 1965; Herrmann, 1977; Lukonin, 1967.

2.2 Greek Art in Asia

The only important elements of Greek art to penetrate the Crossroads of Asia before Alexander the Great led his armies there in 329 BC were those that had been already adopted and translated under the Achaemenid Empire of Iran. These have been considered briefly in the last section. Alexander's army carried with it the trappings of Greek court life and arts, and one early intimation of purely Greek artistic activity in the East may be read in the gem with the portrait of the king (no. 1).

Continued practice of Greek arts is demonstrated principally in coinage, but with the establishment of the Greek Bactrian kingdom in the mid-third century BC there was a more settled court life and patronage. The arts of the Bactrian kingdom were purely Greek, with little concession to local traditions in anything but some architectural plans, which reflect more on life and religion than artistic practice; and even in the architecture the detail and orders were Greek. There are traces of provinciality, but more remarkably there are equally clear indications that the craftsmen were abreast of developments in the Greek homeland despite their remoteness and the presence of hostile Parthians on the overland routes.

Imported Art, Imported Style

The quality of original Greek works that travelled east to be admired and copied can hardly be better judged than from the silver vessels (nos. 97–8). But there is much still to learn both of Greek art in Bactria and of Bactrian art. The French excavations at Ai Khanum on the Oxus have shown just how Greek their towns were in appearance and furnishing. We must look for Bactrian art in later assemblages of loot, or from its influence on other easterners.¹

In the second century BC Greek rule spread south across the Hindu Kush into the Kabul region and Arachosia and east into Gandhara, Swat and the eastern Punjab, but a comparably strong and pure diffusion of Greek arts is hard to discern. It accounts for the production of some fine silver bowls with Greek figures and groups, which generally seem to have lost their narrative or religious identity,² and it was the continuity of Greek idiom that brought into the great city of Taxila in the first century BC so much of purely western inspiration, however translated. The toilet palettes (nos. 153–8) were a local, Indian demonstra-

tion of the process of copying, adaptation and a degree of misunderstanding, as was also much of the work in precious metal (nos. 138–9).

This first phase of the introduction of Greek arts depended initially on the patronage of Greek kings, and developed as a court style even when Parthians or Scythians (Shakas) from Central Asia were the controlling powers. It presented the East with classical forms of architecture, figures and groups, and a new and more realistic approach to the representation of the human body and of dress.

Before the turn of the era the Greek homeland had been embraced in the Roman Empire, but the arts of the eastern Mediterranean remained Greek, and were indeed to set the standards for the development of 'Roman' art. Rome may have provided the impetus for the new injection of western goods and ideas in the East, but the traffic was in the hands of Greeks and the only real Roman influence was, significantly enough, on the development of Kushan coinage. So we may be dealing in the East less with Roman art than with the continuing Greek arts of the Roman period. Striking parallels can be drawn between Gandhara figures or groups and works from Italy, Greece and Roman Egypt. Which area was the major source and what the means of transmission could have been for subjects best known in monumental works in the West will continue to puzzle scholars. The intervention of travelling artists provides one explanation. And there has been over the years no little 'Greek-or-Roman' rivalry in interpretation, however misguided.³

The Gandhara Style

The first century AD saw the inception of the Hellenising arts of the Crossroads of Asia, commonly known as the Gandhara style. Buddhism had been served by artists before, notably in other areas of north India, but new styles were now developed to express the religion, already at least some four centuries old. Much of the western contribution cannot easily be explained simply in terms of the continuing Bactrian or Indo-Greek tradition and many features certainly appear to be of fresh inspiration, from the new traffic across the Indian Ocean.

The first representations of the Buddha seated apparently belonged to the Indian tradition (see section 2.7), but it may well be that the most familiar standing type depended on Greek example. The assured contrapposto of the early standing figures of the Buddha appears to have owed more to the West than to the supple and inventive styles of earlier Indian sculpture (itself probably not unaffected by western practices). Buddhism, unlike Hindu religion, presented an essentially human rather than demonic cycle of stories around the figure of the Buddha, and the conventions of classical art were very readily adopted to demonstrate his life and work in individual tableaux,

for example the reliefs which are the most typical of the arts of Gandhara.

The first intimations of the application of western arts to such themes came before the appearance of the figure of the Buddha, in reliefs such as nos. 130–2, soon to be followed by subjects which came to admit representation of the Buddha himself.

Greek Motifs

The architectural setting of Corinthian columns (and the use of the capital, no. 203) and the decorative application of the garland and the like in Gandhara art copied western models. From the second century AD there were other recurrent motifs from the same source: the atlas figures (as no. 126) and putti with garlands (no. 133) which copied a common Mediterranean motif but with details that betrayed inspiration from the Greek world of the mid-second century onwards. Individual classical figures were pressed into the service of Indian and Buddhist narrative: Heracles for Vajrapani (no. 135), Tyche/Fortuna for Hariti (nos. 111 and 137), and a variety of Dionysiac motifs. Generic figures too were selectively but enthusiastically adopted: Greek sea monsters (no. 156), centaurs (no. 127) and tritons (no. 129). The 'minor' arts, generally neglected apart from jewellery but an important feature of this exhibition, are no less revealing, in both imported bronze figurines and locally made works adapted to varying degrees.

It has been argued that, on into the fourth and fifth centuries AD, progress in style and subjects depended closely on current Mediterranean fashions.⁴ This is not impossible, but given the range of styles presented by the Gandhara series and the almost complete lack of sure dating evidence for almost all of the relevant types in the East, there is some danger of imposing a false sequence of development.

Kushan Hellenising arts were carried, with Buddhism, north into Bactria, and yet farther afield into Central Asia and China, where the familiar motifs can be found centuries later, barely changed. Classical architectural settings, putti with garlands, flying Erotes or Victories translated into apsaras continued to serve Buddhist art for many centuries, and owed their origins to a long-forgotten Mediterranean home.⁵ The Hellenising arts of Gandhara were the source of this, but in the overall record of Indian art they were a comparatively localised phenomenon, whatever their effect elsewhere.⁶

JB

1 A useful survey of the evidence of Ai Khanum is to be found in Descoedres, 1990, pp. 329–42.

2 Weitzmann, 1943, where some optimistic Greek identifications are pressed; Denwood, 1973.

3 The Sasanian period shows more direct awareness of some Roman motifs, even the Roman wolf with the twins, in Persia and Bactria: Azarpay, 1988.

small halo behind the head.⁴ That this type of image already existed at an earlier date, around the middle of the first century AD, is suggested by its appearance on the famous Bimaran casket, found in association with coins which are now securely dated to the period of Kujula Kadphises.⁵ Comparable images of the seated Buddha certainly belong to this period, and the types thus extend from the mid-first to the early second century AD.

