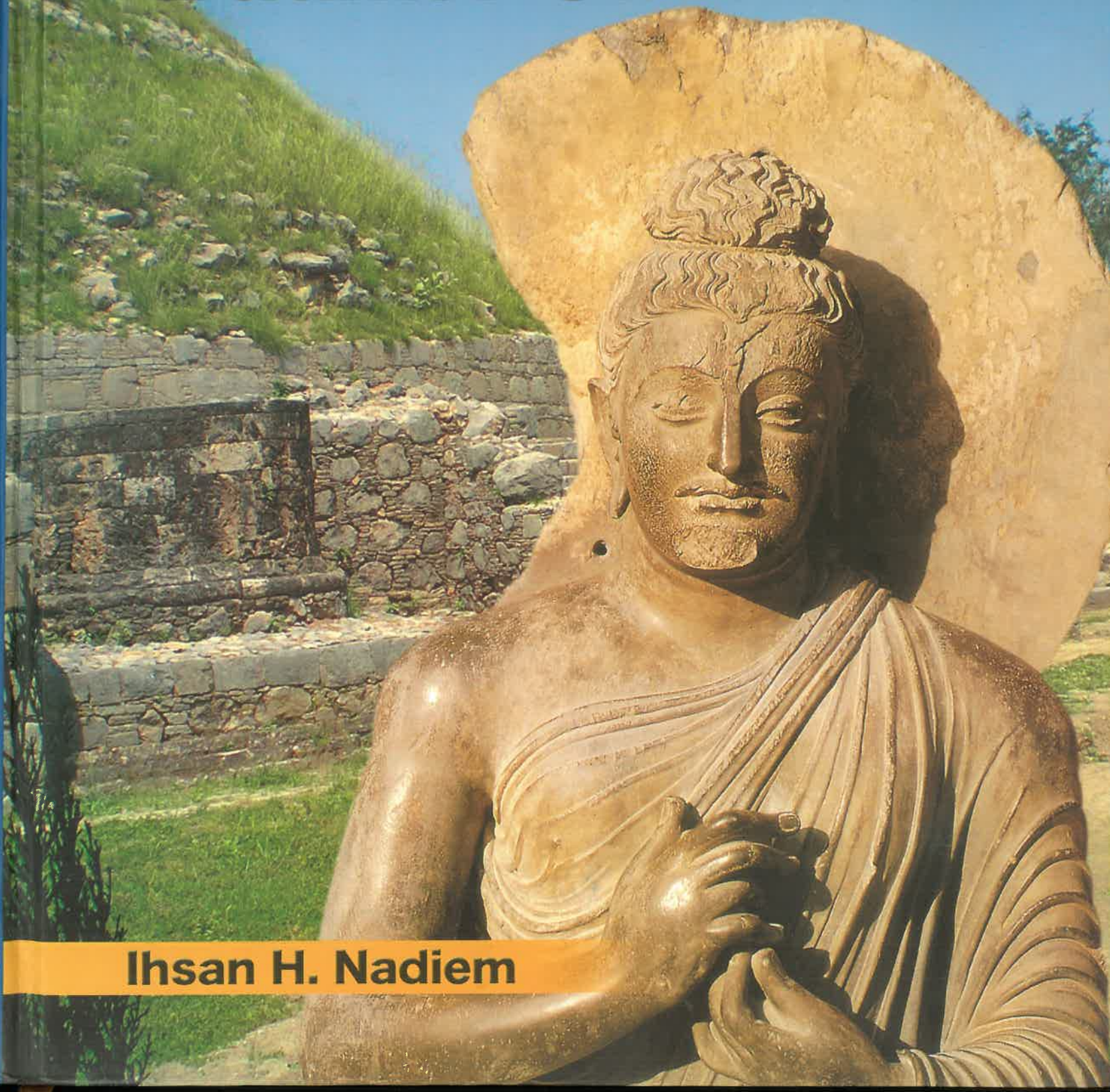


Taxila in Buddhist Gandhara



Ihsan H. Nadiem



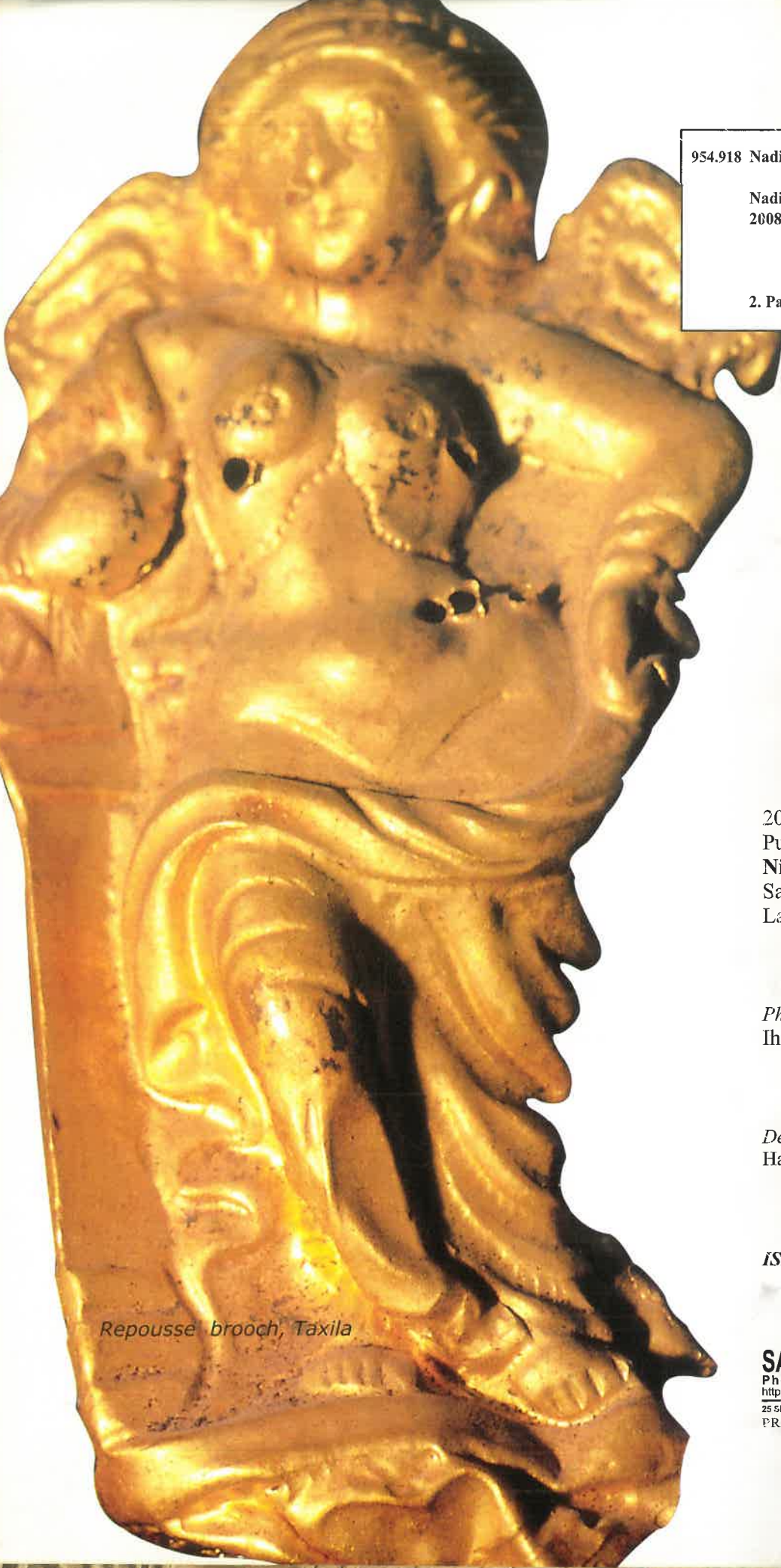
Taxila in Buddhist Gandhara

Ihsan H. Nadiem



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Dedicated to
**The Thoughts in a
Gandhara Monastery***

Perched upon the hillock top
With shiny rivulet far below,
And the cold winds blowing;
A mystic aura engulfs the scene
As revered images mistily show
Their aureate haloes glowing.

Through the wintry, shivery morn
Scores of monks walk in row
Their saffron robes flowing;
Their chants of hymns,
Mixed with ringing of the bells,
In stilly vale echoing.

Engrossed in an illusory trance,
To scour the soul, on they move,
Barefoot, stepping cautiously,
Lest, without intent, they trample
Over some tiny, weakling worm
On the floor crawling lazily.

Like all beings on this earth,
It too has a soul, a life it has
Though worthless creature may it be.
To hurt a living soul,
Or obliterate an earthly life
To them is not humanely.

**From the poetry book:*
"Golden Rays" by Ihsan H. Nadiem.



Remains of stucco Buddha in cell at Dharmarajika

Preface

Although Sir Alexander Cunningham had noted the importance of Shah Ji Ki Dheri Taxila yet it was Sir John Marshall, the first director-general of the Archaeological Survey of (British) India from 1902 to 1928, who is credited with bringing home the true significance of the Valley's Gandharan past. He started the archaeological excavations in 1913, which continued up till 1934 almost without break. He was perhaps spellbound with his Gandharan discoveries and thought that its history did not go beyond that, the later excavations (in the second half of the twentieth century) by Peshawar University and Pakistan Archaeology, however, amply proved that the cultural story went much further than that and deep into the remote antiquity. These scientific studies cover an almost unbroken story of the cultures starting roughly from the Mesolithic period with the discovery of the microlithic blade industry in the Khanpur cave to the Neolithic period. Bronze Age cultural deposits with affinity to Kot Diji and the Gandhara Grave Culture have also been brought to light in this valley from the now well-known site of Sarai Khola. The site, which is situated at the banks of the Kala Nullah hardly a few kilometres from the Bhir Mound, is, however, not the lone prehistoric cultural depository but only one amongst a number of others in its vicinity, which are now known to the archaeologists though not completely probed. On the Hathial spur, however, a more serious work has confirmed the spread of the Kotdiji Culture over this part of the Valley, just a few hundred metres from the famous ancient city of Sirkap.

Having touched upon the chain of the cultures that developed here in ancient times proving only that the Taxila Valley had the potential of sustaining advancements in the human cultures even in the distant past it must be borne in mind that the main attraction in the area is the Gandharan period probably for its awe-inspiring sites and fascinating objets d'art. Although it had written records aplenty left for us by the early chroniclers, pilgrims and travellers, yet they kept the scholars guessing as there were no architectural landmarks traceable above-ground to corroborate the written word about them. Here the archaeologist's spade came to help to reconstruct the achievements of its people for about a thousand years. A host of information of this period, which is bracketed within the 6th century BC and the 5th century AD, was revealed during the excavations carried out between 1913 and 1934, which in it encompasses the famous Gandhara Era when Taxila made its mark on the cultural map of the world. It, however, should not be taken as the end of the human beings' cultural story in this Valley. The presence of architectural specimens belonging to different eras of later history only proves its cultural continuity in one form or the other. It might, however, have been with some hiccups and a little lull when historians think it had lost much of its importance with the change in the routes that had made it the melting pot for many a culture for the long period of centuries or even millennia. It was then mainly

during the British Raj that the development activity had picked up afresh and has not ceased in this context since. This recent bustle, even if adversely affecting its eco system, has shown beyond doubt that history is bound to repeat itself here, bringing back the glory of its past once again.

The aim of the present treatise is to focus on the rich cultural heritage of the limited area with unlimited influence of the Taxila valley. As seen above, it has been inhabited from the time immemorial and even pulled out of its insignificance after it had been devastated by the White Huns. However for the study of this book only its golden age of Gandhara era has been dealt with to bring home its proud past, with as many illustrations as possible only to spread the whole glorious canvas before the reader at his table.

It may, however, be pointed out here that the Taxila Museum, an enormously rich repository of Gandharan objects, has not been touched in this treatise. In fact its richness both in quantity and quality warranted a separate volume exclusively dealing with the wealth that it portrays so beautifully. As such, another book covering this aspect of the Gandharan Taxila follows this book to complement the present account of art and architectural heritage from this era.

I am so grateful to Chaudhry Niaz Ahmad for his help in planning and working on this project. Thanks, indeed, to his efforts that a highly needed tome on this subject could be brought out matching the international standards. No less I am thankful to his gifted son, Chaudhry Afzaal Ahmad, who had nice tips to offer to make it more meaningful to a researcher as also a visitor to Taxila.

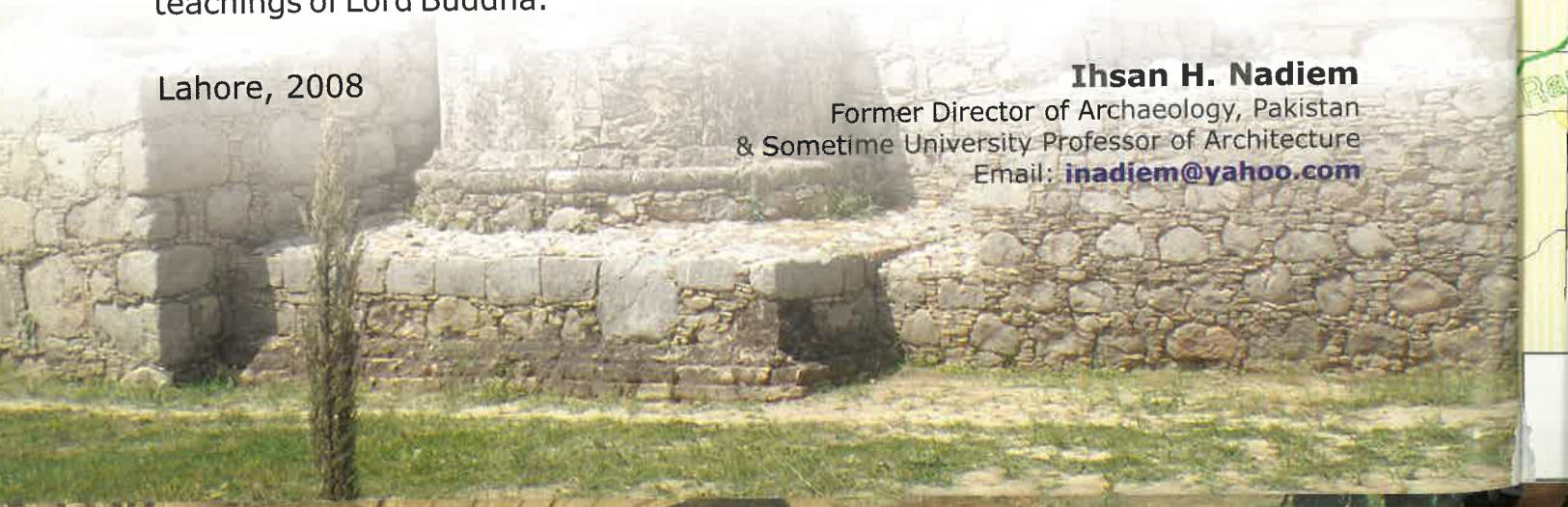
It may be recorded here that the photographic coverage of the Taxila Valley was done afresh by me exclusively for this treatise. These are the latest images that might also betray the level of maintenance of different archaeological sites which are under the charge of the Federal Department of Archaeology and duly inscribed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO immediately after the Gandhara Week celebrated with much fanfare at the official level.

It may also be added that for the benefit of readers not familiar with Buddhism, a note has been inscribed at the back tittle, which dilates on the life and teachings of Lord Buddha.

