

**ANCIENT ARCHITECTURAL
TRADITIONS OF THE SWAT VALLEY:
A STUDY BASED ON BUDDHIST RELIEF CARVINGS**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the research work presented in this thesis entitled '**Ancient Architectural Traditions of the Swāt Valley: A Study Based on Buddhist Relief Carvings**' was conducted by Ms. Aisha Bibi under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Shah and co-supervised by Dr. Luca Maria Olivieri.

No part of this thesis has been submitted anywhere else for any other degree. This thesis is submitted to the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of Archaeology.

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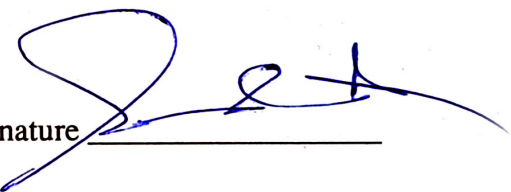
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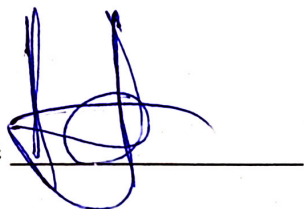
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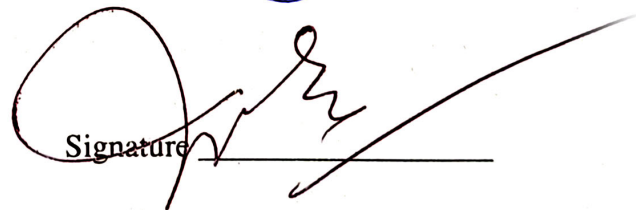
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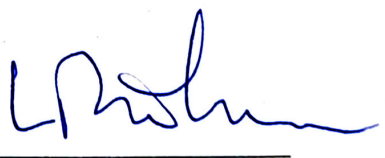
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*Dedicated to my
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Abstract

The Swat Valley (ancient Uḍḍiyāna) is widely recognized for its remarkable Buddhist artistic and architectural heritage, with its landscape dotted by numerous stūpas, monasteries and vihāras. Once grand and splendid, these Buddhist monuments were richly decorated with intricate relief carvings and statues. While considerable scholarly attention has been given to the stylistic and iconographic aspects of the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna, the architectural imagery embedded within these Buddhist relief panels has remained relatively overlooked. This study aims to address this lacuna through a comprehensive analysis of the representation of both sacred and secular architectural forms in the sculptural art of the Swat Valley.

Through this research, we explore how these depictions of architecture within Buddhist reliefs reflect the wider socio-cultural, religious and economic fabric of ancient Swat. We also examine the artistic methods and visual language used to depict a wide range of architectural forms, from city gates, watch towers and palace interiors to stūpas, shrines, tombs/graves and supportive structures. Particular attention is paid to the cross-cultural exchanges e.g., Hellenistic, Roman, Persian, Central Asian and Indian, that shaped and enriched local architectural expressions.

The study also aims to illuminate the connections between visual art and historical architecture by engaging with textual and epigraphic sources, while also tracing how decorative architectural motifs evolved and persisted into later traditions. Environmental and cultural contexts are also explored through the lens of architectural representation. A significant outcome of this research is the creation of a comprehensive catalogue of Buddhist relief carvings depicting architectural forms, providing a valuable resource for further comparative studies in South Asian Buddhist art and architectural history.

By bringing together visual analysis, archaeological data and textual evidence, this research contributes to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley and its significance within the broader Buddhist cultural world.

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List of Abbreviations

Acc. no.	Accession number
ACT	Archaeology, Community, Tourism (Field School Project)
A.S.I	Archaeological Survey of India
A.S.I.F.C	Archaeological Survey of India Frontier Circle
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
DMC	Dir Museum Chakdara
DoAM	Department of Archaeology and Museum, Government of Pakistan
DoAM, KP	Directorate of Archaeology and Museum, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Eds.	Editors
Edn.	Edition
f.n.	Footnote
Fig.	Figure
IAM	Italian Archaeological Mission
IsIAO	Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente
IsMEO	Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
MASI	Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India
Pl. no.	Plate number
PM	Peshawar Museum
Ref. no.	Reference number
SM	Swat Museum
SSAQM	Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar
SRO	Sub-Regional Office, Peshawar

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Architecture stands as a profound testament to human intellectual evolution, bridging the gap between the practical needs of society and its sky-high philosophical and cultural ideals. As a discipline that combines technical skill, aesthetic sensibility, and cultural expression, architecture reflects the intellectual growth of civilizations by epitomizing their ideas, innovations and worldviews in physical form.

From the primitive shelters of prehistoric people to the majestic structures of modern cities, architecture serves as a mirror of human development. In ancient times, architecture was primarily driven by functional needs, for example, protection from the harsh weather, defence from enemies and bestiary, and the provision of communal spaces. However, even these basic structures reveal the creativity of humans in manipulating natural resources and adapting to their environments. Over time, architecture evolved from simple shelters to monumental buildings that reflected the intellectual, spiritual and artistic aspirations of societies.

As societies advanced, architecture became a critical medium of expressing philosophical, religious and political ideologies. For example, the pyramids of Egypt are not only monumental accomplishments of engineering but also represent a sophisticated understanding of astronomy, geometry and metaphysical beliefs about the life after death. Similarly, the Parthenon in ancient Greece reflects the intellectual values of symmetry, proportion and the pursuit of perfection central to Greek thought. The Gothic cathedrals of mediaeval Europe, with their imposing height and intricate stained-glass windows, embody the religious zeal and the desire to reach towards the divine, using architecture to communicate theological ideas.

Through its materiality, architecture provides a permanent record of the intellectual trajectory of human societies. Ruins of ancient cities, religious edifices, palaces and military buildings serve as material evidence of the intellectual accomplishments of past cultures. The study of architectural remains provides valuable understanding of technological advancements, social hierarchies, economic

systems and philosophical ideas that shaped human civilizations. For instance, the Buddhist architecture in the Indian subcontinent is tangible evidence of the golden age of Buddhism, reflecting not only the religious and spiritual essence of the time but also the cultural, social and economic vitality of the regions it thrived in.

One such region was the valley of Swat (or ancient Uḍḍiyāna), famous for its rich Buddhist legacy in art and architecture. Today, the valley is dotted with remarkable stūpas, monasteries and vihāras, all once beautifully adorned with reliefs and portrait sculptures, which later became known as the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley. Through extensive excavations by indigenous and foreign organizations, a wealth of Buddhist sculptures has been uncovered, revealing the valley's rich cultural history.

The Buddhist art of the Swat Valley was primarily aimed to propagate the Buddhist faith. The subject matter comprised of significant episodes from the life of Gautama Buddha, beginning with his previous life stories (*jātakas*) and continuing through to the cremation of his body and the veneration of his bodily relics. While the art of Uḍḍiyāna exhibits local characteristics, it also draws upon Hellenistic, Roman, Persian, Central Asian and Indian cultures.

The material culture portrayed in the relief carvings offers an insightful reflection of the religious, social, political, cultural and economic life of the people of the valley. The sculptural reliefs also exhibit symbolic imagery, divinities, and a wide range of both sacred and secular architectural elements within various narrative contexts. Notable features of secular architecture include city walls, gateways, towers, railings, huts, palaces, a variety of pillars and pilasters, diverse forms of arches and gables, royal chambers, court halls, balconies, doors, doorjambs, etc. On the other hand, the representation of religious architecture prominently features stūpas, vihāras, temples, image shrines, relic shrines and other sacred structures. This artistic portrayal provides a comprehensive understanding of the architectural tendencies and cultural aesthetics of the people of that era.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Many scholars have extensively written about various aspects of the Buddhist art of Uḍḍiyyāna and Gandhāra, including its stylistic elements, cultural significance, and historical context. Many have also highlighted the representation of structural forms within the relief panels, noting their importance in reflecting the art and life of the time. However, despite considerable scholarly attention, an in-depth study focusing specifically on the architectural representations in the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley is still lacking. While previous scholarship has touched upon the subject, there has yet to be a thorough investigation that meticulously examines the architectural details portrayed in the reliefs. Such a study would be essential for understanding not only the artistic techniques but also the broader socio-cultural and religious contexts that shaped architectural styles during the heydays of Buddhism in the Swat Valley.

Therefore, the present research aims to thoroughly investigate the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley by analysing architectural elements depicted in the Buddhist relief panels, alongside existing ruins and monuments. By combining these visual and physical sources, the study will reconstruct the architectural landscape of the valley, offering new perspectives on how buildings and structures were designed and used in Buddhist culture. This research will not only fill a significant gap in study of the cultural heritage of the Swat Valley but will also contribute a valuable chapter to the broader knowledge of Buddhist art and architecture in the region.

1.2 Research questions

While scholars have acknowledged architectural depictions in the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyyāna, no comprehensive study has yet been conducted on the architectural elements in the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley. Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap by conducting an in-depth analysis of the structural representations in stone reliefs, scientifically excavated from various Buddhist sites in the valley. Moreover, the study set out to address the following key research questions:

1. What were the key architectural traditions of the ancient Swat Valley?
2. Secular architecture is richly depicted in relief panels, yet few physical remains of these structures survive. What could explain this scarcity?
3. Is there evidence of foreign influence on the Buddhist architecture of the Swat Valley?

1.3 Aims and objectives

Main purpose of the current research is to examine the secular and sacred architecture depicted in the Buddhist relief panels from the Swat Valley, aiming to reveal their historical, cultural and architectural significance.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the contribution of textual records and epigraphic evidence in reconstructing architectural traditions of the Buddhist period in the Swat Valley, providing a clearer understanding of its historical context and development.
2. To explore the enduring legacy of architectural elements and decorative motifs, tracing their impact on the built heritage of later periods. This will include an analysis of how these elements were adapted or transformed into subsequent architectural traditions.
3. To examine the environmental, cultural, religious and economic conditions of the Swat Valley during the Buddhist period through a detailed study of the types and functions of buildings depicted in the reliefs.
4. To compile a comprehensive catalogue of all Buddhist carvings that represent secular and cultic monuments. This catalogue will serve as a valuable resource for further scholarly investigation, aiding in the comparative study of Buddhist art and architecture in South Asia.

Through these objectives, the research aspires to deepen our understanding of the architectural heritage of the Swat Valley and its broader cultural and historical implications.

1.4 Research methodology

The current research is primarily based on the Buddhist relief panels in stone exhibiting architectural heritage of the Swat Valley. These relief panels are scientifically excavated from various Buddhist sites all over the valley now housed in various museums within the country and abroad. Initially, permission was obtained from the authorities of the Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar (hereafter University Museum) to access the Buddhist relief panels on display and in the reserve collection. Permission was also sought from the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (hereafter DoAM, KP) to document and photograph the Buddhist relief panels lying in the collection of the Sub-Regional Office (SRO), the Peshawar, Dir and Swat Museums. Moreover, several museums were accessed online, and the desired sculptures were identified in their photographic collections. The British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Museum of Oriental Art (Rome) and the online collection of the Libraries of the University of Wisconsin-Madison were visited virtually. With the museums' generous permission, the photographs and descriptive details of such sculptures were incorporated into this research. We focussed on panels that originate from the Swat valley and bear some architectural representation. Frequent visits to the above-mentioned museums in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, enabled the present scholar to see, inspect and identify the desired relief panels carved with architectural peculiarities.

In the next stage, the corpus of the selected relief panels was thoroughly documented by taking high resolution photographs and measurement, writing careful description giving details of their provenance, source of acquisition and the rock used. The desired specimens were classified into different groups and sub-groups according to their nature and style. For example, the data were classified into four major groups: sacred architecture, secular buildings, funerary monuments and architectural elements. Sacred monuments include stūpas, vihāras and temples etc. Secular buildings were classified into huts, military buildings, palaces, stables and city gates. Balconies, arches, brackets, pillars and pilasters alongside a variety of decorative motifs were placed in the category of architectural elements. We

processed the data thoroughly in the light of the available historical accounts wherein for nomenclature and descriptive sequence of both monuments and Gandhāran figurative panels, we followed the handbook titled '*Repertory of Terms for Cataloguing Gandharan Sculptures*' by D. Faccenna and A. Filigenzi (Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007, 2014).

For proper identification of various architectural elements, scholars of the concerned field were consulted. The entire data were carefully analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative findings were formulated in tables, charts and other related illustrations, while qualitative and descriptive part was supplemented by photographs and their sketches where needed. Finally, the corpus of carvings at our disposal was organized and compiled into a comprehensive catalogue to give a complete picture of ancient built heritage of the Swat Valley. This catalogue serves as a structured and detailed record of sculptures, enhancing the accessibility and scholarly value of the present research.

1.5 Chapter-wise summary

The present dissertation is divided into eight chapters to reconstruct the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley. The first chapter serves as a gateway to the entire thesis, providing a clear overview and understanding of this research including research questions, aims and objectives in addition to chapter-wise structure of the study. The second chapter addresses the historical geography of the Swat Valley. It puts forward new research regarding the origin of the term Uḍḍiyāna and examines its geographical boundaries. Additionally, the chapter provides an overview of the cultural and historical perspective of the Valley from pre and protohistoric times, continued up to different dynasties that ruled the region, detailing their reigns and contributions to the development of Buddhism and Buddhist art in the Swat Valley. This section aims to shed light on how these historical factors shaped the cultural and artistic development of the area.

Chapter three summarises the foundational studies and early research relevant to the present work. This section chronicles the history of archaeological research in the Swat Valley, starting from the early nineteenth century CE. It covers the

contributions of various scholars, art historians and even military officers who have conducted research in this area. It also details the archaeological explorations and excavations carried out by various organizations, including the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan, the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan (DoAM), the DoAM (KP) and the University of Peshawar. It also discusses literary sources and the latest investigations conducted by scholars of the field. It also contains an exhaustive list of the available literary sources related to our research.

Chapter four contains textual and epigraphic sources that illuminate the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley. These include historical accounts, ancient and mediaeval travelogues, sacred texts, and dedicatory inscriptions related to religious buildings. These sources offer a rich understanding of the architectural heritage of the Swat Valley, revealing details about the devotion and the construction of sacred monuments.

Chapter five deals with classification and documentation of architectural data as gleaned from bas-reliefs. The data obtained from various collections were sifted and categorized based on their subject matter and architectural representation. Each panel was documented and properly described. In addition, relevant bibliographic references and comparative data are provided for additional context. The inclusion of these references ensures in-depth analysis and comparison with similar works or findings.

Chapter six provides a comprehensive analysis of the Buddhist structural remains in the Swat Valley and their artistic representation in relief panels. By critically examining the physical remains of ancient Buddhist architecture, such as stūpas, monasteries, shrines and other significant cultic monuments, we have identified how these were depicted in various forms of artistic expression, particularly in relief panels. In addition to sacred architecture, the relief panels also visually document secular buildings and aspects of daily Buddhist activities within the region.

Based on the discussions from the previous sections, chapter seven presents a logical and structured discourse, enabling in-depth analysis of Buddhist architectural depictions and their broader cultural and historical significance. The study also includes an analysis of foreign elements reflected in the architectural depictions of the reliefs. This comparative analysis provides new perspectives on the continuity and evolution of architectural traditions in the region.

In chapter eight, an attempt has been made to conclude and summarise key findings of the present research, emphasizing integration of architecture and art to provide a cohesive understanding of the region's Buddhist legacy. This chapter explores the intricate relationship between Buddhist architectural remains in the Swat Valley and their artistic representation in relief panels. By comparing the architectural depictions in the reliefs with surviving ruins has provided valuable insight into the region's religious and secular architecture. The analysis has highlighted how artistic forms mirrored architectural realities, providing a visual narrative of Buddhist practices and the cultural significance of these sites.

Furthermore, comparison of ancient Buddhist structures with those of subsequent periods has revealed a continuity, yet transformation, in architectural traditions. This evolution reflects broader historical, cultural, and religious influences on the region over centuries. The findings of this study deepen our understanding of the Buddhist architectural and artistic traditions of the Swat Valley.

An exhaustive list of references containing books, survey and excavation reports, dictionaries, catalogues and journals consulted during our study is added in the end followed by an index of significant terms.

Finally, a photographic catalogue, precisely labelled with brief description of all relief panels consulted during this research, has been compiled and provided after the Index. This catalogue serves as a visual documentation of the panels studied, supporting the research findings with clear and detailed imagery.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE SWAT VALLEY

2.1 Geographical location of the Swat Valley

The Swat Valley, located in the northern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (former North-West Frontier) Province of Pakistan, is renowned for its awe-inspiring natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Swat is one of the nine districts of the present Malakand Division, lying between 34°-31'-55" and 35°-53'-40" north latitudes and 70° -47'-15" and 73° east longitudes within the foothills of the Hindu Kush Mountain range. It lies at an elevation of 2,000 feet above sea level at the confluence of the Swat and Panjkora rivers, and gradually rising to 15,000-22,000 feet towards the north. The valley covers an area of about 5,337 square kilometres (Ali and Khan 1991; Rome 2005: 19; 2008: 14-16). Enclosed by towering offshoots of the Himalayas, the mountainous valley of Swat is bordered by Chitral in the northwest and Gilgit-Baltistan region to the north. The district of Dir lies to the west, while the mountains of Kohistan form its eastern boundary, separating it from the Indus River. The Malakand range separates it from the vale of Peshawar (ancient Gandhāra) in the south (see Fig. 1; Swati 1997a and b; *District Profile Swat* 2015: 6). According to the Census Report 2017, the district of Swat has a total population of 2,309,570, with a population density of 433 persons per square kilometre. Saidu Sharif is the district headquarters while Mingora is a commercial hub of the valley. The river Swat, which originates from the confluence of Ushu and Gabral rivers in Kalam, flows through the valley, providing a vital source of water.

Swat is divided into two main regions, Swat Kohistan and Swat proper. The mountainous region on the upper banks of the Swat River and its tributaries as far south as Ain village near Madyan marks Swat Kohistan. Swat proper is further divided into two parts, i.e., Bar (Upper) and Kūz (Lower) Swat. Bar Swat starts from the village of Ain and extends down to Landakay, while Kūz Swat stretches from Landakay to Kalangai/Qalungai, a few kilometres above the confluence of the Swat and Panjkora rivers (Rome 2005; 2008: 19, 15). During the British rule, the sub-valley of Adinzai in the southwest was annexed into Dir district, and Thana

and Ranizai territories in the south were included in the Malakand Agency (Stein 1930: 2; Swati 1997a).

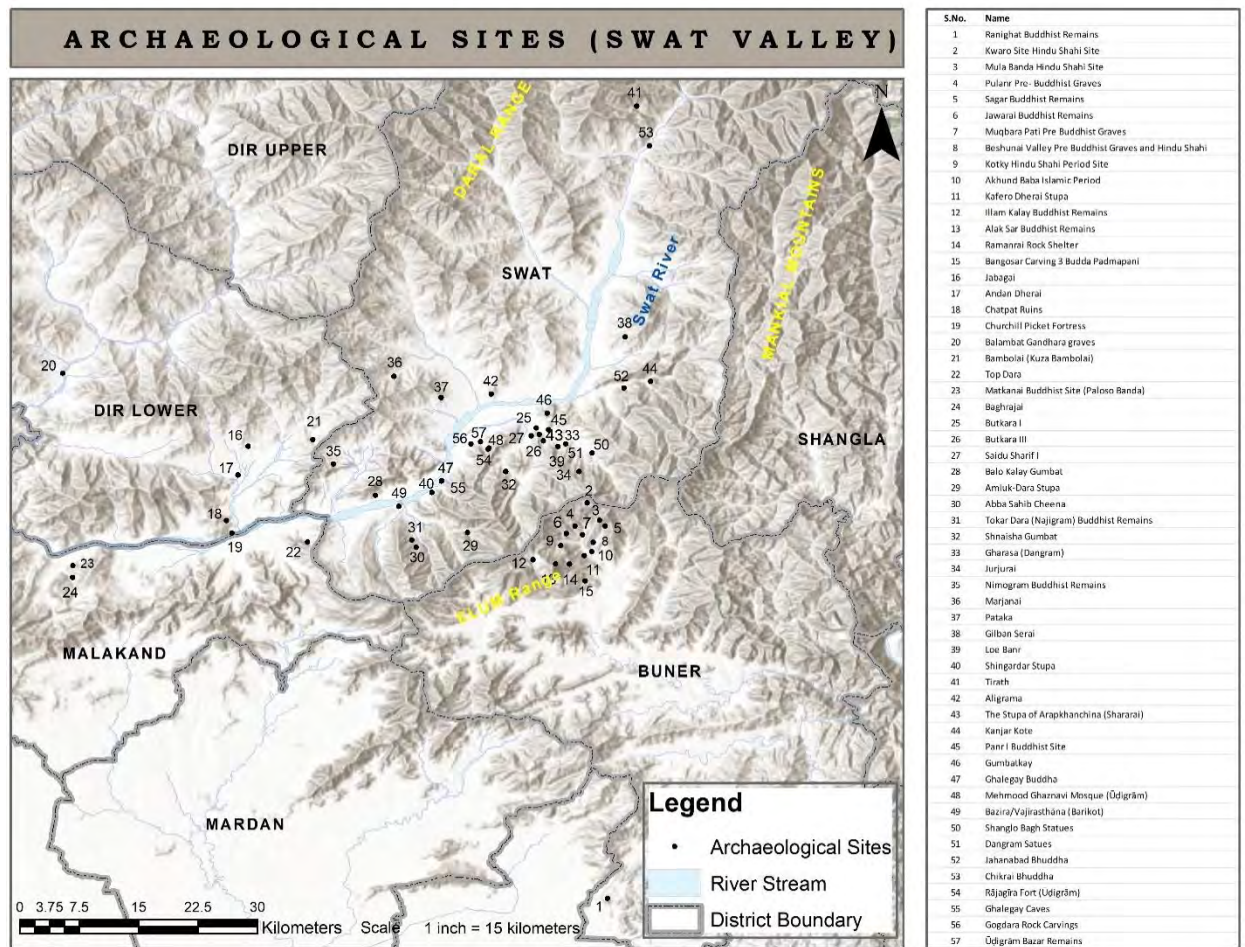


Fig. 1. Map showing archaeological heritage in and around the Swat Valley (Map courtesy: Muhammad Ali Asghar, GIS, HUB, P & D Department).

The Swat Valley has been historically significant due to its strategic location on ancient trade routes that connected South Asia, Central Asia and China. The region once formed part of ancient Gandhāra thus served as a major centre of Buddhist civilization. The valley's geographical location makes it a natural gateway between Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. It has historically been a corridor for invasions, migrations and trade, making it strategically valuable for controlling movements between these regions (also see Rahim and Viaro 2002).

2.2 Nomenclature

There are different theories about the etymology of the name ‘Swat’. It is generally attributed to the river of the same name that flows amidst the Swat Valley. References to the River Swat can be found in various ancient Sanskrit and classical sources. The *Ṛgveda* (c. 1500-1000 BCE) is believed to be the earliest literary source of the Indo-Aryans that mentions ‘*Subhāvastu*’ or ‘*Suvāstu*’ meaning ‘fair dwellings’ or ‘good houses’ (Monier-Williams 1963: 1233). This suggests that the surrounding area was already inhabited by the Indo-Aryans as early as the second half of the second millennium BCE (Agrawala 1953: 42, 69; Majumdar 1957, I: 243, Tucci 1977: 39; Rome 2008: 13-14) Pāṇini, the famous Sanskrit grammarian, has also referred to the river by the name, ‘*Suvāstu*.’ He mentioned Uḍḍiyāna as the upper region of Gandhāra, known for its blankets, *pāṇḍu-kambala*, which were used in war chariots and royal thrones (Agrawala 1953: 42; cf. Tucci 1958: 281).

The *Śvetayāvari* river is also mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*, which, according to Abinas Chandra Das, might be the Śveti or the Swat River (Das 1927, I: 72; Rome 2008: 13-14). The word *śveta* in Sanskrit means ‘white’ or ‘pure’ signifying clean and lucid water of the River Swat (Monier-Williams 1963: 1107). Another opinion says that due to abundant water resources, the valley often appeared marshy and shiny, giving the landscape a whitish appearance. This visual characteristic led to the area being called as ‘*Suadat*,’ a term that implies a connection to this bright, reflective quality. Over time, the name evolved from ‘*Suadat*’ to ‘Swat’ (Swati 1984: 64; Rome 2008: 13-14).

Another oral tradition (Swati 1984) says that the Swat Valley was once densely forested and rich with fertile black soil. When Muslim invaders arrived here, they called this land as ‘*Aswad*,’ an Arabic word, which means black. Over time, this name evolved into ‘*Sawad*’. During the Mughal period, historians and even Babur himself referred to Swat as ‘*Sawad*,’ a name that eventually evolved into ‘Swat’ (Beveridge 1922, I: 207, 399-400, 410-12). However, near contemporary writers and poets like Khushal Khan Khattak consistently referred to the region as ‘Swat’ rather than ‘Sawad’ (Rome 2008; 2014: 109-38).

Abdul Halim Asar puts forward another theory suggesting that the word ‘Swat’ is derived from two components: ‘Su’ means ‘sun’, pronounced in the ancient Syriac way, and ‘At,’ meaning ‘earth’. Thus, the name ‘Suat’ translates to ‘the land attributed to the sun.’ This interpretation is linked to the ancient worship of the Sun god in the region or the valley’s open, sunlit landscape. (Asar n.d. 9-28; Rome 2008: 14). In Hindu mythology, Sūrya is both the Sun and the Sun god that once held a prominent place in the Hindu pantheon, and his worship was widespread across the Indian subcontinent (Bhattacharji 2016). Given the importance of the sun in agricultural societies, it is plausible that the inhabitants of the Swat Valley, reliant on the sun for their crops and daily life, would revere the Sun god.

The presence of the Sun god in the religious practices of the Swat Valley could also be linked to the broader Vedic traditions that spread throughout the region during ancient times. While the direct archaeological or textual evidence of Sūrya worship specifically in the Swat Valley may be scanty, the influence of Vedic rituals and the reverence for solar deities in nearby regions make it a credible assertion that the Sun god was venerated in the valley (for the iconography and cult of Sūrya, see Shah 2008, 2009, 2010).

We find sufficient topographical information about Swat and ancient Uḍḍiyāna in the accounts of Greek historians (M’Crindle 1896: 3-53). They have mentioned Swat with the name *Soastenē* or *suastenē*, a name derived from the river Swat (Tucci 1977; Olivieri 1996). Arrian, a Greek historian, named the river Swat as *Sóastos*, Ptolemy as *Sovastos*, while Curtius wrote it as *Khoaspes/Choaspes* (Beal 2004: 120, f.n. 4, 126, f.n. 24; Tucci 1977; Stein 1972: 47-48). The *Choaspes* of Curtius, could be interpreted as a Persian form of *Hu-aspa* ‘good horse’ or with the Vedic name *Subhāvastu* abbreviated to *Suvāstu* ‘fair abodes.’ The term *Souastenē* is mentioned by Ptolemy for the Swat region (Wilson 1860; Tucci 1977).

It is significant to mention here that Swat was one of the numerous valleys of ancient Uḍḍiyāna. The valley served as a major centre for Buddhist religious activities during the rule of the Mauryans and the Kuṣāṇa. As a holy centre of Buddhism, the valley attracted Chinese and Korean Buddhist monks who visited it at various times to seek religious scriptures and pay homage to the holy shrines.

