

West meets East: At the Borders of the *Oikoumenē* and Beyond

Lecture 6 – The Indo-Greeks Kings

CLAH6007

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Greek Conquests South of the Hindu Kush

- Demetrius “the Invincible” takes power c.200 BC.
- Decline of the Maurya.

“...The Greeks took possession of it and divided it into satrapies...” – **Strabo**
Geog. 11.11.2.

“...the most grand of all kings, Euthydemus, with his son – glorious victor – the remarkable Demetrius.” – inscription from Tajikistan.



Demetrios I. Circa 200-185 BC. AR Tetradrachm - Diademed and draped bust right, wearing elephant's skin headdress - Herakles standing facing, crowning himself with his right hand and holding club with his left, lion's skin draped over left arm - Bopearachchi Série 1B.



Commemorative coin of Agathocles of Demetrius *Aniketos*.

“...he [Apollodorus] mentions the Greeks who caused Bactriana to revolt from the Syrian kings who succeeded Seleucus Nicator, says that when those kings had grown in power they also attacked India...” **Strabo Geog. 15.1.3.**

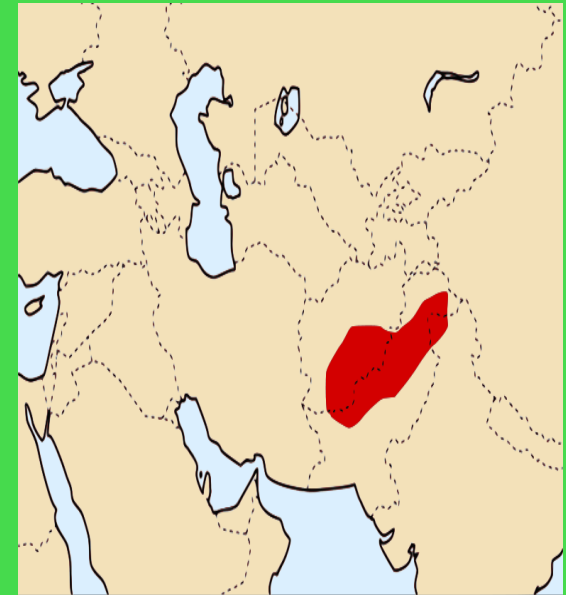
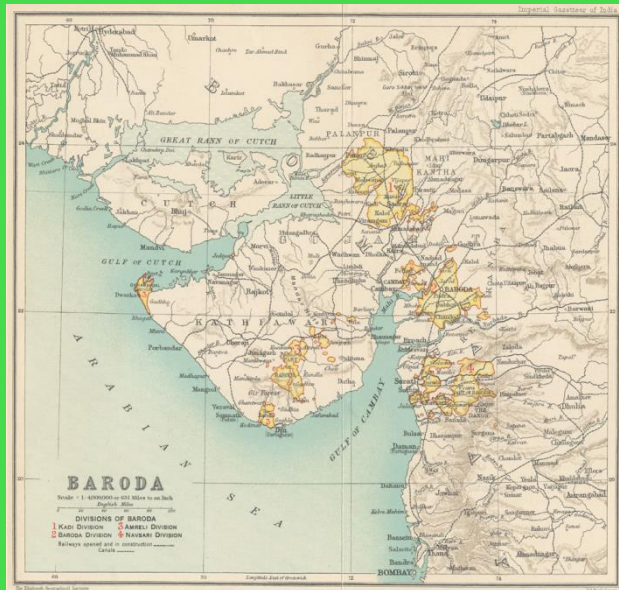
“...they [the Greek dynasts] became masters, not only of Ariana, but also of India, as Apollodorus of Artemita says: and **more tribes were subdued by them than by Alexander — by Menander in particular** (at least if he actually crossed the Hypanis towards the east and advanced as far as the Imaüs), for some were subdued by him personally and **others by Demetrius, the son of Euthydemus the king of the Bactrians**; and they took possession, not only of Patalena, but also, on the rest of the coast, of what is called the kingdom of Saraostus and Sigerdis.” — **Strabo Geog. 11.11.1.**



“...but also, on the rest of the coast, of what is called the kingdom of Saraostus and Sigerdis.” - **Strabo *Geog.* 11.11.1.**

- Saraostos – Surashthra (Kathiawar) – Sigerdis, possibly Cutch?
- The city of Demetrias of Arachosia mentioned in *Parthian Stations* of Isidor of Charax.