Lahore, 2008

Ihsan H. Nadiem

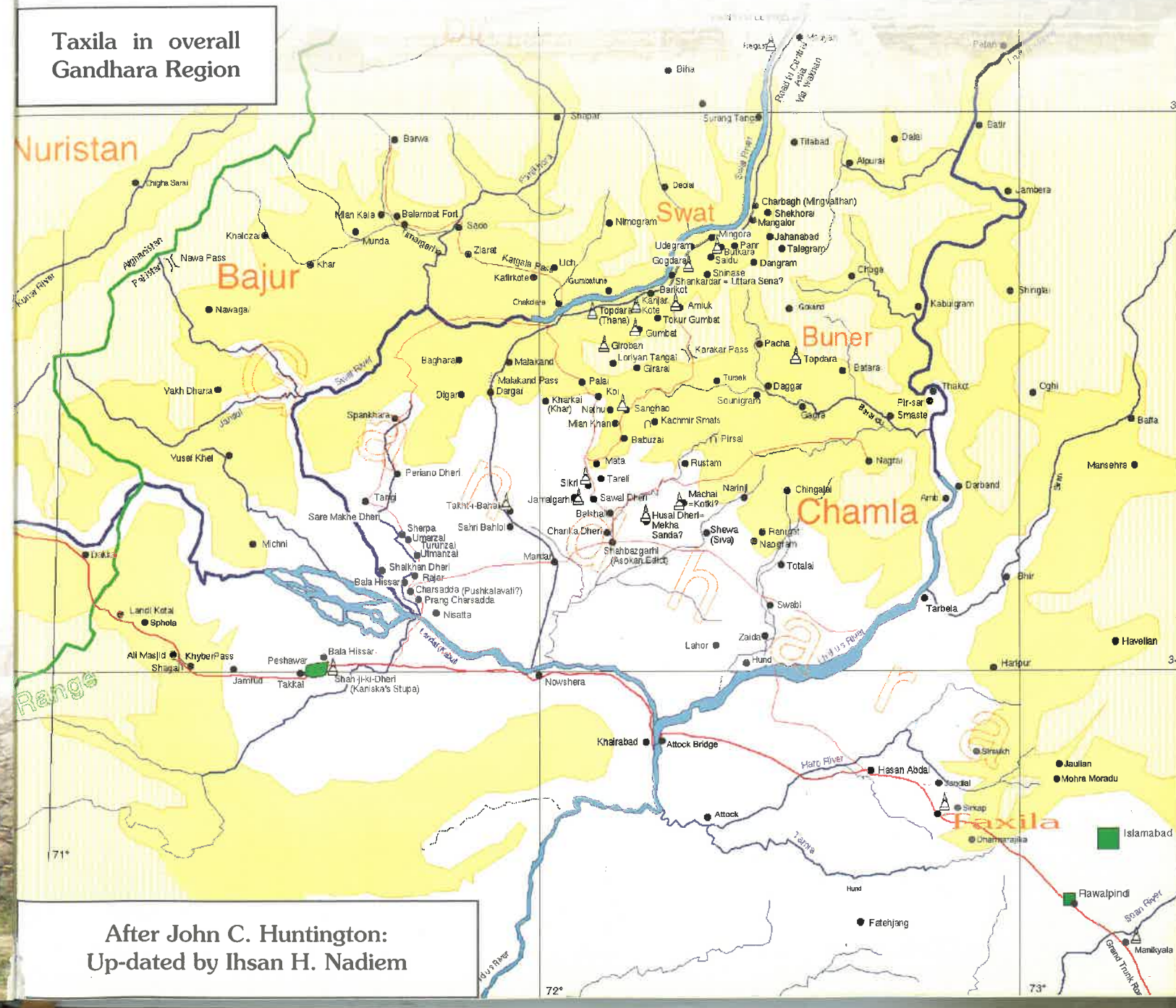
Former Director of Archaeology, Pakistan
& Sometime University Professor of Architecture
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Chapter 1

GANDHARA AND ITS BOUNDARIES

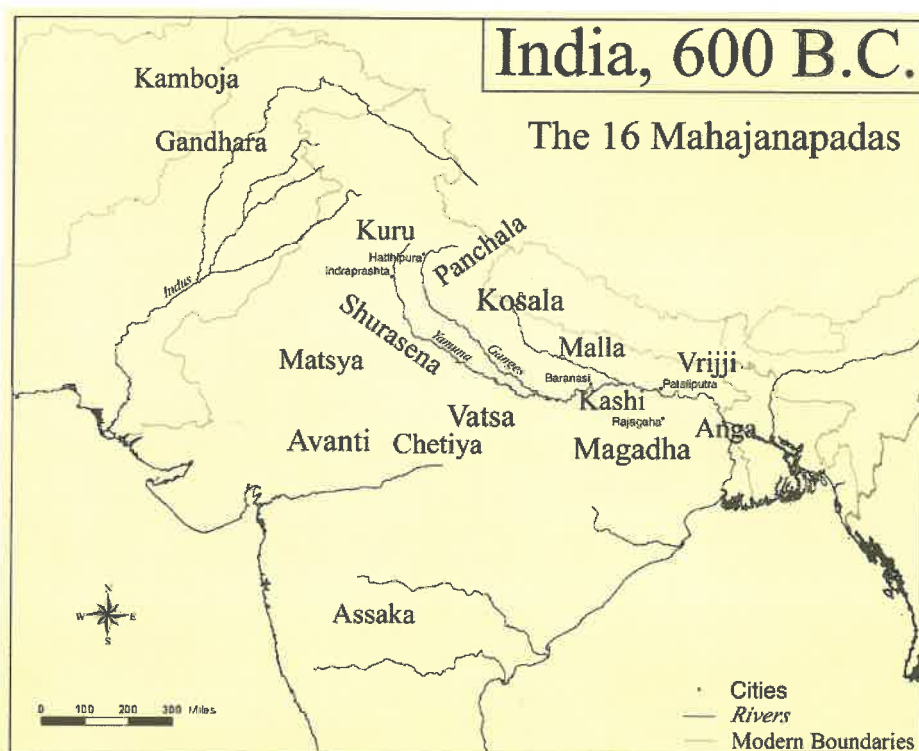
Taxila in overall
Gandhara Region



After John C. Huntington:
Up-dated by Ihsan H. Nadiem

Gandhara, derived from Sanskrit and literally meaning "perfumed", is a nomenclature variedly explained and generally taken as a region, which comprised mostly the areas that sit in the north-western part of what is now Pakistan. In its historical connotation it perhaps had fluid physical boundaries, fluctuating with the rules and the rulers. However, the heart of this area, which remained pivotal throughout the ages, is taken as bounded by tall mountains on its north, east and west with an expansive river-plain towards its south. As such, usually at times, only the Peshawar valley and Taxila were collectively referred to as Gandhara, while at other times it expanded to include the Swat valley, or the Uddayana of the yore, including hilly districts of Dir and Buner. There were also times when its boundaries engulfed within them the eastern Afghanistan, across the Sufed Koh (Pashto: Spin Ghar) as well, with the Khyber Pass connecting both the sides.

The studies also show that at some points of time Gandhara also incorporated in it Kashmira (Jataka No. 406). Hecataeus of Miletus (549-468 BC) refers to Kaspapyros (Kasyapura i.e. Kashmira) as Gandharic city. According to Gandhara Jataka, at one time, Gandhara formed a part of the kingdom of Kashmir. The Jataka also refers to Gandhara with another name, Chandahara, possibly a phonetic variation of the same name. The Buddhist texts like Anguttara Nikaya mention of sixteen great nations (*solas Mahajanapadas*), which flourished in South Asia Subcontinent during Buddha's time, from amongst these only two - the Gandhara and the Kamboja - were located in the Uttarapatha or the north-western division.



In the past, the area beginning from the junction of the river Kabul and the river Indus, including Taxila, had also been known as 'Charene'. How it eventually turned to Gandhara is not clear from any record or archaeological evidence. The vague mention of its changing nomenclature at some point of time is usually attributed to a certain king named Gandhara who ruled this region for a certain period. Its only mention in the historical records is found in the Puranas when they tell of his having been defeated by Mundhata.

The origin of Gandhara is lost in legendary obscurity like most of the ancient cultures, civilisations or territorial entities. Its earliest mention is found in Vedic literature. Here its apparent first historical mention in the Bisotoun Inscription of Darius I, dated 518 BC, records Gandhara as a conquered province. It then continued to be under Persians for a time as prosperous Satrapy, paying the largest tribute to Imperial coffers. Its particular geographical location, its flourishing trade and commerce, its arts and crafts, nurtured in unbroken peace, assured its continued prosperity.

The ancient literature also tells that the Gandharas, taken as the people of the region of Gandhara, were settled, since the Vedic times, on the banks of Kabul River (river Kubha or Kabol) up to its mouth into Indus. Later they crossed the Indus and included parts of north-west Punjab of the modern Pakistan. Gandharas and their king-figure appear prominently as strong allies of the Kuruas or Kurus against the Pandavas in the war as told in the great epic of Mahabharata. The Gandharas were then a furious people, well trained in the art of war.

Gandhara is also thought to be the location of the mystical Lake Dhanakosha, birthplace of Padmasambhava, founder of Tibetan Buddhism. The Kagyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism identifies the lake with Andan Dheri Stupa located near the small village of Uchh not far from Chakdara in what is geographically the lower Swat Valley, now located in the Lower Dir (Dir Payan) district of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. A spring was attributed to have flowed from the base of the stupa to form the lake. The archaeological probes at the site, especially during the 1960s, have found the remains of the Stupa but have not been able to establish the presence of any spring or lake.

Whatever the frontiers of Gandhara at any given time, there is hard testimony that the art for which it is so famous extended far beyond its geographical borders and had left its mark on quite a few lands around it. Although separated by the waters of the mighty Indus and the lofty ranges of Himalayas and Hindukush, Gandhara remains have been discovered near Rawalpindi on one side and as far North as the Oxus river in Afghanistan on the other. This was evidently no isolated culture, rather on the contrary it formed part of one and the same Buddhist civilisation; its art was distinguished

everywhere by the same general characteristics, with only minor local variations.

The common speech of the Gandhara people was Prakrit, though the script was Kharoshthi, which was the modified form of Aramaic, then current in Western Asia. The usual script for sacred texts was Brahmini. Evidently, Gandhara took its speech from native South Asia subcontinent and its writing from West. The intimate fusion of these two widely divergent elements is also traceable in many other aspects of contemporary life, but it is perhaps nowhere as clearly manifest as in sculptural art.



GANDHARAN ART

In all its manifestations the Gandhara art was a consequence of merger of art traditions spread over a large canvas of time and space. The ideal location of the region of Gandhara as a melting pot of several cultures brought together the conventional forms of art of the Greek, the Syrian and the Persian, more importantly, joining them with the indigenous Indian traditions. The most pronounced of them all is the Hellenistic influence, which was nowhere more dramatic than in this region of Gandhara. With its distinctive features and elements, the Gandhara Art in itself is also described as the school of semi-classical sculptures that developed here especially during the early centuries of our era. It is, however, generally taken that the development of this form of art started in Parthian period roughly between 50 BC and 75 AD. This style flourished and reached its peak during the Kushan period from 1st Century to 5th Century AD. No wonder then some of the art historians and art critics also call it as the Kushan art. As mentioned elsewhere, along with the country of Gandhara, its art also declined and suffered destruction after invasion of the White Huns in the 5th century AD.

The sculptural art, which gradually developed in the region of Gandhara, was primarily religious art, basically a mirror of its moral and spiritual life. In view of its getting heavy inspiration from Buddhism no study of this art is possible without reference to religion, which it served, and the man who preached it. But Buddhism, which so vitally influenced life and imagination in



Gandhara, was originally a philosophy of life rather than religion. Buddha advocated the middle path between indulgence and asceticism and sought ultimate deliverance from accumulated sin in supreme detachment, which is known as Nirvana.

Buddha himself was a mortal, essentially and tangibly a human being. But after his death, with the passage of time, the person of Buddha gradually became obscured in the haze of dogmatic speculation, which turned him into a legendary figure, with myths woven around him. It is this Mahayana Buddha and his associates, whom the Gandhara artists attempted to portray.

However, in the earlier form of Buddhism Hinayana Buddha was never depicted in his earthly form but his presence was represented by an empty seat, foot-print, umbrella or a horse without its rider. In Mahayana Buddhism, which replaces the earlier form, the figure of Master occupies central position, commanding and controlling the entire composition of panel. The invention of this Buddha is the greatest contribution of Gandhara art and Asia's greatest artistic achievement.

From the fact that sculptures have been found in large quantities in the monasteries by archaeologists, it can safely be deduced that these manifestations of art played a very decisive role in these religious establishments. Life-sized single statues were placed in chapels to be revered by the monks and the faithful alike. In other instances large figures in high relief were placed with their back to the wall thus giving them the three-dimensional effect, while bass relief filled all manners of places and positions.

Although the religious side dominates the Gandharan art yet it would not be correct if it is

Detail of Deity from Sirkap

taken as exclusive portrayal of the religious subjects. In its entirety it also covered - and not very infrequently - many other aspects of life in those times. There is, in fact, a vast vista of the people at work and play and engaged in various other activities. Amorous people, dancers, musicians, travellers, ascetics, wrestlers, and even robbers, too, have not been left out. Costumes of people, weapons of war and chase, musical instruments, toilet articles, jewellery, tools, carts and carriages all are represented in varying degrees. The lighter side of life is represented by a remarkable group of dwarfs, Atlantes, while popular imagination and beliefs are portrayed by Yakshis etc.

Even if the subject matter of Gandharan art was chiefly religious in nature pertaining to Buddha and Buddhism, most of the decorative elements and motifs, apart from before-mentioned secular substance, were of Western Asiatic or Hellenistic origin. Mesopotamian motifs can be found on Persepolitan capitals; or, forms such as the Atlantis, garland-bearing Eros and the semi-human creatures as the centaur and triton are part of the repertory of Hellenistic art and introduced by Roman Eurasian artists in the service of the Kushan court. It may, however, be noted that the incredible monsters - the sphinxes and griffins - had already been assimilated by different ancient Indian schools of art.

Gandharan art is often referred to as the Greco- or Romano-Buddhist school. The founding - and development - of the Gandhara School has been

Deities bearing garlands, from Dharmarajika





Worship of Tri-ratna



Scene, perhaps, showing Renunciation

credited to the Kushan Emperor Kanishka (c. 129-160 AD), because of his patronage of Buddhism, and his great artistic development particularly for the propagation of the Faith. The character of Gandharan art is determined by the commercial relations between the Kushan and the Roman empires. The many archaeological discoveries of Alexandrian and Syrian workmanship at Taxila on the eastern side of the Indus and Begram beyond the Khyber Pass in the Kabul valley testify to the cultural and diplomatic connections with the Greco-Roman West. Many artefacts, in particular sculptures, have survived and bear testimony to these connections in many of the Museums of Pakistan (prominent among them being the Peshawar Museum, Taxila Museum, Lahore Museum and National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi) or elsewhere in Afghanistan and the western world.

Although the presence of this material in this region provides a Hellenistic background for Gandhara art, it was the introduction of foreign workers from the eastern centres of the Roman Empire that led to the creation of the first Buddhist sculptures. It is not surprising that the Kushans, a nomadic people without a tradition of the art of colossal reckoning, utilised the services of skilled artisans to meet the architectural and sculptural requirements for the many

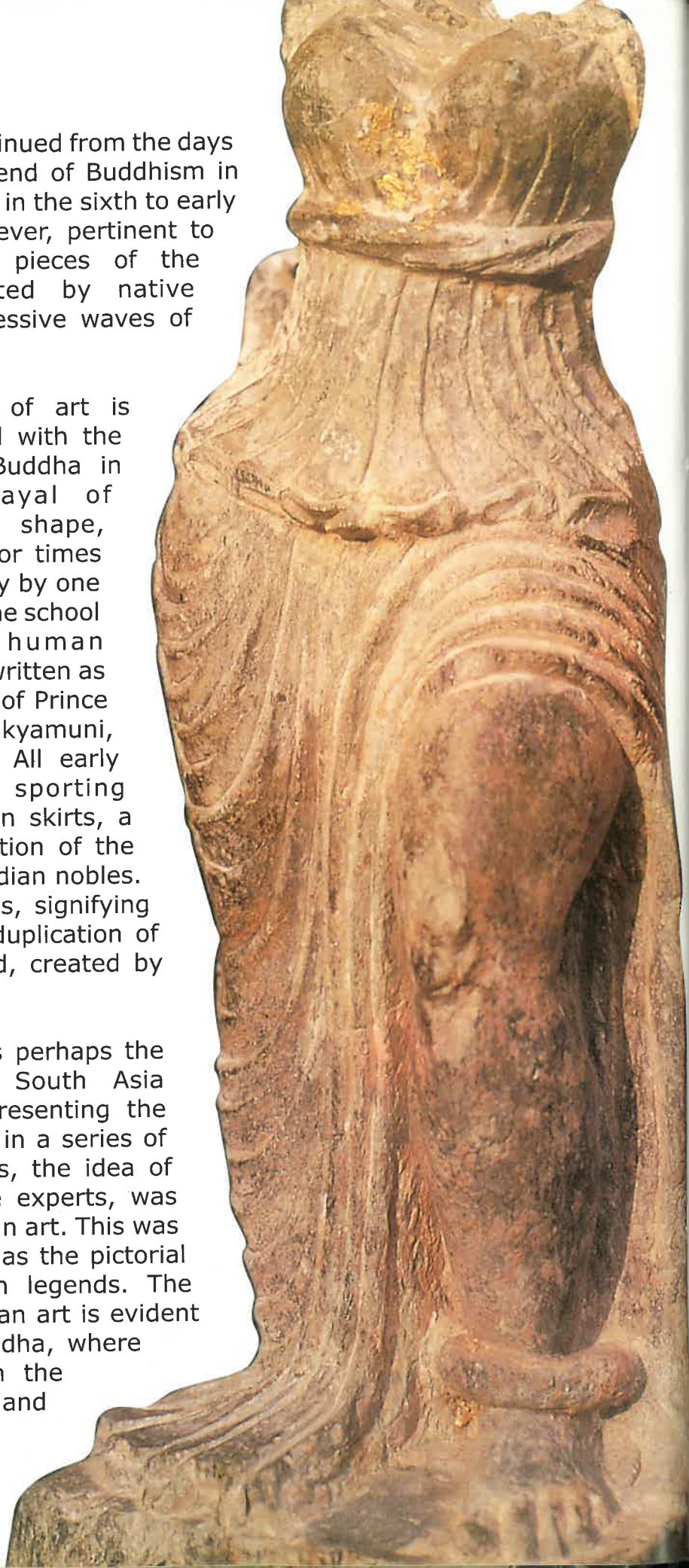


Stone frieze
showing Buddha
presenting a serpent
to Kasyapa, from Taxila

importing foreign artisans continued from the days of Kanishka's reign until the end of Buddhism in Gandhara and places around it in the sixth to early seventh centuries. It is, however, pertinent to note that the majority of pieces of the Gandharan art were created by native craftsmen following the successive waves of foreign influences.