They have referred to the Swat Valley and its environs with ample details in their travelogues. In this context, Faxian visited the region in the fifth century CE and referred to Uḍḍiyāna as ‘*Ou-chang*’ and ‘*Ouchang*.’ He recorded 500 *saṅghārāmas* (or monasteries), with a good number of monks, practising Hīnayāna Buddhism. Faxian also mentioned the kingdom of *Su-ho-to*, which, according to Beal, is synonymous with the Swat Valley, a region that was historically part of ancient Uḍḍiyāna (Beal 1869: 26-28). He was followed by another Chinese monk, Song Yun, who travelled to Swat in the 6th century CE and referred to Uḍḍiyāna with the name *Ouchang* or *U-chang* in his account (Beal 1869: 188; 2004: xcix). Xuanzang, who is considered as the most celebrated of all the Chinese monks, made a pilgrimage to this holy land in the seventh century CE. He mentioned River Swat as *Su-po-fa-su-tu* and Uḍḍiyāna under the name, *U-chang-na* and documented 1400 *saṅghārāmas* with approximately 18,000 monks (Beal 1914; 2004: 119-120). Beal opines that Uḍḍiyāna in Prākṛit is Ujjana and it is so called because of its garden like appearance (Beal 2004: 119, f.n. 1).

Apart from Chinese monk-pilgrims, Korean Buddhist monks also travelled to China and India to study Buddhism. During the sixth century CE, two Korean monks came to India to study Buddhism, followed by nine in the seventh century and four in the eighth century. Out of these fifteen monks, ten permanently remained in India, three returned to China, and only two made it back to Korea (then the Silla Kingdom). Among them, only the travelogue of Hyecho (700-780/704-787 CE) has survived, who embarked on his pilgrimage from the Korean Silla Kingdom to India in the eighth century CE. His travel accounts, titled ‘*Wang o cheonchuk gukjeon*,’ translated into English as ‘*Memoirs of a Pilgrimage to the Five Indian Kingdoms*,’ mentioned Swat by the names of *Wuchang* and Uḍḍiyāna (Whitefield 2012: 132).

The land of Swat was also highly valued by Tibetans, who regarded it as the birthplace of Gurū Padmasambhāva, the venerated founder of Tibetan Buddhism (Olivieri 2016a: 20-42). Swat is referred to as ‘*Urgyan*’ or ‘*Orgyan*’ in the Tibetan literature. A Tibetan pilgrim named O rgyan pa who travelled to Swat in the second half of the 13th century (1260-1283). He has also mentioned Uḍḍiyāna in his travel

accounts. Tucci was fortunate enough to recover and translate a significant portion of O rgyan pa's travelogue, with emphasis on the final part of his outbound journey, related to Swat (Tucci 1940: 6; 1958: 279 & 1977: 39). More recently, Olivieri (2017) has proposed a reconstruction of O rgyan pa's itinerary, building on Tucci's earlier work while introducing new elements. This reconstruction strongly supports the idea that O rgyan pa's Uḍḍiyāna was located in what is now North-West part of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. This connection highlights the significant role Swat played in Tibetan Buddhism and underscores the historical and cultural exchange between the two regions.

Recent scholarship has negated Beal's interpretation of the name Uḍḍiyāna (as garden). Abdur Rahman is of the opinion that the land of Swat was predominantly inhabited by a ruling tribe of Gandhāra, known as the Oḍis, and hence the whole valley came to be known as Oḍḍiyāna or Uḍḍiyāna, which means 'land of the Oḍis'. He stretches back the history of the Oḍis back to fourth century BCE when they are first mentioned by Alexander's historians under the name Ora, correctly identified by Stein with Oḍigram/Uḍigrām in Swat (Rahman 2003, 2022; Luczanits 2008: 72-77).

2.3 Historical geography of the Swat Valley

To understand the historical geography of the valley, it is essential to first study its prehistoric and protohistoric periods. By tracing its early human activity and cultural evolution, we can better appreciate the factors that shaped the region's historical landscape, setting the stage for a more detailed exploration of its later history.

2.3.1 The Swat Valley during prehistoric and protohistoric periods

The prehistoric rock-shelter of Ghalegay is located at 14 km south of Mingora city. The site was extensively excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission (IsMEO), which revealed that the cultural sequence of the Swat Valley goes back to the second half of the third millennium BCE and continues down to the Islamic period. As a result of excavations, 24 cultural strata were uncovered, which were further divided into seven distinct periods. Period I, dating from 2970 to 2920 BCE (layers

24-21), is characterized by coarse hand-made pottery alongside stone tools, primarily from the flake industry. Some of the pottery shapes from this period can be linked to common types found at the Chalcolithic sites of Turkmenistan (Stacul 1967, 1969a, 1987).

Period II (layers 19-18) is dated to 2180 BCE, distinguished by finely wheel-turned pottery with no lithic tools. The pottery from this period shows distinct stylistic similarities with the ceramic industry of the Indus Valley Civilization, particularly those of the early Harappan or Kot Dijian fashion (Stacul 1987). This evidence points to the fact that by the third millennium BCE, the Swat Valley had established permanent settlements, practised agriculture, maintained trade links with Indus Valley sites, and developed complex ceramic traditions (Vidale, Michile and Olivieri 2011).

Period III, dated to 1950–1920 BCE, marks a significant cultural shift in the Swat Valley. During this time, fine, wheel-turned pottery disappears, replaced by coarse, hand-made pottery with basket marks and mat impressions at the bases. The lithic industry is characterized by choppers, flakes, and scrapers made from river pebbles (Stacul 1987: 45-49). This period aligns with the Neolithic Phase I of Burzahom in Kashmir (Stacul 1969a) and is evident in structural finds at sites like Butkara-I and Kalako-Dherai (Stacul 1993).

Period IV, dated between 1700 and 1400 BCE, has been identified in various open-air settlements, including Loebanr-III, Kherai in Indus Kohistan, Birkot Ghundai, Kalako Dera, Aligrama, Damkot, and Barama (Stacul 1966a, 1976, 1980, 1993; Stacul and Tusa 1975; Callieri *et al* 2000; Faccenna 1964; 1964-65; Rahman 1968-69). This period shows typological similarities with Phase II at Burzahom in Kashmir (Thapar 1985: 25-38) and is characterized by rapid population growth and advancements in metallurgy, pottery, agriculture, stone tool-making techniques and long-distance trade. Changes in ideology are evident through the presence of various cult objects (Vidale, Micheli and Olivieri 2011).

Period V (1400-900 BCE) can be linked with the early phase of the protohistoric cemeteries in the Swat Valley and the settlement site of Ghalegay. Pottery from this

period is predominantly wheel-turned, with a variety of shapes. Copper is used in the making of metal objects while bone remains are scarce. This period aligns with the graves at Timargarha in Lower Dir and the pottery from the lowest levels at Charsadda. Other sites, such as Loebanr I, Katelai I, Butkara-II, Gogdara-III, Aligrama, and Saidu Sharif, also reflect this period (Dani 1967; Stacul 1966b, 1967, 1969a).

Period VI, dated from eighth to fifth century BCE, corresponds to the middle phase of the protohistoric cemeteries in the Swat Valley. The settlement patterns and burial rituals continue from the previous period. Pottery is finely wheel-turned, grey in colour, and comes in various shapes and designs, with metal objects still primarily made of copper.

Period VII, dated to the fourth century BCE, represents the last phase of the protohistoric cemeteries in the Swat Valley. Pottery from this period is red in colour, very fine, wheel-turned, and often incised. Metal objects include both copper and iron (Stacul 1969a).

2.3.2 The Indo-Aryans in the Swat Valley

The Indo-Aryans, nomadic people from Central Asia, migrated to and settled in the region stretching from Iran to northwest Pakistan during the second half of the second millennium BCE. These pastoral tribes transitioned from their nomadic ways to a more settled, agriculture-based lifestyle in what is now Pakistan (Dani 1992: 395). They settled in ancient Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna, leaving behind evidence of their presence in the form of graveyards or cemeteries (Dani 1978: 43; 1968). These were first excavated by Dani (1967, 1968, 1978, 1992) and later by the Italian archaeologists (Silvi Antonini 1963; Tucci 1963, 1977; Stacul 1966a, 1966b, 1967, 1969a, 1969b, 1975, 1987; Stacul and Tusa 1975). The Italian scholars identified these graveyards as ‘pre-Buddhist,’ while Dani coined a term for these cemeteries as ‘Gandhāra Grave Culture’ and dated them from the second half of the second millennium BCE to the sixth to fourth century BCE. Further research by Chiara Silvi Antonini and Gregory Stacul (1972) led to the identification of these sites as ‘protohistoric graveyards or cemeteries,’ a term

adopted by later scholars and researchers unanimously. Evidence of similar cemeteries has also been reported in northern Punjab and various parts of the present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Kureshy 1977: 154; Mughal 1985; Zahir 2016). Based on typological and stratigraphic evidence and comparisons with other protohistoric cemeteries in Iran and Central Asia, a three-phase sequence was established: the first phase around 1400-1100 BCE (late Bronze Age), the second around 1100-700 BCE (early Iron Age), and the third around 700-400 BCE (middle to late Iron Age) (Stacul 1966a; Dani 1967: 47-48, 1992; Vinogradova 2001; Zahir 2012). During 2011 and 2012, Massimo Vidale and Roberto Micheli conducted excavations at the protohistoric graveyards of Uḍigrām and Gogdara IV in the middle Swat Valley, as part of the ACT-Field School Project (Vidale, Micheli and Olivieri 2016; see also Olivieri 2013). A new series of Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) radiocarbon dates obtained from samples collected at these sites ranged between approximately 1500/1400 to around 800 BCE or slightly later (Vidale and Micheli 2017).

In addition, the evidence about the presence of the Indo-Aryans in the Swat Valley is found in their religious text, the *Ṛgveda*, where ‘Swat’ as a river has been mentioned as ‘*Subhāvastu*’ or ‘*Suvāstu*’, meaning beautiful houses. The mention of Suvāstu in the *Ṛgveda* testifies that the Indo-Aryans had already secured the land around the banks of the Swat River about the middle of second millennium BCE (Majumdar 1957: 243; Allchin and Allchin 1982: 306; Zwalf 1996, I: 15).

2.3.3 The Achaemenids’ influence

Around the mid-sixth century BCE, Gandhāra came under the direct control of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia. By 518 BCE, Darius I had conquered northwest India, incorporating Sindh and parts of the Punjab into the twentieth satrapy of the Persian Empire, where they remained for more than two centuries. The Behistun inscription (519 CE), authored by Darius I (Thompson 1937; Cameron 1950), confirms the inclusion of Makae (Makran), Gadara (Gandhāra), and Thatagu or Sattagudai (corresponding to the present-day Gomal plains) within his vast realm of twenty-three satrapies (Magee *et al.* 2005; Petrie and Magee 2007). These regions were required to pay an annual tribute of 360 talents of gold dust, marking

them as the largest, most populous, and wealthiest of all the satrapies (Jackson 1922: 335). The Indus River then served as the boundary between Persia and ancient India. Friendly relations between India and Persia persisted during the Achaemenid Empire and continued even after its decline, shaping the art and architecture of the Indian subcontinent in the centuries that followed.

The impact of the Achaemenids' rule is evident in the Buddhist art and architecture of the Swat Valley. However, there is no textual or archaeological evidence to confirm whether Swat, or Uḍḍiyāna, also came under their suzerainty (Swati 1997b: 154). The Achaemenid rule in Gandhāra came to an end in 326 BCE with the arrival of Alexander the great.

Alexander's invasion

Alexander's campaigns in Gandhāra and Swat are well documented by the Greek historians. As discussed under the section on nomenclature, the name 'Swat' has been variously mentioned by Greek historians. After conquering Persia and Bactria, in the spring of 327 BCE, Alexander crossed the Hindukush Mountain range to arrive in the Koh-i-Daman region, situated above Kabul. After gaining dominance in this region, he decided to cross over into the Indian subcontinent. In the upper valley of the Kabul River, he divided his army into two groups at the place of Nikaia. One division of the army was dispatched towards *Peukelaotis*, also known as *Pushakalavati* (modern-day Charsadda) and the River Indus. The second division, led by Alexander himself, crossed the Nawa Pass and advanced into Bajaur, Dir and the Swat Valley. The Assakenoi, a strong and mighty tribe from the areas now known as Swat and Buner, fiercely resisted Alexander and his troops. After an intense battle, the Greeks eventually captured the Assakenoi capital, Massaga. Alexander then continued his campaign towards Ora (Uḍigrām) and Bāzīra (Barikot). Following the capture of Bāzīra, the inhabitants took refuge at the rock of 'Aornos', which some scholars identify with Mount Ilam and Mahaban Mountain in Buner (Rome 2013; Moritani and Zahir 2018; Coloru and Olivieri 2019). After crossing the Buner mountains, Alexander and his forces advanced to Swabi and reunited with the other division of Macedonian troops at Hunḍ. From there, they crossed the river Indus in 326 BCE and took control of Taxila without

any resistance. After crossing the Jhelum River, in a brutal confrontation, Alexander's forces overcame Porus, the ruler of Punjab. Throughout his campaign in the Indian subcontinent, Alexander's army succeeded in defeating and subduing various tribes and small kingdoms. He left behind garrisons and satraps to govern the conquered territories. However, after Alexander's death in Babylon in 323 BCE, continuous revolts in the Indian provinces weakened the Greek hold on the region. Alexander's last general in India, Eudemus, departed in 317 BCE, marking the final collapse of the Macedonian effort to establish a Greek empire in India (M'Crindle 1896: 57-180; Smith 1904: 42-107 & 1920: 11-12; Stein 1930: 23-30; Basham 1954: 48-50; Marshall: 1960: 11-13; Kaul Deambi 1985: 10; Olivieri 1996: 45-78).

2.3.4 The Mauryan rule

The Mauryan rule is considered as the most important epoch, which altered the fate of the Indian subcontinent forever. Following the retreat of Alexander's troops in 325 BCE, Chandragupta Maurya of Magadha seized the opportunity to establish a powerful empire in India. The invasion of Alexander, coupled with the significant losses suffered by the tribal chiefdoms in northwest India and the oppressive rule of the Nandas, played a crucial role in establishing the Mauryan rule. Chandragupta Maurya founded this dynasty in 324 or 322 BCE, with its capital at Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna). The tribes of the northwest and the Punjab provided substantial support in his efforts to overthrow the last Nanda ruler, Dhana Nanda, leading to his ascension as the powerful emperor of India.

Chandragupta Maurya studied at the educational institutions of Taxila, where he was mentored by Kauṭilya/Chanakya (also known as Viṣṇugupta), an ancient Indian polymath. He taught Chandragupta the intricacies of statecraft and the art of building an ideal kingdom. Kauṭilya later served as the first prime minister of the Mauryan Empire and authored the *Arthaśāstra*, a Sanskrit treatise on statecraft, political science, economic policy and military strategy. Chandragupta Maurya successfully subdued his enemies, expanding his empire significantly, earning recognition as the first known historic emperor of India. After Chandragupta's death in 298 BCE, his son Bindusara succeeded him (Smith 1904: 108-113; Thapar 2004).

However, the most renowned Mauryan ruler was the son of Bindusara and grandson of Chandragupta, named Aśoka the Great (r. 269-232 BCE), who initially served as the Viceroy of Taxila and Ujjain during his father's reign. He ascended the throne in 269 BCE and fought the brutal Kalinga War in 261-60 BCE (Smith 1904: 137; 1920: 24; Sen 2022: 62-128). The devastation of this war led Aśoka to convert to Buddhism, which then flourished under his royal patronage. Aśoka established stūpas and inscribed the teachings of *dharma* on rocks and pillars throughout his empire. These inscriptions, written in Kharoṣṭhī script, have been discovered at places like Shahbaz Garhi (near Mardan) and Mansehra in Hazara (Smith 1904: 147; 1920: 159-189; Rahman 2018). The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang visited the Swat Valley in the seventh century CE and attributed several stūpas to Aśoka, including one near the Mu-so saṅghārāma, identified with the ruins of Girarai in Buner district (Beal 2004: 124-125; Rienjang 2012: 4). Another stūpa built by Aśoka known as *Lu-hi-ta-kia* (or Rohitaka), believed to be in Hazara village, Tehsil Kabal, Swat (Beal 2004: 127; Deane 1896). The presence of stūpas built during Aśoka's reign suggests the spread of Buddhism and indicates the cultural and religious role the Mauryan Empire played in Swat. The peaceful environment of the Swat Valley provided an ideal setting for the growth of Buddhism, which reached here through Aśoka's missionary efforts or even earlier (Tucci 1958: 281; Swati 1997a: 2).

2.3.5 The Bactrian and Indus-Greeks

After the death of Aśoka, the Mauryan Empire gradually weakened and ultimately collapsed with the assassination of its last ruler, Brihadratha. This event occurred around 187 or 185 BCE when Brihadratha was killed by his general, Pushyamitra Shunga, at Pāṭaliputra. The political situation in northwest India, however, followed a different trajectory due to the emergence of the Bactrian and Indus Greeks at the beginning of the second century BCE. Originating from their stronghold in Bactria, these Greeks extended their influence southwards into the Kabul Valley and south-eastwards into regions such as Gandhāra, Uḍḍiyāna and parts of western Punjab. This expansion took place under the leadership of Demetrius around 190 BCE (Narain 1957: 12-46; Swati 1997b; Rahman 2018).

Due to their Greek origins and their control over these Indian regions, they became known as Bactrian Greeks, Indus-Greeks or Indo-Greeks.

Excavations at Barikot/Bāzīra (in Swat) have revealed the remains of a fortified city that was established during the Indo-Greek period, towards the end of the second century BCE (Olivieri 1996). According to recent research and scientific analysis of the materials uncovered during these excavations, it has been determined that the pre-Indo-Greek layers of the city can be dated with certainty to around the mid-third century BCE, which places them within the Mauryan period. Luca Maria Olivieri opines that the Indo-Greeks fortified an already existing city at Barikot and in the process of constructing city walls, they excavated deeply, destroying much of the earlier layers and exposing ancient structures. The construction of this massive Defensive Wall has been dated to after 150 BCE, based on numismatic evidence and carbon-14 dating results (Olivieri *et al.* 2019).

After Demetrius, a succession of kings and queens ruled over the Indo-Greek territories, Menander being the most notable among them. He ruled from c. 165-130 BCE from Sāgala or Sākala, modern Sialkot in the Punjab province of Pakistan. He was the only Indo-Greek ruler who is said to have adopted and patronized Buddhism. Menander is also highly valued in Buddhist literature, particularly in the *Milindapañha* (the Questions of Menander), a text written in Sanskrit in Gandhāra. His occupation of Gandhāra, which included key cities like Taxila and Puṣkalāvātī, is well documented through numerous coin finds bearing his name. These coins have been discovered in several locations including Shaikhan Dheri near Charsadda, Taxila, Swabi, Mardan, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar. Menander also extended his rule northwards, captured Hazara and the Swat Valley. Two significant hoards of his coins were discovered in Bajaur; the first contained 200 *drachms* in mint condition along with 721 other coins showing signs of limited circulation, while the second hoard included 92 coins of Menander out of 120 examined by Haughton (Narain 1957: 79; also see Lahiri 1965)

In addition to the abundant numismatic evidence, Menander is also mentioned in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription found on a reliquary from Shinkot (Bajaur), indicating his patronage of Buddhism. This inscription, along with the coins and other

archaeological findings, bespeak of Menander's significant role in the spread of Buddhism in the region during his reign (Sircar 1942; Konow 1956; Majumdar 1984; Narain 1957; Rahman 2018).

2.3.6 The rule of Śakas or Indo-Scythians

The Indo-Greeks were succeeded by the Indo-Scythians, also known as the Śakas, who were a nomadic group displaced from Central Asia by another nomadic tribe, the *Yueh-chi* (later came to be known as the Kuṣaṇa). Numismatic and epigraphic evidence suggests that Maues (r. 90/85-60/57 BCE), was the first Indo-Scythian king who invaded India and established the Śaka rule by conquering the Indo-Greek territories. He became the ruler of Taxila around 90 BCE. He is also mentioned as Moga in the Taxila copper plate inscription (Cunningham 1865; Konow 1929). According to Rosenfield (1967: 124-126), the discovery of a large and varied number of coins bearing the name of Maues suggests that he ruled for a long period over regions including the vales of Taxila, Gandhāra and Swat. Most of his coins have been found in Taxila, with a few rare discoveries in the Kabul Valley (Whitehead 1914: 1, 91).

The most significant inscription mentioning king Maues, is the famous Patika copper plate, written in Kharoṣṭhī script, which refers to him as ‘Maharaya Mahamta Moga’ or ‘the great king Moga the great.’ This inscription was discovered in 1862 at Hasan Abdal near Taxila (Cunningham 1863: 139-151; Rosenfield 1967: 124-25; Khan, M.N. 1998).

Recent archaeological research by the Italian archaeologists at Barikot (also known as Birkot-Ghwandai) confirms that Swat was occupied by the Śakas and Parthians during 50 BCE and 80 CE. The cultural phases associated with the Indo-Greeks (Macrophases 3a, 2-4) and the Śaka-Parthians (Macrophase 3b) correspond to the construction and fortification of the Defensive Wall at the Birkot-Ghwandai site (Olivieri *et al.* 2019; also see Olivieri 2020, 2022a).

2.3.7 *The Indo-Parthians' rule*

At the beginning of the first century CE, the Indo-Scythians were supplanted by the Indo-Parthians, who were of Parthian descent. The primary challenge in studying this period is the scarcity of authentic sources. There are very few references to the Indo-Parthians in historical texts, and inscriptions do not explicitly mention them. Additionally, archaeological discoveries have provided limited information, some of which is subject to debate. As a result, coins are the most significant source for piecing together Indo-Parthian history.

Their first and most renowned ruler, Gondophares-I (c. 20-46 CE), established a vast empire that extended from Sīstān to areas beyond the Indus, including Gandhāra. Gondophares is mentioned in a Kharoṣṭhī inscription discovered at Takht-i Bahi near Mardan. The inscription commemorates the inauguration of a sacred structure, specifically a chapel, during the 26th year of King Gondophares' reign, aligned with the so-called year 103 of the Azes I Era, thereof corresponds to 47/46 CE (cf. Baums 2018). The inscription is currently preserved in the Lahore Museum (Smith 1904: 203; Goldman 1978; Kaul Deambi 1985: 11). Gondophares' prominence is further augmented by his mention in a Christian tradition, which claims that he was the ruler of India who received Saint Thomas shortly after the crucifixion, around 29 or 33 CE (Sehrai 1982a: 8; Rahman: 2018).

2.3.8 *The Kuṣaṇa supremacy*

The Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians were followed by the Kuṣaṇa in Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna during the second half of the first century CE. The Kuṣaṇa, originally a nomadic tribe known as the great Yueh-chi or Yuzhieh, lived in the Gansu or Kan-su province of western China, during final stage from 174 to 165 BCE. They were forced to migrate by the Hiung-nu tribe from their homeland and moved to the north of the Taklamakan (Gobi Desert). Subsequently, they displaced another nomadic tribe, the Śakas, who were residing north of the Syr Darya. However, the Yueh-chi were again driven out by a third tribe called the Wu-sun, prompting them to settle in the Oxus Valley, where they established control over Bactria. Over time, they lost their nomadic traits and divided into five sub-tribes. In the first half of the first century CE, Kujula Kadphises, from Kuei-Shwang tribe, consolidated power

by unifying the sub-tribes under one rule. He crossed the Hindukush, annexed the Kabul valley and extended his rule to the regions now part of Pakistan (Smith 1986: 147; Basham 1954: 60; Rahman 2018; Hussain 2020: 3-10).

The Rabatak inscription, discovered in Afghanistan in 1993, translated and published by Joe Cribb and Nicholas Sims-Williams, lists the first four Kuṣāṇa kings in direct father-to-son succession: Kujula Kadphises, Wima Takto (or Soter Megas), Wima Kadphises, and Kaniṣka I (Sims-Williams and Cribb 1995/96; Cribb 1999, 2018). Other notable Kuṣāṇa rulers include Huvishka and Vāsudeva I. Like Aśoka, Kaniṣka I was a great patron of Buddhism (Basham 1954: 60-61; Rahman 2018). He established Purushapura / Kaniṣkapura (Peshawar) and Mathurā as his winter capitals, and Kabul as his summer capital (Puri 1994: 249-250; Ali and Qazi 2008: 8; Rahman 2018). His reign is regarded as golden era for the spread of Buddhism and the development of Buddhist art in Gandhāra and Mathurā (Kaul Deambi 1985: 11). During his rule, numerous Buddhist sacred sites were constructed in the regions now forming part of Pakistan. The renowned Chinese monk Xuanzang, along with Song Yun and Albiruni, mentioned a grand stūpa and monastery in his capital, Peshawar. This stūpa, located at Shah-ji ki-Dheri (lit. King's Mound) outside the Ganj gate, was excavated by D. B. Spooner, where the famous Kaniṣka relic casket was discovered, now preserved in the Peshawar Museum (Spooner 1912).

Copper coins of Wima Taktu (Soter Megas) and Vāsudeva I, found at the Butkara III site, confirm Kuṣāṇa' rule in the Swat Valley (Rahman 1990, 1991; Khan, G. R. 2015: 272, nos. 218, 219; 2006; 2009; Khan, G.R. and Durrani 2018). In addition to Butkara III, numismatic evidence of Kuṣāṇa' rule in the Swat Valley has been uncovered at other sites such as Butkara I and Uḍigrām Bazar (Faccenna and Gullini 1962). On the basis of numismatic evidence and contemporaneous material culture, Olivieri (2014b), argues that Barikot fulfils the key archaeological criteria of a Kuṣāṇa urban centre. These data, together with planned urban architecture and administrative indicators such as inscriptions and seals, confirm that Barikot functioned as a fully integrated Kuṣāṇa city rather than a marginal or short-lived

settlement. Kaniṣka was succeeded by his son Huvishka, and the last great ruler of this dynasty was Vāsudeva I.

2.3.9 *The Kushano-Sāsānians*

The Kuṣaṇa power disintegrated shortly after the reign of Vāsudeva I (c. 194-226 CE). Shapur I, the ruler of the newly established Sāsānian dynasty of Persia, succeeded his father Ardashīr, son of Papak and grandson of Sāsān, who took the throne around 239 or 241 CE (Basham 1954: 61; Rahman 2018). Ardashīr had defeated the Parthians in 226 CE, founding the Sāsānian dynasty on the remnants of the Parthian Empire. Shapur I accompanied his father on all military campaigns. The Kuṣaṇa Empire was subsequently divided among Sāsānian princes, who governed a vast territory that included Bactria, Samarkand, Gandhāra and regions north of the Hindu Kush. These rulers are commonly referred to as Kushano-Sāsānians or Kushan Shahs. Their rule is believed to have lasted from the third century CE to the fourth or fifth century CE (Dani 1992: 139-142; Rahman: 2018). Evidence of Kushano-Sāsānian rule over ancient Gandhāra has been found in inscriptions and coins from Gangudher (or Aziz Dheri) in Swabi. Excavations at this site have uncovered coins from the Scythians, Parthians, Kuṣaṇa, Kushano-Sāsānians, and later Kuṣaṇa (Khan, M.N. and Khan, G.R. 2008; Khan, G.R. 2009; Siddiqui 2014).