But these images were not the first to be produced in Gandhara, as van Lohuizen-de Leeuw has shown.⁶ Before them were others depicting the Buddha with similar facial features but with hands folded on the lap in dhyana mudra, the meditative pose, and dressed in a dhoti and scarf, wrapped across his chest and drawing a loop over the shoulder. A small halo appears behind his head, replaced on some images by a crown of flowers hanging in the bodhi tree above his head. These images are different from the classical Gandhara Buddha, and are closer to the type of teacher found in early Indian schools of art, and they may be confidently assigned to the earliest stage of the custom of depicting the Buddha in human form. This conclusion is supported by the style and composition of the reliefs in which they appear, recalling those of Indian sculptures of the first century BC; and by the concurrence of early Indian types of ornaments alongside others of Parthian origin.⁷ Taken together with the style, they bracket the series between the late first century BC and the beginning of the first century AD.

Development of the Image

Both the Gandhara and Mathura images were to undergo further significant changes after the reign of Kanishka. At Mathura the kapardin type is replaced, by the time of Huvishka, by a Buddha with a hairstyle represented by snail-like curls, dressed in a monastic robe covering both shoulders and looping symmetrically over his chest, sitting on a pedestal decorated at each corner with a crouching lion depicted head on. During the third century AD the cloak is looped asymmetrically and the lions on the pedestal are shown with heads turning inwards.

In Gandhara, by the end of the second century AD the Buddha has an undulating hairstyle, a large halo and a robe, of which the asymmetric draping over the chest is widely impregnated with Greco-Roman influences. From the third century AD the Buddha is frequently represented in a new attitude, the teaching attitude, dharmachakra mudra. When shown in this mode his robe often covers one shoulder only. These later versions represent what is normally considered to be the fully developed Gandhara style.

FRA/CF

1 Huntington, 1985, presents an alternative viewpoint from textual reference to early Buddha images.

2 See above, section 1.6. For a recent listing of the dated images see Czuma, 1985, pp. 227–32.

3 Coomaraswamy, 1927.

4 This description was constructed by Cribb, 1984 and 1985(a), from his study of the surviving coins.

5 See 1.5 and 1.6 above, and the commentary on nos. 186–92.

6 van Lohuizen, 1979.

7 Fabrègues, 1991.

2.8 Coin Designs as Evidence of the Art History

Coin designs provide a valuable resource for the study of the development of Greek and local artistic forms and conventions in the Crossroads of Asia during the ancient period. In many respects the art of the coin designer parallels that of artists in many other media in this area. The study of coin designs, however, provides a very particular insight which is not available from other art forms, because the nature of their production allows them to be securely dated in a way which creates a continuous sequence of designs throughout the period from the introduction of coinage into the area until the advent of Islam.

There are two main types of design in the ancient coins of this area: royal portraits and divine representations. The royal portraits are of considerable interest, but provide only a limited insight into contemporary developments in art, because there are few royal images in other media. Notable examples are the Kushan royal images from Mathura, which parallel the coin designs exactly. Divine representations, however, are so dominant in all surviving art forms from the area that the coins can be used to provide an essential tool in the understanding of their development.

The Conventions of Coin Design

In order to make use of the opportunities created by the availability of the repertoire of religious designs on coins, it is essential that these designs are understood as products of conventions which are fundamentally different to those of the other art forms of the area.

The basis for these conventions was the function of the objects on which the designs appeared as coins. The choice and construction of designs for coins in the region, as elsewhere, involved a conscious and publicly evident decision by their producers about the image to be conveyed by the coins, an image intimately related to their role as money.

The primary factor in that decision was based on a practical necessity: a coin must conform in its physical

appearance with its intended users' perception of what money should look like before they will accept it in payment. The coin design must present to its users an image which convinces them that the object which it decorates is a coin and can fulfil the uses to which a coin is normally put, that is as money. Recent evidence of that necessity has been observed in the United States, where public rejection of the novel Susan B. Antony Dollar coin (1979), because the public was used to this denomination being in the form of a paper money bill, caused it to be withdrawn from use. In many respects this need for conformity is the overriding factor in the choice of design. A clear indication of this can be seen in the coins of the first Kushan king, Kujula Kadphises, which mostly imitated coins already in use in the lands he appears to have conquered (see nos. 34, 35 and 75).

Another important factor could be the need to present through the coin designs the political power and public image of the ruler by whose authority the coins are issued. Confidence in that authority could offer a partial alternative to the need for strict adherence to pre-existent concepts of what a coin should look like.

The Greek Coinage Tradition

In the Crossroads of Asia, during the ancient period, the conventions governing the choice of coin design can be loosely termed Greek. They were introduced into the area with the coins of the Greek kingdoms following Alexander the Great's destruction of Achaemenid rule in the region.

Initially the predominant coin designs used in the area were all part of the Greek coinage tradition. The conventions soon developed a local character as elements of the tradition were modified in response to local demands different from those operating in the rest of the Greek world. The basic coin design composition introduced into the area by the Greeks featured a royal portrait on one side of the coin (the obverse) and a divine image on the other (the reverse); the side with the divine image was at first normally inscribed with the king's name and title. In some cases, particularly on copper coins, the design composition was closer to the convention in use to the time of Alexander: one divine image on the obverse with another on the reverse. The divine images could also take the form of an object or animal associated with the deity.

The royal portrait/divine image formula was initiated in the period immediately after the death of Alexander the Great. Alexander's own coinage (nos. 10–11), mostly following an earlier Greek convention already known from imported Greek coins,¹ had a divine bust on the obverse and a deity on the reverse. His successors replaced the divine bust with the portrait of Alexander, presenting him in this way as a

new deity (nos. 3–4). From this innovation they then proceeded to introduce their own portraits, often with 'divine' attributes, onto their coins (nos. 13, etc.).