“...Demetrius king of the Indians...” – **Justin 41.6.**





Demetrios I. Circa 200-185 BC. AR Tetradrachm – legend: “of King Demetrius” - Bopearachchi Série 1C.



Demetrios II?, Baktrian Kingdom, ca 175-170 BC. AR Drachm - Athena standing facing, holding shield and spear - Bopearachchi 2A.



Demetrios I. Circa 200-185 BC. AE Double Unit - Wreathed head of Herakles right, club over shoulder / Artemis standing facing, holding bow and drawing arrow - legend: “of King Demetrius” - Bopearachchi Série 4F.



Bust of king, wearing an elephant's scalp, with Greek legend: of the invincible King Demetrius – Demetrios III?

Qunduz / Kunduz Hoard

- Cache containing 627 coins:
 - Euthydemus I (12 coins)
 - Euthydemus II (5 coins)
 - Demetrius I? (8 coins)
 - Agathocles (3 coins)
 - Antimachus (14 coins)
 - Eucratides (147 coins, and another 130 bearing the name Eucratides but attributed to a homonymous king)
 - Demetrius II? (50 coins)
 - Plato (12 coins)
 - Heliocles, Bactrian king (221 coins).



Agathocles and Pantaleon

- Agathocles and Pantaleon (c.190-180 BC) the earliest kings to mint bilingual currency.



Agathokles - AR Tetradrachm - Diademed and draped bust of Agathokles right. Reverse: Zeus standing, facing, scepter in left hand and holding in right hand a figure of triple-faced Hekate, who holds two torches - SNG ANS 230.



Agathokles AR Drachm - Bilingual series - in Greek: "King Agathokles" – with image of the Indian god Balarama-Samkarshana standing facing, wearing ornate headdress, earrings, and sheathed sword, brandishing gada in his right hand, holding plow-symbol in left (obv.) - "Rajane Agathuklayasa" in Karosthi, the Indian god Vasudeva-Krishna standing facing, wearing ornate headdress, earrings, and sheathed sword, holding sankha in his right hand, chakra (ornamented wheel) in left. - Bopearachchi Série 9A.



Pantaleon - Legend in Brahmi, female deity walking left, holding flower in right hand – "king Pantaleon" - panther standing right. Bopearachchi Série 6A.

Eucratides the Great

- Held a thousand cities (**Strabo *Geog.* 15.1.3**); lost Bactria to the Parthians (**11.9.2**) and the satrapy Turiva and that of Aspionus (**11.11.2**).

“Almost at the same time that Mithridates [c.171-138/7 BC] ascended the throne among the Parthians, Eucratides began to reign among the Bactrians... the fortune of the Parthians, being the more successful... while the Bactrians, harassed with various wars, lost not only their dominions, but their liberty; for having suffered from contentions with the Sogdians, the Drangians [area between Iran and SW Afghanistan], and the Indians, they were at last overcome, as if exhausted, by the weaker Parthians. Eucratides, however, carried on several wars with great spirit, and though much reduced by his losses in them, yet, when he was besieged by Demetrius king of the Indians, with a garrison of only 300 soldiers, he repulsed, by continual sallies, a force of sixty thousand enemies. Having accordingly escaped, after a five months’ siege, he reduced India under his power. But as he was returning from the country, he was killed on his march by his son...” – Justin 41.6.

Monolingual



Eucratides I - AR Tetradrachm - Diademed and draped bust right / The Dioskouroi on rearing horses right.

Bilingual



Kharoshthi legend: rajasa mahatakasa / evukratidasa (of Great King Eucratides)

Dioskuri mounted on horses, Kharoshthi legend (as above).