2.3.10 *The Kidāras (or Kidarites) and Hūṇas (or Hephthalites)*

In the fifth century CE, the Kushano-Sāsānian rule ended with the invasion of King Kidāra, who also took control of Gandhāra around 357 CE (Rahman 2018). The Greek and Chinese sources have mentioned Kidarites. The Greek historian Priscus (5th century CE), refers to the Kidarites as a subgroup of the Hūṇas, using terms such as 'Hūṇas called Kidarites', 'Kidarite Hūṇas', or simply as 'Hūṇas' or 'Kidarites' (Cribb 2010). The Chinese chronicles from the Wei Dynasty, known as *Wei-shu*, record that the capital of the 'Da Yuezhi' (Great *Yue-chis*) was at 'Polo' (Balkh), and their king, 'Ki-to-lo' (or Kidāra), was under pressure from the 'Ruanruan' (Ruru), a nomadic tribe from Inner Asia. In response, Kidāra raised an army, crossed south of the great mountains, and invaded northern India (Tianzhu).

The same chronicles also record that he occupied Chian-to-lo (Gandhāra) and five nearby kingdoms. Later, Kidāra moved westward under pressure from the Hiung-nus (or Hūṇas) and appointed his son to rule in Polousha (Peshawar). His son's kingdom and successors were referred to as 'Xiao Yuezhi' (Lesser or Little *Yuechis*). Although the *Wei-shu* chronicles do not specify the date of these events, it is believed that by the early to mid-fifth century, the Chinese had heard of a king named Kidāra ruling the former Kuṣāṇa state. Cunningham suggests that Kidāra occupied Gandhāra around 425 CE, as the Brāhmī legends on his coins do not appear before the fifth century CE, and his silver coins seem to be contemporary with Bahrām V, who reigned from c. 420-440 CE (Cribb 2010). Coins from the Kidarite period have been excavated from various Gandhāran sites. Nasim Khan (2010a, III: 4) has documented Kidāra-period copper coins during excavations at Aziz Dheri (Swabi). The discovery of these coins and a sealing near Kashmir Smast (Mardan) aligns with other evidence of Kidāra's rule in Gandhāra and the nearby vales (Khan, M.N. *et al.* 2008: 31-41).

The Hūṇas, or Hephthalites (also spelled Ephthalites), began raids from Central Asia into Gandhāra, eventually taking control of northern India in the late fifth and early sixth centuries CE. Toramāṇa and his son Mihirakula were two well-known Hūṇa rulers in the early sixth century CE. Their copper coins have been found in the Punjab, Gandhāra, and Kashmir (Basham 1954: 67; Zwalf 1996: 16; Rahman 2018). It is generally believed that the Hūṇas plundered and devastated Buddhist sacred sites in Gandhāra. The Chinese pilgrim Song Yun, who visited Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna in 520 CE, referred to these people as Ye-tha (or Ephthalites) (Ingholt 1957: 16-17; Zwalf 1996: 16, 30; Litvinsky 1996; Beal 2004: Intr. xv, xvi). According to the *Rājatarangīnī* of Kalhāṇa, Mihirakula was succeeded by several kings, but inscriptional evidence exists for only one, Narendraditya. The Proto-Śaradā inscription found at Huṇḍ (in Swabi District) mentions Narendraditya, who might have ruled between the sixth and seventh centuries CE (Khan, M.N. 1998-99; Kurbanov 2010: 98-99; Rahman 2018). Recent excavations at Kashmir Smast and Aziz Dheri have provided numismatic evidence of the Hūṇas, indicating that at least three groups of ruling Hūṇas, the Kidarites, Alchon, and Nezak controlled much of what is now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Khan, M.N. *et al.* 2008: 31-41; Khan,

M.N. 2010a, III: 4). The political history of Gandhāra after the decline of the Hūṇas' remains largely obscure due to the lack of literary sources.

2.3.11 The Turk Shāhis and the Hindu Shāhis

According to the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (7th century CE) and Korean Buddhist monk Hye Ch'ao (8th century CE), a Kshatriya ruler of Kapiśa named Khiṅgala assassinated the ruler of Gandhāra and seized the throne. The Khiṅgala rule was ended by the Turk Shāhis shortly before 726 CE. The Turk Shāhis ruled Gandhāra, Kapiśa, Kabul and Zabulistan, and they annexed Swat in 745 CE. Due to increasing Muslim pressure in the ninth century CE, they moved their capital from Kabul to Udhabhāṇḍapura, modern-day Huṇḍ in Swabi District (Rahman 1976: 45-47; 2018; see also Rahman 2002; Zwalf 1996: 17). The Turk Shahi kingdom of Kabul was overthrown by Yaqub bin Lais in 870 CE. Lagaturman was the last ruler of this dynasty, who was overthrown by his Brahman minister Kallar, who founded the Hindu Shāhi dynasty (also known as Hoḍi or Uḍi/Oḍi Shāhis). This dynasty ruled until 1026 CE, with their capital at Huṇḍ. According to Abdur Rahman, key rulers of this dynasty in chronological order were Kallar (843-850 CE), Śrī Samantādeva (850-870 CE), Khudarayaka (870-880 CE), Lalliya (880-902 CE), Toramāṇa/Kamalu (903-921 CE), Bhimadeva (921-964 CE), Jayapāladeva/Jayapāla Shāhi (964-1002 CE), Ānandapāla (1002-1010 CE), Trilocanapāla (1010-1021 CE), and Bhīmapāla (1021-1026 CE), the last ruler of the dynasty. Their winter capital was at Huṇḍ, and their summer capital was in Kabul (Rahman 1993c; 2003; 2018, Sehrai 1979). Important monuments from the Hindu Shāhi period are scattered throughout Gandhāra and the Swat Valley (see Khan, I. 2017). A copper coin of Śrī Samantādeva was also unearthed during excavations at the site of Maṭkanai in Malakand District (Bibi 2020). The Barikot inscription of the reign of Jayapāladeva was found on a hill to the north of Barikot, attests the inclusion of the Swat during the rule of Hindu Shahis.

2.3.12 The Ghaznavids

The Hindu Shahi rule was swept away by the Muslims under Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, who established rule over the Swat Valley in the first half of the 11th

century CE. The Muslims invaded Swat (c. 1001 CE-1002 CE) after the defeat of Raja Jaipal and besieged the castle of Rājagīra at Uḍigrām, taking control after a year-long siege. A romantic legend arose that princess Padmavatī, fell in love with General Idris, the commander of the enemy forces led by Mahmood of Ghazna. The Rājagīra (fortress), after withstanding repeated assaults by the forces of Mahmud of Ghazna, finally surrendered when Padmavatī secretly diverted the water supply of the fort, and thus the siege was ended without bloodshed. There is no epigraphical or historical record of a king named Rājā Gīra, Abdur Rahman suggests that this name may refer to 'Rājā Griha' (or Rājagarh), meaning the capital (Stein 1930: 38; Rahman 2003; Rome 2008: 23-24; see also Faccenna 1964: 14-23). The Zalamkot bilingual inscription (Arabic and Śāradā) found near Batkhela in the lower Swat Valley (Rahman 1998; Nasha 2016), along with another inscription from the Rājā Gīra castle, Uḍigrām (Nazir Khan 1985) and the congregational mosque at Uḍigrām (1048-49 CE), clearly indicates the impact of Islam in the Swat Valley following the foundation of the Ghaznavid Empire (also see Bagnera 2006).

2.3.13 The Swati Pathans and the Yusufzai Tribe

Following the Muslim occupation of the valley, several Afghan tribes that had supported Mahmud of Ghazna during his campaign settled in Swat and became known as Swati Pukhtuns. Another tribe, the Dilazaks, also established themselves in the region. The Sultān granted the Swat area to these two tribes. However, they maintained their independence and remained beyond the influence of neighbouring Muslim rulers in Afghanistan and India throughout their occupation. In 1024 CE, the Swati Pukhtuns expelled the Dilazaks to the Peshawar region. The Swati Pukhtuns ruled the valley for two to three centuries, maintaining their control over the region until the first half of the 16th century CE. During this period, Sultan Uwais, a prominent Swati Pukhtun chieftain, held power over the valley. However, their rule came to an end when the Yusufzai Afghans launched an invasion, ultimately seizing control of the territory. The arrival of the Yusufzais marked a significant shift in the region's power dynamics, as they established their dominance over the valley, bringing an end to the centuries-old reign of the Swati

Pukhtuns. The Yusufzais, also a Pukhtun tribe, were forced to leave the Naushki and Gora regions in Afghanistan and migrated to the Swat Valley. They expelled the Swati Pukhtuns to the Hazara region and settled in Swat, where they have remained the dominant tribe ever since (Ali and Khan 1991; Swati 1997b; Rome 2008: 23, 24).

2.4 Conclusion

The Swat Valley, due to its strategic location, resources and fertile land, attracted numerous powers seeking control over this important territory. The earliest known occupation goes back to the third millennium BCE, as evidenced by archaeological findings at the Ghalegay rock-shelter, which shows continuous habitation up to the Islamic period. The valley's protohistoric cemeteries, dating from 1400-900 BCE, further attest to its long-standing human settlement and strategic significance. The invasion of Alexander the Great in 327 BCE marked one of the earliest recorded foreign incursions into Swat. After the departure of Macedonian army, the valley subsequently came under the rule of Mauryan Empire beginning with Chandragupta Maurya (c. 321-298 BCE), and later his grandson Aśoka (c. 269-232 BCE). Over the centuries, Swat witnessed a succession of rulers, the Bactrian/Indus Greeks, Śakas, Parthians, Kuṣaṇa, Sāsānians, Kidarites, Ephthalites, Turk Shāhis, and Hindu Shāhis. Each of these dynasties left its mark, either through architecture, culture, or trade.

In the early 11th century CE, Mahmud of Ghazna's conquest of the valley marked the beginning of Muslim's influence in the region. Following his victory over the Hindu ruler of Rājagīra at Uḍigrām, Mahmud distributed land to the Dilazaks and Swati Pukhtuns who were his military allies. Eventually, in the 16th century, the Yusufzai tribe, a Pukhtun group from Afghanistan, seized control of the valley, driving out the previous settlers and establishing their long-term dominance.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, the current study aims to trace the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley as depicted in the Buddhist reliefs carved in stone. Many scholars have dealt with the subject but superficially, therefore, dire need was felt to undertake a focussed study that specifically examines the architectural representations within these reliefs. In this regard, the present research will also critically review the contributions of earlier scholarship that have highlighted architectural depictions in the Buddhist reliefs or have worked upon related topics. The surviving Buddhist remains in the valley are crucial to this study, as they provide a tangible basis for comparing the architectural forms depicted in relief carvings with actual structures that have survived over time. Therefore, the study will critically analyse previous works on the Buddhist monuments of Uḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra, focussing on interpretations of architectural features and stylistic elements. This chapter provides an overview of the history of archaeological explorations in the Swat Valley, the significant discoveries made by early explorers and their contributions to understanding its rich Buddhist heritage.

3.2 History of Archaeological investigation in the Swat Valley

Archaeological research in the Swat Valley began much later than that in Gandhāra and other regions of ancient India, primarily because this part of the world remained inaccessible to Europeans for a considerable period of time. Despite the challenges posed by the inaccessibility of the Swat Valley, some European scholars managed to penetrate the region with the help of local agents, collecting antiquities and related data. Consequently, the earliest references by these scholars were based on the information gathered from local inhabitants.

3.2.1 *Lieutenant M.A. Court*

Lieutenant M.A. Court was a French general in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and one of the early European explorers who conducted surveys and documented

historical and archaeological sites in what is now Pakistan. In 1840, he made one of the earliest surveys of the Buddhist remains in the vales of Swat and Gandhāra, which was among the first attempts by a European to systematically study the ruins of the ancient Gandhāra civilization. He provided detailed accounts of significant sites in Swat and Buner, relying heavily on native informants for his findings. His descriptions, marked by remarkable precision and accuracy, were invaluable in documenting these archaeological treasures (Court 1840: 306-312; also see Rahman 2018). He also tried to locate 'Aornos,' the famous fortress mentioned by Alexander's historians but failed in this endeavour (Rahman and Khan, S.N. 2008; Rome 2013; Moritani & Zahir 2018).

3.2.2 Sir James Abbott

Sir James Abbott, a British army officer and administrator during the colonial period in India, was appointed as the first Deputy Commissioner of Hazara. During his tenure, he founded the city of Abbottabad, named in his honour, between 1852 and 1853. Abbott was notably influenced by the writings of Arrian and Curtius, who documented the campaigns of Alexander the great. That is why he embarked on an exploration in 1854 to identify several ancient sites mentioned by these historians, including the famous Aornos, Ora (modern-day Uḍigrām), and Bāzīra (modern Barikot).

During his survey, Abbott explored various locations in the Buner Valley, where he documented several significant sites, such as Mount Mahāban, Rām Takht at the peak of Mount Ilam, and the shrines of Pīr Bābā and Dīwāna Bābā. He also recorded important archaeological sites in the district of Swābi, including Huṇḍ, Rānigat, and Bājā (Abbot 1854). Abbott's exploration extended into the Swat (spelled by him as Sohaut) and recorded several important archaeological sites within the valley. Among these was the castle of Rājā Hodi at Uḍigrām, known as Rājagrīha Castle, which he identified as a significant historical fortress. He also mentioned the ruins of a fort situated between Manyar and Tindora (referred to as Tindodag), the Shingardar (or Shaṅkardhāra) stūpa, and the town of Thāna (Abbot 1854).

3.2.3 Major H.G. Raverty

Major Henry George Raverty (1825-1906) was a British soldier, linguist and orientalist known for his significant contributions to the study of the languages, literature and culture of Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan.

In August 1858, Major H.G. Raverty sent one of his reliable and intelligent subordinates (a native of Kandahār) to the Swat Valley to obtain a rare book titled ‘*The History of the Yusufzai Tribe, and Their Conquests in Swat and Other Districts Near Peshawar*’. This book was originally written in Pashto by Shaikh Mali of Qambar, a renowned writer, historian and leader of the Yūsufzai tribe. Raverty had been informed that a copy of this book was in the possession of a chief from the Tarnah (Thāna) division of Swat. The subordinate documented extensive details about the villages, ruins, customs, traditions, ethnic groups and geography of the Swat region.

In 1863, Raverty published this comprehensive account, which included significant geographical, topographical and archaeological information about the Swat Valley. Noteworthy sites mentioned in this account are Barikot, Shankardhār stūpa, Ghalegay, two small stūpas facing each other in Mānyar, Gogdara, Panjigrām, the ruins of Uḍigrām and an inaccessible cave located in the same village. The author also encountered Buddhist rock carvings along the roadside and copper coins of the Indo-Greek king Apollodotus, which were shown to him by residents (Raverty 1863).

3.2.4 Dr. Leitner and Alexander Cunningham

Dr. Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840-1899) was a British linguist, orientalist, and educator of Hungarian-Jewish descent, notable for his contributions to the study of Oriental languages and cultures. In the 1870s, Dr. Leitner acquired several pieces of Buddhist sculptures from the Swat region, while Alexander Cunningham obtained two inscriptions, one each from Swat and Bājaur. Based on these findings, Cunningham expressed confidence that Swat and Bājaur were likely to have a rich Buddhist heritage, comparable to that of Takht-i Bāhi and Jamāl Garhi (Cunningham 1875: 1). In his book, ‘*The Ancient Geography of India*’,

Cunningham provides a detailed discussion of the ancient geography of Uḍḍiyāna and the important sites within the Swat Valley, based on Chinese literary sources and information collected through local informants (Cunningham 1979a: 68-70).

3.2.5 *Alfred Foucher*

In 1895, Alfred Foucher, a renowned French scholar, carried out a comprehensive survey of Buddhist sites and monuments in the regions of Gandhāra, Malākand, and the Swat Valley. His research significantly contributed to the field of Buddhist art and archaeology. Foucher's expertise allowed him to interpret various episodes from the life of the Buddha, which were depicted in the sculptures found at important archaeological sites such as Sahri Bahlol, Jamāl Garhi, and Takht-i Bāhi. His scholarly endeavours were later compiled and published in a two-volume work titled, *L'art Gréco-Bouddhique du Gandhāra*, in 1905, which has since become a critical reference in the study of Gandhāran art and iconography.

Foucher's contributions to the field extended beyond this initial survey. He visited India for the second time in late 1918, this time to collaborate with the Archaeological Survey of India. During this period, he participated in excavations at the ancient city of Taxila alongside Sir John Marshall, a prominent figure in Indian archaeology. Foucher's participation in these excavations further enriched his scholarly output and solidified his reputation as a pioneering figure in the study of Buddhist art and archaeology in South Asia (Mirsky 1977: 64, 68, 401, 402).

We have thoroughly consulted the two volumes authored by Alfred Foucher for the purpose of the current research. This engagement with Foucher's comprehensive work has provided meaningful insights, particularly in identifying various architectural representations depicted in the Buddhist art of the region.

3.2.6 *Major Harold Arthur Deane*

As previously noted, the Swat Valley and its surrounding areas (ancient Uḍḍiyāna), were predominantly inhabited by the Yūsufzai tribes and remained largely inaccessible to Europeans from the 15th century CE until the 1920s. However, during the 1890s, a mutual agreement with the British government allowed limited

European access to parts of Lower Swat and Dir, primarily to establish a route to Chitral, a strategic region bordering Russia (Swati 1997b: 156).

Major Harold Arthur Deane (1854-1908) played a significant role during this period. Serving as the Chief Political Officer with the Chitral Relief Force and later as a Political Officer for the Dir and Swat regions, Deane was not only notable for his military expertise but also for his contributions to the documentation of ancient monuments in these areas. He undertook surveys in Lower Swat, Buner and Dir, gathering detailed information about these sites, often relying on evidence provided by local informers and agents.

Inspired by the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang, Deane worked to identify the sacred Buddhist monuments described in Xuanzang's '*The Buddhist Records of the Western World*,' translated into English by Samuel Beal. His efforts resulted in the publication of his findings in the '*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*' in 1896, where he provided comprehensive descriptions and details of various Buddhist sites (Deane 1896).

3.2.7 C. M. Enriquez

C. M. Enriquez, an officer in the British army, stated that the upper region of Swat beyond Thāna possessed significant archaeological potential but remained largely unexplored due to the unwelcoming attitude of its local inhabitants. In 1895, Enriquez conducted an excavation near the village of Thāna in the Malakand District. He reported that the excavation took place at a temple of Greek origin, characterized by a square structure topped with a hemispherical dome and featuring two Ionic pillars that framed the entrance leading to the shrine.

During the excavation, the entire portico, including the pillars, along with several Greek lamps and Buddhist sculptures, were unearthed. These findings were subsequently removed and transported to the British Museum for further study and preservation (Enriquez 1921: 8; for further details, see Khan, Z. 2017a).

3.2.8 *Mr. Laurence Austin Waddell*

In July 1895, during the Chitral Expedition, Surgeon-Major Laurence Austin Waddell, a British archaeologist was sent from Bengal to Malakand with the official task of conducting a survey of the region's archaeological heritage and gathering sculptures for the Indian Museum in Calcutta (Errington 1990). His mission led him to the Swat Valley, an area rich in historical and cultural heritage, particularly of the Buddhist Gandhāran civilization. At Swat, he met with Major Harold Deane, who was the Chief Political Officer in the area. Waddell revealed the objectives of his mission, emphasizing the urgent need for the Indian Museum of Calcutta to acquire specimens of Buddhist sculptures of the Gandhāran style. Understanding the significance of Waddell's endeavour, Major Deane generously offered his support and agreed to transfer to Waddell all the sculptures from the Swat Valley that he had already acquired (Waddell 1922: 126).

As a result of this collaboration, Waddell was able to collect a substantial number of Buddhist sculptures from the Swat Valley, which were later preserved in both the Calcutta Museum and the Peshawar Museum. However, as noted by Olivieri, the Peshawar Museum did not actually exist in 1895. This points to a wider context of competition between major museums, especially those in Lahore and Calcutta, as they were eager to grow their collections of ancient artefacts (Olivieri 2015a: 172-173).

Waddell made significant scholarly contributions to the understanding of the Swat Valley's antiquities. His notable works include *Report on Archaeological Tour in Swat* (Calcutta, 1895), and *Newly Excavated Graeco-Buddhist Sculptures from Swat Valley*, which appeared in the *Transactions of the Oriental Congress* in 1896 (Section I, pp. 245-247). He also authored *Graeco-Buddhist Sculptures in Swat*, published in the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* in 1897, Volume 3, Issue 1, pp. 192-194. Another contribution of Waddell is *Swat or Udyana*, in J. Hastings, edited by J.A. Selbie and L. H. Gray, *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, vol. XII, New York 1922 (Khan, R. 2014: 57-62; Olivieri 2015a).

3.2.9 *Alexander Edwin Caddy*

In 1896, Alexander Edwin Caddy, a representative of the Calcutta Museum, arrived in the Malakand-Swat region where he conducted archaeological surveys and excavations in collaboration with British officials from the Malakand Agency. One of the prime objectives of this expedition was the excavation of the site at Loriyān Tangai, located in the Shāh Kot Pass (Errington 1990: 779). This site proved to be rich, yielding many Buddhist sculptures, which were subsequently transferred to the Calcutta Museum.

In addition to his excavation work, Caddy was also given the task of creating a photographic record of several archaeological sites in the Swat Valley. His primary aim during this expedition was to acquire sculptures for the museum's collection and to visually document the region through photography, both of which he accomplished successfully. The photographs and extensive sculptural remains from Loriyān Tangai that he brought back to Calcutta provide a vivid account of his endeavours. However, the original report detailing Caddy's activities was thought to have been lost.

Recently, a copy of this report has been discovered, which appears to have been submitted by Caddy to the Secretary of the Government of Bengal in 1896. This document, now part of the Malakand Fund, is dated from Camp Chakdara on May 13, and from Mansehra on July 18, 1896 (Behrendt 2015). This rediscovered report sheds light on Caddy's significant contributions to the archaeological explorations of the Swat Valley. Two complete photographic series of Caddy are preserved in the India Office section of the British Library (accessible online).

3.2.10 *Sir Aurel Stein*

Sir Aurel Stein was a pioneering European archaeologist who conducted the first comprehensive archaeological survey of Uḍḍiyāna. While serving in British India (1898-1928), Stein undertook numerous archaeological explorations, surveys and excavations throughout the region. He was encouraged and supported by H.A. Deane, the first Political Agent of the Malakand Agency.

Stein's initial visit to Uḍḍiyāna happened during 1896-1897, shortly after the British Chitral campaign of 1895. During this period, he conducted a detailed survey of Buddhist sites and other ancient monuments in the Lower Swat Valley. He visited Uḍḍiyāna later in 1898, and with the support of Deane, he embarked on a month-long archaeological exploration. This expedition involved the survey of several Buddhist sites across the Buner Valley, Malākand districts and Mardan, including a minor excavation at Gumabatai in Buner (Reinjang 2012). His findings were documented in a publication released in 1898 (Stein 1898).

In January 1904, Stein expanded his archaeological quest to encompass the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Baluchistan while serving as the Inspector General of Education and the Archaeological Surveyor of these regions. One of the most significant aspects of Stein's survey was his exploration of Mahāban Mountain in the Buner Valley. Driven by a long-held ambition to locate the site of '*Aornos*', which earlier explorers like James Abbot had identified at the summit of Mahāban. Stein made his way to the top of the mountain but upon reaching the peak, he concluded that Mahāban was not the actual location of *Aornos*. Despite this realization, his exploration was not in vain; he discovered noteworthy remains, including an ancient fort and a Buddhist sacred site featuring the ruins of a stūpa and a monastery at Banj Mountain, situated to the south of Mahāban. Stein identified this site as the 'Buddha's Body Offering' site described by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (Stein 1905: 30, 38; Reinjang 2012).

In 1913, Stein became the first European to explore the remote Darel and Tangir valleys while traversing these territories during his survey of Central Asia (Stein 1942). Later, in 1921, he revisited Uḍḍiyāna, resuming his archaeological explorations along the left bank of the River Indus.

By the spring of 1926, Stein managed to extend his investigations into the Upper Swat regions. He succeeded in identifying '*Aornos*' as Uṇā-Sar or Pīr-Sar in the Kāṇa Ghurband region of the Shangla district. From there, he proceeded southward to Mount Ilam. His expedition, lasting two and a half months, resulted in the identification of numerous sites connected to Alexander's campaigns in Swat, as well as several Buddhist sites mentioned by Chinese pilgrims. Stein identified the

ancient towns of Ora and Bāzīra, captured by the Macedonians, with modern Uḍigrām and Barikot, respectively.

Stein's expedition culminated at Mount Ilam (Ilam Sar), located south of Barikot. Here, he visited Rām Takht (or the throne of Rāma) on the summit, also known as Jugiyāno Sar. Later archaeologists have confirmed that Mount Ilam is indeed the location of the historical 'Aornos' (Stein 1927; also see Stein 1930, 1942, 1972; Reinjang 2012; Rahman and Khan, S.N. 2008; Moritani and Zahir 2018).

3.2.11 Barger and Wright Expedition

In the summer of 1938, another British archaeological expedition arrived in the Swat Valley and northern Afghanistan, under the leadership of Professor Evert Barger of the University of Bristol. The mission's entry into the Swat Valley was facilitated by Major E.H. Cobb, the Political Agent of the Malakand Agency, who secured permission of the ruler of Swat for the team to conduct archaeological investigations within his territory (Barger and Wright 1985: 8).

During their stay in Malākand, the team began their work by visiting and surveying a group of ruins at Kalungai, located in the lower Swat Valley, about eight miles northwest of Malākand (Barger and Wright 1985: 14). They utilised historical accounts for guidance, particularly those of Xuanzang, who had visited the Swat Valley in 630 CE, and the earlier reports of Sir Aurel Stein, who conducted surveys of the Swat and Buner regions in 1926.

The expedition carried out several excavations in the village of Barikot, which had been identified by Stein as Bāzīra, a town mentioned in the accounts of Alexander's historians. In the Lower Swat Valley, they excavated various Buddhist sites in the Barikot and Kanadak Valleys, including Kanjar Kote, Gumbat, Amluk, Chinabara, Abarchinar and Nawagai. Additionally, the team explored the ruins of Gumbatuna, situated on the right bank of the Swat River. Approximately three miles (about 5 kilometres) upstream from Gumbatuna, they reached the village of Parrai, where they discovered several coins attributed to Soter Megas at the base of a stūpa. The ruins of Tokargumbat in the Najigram Valley were also included in their survey (Barger and Wright 1985: 9-28). Some of these sites, such as Kanjar Kote, Gumbat

and Gumbatuna, had been previously reported in Stein's 1926 survey (Stein 1972: 14-28, 31-32).

After two months of fieldwork at Barikot, the team moved to Chārbāgh in the Upper Swat Valley, where they excavated the ancient mound of Jampure Dheri. The site featured a surface scattered with numerous potsherds, and during the excavation, many clay seals and pottery were reported. The excavators opined that Jampure Dheri was probably an occupational site from the Gandhāran period. Additional ruins of stūpas were also noted in the vicinity of the mound (Barger and Wright 1985: 29-31). Throughout their explorations and excavations in the Chārbāgh and Barikot valleys, the expedition unearthed a considerable number of Buddhist sculptures, adding to the understanding of the region's rich cultural and religious history (Barger 1938: 102-124).