Local Developments

In the north-western Indian context modifications to this Hellenistic model were made to accommodate the introduction of more appropriate bilingual inscriptions. Both sides of the coin were now inscribed, normally with the Greek inscription transferred to the portrait side and an Indian (Kharoshthi)² inscription translating the Greek on the other (nos. 23, etc.). On silver coins this new modified composition became a general rule, but on bronze coins divine images or divine symbols could be used instead of the royal portrait (nos. 22, etc.).

The arrival of Scythian rulers in the area prompted a modification of the form of the royal portrait. The king was no longer depicted by his bust, but was normally shown full length on horseback (nos. 29 and 30) or occasionally seated (nos. 27 and 28) or walking. These kings had a different perception, from that of the Greeks, of the most convincing and appropriate image of their own authority. The Parthian rulers who succeeded the Scythians made use of both the Greek (no. 31) and the Scythian form of royal portrait (nos. 32 and 33), as well as introducing a secondary wave of Greek influence from the Parthian coinages of Iran.³ After an initial stage of copying or adapting existing designs from their Greek, Scythian and Parthian predecessors (nos. 34 and 35), the Kushans made a similar change, choosing to depict themselves on most of their coins as full length standing (nos. 37, etc.) or seated figures or as half-length busts (nos. 36, etc.). The use of a portrait surrounded by an identifying Greek inscription, however, remained the general rule throughout the Scythian, Parthian and Kushan coinages (from the time of the Kushan king Kanishka I the inscriptions were only Greek in lettering, but Bactrian in language (nos. 37, etc.)). From the time of Vasudeva I this could also be accompanied by Brahmi inscriptions in the field (nos. 40, etc.), which from the time of Vasudeva II took over the role of main inscription from the increasingly blundered Greco-Bactrian inscription (nos. 43, etc.). The Kushan period saw a new strand of influence from Greek coinage in the form of imported Roman coins. In some instances this influence manifested itself in the form of designs copied from Roman prototypes (no. 35), but it also had a less overt impact on the handling of reverse designs, where divine images were accompanied, as on Roman coins, with inscriptions naming the depicted deity, in place of the earlier royal name and title inscription.⁴

Towards the end of the Kushan period yet another influx of coin designs from the Greek tradition entered this area in the form of Iranian coins of the Sasanian Empire (nos. 46 and 48) and its sub-kingdom in

Bactria, the so-called Kushano-Sasanians (nos. 47 and 49). Sasanian coins retained the royal portrait bust as their main design, but surrounded it with an inscription giving the royal name and titles in the local Iranian script (Pahlavi). The divine image on the reverse no longer took the traditional form, but consisted of a depiction of the fire altar emblem of the Zoroastrian religion; when divine images were featured, these were subordinated to the representation of the fire altar. In Bactria the Sasanians retained many of the conventional designs of the Kushans, but also introduced Sasanian elements. Kushan and Sasanian designs, as well as Brahmi and Greco-Bactrian inscriptions, survived into the Hun coinages of the fifth and sixth centuries (nos. 50–2).

Gods on Coins

The divine images and divine symbols used within this tradition were, like the royal portraits, intimately related to the intentions of presenting a public statement about the ruler and his authority. On the coinage of the local Greek kingdoms there was a consistent pattern of depicting deities from the Greek pantheon. The gods shown varied from king to king. Most kings issued coins with only one or two gods, apparently selected as patrons of the issuing king. It was also implicit in the design that the deity supported the right of the king to rule.

Sometimes these gods were represented in a symbolic way by a design featuring an animal or attributes associated with them. So Athena was represented on Menander's coins by her owl; Hermes on Demetrius' by his caduceus. This pattern conformed closely with the broader Greek coinage tradition as practised right across the 'Greek' world from India to the western Mediterranean.

Local conditions could affect this tradition by introducing new deities onto the coins in place of the strictly Greek gods. This was normally achieved in this region by presenting the local deity in the guise of his or her closest parallel in the Greek pantheon. It has been observed by many scholars that the Zeus on the coins of the Greek kings Hermaeus (no. 24) and Amyntas has the attributes of a sun god, perhaps with the intention of depicting the Bactrian deity Mithra from the Iranian Zoroastrian religion (see below, commentary on nos. 54–60).⁵

The divine images selected by the Greek kings reflected a common feature of polytheistic religion – the tendency of individuals and communities to focus their devotion on one or a small selection of deities from the broader pantheon. The same phenomenon is observable in monotheistic religions where particular aspects of the divinity or particular associates of the divinity become the centre of devotion (as the cult of Mary in Roman Catholicism). The gods chosen by the Greek kings of the Crossroads of Asia tended to be

those who could also be used as symbols of royal power. So Zeus, king of the gods; Heracles, the mortal hero who achieved divinity; and a martial representation of Athena, daughter of Zeus, were the ones most frequently portrayed on these coins.

When the Greek rulers were replaced during the first century BC by Scythian and then, in the first century AD, by Iranian (Parthian) rulers, the traditional presentation of divine images on coins was retained but modified. Zeus (no. 30) and Athena (no. 72) remained popular with the Scythian rulers, but other obscurer deities began to be featured (the Greek god Hermes on no. 28, and an unidentified lamp- and palm-bearing goddess on no. 29). These deities continued the trend observed above of depicting apparently local deities in the guise of Greek gods. On the coins the Scythian king Maues, a club-wielding deity, is featured with attributes which distinguish him from the Greek club-wielding deity, Heracles (no. 74), and on the coins of Azes a trident-bearing version of Zeus appears (no. 86). These could be interpreted as Greek deities, but they do not quite fit the norms of Greek iconography.

The Parthians made similar changes, but the intention of the coin designs chosen still appears to be within the Greek tradition. The Parthian kings, perhaps as a reference to their military prowess, made great use on their coins of Nike, the Greek goddess of victory (no. 31). The overall design is still of Greek origin with a royal portrait on one side and a deity on the other, labelled on both sides with the royal name and titles, written in Greek and Indian.

The use of divine images on coins underwent a transformation during the Kushan period. The first Kushan king's issues used designs derived from earlier coins, but his successor Wima Kadphises introduced a design featuring an Indian deity, Shiva, with no apparent connection with the Greek pantheon (nos. 36 and 88). From this beginning the next two Kushan kings placed on their coins a broad range of gods, mostly drawn from the Iranian Zoroastrian religion, but also including some Greek and Indian gods.⁶ At the same time they introduced a new form of reverse inscription which named the deity being depicted. Their successors reduced the number of gods depicted to two, but retained the label-type inscriptions (nos. 39–44).