INDO-GREEK KINGS AND THEIR TERRITORIES					
Based on Bopearachchi (1991)					
Territories/ Dates	PAROPAMISADAE	ARACHOSIA	GANDHARA	WESTERN PUNJAB	EASTERN PUNJAB
200-190 BCE	Demetrius I				
190-180 BCE	Agathocles	Pantaleon			
185-170 BCE	Antimachus I				
180-160 BCE	Apollodotus I				
175-170 BCE	Demetrius II				
160-155 BCE	Antimachus II				
170-145 BCE	Eucratides				
155-130 BCE	Menander I				
130-120 BCE	Zoilos I		Agathokleia		
120-110 BCE	Lysias		Strato I		
110-100 BCE	Antialcidas		Heliokles II		
100 BCE	Polyxenios		Demetrius III		
100-95 BCE	Philoxenus				
95-90 BCE	Diomedes	Amyntas		Epander	
90 BCE	Theophilos	Peukolaos		Thraso	
90-85 BCE	Nicias	Menander II		Artemidoros	
90-70 BCE	Hermaeus	Archebios			
	Yuezhi tribes		Maues (Indo-Scythian)		
75-70 BCE			Telephos	Apollodotus II	
65-55 BCE				Hippostratos	Dionysios
55-35 BCE				Azes I (Indo-Scythian)	Zoilos II
55-35 BCE					Apollophanes
25 BCE- 10 CE					Strato II
					Rajuvula (Indo-Scythian)

Cultural and Religious Interaction

Linguistic and Religious Accommodation

- Bilingual coinage – native languages such as Brahmi and Kharoshthi. Below Apollodotus I (c.180-160 BC).



- Agathocles silver bilingual coin with Indian deities - Hindu deities recognised as Balarama-Samkarsana and his brother Vasudeva-Krishna



Image from Bopearachchi (1995).

- The kings Agathocles and Pantaleon (c. 190-180 BC) even issues some coins in purely native script.



Image from Boardman et al (1992).

- On Reverse of coin - City Goddess of Kapisa enthroned, holding palm, forepart of elephant at left, mountain at right, Kharoshthi legend: kavisiye nagara devata (*deity of Kapisa City*)



Religious “Conversion”

- Heliodorus ambassador of Antialcidas (c. late 100's BC) in the Sunga Empire - erected a pillar in Vidisha (Besngar).

“This Garuda-Standard of Vishnu, the god of the gods was erected here by the devotee Heliodorus...sent by the Great Greek King Antialcidas the son of Dion, a man of Taxila... as ambassador to King Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the Savior son of the princess from Benares, in the fourteenth year of his reign. ...” – Archaeological Survey of India,

Annual Report (1908-1909).

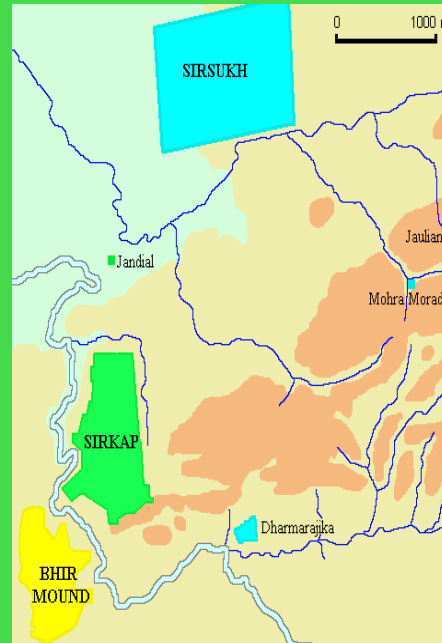
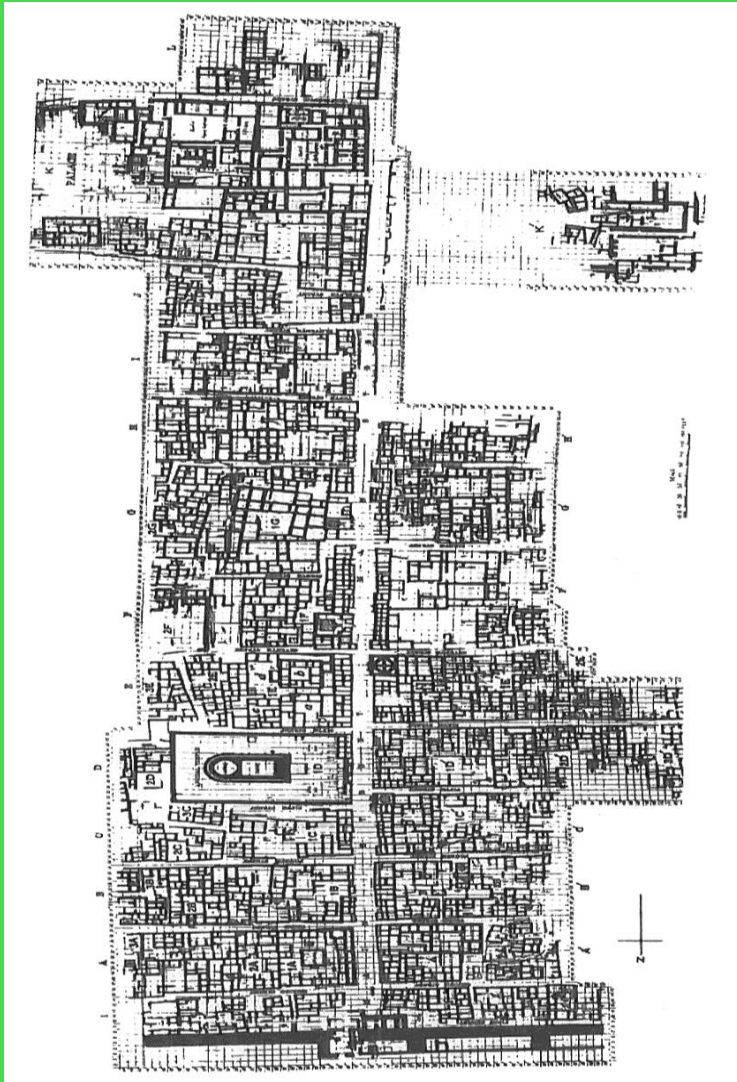
- Antialcidas, may have wished to contrast himself to Buddhist supporting descendants of Menander, by seeking the support of the Hindu population of his territory (Gandhara).