3.2.12 The Italian Archaeological Mission to Swat (IsMEO/IsIAO) 1956-Present.

While busy in archaeological activities at Tibet, Professor Giuseppe Tucci stumbled upon references to the name Orgyan, Urgyan (or Uḍḍiyāna) in Tibetan literature. The region held great significance in Tibetan Buddhism because Guru Padmasambhāva, revered as the second Buddha and the most influential figure in the tradition, is believed to have come from Orgyan, identified with Uḍḍiyāna (or Swat) in Sanskrit sources. Consequently, Swat became a sacred destination for Tibetans, a place where many wished to undertake a pilgrimage. This recognition of Swat's importance in Tibetan texts inspired Tucci to visit the area in 1955 (Tucci 1940, 1958; Callieri 2006; Tanveer 2011; Olivieri 2016a).

In the summer of 1955, under Tucci's leadership, the Italian Archaeological Mission (hereafter IAM) to Pakistan conducted a comprehensive survey and study of the Swat Valley. The mission was carried out in collaboration with Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums (hereafter DoAM) and the Italian Institute for Cultural Relations between Italy and Asia, known as *Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente* (IsMEO). In 1996, IsMEO merged with the *Istituto Italo-Africano* to form a new organization, the *Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* (IsIAO). Dr. F.A. Khan, then Director of the Excavation and Exploration

Branch of DoAM, collaborated closely with the Italian team. Later in 1955, Tucci was joined by Italian archaeologists Domenico Faccenna and Giorgio Gullini. The Wālī of Swat, Miāngul Jahānzeb, offered full support and encouragement to the IsMEO team in their archaeological endeavours (Tucci 1958: 284-285; Faccenna 1964: 8; Qamar 2004; Tanveer 2011).

Tucci's survey of 1955 laid the groundwork for future archaeological activities in Swat. His findings were published in 1958, providing a detailed account of the sites he surveyed and explored, including locations mentioned by Xuanzang, Sir Aurel Stein, and H.A. Deane. Notably, Tucci corrected the identification of several sites; for example, he identified the 'Meng-chie li' of Xuanzang's accounts with modern-day Mingora, challenging earlier scholars' identification of it with Manglaur or Manglawar. Based on his findings, the sites of Uḍigrām and Butkara I, near Mingora, were selected for further excavation.

In 1956, the Italian Archaeological Mission became the first foreign team authorized to conduct archaeological excavations in Pakistan. Over the next six decades, it remained the longest-standing foreign archaeological mission in Asia. Excavations commenced at Butkara I and Uḍigrām 'Bāzār' and later extended to other sites, including Gogdara, Uḍigrām 'Castle,' Pāṇr, Butkara II, Loebaṇr, and Katelai (Faccenna 1964: 9; Olivieri 2006a: 23; Tanveer 2011). The excavations at Butkara I (1956-1962) were followed by further digs at Buddhist sacred sites such as Saidu Sharif I, Amluk Dara Stūpa, Balo Kalay Gumbat, Barikot Ghundai, and Pāṇr. These efforts uncovered a significant number of Buddhist sculptures in their original archaeological contexts, which have greatly contributed to understanding the artistic and architectural development of the region (Tanveer 2011).

Tucci also envisioned establishing a regional archaeological museum in Swat to house the artefacts collected during the IsMEO excavations. Until then, these collections were stored in a room at Jahanzeb College, Mingora. The Swat Museum was eventually established by Miāngul Jāhānzeb, the Wālī of Swat, with assistance from IsMEO. In 1959, the Wālī ordered the construction of the museum to accommodate both his private collection and the Gandhāran sculptures excavated by the IAM team. On November 10, 1963, the museum was officially inaugurated

by the President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, in the presence of Miāngul Jahanzeb. During the ceremony, Dr. Tucci highlighted the profound historical significance of Pakistan and its contributions to culture and art. Other dignitaries, including Dr. F. A. Khan (then head of DoAM), the Nawāb of Dīr, the crown prince, Miāngul Aurangzeb, and representatives from Italy and Pakistan, also attended the event (*DAWN*, 10 November 2013).

Another notable contribution of the IAM was the reconstruction of the Swat Museum after it was severely damaged by an earthquake in 2005 and later by a roadside bomb explosion near its entrance in 2008. Archaeologists Ivano Marati and Candida Vassallo developed the master plan for the museum's restoration (Olivieri 2011; Marati and Vassallo 2013).

The IAM team also focussed extensively on the prehistory and protohistory of the Swat Valley to establish a comprehensive cultural and historical profile of the region (Faccenna and Tusa 1986). Their excavation of the Ghalegay rock-shelter pushed the cultural sequence of the Swat Valley back to the second half of the third millennium BCE, extending to the Islamic period. The team also excavated protohistoric graveyards at various locations, such as Katelai, Butkara II, Loebanr I, Gogdara I and III, Barama, Aligrāma, Saidu Sharif I and others, which provided insights into the cultural landscape of the region before the Buddhist era (IsMEO 1982: 10-29).

Apart from excavations and conservation, the IAM team also documented painted rock shelters, such as those at Sargah-Sar I, Kakai-Kandao, Gogdara I, Churkhai, Dandi-Sar, Muhammad-patai, Lekha-gata I and Kamal-chīna. These rock paintings depict the flora, fauna, mythology and iconography of Protohistoric Swat (Olivieri 1998, 2014; Olivieri and Vidale 2004; Olivieri and Rahman, F. 2010; Vidale, Micheli, and Olivieri 2011).

Additionally, the Swat Valley is renowned for its rich heritage of wooden architecture, characterized by intricate carvings. This heritage includes wooden mosques, sanctuaries and some secular structures. Photographic documentation of this architecture was initially carried out by Umberto Scerrato and Maurizio Taddei

in 1959 and later expanded by Guiseppe Zander and Luca Mariani between 1968 and 1972, with further surveys conducted in the 1980s in Swat, Dir, Chitral, Indus Kohistan and Baltistan (Scerrato 1982: 52-55, 1983, 1984; Mariani 1985; Noci 2006; Tanveer 2011).

An important aspect of the IAM's work has been the publication of their excavation results and subsequent research. The excavation report of Butkara I and Uḍigrām was published in the '*Reports and Memoirs*' Volume I in 1962 (Faccenna and Gullini 1962). Volume II (Parts 1 & 2), containing catalogues of the sculptural art of Butkara I, was published in 1962 and 1964, respectively (Faccenna and Taddei 1962; Faccenna, Bonardi and Taddei 1964). Similarly, the catalogue of '*Narrative Stone Reliefs from Gandhāra in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London*' by H.C. Ackerman (1975) was published in '*Reports and Memoirs*' Volume XVII. While volume XXVIII of the same has published the sculptures of Saidu Sharif I by Faccenna (2001). Recent studies on Buddhist architecture in Gandhāra have been significantly enhanced by several key publications. A notable addition is D. Faccenna's book on Buddhist architecture in the Swat Valley, published posthumously in 2014 with Olivieri's collaboration, which categorizes the region's architectural styles (Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014).

Luca Maria Olivieri, now the director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan, has continued the work of earlier scholars by conducting extensive excavations and research in the region. His work has focussed on both excavation and conservation efforts, particularly at the sites of Barikot and Amluk-Dara. An important discovery at Barikot in 2021 is the monument featuring an apsidal podium, with a circular chapel and stūpa. The design of this monument is quite unique and is rarely depicted in Gandhāran relief panels, although a similar type can be seen in Butkara I panel no. 920 (Pl. 87 of our catalogue). Detailed information about this recent discovery is provided in Olivieri's 2022b publication (pp. 218-224), which is a monographic study on the columned stūpa at Saidu Sharif I, compared with similar structures in Swat. These publications have been invaluable to the current research by accurately identifying number of scenes and providing detailed descriptions of the architectural elements depicted in them.

Due to space limitations, a complete record of the IAM's publications cannot be provided here. However, an extensive bibliography compiled by Luca Maria Olivieri is available, offering a comprehensive overview of the IAM's archaeological explorations and excavations from 1956 to 2011 (Olivieri 2006b: 301-318; 2011: 313-354; also see Faccenna, Callieri and Filigenzi 1984).

3.2.13 The Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan

The Department of Archaeology and Museums (DoAM) has played a significant role in uncovering the historical remains of various groups that once inhabited the scenic Swat Valley. Between 1991 and 1994, the DoAM undertook extensive archaeological explorations and salvage operations across different regions of the present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. These activities were conducted as part of the project titled '*Survey of Archaeological Sites in Ancient Gandhāra Salvage Operations/Preservation and Protection of Pakistan's Heritage.*' Through this project, detailed surveys were carried out along both banks of the Swat River, leading to the discovery and documentation of 60 previously unknown archaeological sites in various parts of the Swat Valley. Additionally, a similar archaeological survey was conducted in the Buner district, which resulted in the identification of 250 new sites. In 1995, the Bajaur Agency also saw a comparable survey effort, which uncovered numerous Protohistoric graveyards and Buddhist sites (Khan, M.A. 2011a: 81-93). The findings from these surveys were later published by Saeed-ur-Rehman (Rehman, S.U. 1996).

In addition, the DoAM also conducted archaeological excavations at various Buddhist sites within the Swat Valley. Some of the most notable excavations include the sites of Nimogram (*Pakistan Archaeology* 1968: 116-121), Gumbatuna and Dadahara (Khan, M.A. 1996 a, b) and the Buddhist monastery at Malam-Jabba (Khan, M.A. 1993a: 40-44; Khan, R. 2011: 203-223). Other key sites excavated by the DoAM are the Buddhist establishment at Nawagai (Qamar 2004: 181-221), the stūpa and monastery at Tokar-Dara, also known as Najigram (excavated by Khan, M.A. in 1995), and the Buddhist complex at Asān Kote, near Gogdara (Khan, M. 1998: 179-188).

The extensive research activities carried out by the Pakistani archaeologists in the districts of Dir (both Lower and Upper), Buner, Swat, Malākand and Shāngla have been comprehensively documented by Ashraf Khan in a detailed bibliography spanning from 1968 to 2011 (Khan, M.A. 2011b).

3.2.14 The Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Since its establishment in 1992, the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums (DoAM, KP) has been actively involved in the excavation, conservation and safeguarding of the archaeological heritage in the length and breadth of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Following the administrative changes brought by the devolution of powers in 2011, numerous archaeological sites and monuments in areas such as Malākand, Swat, Chitrāl, Dir, Buner, Shāngla and the Swat Museum came directly under the jurisdiction of the provincial directorate. Since then, the DoAM, KP has undertaken extensive efforts to safeguard and preserve the cultural and historical assets of Swat and Malākand, aiming to protect these valuable sites from human vandalism and encroachment.

Significant archaeological sites, such as the stūpa of Amlukdara, Balo Kalay Gumbat, Shnaisha, Barikot, Abbā Sāhib Cheena, Jurjury stūpa, Dangram stūpa, and the Ghalegay and Jahanabad rock-carved statues of the Buddha, have been secured under the Land Acquisition Act of 1884. This legal framework has enabled the DoAM, KP to declare these sites as 'protected' and implement measures to prevent their destruction or unauthorized use.

The Directorate's work in conservation and excavation at these sites has been in collaboration with various international and national archaeological teams. For example, at Barikot, Amlukdara, and Balo Kalay Gumbat, DoAM, KP has closely collaborated with the Italian Archaeological Mission (IAM) to conduct scientific excavations and conservation efforts, significantly contributing to the understanding of the region's archaeological landscape (Khan, Z. 2017b: 45-47).

During 2019-2020, the DoAM, KP carried out independent field activities at the Buddhist site of Amlukdara in the Swat Valley for the first time, without external

collaboration. This initiative marks a significant step for the directorate in managing its heritage sites autonomously, reflecting its growing capacity and commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Samad *et al.* 2021a). Another important Buddhist site of Abbā Sāhib Cheena was also excavated by the DoAM, KP in 2020-2021 (Samad *et al.* 2021b). As a result of fresh excavations of the above sites, a fair number of Buddhist sculptures have been unearthed. Some important relief panels displaying architectural peculiarities are also included in the present catalogue (Pls. 99, 124, 176, 213)

3.2.15 The Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar

The Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar (hereafter the Department), established in 1962, has been a cornerstone for archaeological research in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Over decades, the Department has conducted numerous excavations, particularly in the Swat Valley where discovered and documented many sites of the Gandhāra Grave Culture, notably at Timargarha and Thāna. These efforts have greatly enriched the cultural profile of the valley (Dani 1967: 1-55).

During 1962-65, the Department carried out excavations in Timargarha, Bajaur and Chakdara, led to the discovery of significant Buddhist sites in Dir, including Andan Dheri, Ramora, Bambolai, Chatpat and Damkot (Dani 1968-69 a, b). These excavations yielded a substantial collection of stone and stucco sculptures and hoards of copper coins from secure stratigraphic contexts (Dani 1968-69 a, b; Rahman 1968-69). In 1980, under the leadership of Professor Abdur Rahman, the Department undertook a salvage operation of Buddhist sites across various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During this project, the sites of Maṭkanai and Baghrajai were excavated in collaboration with the Dir Museum at Chakdara (Pers. comm. with Prof. Abdur Rahman, August 12, 2022).

From 1981 to 1982, a joint venture titled the ‘*Gandhāra Archaeological Project*’ was launched by the Department and the DoAM under the direction of F.A. Khan, Farid Khan and Abdur Rahman. This project led to the discovery of more than 50 Buddhist sites in the Swat Valley, Dir, Buner and Bajaur. Notable excavations

included sites like Charg-Pate (1981), Butkara III (1982, 1985), Shnaisha (1990), Marjanai (1983), Gumbatkai and Guligram (1985), Pataka Khimdara (1985), Gilban Serai (1985), Tirat (1985), Kani Sapar (1981), Khan Mahi (1992), and Parrai (Khan, F. 1990, 1992; Rahman 1990, 1991, 1993a, 1993b; Khan, S.N. 1995; Swati 1997c). These excavations have significantly contributed to reconstructing the cultural history of the region, providing a wealth of sculptures and artefacts that offer insights into the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna (Swati 1996a, b; 1997a).

3.2.16 Recent Surveys and Research Contributions

Subsequent surveys continued to reveal new sites and enhance the understanding of the region's archaeological significance. In 1995, Professor Farooq Swati conducted a survey that identified 28 new Buddhist sites along the right bank of the Swat River (Swati 1997b). Another survey in 2001 in Shangla district and the Swat Valley led to further discoveries of archaeological sites and monuments (Swati, Bacha and Mulk 2002). In 2005, a collaborative survey by the Universities of Peshawar, Hazara, and Leicester located and documented 294 sites in Lower Dir, with Buddhist sites comprising the majority (Ali, Rahman, Young and Zahir 2010). These findings underscore the importance of both Swat and its surrounding regions, such as Lower Dir, as centres of Buddhist activity.

3.2.17 Academic Research and Publications

The Department has supported numerous MPhil and PhD scholars in conducting research on the Buddhist sites and art of the Swat Valley. Notable dissertations include those by Muhammad Farooq Swati (1996a), who completed his doctoral research at the University of Cambridge on Buddhist sculptures from the Peshawar University Collection, and Tahira Tanweer (2010), who researched the Buddhist collection of the Wālī of Swat. Other scholars, such as Sadeed Arif (2014), Zarawar Khan (2017b), Muhammad Sher Ali Khan (2017), Zafar Hayat Khan (2018), Nidaullah Sehrai (2018) and Zubaida Yusuf (2020) have contributed significantly to various aspects of the Buddhist art and archaeology of the Swat valley. The Department also publishes its annual research journal '*Ancient Pakistan*' which has

been a vital platform for sharing excavation reports and articles on the Buddhist archaeology of the Swat Valley since 1964.

In addition to these scholarly activities, faculty members of the Department have produced numerous articles and monographs on Buddhist architecture and sculpture, published in both national and international journals. Notably, Gul Rahim Khan (2015) published a catalogue of Buddhist sculptures from Butkara III, further contributing to the understanding of Gandhāran art.

3.2.18 Academic Research and Publications of other Universities

Scholars from other universities have also pursued research on the region's archaeological heritage. For example, Ijaz Khan (2017) of Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, explored Hindu Shāhi period sites in Malakand, Lower Dir, Swat, and Buner for his PhD research at the University of Leicester (UK), providing insights into the cultural and political landscapes of the Hindu Shāhi period. Rafiullah Khan (2014) and Sarfaraz Khan (2015) from the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, focussed on the early phases of archaeology in Malakand-Swat. Amjad Pervaiz (2016) and Abdul Ghafoor Lone (2017) of the same institution studied the stone sculptures of the 'Malakand Collection' and 'Varia Collection' in the Swat Museum respectively. Tahir Saeed (2017) did his doctoral research on the 'Buddha Stone Images in Sub-Regional Office, Peshawar'. Recently Mahmood-ul-Hasan Shah (2019) analysed Buddhist stone sculptures at Taxila Museum, which also includes pieces from Uḍḍiyāna.

3.3 Major Publications on the Buddhist art of Gandhara and Uḍḍiyāna

Several key works on the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna have been discussed in the relevant sections above. Here, a brief overview of the most important catalogues and studies related to the Buddhist art will be provided.

In 1901, Jas. Burgess published a revised and enlarged edition of the book '*Buddhist Art in India*', which was originally written (in German) by Professor Albert Grünwedel and published in 1893. Another contribution of Jas. Burgess is

the book titled '*The Gandhara Sculptures*' (published in 1978). These books have become fundamental resource for the study of Buddhist art of India and Gandhāra, providing scholars with detailed descriptions and analysis of various sculptures, highlighting their stylistic features and iconography.

Another important book on the Gandhāran sculptures was written by H. Hargreaves titled, *A Handbook to the Sculptures in the Peshawar Museum*, in 1930. This book highlights numerous scenes which portray architectural details as well as individual statues of Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

In 1957, Harald Ingholt published a significant volume titled '*Gandhāra Art in Pakistan*', which is the result of a meticulous selection of noteworthy sculptures from various Pakistani museums, as well as from some private collections. This book provides invaluable insights into the intricate architectural details portrayed in various relief panels, serving as a key reference for a wealth of information about the structural designs, architectural elements and decorative motifs.

The book, *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Period* by Percy Brown (1959) is a seminal work of the architectural styles, structures, and innovations that emerged in India from around third century BCE to 13th century CE. The book covers a wide range of architectural forms, including stūpas, rock-cut caves, temples, monasteries, and other religious and secular structures, tracing their evolution and regional variations over time. Originally published in 1942, this book is part of his two-volume series on Indian architecture, with the other volume focussing on Islamic architecture in India.

In addition to his comprehensive three-volume reports on the excavations at Taxila (Marshall 1951, repr. 2006), John Marshall made another significant contribution to the study of Gandhara art with his book '*The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*' (1973). This work provides an in-depth exploration of the art of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna. It highlights numerous architectural details that can be gleaned from various relief panels, including insights into structural designs, decorative motifs and the presence of foreign artistic traditions. Moreover, the author has traced the evolution

of Buddhist art in Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna by examining how these styles were shaped by the amalgamation of Indigenous and external influences over time.

A scholarly work titled *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* by John M. Rosenfield (1967) provides a comprehensive analysis of the art and culture of the Kuṣāṇa Empire, which flourished from the first to the fourth centuries CE across a vast territory that included parts of present-day India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. This book has become an essential reference for understanding the artistic and cultural achievements of the Kuṣāṇa, a dynasty known for its significant role in the development of early Buddhist art and the cross-cultural exchanges along the Silk Road.

K. Krishna Murthy (1977) has also briefly mentioned the architectural peculiarities exhibited in the Buddhist art of Gandhāra in his book *The Gandhara Sculptures: A Cultural Survey*. The Buddhist relief panels of Gandhāra vividly capture all aspects of the cultural trends that were prevalent during their creation. Murthy has analysed these panels within their cultural contexts, drawing meaningful conclusions about the various traditions of the era, including dresses, utensils, flora, fauna, architecture, infrastructure and more. The book is an essential reference for anyone interested in the artistic and historical legacy of Gandhāra.

Volker Thewalt (1982) did his doctoral research titled '*Supporting elements and their decoration in the Architecture of the Kuṣāṇa Period*'. This dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of the architectural elements from the Kuṣāṇa period, shedding light on the architectural advancements introduced during the Kuṣāṇa dynasty. The study also explores how these elements reflect the cultural, religious and artistic developments of the time.

Fidaullah Sehrai has also written an informative book titled '*The Buddha story in the Peshawar Museum*' (Sehari 1982b). This book serves as a catalogue of Gandhāran sculptures housed in the Peshawar Museum, focussing on the narrative relief panels that depict scenes from the life story of the Buddha.

The book '*Gandhara*' by Francine Tissot is a comprehensive study on the art and culture of the Gandhara region. Published in 1986, this book is considered as one

of the most significant contributions to the study of Gandhāran art, offering a thorough examination of its various forms, from sculpture to architecture.

The catalogue of sculptures by Isao Kurita, titled *Gandharan Art*, is a two-volume work that provides a comprehensive overview of Gandhāran sculptures (Kurita, I: 1988, II: 1990), with a revised and enlarged edition released in 2003. This catalogue is a significant scholarly resource for the study of Gandhāran art, containing an extensive collection of images from Pakistani Museums, international and private collections. By providing high-resolution photographs and detailed descriptions, the volumes enable a thorough understanding of the stylistic characteristics, materials and craftsmanship involved in Gandhāran sculpture.

Muhammad Ashraf Khan (1993a, b) published two books titled *Buddhist Shrines in Swat* and *Gandhāra Sculptures in the Swat Museum*, which are vital contributions to the Buddhist art and architecture of the Swat Valley. Muhammad Ashraf Khan, Mahmoodul Hassan and Abdul Ghafoor Lone (2005) have published ‘*A Catalogue of Gandhara stone sculptures in the Taxila Museum*,’ in two volumes under the aegis of the DoAM.

The catalogue of Gandhāran sculptures by Wladimir Zwalf titled ‘*A Catalogue of the Gandhāra Sculpture in the British Museum*’ (two volumes) is an extensive work that presents a comprehensive study of the Gandhāran sculptures housed in the British Museum. Published in 1996, Zwalf’s catalogue is carefully organised, providing detailed descriptions, measurements, provenance and contextual analysis for each sculpture.

Ihsan H. Nadeem’s *Buddhist Gandhāra: History, Art and Architecture* (2003), provides an in-depth exploration of Gandhāra's history, its Buddhist art and unique architectural contributions, highlighting the region's significance as a crossroad of ancient civilizations.

‘*The Buddhist Architecture of Gandhāra*’ by Kurt Behrendt, published in 2004, is another significant work that provides a comprehensive examination of the Buddhist architectural heritage of the Gandhāra region. Behrendt examines the architectural features, structural designs and layout of these structures, providing

detailed descriptions of their form and function. This thorough examination highlights the diversity and complexity of Buddhist architecture in Gandhāra and its development over several centuries.

Similarly, the book *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts*, edited by Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt (2006), consolidates scholarly contributions to the art and architecture of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna, providing an extensive overview of these ancient cultures.

‘*The Art of Gandhāra in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*’ by Kurt A. Behrendt (2007) is a significant contribution to the study of Gandhāran art, offering detailed analysis and valuable information into one of the most important collections of Gandhāran art outside of South Asia.

Another scholarly work of Behrendt (2018) is ‘Architectural evidence for the Gandhāran tradition after the third century,’ in *Problems of Chronology in Gandhāran Art*. Here the author explores the evolution and significance of Gandhāran architecture beyond the third century CE due to changing political, religious and cultural contexts.

The book, ‘*Gandhara: The Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan*’, *Legends, Monasteries and Paradise*’ (edited by Luczanits and Jansen 2008) is a comprehensive collection of essays by esteemed archaeologists and art historians, which offer in-depth analysis of the art and architecture of ancient Gandhāra.

In 2008, Ihsan Ali and M. Naeem Qazi published a voluminous work titled ‘*Gandharan Sculptures in the Peshawar Museum*’. The book serves as an extensive catalogue of Gandhāran sculptures in the Peshawar Museum, providing detailed descriptions and photographs of each sculpture, including information about their stylistic features, iconography and historical significance.

M. Nasim Khan published the results of his excavations at the Buddhist site of Aziz Dheri in three volumes under the title of ‘*The sacred and the secular: Investigating the unique Stūpa and settlement site of Aziz Dheri, Peshawar Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*’. This work was published in 2010 with the contribution of

DoAM, KP, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, the British Council (Pakistan) and the University of Peshawar. Volume Three of this work presents the stone sculptures and narrative relief panels that offer a fair idea of architectural peculiarities.

In 2010, Professor Abdur Rahman presented a paper ‘Ancient Architecture as reflected in Gandhara Art: Cities and City Gates’ in the *International Workshop on Gandharan Cultural Heritage* at the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Islamabad. Subsequently the conference proceedings were published in 2011. This paper is limited to the depiction of various cities and city gates of ancient India in the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna.

In 2011, Tauqeer Ahmad conducted doctoral research titled, *Cultural Profile of Gandhara: An Appraisal*. In this study, the author has explored various cultural aspects of ancient Gandhāra as gleaned from the Buddhist relief panels. While the primary focus was on the broader cultural elements, the author also provided a brief examination of the architectural features depicted in these panels. M. Ilyas Bhatti and Anwaar Mohyuddin (2014) have also written very briefly on the structural representations as depicted in the Buddhist art of Gandhāra. Nidaullah Sehrai (2018) did his doctoral research on *Gandhāran Pillars, Their Typology and Chronology*, at the Department. The study mainly focuses on the various types and styles of pillars as depicted in the relief panels as well as individual pieces found in the region of Gandhāra.

David Jongeward (2019) published a voluminous work titled ‘*Buddhist Art of Gandhara in the Ashmolean Museum*’, highlighting the rich Buddhist heritage of Gandhāra including stūpa models, reliquaries, relief panels and portrait images in stone and stucco.

3.4 Conclusion

A substantial body of published data throws ample light on the Buddhist art and architecture of the Swat Valley, which provides valuable insights into the ancient architectural practices and traditions of the region under study. The review of the already published works on the subject as given above is very much helpful in

providing a steppingstone to undertake the present research. Our study will systematically analyse both physical remains of ancient monuments and depictions of architecture in Buddhist narrative relief panels. This structured approach ensures that the current research is grounded in existing scholarship while offering fresh perspectives on the Buddhist architectural heritage of the Swat Valley.

CHAPTER 4

ARCHITECTURAL EVIDENCE IN TEXTUAL AND EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES

4.1 Introduction

The Swat Valley has been an important centre of Buddhist art and architecture for a long time. Since the early centuries of the Common Era, a unique architectural style developed in the region, shaped by both local and foreign traditions. The valley is full of ancient Buddhist sites, such as stupas, monasteries and shrines, which show its strong religious and artistic history. Most of what we know about these structures comes from ancient writings and inscriptions that help us understand the architecture of ancient Uḍḍiyāna.

The current chapter explores the architectural evidence across South Asia, with a specific focus on the Swat Valley, as documented in various textual sources and inscriptional records. By examining these sources, the chapter aims to reconstruct the role of architecture in the region's sacred and secular life and to understand the cultural and political context that shaped these constructions. Emphasis is placed on how epigraphic records, including royal decrees and donor inscriptions, complement descriptions found in sacred and secular texts, thereby offering a comprehensive picture of the architectural developments in ancient Swat.

4.2 Architectural evidence in textual sources

Textual sources serve as a window into the architectural history of early civilizations, specifically in regions where physical remains are scanty or have been heavily mutilated over time. In South Asia, ancient literary traditions give detailed information about how buildings were designed and built. They help us understand the styles, construction methods and layouts used in both religious and everyday buildings. These sources, ranging from religious scriptures and epic tales to technical manuals and travelogues, each bring their own perspective on the architectural world of their time. Between roughly 800 BCE and 250 CE, South Asia witnessed the rise of cities and states alongside the spread of Buddhism and Hinduism, shaping the cultural and architectural landscape. Among the earliest

surviving records from this period are the Vedas, apart from the still undeciphered script of the Indus Valley Civilization. The Vedic texts, including a large body of later interpretative texts, help paint a clearer picture of the territorial expansion and architectural developments that marked this important era (Allchin 1995: 73-74).