The Sasanian princes who took over part of the Kushan kingdom during the third century continued Kushan coin designs, but featured a few new divine images (no. 60). They also introduced Sasanian coins on which the reverse design took the form of a fire altar (nos. 46, 48 and 49), sometimes with divine or priestly attendants. Both Kushan and Sasanian religious designs continued to be used on the coins of the Huns who conquered the region in the late fourth to fifth century (nos. 50–2 and 94).

The wealth of imagery surviving in coin designs ensures their role in the study of local art history. They

provide a unique record of royal portraiture, regalia and costume, supplementing the meagre remains in other art forms. They also broaden the repertoire of non-Buddhist religious images, particularly in depicting local deities, whose iconographies are scarcely known from other sources. The handful of coin designs representing Buddha images (nos. 187-9) create a relatively datable benchmark for the study of the development of Buddhist art and Gandhara sculpture.

There are, however, important considerations to be kept in mind in using this evidence. Because of the need to maintain the role of coins as money, there is an in-built conservatism in coin designs which has kept in use many designs long after they have any true relevance for the study of local development of art motifs and designs. The value of coin designs for the art historian lies in a firm understanding of the context within which they function.

JC/OB

1 Curiel and Schlumberger, 1953.

2 The Indian inscription was normally an exact translation of the Greek inscription into Prakrit, the contemporary vernacular of north-

western India. On most coins this was written in the Kharoshthi script apparently invented during the late Achaemenid period for the transcription of the local language. Analysis of the script has shown that it was developed out of Aramaic, the official script of the Achaemenid administration. Like Aramaic it is written from right to left in syllables, but with consonant clusters written as a single syllable and with marks to indicate the value of the vowel in each syllable.

On a few coins (no. 21) the Indian inscription was written in Brahmi script, the script normally used to write Prakrit in northern India. Brahmi is written from left to right, but like Kharoshthi it was written in syllables with the same treatment of consonant clusters and vowels.

For a clear summary of the historical evidence concerning these scripts and their sources, see Dani, 1963.

3 The design of a horseman used on coins nos. 32 and 33 is a modified version of the reverse designs from a silver coin of the Parthian king Artabanus II (dated AD 26-7); on another issue (Mitchiner 1113-15) Gondophares copies the exact detail of the reverse design of the same Artabanus II coin (Sellwood, 1980, type 63).

4 Göbl, 1960; Göbl, 1968; MacDowall, 1968.

5 Bivar, 1979(a).

6 Rosenfield, 1967.

Bronze Figurines, 102–14

The individual bronze statuette, used as a votive or decorative object, is a mainly classical phenomenon, and in the East such figures more commonly appear as attachments to larger metal objects or furniture. The strong classical style and subjects of nos. 102–12 make it probable that they hail from the eastern edges of the Greek world, an observation supported by the leaded-bronze composition of those analysed, but nos. 113–14 must be of Indian origin.

102. Statuette of Heracles

Leaded brass

2nd–1st century BC

Western Afghanistan, said to have been found with no. 103

Height 16.8 cm; weight 618.6 g

Collection A.I.C.

The figure is solid cast, with a fully finished back.¹ It is slightly damaged at the forehead and lacks whatever was held in the right hand and whatever object was set below the head of the club to raise it from the ground. The beard and hair are shown as curly. The right leg is slightly distorted and should probably be straighter. The hero wears a wreath of pointed leaves (one seems trilobate) fastened by a band, the ribbon ends of which spread onto his shoulder-blades.

The pose is a familiar one in classical art, devised in the fourth century BC to represent the weary hero resting on his club after his labours. This is the simplest form, omitting the lion skin. The long club is commonly shown resting on a boulder. In such figures the right hand is shown either resting on the hip, or behind the back, holding the Apples of the Hesperides (as in the Heracles Farnese).² The artist of our statuette gives him a clenched right hand, which matches the more alert set of the head, in the place of



the usual more relaxed or even downcast posture. This is eastern work, reinterpreting the pose in the way described, or possibly ignoring the narrative intention of the pose for the weary hero. But the physiognomy of the Heracles type is carefully rendered. On the wreath see below, no. 104.

Heracles was a popular figure in the East, assimilated to Verathragha in Iran and to Vajrapani in

early Buddhist art.³ He is not an uncommon subject for bronze figurines, many of which were probably made in the East, although, as here, closely following classical types (see also nos. 69–78 and 103–4). The classical proportions and quality of this example could support a date within the Hellenistic/Parthian period, second/first century BC. (See colour plate, p. 22.)

JB

1 A few casting bubbles are visible, especially in the chest, right arm and lower legs (Appendix, fig. 4). A major casting flaw at the top of the head was once filled with lead (probably original to the time of casting). Most of the repair is gone, but some lead carbonated remains. Information courtesy of C. Reedy. See Appendix, table 1.

2 For these see *LIMC*, IV, Heracles, 762–5, pls. 489–95.

3 This is well studied by Flood, 1989, pp. 17–27. He mentions (p. 22) other Heracles bronzes from the East: from Ai Khanum (crowning himself), Begram (probably imported, Heracles/Serapis) and Quetta (carrying lion), but none adopts the pose seen here (or of no. 103).



and cult, is Demeter's agent in bringing the fruits of agriculture to mankind, and who is commonly shown holding ears of corn, such as may well have been held by the bronzes (with a *phiale* in the other hand). This need not impede assimilation to a Syrian fertility hero who might personify the province, and then change sex for a Roman relief. The Greek origins of the type remain obscure and might be explained by the dress, especially the tasselled scarf. It too is likely to be eastern in inspiration with its elaboration of tassels. The knotted scarf-dress leaves both arms free – appropriate for a priest though not wholly necessary for an attribute-carrying hero.