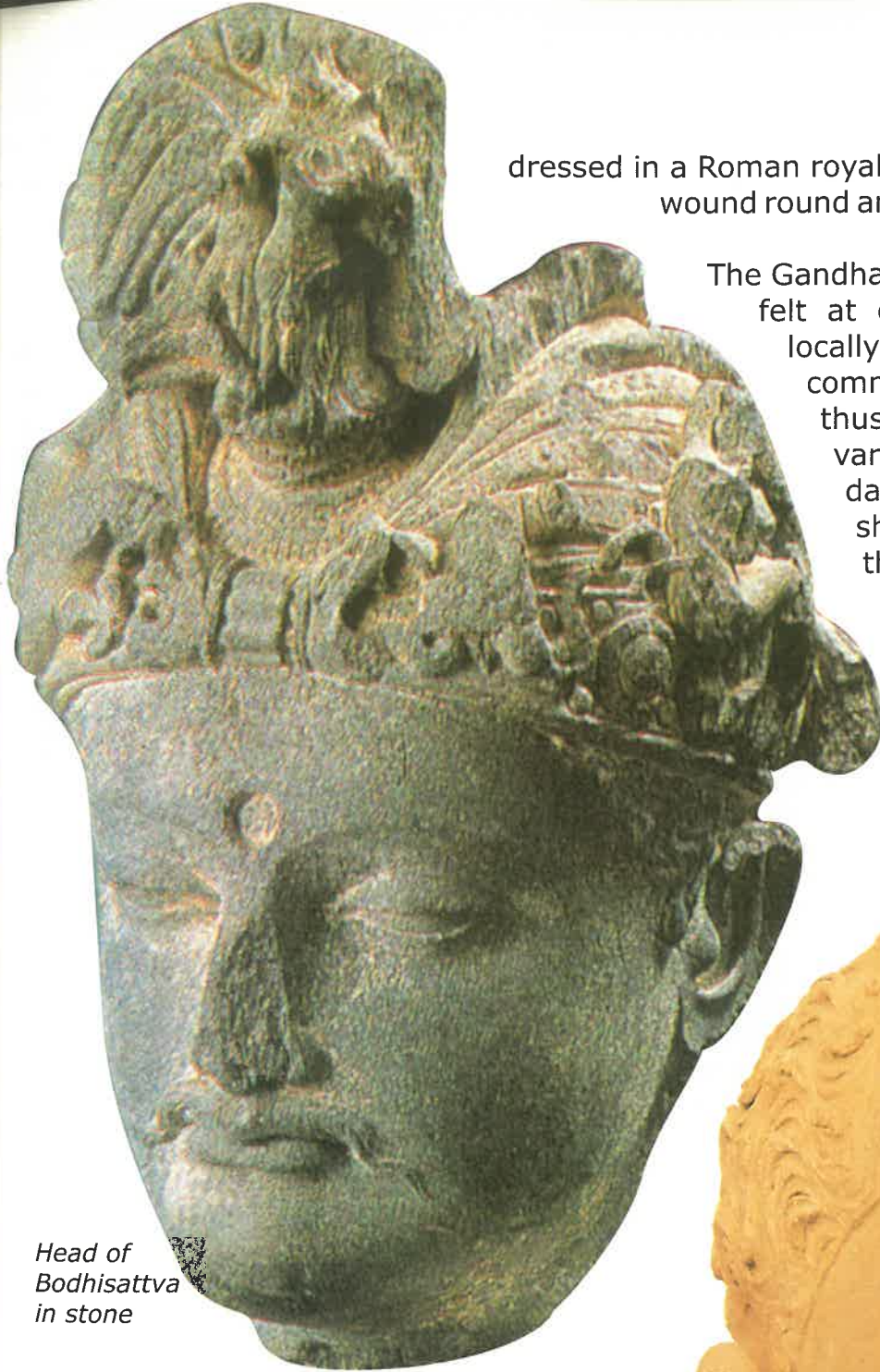
The Gandhara School of art is perhaps convincingly credited with the first representation of the Buddha in human form, the portrayal of Sakyamuni in his human shape, differing from other places or times where he was represented only by one symbol or the other. Perhaps the school intended to create a human Bodhisattva (sometimes also written as Bodhisatta), a representation of Prince Siddhartha, the Buddha Sakyamuni, while still as a Bodhisattva. All early Bodhisattvas are shown sporting turbans, jewellery, and muslin skirts, a costume that was an adaptation of the actual dress of Kushan and Indian nobles. The jewellery of these statues, signifying the royalty, was certainly a duplication of Hellenistic and Samatian gold, created by Western artisans.

The Gandharan art was perhaps the first to introduce in the South Asia Subcontinent the art of representing the story of the Buddha's legend in a series of separate episodes and panels, the idea of which, as is believed by the experts, was certainly borrowed from Roman art. This was done in much the same way as the pictorial iconography of the Christian legends. The western influence in Gandharan art is evident also from the images of Buddha, where Sakyamuni is rendered with the head of a Greek Apollo and



dressed in a Roman royal robe, the long piece of cloth wound round and draped over the body.

The Gandharan sculpting artists perhaps felt at ease while working on the locally available material. The most commonly used substance was thus soft indigenous schist that varied in colour from light to dark grey, and often contained shining mica particles. Many of these statues were covered with gold leafs perhaps to give them a lustrous look in dark interiors of the religious establishments.

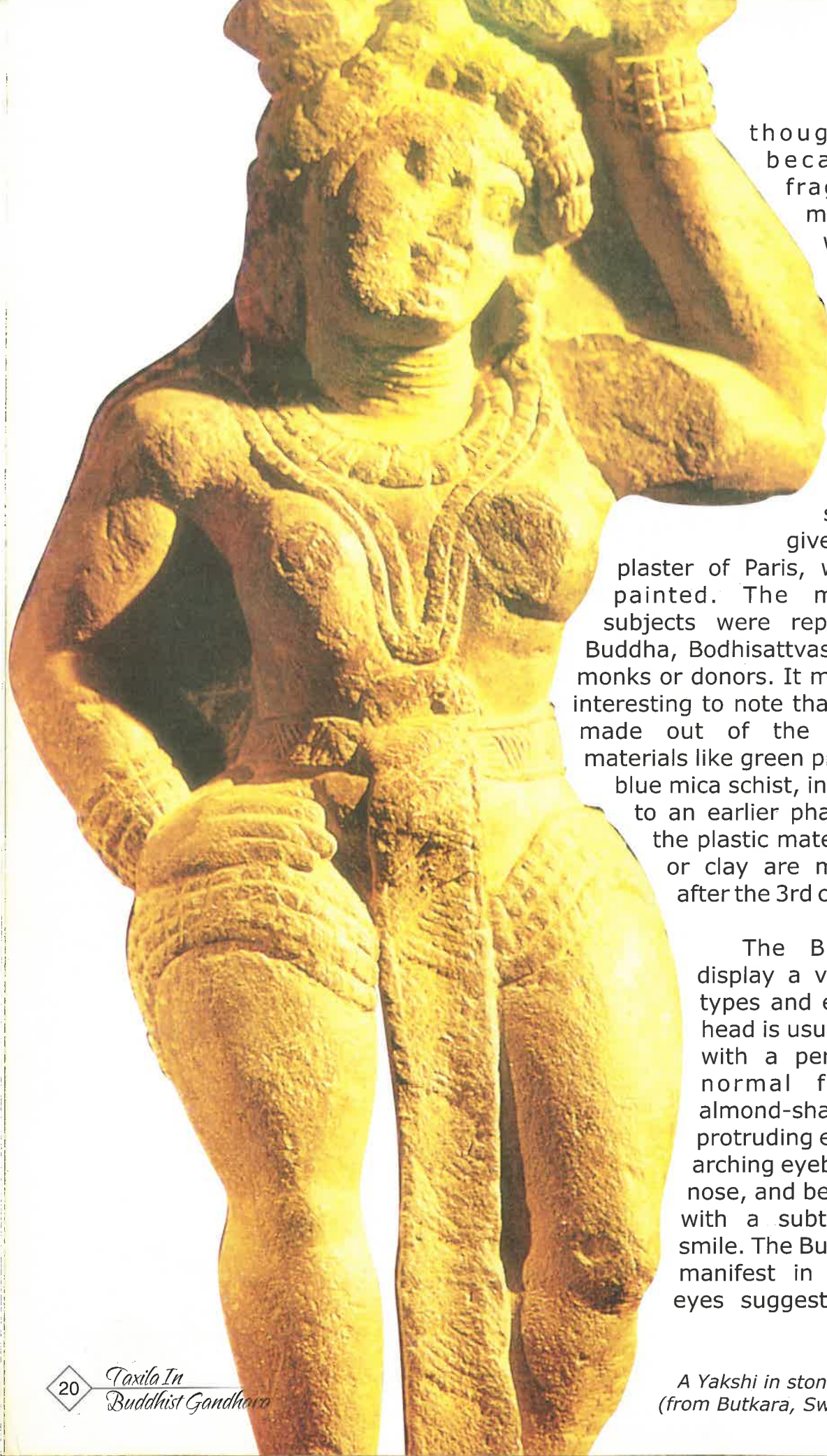


*Head of
Bodhisattva
in stone*

However, in some areas especially Taxila the most popular media were stucco and baked or unbaked clay especially because of their elasticity hence easy-to-work nature and ready availability as compared to the stone. The placing of the statues made from these substances had been well



*Head of
Buddha
in stucco*



thought after as because of the fragility of the material they were provided with support by attaching them to walls, giving them the appearance of a three-dimensional relief. Stucco sculptures were

given a final coat of plaster of Paris, which was then painted. The most frequent subjects were representations of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and attending monks or donors. It may, however, be interesting to note that the sculptures made out of the basically hard materials like green phyllite and grey-blue mica schist, in general, belong to an earlier phase, and that of the plastic materials like stucco or clay are met increasingly after the 3rd century AD.

The Buddha images display a variety of ethnic types and expressions. His head is usually represented with a perfect oval face, normal features with almond-shaped and slightly protruding eyes, with gentle arching eyebrows, a straight nose, and beautifully cut lips with a subtle but divinely smile. The Buddha's impact is manifest in the half-closed eyes suggesting meditation.

Although the face is mostly without a beard yet, quite often, the moustaches betray of an alien influence, most likely Kushan. The "usnisa" or cranial bump, a predestination the Buddha was born with, is usually seen in the form of the twist, a knot or a roll of hair wrapped in silk on the dome of Buddha's head. The elongated ears, although taken as a symbol of wisdom in the classical India, are also thought by the western art critics as indicative of the result of heavy, rich jewellery the Buddha wore. The 'urna' is well placed in the centre of the forehead, a little above the eyebrows. Some of the figures, represented in Gandhara sculptures, are strikingly tall and dignified with baggy trousers (a heavy shalwar) and sleeved coat, to many even resembling closely the normal dress worn by Pathans especially in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan or even Afghanistan; others are characteristically Greek, Scythian or Parthian, while yet others possess the characteristics of forms prevalent in the South Asia Subcontinent.

The Kushans were able to establish a strong empire for a period of about three hundred years and produced works of art reflecting both indigenous traditions and external influences. The detection of Greek and Roman elements in the Gandharan School testifies to the active exchange of ideals and ideas among all the civilisations of the Classical and Central Asian worlds. The Gandhara School reached its peak towards the end of the second century AD with the production of the most significant large Buddha statues. Their style continued to flourish into the third century until after the Sassanian invasion, and perhaps sustained until the seventh century at different places in varying degrees of standards. But in no way the art for which Gandhara is so famous was confined to its geographical boundaries. It rather extended much beyond these limits and continued, if not flourished, for much longer period of time when it had declined within the province itself.





Taxila jewellery and a toilet tray with Apollo and Daphne

GANDHARAN ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of Gandhara, like the Gandharan art in sculpting, also presents an individuality of its own even though showing the blend of classical and indigenous South Asian technique and the resultant decoration. The Gandhara architecture is also not devoid of certain features that show the borrowing from the Western world though the initial inspiration can clearly be seen as taking roots from the local elements. It appears that the survival for long centuries of the discreet techniques in its basic elements mainly owe to its leaning heavily on the Buddhist religious themes and the person of Buddha.

The large scale archaeological excavations carried in different regions of Gandhara during the twentieth century have amply added to the knowledge about the Gandhara architecture. On the basis of the type of masonry encountered in consecutive strata of different sites, especially those at Taxila, archaeologists have also been able to evolve a chronology of the Gandhara architecture. The earliest buildings, belonging to the Parthian period, are built in coarse rubble masonry, an assorted mixture of large and small stones. In the following period, which corresponds to the earliest Buddhist era, it is changed to a variety of diaper-patterned rubble wherein the spaces between the larger stones were filled with small stone pieces. The latest period of Gandhara architecture, especially at Taxila from around 3rd century AD, the masonry type used shows a great improvement. In this period precisely cut ashlar masonry alternating with layers of rubble is found extensively.



Different types of masonry used in different eras (Sir)



Circular drum on square base, Mohra Moradu Stupa



Stupa on square base, placed in the middle of Monastic courtyard, Takht-e-Bahi



Ionic Column

It is of interest to note that while Ionic order was used in buildings during the Parthian period at Taxila, Corinthian was employed almost everywhere in the structures constructed during the Kushan period. Some experts think that the Corinthian capitals of Gandhara have their nearest prototypes in Roman provincial examples in Syria and Palestine. Evidence of Hellenistic art in the form of architecture had been noted on a number of



Indo-Persepolitan Pilaster

temples from the city of Sirkap at Taxila, and on the tumbled columns of Ay Khanum's administrative centre.

The Gandhara architecture is seen revolving around a few certain types, which though did not remain intact and above ground to our age but, thanks to the archaeologist's spade, have been brought back to light from under tons of earth in a meaningful way. The most common form of architectural expressions is the Buddhist building complexes constructed on grand scales. They are additionally embellished with rich plastic art, especially on the whole body of the stupa. This form of decoration is specifically employed in Gandhara as at other places the contemporaneous architecture depicts it mainly on the balustrades and the gateways.

The stupa for the Buddhists was originally a sepulchre for the dead. With the passing of time it attained some sort of reverence, especially as it



Indo-Corinthian Column

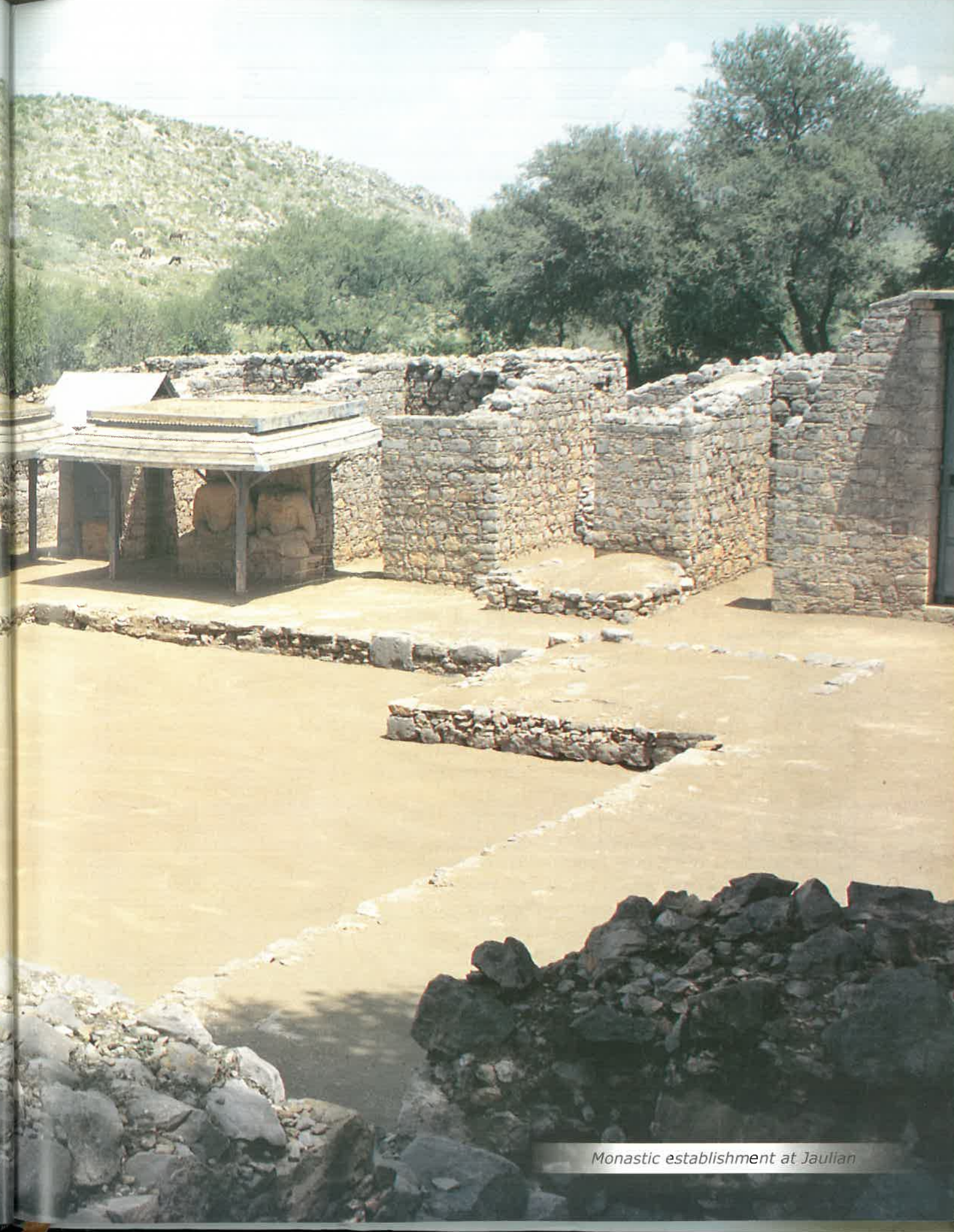


enshrined the mortal remains of Buddha or other saintly personages. It thus became the object of worship. This resulted in its developing into a grand hemispherical dome, which was used to house some relic - from the remains of Buddha to those of other saints or holy men of Buddhist creed. However, in the later period the stupas were also built to commemorate some event of the life of Buddha or his disciples. In due course of time these stupas, relic as well as commemorative, became places of pilgrimage. Here the devotees also erected some votive stupas, taking the act as of great religious merit. As stupa was taken to be a symbol of the death of Buddha it had also been represented in relief on the stone prior to the introduction of his image in the human form.