4.2.1 Early Vedic literature

The *Ṛgveda*, the oldest Indian literary text (dated around 1500-1000 BCE), is primarily a collection of hymns devoted to various gods. It focuses on religious rituals, the universe and aspects of social life. While it doesn't give direct or detailed information about architecture as we know it today, it does contain some references that give us clues about the buildings and homes of early Vedic society. (Dalal 2014: 110-11).

There are indirect references to architecture in the *Ṛgveda* wherein it mentions terms like *grāma*, which served as a basic settlement or village unit. *Grāma* is mentioned in contrast to *araṇya* or forest. The *grāma* consisted of several *kulas* (families) and the whole settlement was surrounded by fencing or barricade. Other terms such as *Dūr̥ga* and *Pur*, used for a fort, suggest that early forms of defensive buildings or enclosed structures may have existed. The Vedic people lived in simple house-like structures (*gr̥ha*) made of natural materials like reed, wood and bamboo. The houses were simple in design, made with wooden posts joined at the top by horizontal beams to support a thatched roof. The walls were made from woven mats, and there was no use of stone or brick in their construction (Renou, Meister and LaPorte 1998; Dalal 2014: 148). The descriptions in the texts are more about practical use than architectural style, showing that houses were built mainly for shelter, not as grand buildings. Some Buddhist relief panels (see Pls. 92-99) also show huts made from bamboo and wood. The *Ṛgveda* does not mention cities directly.

4.2.2 Later Vedic Period

In the later Vedic period (1000-500 BCE), references to both villages and urban settlements begin to appear. The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* mentions the term *nagara* in the context of a town or city. The *Atharvaveda* describes a type of house called

harmya (mansion), which included multiple rooms or sections, along with designated spaces for cattle and sheep. In the context of our study, relief carvings from ancient Uḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra portray elaborate residences, such as mansions and palaces. A prominent example is the palace of King Śuddhodana, where Prince Siddhārtha is shown enjoying a luxurious lifestyle, surrounded by grand architectural elements and lavish banquets (see Pls. 124-133). These panels not only capture the magnificence of the palace interior but also provide detailed depictions of its external environment, including areas reserved for livestock and stables. For example, in the scenes representing the birth of Chandaka and Kaṇṭhaka, such architectural and functional elements are clearly portrayed, giving a rare glimpse into the opulent and well-organised royal life of ancient times (see Pls. 134, 135).

The *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* refer to the term *mahāgrāma*, or a big village. The houses were probably built of thatch and bamboo, or perhaps some other kind of wood. There are multiple references to sacrificial altars (or *yajña*), which were crucial to Vedic religious rituals. Mudbricks (or *iṣṭaka*) were used in the construction of a fire altar but are not referenced in the context of a house. These fire altars were temporary structures made of mudbricks or earth, aligned with specific geometric principles, but they do not constitute massive buildings. Depiction of fire altars can be seen in our Plates 93-94 and 109. The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* mentions *dhanadhānī*, probably used as a storage or granary. The *Atharvaveda* refers to *patnīnāṃ sadana* or separate women's chamber (Dalal 2014:161; also see our Pls. 121-123).

In conclusion, while the *Rgveda* provides glimpses of early dwellings, forts and sacrificial altars, it does not contain detailed information on ancient Indian architecture as understood in later times. Its references are more symbolic and functional, reflecting a simple and pastoral society of the Vedic period.

4.2.3 Architectural evidence in Buddhist and Jain sacred sources

The Buddhist monastic texts (in particular the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*) mention figures like superintendents, architects and masons but, apart from the figure of the

superintendent, the impression is that they tended to be extraneous to the monastic community (Schopen 2006). As for the terminology, in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* we find *navakarmika* for the superintendent, *sahāyaka* for the assistant, *sthapati* for the foreman, or possibly for the architect, *takṣaka* for the carpenter, *saṃlipta* for the plasterer, *citrakāra* for the painter, *iṣṭakakāra* for the brick maker, and *bhṛta* for the manual labourer (Schopen 2014). However, we find no specific terms for the sculptor and the stonemason. Reference to art is generally to pictorial art, although it may at times be to sculpted images (Schopen 1997: 232, 239).

Buddhist literary sources inform us that the Buddha ordered for the construction of monasteries and nunneries during his lifetime to serve as retreats for rainy season. These texts suggest the evolution of monastic architecture and stupa construction in ancient South Asia. The *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the oldest and smallest of the three sections of the Buddhist canonical *Tripiṭaka* (meaning triple basket), is an important Buddhist scripture of the 5th century BCE. The other two are the *Sutta Piṭaka* (Buddha's teachings), and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (consisting of philosophical analysis). The *Vinaya Piṭaka* is comprised of monastic discipline and ethical guidelines for the monks and nuns of the Buddhist *saṅgha*. The text provides guidelines for the construction of monastery, outlining aspects such as cells for monks, courtyards and common halls, many of which are reflected in Gandhāran monastic architecture. Initially, rules were set by the Buddha in response to specific incidents. Over time, these rules were codified and expanded upon. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* was transmitted orally before being written down in the Pāli text (Davids and Oldenberg 1885: 157-223). The said *Piṭaka* details the early Buddhist monastic lifestyle when monks lived in forests, caves, and cemeteries, lacking formal dwellings. It emphasizes the importance of offering *vihāras* (monastic residences) to the *Saṅgha*, which the Buddha regarded as a precious gift. Laymen were encouraged to build and support monasteries with food items, clothing and shelter in exchange for receiving the *Dharma* (Sanskrit) or *Dhamma* (Pāli), meaning the true teachings of Buddha.

In the beginning, *vihāras* were constructed without doors, exposing monks to hazards from reptiles and bestiary. As a result, monastic establishments evolved

through trial and error under the supervision of Buddha. Initially, the monks secured doors with strings or creepers, but these were eaten by termites and rodents. Later on, the Buddha gradually permitted improvements, introducing bolts, lintels with pivots, doorposts, pull strings, rings and wooden blocks. This iterative development shows the practical challenges of early monastic structures and its refinement over time (Davids and Oldenberg 1885).

The *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (Davids and Davids 1910) and other Buddhist texts mention how, following the demise of Buddha in the fifth century BCE, his disciples cremated his body and distributed the ashes among eight kingdoms. The rulers of these early kingdoms enshrined the Buddha's relics within large earthen mounds known as *stūpas*, often constructed at prominent crossroads. Over time, these *stūpas* evolved into important focal points of Buddhist worship, along with other sacred symbols such as the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. In the third century BCE, Emperor Aśoka initiated a significant transformation by exhuming and redistributing relics from the original eight *stūpas*. He is credited with commissioning the construction of more than 84,000 *stūpas*, using materials such as brick, stone and stucco (Fogelin 2012).

The Buddhist structural remains and carved reliefs found in the Swat Valley support the information given in ancient textual sources. These reliefs show monasteries and *stūpas* with domed and tiered designs, decorated with detailed carvings. They highlight the importance of these buildings as centres of religious worship. The visual evidence in the reliefs confirms the descriptions found in early Buddhist literature, showing the continuity between written records and actual examples of sacred architecture.

The *Kalpasūtra* is a sacred Jain scripture comprising of rituals and monastic rules for the Jain community. It consists of three parts:

1. Biographies of the twenty four *Tīrthaṅkaras* (or spiritual leaders).
2. The life of Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24th *tīrthaṅkara* of Jainism.
3. Monastic rules and guidelines, specifically framed for the rainy season when ascetics halt among laypeople.

The Kalpasūtra is generally attributed to Bhadrabāhu, who composed it approximately one and half century after the *Nirvāṇa* of Lord Mahavira (the last *tīrthankara*). The text contains discussion about the temple layouts and rock-cut buildings, paralleling Buddhist site developments (Lahoti 2024).

4.2.4 *Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini*

Pāṇini wrote the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* more than two thousand years ago (fourth century BCE) that marks the beginning of a new era in Sanskrit literature, often identified as the post-Vedic period. His grammar became the authoritative guide for classical Sanskrit, shaping the way the language was used in both literary and scholarly contexts. The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* also enhance our understanding about the built environment of ancient India through its linguistic references, even though its primary focus is on the rules and structure of language. With the help of the architectural terms used in the text, we can infer certain features of the architectural landscape at the time of Pāṇini.

The author gives details of several key architectural patterns of buildings found in a big city, e.g., *rāja-sabhā* (the king's council-hall), *geha* or *gṛha* (houses), *nivāsa* and *nikāyya* (residential quarters), *koṣṭhāgāra* (royal storehouses), *niṣadyā* (rest houses), *dvāra* (city-gates), *parikhā* (moats), *kapāṭa* (door leaves) and *parigha* (bolts). The word *Śālā* was used for a variety of buildings, e.g., *strī-śālā* denotes the provision of women's hostel in the Vedic culture, *gośālā* and *kharaśālā* (stables for cows and asses). *Śālā* was also used for a granary room for storing corn with an opening called *śālā-bila*.

Pāṇini has also mentioned some important cities of his time, e.g., Gandhāra, Kāpiśī, Takṣaśilā, Śākala, Hāstinapura and Kāśī. The existence of these cities at the time of Pāṇini shows progress in the art of architecture (*vāstuvīdyā*) and town-planning (*nagara-māpana*). According to Pāṇini, the strategic parts of a city were, its moat (*parikhā*), rampart (*prākāra*) and gates (*dvāra*), which served as the main defences. Proper town planning was mandatory before the actual construction of a city could begin. The initial phase involved marking out key features such as the moat, rampart and palace. This preparatory stage was carried out with careful precision.

Expert architects, known as *vatthuvijjācariyas*, were appointed to examine and test the suitability of the site before any building took place.

Similarly, Pāṇini informs us that contemporary cities were usually square or rectangular in shape, enclosed by fortification walls on all four sides. Each of these walls was pierced with a gate, strategically positioned to face one of the four cardinal directions. He also mentioned the principle which governed the naming of these cities. This arrangement not only facilitated access to and from the city but also symbolised a well-planned urban structure, ensuring efficient movement, defence and trade routes. These gates were meant to serve as significant points of interaction between the city's interior and the outside world, contributing to the city's connectivity and security (Agrawala 1953: 133-43).

Though the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is not a treatise on architecture, the architectural terms it contains give us an idea about the types of structures that existed in ancient India. These references give an idea of a wide range of buildings, from private houses (*gr̥ha*) and mansions (*harmya*) to forts (*durgā*) and fortified cities (*pura*), as well as the presence of public infrastructure like halls (*śālā*) and bridges (*setu*). Together, they point to a society with a developed architectural tradition, characterised both urban planning and functional structures.

4.2.5 *Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya (also Cāṇakya and Viṣṇugupta)*

Kauṭilya served as a teacher at the university of ancient Takṣaśilā who later became the prime minister of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Mauryan Dynasty. It is believed that he wrote the book *Arthaśāstra* in the last quarter of fourth century BCE (c. 321-300 BCE). Bhatta Swamy of Tanjore found 168 palm leaves of Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* in 1902, and handed them over to Sanskrit scholar Rudrapatna Shamasastri, who was a curator at the Oriental Research Institute (ORI) in Mysore. In 1909, Dr. Shamasastri edited and published the work, cementing Kauṭilya's historical significance. Later on, the text was translated into multiple languages worldwide (Bandyopadhyaya 1927; Sabhlok 2012).

Kauṭilya is recognized as a global authority on political governance. In the *Arthaśāstra*, which is primarily a treatise on polity, he covers a wide range of

topics, from principles, rules and legal codes to the planning and administration of cities and villages. Although his work is not specifically focused on architecture, it provides detailed guidelines for building an ideal city in ancient India. He gives thorough recommendations for the construction of forts and buildings within the water fortification of the city, making his work a valuable source for urban planning in ancient times. Kauṭilya outlines a hierarchy of towns and their administrative divisions, recommending different sizes based on available natural resources (Shamasastri 1951; Deshkar 2010).

According to Kauṭilya's guidelines, the towns should manage population growth by relocating surplus residents to new areas, preventing overcrowding. Urban centres should be strategically positioned to support one another, resulting in regional cooperation. Cities should be centrally located to facilitate trade and commerce, with their sites chosen to be spacious and near a reliable water source. The layout of cities should conform to the topography of the land, adopting circular, rectangular, or square shapes as needed. The *Arthaśāstra* mentions the construction of ditches (*parikhā*) as the first item in the construction of forts (*durga-vidhāna*). The city's defences should include a fortification wall 6 *daṇḍas* (measuring yard) high and 12 *daṇḍas* wide, with three protective moats around it, spaced four arm-lengths apart.

The city should also be planned with a grid of three north-south and three east-west roads, with main roads being 8 *daṇḍas* wide and smaller roads 4 *daṇḍas* wide. To ensure access to water, there should be one well for every 10 houses. These guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for the organization and infrastructure of ancient Indian towns and cities (Fleet 1907; Shamasastri 1951; Deshkar 2010, Sabhlok 2012).

4.2.6 *Indika by Megasthenes*

Megasthenes was a Greek ambassador sent by Seleucus I Nicator to the Mauryan court in the last decade of the fourth century BCE. He was an eyewitness to the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, the maker of the first India-wide empire (c. 321-185 BCE). His writings serve as key source of information on the Mauryan Empire,

though only fragments of his book '*Indika*' survive, referenced by later historians like Arrian, Strabo and Diodorus. He described the majestic city of Pāṭaliputra, its bureaucracy, taxation and laws, its magnificent army, urban lifestyles, elite fashions and social norms. Megasthenes witnessed the emergence of endogamy and early castes in the Aryanised groups around him and noticed Brahminism as more patriarchal than Buddhism.

He made detailed observations of the capital city of Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna, the Palimbothra of Megasthenes), where he spent couple of years around 300 BCE.

Megasthenes' lucid remarks about the grandeur of Mauryan architecture, the size and layout of Pāṭaliputra is based on his personal observations and experience. He described it as a majestic, well-fortified and developed city, reflecting the power and sophistication of the Mauryan Empire. It was situated at the confluence of the Ganges (Gaṅgā) and Erannaboas (Hiraṇyavāha), which played a crucial role in its economic and strategic importance. The city was laid out in a rectangular shape, approximately 15 km along the river front and 3 km inland, comparable in size and population to some of the largest cities of the ancient world (Kumar 2019: 17-21).

Pāṭaliputra had a well-planned grid system with streets crossing at right angles, reflecting a high level of urban planning sophistication. Megasthenes tells us that much of the city, including the king's palace, was made of wood, a characteristic feature not uncommon then for Indian cities located on flood plains. The city was enclosed by a massive wooden wall, fortified with 560 towers and 64 gates, averaging one gate every half a kilometer. The fortification wall was made of timber and supported with earthworks. The fortifications included moats surrounding the city, filled with water from nearby rivers. These moats were used as defensive structures to prevent incursions and were large enough to hold crocodiles, which further discouraged enemy forces (Schwanbeck 1846; McCrindle 1877: 66-68; Brown 1959: 3-11; Arora 2021).

Archaeologists have found fragments of its wooden walls and a pillared hall of polished stone. But much of ancient Pāṭaliputra is still likely beneath the modern

city of Patna, including what post-Mauryan dynasties later constructed in brick and stone (Kumar 2019; Rowland 1953: 40-43, fig. 2; Grover 1980: 25, fig. 16).

Megasthenes also mentioned the royal palace of Chandragupta Maurya by describing it as a striking feature of Pāṭaliputra. He compared it to the splendour of the contemporary palaces in Susa and Ecbatana in Persia. The palace was typically constructed of wood, which was common in ancient Indian architecture, though embellished with lavish decorations, including gilded pillars and ornate carvings. The Mauryan architecture was famous for its grace and beauty, reflecting aspects of Persian and Greek styles, due to interactions with the Hellenistic world following the invasion of Alexander the great (Arora 2021).

The description of Pāṭaliputra by Megasthenes aligns with that of Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*. The Mauryans likely followed these principles, resulting in a well-planned and fortified city, as described by Megasthenes. His depiction of Pāṭaliputra's grandeur, including its palaces and urban layout, is reflected in the Buddhist relief panels from Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna, where secular scenes detailing the palace life and city gates along with fortification walls and watchtowers (see plates 100-109).

4.2.7 Records of the Chinese Buddhist monks

It is generally believed that Buddhism reached China in the second half of the first century CE during the rule of Emperor Ming (or Mingdi) of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) after he had a dream of a radiant divine figure, flying over him. Upon consulting his ministers, he was told that the figure was the Buddha from the West (India). Curious to learn more, Emperor Ming sent his envoys to India, who returned with Buddhist scriptures (*sūtras*) and images of the Buddha. It is believed that Ming's mission convinced two Indian monks to move to China. One of them was Kashyapa Matanga, who hailed from a Brahmin family in Central India and became well versed in the Mahāyana *sūtras*, and the other was the learned Dharmaratna. This event marked the formal introduction of Buddhism to China. As Buddhism spread, it left its mark on Chinese culture, literature, philosophy, art and architecture. The translation of Indian *sūtras* into Chinese not only helped in

disseminating Buddhist teachings but also contributed to the development of Chinese writing and literature (Englehart 2015)

Following the formal introduction of Buddhism to China, Faxian was among the earliest pilgrims to travel to India, the holy land of the Buddhists. His journey, which lasted about sixteen years (c. 399-414 CE), was detailed in his travelogue, *Fo-Kwō-Ki (or Foguoji)*. The main purpose of his journey was to obtain texts on monastic discipline, known as *Vināya*, which were urgently required in China at the time. As a result, his account provides detailed descriptions of *saṅgharāmas* (monasteries) and *stūpas*, while also serving as a valuable record of the socio-economic and religious conditions of ancient India (Legge 1886: 28-32).

Next followed the pilgrimage of Song Yun and his fellow monk Huisheng in 518 CE; unfortunately, however, their narrative is very short, and not to be compared with that of the other pilgrims. He explored nearly all the sites previously visited and documented by Faxian in his travelogue. During his visit to the Swat Valley, Song Yun observed several *stūpas* and temples that were inhabited by a fair number of priests. He records the *To-lo* temple or monastery with a tall *stūpa*, occupied with sixty full-length golden images (Beal 2004: XC-CXIV). Tucci identified this site with the *stūpa* of Butkara-I. While excavating at the same site, the IsMEO team unearthed gold gilded sculptures that further support the pilgrim's narrative (Tucci 1958; Faccena 1964: 39).

Much later, during the rule of the T'ang dynasty, the Augustan age of Chinese Buddhist literature, we have first the famous Xuanzang, of whom we know much through his travelogue, *Si-Yu-Ki (or Buddhist Records of the Western World)*. He travelled in different parts of India for about 17 years (c. 629-45 CE) and composed a detailed account of the people, places and socio-cultural environment that forms an authentic and valuable source for the study of Indian history and culture of his time. Like other Chinese pilgrims, Xuanzang's primary goal in visiting India was to see its sacred Buddhist sites. His second purpose was to acquire original Buddhist scriptures and learn directly from the Indian teachers.

Xuanzang was disappointed to see the deplorable condition of Buddhism in the Swat Valley. He mentioned some 1400 old *saṅghārāmas* on both sides of the river *So-po-fa su-tu* (river Swat) but desolate and inhabited by few monks (Beal 2004: 97-134). He described the region of Gandhāra as having 1000 *saṅghārāmas*, which were deserted and in ruins, filled with wild growth and desolate to the extreme (Beal 2004: 98). He further mentions an inhabited monastery located outside the city of Puṣkalāvātī (Beal 2004: 110) and refers to the restoration of Kaniṣka's stūpa, which had been previously damaged by fire, probably the cruciform stūpa at Shāh-jī-kī-ḍherī (Kuwayama 1997; Beal 2004: 103). Xuanzang also visited the city of *Po-lu-sha*, identified with Sahri Bahlol (Errington 1993; Khan, M.N. 2006: 11-13, 2018: 46-47), where he noted a monastery with fifty priests, adhered to the law of the Little Vehicle or *Hīnayāna* (Beal 1884: 112).

Soon after Xuanzang's death, another Chinese Buddhist monk, Yijing, started his journey for India in 671 CE, and arrived in Tāmraliptī, at the mouth of the Hooghly in 673 CE. He studied in Nālanda, the centre of Buddhist learning, at the east end of the Rājagṛha valley, for a considerable time, and collected some 400 Sanskrit texts, amounting to 500,000 ślokas. On his way back home, he stayed in Śrībhoga (Palembang, in Sumatra), where he further studied and translated Buddhist scriptures, either Sanskrit or Pali. In 692 CE, from Śrībhoga, Yijing sent home his work, through another Chinese priest, Ta-ts'in, who was then returning to China. The book is therefore called '*Nan-hai-chi-kuei-nai-fa-ch'uan*,' a 'Record of the Inner Law' sent home from the Southern Sea, the islands which lie off the Malay peninsula being then known as the islands of the Southern Sea. He returned home in 695 CE; thus, his stay abroad covers, roughly speaking, a period of twenty-five years (671-695 CE). The aim of Yijing's travel was to correct the misrepresentations of the *Vināya* rules, and to refute the erroneous opinions held by the schools of the *Vināyadharmas* then existing in China. He therefore dwells chiefly on the monastic life and discipline of his time; but mingled with this we also find several important facts regarding the then prevailing socio-cultural and religious aspects of India.

The travelogues of the Chinese Buddhist monks served as an authentic historical source for the identification of key Buddhist sites in ancient Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyyāna by prominent scholars like, Colonel H. A. Deane (1896), Sir Alexander Cunningham (1979a), A. Foucher (1915), Sir Aurel Stein (1972) and G. Tucci (1958).

4.3 Architectural evidence in epigraphic sources

Inscriptions or ancient records are also referred to as epigraphs, and the study of these records is known as epigraphy. The discipline of epigraphy involves analysing meaningful symbols and writings that have been engraved on various surfaces to convey messages. Through these inscriptions, societies have documented values, beliefs, norms and other such notions that were meaningful to their communities. Therefore, inscriptions serve as contemporary records that provide a more precise reflection of the conditions of their time compared to textual records, which were initially transmitted orally and later written down. Inscriptions provide first-hand accounts of events, whereas literary texts often contain distortions due to rhetorical or stylistic purposes and typically survive only in later copies with mistakes. As a result, written texts were sometimes modified to align with particular narratives or agendas, rather than preserving an objective account. Consequently, inscriptions hold a unique authenticity, providing a more unfiltered view of the past, whereas textual records reflect the influences of their transmission process and the intentions of their authors.

It is also important to note that though inscriptions are written records, they are unmistakably different from other texts for the simple fact that they were not meant to be circulated (Lüders 1929: 31). Even though they are very precise and contain limited data, at least many of those with an explicit date provide useful information.

Epigraphic sources revealing the endowment of Buddhist monuments and other buildings provide invaluable information about the patronage, dedication and cultural significance of these sites within Buddhist communities. Such inscriptions usually found on stūpas, vihāras (monasteries), *caityas* and even rock-cut caves, document not only the funding and construction of these religious and communal

buildings but also the motivations, social status and religious devotion of the donors. The patrons ranged from devout laity, members of the royalty, nobles, monks and nuns, merchants and guilds, each contributing according to their means. Kings and queens often viewed sponsorship of these structures as both a religious duty and a way to assert authority, encouraging unity and promoting Buddhism. Merchants and guilds contributed to gain prosperity and spiritual merit (*punya*), frequently funding monuments along trade routes like the Silk Road. Lay devotees, too, made smaller contributions out of personal devotion and religious zeal. These endowments included construction and renovation of buildings, material donations (e.g., funds, metals, or construction resources), land grants, and provisions for monastic sustenance like food and medicine. The earliest inscriptions that bear witness to the existence of Buddhism in India are from the Mauryan period.

4.3.1 Epigraphic evidence during the Mauryan Period (The Edicts of Aśoka)

The Edicts of Aśoka are a series of inscriptions carved on rocks, pillars, and cave walls across the Indian subcontinent by Emperor Aśoka of the Maurya Dynasty (r. 269/68-232 BCE). These edicts are found at different places in India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, inscribed in Brāhmī, Kharoṣṭhī, Aramaic and Greek scripts. The Aśokan edicts highlight Aśoka's rule, policies and beliefs, offering historians a rare, unfiltered glimpse into ancient Indian society and governance (Smith 1904: 135-172; Dani 1964).

Similarly, emperor Aśoka's inscriptions outline his support for Buddhist infrastructure across India. At the Sānchī Stūpa complex, numerous inscriptions, including the inscribed pillar of king Aśoka, are found on various architectural elements such as the *Pradakṣiṇapatha* (circumambulatory path), *vedikā* (railings), *torāṇa* (gateways), pillars and reliquaries, detailing their associated features and significance. These records, dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 8th century CE and written in Brāhmī script, provide important details about different individuals from diverse regions who participated in the construction and maintenance of the site. They also shed light on the religious practices prevalent at this sacred location, as well as on certain restrictions and a formal charter issued by the royal authorities (Smith 1904: 135-172).

Major Rock Edict No. 2, also discovered in the northwestern regions of the Aśokan Empire, Shahbaz Garhi (district Mardan) and Mansehra (district Hazara) in present-day Pakistan, details Emperor Aśoka's initiatives aimed at enhancing the welfare and well-being of his subjects. In this edict, Aśoka records that he established hospitals to provide medical care not only to people but also to animals. Additionally, he mentions the construction of wells along major roads to provide fresh drinking water for travelers and their animals, facilitating safer and more comfortable journeys (Court 1836: 481; Cunningham 1877: 8-12; Smith 1904: 145-154; Konow 1943: 69; Dani 1964: 20).

4.3.2 Epigraphic Evidence of Donations to Buddhist Establishments

From the very beginning, the Buddhist order relied on donations, which were appealing to lay people due to the merit they could gain by contributing. As a result, the names of donors were meticulously recorded in inscriptions and, later, in manuscripts when these became available, often in colophons. In some cases, donations were made collectively by families, whose members were listed, sometimes with details of their relationships, such as parents, siblings, or other relatives, all sharing in the merit earned. These records occasionally enlighten us about the structure and size of average families within the ancient Indian cultural context, a facet of Indian social history about which little is otherwise known.

Epigraphic records reveal that patrons of Buddhist establishments came from diverse social strata, including royalty, nobility, merchants, guilds, artisans and laity. This diverse patronage highlights Buddhism's appeal across societal levels and its egalitarian values, indicating the religion's significant social role beyond the royal courts and its wide appeal among the general population.

There are detailed accounts of royal women from dynasties such as the Sātavāhanas and Ikṣvākus who contributed to the Buddhist establishments. For example, Queen Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī of the Sātavāhanas donated a cave. She mentions in an inscription:

‘We had previously given a field in the village Kakrāḍa to the mendicant monks dwelling in the cave, which is our pious offering on the Triraśmi hill. Since the field is now

uncultivated and the village is uninhabited, we are currently donating a hundred nivartanas in our royal field on the boundary of Govardhana town.’

Epigraphic evidence also reveals about the donations given by Brāhmans and traders in support of Buddhist sites. A few Brāhmans contributed donations to the Buddhist caves. One notable inscription from Kuda records the donation of a *caitya* (sanctuary or prayer hall). The inscription reads:

‘A *caitya* building (*caityagrha*), a gift from the Brahmin woman Bhayila (Bhrajila), wife of the Brahmin Ayitila, an upāsaka’.