The construction of several of these figures in two pieces is odd since, although the technique is familiar enough, the division at the waist is not, and the two halves were never soldered together. This makes the figures more like dolls or figure-boxes to contain other materials, presumably of a sacred character or

ritual intention, possibly ears of corn or a rolled prayer. Only on this example has the plaster lining been observed. We must assume that the wooden peg that made it was not left in position to secure the two halves since there would have been better ways of doing this (with solder) and the arrangement must surely have been so that the figure could hold or conceal some object. In this respect it recalls Phoenician or Egyptian amulet boxes which held charms or perhaps prayers. The practice is non-Greek, whatever the appearance of the figure. This example is the farthest travelled of the whole group.

JB

1 That it was not of eastern manufacture was recognised by Harle. Mrs Tissot was the first to perceive its relationship to the 'Adonis' figures in the Louvre, Paris.

2 Bol, 1988, pp. 11–15.

3 Simon, 1990, pp. 265–70.

110. Statuette of Demeter (Ceres)

Leaded bronze
2nd–1st century BC
Western Afghanistan
Height 11.4 cm; weight 167.9 g
Collection A.I.C.

The figure is hollow, cast in the round, with the back as carefully worked as the front.¹ The goddess stands with her right leg slightly bent and the foot drawn to the side. She wears a crown of ears of corn with a central fruit(?), the ribbon ends curling onto her shoulders. Her hair is drawn in wavy locks across her forehead, parted on the crown. She is dressed in a peplos, with a himation fastened at her left shoulder falling to her knees, its end carefully disposed behind her left shoulder. In her lowered right hand she holds ears of corn and fruit (figs?). The object in her left hand is missing but, from analogy with similar figures, is likely to have been a torch.

Such figures of Ceres (the Greek Demeter) may carry a cornucopia, torch or basket in the hand not



129. Relief: marine figures

Serpentinite¹

1st–2nd century AD

Peshawar Valley (see no. 128)

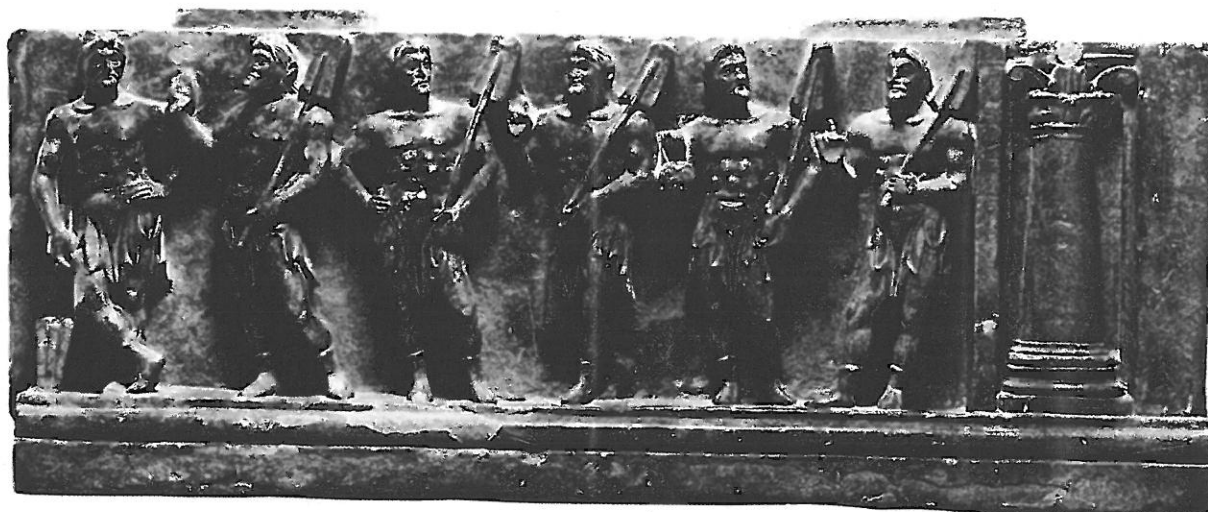
43.4 × 17.8 × 5 cm

British Museum OA 1889.10–16.1

AGBG, I, p. 247, fig. 126; *BAG*, pp. 36–7, fig. 47, pl. 30; Buchthal, 1945, p. 69, pl. I f; Bussagli, 1984, p. 176; Doshi, 1985, pp. 32–3; Czuma, no. 89.

The relief has two rectangular flanges above and below for attachment (see no. 128, note 2). The torus and flat moulding at the base does not quite reach the left end of the block. At the right, within a flat frame, there is an Indo-Corinthian column with an elaborately moulded base and a rosette on the abacus front. Six mariners stand in relaxed poses, grouped in pairs. All have acanthus-like growths as skirts and wear boots; their rib-cages are heavily modelled. They have moustaches and beards, while their front hair is swept back from a centre parting with two short, rising locks, rather like small horns. All hold oars in their left hands except (1) who leans on his, propped beneath his right armpit. (2), (4) and (6) raise their right hands, palm out, with forefinger and little finger raised; (1) and (3) have their free hands on their hips; (5) holds a dolphin, frontal. The right legs of (1) and (6) are cut in the round; all the others are attached to the background which is well cut back from all figures, leaving all the relief work in the front plane with little carved in the round (unlike no. 132).

The probable companion relief is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. It may well have stood adjacent, to the left, and is by the same hand.² It carries six similar figures, with comparable gestures, poses, oars, and one holding a dolphin. The poses are classical; that of (1) derives from the weary Heracles, as no. 102. The odd anatomy is the work of an artist well aware of heavily modelled classical figures of sea deities or the like, but with no detailed knowledge of human anatomy and not prepared to look. The result looks more grotesque to our eyes, conditioned to realistic sculpture, than it probably did to the ancient viewer (unless he came from the West). It is treated in different ways on each figure, and is close to being correct on some, so special meaning need not be read into it – Marshall had suggested multiple breasts, and that they represent the five rivers of the Punjab and the sea, but this takes no account of the companion slab. Is it possible that the upstanding forehead locks (also on no. 128) reflect, at some distance to be sure, the crab claws shown in this position on many classical marine deities? Oars and dolphins are commonly held by anonymous part-human marine monsters in classical art, from the first century BC onwards. They too may have the acanthus-like skirts, which probably have marine connotations – resembling fins with a suggestion of seaweed. In Gandhara the point of them seems to have been forgotten. (On no. 126 the feature would have been more appropriate if she had been an ichthyocentauress.) Here their presence is



reduced to 36%

unnecessary since they do not mask the transition between animal and human, as in classical art, but they do lend a further marine and supernatural aspect to the figures.³ These too are anonymous unless there were heroic rowers involved in a Buddhist story.