The construction scheme of the stupa in Gandhara marks the gradual elaboration of the primitive type of the one, which belonged to the Mauryan period at Sanchi and Barhut. It is interesting to note that in Gandhara the hemispherical stupa form, with or without the drum, was developed into a more cylindrical structure, putting heavy emphasis on the superstructure. With the series of cylindrical elements or drums added upward, the Gandhara stupa usually presents the tower-like appearance.

The stupas are found to be having either circular drum or else a square structure set on the base. The best examples of the former type are found at Dharmarajika and Mohra Moradu in Gandharan Taxila while the latter is best portrayed in Swat.



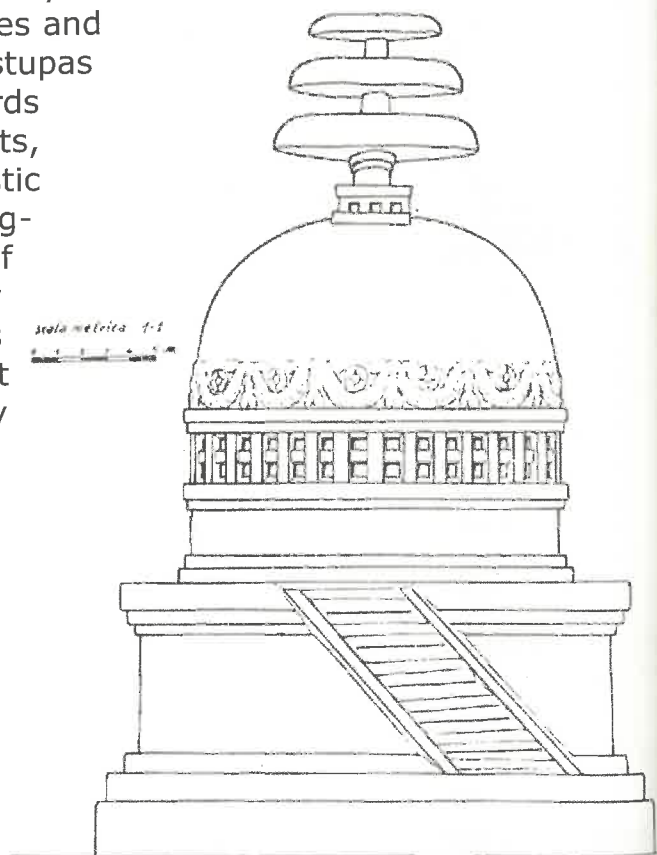


Monastic establishment at Jaulian

The stupa was erected on a setplan. It had a base over which was erected a cylindrical drum and a hemispherical dome superimposed by seven disc-shaped umbrellas, called *chhatra*, one above the other. These *chhatras* were held by upright staffs, which were fixed inside a square box called *harmika*. It was the *harmika* that contained the relic.

The stupa thus being one of the most revered structures was built in imposing height with a dominating look. In its earlier stages of history the round-shaped stupa needed apse-like projection at one end. Such an example is seen in the city of Sirkap in the Taxila valley. The true Gandhara form was later attained by constructing the stupa on a square base and placing it in the middle of the monastic courtyard. The stupa found in the Takht-e-Bahi monastery very aptly presents this type. In the Mahayana Buddhism of Gandhara a sort of compromise is found to have been attained between the pure symbolic form of stupa and the one decorated with sculptures for teaching the law of Buddhism.

Although Buddhist chapels and stupas in the Gandhara region would be found inside cities yet such establishments can be counted on fingers. These religious buildings were meant only to serve the ordinary Buddhists living in the cities and towns. However, most of the monasteries and stupas were located outside the cities' walls. The words used in ancient times for these establishments, 'Sangharama' or the shelter of the monastic organisations and 'Vihara' or wandering-pleasure amply speak of a separate entity of institutions which provided respite in rainy season to the monks wandering to preach. As the selection of these sites merited calm, quiet and tranquil atmosphere, these were mostly found away from the crowded urban centres. But as the 'Bhikshus' or the monks, had to live by their daily alms begging, these quarters were also required to be in the vicinity or not much away of some large city or town. The sacred texts lay down the basic principles governing the choice of these spots. They speak of "a spot not too far from the town and not too near, suitable for going and coming; easily accessible to all people; by day not crowded, at night not exposed to noise or alarm; clean of the smell of the people; secluded from men; well fitted for retired life".

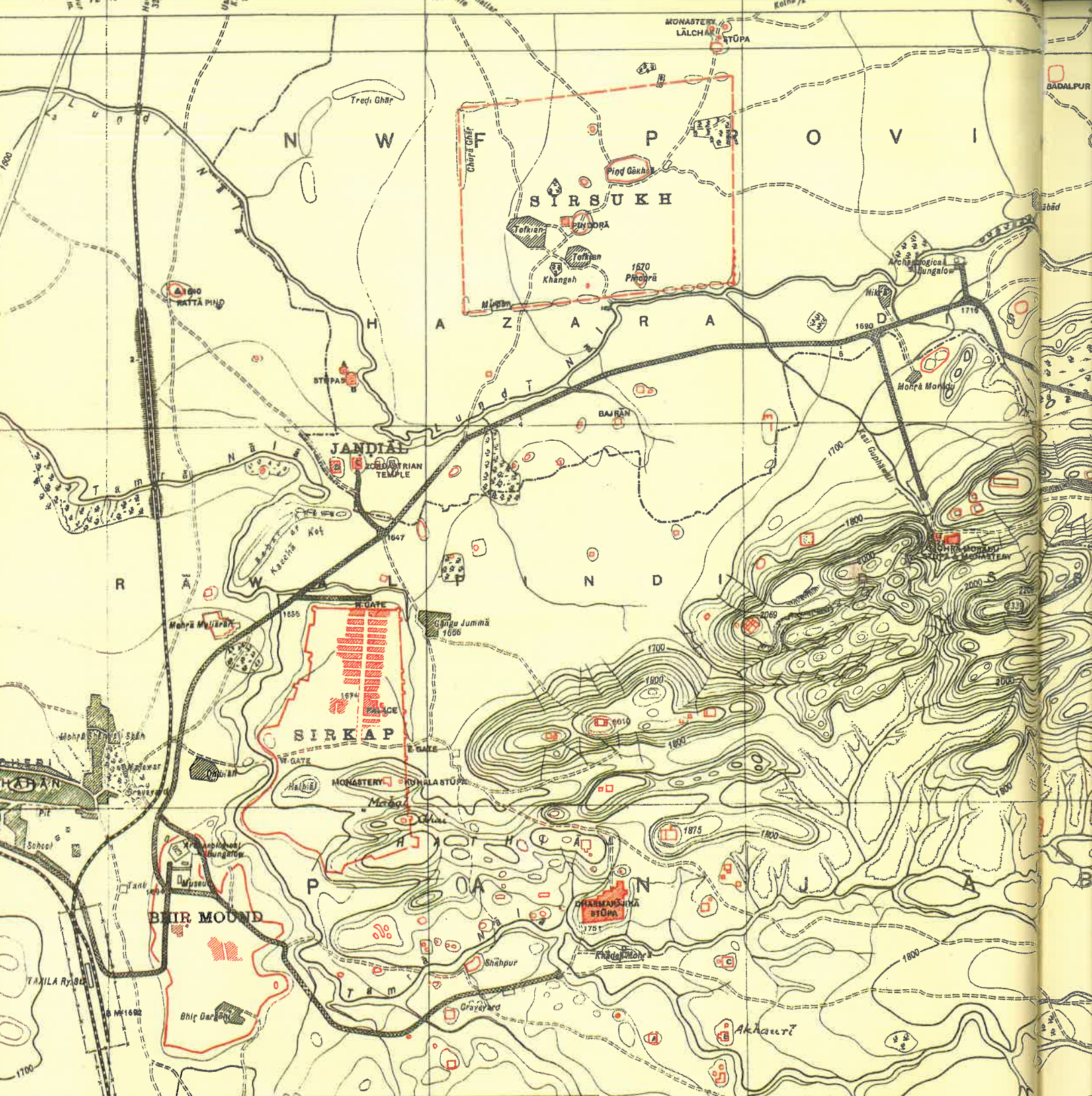


A conjectural reconstruction of Butkara Stupa

TAXILA, GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT

The valley within which Taxila is situated is only 18 kilometres long and 8 kilometres broad at its mouth and stands 550 meters above the mean sea level. It is bound by two spurs of the Murree Hills. The northern spur, reaching a height of about 1,226 metres, and known by the name of Sarda, runs towards west, with Hazara Valley beyond, and dies down into the plain. The second of the Ranges is Margalla, which is somewhat lower in altitude, runs down on its east reaching the southern perimeter. A third, a rocky ridge of limestone and much shorter when compared to the earlier two, known as Hathial partially divides the main valley into two parts, which are neither equal nor similar to each other. The modern eco-system apart, the northern part has plenty of precipitation and has been well-watered throughout the centuries by the river Haro and many a smaller stream. The southern part of the Taxila Valley, delimited for a greater part by Hathial Range, today bears almost a stark contrast as far as the water-resources and the greenery are concerned.

The natural terrain of this component is found intersected by quite a few deep ravines and broken by bare stony mounds or hillocks, termed as knolls in geography. The most pronounced water source in this part of the valley is the Tamra Nullah which had its share of misfortune in the earthquake of the early 20th century. It also discharges into the Haro after it passes around the southern edge of the Hathial spur, and close to the grand Dharmarajika Stupa and the city of Sirkap. Still another small stream, called locally as Lundi Nullah, runs in the northern part and joins the Tamra a little before its union with the Haro River towards the western end of the Taxila Valley.



MAP OF TAXILA

SCALE 100 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200 1300 1400 1500 YARDS

Note: Contours are approximate & represent a vertical distance of 25'

Every fourth contour is drawn thick

Each minute square measures W. to E. (longitude) 16 1/2' approx. & S. to N. (latitude) 20 22 1/2'

Ancient monuments & mounds containing ancient remains are shown thus

New motor road shown thus

Foot paths shown thus

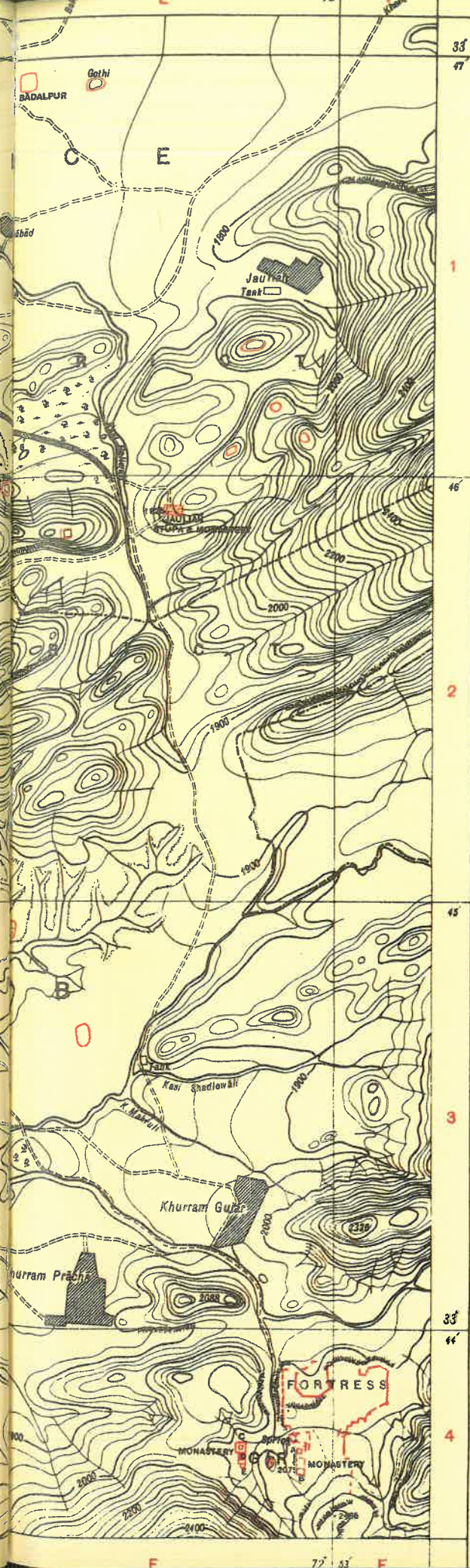
Heights above mean sea level shown thus

Approximate heights shown thus



1645

2339



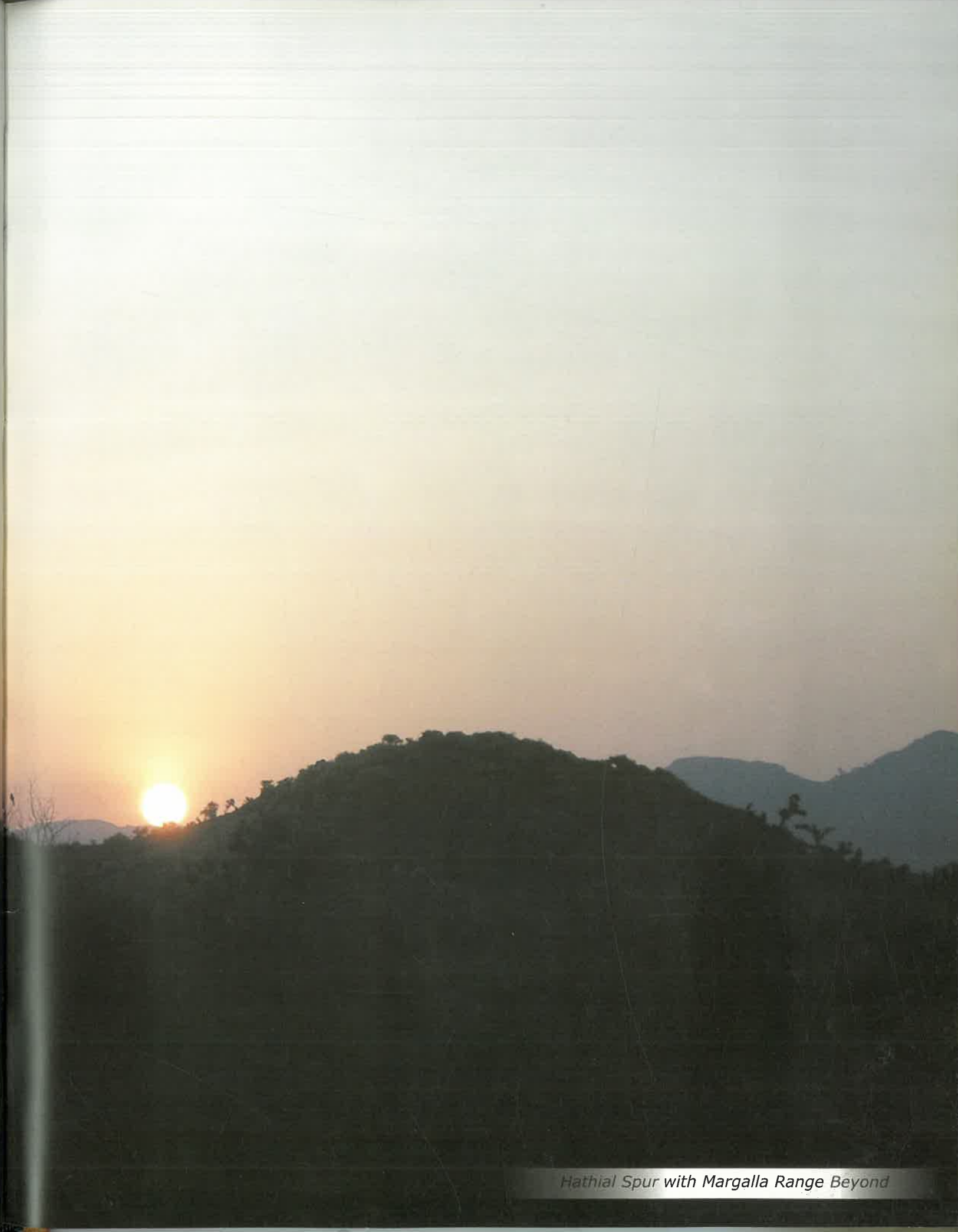
The southern portion of the Margalla spur, locally known as Kala Chitta Range (Black and White as its English equivalent) stands guard at this side of the Taxila Valley. Another nullah, known as Kala, even if made to disappear at places with the modern developments, runs parallel to this Range, though for quite sometime it had never carried any water except during rainy season just for the same reason of the earthquake as it happened to the Tamra.