Additionally, many traders contributed donations, often affiliated with trade guilds. Some inscriptions reference śreṣṭhis (guild leaders or merchants) who played a crucial role in the socio-economic fabric of society. These śreṣṭhis were typically part of the urban elite and were involved in extensive trade, both domestically and internationally. Inscriptions found in Western Indian rock-cut caves frequently reference these donors, indicating the significant role of trade guilds in supporting religious establishments (Pandit 2010).

For instance, two inscriptions at Kuda refer to *gahapatis* (householders) who were *śreṣṭhis*, with additional inscriptions documenting donations by the *śreṣṭhis* Vasulanaka. Another key donation is mentioned in an inscription at Karle, where *śreṣṭhis* Bhutapala from Vaijayanti declares this *caitya* to be the finest in Jambudvīpa, meaning the entire Indian subcontinent (Pandit 2010).

4.3.3 Indo-Scythian Period inscription (CKI 455) found near a Stupa at Haḍḍa, Afghanistan

An inscription (For Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, we refer to their number in: Stefan Baums and Andrew Glass. 2002. Catalog of Gāndhārī Texts. <https://gandhari.org/catalog>) about the stūpa donation by the Kuḍiya sons was recovered from a stupa at Haḍḍa, Afghanistan. The inscription was engraved on a gold foil, which was once part of a relic chamber in a stūpa, hidden in a relic casket made from limestone (allegedly, this is just a story told by a dealer, Baums comments while reviewing this chapter). It was first studied by A. Sadakata and Gérard Fussman in 1996 (Sadakata 1996: 301-24; Fussmann 2015: 160-161).

Although Fussman supported its authenticity, R. Salomon (1999: 144, fn. 3) questioned its genuineness due to atypical phrasing, handwriting, and format, leading to its exclusion from Baums' 2012 inscription collection (Baums 2012: 200-251). Despite considering it a possible forgery, Baums included it in 2018 for its relevance in chronological debates (Baums 2018). Harry Falk re-evaluated the inscription's authenticity using new high-quality photographs to address Salomon's objections and reassessed its legitimacy as a historical record (Falk 2020-21).

The inscription, dated to the 39th year of King Azes (corresponds to 9/8 BCE cf. Baums 2018, 66), documents the dedication of a stūpa by a group of donors. The event took place in the month of *Jyeṣṭha*, on the eighth day, with the year beginning in the month of *Caitra*. The group collectively established a stūpa on a previously undeveloped land in the village of Hiḍḍa (Hadda). The stūpa was built to honour all Buddhas and to promote self-discipline among the donors. Specific individuals are named, including sons from various families of the Kuḍiya lineage, with a notable list of contributors (Falk 2020-21).

4.3.4 Patika's copper sheet inscription (CKI 46), Year 78 of Maues (Indo-Scythian Period)

The Patika's copper sheet inscription was found at Taxila, Pakistan and now in the custody of the British Museum, London, UK (No. 1967,1018.5). The inscription narrates that in the seventy-eighth year of the reign of the great king Maues, on the fifth day of the month *Panemos*, Patika, son of the Kṣaharata and governor of Cukhsa, known as Liaka Kusuluka, established a previously unenshrined relic of the Buddha (the Śākya sage) and a monastery in the north-eastern area of Takṣaśilā, referred to as Kṣema. This dedication was made in honour of all Buddhas and out of reverence for his parents. Patika sought blessings for the longevity and strength of himself, his family, including his sons, wife, brothers, and extended kin, as well as his teacher. The construction of the monastery was supervised by superintendent of construction Rohiṇimitra (Marshall 1914; Konow 1929: 23-29, 1932; Sircar 1965: 124-25; Cribb 1999; Baums 2012).

4.3.5 *The Indo-Parthian period inscription (CKI 53) of Gondophares' reign (circa. 47/46 CE) from Takht-i-Bahi*

The significant role of royal patronage in the expansion of Buddhist religious sites is also evidenced in the epigraphic sources, for example, the Takht-i-Bahi stone panel, bearing an inscription in Kharoṣṭhī script, installed within the primary monastic complex, commemorates the inauguration of a religious structure, specifically a chapel, during the 26th year of King Gondophares' reign, aligned with the so-called year 103 of the Azes I Era, thereof corresponds to 47/46 CE (cf. Baums 2018). This ceremonial inauguration took place on the day 1 (first full moon) of the month *Vaiśākha*, a significant period in the Buddhist calendar, believed to be the birth month of Buddha. This indicates the chapel was dedicated with an auspicious timing intended to honour Buddhist traditions.

The construction of this chapel within the already established monastery was financed by Miraboyana, from the household of Prince Kapa. The actual donation was made by an intermediary named Balasami, who acted on behalf of the nobleman. The chapel was gifted as a religious offering to the monastery, and the plaque was affixed in honour of the man's parents. This reveals the involvement of royal and noble families in supporting Buddhist establishments during the said period (Cunningham 1875: 58–60; Konow 1925-26, 1929: 20; Rapson 1930; Cornish 1995: 109-34; Salomon 2005, 364–365, 369; Salomon 2011; Khattak 2020: 35-38).

4.3.6 *Epigraphic evidence about Buddhist sacred buildings during the Kuṣāṇa Empire*

Numerous religious donations from the Kuṣāṇa Empire (circa 50-320 CE) are accompanied by inscriptions that include the ruler's name, a date, details about the donor, a description of the donation and a list of its beneficiaries. These inscriptions have provided scholars with deep insights into the religious, political, social and economic conditions of South Asia during that period.

4.3.6.1 *Kaniṣka Casket (CKI 145) Inscription from Shah-Ji-Ki-Dheri*

The famous Kaniṣka casket, a gilded bronze reliquary discovered in 1908-9 at the site of Shah-ji-ki-Dheri near modern Peshawar, now property of the Peshawar Museum. This artifact, with a height of 18 cm and diameter of 12.7 cm, features intricate iconography and inscriptions that provide vital insights into Kuṣāṇa art, Buddhism and imperial symbolism. Its lid displays a seated Buddha flanked by Indra and Brahma, decorated with a lotus leaf pattern and six flying geese with wreaths in their mouths. The base depicts four scenes separated by a garland held by amorini figures, representing a blend of Buddhist and Hellenistic imagery.

The discovery of the casket was motivated by references to a grand stūpa built by King Kaniṣka mentioned in ancient Chinese Buddhist travelogues by Faxian and Xuanzang, who visited the region in the 5th and 7th centuries, respectively. This inspired D.B. Spooner's excavation in 1908, during which he unearthed a large stupa and the reliquary in a collapsed chamber (Spooner 1912). Upon opening the casket, Spooner found a crystal container with three bone relics (currently displayed in a Buddhist temple in Mandalay, Burma) thought to be those of the Buddha, as described by Xuanzang.

The casket's inscription was published by Konow (1929) and later by M.A. Shakur (1946: 36-38). It records the donation with the names Mahasena and Saṃgharakṣita, superintendents of construction of the fire chamber in the monastery of the king Kaniṣka, into the acceptance of the Sarvāstivādin teachers (cf. Baums 2012.)

While, in his initial interpretation of the inscription, Spooner identified the name Kaniṣka in the second line, inscribed among depictions of geese and a mention of Kaniṣka's viḥāra in the fourth line near the lower section of the base. These references indicate a link between the site and Kaniṣka, though they do not provide direct evidence of his involvement in constructing the stupa. It has since been established that the reliquary's donors were two architects of the fire-hall (*agiśala*), Mahasena and Saṃgharakṣita, who dedicated their offering of relics for the welfare and happiness of all beings and for the acceptance of the Sarvāstivādin school teachers (Falk 2002: 113).

Spooner initially identified the reliquary's finding spot as the legendary Kaniṣka stupa, but later scholarship has emphasized its role within a broader Kuṣāṇa-era Buddhist complex near Peshawar, underscoring its importance as an object of cultural and historical study. Scholars like Prudence Myer (1966) published a detailed study of the figures on the reliquary and B.N. Mukherjee (1964, 1996) produced a revised reading of the inscription. Further research about the object's historical and artistic significance were conducted by Mirashi (1966), Rosenfield (1967), Neil Kreitman (1992), Elizabeth Errington (2002) and Harry Falk (2002) and Baums (2018).

4.3.6.2 *The Manikyala Stupa Stone Inscription (CKI 149) during Kaniṣka's rule*

On one of the slabs in the relic chamber of the stupa, there is an inscription in the Kharoṣṭhī script, which appears to be a regular relic-donation inscription (Baums 2012: 240-241). It thus reads:

(Inside of slab:) [1] In the 18th year-on the 20th day of the month Kārttika, on this first (lunar

day) of the great king [2] Kanishka, Lala, increaser of the Kuṣāṇa line, [3] judge, [4] donation master of the governor Veśpaśi-he is [5] donation master in his personal monastery-[6] establishes here several relics of the Lord, the Buddha, together with the group of three Veśpaśia, Khudacia, and [7] Burita, the builder of the monastery, [8] and together with (his) whole retinue. Through this [9] root of good as well as through the buddhas and disciples [10] may it always be [11] for the best share of (his) brother Svarabudhi. [12] Together with Budhila, the superintendent of construction (Baums 2012: 240-241, no. 37).

The Manikyala stone inscription thus mentions the establishment of a relic during the reign of the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kaniṣka (also see Lüders 1909; Majumdar 1922: 67; 1924: 13; Salomon 2012; Baums 2018).

4.3.6.3 *A copper sheet inscription (CKI 33) by unknown meridarch*

The inscription was recovered from Taxila and now lies in the Indian Museum, Kolkata. It narrates about the establishment of a stūpa by the meridarch (governor of a district or province), together with his wife, in honour of their mother and

father and for the attainment of the highest spiritual reward. Paleographically, this inscription is datable to the second half of the first century BCE or a little later (Konow 1939-40: 640; Marshall 1951; Baums 2012, 2018; Salomon 2012).

4.3.7 Inscriptions of Apracas and Oḍis from the Swat Valley and surroundings Stupa Establishment and donation by Nagaṇaḍa (CKI 454)

This inscription is engraved on a schist spherical reliquary discovered from Samarbagh in the Mayar area, between Dir and Bajaur (Pakistan). It is now lying in a private collection in the United Kingdom. The inscriptions on various parts of the reliquary collectively describe the establishment of a stūpa and the enshrinement of relics by Nagaṇaḍa, the wife of the Meridarch Taravia during the reign of Vijayamitra (II), king of Apraca. The offering was made as a gift to the Dharmaguptin Buddhist monastic community (Falk 2003, 2010; Baums 2012, 2018).

a. Relic Inscription of Imḍravaṃma (I) on a schist reliquary (CKI 242)

This inscribed reliquary was discovered from Bajaur, Pakistan and now lying in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA (No. 1987.142.71a, b).

The inscriptions document the enshrinement of sacred relics of the Buddha by Prince Imḍravaṃma (I) of the Apraca dynasty, emphasizing devotion, dynastic honour and religious merit.

It thus narrates that in the 63rd year (AD 16/17) of the late King Azes, on the 16th day of the month Kārttika, under Caitrika reckoning, Prince Imḍravaṃma (I), son of King Viṣṇuvarma of Apraca, enshrined relics of the Buddha (Śākya sage) in a previously unestablished, deep and secure location.

The ceremony was performed by the prince's mother, Rukhuṇaka (wife of Viṣṇuvarma and mother of Vijayamitra II), his maternal uncle Ramaka and Ramaka's wife Daṣaka, his sisters, wife (Vasavadata, Mahaveda, and Nika), and the lady of the house, Utara, his father, King Viṣṇuvarma of Apraca, his brother Vaga (a general) and Vijayamitra (II), the reigning king of Apraca, and finally his

mother's sister Bhaīdata. It is also mentioned that these relics were originated from a Mauryan-period stūpa associated with a miraculous event. They were relocated to a safe and central location for preservation and reverence.

The inscription highlights the interconnection of Buddhist religious practices with familial ties, dynastic legacy, and the continued veneration of the Buddha's relics in the region. It reflects the commitment of the Apraca dynasty to Buddhism and their role in safeguarding its sacred traditions (Mukherjee 1977-78; Salomon and Schopen 1984; Salomon 1999; Baums 2012; 2018).

b. A Gold sheet inscription (CKI 334) of Ajidasena/Ajitasena (Year 420)

This inscription was found in a spherical container made up of schist, from the region of Matta in the Upper Swat Valley. Currently, it is lying in the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Hokuto, Japan (No. 101740). This inscription contains information about the enshrinement of relics of the Buddha by Ajidasena, the son of King Vijidasena and king of Oḍi.

Summary of the inscription is as follow:

Ajidasena, fortress master and ruler of Oḍi, honoured all Buddhas (past, present and future), solitary Buddhas, the Lord's disciples, and his parents, as well as all deserving of respect. He established relics of the Tathāgata (the fully enlightened Śākya sage, leader of the Śākyas) in a previously unestablished site at Tira within the southern part of a great stūpa. This sacred act, performed in the fourth year on the tenth day of Āṣāḍha, was dedicated to ending suffering and facilitating the path to nirvana (Fussman 1986; Salomon 2000; Falk 2012; Baums 2012, 2018).

Tira is identified with Tirāt village by scholars like Rahman (2022) and Salomon (1995: 31). Tirāt is located some thirty miles from Mingora city on the right bank of River Swat in the Upper Swat Valley (see Map 1). In the same village an inscribed stone slab bearing the famous Buddha Pāda (footprints) was discovered, now on display in the Swat Museum (Rahman 2022). Scholars like Fussman (1986: 9-10) have debated the exact location of Tira in Ajitasena's inscription, for he identified it with Tīrah Valley to the south of Khyber Pass. However, the inscription of Ajitasena is linguistically and geographically linked to Tirāt in the Swat Valley,

supported by the region's historical identification with Uḍḍiyāna, a great centre of Buddhism.

c. Relic Inscription of Senavaṃṃa/Senavarma (CKI 249)

This Gold sheet detailed inscription was found in a gilded-schist miniature stūpa in the valley of Swat whereas its current location is unknown. This inscription is in fact a declaration by King Senavarma, ruler of the Oḍi tribe, documenting his contributions to the restoration and veneration of the stūpa named Ekaūḍa. The king Senavarma narrates that the Ekaūḍa stūpa, initially built by Vasuseṇa, son of Utaraseṇa, king of Oḍi from the Ikṣhvāku family, was damaged by fire and a lightning strike. He (Senavarma) restored and rebuilt this stupa by increasing its height and ensured its proper completion. He also restored other stūpas of his ancestors in the nearby regions that were affected by the same fire.

The king also re-established a relic of the Buddha in the stūpa, by paying deep reverence to the Buddha and honour other enlightened beings, saints and noble persons. Sadaṣkaṇa, son of the great king, chief king of kings Kujula Kadphises is also honoured. The king's own royal lineage, including his deceased brother Varmaseṇa and his father Ajidaseṇa are also paid honour in the same inscription (Bailey 1980; Schopen 1999; Salomon 2003; Salomon and Baums 2007; Baums 2012).

Abdur Rahman (2022) highlights the importance of the gold leaf Kharosthi inscriptions of Senavarma and Ajitaseṇa/Ajidaseṇa for reconstructing the history of the Oḍi (also spelled Uḍi) rulers. These inscriptions shed sufficient light on the Iṣmaho royal family of the Oḍis, depicting Senavarma as a significant figure, probably a viceroy or governor under the Kuṣāṇa Empire. We come to know from Ajitaseṇa's inscription that he was the father of Senavarma and thus he ruled the region earlier than his son Senavarma. Although Oḍi rulers held considerable power, they were probably subordinate to the Kuṣāṇa overlords. The inscriptions indicate their role as regional governors in Swat and surrounding areas, performing both administrative and religious duties.

4.3.8 *Gāndhārī monastic ledger manuscript (Kuṣāṇa Period)*

Mark Allon has published a unique Gandhārī monastic ledger (from unknown find spot) documenting donations to a Buddhist monastery by the third Kuṣāṇa king, Vima Kadphises. This record, preserved on a newly surfaced Kharoṣṭhī birch bark manuscript from the second century CE, represents the earliest known Buddhist monastic ledger in Gandhārī. Notably, it captures the spelling of the name of Vima Kadphises and his royal titles, marking a significant historical reference as it records him as a Buddhist patron, a role not previously attributed to him. More broadly, this document offers a rare glimpse into the direct royal patronage of Buddhism by the Kuṣāṇa dynasty (Allon 2019: 1-46). However, scholars like Stefan Baums disagree with Allon's claim, arguing that the document might also just be dated in the reign of Vima Kadphises (personal communication with S. Baums, 15 March 2025).

4.4 Conclusion

Uḍḍiyāna has long been celebrated as a cradle of Buddhist civilization and heritage. In the foregoing discussion an effort has been made to comprehend the ancient architectural traditions of the valley in the light of textual and epigraphic sources. The inscriptions found in the Swat Valley, such as the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the Oḍi rājās, Seṇavarma and Ajitasena, provide detailed information about the architectural and religious milieu of the time. For instance, Seṇavarma's inscription mentions the rebuilding of the Ekaūḍa stupa after it was struck by lightning fire, reflecting the resilience and devotion of the rulers to preserve their sacred architectural heritage. The references to modifications, such as height changes in the stupa mentioned in Seṇavarma's inscription, provide clues about evolving architectural practices.

Epigraphic evidence from ancient Gandhāra and the Swat Valley, provide invaluable information about the establishment and enshrinement of Buddha's relics. These inscriptions document acts of devotion and the construction of sacred monuments, reflecting great devotion for the Buddha and the socio-political environment prevailing at that time. The inscriptions also reveal the participation of extended families in acts of merit, reflecting the communal nature of Buddhist

practice. We also come to know from these inscriptions that the enshrinement of Buddha's relics was central to Buddhist rituals, with stupas serving as both spiritual and social hubs. These inscriptions also shed light on Buddhist architecture and social life, revealing structural innovations, artistic contributions and even rules for monastic conduct.

Textual records by the Chinese pilgrims, like Faxian, Xuanzang, and Song-Yun, offer vivid descriptions of the Buddhist architecture in the Swat region. They mention the presence of stupas, monasteries, and relics, emphasizing the valley's status as a centre of Buddhist pilgrimage. For example, the mention of the footprints of the Buddha carved on a rock and the associated stupas highlights the symbolic significance of architectural legacy of the Swat Valley in Buddhist traditions.

In conclusion, textual and epigraphic sources are crucial for unveiling the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley. They provide a bridge to the past, allowing us to explore and understand the rich Buddhist heritage of the valley.

CHAPTER 5

CLASSIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF ARCHITECTURAL DATA AS GLEANED FROM BAS- RELIEFS

5.1 Introduction:

The Buddhist relief panels unearthed from the various Buddhist sites of ancient Uḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra through scientific excavations reveal a unique blend of sacred and secular architectural elements that were prominent in the region during their creation. These panels, rich in historical and cultural significance, provide a window into the unique artistic and architectural styles that emerged from the fusion of religious devotion and everyday life.

For the purpose of current study, we gathered sculptural data from various esteemed collections such as, the Swat, Dir and University Museums. Additionally, the corpus of sculpture lying in the Peshawar Museum and the SRO collection were also accessed to incorporate reliefs with similar themes. The aim of this comprehensive approach was to provide a clear understanding of the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley, particularly in comparison to those of Gandhāra. To enhance this comparative analysis, panels from Gandhara and Uḍḍiyāna housed in the international collections, such as the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, were also selected for thorough examination. The National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome, houses a good collection of relief panels recovered from the Buddhist sites of Swat Valley by Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan during 1960s and onward. Fortunately, these sculptures with subject matter like the current study have been extensively documented in catalogues by the Italian scholars. Therefore, these panels have also been included in the present work.

The data obtained from various collections was sifted and categorized based on their subject matter and architectural representation. Therefore, we divided the whole data into four major categories:

1. **Sacred architecture**
2. **Secular architecture**
3. **Funerary monuments**
4. **Architectural elements**

Category. 1. The sacred architecture is further divided into three sub-categories:

1.1. Stūpa: This sub-category is again divided into several types:

- 1.1.1. Stūpa with columns
- 1.1.2. Stūpa without columns
- 1.1.3. Stūpa models
- 1.1.4. Stūpas as reliquaries
- 1.1.5. Individual parts of a stūpa:
 - 1.1.5.1. Stūpa base
 - 1.1.5.2. Stūpa Drum
 - 1.1.5.3. Stūpa Dome
 - 1.1.5.4. Harmikā
 - 1.1.5.5. Chattras/Umbrellas
 - 1.1.5.6. Spacers
 - 1.1.5.7. Pinnacles
 - 1.1.5.8. Yaṣṭi

1.2. Vihāra: The vihara is further divided into three major types:

- 1.2.1. Vihāra without Buddha image
- 1.2.2. Vihāra with Buddha image inside/image shrine
- 1.2.3. Relic Shrine

1.3. Temple

Category. 2. Secular architecture:

This category is again divided into different sub-categories such as:

- 2.1. Huts
- 2.2. Military Architecture: It includes forts, towers and city gates with fortification walls
- 2.3. City gates representing different cities of the ancient India
- 2.4. Palace Gates
- 2.5. Palace Interiors: 2.5.1. Bedrooms 2.5.2. Court Halls 2.5.3. Dressing Rooms

2.6. Royal Stables

Category. 3. Funerary monuments

Category. 4. Architectural Elements: This category is further divided into different sub-categories and types, such as:

4.1 Balconies

4.2. Arches:

4.2.1. Voluted Carinated Arches

4.2.2. Voluted Round Arches

4.2.3. Simple Raised Round Arches with Carinated Extrados

4.2.4. Voluted Raised Round Arches with Carinated Extrados

4.2.5. Voluted Trefoil Arches

4.3. False Gable Arches

4.4. Pillars and pilasters:

4.4.1. Freestanding Pillars

4.4.2. Gandhāran-Persepolitan Pillars and Pilasters

4.4.3. Gandhāran-Corinthian Pillars and Pilasters

4.4.4. Gandhāran Composite Pillars

4.5. Brackets

4.5.1. Voluted Brackets

4.5.2. Cyma Recta Type Brackets

4.5.3. Cyma Reversa Type Brackets

4.5.4. Gandhāran-Corinthian Capital Shaped Brackets

4.5.5. Figured Brackets with Human Figures

4.5.6. Figured Brackets with Animal Figures

4.6. Decorative Motifs

4.6.1. Stepped Pyramid as a Decorative Motif

4.6.2. Geometric Decorative Motifs

4.6.3. Phytomorphic Decorative Motifs

4.6.4. Composite Decorative Motifs

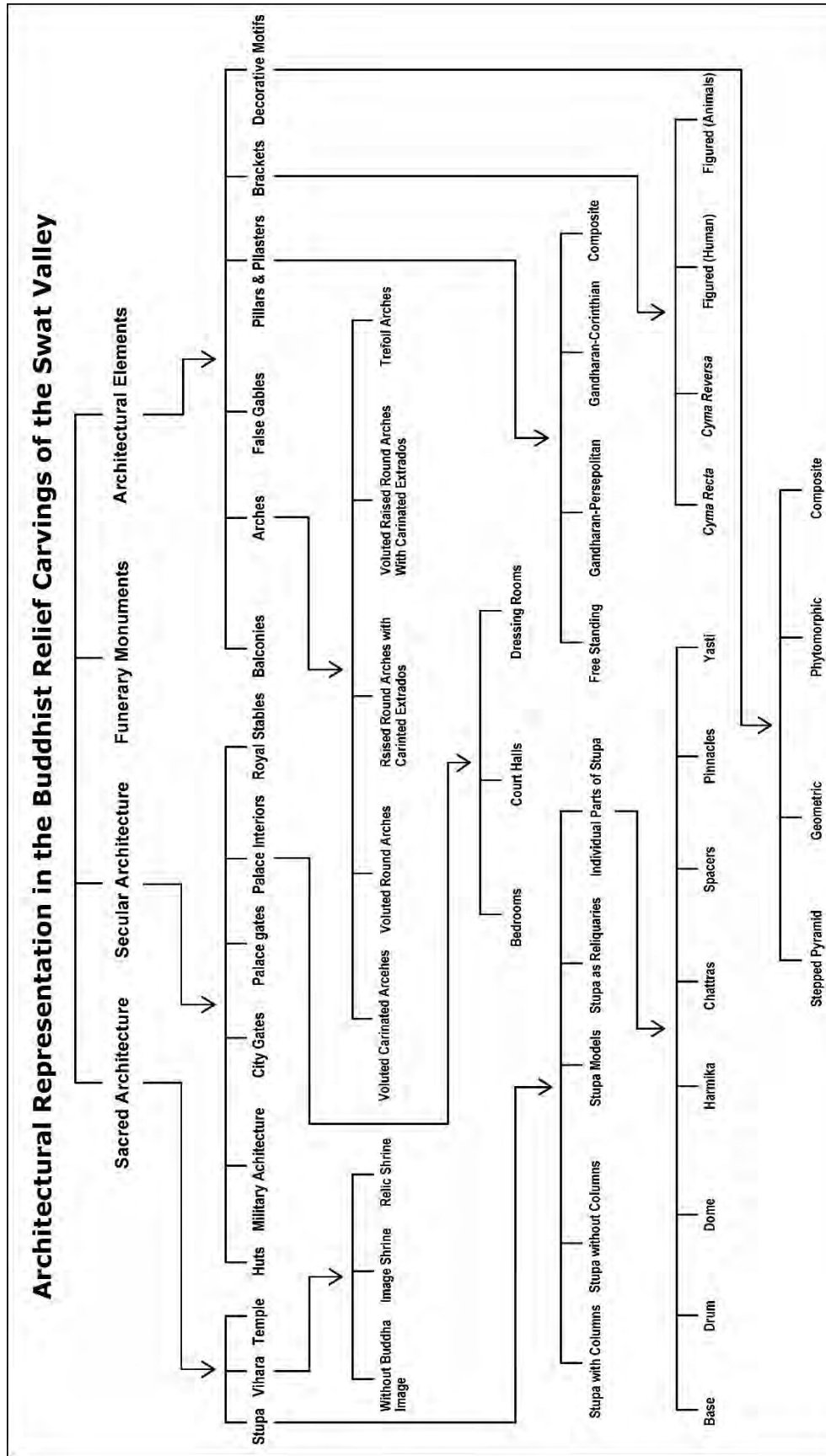


Fig. 2. Classification of Architectural features represented in Buddhist Relief Carvings.

5.2 Description of the Selected Reliefs

Category. 1. Sacred Architecture:

Sub-category. 1.1. Stūpa

Type. 1.1.1. Stūpa with columns

Pl. 1. Stūpa with Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns and railing design on the drum.

Acc. no.	BKG 2269	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	28.2x32x5.1
Provenance:	Barikot Ghwandai	Source:	Exc. 2011-13	Location:	Swat Museum

Description:

This relief panel is depicting a stūpa positioned on a square plinth. The lower drum is circular in plan without any decoration while the upper part shows a false security railing. A raised dome is resting upon the drum above which a square *harmikā* is decorated with rosette (lotus?). The *harmikā* is topped by three chattras in receding order. The stūpa is flanked by two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns on either side. The columns are standing on a pedestal with round shafts and bell-shaped capitals surmounted by lions.