There are some fifteen of these stair-risers, with which several triangular side reliefs, as no. 128, are probably associated.⁴ These are the so-called 'Buner reliefs' (see no. 128 for the true provenance). Each of the rectangular reliefs is decorated with three pairs of figures. Most of them are apparently halves, as here, to be assembled with a companion piece, which is easy to identify in this case. All are about the same height within a range of about 2 cm, which is probably acceptable; and the full relief widths seem to have been about 80 to 85 cm, but this is without any central divider which should perhaps be allowed for all pairs. Stylistic similarities make it possible to identify hands, but the style is very homogeneous.⁵ Subject matter should help to identify pairs, but it is likely that they all come from one major complex and a great many are missing. Of the same height are narrower reliefs, like no. 130, which, with their columns at both ends, are presumably complete and made to serve a narrow ledge or stair; they are of varying widths, from about 46 to 53 cm.

The style and heavily classicising subject matter which is not, apparently, taken up in later art in quite this form, suggests a relatively early date; see no. 131.

JB

1 See Appendix, p. 266.

2 Czuma, no. 90. They did not, however, stand immediately side by side since the lower moulding on the Metropolitan Museum relief matches that on our piece in not reaching the edge of the block on the side without the column. This suggests that there was some vertical block between them, holding them back in position; and incidentally masking any minor discrepancy in height. The back of the Metropolitan Museum block was worked with a chisel of the same size as here. It is not always clear whether heights for reliefs of this and related series are stated with or without the flanges, and the lower flanges do not normally appear in photographs since they are let into mounts for exhibition.

3 There are two male figures so equipped shown with a woman and a garuda in a group in the Metropolitan Museum, New York; Czuma, no. 95. They are properly used for mermen in *GAP*, figs. 390, 395.

4 Listed by Czuma, under no. 87, but his total and references do not seem to tally; see no. 131 for two related examples from elsewhere. The best discussions remain those by Rowland, 1956, pp. 8–17 and Marshall, *BAG*, chapters 5, 6.

5 The famous, slightly higher (23.6 cm) relief slab with soldiers from 'Buner' now in Toronto (Czuma, no. 92), is in the same style. It is slightly convex, which suggests that it is from a stupa drum. It might be from the same complex.

130. Relief: regaling couples

Schist

1st–2nd century AD

Peshawar Valley (see no. 128)

46.8 × 16.5 × 5.2 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum I.S. 3–1971

Formerly B. Rowland collection

Rowland, 1977, p. 132, fig. 71.

The panel is similar to no. 129 in details of style, base moulding¹ and framing columns (except that here they abut the edges of the relief). There are two flanges for attachment at top and bottom. This is a full, though narrow, stair width, and not a half, as no. 129, though of the same height. It illustrates three couples: the men are bearded, dressed in a tunic fastened over the left shoulder, with an overfall over the belt, and booted. The women wear a belted dress, necklets and bracelets. (2) and (4) have their cloak draped over their left arms and shoulders; (6) has it over both shoulders, covering the right arm and hand, which holds it at the neck. Of the women, (2) may have held something in her missing left hand; (4) fingers her necklet; (6) holds a palm branch over her left shoulder. Of the men, (1) holds a lidded (?), footed, two-handled vessel in both hands; (3) has a palm branch over his left shoulder, his right hand held horizontally with forefinger and little finger extended, like mariners (2), (4) and (6) on no. 129; (5) holds a tall footed cup in his right hand.

The sculptor is not the same as that of no. 129, as can be seen from details of heads and the columns, but they followed the same models, probably for the same monument. In common with other 'stair' reliefs discussed here, it shows no sign of weathering; probably they were all under cover, or not long exposed.² It has been 'improved' at some time by blacking, not quite all removed.³

A relief in Peshawar which is not of this group and whose style and associations will be discussed with no. 131, is in a very similar style and carries similar figures: four couples and one extra woman. The same cup as in the hand of (5) here is seen and it is clear that they are being offered to the women. The man at the centre of the Peshawar relief wears a himation (cloak) only and holds a one-handed cylindrical tankard, recalling the shallower vessel of (1) here. With this goes no. 131, where there is the cup offering, one man holding flowers, and a man in a himation, like the central figure in the Peshawar relief, but with a chiton beneath it. The dress and poses are classical, the goblets eastern. In a similar scene on a 'Buner' relief in the Cleveland Museum, a woman holds a palm branch, and there is music. The occasion is festive,



reduced to 35%

yet solemn, the women being the focus of attention for the men. The activity is repeated on the other 'Buner' reliefs, sometimes with figures in Indian or foreign dress. (See colour plate, p. 25.)

JB

1 The flanges at the left are closer to the side (5.7 and 3 cm) and smaller (6.5 and 7.5 cm wide) than those at the right (10 and 11 cm away from the end and 8 cm wide). The sides at the back have vertical square-cut (approx. 2×3.5 cm) rabbets to overlap blocks at either side. The back is rough chiselled vertically (chisel 17 mm; narrower than that used on no. 129) and bevelled along the top. The sides, top and bottom are carefully smoothed.

2 BAG, pp. 36–7, suggests steps leading up to a small stupa base.

3 GAP, fig. 411: said to be made of soapstone; formerly in the Guides Mess, Mardan.

131. Relief: couples

Schist

1st–2nd century AD

Takht-i-Bahi

33 × 14.5 × 5 cm

British Museum OA 1900.4–14.13

BAG, p. 34, fig. 41, pl. 27; Doshi, 1985, p. 86; Tissot, 1985, pl. 20.1; Nehru, 1989, pl. 8; Salomon, 1990, pp. 258–62, figs. 1–2.