In the Gandharan period the conditions were certainly much more favourable in the whole of the Taxila Valley. From the hills flowed streams and rivulets that fed the valley making it, in the words of Hieun Tsang, the seventh century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, 'a land of rich harvests, flowing streams and fountains, abundant flowers and fruits'. The present conditions do not match to this boastful expression. The hills around Taxila are bare and raw, brown and barren with meagre vegetation most of the year. To top this natural phenomenon, the modern day so-called developments are even depleting the Kala Chitta Range of its beauty by criminal speed by Stone-crushers, which may well annihilate at least parts of it on the southern side of Taxila Valley. Thanks to some archaeological authorities for saving the rest of the geographical features within the Valley by enforcing a ban and restricting the operations of these crushers.



(After John Marshall - 1951)





Hathial Spur with Margalla Range Beyond



A-9308



Southern limit of Taxila Valley, Kala-Chitta Range





Sarda Range (In background) delimiting Taxila Valley on north





Tamra Nullah



GANDHARAN TAXILA IN HISTORY

The history of Taxila in major part is the history of Gandhara, generally overlapping and running parallel to it. During the Gandharan period Taxila was very famous and known far and wide. This is very much evident from the fact that it is mentioned, even if variedly, in several languages: in Sanskrit, the city was called Takshaṣila, which is often interpreted as 'prince of the serpent tribe', or even Taksaka, which means "carpenter", often used as alternative name for the Naga; in Pāli it was known as Takkaṣila, the Greeks were familiar with it through the name of Taxila, which the Romans rendered with a slight variation as Taxilla while the Chinese called it Chu-ch'a-shi-lo.

Taxila is also known from references to it in Indian and Greco-Roman literary sources and from the accounts of two Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hsien and Hieun Tsang. According to some other interpretations it meant literally "the city of cut-stone" or "the rock of Taksa", Taksasila was founded, according to the Indian epic Ramayana, by Bharata, younger brother of Rama, an incarnation of the Hindu god Visnu. The city was named after Bharata's son, Taksa, its first ruler. The great Indian epic Mahabharata was, according to tradition, first recited at Taxila at the great snake sacrifice of King Janamejaya, one of the heroes of the story. Buddhist literature, especially the Jataka, mentions it as the capital of the kingdom of Gandhara and as a great centre of learning. Gandhara (Gandarii) is also mentioned as a satrapy or province in the inscriptions of the Achaemenian (Persian) king Darius I in the 5th century BC. Taxila, as the capital of Gandhara, was evidently under Achaemenian rule for more than a century.





When Alexander of Macedonia invaded India in 326 BC Ambhi (Omphis), the ruler of Taxila, surrendered the city and placed his resources at Alexander's disposal. Greek historians accompanying the Macedonian conqueror described Taxila as "wealthy, prosperous, and well governed." Its affluence is attributed, in addition to its favourable climate, mainly to its location at the junction of three great trade routes: one from eastern India described by a Greek writer, Megasthenes, as the "Royal Highway", the second from western Asia, and the third from Kashmir and Central Asia. When these routes ceased to be important the city sank into insignificance and was finally destroyed by the Huns in the 5th century AD, as mentioned elsewhere.

Within a decade after Alexander's death, Taxila was absorbed into the Mauryan Empire founded by Chandragupta Maurya, under whom it became a provincial capital. But this was only an interlude in the history of Taxila's subjection to conquerors from the west. After three generations of Mauryan rule, the city was annexed by the Indo-Greek kingdom of Bactria. It remained under the Indo-Greeks until the early 1st century BC. They were followed by the Śakas, or Scythians, from Central Asia, and by the Parthians, whose rule lasted until the latter half of the 1st century AD.

Taxila perhaps also became a sacred place for the Christians. According to early Christian legend, Taxila was visited by the Apostle Thomas during the Parthian period. Another distinguished visitor was the Neo-Pythagorean sage Apollonius of Tyana (1st century AD), whose biographer Philostratus described Taxila as a fortified city that was laid out on a symmetrical plan and compared it in size to Nineveh. It was certainly the second city site of Sirkap, which dates from the Indo-Greek period.

Taxila was taken from the Parthians by the Kushans under Kujula Kadphises. The great Kushan ruler Kaniska is credited with founding of the third city site of Sirsukh. In the 4th century AD the Sassanian king Shapur II (310-379) seems to have conquered

Taxila, as evidenced by the numerous Sassanian copper coins found here. The historian would have been faced with an impossible task of reconstructing its history after its occupation by Sassanian as there is hardly any information available about this period, but for the accounts left by the Chinese Pilgrims, Fa-hsien, who visited the city at about the beginning of the 5th century AD. He found it a flourishing centre of Buddhist sanctuaries and monasteries. Shortly thereafter it was sacked by the Ephthalites or the White Huns. Taxila never recovered from this calamity. Hieun Tsang, visiting the site in the 7th century AD, found the city ruined and desolate, while there is no mention of subsequent records.

Taxila is considered a place of religious and historical sanctity not only by Buddhists but also Hindus the world over. While its reverence by the former is obvious, the latter regard it so as it was a great seat of Vedic learning where the outstanding strategist, Chanakya, who later helped consolidate the empire of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya, was a senior teacher. The institution is very significant in Buddhist tradition since it is believed that the famous sect of Buddhism, Mahayana, took shape here.

The history of Taxila or *Takshashila* for almost a millennium tells that the Buddhist shrines continued to be built here. During this period it grew to be a famous university where scholars and students from all parts of the Buddhist world, even as far away as China pursued their aim in knowledge. It was celebrated in the ancient world as a prestigious centre of learning where students could receive instructions in almost any subject, from mathematics to medicine, and astrology to philosophy.

The records amply tell that Taxila, or Takshashila, was an early centre of learning, perhaps going back to at least the 5th century BC. Some scholars argue as to its status of a university even if not in the modern sense it is, however, agreed by all that it was certainly a well-recognised seat for higher learning.

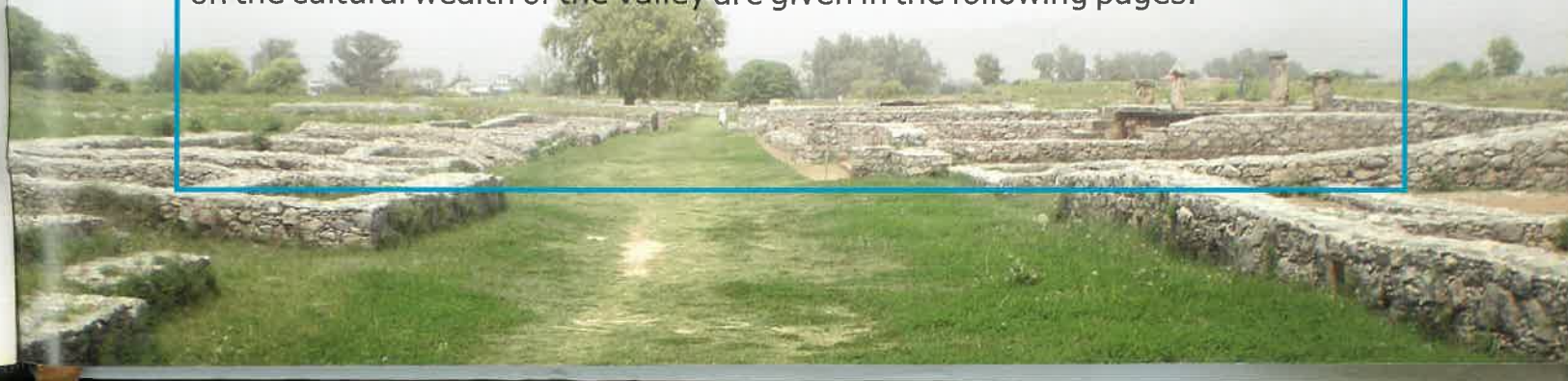
Whatever type of its institution, Taxila had become a noted centre of learning at least several centuries before Christ, and continued to attract students from around the world of the yore until the destruction of the city in the 5th century AD. The place is perhaps also best known the famous treatise on Economics, *Arthashastra*, is said to have been composed by Chanakya here in Taxila. Chanakya (or Kautilya), the Maurya Emperor Chandragupta (when he was a Prince) and the famous Ayurvedic healer Charaka had all studied in the learning centre of Taxila. According to scholars it is generally taken that a student entered this place of learning at the age of sixteen. He was then perfected in the Vedas and the Eighteen Arts, which included skills such as archery, hunting, and elephant lore in addition to going through its law school, medical school, and school of military science.

VESTIGES OF GANDHARAN TAXILA

To have an overall picture of the Gandharan vestiges of Taxila it may be surmised on the scientific data that some of the more important excavated sites roughly belong to the three eras of extensive building activities as shown in the following table:-

Achaemenian era	Greek era	Kushan era
<u>Bhir mound</u>	<i>Sirkap</i>	<u>Sirsukh</u>
	<u>Jandial</u>	<u>Jaulian</u>
		<u>Mohra Moradu</u>

These archaeological sites, along with some others having strong bearing on the cultural wealth of the Valley are given in the following pages.



I. BHIR MOUND (6th-2nd centuries BC):

Taxila was founded in the seventh or sixth century BC, according to legend by a son of the brother of the legendary hero Rama. The first town was situated on a hill that commanded the river what is now known as Tamra Nala or Tamra Stream, a tributary of the Indus. It was an important cultural centre and, as mentioned elsewhere, it is said that the *Mahabharata* was first recited at Taxila, and this must be the city of the yore that had the privilege of witnessing this sacred act. The site of this city is now known after local nomenclature as



Bhir or the mound, as it is a big cultural mound. The pioneer British archaeologist, John Marshall is perhaps responsible to call it "Bhir Mound" even if both words giving the same meaning. The residential area of this first city of Taxila was in the east; the western part of the town seems to have had a ceremonial function. The archaeologists also brought to light remains of a building they call 'Pillared Hall'. The Hindus take it as a sanctuary, which could be the oldest known Hindu shrine in the region.





Bhir Mound: Old Excavations



Bhir Mound: Recent Excavations

II. DHARMARAJIKA STUPA (2nd century AD):

Even now, in its awe-inspiring condition, the Dharmarajika Stupa is perhaps just a shade of its past splendour. It is unquestionably the earliest Buddhist monument in Pakistan. According to the scholars it was one of eight shrines constructed in the 3rd century BC, during the reign of Emperor Asoka of the Mauryan dynasty, to enshrine relics of the Buddha. It was continually to be enlarged and expanded over the centuries of its existence, attaining the biggest volume in the 2nd century AD. The archaeological evidence points to the fact that the stupa was once coated with lime plaster and further decorated with gilding. These have now fallen away along with a seven-tier stone umbrella that once crowned its top.

Near the main stupa are the remnants of a large number of votive stupas and vast monasteries that are barely distinguishable from their foundation stones brought to light by archaeologist's spade.