Additionally, the podium and the lower drum are scribbled by an unknown person with faint but definite vertical lines along with short parallel horizontal lines creating a pattern resembling a false railing. According to Olivieri (2023: 69, fig. 11), this panel was found reused in the decoration of chapel 527 in courtyard 28 of Block D during excavation of the ancient city. Probably these lines were engraved in the time of reuse. The set of lines surrounding the podium, creating a fence-like pattern remind us of the Indian stūpas while the second set is engraved in the open space on the lower drum, just below the false-railing crafted by the sculptor. This might suggest that perhaps this feature was meant to be placed there.

References: Olivieri 2014b: 93-94, figs. 69-70, 2022: 116-17, fig. 36, 2023: 69, fig. 11.

Pl. 2. Stūpa with four columns topped by lions seated on their haunches.

Acc. no.	BKIII 1982-1-183	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	34.0x25.0x5.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Excavation 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

This rectangular panel exhibits a stūpa, provided with columns on the four corners on a square platform. The base of the platform is moulded with a stepped cornice and a sloping flight of four steps is provided at front. The four columns on the platform are standing on stepped pyramidal shaped bases with rounded tapering shaft and bell-shaped capital which is surmounted by a lion seated on its rear haunches and facing to the stūpa.

The stūpa has round base with projected cornice supporting two drums in recessed form whereas the upper one is enriched with a fence/*vedikā*. Above them is a

hemispherical dome surmounted by a square *harmikā* decorated with a four petalled rosette and topped by a pinnacle of three *chattras* (discs). Two worshippers with round faces are approaching from right to pay homage to the stūpa. An enframed Gandhāran-Corinthian column is bordered on left.

References: Rahman 1990: 704, fig. 10; 1991: 163, pl. 10; Swati 1997a: 37, pl. 5; 2007: 134, pl.5; Filigenzi 2002: 176, fig. 89; Spagnesi 2006: 156-57, fig.4; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 200, cat. no.114; Khan, G.R. 2015: 56, no. 26; Loeschner 2012: 15, fig.6.

Pl. 3. The Stūpa of Rāmagrāma with lion pillars.

Acc. no.	1981-1-67	Material:	Green phyllite	Size (cm):	16.8x14.5x4.5
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Excavation (1981)	Location:	University Museum

Description

This relief panel is showing a stūpa positioned on a plain square base. The lower drum is unadorned, while the upper one is decorated with a security railing. The dome is richly decorated with garland bearers and other motifs which are not identifiable because of wear and tear. The dome is surmounted by a now defaced reverse stepped pyramid shaped *harmikā* and two *chattras*. Additionally, at the far corners of the stūpa precinct, there are two Gandhāran-Persepolitan style pillars with bell-shaped capitals crowned by seated lions facing towards the stūpa.

In the forefront, there are two royal individuals seated. On the left a male royal figure sits in a chair, while on the right, a female is seated on a cushion-like seat with hands joined together in *añjalimudrā*. Both figures have their feet resting on a low stool. A female attendant is holding something in a basket and offering to the queen. Two other defaced figures are standing on either side of the stūpa in *añjalimudrā*. Probably, they are representing serpents or nāgas personified as human beings, identifiable by the hoods behind their heads. Perhaps, this scene depicts the Rāmagrāmā stūpa, guarded by these nāgas and commemorates the occasion when King Aśoka along with his queen visits the stūpa following its renovation.

References: Swati 1996b: 78, pl. 2; 2012: 11, pl. 14; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 201, cat. no. 116.

Pl. 4. Stūpa with two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns and garland bearers on drum.

Acc. no.	MK 13	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	53.5 x 6 x 24
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Malakand Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This rectangular panel is depicting two scenes sundered by an encased Corinthian pilaster. Starting from the right, a man is mounted on a horse holding a relic casket in both hands. The second scene on the left corner shows a stūpa resting on a quadrangular podium. The lower drum is plain while the upper drum shows garland bearers, above which a hemispherical dome is placed. The dome is crowned by a

square *harmikā* and three *chattras*. The stūpa is flanked by two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns on either side. The bases of the columns are stepped pyramidal with round tapering shafts and bell-shaped capitals, surmounted by seated lions. Two worshippers are standing on either side of the stūpa. One figure on the right is holding a lamp in his hands followed by another holding something/oil lamp? in his hands. The first figure on the left is also holding something (oil lamp/offering?) in his hands and the one on the extreme left corner is holding an oil lamp? in his left hand and a vajra/lamp? in the right. The panel is bordered by a plain fillet below and a floral decoration above.

References: Khan, M.A. 1993b: 115, no. 79; Pervaiz 2016: 36-37, fig. No. 30; Pervaiz, Ahmad and Nadeem 2019: 110, fig. no. 6. cf. Kurita 1988-90: I, 259, figs. 536-38.

Pl. 5. Columned stūpa sprouting from acanthus leaves.

Acc. no.	PM_02836	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	19.06x17.79x6
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol			Location:	Peshawar Museum
Source:	Excavation of Archaeological Department, 1906-07				

Description

The panel under study presents a composite stele or potentially a section of a false gable that exhibits a stūpa as its central theme. The lower part of this stele is broken except the lion-head protomes that upheld a flat surface on which the Stūpa is positioned. Towards the right corner of this platform are remnants of two human figures, one depicted in a prostrate position, another standing figure just behind, facing rightward and gazing towards the sky with clasped hands. Both figures are attired in lower garments with bare upper torsos. Presumably, similar figures are mirrored in the left corner of the panel, though only the legs of one person are visible due to the stele's damaged state. The stūpa's base takes the form of acanthus leaves, from which the superstructure emerges. Comprising two tiers of plain circular drums, the lower drum is succeeded by a row of modillions and a projecting cornice supporting the upper drum. This pattern repeats, sustaining the dome atop the stūpa. A small niche in the dome's center depicts a cross-legged Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*, flanked by niches featuring half-rosettes on either side of the stūpa. The base of the dome also features a row of modillions and a moulding, followed by an inverted lotus flower crowned by a square harmikā. This relic chamber is topped by four parasols, supported by pillars emerging from the three niches.

References: Ingholt 1957: 125-26, fig. 257; Kurita 2003: 265, 302, nos. 801, 936; Rhi 2008: 254, fig. 1; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 277, cat. no. 205; For stūpa with lotus base see Samad *et al.* 2021a: 26, pl. 16.

Pl. 6. Stūpa with Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns and false niche.

Acc. no.	PM_02832	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	43.21x43.21
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi	Source:	Excavation 1913	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This false gable arched panel is showing four distinct scenes arranged vertically. Starting from the uppermost section, the first scene portrays an unidentified event. The second scene depicts the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* of Buddha, followed by the third scene illustrating the distribution of relics. The fourth and last scene portrays the veneration of the stūpa, with monks standing on the right and nuns on the left, all in *añjalimudrā*. The stūpa is resting upon a low base which is quadrangular in plan. A double-tiered drum is positioned on the base above which a hemispherical dome is supporting a stepped-pyramidal shaped *harmikā* and *chattras*. A false niche is provided onto the front of the stūpa, running through the circular drums and reaching up to the dome. This false niche resembles in shape the whole panel on which it is carved. There are two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns on either side of the stūpa having animals (lions?) on their capitals. To the left of the panel, three successive couples are carved on balconies, each engaged in talking. Unfortunately, chipping has affected the same depiction on the right side of the panel. Above these balconies, two seated figures in *añjalimudrā* grace each side. The borders of the initial scene are adorned with laurel leaf and lozenge designs, while acanthus leaves embellish various areas.

References: Hargreaves: 1930: 104-105; Shakur 1954: 53, 101; Ingholt 1957: 102: pl. 167; Ali and Qazi 2008: 266, no. 12.6.

Pl. 7. Stūpa with Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns with bell-shaped capitals.

Acc. no.	SRO-913 Old no. TH-6367	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	34x12cm
Provenance:	Thareli Buddhist site	Source:	Exc. 1967	Location:	SRO

Description

This long rectangular panel is depicting two scenes which are separated by an enframed pilaster. The scene on the right is showing two figures atop horses, probably transporting the bodily relics of the Buddha to be buried in a stūpa. The left portion of the panel exhibits a stūpa which consists of a square base, lower and upper drums, hemispherical dome, *harmikā* and *chattras*. The stūpa is flanked by two columns at both corners of the podium, most probably Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns crowned by bell-shaped capitals and animals (lions?). In the foreground two devotees are standing at either side of the stūpa in *añjalimudrā*. Perhaps three other figures are standing at the back of the stūpa but due to bad state of preservation, nothing is identifiable.

References: Mizuno and Higuchi 1978: pl. 138/ 29; Khan, Z. 2017b: 189-90, pl. 88; Ingholt 1957: nos. 149, 157.

Pl. 8. A columned Stūpa with false niche on the front side (courtesy the British Museum).

Acc. no.	BM 1880.66	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.50x32x 5.70

Provenance: Jamal Garhi

Location: British
Museum

Source: Gifted by Mrs. Mary Eustace Smith to the former India Museum in 1876.

Description

The panel under study is part of a stūpa drum, depicting two distinct scenes: a broken incomplete part of the Buddha's Death scene on the left and the nearly complete representation of the Enshrinement of the Relics on the right.

The latter scene is comprised of a stūpa positioned on a rectangular base with corner columns. The columns are depicted with plain round tapering shafts topped by horizontally grooved capitals (Gandhāran-Persepolitan?). The base of the stūpa above the plinth is decorated with four-petalled flowers along its sides. The drum is in two tiers having acanthus motif decoration and support a dome above. Representation of a false gable niche is barely discernible on the front side of the dome, with a railing register at its base and a lotus design with stamens above. The dome is crowned by a square *harmikā* which is adorned with four parasols and a finial featuring pleated banners on either side. The stūpa is flanked by worshippers, one of whom is holding a reliquary, while others are shown with hands clasped in adoration.

Both scenes are separated by a double frame enclosing a column with a Corinthian capital. The cornice is embellished with squat brackets displaying a simplified horizontal 'S' shaped pattern, topped with acanthus capitals. The undersurface of the cornice panel exhibits saw-tooth pattern.

Reference: Zwalf 1996: I-II, 209, no. 235.

1.1.2. Stūpa without columns

Pl. 9. Stūpa with intricate designs on the drum and inverted lotus-shaped dome.

Acc. no.	OA 1902. 10-2.29	Material:	Greenish schist	Size (cm):	15x19.3x5
Provenance:	Swat	Source:	Gifted by captain B.C. Waterfield	Location:	British Museum

Description

The relief panel depicts a scene wherein monks and a lay couple worship a stūpa. Two monks, portrayed from their backs with joined hands, are positioned on the left, about to circumambulate the stūpa. Behind them, three defaced half-length figures are shown, one among them is a haloed deity holding an opening lotus. On the opposite side, a male figure holds a censer or lamp with a pointed flame, followed by a woman. The dresses and simplicity of the couple suggest that they are lay followers. Among the three damaged half-length figures above, one, with a lost face, holds a flower, while the others are also defaced.

The stūpa itself is resting upon a rectangular podium with a dentil-and-drop cornice and a moulded plinth. The lower drum has a diaper pattern of open flowers, defined by mouldings at the top and bottom. The plain register above it, is delineated by a moulded plinth and cornice, supporting a *vedikā* register with a bracket cornice. Beneath the dome, a continuous garland hangs from pegs with rosettes, and the top

of the dome displays a double row of centrally grooved lotus petals in relief at the base of the *harmikā*. Corinthian pilasters frame a panel with a six petalled flower under a bracket cornice of *cyma reversa* type. Above the *harmikā*, the *chattras* exhibits three broken parasols of diminishing circumference.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 178, pl. 299 (vol-I: 233 colour plate XI); Foucher 1905-51: I, 83, fig. 22; Marshall 1973: 76-77, Pl. 68. fig. 97; Kurita 1988-90: I, 240, pl. P4-X; Stoye 2008: 186, fig. 2; Behrendt 2007: 33, fig. 14; Jongeward 2019: 22, fig. 19.

Pl. 10. Stūpa with a flight of steps and railing design on the drum.

Acc. no.	SM-0243 (Inv. no. 2835)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	26.7x0.24
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel is carved with a stūpa resting on a quadrangular podium. The stūpa is accessed by a flight of steps in the front. The lower drum lacks ornamentation whereas the upper one is decorated with a false railing (*vedikā*). The hemispherical dome features garland undulating lotus flowers. The square *harmikā* is visible on the top of the dome while the *chattras* are missing. A devotee with folded hands can be seen on the left side of the stūpa.

Reference: Khan, M.A. 1993b: 30, no. 12

Fig. 11. Stūpa with a raised podium adored by elephants.

Acc. no.	CGP 1981-1-76	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	24.0x19.5x5.5
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Excavation 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

A much-defaced relief panel is probably depicting the stūpa of Rāmagrāma, worshipped or guarded by elephants (*Nāgas*). The stūpa is resting on a raised podium and topped by a stepped *harmikā* and *chattras* with garlands. Two elephants, each holding a lotus flower in its trunk adore or guard the stūpa on either side. The panel is bordered on the right by an encased Corinthian pilaster, above by a band of acanthus leaves and below by a plain moulding.

References: Swati 1996: 79, pl. 3; 2012: 8, pl. 10.

Pl. 12. Stūpa with a chequered design on the drum.

Acc. no.	AND 1966-1-13	Material:	Bluish Schist	Size (cm):	21.5x12.0x4.0
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	University Museum

Description

The lower right corner of this relief panel is broken, and remaining portion is partly defaced. The panel depicts the cult of the stūpa, positioned on a square base flanked

by two standing worshippers in *añjalimudrā* on either side. The drum is circular in plan exhibiting chequered design provided with well-defined lower and upper fillets. The plain hemispherical dome rests upon the drum, surmounted by a pyramidal shaped *harmikā* and three *chattras*.

Reference: Dani 1968-69a: 55, no. 11, pl. 15b.

Pl. 13. Stūpa with low podium and hemispherical dome topped by *harmikā* and *chattras*.

Acc. no.	DMC 1987	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	21.3x27.7
Provenance:	Baghrajai	Source:	Excavation 1980	Location:	Dir Museum (Reserve)

Description

This broken panel is comprised of three tiers, the upper tier is broken and defaced with traces of two human busts, the middle depicts pīpal leaf scroll, and the lower shows veneration of the stūpa. The stūpa is shown on the lower right corner of the panel with two devotees in adoration pose on either side. The worshippers on the right side are broken above their waistline while those on the left are intact. An encased Corinthian pilaster separates them from the three devotees on the left corner, who are complete in their appearance. The stūpa rests upon a podium which is quadrangular in plan, the drum is divided into two by a moulding in the middle with a hemispherical dome above. The pyramidal shaped *harmikā* is surmounted by five *chattras*.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 596, fig. 297; Kurita 1988-90: I, 255, no. 523; Anwar and Wahab 2021: 108, pl. 6.

Pl. 14. Stūpa with a single drum and inverted lotus-shaped dome.

Acc. no.	MK 17	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	14.5x16.0x3.0
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Malakand Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This panel shows incomplete scene of the stūpa cult. The stūpa is depicted in lower compartment of the panel surrounded by two worshippers on either side. The figure on the right side is partly chipped and defaced with a raised right hand in reassurance pose and the left perhaps securing the hem of his drapery. The other worshipper on the left of the stūpa is slightly turned towards the stūpa with hands joined together in *añjalimudrā*. The stūpa itself is placed on a square base and a single drum with distinct mouldings, perhaps decorated with floral motifs but now due to wear and tear nothing is recognizable. The hemispherical dome is adorned with an inverted lotus flower emerging from the base of a square-shaped *harmikā*. The *harmikā* is supporting a thick cylindrical *Yaṣṭi* with a single parasol. On the extreme left corner there is an enframed Corinthian pilaster. The cornice of the panel is decorated with a pīpal scroll bracketed by a row of lozenges and ovals in the lower fillet and a braid motif is embellishing the topmost fillet.

References: Parvaiz 2016: 157, fig. 31; Parvaiz, Ahmad and Nadeem 2019: 118, pl. 27.

Pl. 15. Stūpa with a flight of steps, surrounded by serpents.

Acc. no.	PM_02840	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	30 x 29 x 4.90
Provenance:	Shaikhani Dheri, Peshawar	Source:	Purchased, 1941	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The worship of a stūpa inside a stylized pointed arch is beautifully depicted in this relief panel. The arch's border is embellished with vine scrolls and saw-tooth designs. The stūpa is surrounded by four devotees, two on either side with hands clasped in *añjalimudrā* except the one on the left corner, who is holding something in his raised right hand (bunch of flowers?). He is distinguished by his attire and jewellery, appears to be a royal figure.

The stūpa is positioned on square base of a considerable height with a central flight of steps, flanked by full-blown lotus flower on either side. A denticulate design is running below the cornice of the podium. Above, a single drum is depicted which is treated with vine scroll and denticulate patterns. A projected moulding sits above the drum above which part of the stūpa is concealed under curled snakes/*nāgas* with prominent raised heads on each side, most probably the hidden part is comprised of an upper drum and part of the dome. The upper part of the dome is in the shape of an inverted lotus, supporting a pyramidal-shaped *harmikā*, with three *chattras* resting upon it.

References: Ali and Qazi 2008: 275, No. 12.13; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 215, cat. no. 143, Tissot 1985: fig. 85; Kurita 1990: II, 257, no. 530.

Pl. 16. Three complete stūpas in a relief with slight variations.

Acc. no.	PM_02838	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.25x31.77
Provenance:	Dargai, Malakand	Source:	Purchased in 1936	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This incomplete relief panel illustrates three stūpas accompanied by worshippers. Starting from the left, the initial stūpa is resting upon a square podium embellished with a comprehensive array of disc motifs. Its lower drum is plain with distinct mouldings at both the base and top. The upper drum exhibits a *vedikā* design, while the dome remains unadorned except for an inverted flower, possibly a lotus, situated at the apex, sprouting from the base of a stepped pyramidal-shaped *harmikā*. Three fragmented *chattras* are emerging from the *harmikā*. There is a royal devotee with clasped hands on the right side of the stūpa. The second stūpa closely resembles the first, differing primarily in the ornamentation of its base, which consists of single rosettes within panels, and a beaded pattern on the upper drum. Adjacent to the second stūpa, head of another worshipper can be seen on the right side. These two stūpas are separated from the one situated on the right corner by an encased Corinthian pilaster. On the left of the third stūpa, a worshipper stands with clasped

hands. The base of this stūpa is rectangular in plan, exhibits decorative rosettes within distinct panels, while rest of the structure mirrors the characteristics of the other stūpas.

References: Kurita 1988-90, I: 258, no. 535; Sehrai 1982: 60, no. 69; Ingholt 1957: 98, no. 155.

Pl. 17. A complete stūpa placed on a square base.

Acc. no.	SRO-8	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	36x10
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Railway Police, Peshawar	Location:	SRO

Description

This long curvilinear panel is divided into three sections by encased Corinthian pilasters. Starting from the right, the first section exhibits the distribution of relics over an embellished couch in front of five human figures. The second section shows two horsemen riding to the left, wearing turbans and holding something (relic container?) in the left hand. Another turbaned male figure follows the horses. The third and last part of the panel is displaying a stūpa, surrounded by two worshippers on either side, each with folded hands facing to the stūpa. The stūpa is positioned on a square base, having a low round drum, and a hemispherical dome surmounted by a *harmikā* and *chattras*. The panel is bordered above with acanthus leaves decoration.

Reference: Khan, Z. 2017: 188-89, Pl. 86.

1.1.3. Stūpa Models

Pl. 18. Stūpa Model with Buddha figures under stylized trees and vegetative embellishments.

Acc. no.	NG 390 (SM-1811)	Material:	Soapstone	Size (cm):	40.5x19
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A model Stūpa, discovered in eight fragments, having visible traces of red pigment and remnants of gold leaf on the *chattras*. The base is square with a height of 3 1/2 inches, illustrates three seated Buddha figures under stylized trees in *dhyānamudrā* on every side. Gandhāran-Corinthian pillars are positioned at every corner of the base. Above the base, there is a circular drum, displaying half rosettes within filleted triangles on its face with a rounded moulding at the bottom and a row of brackets with simple incised lines in the centre form the upper rim. The next circular storey is decorated with a balustrade motif and a protruding upper rim. The dome is carved with a recessed square at the top, housing a central hole. The dome is decorated with straight lines around the central hole suggesting stamen and descending rows of lotus petals, a raised band featuring lanceolate leaves, and a festoon with opposite pointed leaves at the bottom.

The square base of the *harmikā* is ornamented with a rosette flanked by pillars on each side, topped by a stepped pyramid. This pyramid consists of three tiers adorned

with vegetative motifs on the bottom and sides, culminating in a bracketed slab. Further embellishments include a level with alternating relief squares bordered by flat decorated rectangular medallions, concluding with stepped triangles at the top. The three *chattras*, progressively diminishing in size, possess flat tops and are ornamented with broad lotus leaves at the base, along with a raised center. Notably, a through hole is present in the upper components.

References: Khan, M.A. 1993b: 119, no.82; Rahman, I. 1968: 130; Faccenna 2001: tav. 154 (a).

Pl. 19. Stūpa model representing floral decorations and three circumambulatory passages.

Acc. no.	SHK 1963-1-42	Material:	Brownish schist	Size (cm):	a. 19.5x19.5x9.0 b. 22.25x14.25
Provenance:	Shaikhan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1963-64	Location:	University Museum

Description

The stūpa model is comprising of two separate components: the base and the drum. The square base, measuring 8 inches on each side, with Corinthian pillars at its corners and one in the middle of each side, demarcating a five-petalled rosette. The cornice of the base is supported by eight brackets, while its flat upper surface imitates the circumambulation passage. There is a central hollow for the socket and a deep recess for housing relics. The drum consists of three raised mouldings, suggests two additional circumambulatory passages in the upper sections. Between the lower two mouldings, there is a straight festoon with opposite ovate leaves facing left while the upper mouldings display a scroll of acanthus leaves within volutes. Above the final moulding, pillars are positioned to support the main solid drum, culminating in large lotus petals at its peak. A pyramidal-shaped *harmikā* is placed on top of the dome, having a central hole for supporting *chattra*, with three corresponding pieces discovered later (no. 2223). Surprisingly, despite the lavish ornamentation, the stūpa model notably lacks any depiction of the Buddha figure. The overall height, up to the *harmikā*, measures 12 inches.

Reference: Dani 1965: 43, pl. XIX, no. 1.

Pl. 20. Model stūpa with Buddha figures on four faces of the podium (courtesy V&A Museum).

Acc. no.	IS.299-1951	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	119x58x30
Provenance:	Takht-i-bahi	Source:	Purchased from Major General H.L. Haughton	Location:	V&A Museum

Description

This stūpa model was perhaps utilized as a reliquary, comprised of three parts: a square base surmounted by a dome, adorned with three *chattras*. Each face of the base depicts a seated Buddha in meditation worshipped by devotees, enframed by pilasters embellished with Hellenistic Corinthian capitals and an acanthus-leaf motif

above. The dome is supported by two superimposed drums, one with a checkered grid pattern and the other with a lattice design, separated by a torus with bay leaf moulding. On the front, there is an ornamental false window with three scenes: depicting the death of Buddha in the lower scene within a recessed frame, Buddha in *dhyānamudrā* worshiped by monks in the gable scene, and again Buddha meditating alone with *nāgas* forming a vault over him. The framing of the false window is enriched with leaf moulding over the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* and saw-tooth moulding over the upper half. The dome is decorated with a double row of hanging lotus, from whose starting point rises the square base of the *harmikā*. The reverse stepped pyramid shaped *harmikā* is decorated with a balustrade featuring a zigzag crenellation at the top. The *harmikā* platform is decorated with engraved patterns, and from it rises a thick trunk carrying three diminishing parasols, the lowest resting on a lotus blossom. Within this reliquary was discovered a small gold-leaf casket (IS.299:B-1951) which contained bone fragments and stone beads.

Reference: Ackerman 1975: 98-99, pl. XXXIII, XXXIV.

Pl. 21. Stūpa model having four stages decorated with geometric and floral motifs.

Acc. no.	PM_00395	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	26.69x 33.04ø
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi	Location:	Peshawar Museum		

Source: Excavation of Archaeological Department, Frontier Circle, 1907-08

Description

A nearly complete stūpa model is comprised of four stages and a central hole at the top designed to accommodate the shaft of the *harmikā*. The structure is beautifully carved with floral and geometric designs. The three circular drums and the dome progressively diminish in size towards the top. Each drum, except the lowest one, is supported by a row of modillions. The decorative motifs on the drums vary, with the bottom one illustrating a row of trifid calices, alternating vertical and reverse. The next drum is displaying a straight festoon with opposite pointed leaves, facing left. The third drum is adorned with a chequered grid pattern. At the top of the structure, the dome is decorated with swirling lines surrounding the central hole, symbolizing stamen of the flower. Below this, there are two concentric rows of overlapping lotus petals and sepals. The raised section of the dome, situated just above the final drum, is carved with three incised lines.

Reference: Ingholt 1957: 174, no. 472.

Pl. 22. Stūpa model with Buddha figures and floral decorations.

Acc. no.	DMC 1169	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	21 Ht. 19.5 Ø
Provenance:	Dir	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This stūpa model consists of three circular drums and a raised dome. The lower drum represents six scenes of Buddha sitting in meditation pose worshipped by a devotee

on either side, separated by Corinthian pilaster. The scenes are enclosed at the bottom with plain fillets and brackets at the top. The second drum illustrates floral decoration (vine/pīpal scroll?) with plain projected cornice below and brackets above. The upper drum portrays chequered grid with alternating relief squares topped by a slightly projected cornice supported by brackets (?). The dome is somewhat cylindrical or raised in shape embellished with inverted lotus flower featuring stamens and double row of overlapping petals along with sepals.

Reference: Zwalf 1996: I-II, 341, no. 638.

Pl. 23. Stūpa model with intricate decoration and broken trefoil arch.

Acc. no.	PM_01102	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.25 Ht. 12.71ø
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi			Location:	Peshawar Museum
Source:	Superintendent of Archaeological Department, Frontier Circle, on loan from D.G.A. (Excavation 1911-12)				

Description

The Stūpa model, although lavishly adorned with intricate motifs, unfortunately suffers bad state of preservation. The remnants of the lower drum exhibit a plain circular form with a saw-tooth design above, succeeded by a projecting moulding. The second storey features a row of leaves making an undulating pattern. A slightly raised plain moulding separates this from another decorative band above, consisting of opposing triangles filled with parallel lines. The dome is elevated and accommodates an inverted lotus flower, exhibiting a well-defined stamen and a double row of broad-petalled leaves. Remains of a trefoil arch can be seen on the front of this model stūpa, but nothing can be discerned except that it was once inhabited by a figure (figures ?).

Reference: Khan, M.A. Hassan and Lone 2005: I, 263, 2005: II, 261, no. 349 (for lotus decoration on dome).

Pl. 24. Hemispherical model stūpa with railing design and caitya-style *torāṇas* on four sides.

Acc. no.	PM_01115	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	13.98 Ht. 22.87 ø
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Guides Mess Mardan	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

A beautiful depiction of a hemispherical domed stūpa, enclosed by a massive stone railing pierced by four caitya-style *torāṇas*, strategically positioned on each side. The gateways are decorated with the figures of Buddha at their centers. Unfortunately, the Buddha images within the gateways have been defaced, leaving only fragments devoid of discernible significance. At the top of the hemispherical dome, a recessed square with a central hole is designed to accommodate a *harmikā*, and a *yaṣṭi* to support *chattras*. This architectural manifestation reminds us of the

characteristic style of Indian stūpas, exemplified by the renowned Sānchi stūpa located in the Madhya Pradesh state of India.