The scene is placed on a flat plinth. One rectangular flange is preserved above, and one below, with indications at the broken right side of the start of a second one. Seven figures are preserved: four men alternating with three women. (1) and (3) are dressed as the male figures (1), (3) and (5) on no. 130 but without boots. (1) stands with his legs crossed and holds a large goblet with a deep conical body decorated with leaves towards the woman (2) beside

him; (3) holds a bunch of cross-hatched flowers in his raised right hand. (7) was probably dressed in the same way; he faces right and holds up what looks like a flat box or bowl. With his head in profile we can see that the hair is brushed back to a point at the nape. (5) wears a short-sleeved chiton under a himation, draped over the left arm and shoulder; his right hand is raised but the gesture is not clear; the palm of the hand was probably turned out.¹ The women wear belted chitons under himatia, draped over both (2, 6) or the left (4) shoulders, bracelets and large floral headbands over locks curled back from the forehead. The men are bearded but the hair of (5) is tufty and his physiognomy decidedly different, more 'Greek'.

On the reverse, which has been smoothed with a broad flat chisel, there is an incised inscription, set sideways on the stone. This has been studied by Salomon. It is in the so-called *arapacana* (a word which recurs in the inscriptions) syllabary, which is thought to have been invented in Gandhara at about the time this relief was carved and has been described as a 'mystical alphabet [sic] of the Buddhists'. The inscription can be transcribed but not understood. It appears to have been written after the block was prepared for carving but either before installation or after a very early dismantling of the monument. Since the relief has only one close parallel (see below), the back of which has not been described, we cannot judge whether the back here has been reworked. The backs of the 'Buner' reliefs (as nos. 128 and 131) are rougher finished. Explanations offered for the inscription are that it is a charm or blessing, which is possible, but then it is difficult to explain its obscure position unless there was something secret or forbidden about it; an indication of the location of the stone, but it is very elaborate and not paralleled on other such reliefs; or an idle graffito. The last is probably the answer but it is hardly 'idle' and must record something, perhaps a transaction such as payment for work, perhaps for carving, which

required a record before the structure in which the block was to be set was assembled. A set of numerals appears beside the inscription but these have not been read as monetary.

This has commonly been called 'The Presentation of the Bride to Siddhartha', but there is nothing to distinguish it from a companion relief in Peshawar, or – at least for the two couples at the left – from the regaling on some 'Buner' reliefs, as no. 130. The Peshawar relief is the same height, and apparently complete (45 cm),² probably with the same flat plinth below (broken away). If the rectangular flanges were symmetrical on our relief it probably once accommodated nine figures (as Peshawar) and was about 42 cm wide. The Peshawar relief can guide the restoration here: two pairs of regalers at the left (at Peshawar (1) fills a cup from a wineskin and (3) turns his back: for discussion of the subject see no. 130); then the senior male, at Peshawar with naked torso under his cloak, with a woman turned slightly towards him; they are followed by a man facing right (the last figure preserved on the present relief) and two women. The male (5) is thus the centre-piece, with a consort, accompanied by two pairs of regalers and a threesome, making a more involved version of the simple pairs of regalers on the 'Buner' reliefs. The pose and dress of (5) and of the women is thoroughly classical (see remarks on the comparable bronze, no. 111).

The identity of the man is crucial but most obscure. If the Presentation of the Bride to Prince Siddhartha (the future Buddha Sakyamuni) is involved we would have to judge him either the father of the bride (but not actually presenting her), or Siddhartha himself, rendered as a bearded Greek noble or philosopher on a relief whose figures are otherwise almost wholly Hellenic rather than Indian. This would have been more intelligible to a Greek than a Buddhist and the possibility is perhaps not to be entertained. Later Presentations understandably take a quite different form, with Siddhartha an Indian prince.

Comparable in style and subject are two six-figure reliefs (without border columns and with flat plinths,

as here) from Andandheri; one has warriors and woman musicians; the other regalers.³ A more lively group of similar figures appears on a fragmentary relief from Hadda.⁴

The Peshawar relief was in the Guides Mess at Mardan, only about 13 km from Takht-i-Bahi, the find-spot of our relief, and thus plausibly by the same hand and from the same monument,⁵ probably not that of the 'Buner' reliefs. The two are not as high as these reliefs, by at least 2.5 cm, and they lack the columns, but are fitted with similar flanges for attachment. In many respects the figures are more wholly classicising in aspect and in execution, and this may be enough to suggest that they are earlier (but only marginally so, since no. 130 is so very similar though poorer in execution, the figures not being quite so fully modelled and detailed to the background). They might, however, be in some respect forerunners of the 'Buner' (Peshawar Valley) series which admits many more exotic figures but is designed in pairs of figures, many of them regaling and with the same dress, unique in detail to these reliefs. They precede, if by little, in style, subject and date, reliefs with explicit Buddhist iconography.

JB

1 On the analogy of figure (3) who is holding flowers. The outer edge of (5)'s wrist and hand is broken away. He seems not to have been holding anything. If the palm was turned in the only reasonable explanation would be that he was holding the edge of his dress, which is patently not the case.

2 *AGBG*, I, p. 253, fig. 131; *BAG*, fig. 40; *GAP*, fig. 411. The right-hand figure seems very close to the edge but the rectangular flanges on the top are placed symmetrically, suggesting that the full length, or near it, is preserved. *GAP* gives the height as 5.5 in/14 cm and the material as soapstone; Marshall as 4.75 in/12 cm.

3 Dani, 1968–9, pl. 10. nos. 1–2; Dobbins, 1973, p. 291, figs. 58–9. One was unstratified. The other apparently antedates much of the remaining structures, and coins indicate use of the site within the first century AD. They have plain plinths, unlike the elegantly moulded 'Buner' reliefs.

4 Paris, Musée Guimet; *BAG*, pl. 31, fig. 49; *Dossiers d'Archéologie*, V, 1974, p. 116.

5 Marshall made the connection, *BAG*, pp. 33–4.



reduced to 35%

136. Relief group: Panchika and Hariti

Carbonaceous quartz-muscovite-chloritoid phyllite¹
 Takht-i-Bahi
 3rd century AD
 27.3 × 25.4 × 11.5 cm
 British Museum OA 1950.7–26.2

Rosenfield, pl. 78; Tissot, 1985, fig. 139, pl. 17.6; Carter, 1968, pp. 131–2, pl. 6, fig. 12.