Dharmarajika: Main Stupa



Dharmarajika: Different views of the site



Dharmarajika: Northern view of votive stupa east of main stupa



Dharmarajika: Southern view of votive stupa east of main stupa



Dharmarajika: Votive Stupas



Dharmarajika Stupa





Imposing view of Dharmarajika Stupa



Dharmarajika Site



Dharmarajika Site



Different figures in cells of Dharmarajika Stupa





Seated Buddha in a cell of Dharmarajika



Figures around votive Stupas at Dharmarajika

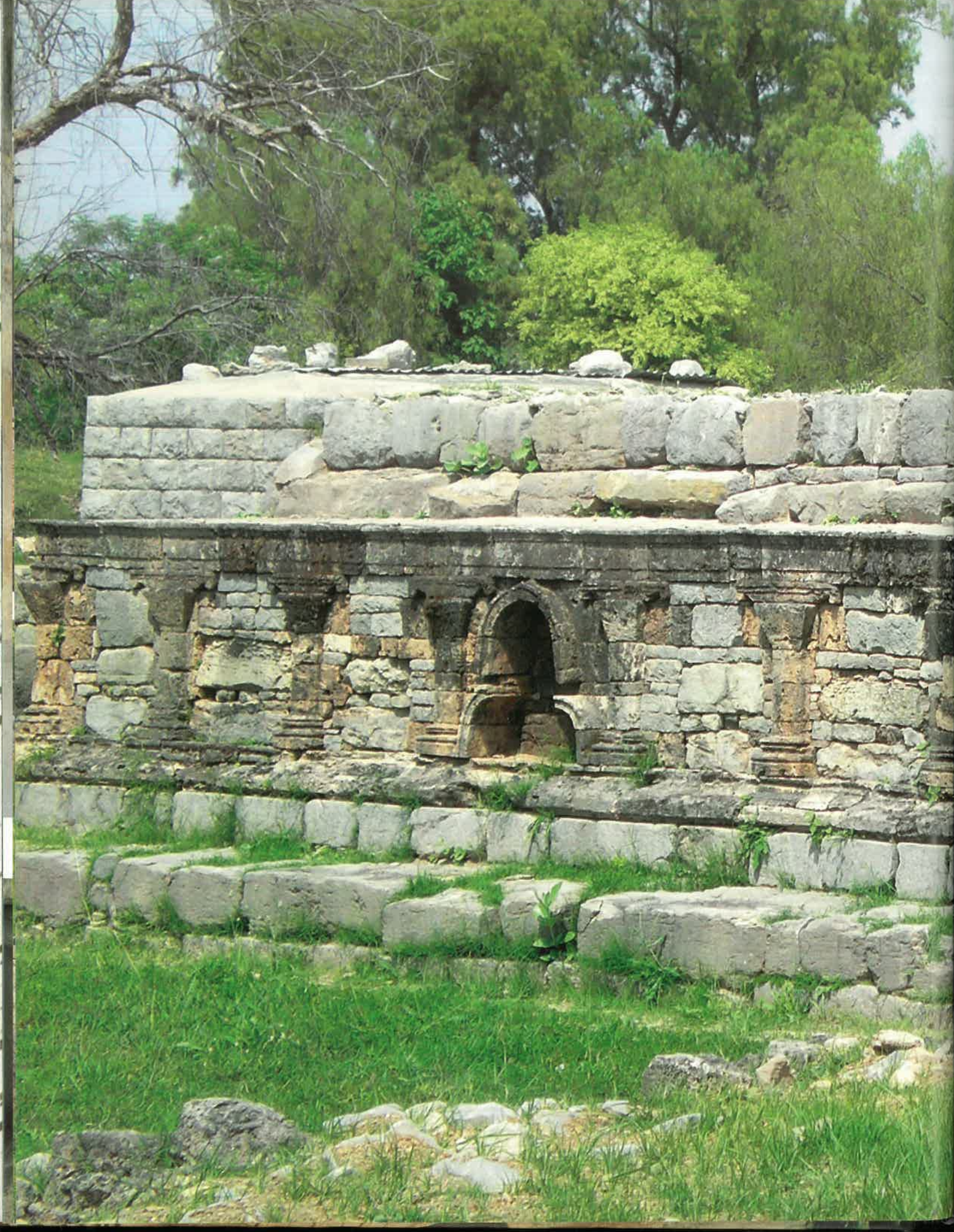






Views of Dharmarajika Stupa site







Closer look at votive stupa: Dharmarajika



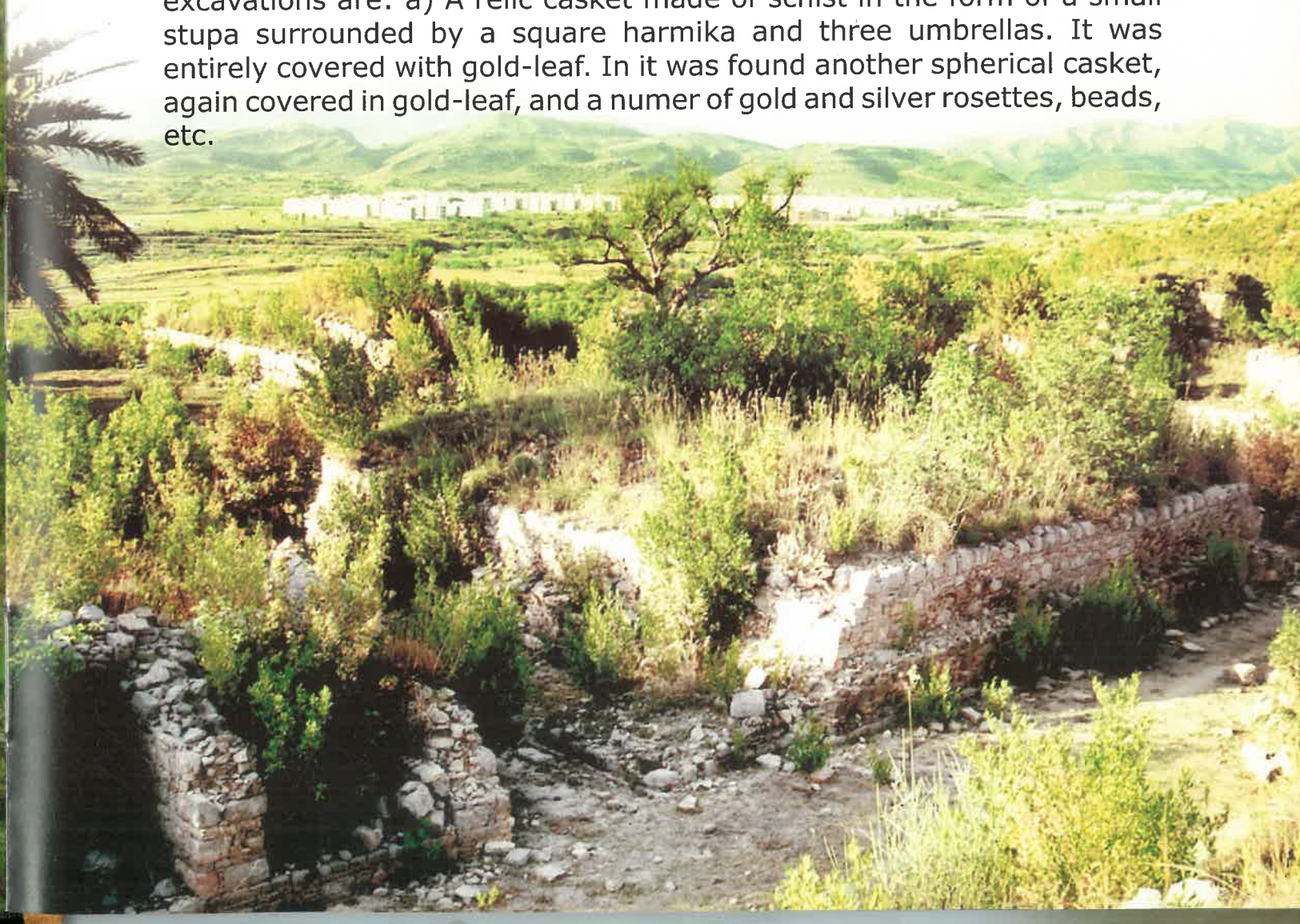
Tamra Nullah by the site of Dharmarajika Stupa & Monastery

III. KALAWAN

Perhaps next in magnanimity and expansiveness to the Dharmarajika is the Kalawan Buddhist complex of Stupa and monastery. The monument is not easily accessible now because of the nearby military establishments, and thus has fallen prey to the negligent attitude of the archaeological authorities resulting in its having been covered under the wild jungle growth. It nevertheless does not undermine its importance as an antiquity. Situated about three kilometres south-east of Dharmarajika, it is almost the same distance east from the Bhir Mound, or the first city of Taxila.

An inscription found from the place refers to its name as Chadashila, though in the modern times the area is known as Kalawan, meaning caves, because of the presence of two caves here. The excavators found it built in terraces, with three types of masonry. They also found that the plan of the Stupa-court was different from those that are found at other places. Instead of the main stupa being the largest of the all, here it is interestingly small.

Among the important finds that came from this complex during excavations are: a) A relic casket made of schist in the form of a small stupa surrounded by a square harmika and three umbrellas. It was entirely covered with gold-leaf. In it was found another spherical casket, again covered in gold-leaf, and a number of gold and silver rosettes, beads, etc.



IV. SIRKAP CITY (2nd century B.C. to 2nd century AD)

This is represented by the remains of a settlement, which followed the abandonment of Bhir site and was thus the second main settlement at Taxila. The city of Sirkap was built by the Greco-Bactrian king Demetrius after he invaded the South Asia Subcontinent in c. 180 BC. Demetrius founded in the northern and north-western parts of the Subcontinent an Indo-Greek kingdom, which lasted up till around 10 BC. The city is also said to have been rebuilt by Menander I.

The most striking feature of the city one encounters on entry seems to be the long main street. On both sides of it the shops and private houses were constructed of rubble masonry covered with lime or mud plaster. The residential houses usually had a small court, a second floor and a flat roof. After the earthquake, in the Parthian period, many were rebuilt with stronger walls and deeper foundations. Towards the end of the main street on left, now hardly presenting its past glory, is the palace complex of Sirkap.

The remains of the city-plan suggest its having been built according to the





Main Gate, Sirkap



Main Street, Sirkap





A general view of Sirkap city





Northern fortification of Sirkap



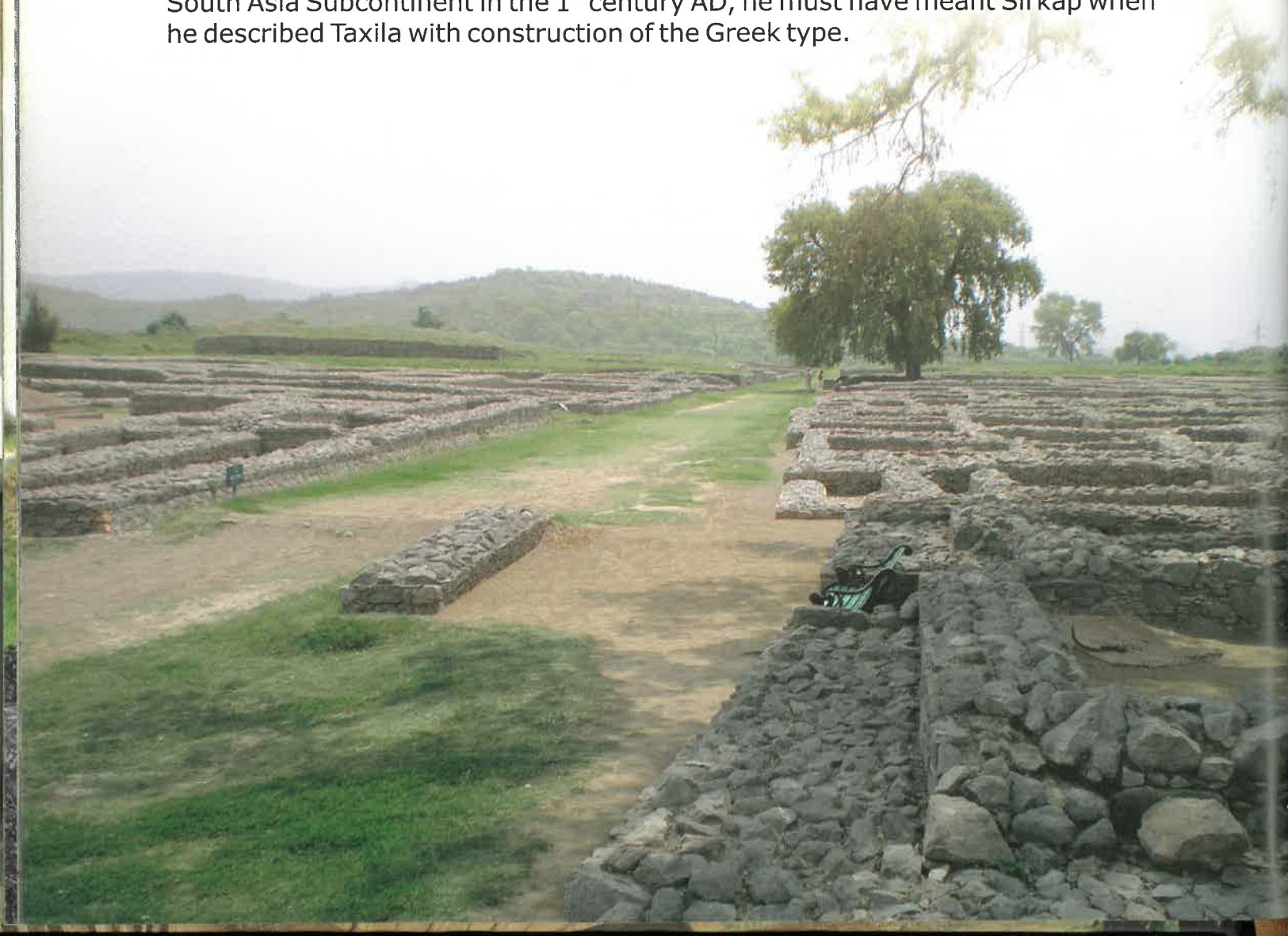


A panoramic view of houses in Sirkap

"Hippodamian" grid-plan, characteristic of Greek cities. It is structured around one main avenue and fifteen perpendicular streets, covering a surface of around 1200x400 metres, with a surrounding fortification, which runs for nearly 5 kilometres and is 5-7 meters wide. The similarity of the Sirkap plan to that of Olynthus in Macedonia speaks boldly of its Greek character. The archaeological excavations have brought to light numerous Hellenistic artefacts, especially the coins of Greco-Bactrian kings and stone palettes representing Greek mythological scenes. Some of them are purely Hellenistic while others indicate an evolution of the Greco-Bactrian styles that got affected with merging of these different cultures.

In architecture itself, the Buddhist stupas with strong Hellenistic elements of embellishment can be found throughout the Sirkap site, as well as Hindu temple only points to a close interaction of religious cultures. The site of Sirkap bears witness to the city-building activity of the Indo-Greeks during their two hundred years of occupation of the territories in this part of the Subcontinent. It also tells of their integration of other religions especially Buddhism.

At the time of the visit of the Greek philosopher Apollonius of Tyana to the South Asia Subcontinent in the 1st century AD, he must have meant Sirkap when he described Taxila with construction of the Greek type.



The most important of the buildings in the city of Sirkap are as follows:-

A. DOUBLE HEADED EAGLE SHRINE:

There certain outstanding structures within the city of Sirkap. One of them, the Double Headed Eagle Shrine (2nd century BC to 2nd century AD) shows a very heavy Bactrian-Greek influence. Lying along the main street of the city, it is so reckoned by archaeologists because of bas-relief depiction of the bird within the decorative arches. This particular motif is thought to be of Scythian origin, which is found in the Byzantine and also on the European armour crests. The Shrine is also a good example of Bactrian Greek influence with its Corinthian columns embellishing its side. The Shrine, however, also presents the local Indian influence especially borne out by the decoration in the other niches, which fact goes to prove the merger and fusion of different cultures.







A general view of Double-Headed Eagle Shrine

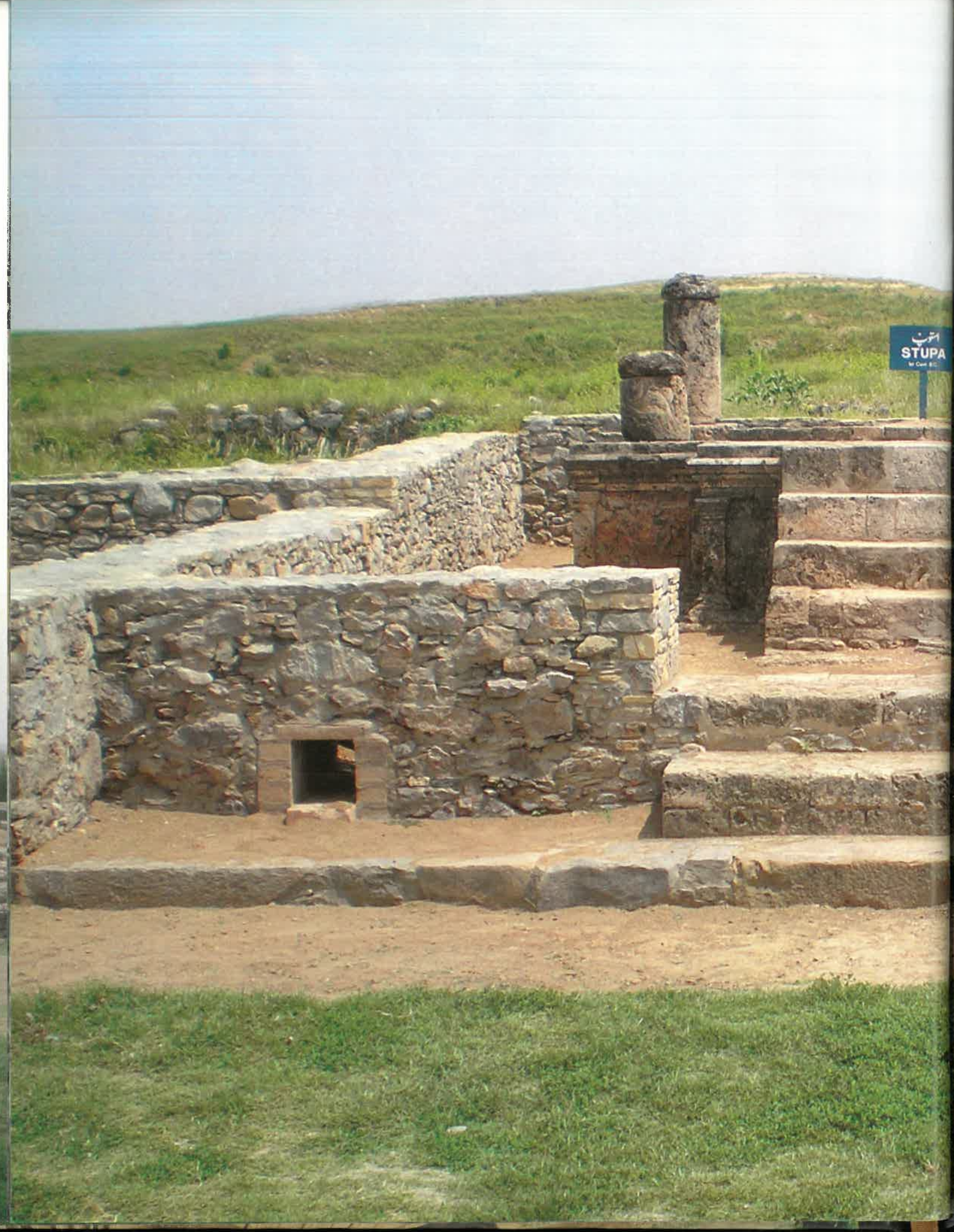


Focus on Double-Headed Eagle

B. JAIN SHRINE:

The other notable building is the **Jain Shrine** (2nd century BC to 2nd century AD), which is also situated by the side of the main street, towards eastern side. This Shrine survives today without any superstructure. The Persepolitan columns with lion decoration, which are seen on its four corners, were put in these places after they were recovered during excavations from the courtyard of the Shrine.





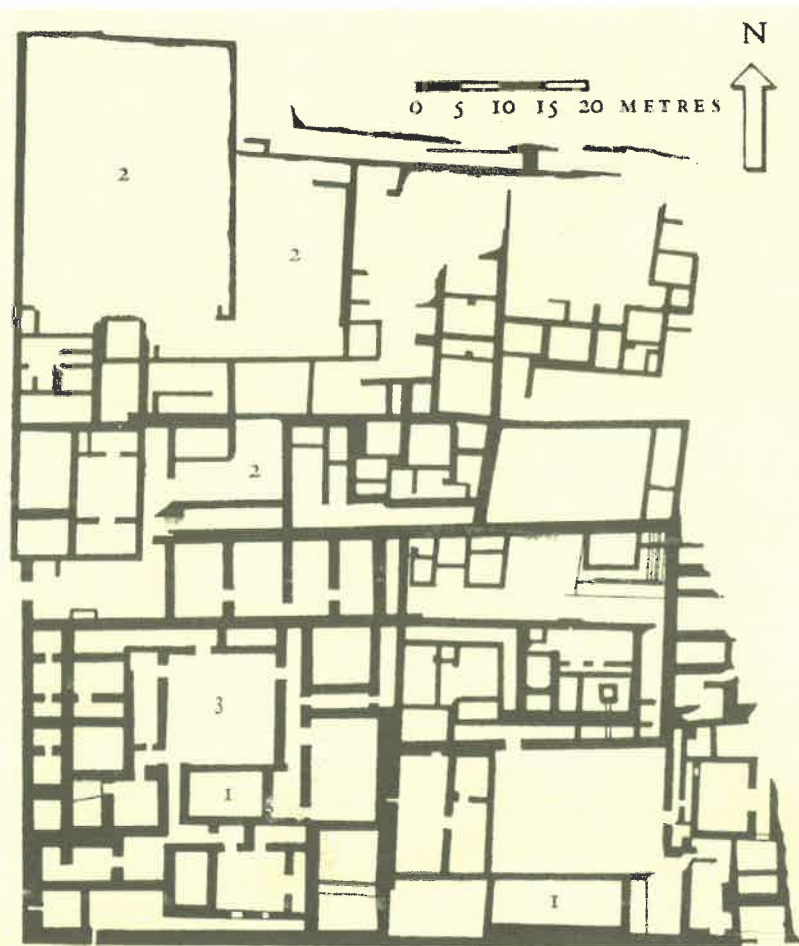
STUPA
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A panoramic view of the Shrine

C. Mahal or University site

Towards the extreme south of the Sirkap city is the beautiful retreat, surrounded by the Hathial spurs on three sides, each of which is topped by stupas and monastic establishment, the archaeologists reckon one of them as possible Uttararama, while the enclosed lower plain are excavated remains called Mahal or Palace by the pioneer excavators. Some other scholars of later date, however, do not agree with them and tend to take it as the site of a University type of a *madrassah*. According to them the incomplete excavations here show part of five sets, each having a courtyard in the middle and rooms on the sides. The presence of courts with surrounding corridor and room are thought to be representing of an establishment, which may not entirely be taken as an ordinary residential house, howsoever big it may be. Moreover, their internal means of communication are also taken to be pointing to a *madrassah*-style of architectural planning. For this reason they take it as a university where the name *Uttararama* was recorded in a ladle inscription while other finds also suggest their having been in use groups of men, such as students living together.