Zeus with an elephant (a traditional Indian symbol).



Taxila - Sirkap



Menander the Saviour

- The most successful of the Indo-Greek kings (c. 155-130 BC).
- Able to control territory spanning from Gandhara, the Indus, and the Kabul valley.
- Possible involvement in campaign against Pataliputra? – *Yuga Purāṇa*, *Mahābhāṣya*, *Mālavikāgnimitra*.



“...more tribes were subdued by them than by Alexander — by Menander in particular...” – **Strabo Geog. 11.11.1.**

Menander/Milinda

- Converted to Buddhism according to a Pali text called the *Milindapanha* (The Questions of Milinda) – text describes a discourse between the king and a Buddhist sage Nagasena.
- At the end of the discourse Menander adopts Buddhism and gave up his throne in order to achieve enlightenment.
- Alternative tradition – Plutarch (*Precepts of Statecraft* 28, 6) claims he died on the battlefield.
- Menander's ashes were dispersed among competing cities in India and they erected monuments in his honour - Plutarch *Moralia* 831 D.



Buddhist Wheel of Law?



Menander I - Athena Alkidemos right, holding shield and thunderbolt; monogram. Bopearachchi Série 3D.

- Inscribed on Silver vessel:
*Theudama-putrasa
budhalasa*
– “[Property] of Buddhala,
son of Theodomos.”
- Relic vase inscription of a
Meridarkh Theodotos.

The Greek Legacy in Central Asia and Northwest India

Nomadic Invasions

“But the best known of the nomads are **those who took away Bactria from the Greeks, I mean the Asii, Pasiani, Tochari, and Sacarauili**, who originally came from the country on the other side of the Jaxartes River that adjoins that of the **Shakas and the Sogdiani** and was occupied by the Shakas.” – **Strabo Geog. 11.8.2.**

- Sacking of of Samarkand c.145-130 BC.
- Sacking of Ai Khanum c.145 BC by the Sakas and subsequently by Yuehzi (Yueh-Chih) c.130 BC.
- Plundering of the Oxus sanctuary at Takht-I Sangin (frontier between Bactria and Sogdia).



- Sima Qian *Shiji*, the Chinese “Book of History” – Xiongnu and the Da Yuezhi.
- Zhang Qian meets the Yuezhi in 129/128 BC.

“Asiani [Kushans] are kings of the Tochari and destroyed the Sacaraucae” – **Justin XLII Prologue.**



Kushan Kingdom

“The main centre of the Da Yuezhi (Kushan) kingdom is the town of Lanshi (Bactra/Balkh). To the west it borders Anxi (Parthia), which is 49 days march away. To the east, it is 6,537 li (2,718 km) from the seat of the Chief Scribe [in Lukchun], and 16,370 li (6,807 km) from Luoyang. There are 100,000 households, 400,000 individuals, and more than 100,000 men able to bear arms.