The couple are seated on a plain bench with a back rising to behind their necks.² He has curly locks with a headband, chunky earring pendants, a thin necklet, a short belted tunic with wavy pleated skirt, and soft boots laced at the front, with turned-over lappets and thick soles, but leaving the toes either bare or clearly apparent through the thin skin. In his right hand (the arm missing) he holds a footed kantharoid cup. His left elbow rests on the bench back (rather than her shoulder, as elsewhere) and the forearm (missing) was brought across his body, possibly holding something (elsewhere it is a purse). Her wavy hair is dressed in a knot over the forehead, before a thick garland from which rises a splaying round crown, marked with a zigzag at the top and a triangle in front. She has earrings as his, a thin necklet, bracelets, and a thin dress slipping from one shoulder. She rests her hand on his thigh. In her other hand she holds a cornucopia filled with fruit, its horn marked with leaves, its terminal in the form of an animal head with long ears and recurved horns. A baby with short dress and anklets clings to her right leg. Behind the man's arm, apparently climbing over the bench back, is the upper part of a bearded man, dressed and with, it seems, a bundle at his back, offering a purse. Below, at either side (the right one missing) two small figures look up, and hold cylindrical, round-based pots from which there emerges a broad cylindrical mass, such as can be seen in similar groups, but here more realistically portrayed and analogous to an elongated bolster with upholstered ends.³

The identity of these groups has been mentioned under no. 135, and has been discussed by Rosenfield.⁴ Panchika has adopted the mien of a prosperous and warlike nobleman; Hariti remains classically clad but more womanly. This is also how they appear when shown singly. Then Panchika (or Kubera: see no. 144) is dressed in the standard Indian fashion, with dhoti and cloak, not booted, and his wealth is once implied by a baby pouring out coins before him.⁵ Hariti may be shown alone, usually standing, with babies, but then without a cornucopia. The only seated example with the cornucopia is also the most classical: from Taxila, where she also wears the *polos* of Tyche and has no other attributes whatever, and where the identification as a Hariti depends very much on

knowledge of the later history of the type.⁶

The couple seated together offer the fullest statement of their functions, none better than this example. There are two main types for the group. In one Panchika is dressed in Indian style (like the single figures) and there are babies, but she is suckling and not holding a cornucopia; there may be a small attendant figure above and between them.⁷ But in groups such as ours, he is in a short tunic and booted. He may hold a cup, as here, or a purse.⁸ There are clear expressions of intimacy between them: his elbow on her shoulder (or near it, as here) and her hand hovering provocatively over his lap.

Her origins as the classical Tyche/Fortuna are indicated in several examples by a *polos*-like crown.⁹ The cornucopia is magnificent. Here, and in the group in Paris, its shaft is heavily leafed; and on these examples, and on other examples in Berlin, Oxford and London, it terminates in an animal head, perhaps an antelope.¹⁰ This is an odd feature. In the Greek world the horn is simply a container, and when used for drinking the broad upper end is the 'mouth'. In the East horns used for drinking are used as what the Greek called *rhyta* (pourers), with an orifice at the pointed end, from which the liquid is poured into the mouth (see no. 101). The type could be copied for Greek *rhyta* but these are not 'horns of plenty'. To the Indian the horn of plenty was an unfamiliar concept, and the notion of using an animal horn for drinking would have been repugnant. But the horn as *rhyton*, often with animal-head spout, had been adopted from the West (Persia or beyond; see also no. 95), and in copying the horn of plenty this feature of the drinking *rhyton* seems to have been naturally, though inconsequentially added, since the riches of the horn are non-liquid. In later eastern art the horn motif is forgotten and the device becomes no more than a slim bunch of flowers.

In his treatment of Hariti's body and dress, with the material slipping to expose the woman's shoulder, the artist has captured successfully the essence of the classical motif of provocation, more appropriate to an Aphrodite than Tyche. It is a highly successful and compact sculptural group for which I am not aware of any close model in the classical world, where pairs of seated deities or husband-and-wife are not more intimate than a hand at shoulder (which appears on palettes, as no. 157). (See colour plate, p. 25.)

JB

1 See Appendix, p. 269.

2 The back is chiselled (5 mm) in horizontal grooves and at the top is cut back down to 5 cm, as no. 134. There is a tenon beneath for fastening.

3 Usually identified as a money bag. The motif is made more



reduced to 55%

explicit, but without the figures holding the pots, on the base of the Panchika and Hariti group, *GAP*, fig. 345, where the coins are roughly modelled and flow together in a mass. On our example the coins may have been painted on, or perhaps the carving of them was omitted. They appear (with bars) on two smaller footrests seen for the couple on the group in Paris, Tissot, 1985, fig. 140. For the depiction of the coins, see *AGBG*, II, p. 103, fig. 364, where they are poured out by a baby for Panchika alone; and in the Panchika and Hariti group in Oxford (Harle and Topsfield, no. 18) where piles are shown as neat hemispherical mounds patterned with the double circles; compare too the patterns on the base of the latter and other groups, as *AGBG*, II, pp. 159 ff., figs. 386–7, and the footrest of Panchika on a British Museum group (Carter, 1968, p. 131, fig. 11).

4 Rosenfield, pp. 246–8.

5 *AGBG*, II p. 103, fig. 364; with babies p. 111, fig. 369; *GAP*, fig. 339.

6 *Taxila*, III, pl. 211.1; Nehru, 1989, fig. 124. The seated Ardochsho,

Iranian equivalent to Hariti, appears alone on many Kushan coins; see nos. 40–1, 43–5.

7 *AGBG*, II, p. 145 ff., figs. 382–3 (*GAP*, fig. 344; Rosenfield, fig. 61), 384–5 (*GAP*, fig. 342). No babies, but with both holding cups and the attendant behind them on an example in the British Museum, cf. Carter, 1968, p. 131, fig. 11.

8 Cup: Tissot, 1985, fig. 140. Purse: *AGBG*, II, p. 161, fig. 387 (*GAP*, fig. 345); Harle and Topsfield, no. 18.

9 Thus, *AGBG*, II, p. 165, fig. 388; Tissot, 1985, fig. 140; *GAP*, fig. 343; Harle and Topsfield, no. 18. For the finest fortification-*polos*, see the relief from Swat, Tissot, 1985, pl. XXII.6.

10 Paris: Tissot, 1985, fig. 140; Berlin: *AGBG*, II, p. 159, fig. 386; Oxford: Harle and Topsfield, no. 18; London: British Museum, Hariti's head is missing. The terminals resemble those on Bodhisattva necklets, Tissot, 1985, pl. XXXIII.1–7 and figs. 217–21.