1. Halls of audience 2. Women's quarters
3. Private court and men's quarters



Main street, Sirkap, with Mahal at far left end

استوپ
STUPA
1st Cent. B.C. - 1st Cent. A.D.





Access from main street to Stupa Premises



A Stupa within the residential area, Sirkap

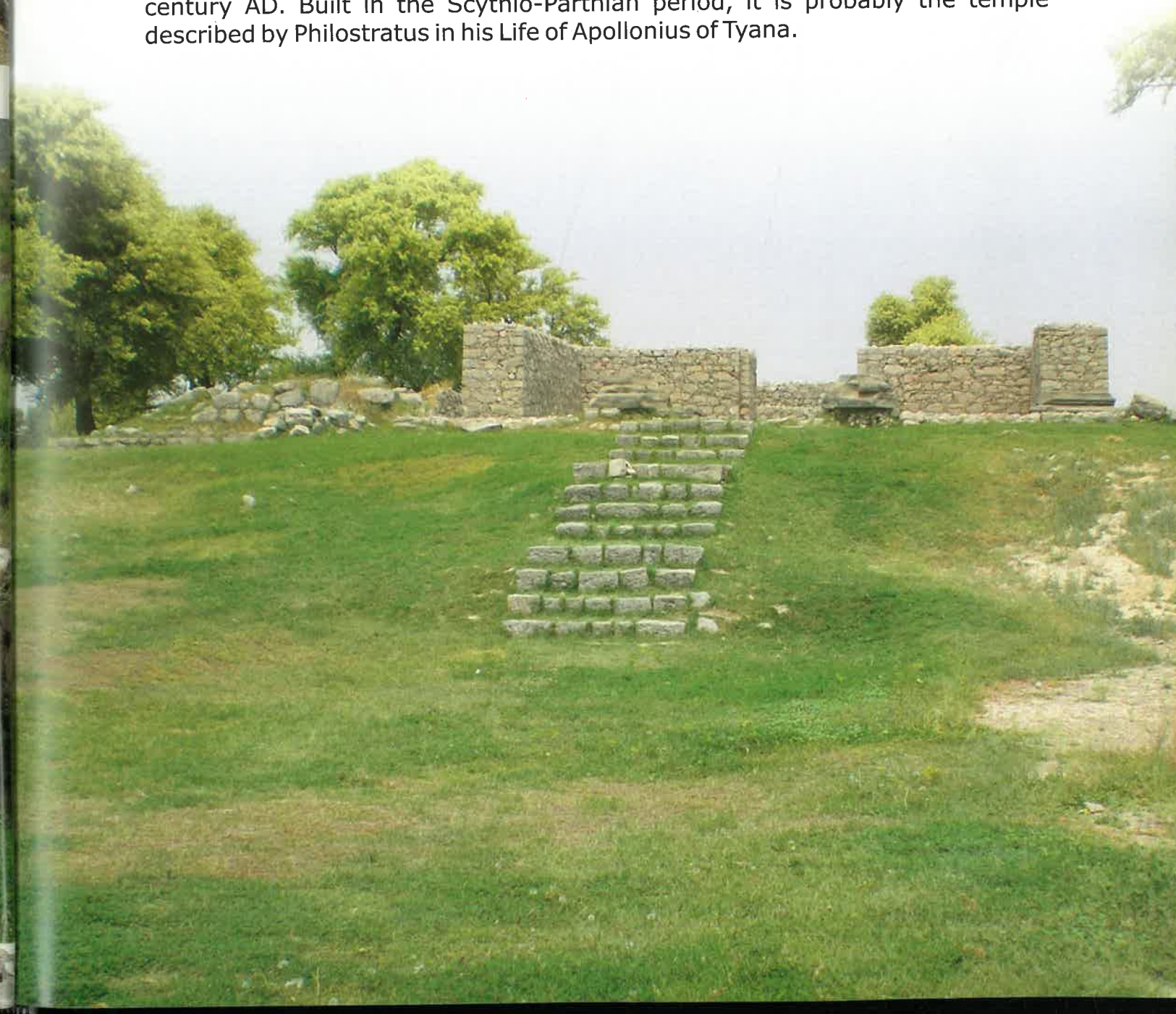


Remains of a Stupa

V. JANDIAL TEMPLE (2nd century BC to 2nd century AD)

The large building that closely resembles the ancient Greek religious temple of the Ionic order lies a little over half a kilometre from Sirkap, the second city of Taxila. Now known after the local place-name of Jandial, it attracts the utmost possibility that it may have been dedicated to a Zoroastrian cult and thus may not have been considered a Buddhist shrine, proving the presence of other religions within the Buddhist period..

Set up on an artificial mound, the temple has Ionic columns and pilasters, which are composed of massive blocks of sandstone. It consisted of a square sanctuary, a meeting hall, and a courtyard, the remains of which have been dug from under the earth by archaeologists during the first half of the twentieth century AD. Built in the Scythio-Parthian period, it is probably the temple described by Philostratus in his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.







A general view of Jandial Sanctuary, probably Zoroastrian





Entrance to the central room



South of the main hall of Temple

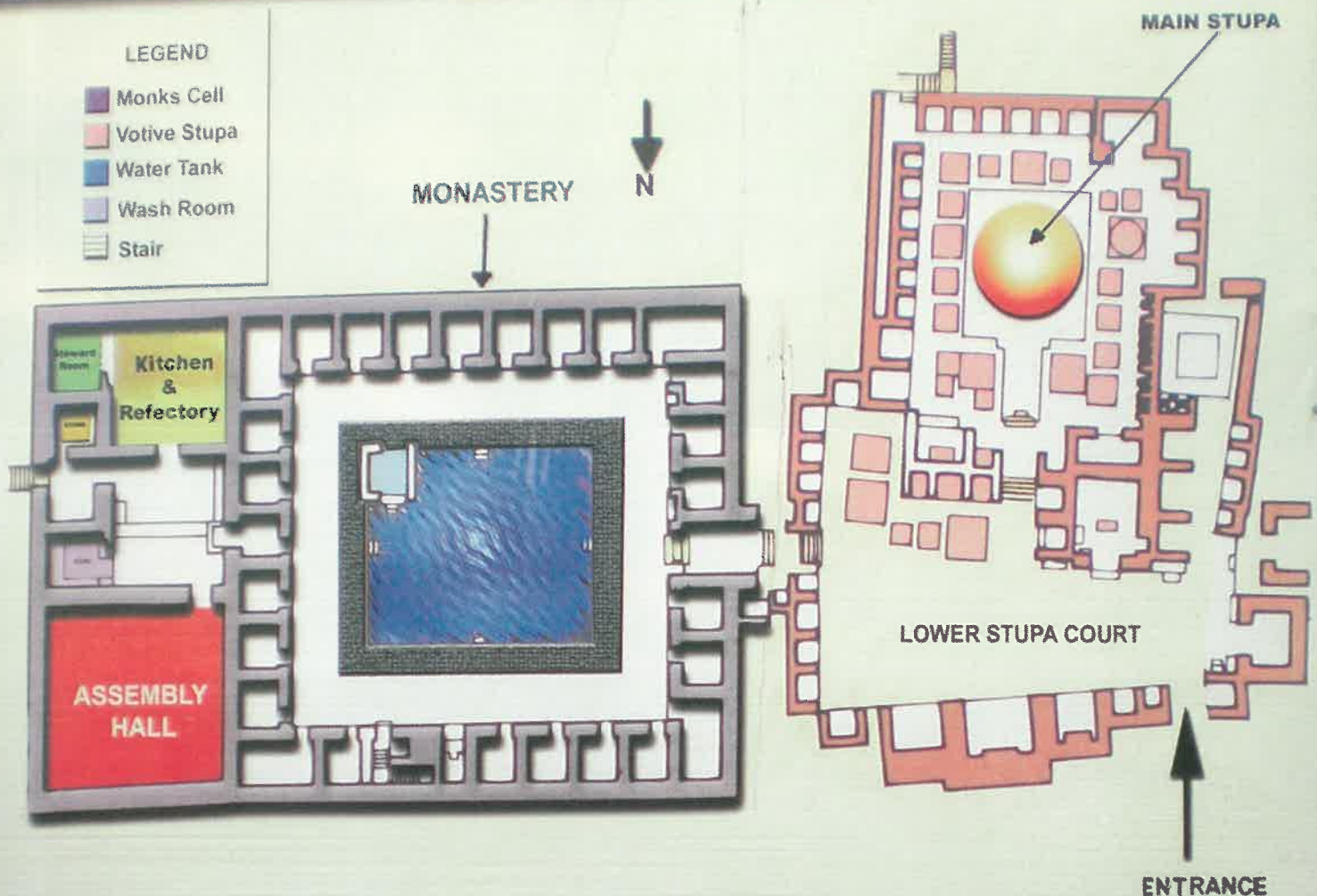


Construction betraying Ionic Order

VI. JAULIAN STUPA & MONASTERY

The stupa and monastery at Jaulian are perched upon a hill top, a location ideal for such Buddhist establishments as ordained by Dharma. Now, after climbing through the modern steps, the entry to the complex is from the northwest corner to what is known as the Lower Stupa Court, which has alcoves or chapels round the sides that once contained statues of Buddha. In order to ensure preservation of the remains of the ensemble of five votive stupas here, a wooden roof has been put up, with wire net provided on the sides. These votive stupas were built as offerings by Buddhist pilgrims early in the fifth century AD. The lower levels of the stupas here are in fair state of preservation and still are covered in rows of plaster carvings, though the paint and gilding have withered away due to the lapse of centuries of neglect.

PLAN OF JAULIAN STUPA & MONASTERY







Stupa Court, Jaulian



The decorative elements are represented by Buddha and Bodhisattva images set in niches with attendants beside them. There are also rows of elephants, lions and naked Greek Atlantes figures ingeniously moulded into bent positions as they seem straining to hold up the structure above them. There is a Kharoshthi inscription on the fifth stupa, giving the titles of the statues and the names of the donors.

The main stupa court is reached by climbing the five steps to the south and is also covered by a protective wooden roof. The main stupa in this monastery is surrounded by 21 votive stupas. The steps that now lead out onto the flat modern wooden roof over the Stupa originally led to the usual feature of the processional path round the dome, no more to be found here.



The Healing Buddha, a seated Buddha with a hole in his navel, is set in the northern wall of the main stupa, to the left of the steps. The faithful would put their fingers in the hole and pray for a cure for their ailments. The Kharoshthi inscription, below the statue, records that the statue was a gift from Budhamitra (literally Buddha's friend, presumably a rich pilgrim "who delighted in the law").

There are two more Kharoshthi inscriptions on a votive stupa on the west side of the main stupa, which give the names of the donors

The votive stupa in the centre of the south side of the main stupa contained a relic chamber, the content of which is now in the Taxila Museum. It is a tall, narrow, miniature stupa over one metre high,

made of hard lime plaster, painted with gaudy blue and red colours and crudely decorated with gamete, lapis-lazuli, ruby, amethyst, crystal, carnelian and aquamarine. The excavators found the relics hidden inside a copper box during the archaeological probe of the site.

Some colossal Buddha figures are placed in a row across the south face of the main stupa. Their bodies, made in the fifth century, present a poor and crude craftsmanship. Their bodies are made rather coarse although their heads are modelled in a fine and sensitive fashion. The heads, which in a normal were prepared separately and attached to the body by artisans working with stucco or clay during the Gandharan Age, have been removed to the museum for safety and better exposure.

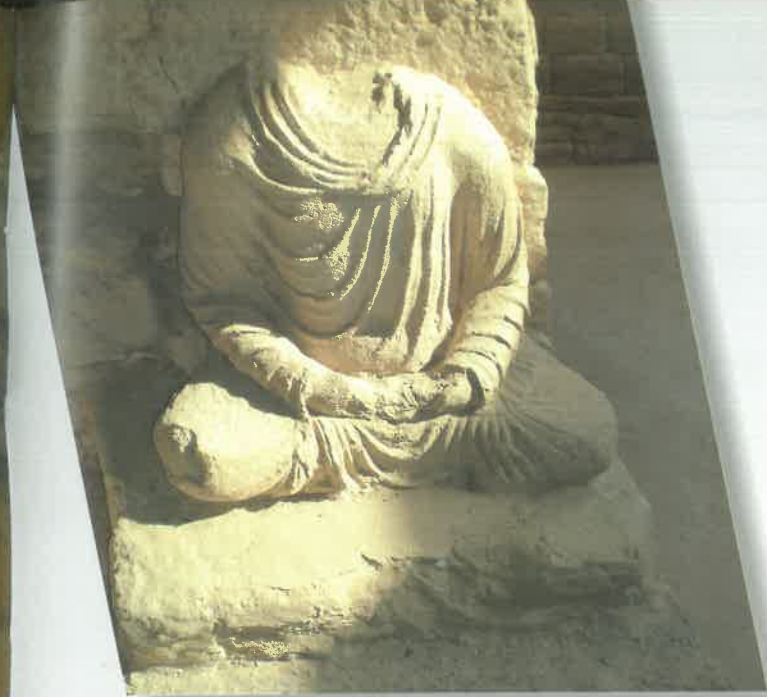
The second-century Jaulian monastery is west of the main stupa. A group of five plaster sculptures at the entrance on the left is protected behind wooden doors. As the original pieces from here had been removed to and displayed in the Taxila Museum, their replicas have been placed here to complete the picture. The group shows the meditating Buddha with a standing Buddha on either side with other figures in the background. The attendant figure on the left carries a fly whisk; on the right stands Vajrapani, the thunder god holding his thunderbolt.

The monastery court is surrounded by 28 cells for the monks. From the study of the remains it becomes evident that originally there was a second floor with another 28 cells and reached by the stone staircase in the cell located in the north-western corner. The balcony post-holes





Seated Buddha with a hole at the navel intended for a suppliant to place his finger when offering prayers against certain bodily ailments



and the charred wood found in the excavations indicated that a carved wooden balcony, supported on wooden pillars, ran all the way round the inside of the court with an access to the upper cells.

A low wooden door led into each cell. Each of the cells has a sloping window towards the upper side, and a niche for the monk's lamp. In the fifth century all the walls were plastered and painted and statues of Buddha and scenes from his life decorated the courtyard.

The shallow water tank in the centre of the court collected the rainwater off the wooden roof. In the dry season water was carried up from wells at the bottom of the hill. The monks bathed in the enclosure in the corner of the tank.