Formerly, the Yuezhi were defeated by the Xiongnu. They then moved to Daxia (Bactria) and divided up this kingdom between five xihou (‘Allied Princes’)...

More than a hundred years later, the xihou (‘Allied Prince’) of Guishuang (Badakhshān and the adjoining territories north of the Oxus), named Qiujiu Que (Kujula Kadphises), attacked and exterminated the four other xihou (‘Allied Princes’). He set himself up as king of a kingdom called Guishuang (Badakhshan). He invaded Anxi (Parthia) and took the Gaofu (Kabul) region. He also defeated the whole of the kingdoms of Puta (Parthuaia, 55 CE), and Jibin (Kapisha-Peshawar). Qiujiu Que (Kujula Kadphises) was more than eighty years old when he died.” – **Fan Ye *Hou Han Shu* 13** – Trans. John E. Hill.



...port of trade Barbarikon... and behind it, inland, is the metropolis of Scythia itself, Minnagar. The throne is in the hands of the Parthians, who are constantly chasing each other off it.” – **PME 38.**

- Indo-Greeks introduced **numismatic innovation** in coinage that would be picked up by north-western Indian kingdoms:

- die-striking
- use of legends
- use of monograms
- portraits of rulers
- representation of deities



KUSHAN: Huvishka, c.AD 150-190

- Portraits on coins did not become common elsewhere in India in the early first millennium AD.
- Many Greek coins would continue in circulation or be imitated (often lower quality) by the kingdoms which would replace them.
- Saka (Indo-Scythian) king Spalirises who reigned some time after 70 BC, over-struck (imprinted) his name onto an imitation coin of Eucradites I who came to an end around 145 BC.

“...there are to be found in the market in Barygaza even today old drachmas engraved with the inscriptions, in Greek letters, of Apollodotus and Menander, rulers who came after Alexander.’ – *PME* 47.

Adopting and Adapting the Gods

- Notable popularity of certain deities, particularly Athena.
- Importance of Saka and Indo-Parthian developments for syncretism seen under the Kushans.



Indo-Scythian / Saka - Maues. Circa 85-80 BC. AR Tetradrachm. Zeus standing left, holding sceptre / Nike standing right, holding palm & wreath; monogram to right. MIG 729a.



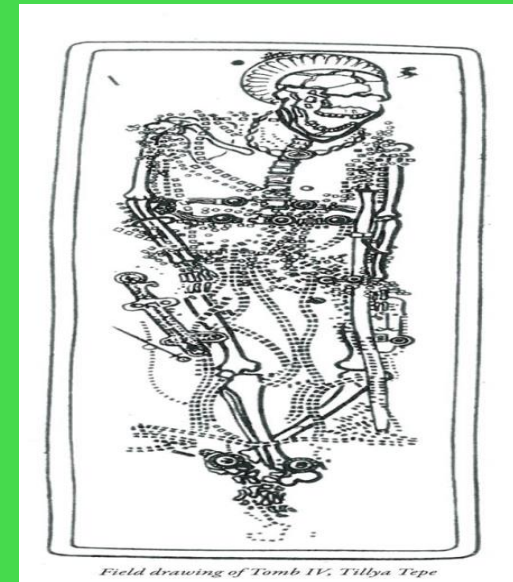
Indo-Parthian - Gondophares AE Tetradrachm. 30-50 AD. 22.14 mm, 9.1 gr. BACILEWN BACILEWN GONDOPAROU, King on horseback right, holding ankus; monogram to right / Siva facing holding trident and extending right hand, monograms to left and right. BMC 10.



Indo-Scythian / Saka - Azilizes. Ca 85-45/35 BC. AR Tetradrachm 27mm, 7.99 g. King on horseback right, holding spear / Athena standing left, holding shield with aegis and thunderbolt; monograms in fields. Senior 50.1T.

Tillya Tepe “Hill of Gold” - Nomad Necropolis

- Six nomadic graves discovered at the site of Tillya Tepe.
- Rulers of a Kushan principedom?
- Possible family – body of woman 20-30 years of age (Tomb 1); woman age 30-40 (Tomb 2); female teenager (Tomb 3); adult male warrior (Tomb 4); young woman, comparatively lacking in ornaments (Tomb 5); woman with a collapsible crown (Tomb 6).
- Tiberian aureus present – used for dating.
- Similarity of the structures - consistency of certain objects - hierarchical manner of the burial?



Composite Art



Tomb 2 - A ring with an intaglio depicting Athena



Tomb 5 - A pair of heart shaped earrings



Tomb 3 - Ornament with an image of Athena



Tomb 3 – A pair of clasps – Cupids on dolphins

Tomb 2 – Ring with an image of Athena (lacking a seat)



Tomb 4 – Phial (bowl) bearing Greek inscription - Greek script (CTA MA) – sigma, tau, alpha, - mu / alpha. - 41 staters = 637.96 grams.



Tomb 3 – Rounded box with lid, bearing Greek inscription - Greek script (CTA E/B) – sigma, tau, alpha, - epsilon / beta.
Five staters and two drachmas = 23.4 grams.



Tomb 6 – A pair of clasps showing Dionysus and Ariadne

“From Scythes son of Heracles comes the whole line of the kings of Scythia; and it is because of the vessel that the Scythians carry vessels on their belts to this day. This alone his mother did for Scythes. This is what the Greek dwellers in Pontus say.”
– **Herodotus 4.10.3.**



Tomb 6 – Appliqué “the Aphrodite of Bactria”

“Toilet Trays”



Image from Pons (2011)

- Concave disc of 4 to 40 cm in diameter.
- Tend to be made of soft stone such as steatite or serpentine or of hard stone such as schist and gypsum.
- Very few of these objects have been found in archaeological contexts.
- Derive a wide range of scenes from Greek, Roman, Indian, Iranian and Scythian iconographic repertoires.



- Sea-dragons, sea-horses, *ichthyocentaurus*, sea-lions, sea-griffins, sea-hares and tritons.
- Indian sea-monsters (*makaras*) lack characteristics of Gandharan examples.