The hall of assembly, kitchen, store room, refectory, stewards' room and latrine are all to the west of the monastery court. The monastery was burned by the White Huns during their barbaric invasion perhaps never to be rebuilt to see glory of its heydays





MONASTERY



A partial view of Jaulian Monastery



Remains of Stucco Buddha, Jaulian



Two views of Jaulian Monastery

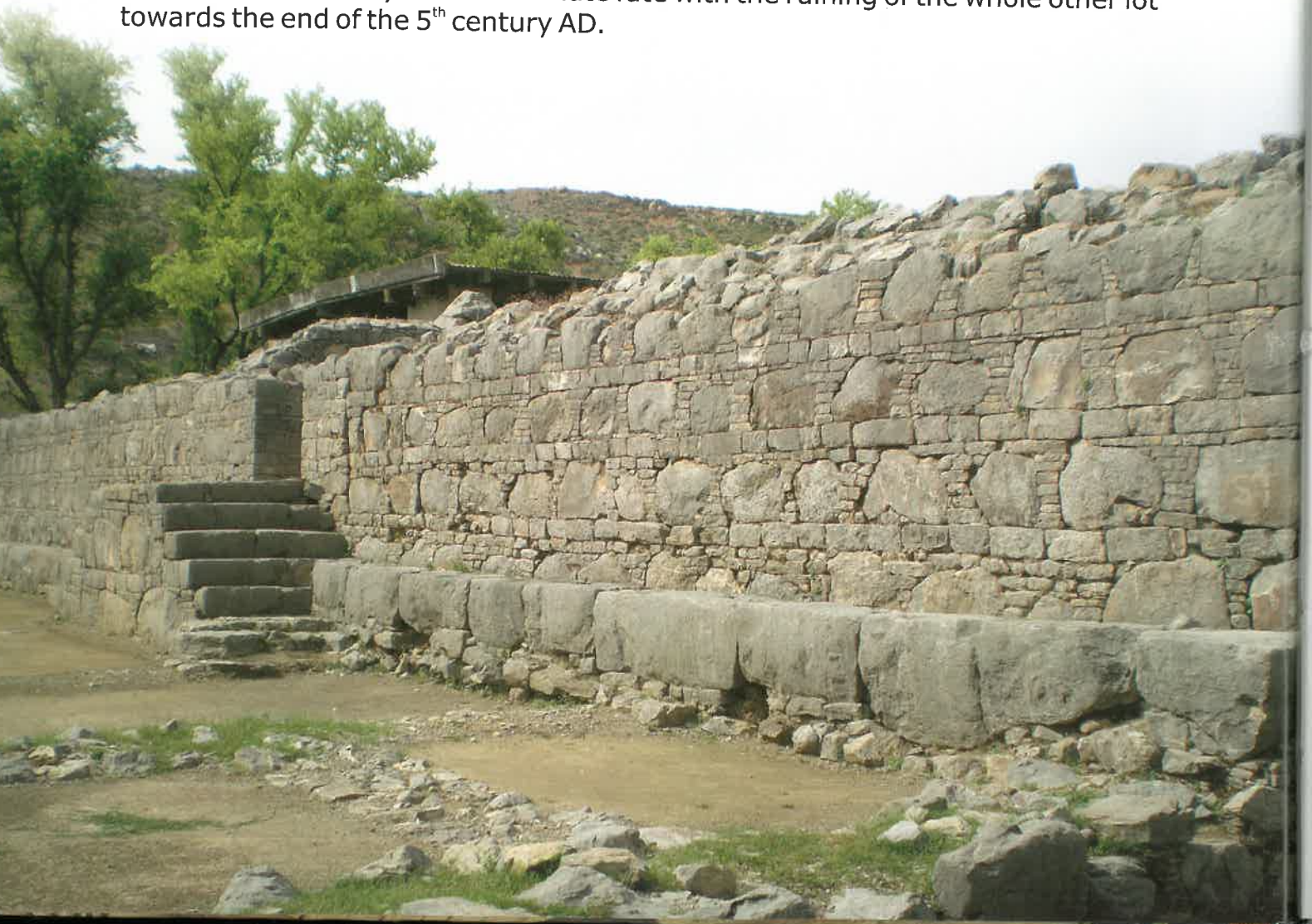


VII. PIPPLAN

The ancient remains at Pipplan named so because of huge and ancient papal trees at the site, belong to two periods; one adjoining the other and partly covering the ruins of earlier period. The monastery, which belonged to the earlier period, lay towards east and dates from early Kushan period. It fell into ruins about the 4th/5th century AD when the whole of this area was levelled leaving only the structures of the Stupas in the middle.

The later monastery, built on the western side with semi-ashlar masonry, is almost on the same plan as those at Jaulian and Mohra Moradu. It thus consisted of the central open courtyard and cells on all its four sides, with assembly hall, kitchen and refectory on the south. In one of the cells on the southern side, an earlier period Stupa stands the height of about 4 ½ metres in somewhat better state of preservation. This votive Stupa rose in three tiers and decorated with Corinthian pilasters alternating with lotus rosettes. A meditating Buddha is depicted on the north side of the second tier. At the base of the dome, eight seated figures of the Buddha in stucco are placed. Some important finds in the form of a collection of 26 coins were retrieved from the dig.

The monastery met its ultimate fate with the ruining of the whole other lot towards the end of the 5th century AD.

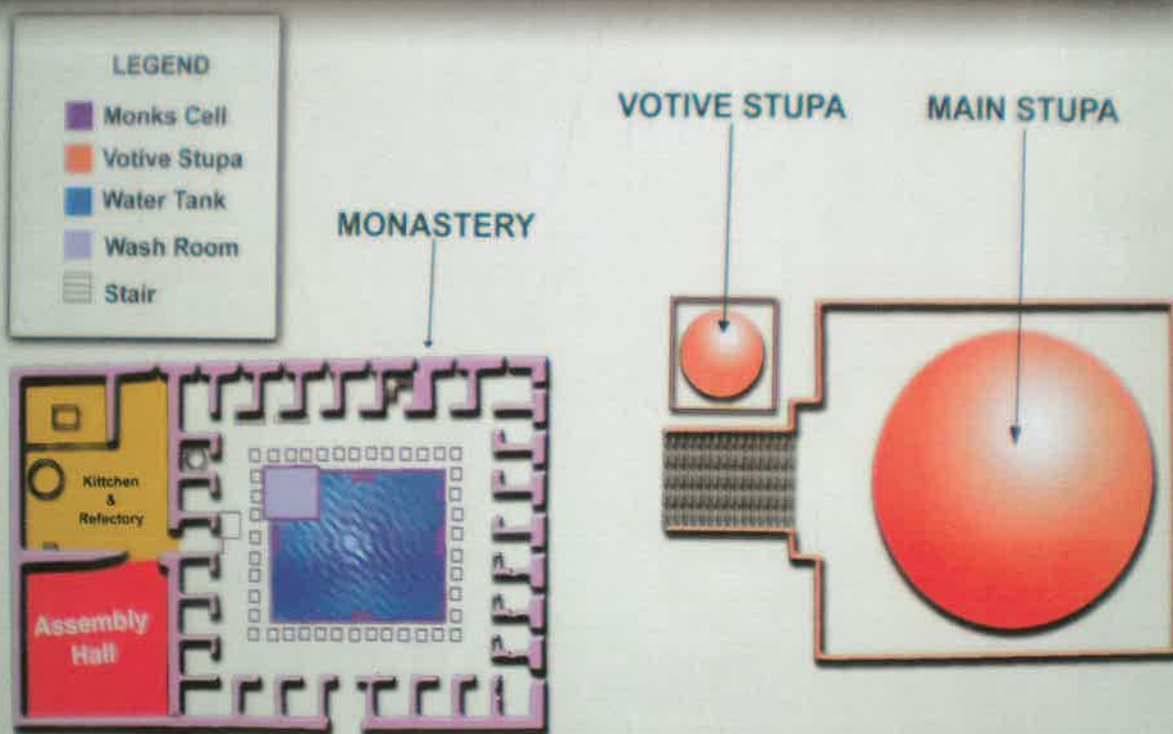




VIII. MOHRA MORADU MONASTERY (3rd to 5th centuries AD):

Mohra Moradu is a Buddhist complex, consisting of two parts: in the west there is a stupa while in the east is situated a monastery. The latter is magnanimously located between two hill spurs. The monastery looks very much like the one at Jaulian and must have had the usual around 27 cells, surrounding a rectangular court with a bathroom, an assembly hall, a well for water, a store-room, a kitchen, a refectory and a latrine.. The stupa in the museum is the replica of the original which can be viewed at this site.

PLAN OF MOHRA MURADU STUPA & MONASTERY





A view of Main Stupa



A partial view of Monastic Establishment





Main Stupa with Votive Stupa in foreground, Mohra Moradu



Buddha figures around Stupa



Stupa in cell No. 9

IX. COMPLEX OF MONUMENTS AT GIRI:

Some 5 kilometres east south-east of the Second City of Sirkap are located in the naturally defended, additionally provided with fortifications, at place of Giri some Buddhist remains uncovered from under the earth during the first half of the twentieth century archaeological operations in Taxila region. Here also lies sweet-water spring, the probable source of water for the people of the castle and the nearby monastic establishment. The Buddhists could not have chosen a better place for its serene and secluded location, and a calm atmosphere for the monastery and a naturally ideal spot for the fortress.

There is clear evidence pointing towards the fort's having been inhabited for considerable length of time. This conjecture is based on the fact that the excavators found here the remains of dwellings and other structures lying scattered over almost the whole area of the fort. However, a comparatively scant quantity of the pottery shreds was found from the fortress. On the basis of this fact the archaeologists infer that this well-defended place was meant only to be used in an event of emergency by the Buddhist establishments of the scores of monasteries lying scattered along the foot of Margala and the Vale of Taxila. 'In the fifth century A.D., from which this stronghold appears to date, the whole body of monks in the environs of Taxila must have run into many thousands, and even assuming that they could have taken refuge inside the city, they may have had strong reasons for preferring to defend themselves in a fastness such as that of Giri, which might well escape the full force of an invasion and from which, if necessary, they could beat a retreat into the higher hills of the Murree range. Towards the close of the fifth century the Buddhists especially were hard put to it to escape the fury of the White Huns, who were then overrunning the north-west, and this stronghold of Giri affords interesting evidence of the imminent dangers to which the monks were then exposed'.



X. SIRSUKH

In c. 80 AD, the Yuezhi nomads or Kushans took over the Taxila region. Abandoning the Second city of Taxila Sirkap they relocated their headquarters in a newly founded fortified city what is known as Sirsukh even further to the north. There were many sanctuaries and monasteries in the neighbourhood of the new town. This new city, with its pronounced fortifications and other defence elements, must have looked like a large military base well defended against outside invasions. The wall is some 5 kilometres long and no less than 6 metres thick. It was during the life of this town that Taxila began to be visited by Buddhist pilgrims from countries as far away as Central Asia and China.

In addition to the sites mentioned above the whole valley is replete with stupas and other religious establishments like that of Kunala, Bhamala, Bhallar, Badalpur, etc. and many others still not scientifically probed.





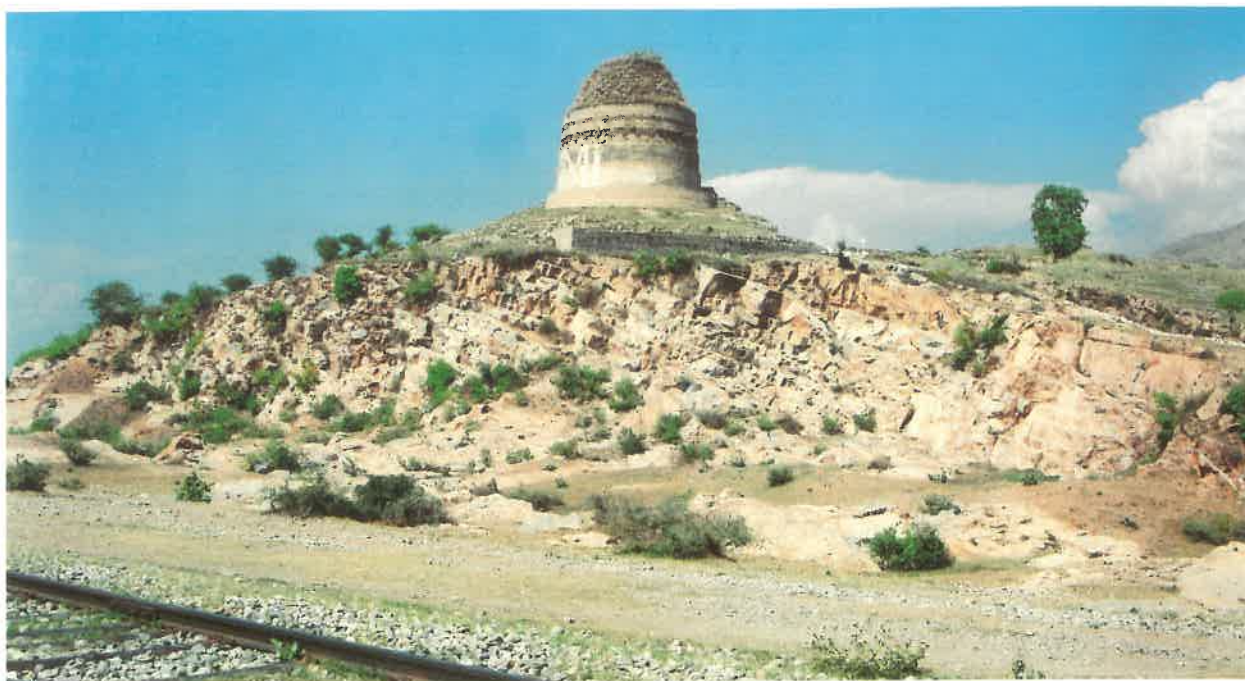
Views of Fortification Wall, Sirsukh





XI. MISCELLANEOUS

In addition to the sites mentioned above the whole valley is replete with stupas and other religious establishments like that of Kunala, Bhamala, Bhallar, Badalpur, etc. and many others still not scientifically probed.



Bhallar Tope



Bhamala Stupa

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Lord Buddha

Buddha, the Enlightened One, was born in 563 BC. He was the son of the Sakya king of Kapilvastu, Siddhodhana and his queen Mahamaya. His private name was Siddhartha (desire accomplished). In later life he was known also as Sakyamuni (Sage of the Sakyas). His commonly known name, Gautama Buddha, is a combination of the family name Gautama (derived from one of the ancient families of Rishis or seers of Vedic times) and the appellation Buddha. In addition to these he is also known by the names of Bodhisattva (Buddha in the making), Tathagata (the predestined one) and Maitreya (the future Buddha).

The story of his life begins with an account of a dream that his mother, Queen Mahamaya, had before his birth: A beautiful white elephant entered her womb through her side. The Hindu priests interpreted the dream predicting the birth of a son who would become either a monarch of the whole universe or have fame as a Buddha. Ten lunar months after the conception, the queen desired to go to her parents in Devadaha. It was on the way when in the grove of Sal trees known as Lumbini - at the foot of Mount Palpa in the Himalayan ranges within Nepal - that he was born.

It is clear from the available evidence that Buddha apparently showed an early inclination to meditation and reflection. This obviously displeased his father who wanted him to be a warrior and ruler rather than a philosopher and a religious leader. To dispel his attraction to spiritual life the young prince was brought up in great luxury of the palace. In accordance with the wishes of his father the Prince married his cousin, a princess named Yasodhara, when both were 16. Although he actively participated in all the worldly activities of the royal life, his thoughts remained elsewhere, as he witnessed the miseries of life outside the palace. This inevitably led him to leave home and begin to wander in search of Enlightenment.

At the age of 29, in his wanderings he came across a monk whom he found to be very serene and calm, whereupon he decided to renounce all worldly power, wealth and family and lead this mendicant's life in quest for truth. This decision, known in Buddhism as the Great Renunciation, is celebrated by Buddhists as a turning point not only in the Master's life but also in the history of the world.

In his wanderings over the northern India, Buddha first investigated into the doctrine of Hinduism but soon got disillusioned as the Hindu caste system was simply repelling and Hindu asceticism utterly futile. He continued his wanderings in search of truth. In about 528 BC while meditating under a Bo tree near Gaya (now Budh-Gaya) in the Indian State of Bihar, he experienced the Great Enlightenment, or *Mahagayan*. It revealed to him the way of salvation to all the sufferings. Shortly afterwards, he delivered his first sermon in the Deer Park in Varanasi. The text of this sermon is preserved, and it is believed to contain the gist of Buddhism.

At the age of 80 Buddha died (*Mahaparinirvana*) in Kusinagara in Nepal. His remains were cremated with royal honour and divided into eight parts to be deposited into the Stupas erected in the eight different parts of the South Asia Subcontinent.

His Teachings

Lord Buddha preached: "We will have to find out the cause of sorrow and the way to escape from it. The desire for sensual enjoyment and clinging to earthly life is the cause of sorrow. If we can eradicate desire, all sorrows and pains will come to an end. We will enjoy Nirvana or eternal peace. Those who follow the Noble Eightfold Path strictly, viz., right opinion, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right employment, right exertion, right thought and right self-concentration will be free from sorrow. This indeed, O mendicants, is that middle course which the Tathagata has thoroughly comprehended, which produces insight, which produces knowledge, which leads to calmness or serenity, to supernatural knowledge, to perfect Buddha-hood, to Nirvana.

"This again, indeed, O mendicants, is the noble truth of suffering. Birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, association with unloved objects is painful, separation from loved objects is painful, the desire which one does not obtain, this is too painful - in short, the five elements of attachment to existence are painful. The five elements of attachment to earthly existence are form, sensation, perception, components and consciousness.

This again, indeed, O mendicants, is the truth of the cause of suffering. It is that thirst which leads to renewed existence, connected with joy and passion, finding joy here and there, namely, thirst for sensual pleasure, and the instinctive thirst for existence. This again, indeed, O mendicants, is the noble truth of cessation of suffering, which is the cessation and total absence of desire for that very thirst, its abandonment, surrender, release from it and non-attachment to it. This again, indeed, O mendicants, is the noble truth of the course which leads to the cessation of suffering. This is verily the Noble Eightfold Path, viz. right opinion, etc."

In the following centuries Buddhism spread to Gandhara though Buddha had never visited this region in his lifetime.

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