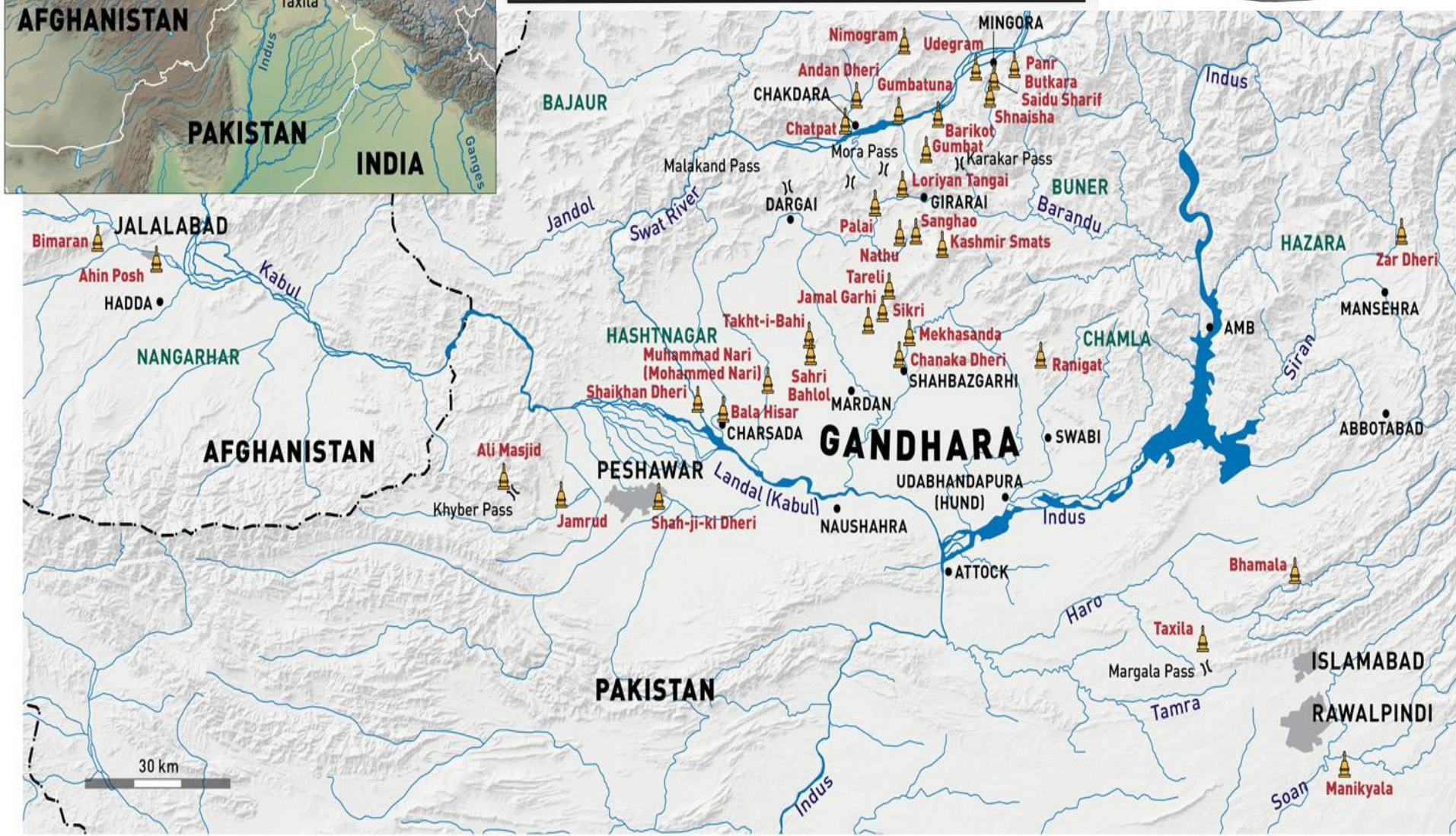
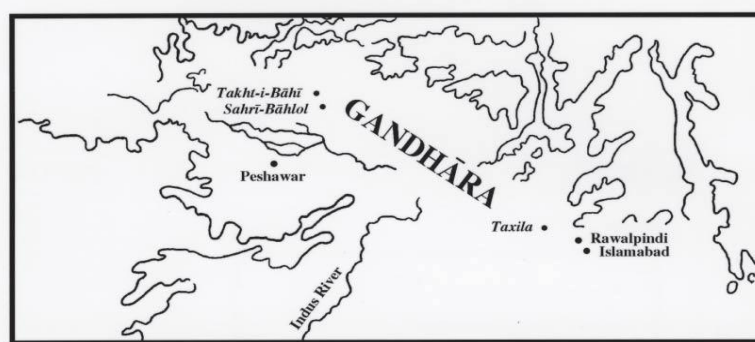


- Vajrapāṇi = Hercules? or adapting the imagery of Hercules?



Fig. 24: The wedding of Dionysos and Ariadne, Sirkap-Taxila, National Museum, Delhi (After Francfort 1979, no. 14, Pl. 7)

- Connections between Dionysus and his *thiasos* with the *Yakṣa* / *Yaksha*?



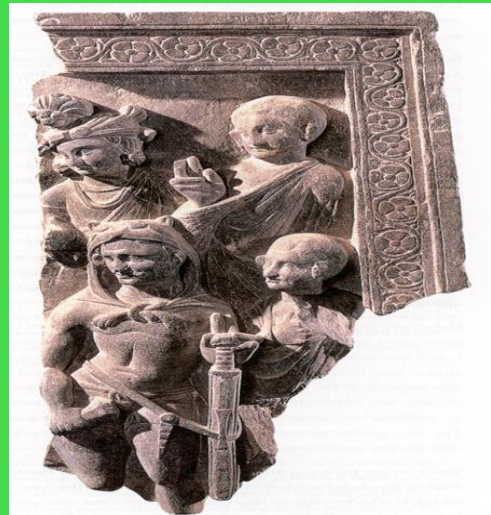
The Gandharan Style



Winged Atlas – Jamalgarhi - c.2nd – 3rd century AD – British Museum.



Relief of regaling couples – Peshawar Valley – c.1st -2nd century AD – Victoria and Albert Museum.



Vajrapani and others – Gandhara - c.2nd – 3rd century AD – British Museum.



Fragmentary relief: Trojan Horse – Mardan District – c.2nd century AD – British Museum.

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