Reference: Foucher 1905: I, 55-59, figs. 9-12; Ingholt 1957: 174, no. 471.

Pl. 25. Upper part of a model stūpa with floral and geometric designs.

Acc. no.	PM_00081	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79 Ht. 25.42 ø
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	P.G.G. Pison, Esquire, I. C. S	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The upper part of a model stūpa executed with intricate floral and geometric designs. The lower drum is adorned with a chequered grid pattern, having alternate relief squares, followed by a projected moulding. Subsequently, a plain circular drum precedes a raised rope moulding, adorned with a straight festoon of overlapping lanceolate leaves that face left. The dome is decorated with a full-blown lotus flower, featuring a prominent stamen or button, along with a double corolla of petals and single row of sepals.

Reference: Kurita 2003: 267, no. 809.

Pl. 26. Miniature stūpa wrought out in one piece of stone.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1982-1-8	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	9.5x18.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

A miniature model stūpa comprises a circular base (or lower drum), a projected drum (upper one), a hemispherical dome and a plain square *harmikā*, executed in one piece of stone. The drum is marked by projected bands at the centre; two more thick projected bands are provided one each above and below the double bands. The upper portion of the drum is roughly finished.

Reference: Khan, G.R. 2015: 264, no. 208.

1.1.4. Stūpa as Reliquaries

Pl. 27. Stūpa-shaped reliquary with incised lotus flower on the dome.

Acc. No.	SM-939 (SS-0938)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	39.3 Ht.
Provenance:	Saidu Sharif	Source:	Exc. 1964- 82	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The base of this stūpa-shaped reliquary is hollow and circular in plan. It is bordered by plain fillets both below and above, followed by *cyma-reversa* type brackets that supports the next part. This section is an ovoid cavity that open at the bottom, designed to fit downwards into the circular recess of the base. It consists of a circular

drum enclosed by plain fillets both at the bottom and top. The dome is supported by *cyma reversa* type brackets at the bottom and decorated with a lotus flower, potentially added later evidenced by its irregular incised lines. The dome is pierced to accommodate the cylindrical tenon of the third part, the *harmikā* and *chattras* in one piece. The *harmikā* superstructure is a stepped pyramid, surmounted by five parasols.

References: Kurita 1990: II, 251, no. 757; Zwalf 1996: 340, fig. 636

Pl. 28. Stūpa-shaped reliquary decorated with finely crafted lotus flower on the dome.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-160	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	a. 111.1x99.2 b. 114.3x46.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

A finely crafted stūpa-shaped reliquary illustrates a smooth outer surface. It is comprised of two parts, the lower portion with a circular base and moulds, a two-tiered drum, and a hemispherical dome intricately carved with inverted lotus flower. The upper part shows a circular stepped *harmikā*, surmounted by four recessed *chattras*, each demarcated by spacers affixed to the vertical shaft. Well-defined layers of moulds embellish the base and both drums, while vertical incised lines adorn the upper drum. This reliquary also contained a small gold box.

References: Wilson 1841: 53, fig. 1, pl. III; Marshall 1951: III, pl. 80, no. g; Zwalf 1996: II, no. 636; Khan, G.R. 2015: 266, no. 211.

Pl. 29. Stūpa-shaped reliquary with plain dome and incised railing design on the drum.

Acc. No.	SM-941 (SS-1206)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	0.30x0.14
Provenance:	Saidu Sharif	Source:	Exc. 1964-82	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This stūpa-shaped reliquary features a smooth exterior. Its base is circular in plan and characterized by prominent mouldings both at the bottom and top. A two-tiered drum is resting upon the base, having well-defined mouldings and incised lines with intersecting vertical and horizontal bars embellish its upper tier. The dome, hemispherical in shape and devoid of ornamentation, is pierced to accommodate the cylindrical tenon of the upper part, encompassing the *harmikā* and *chattras* united into one piece. The *harmikā* superstructure assumes a circular, stepped configuration, topped by four parasols progressively diminishing in size as they ascend.

References: Khan, M.A. 1993b: 118, no. 81, cf. Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 205, cat. 122; Jongeward 2019: 25, fig. 3.

Pl. 30. Stūpa-shaped relic casket with chequered design on the drum.

Acc. No.	GTK 1985-1-3 (in two pieces with Ref. nos. 3 and 3A)	Material:	Soapstone	Size (cm):	7.2x7.2x2.9/ 5.0x11.6
Provenance:	Gumbatkai	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

A small reliquary in the shape of a stūpa is comprised of distinct elements: a square base adorned with fillets both above and below, two cylindrical drums, dome, *harmikā* and *chattras*. The lower drum lacks ornamentation and is enclosed within simple fillets at its top and bottom. A projected moulding separates the upper drum, which is decorated with a net of oblique lines and bordered by plain fillets at its extremities. Transitioning from the upper drum is a projecting cornice leading to the hemispherical dome, which displays identical ornamentation found on the upper drum, embellishing its lower part, while its upper section is plain. The dome is pierced to accommodate the cylindrical tenon of the summit, marked by a circular stepped *harmikā* and four *chattras*.

Reference: Kurita 2003: 251, figs. 757-759.

Pl. 31. Reliquary in the shape of a small Stūpa with square base.

Acc. No.	SM-1099 (Inv. no. 2115)	Material:	Soapstone?	Size (cm):	14.5x9x9
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-57	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This small Stūpa-shaped reliquary consists of a square base with well-defined mouldings at the top and base, a circular drum and a hemispherical dome topped by a square *harmikā*. The entire structure is devoid of any embellishments.

Reference: Faccenna 1962: I, 58, fig. 77.

Pl. 32. Reliquary in the shape of a small stūpa with circular base.

Acc. No.	SM 1116 (BKI 2808)	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	H. 10 W. 10.2
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A stūpa-shaped relic casket is comprised of a circular base with plain fillets above and below. The next part is a raised hemispherical dome with a narrow circular drum that fits downwards into the recessed cavity of the base. Remains of a broken *harmikā* can be noticed on top of the dome. This structure shows no decorations.

Reference: Faccenna 1962: I, 155, fig. 187.

1.1.5. Individual Parts of a Stūpa:

1.1.5.1. Stūpa Base

Pl. 33. Stepped base of a small stūpa with floral motifs.

Acc. No.	DMC 835	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	36x36
Provenance:	Jabagai	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

The art piece under study exhibits a stepped base of a small stūpa in pyramidal shape with three tiers gradually decreasing in size as it ascends. The first two tiers are decorated with half-rosettes placed within filleted triangles that face in opposite directions on both their sides and undersides. The final segment is embellished with a row of overlapping pīpal leaves, present on both its sides and undersides.

References: Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 47, pl. 16 (1, 2); Raducha 2010: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AJB76H5VXQVN6Q8Q> (accessed August 5, 2024).

1.1.5.2. Stūpa Drum/Storey

Pl. 34. Stūpa drum with garland bearers.

Acc. No.	DMC 731	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	8.5 Ht. 33 ø
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This circular drum of a stūpa is composed of two broken pieces joined together. It depicts *amorini* or nude cupids, providing support to an undulating garland characterized by a straight festoon decorated with overlapping lanceolate leaves, all facing to the right and bound by a double ribbon. The lower hollows of the garland are adorned with four-petalled rosettes, while the upper hollows are upheld by *amorini*. Pendant elements are hanging down from the bottom of the lower hollow. The lower moulding of the circular drum exhibits significant projection and is distinguished by three sections of plain fillets, whereas the upper moulding consists of a single plain fillet.

References: Ingholt 1957: figs. 374-380; Dani 1968-69b: pl. 50, c. no. 98; Bromberg 1988: 67-85, figs. 1, 6-12; Swati 1997d: 115-30, pls. 1-20; Rahman 1995: 5-15, pls. I-VI; Kurita 2003: 220-21, nos. 653-660; Khan, G.R. 2015: 154-89, pls. 109-33.

Pl. 35. Stūpa storey with naked *amorini* holding an undulating garland.

Acc. No.	LBN-1981-1-51	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	20.0x10.0x7.0
Provenance:	Loebanr	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

A fragment of a stūpa drum is depicted with *amorini* bearing an undulating garland draped over their right shoulders, progressing to the left. Starting from the right, the garland is decorated with alternating lanceolate leaves and a twisted beaded pattern, interspersed by a plain band. The central dips feature four-petalled rosettes, and at the bottom of the lower central depression, a bunch of lotus buds hangs from their stalks. This scene is enclosed by four tiers of plain fillets both below and above. The upper fillet is again surmounted by *cyma reversa*-type brackets characterized by vertical central grooves.

References: Ingholt 1957: nos. 374-380; ; Bromberg 1988: 67-85, figs. 1, 6-12; Swati 1997d: 115-30, pls. 1-20; Rahman 1995: 5-15, pls. I-VI; Kurita 2003: 220-21, nos. 653-660; Khan, G.R. 2015: 154-89, pls. 109-33.

Pl. 36. Stūpa drum carved with garland bearers.

Acc. No.	LBN-1981-1-52	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	24.5x9.5x7.5
Provenance:	Loebanr	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

A broken segment of a stūpa drum depicts four *amorini* standing frontally, supporting an undulating garland over their shoulders. A five-petalled rosette and busts of two other *amorini* peering behind the lower hollows (dips) of the garland. Beginning from the right, the garland is adorned with a twisted beaded motif alternating by a plain band and lanceolate leaves. Below the central troughs of the undulating garland, a bunch of lotus buds hanging loosely from their stalks. The composition is bordered by four tiers of plain fillets both below and above, with the upper fillet surmounted by *cyma reversa*-type brackets featuring vertical central grooves.

References: Ingholt 1957: figs. 374-380; Swati 1997d: 115-30, pls. 1-20; Rahman 1995: 5-15, pls. I-VI; Kurita 2003: 220-21, nos. 653-660; Khan, G.R. 2015: 154-89, pls. 109-33.

PL. 37. Circular drum of a stūpa carved with eight different scenes.

Acc. No.	DMC 762	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	12.5 Ht. 47.5 ø
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This complete circular drum of a stūpa is decorated with eight distinct scenes, each separated by enclosed Corinthian pilasters. Among these, four scenes depict Buddha seated in *dhyānamudrā* flanked by followers holding lotus flowers. The other three scenes portray Buddha seated in *abhayamudrā*, accompanied by worshippers offering lotus flowers. One scene illustrates the taming of an elephant, wherein an elephant emerges from a city gate, and Buddha, with his right hand placed over his head, is flanked by two other figures standing behind him.

References: Dani 1968-69b: 65-102; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 204, cat. no. 121.

Pl. 38. Drum of a stūpa depicting Buddha and ascetics in different poses.

Acc. No.	DMC 763	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	10 Ht. 41.5 ø
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A complete circular drum of a stūpa represents an image of Buddha seated in a meditative posture (dhyānamudrā) under a trefoil arch, while three bearded ascetics stand outside the niche, bowing in adoration with folded hands. Additional scenes are separated by trees characterized by upward wavy branches and lanceolate leaves. These scenes depict Kāśyapa seated within a hut, accompanied by attendants and monks. The lower moulding of the drum is a double-tiered plain fillet, whereas the upper moulding is supported by a cyma reversa pattern with centrally positioned vertical grooves.

References: Dani 1968-69b: 65-102; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 204, cat. no. 121.

Pl. 39. Stūpa drum representing eight scenes from the life story of prince Siddhārtha.

Acc. No.	DMC 764	Material:	Light grey Schist	Size (cm):	7.5 Ht. 39.6 ø
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Excavation 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A circular drum is carved with eight scenes from the life story of prince Siddhārtha, separated by encased Corinthian pilasters. The first scene shows the dream of queen Māyā, second one depicts interpretation of the dream by Rishi Aśita while the third one is about the birth of Siddhārtha. The fourth scene portrays return of the baby and queen to Kapilavastu, the fifth one is an elephant leading a chariot dragged by lions and this is also perhaps the continuation of the fourth scene. The sixth scene is about the horoscope of Siddhārtha, the seventh exhibits the school going scene of prince Siddhārtha and the last one shows Siddhārtha learning wrestling. The upper moulding is supported by *cyma reversa* type brackets with centralized vertical grooves.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 187, fig. 73; Dani 1968-69b: 65-102; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 204, cat. no. 121.

Pl. 40. Half broken circular drum of a stūpa with chequered design and lotus flower.

Acc. No.	DMC 825	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	7.6 Ht. 32.5 ø
Provenance:	Jabagai	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A half broken circular drum is carved with a continuous pattern of chequered grid design having alternate relief squares followed by an enframed lotus flower. The top cornice is supported by *cyma reversa* with centrally positioned grooves.

References: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A67MPHKJROLCBM8U> (accessed July 2, 2024); Samad *et al.* 2021a: figs. 437, 536, 600, 1442, 1452.

Pl. 41. Stūpa drum with Buddha's alms bowl.

Acc. No.	NG 132	Material:	Light Green Schist	Size (in):	1 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 4 1/4"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Circular tier/drum of a miniature stūpa is adorned with a railing design situated between a fillet and cornice interspersed with a panel, potentially the lowest section of a false gable. The panel illustrates the Buddha's alms bowl, placed on a throne encompassed by vertical bands of lanceolate leaves, all enclosed by a flat frame.

References: Kurita 2003: 256, nos. 773, 776, 777; Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AB3NW6PK7GDE3684> (accessed August 5, 2024).

Pl. 42. Plain drum of a miniature Stūpa.

Acc. No.	NG 083	Material:	Soapstone	Size (in):	8 3/4" x 8 3/4" (diam) x 2" (Ht 2" Dia 8.5")
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This circular tier of a miniature stūpa is adorned with a rounded moulding both below and above, with an undecorated surface in between. There is a central through hole measuring 3/4 inch. It was found in three separate pieces.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AYQUCEWM3G67KE8A> (accessed July 10, 2024).

1.1.5.3. Stūpa Dome

Pl. 43. Hemispherical dome of a stūpa decorated with lotus flower.

Acc. No.	DMC 627	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	35 Ø
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A hemispherical dome of a stūpa is decorated with an inverted full-blown lotus flower on its exterior surface. There is a hole instead of a pistil while stamen, double row of petals and sepals are beautifully carved.

Reference: Dani 1968-69b: 65-102.

Pl. 44. Dome of a stūpa with lotus flower on its exterior surface.

Acc. No.	DMC 732	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	33 ø
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A complete dome of a stūpa is adorned with inverted lotus flower and other intricate vegetative designs. Starting from the lowest segment, a row of trifid calices is beautifully carved, alternating in a vertical and reverse pattern, spaced apart. Above this, a series of straight festoon with lanceolate leaves facing right is prominently featured. At the apex, there is a recessed square with a central opening, presumably designed for holding a central pole around which spacers and chattras could be arranged. Swirling lines, representing stamens, extend from this central point, giving rise to three tiers of descending lotus petals and sepals.

References: Dani 1968-69: 65-102; ; Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AAJCC4PPLJCGK38U> (accessed June 8, 2024).

Pl. 45. Stūpa dome decorated with lotus petals.

Acc. No.	DMC 823	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	30 ø
Provenance:	Jabagai	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Stūpa dome adorned with double row of lotus petals along with sepals, descend from a central square opening.

Reference: cf. DMC 828 and DMC 1148, Dir Museum Chakdara.

Pl. 46. Dome of a votive stūpa with three rows of lotus petal decoration.

Acc. No.	NG 224	Material:	Light greenish schist	Size (in):	18 Ht.
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Dome of a votive stūpa illustrates a recessed square at the top, containing a central hole presumably designed to accommodate a pole for the placement of spacers and *chattras*. Intricate swirling lines around the sunken square resemble flower stamens, leading to three rows of descending full-blown lotus petals. A raised rope of lanceolate leaves is

dividing the lower section which is adorned with half rosettes enclosed within filleted opposite triangles. The central hole measures approximately 1 1/4 inches in diameter.

References: Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 204, cat. no. 120; ; Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AAJCC4PPLJCGK38U> (accessed June 8, 2024).

Pl. 47. Portion of a hemispherical dome with an overlapping row of bifurcated round petals.

Acc. No.	NG 054	Material:	Greenish black stone	Size (cm):	12.7x28x9.53
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Surface find	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Fragment of a hemispherical dome with an overlapping row of bifurcated round petals (lotus?) on the exterior surface.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AIOSUIIR7OKQ7S8F> (accessed June 8, 2024).

Pl. 48. Dome of a stūpa with lotus and false gable depiction.

Acc. No.	NG 245	Material:	Light Greenish Stone (Schist)	Size (cm):	21.0x40.64x8.9
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The dome of a stūpa consists of two pieces. At the top, there is a sunken square with a central hole, presumably intended for holding a central pole around which spacers and *chattras* would be arranged. Radiating lines resembling the stamen of a flower extend from this point, from which two rows of full lotus petals descend. The lower segment is separated by a raised rope featuring a twisting fillet and beads. This section is further decorated with a series of square panels, each divided into triangles housing indented triangles and filleted rosettes. One of the petals near a missing portion of the dome exhibits the carved torso of a Fig., suggesting that the absent area may have once held votive Figures or a false gable.

References: Ingholt 1957: 174, no. 471; Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/ARMKV7D7I7QNU38G> (accessed June 9, 2024).

1.1.5.4. Harmikā

Pl. 49. Cubic *harmikā* with four different scenes.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-178	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	35.5x35.5x20.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

This cubic *harmikā* is depicting four different scenes on its four faces. The corners are bordered by broad Corinthian pilasters sometimes bear short flute on its outer shafts and the cornices are uniformly decorated with horizontal lanceolate leaves motif. The scenes represented here are the birth and the great departure of the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha, the worship of the vihāra and the seated Buddha with devotees.

References: Swati 1997a: 39, 42, pls. 10, 18, 19 & 2007: 136, 139, pls. 10, 18, 19
Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 203, cat. no. 119 (a-d)
Khan, G.R. 2015: 32, 33, 50, 51, 60, 61, 88, 89, 236, 237, nos. 9, 21, 29, 55, 174, 175

Pl. 50. Cubic *harmikā* showing Buddha and divinities.

Acc. No.	BKIII-1985-1-198	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	35.0x34.0x21.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Excavation 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

A cubic *harmikā* illustrating seated Buddha in *abhayamudrā* under an arboreal canopy, accompanied by Indra and Brahma in *añjalimudrā*. This depiction is presented on three faces of the *harmikā* with slight variations. The fourth scene is also about seated Buddha flanked by shaven-headed monks but here the Buddha is shown in *dhyānamudrā*. Corinthian pilasters adorn all four corners of the *harmikā*, and the cornice is adorned with a design of lanceolate leaves.

Reference: Khan, G.R. 2015: 68-71, 88, 89, nos. 35-37, 55, 56.

Pl. 51. *Harmikā* carved with Buddha and Maitreya images.

Acc. No.	DMCD 617	Material:	Blue Schist	Size (cm):	13.0x14.0
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This intricately carved *harmikā* exhibits Corinthian pillars positioned at each of its four corners. Between these pillars, figures are carved on all four faces. Three sides depict Maitreya seated in *abhayamudrā*, accompanied by two standing devotees, a male and a female. Maitreya holds a *kamaṇḍalu* in his left hand. On the fourth side, the carving depicts Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*, accompanied by a devotee on either side. The Corinthian pillars at the corners have pyramidal bases, square-tapering shafts, and capitals adorned with acanthus leaves. The shafts exhibit a long vertical oblong flute, slightly sunk at the center, with top and bottom curved inwardly. The cornice is adorned with a leaf-and-dart motif.

Reference: Dani 1968-69b: 87, pl. 49a.

Pl. 52. A small square *harmikā* with floral decoration.

Acc. No.	DMC 626	Material:	Blue schist	Size (cm):	5.9x9.3
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A diminutive square *harmikā* is beautifully carved with Corinthian pillars on each of its four corners. A full-bloomed lotus flower and four-petalled rosette is carved alternately on its four faces. The Corinthian pillars comprised of pyramidal bases, tapering shafts, and capitals adorned with finely detailed acanthus leaves. The shafts are distinguished by a long vertical flute, slightly sunk in the center, with gracefully curved ends at the top and bottom. Notably, a circular hole designed to support chattras is centrally located within the *harmikā*.

References: Dani 1968-69b: 65-102; Khan, G.R 2015: 224, 225, figs. 166 (a-d).

Pl. 53. *Harmikā* depicting lotus flower.

Acc. No.	BKIII-1982-1-38	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	11.0x5.5x11.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Excavation 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

A cubic *harmikā* with partially damaged corners, is adorned with intricately carved lotus flowers on its four faces, bordered by Corinthian columns at the four corners. Each face of the *harmikā* represents a full-blown lotus flower with subtle variations. While three sides of the *harmikā* feature nine-petalled lotus flowers, one side illustrates an eight-petalled design. The flat top of the *harmikā* is equipped with a square hole, designed to accommodate the shaft of *chattras*. The corner columns are consisting of a tiered base, square shafts and capitals that exhibit uniform decoration with acanthus leaves positioned between moulds or steps both below and above.

Reference: Khan, G.R. 2015: 224, 225, 238, 239, figs. 166 (a-d), 176, 177.

Pl. 54. Reverse stepped pyramid-shaped *harmikā*.

Acc. No.	DMC 759	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	13.0x22.0
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

An intricately carved stepped *harmikā* is comprised of five steps adorned with variety of vegetative and geometrical motifs, topped by a stepped pyramid cornice. Starting from the bottom and moving upward, the first step/segment is decorated with a beaded pattern on its side and underside. The second one is adorned with a row of overlapping leaves of pīpal both on its side and underside. The third segment is embellished with a row of trifid callices arranged in a sequential pattern, alternating vertical and reverse orientations, contiguously positioned on both the lateral and lower surfaces. This is followed by another slab with *cyma reversa* type brackets with vertical central grooves. Then bordered on both sides with a plain

fillet is a segment decorated with a chequered grid with alternating relief squares. Above a projected moulding is a row of stepped pyramids, each with a half lotus flower and half rosette in the center.

References: Dani 1968-69b: 65-102; cf. DMC 628, DMC 2050, DMC 2052, DMC 2092, DMC 2119 (Dir Museum).

Pl. 55. A stepped *harmikā* with Dionysiac activities.

Acc. No.	WS-40	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	36.5x4.5x3
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Wāli-e-Swat Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A stepped *harmikā*, framed with a plain and narrow border at its upper and lower edges, portrays scenes of Dionysian festivities. Two pairs, each divided by vine twigs are busy in drinking activities. The female figures, adorned with earrings, necklaces, and wreath headdresses, hold pots to offer to their male counterparts. The locks of hair of the right female figure cascade down her shoulders.

Reference: Tanveer 2010: 35, pl. 38.

1.1.5.5. *Chattra*/Umbrella/Parasol

Pl. 56. *Chattra* with two central holes and rosettes.

Acc. No.	DMC 490	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	34.4 ø
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

The *chattra*, having two adjacent central holes, is badly damaged and marred across most of its surface. It is decorated with two circles of empanelled rosettes, arranged in an irregular pattern that lacks symmetry.

References: Dani 1968-69a: 33-60; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 204, 205, figs. 303-310.

Pl. 57. *Chattra* with empanelled rosettes.

Acc. No.	NG 394	Material:	Soapstone	Size (in):	2 ¾"(depth), 16 ¾"(diameter)
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Excavation 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This *chattra* is partly damaged at rim with a one-inch central hole. Its underside is embellished at the rim with plain fillet inside of which is a festoon alternating lanceolate leaves and bead with ribbon motif. Rest of the surface is filled with two circles of empanelled rosettes and a raised center adorned with lotus petals.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AM6B77PCDGNL59B> (accessed June 24, 2024).

Pl. 58. *Chattra* with lotus depiction and three sockets.

Acc. No. NG 212 **Material:** Light Grey Stone **Size (in):** 2 ¼" x 15 ½"
Provenance: Nimogram **Source:** Excavation 1967-68 **Location:** Swat Museum

Description

Part of a *chattra* from a small stūpa. The lower face is carved with a series of sepals and rounded lotus petals with incised lines at the center. The inner circle is raised and illustrated at the sides with incised lotus petals and sepals. There are three sockets for supporting struts (the fourth presumably missing) and a round central through hole measuring 7/8" in diameter.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/ACOCIOASUQQS5P82>
(accessed June 24, 2024).

Pl. 59. *Chattra* with two concentric circles of lotus petals.

Acc. No. NG 125 **Material:** Soapstone **Size (in):** 13" (diameter) x 2 ⅛" (depth)
Provenance: Nimogram **Source:** Excavation 1967-68 **Location:** Swat Museum

Description

This *chattra* perhaps belonged to a small stūpa. The lower face is carved as a full-blown lotus having two concentric circles of petals that continue on the sides of the raised center. The rim and outer face are undecorated. There is a central through hole.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/ACOCIOASUQQS5P82>
(accessed June 24, 2024).

Pl. 60. *Chattra* with lotus depiction.

Acc. No. NG 223 **Material:** Greenish Conglomerate **Size (in):** 2 1/2" x 16" (diameter)
Provenance: Nimogram **Source:** Excavation 1967-68 **Location:** Swat Museum

Description

Lower face of the *Chattra* is decorated with bifurcated lotus petals at the outside. This is followed by a circle of swirling lines that continue on the sides of the raised center which is plain. The outer face is plain. There is a central through hole.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A6PHFPPKKGX2NS8H>
(accessed June 25, 2024).

Pl. 61. *Chattra* embellished with bifurcated lotus petals.

Acc. No.	NG 143	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	54.0 (diameter)
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Excavation 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Fragment of a *chattra* from a small stūpa. The lower face is embellished with a series of rounded bifurcated lotus petals. The inner circle is raised and without any decoration as is the underside rim. There is a round central through hole.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AUSUTOF6KBRDQI8R> (accessed June 24, 2024).

Pl. 62. *Chattra* with acanthus leaves decoration.

Acc. No.	LBN1981-1-7	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	23.0x5.5
Provenance:	Loebanr	Source:	Excavation 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

Chattra with a raised plain center having a circular hole at its core. This plain region is succeeded by two descending levels decorated with intricately carved acanthus leaves, adding an ornate touch to the structure.

Reference: Samad *et al.* 2021b: 204, nos. 269, 270. Note. In the accession register of University Museum, this *chattra* is mistakenly entered as capital of a Corinthian column.

Pl. 63. Undecorated *chattra*.

Acc. No.	DMC 833	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	31.5 ø
Provenance:	Jabagai	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This *chattra* lacks any ornamentation and its rim is formed by a plain moulding. There is a central through hole.

Reference: cf. CGP-1981-1-61 and CGP-1981-1-62, University Museum.

1.1.5.6. Spacers

Pl. 64. Spacer with acanthus leaves decoration.

Acc. No.	NG 247	Material:	Green schist	Size (in):	7" x 6" (diameter) x 3"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Excavation 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A spacer consists of a plain shaft with an elevated rim at the base. At the top, there is a dentil and bar band, crowned by a capital decorated with acanthus leaves. This item was likely used to separate *chattras* of a small stūpa dome. The object has a through hole for functional purposes.

References: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AKX34RV4LNHNOK8D> (accessed June 28, 2024); Samad *et al.* 2021a: 133, 506, figs. 024, 1509, 1510.

Pl. 65. Spacer with incised lines.

Acc. No.	NG 393	Material	Black schist	Size (in):	4 7/8"x3 5/8" (dia), 1" (hole)

Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Excavation 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A spacer illustrates moulded rims at both ends, with a series of incised lines encircling both the rims and the shaft. This object was presumably used to separate chattras positioned above a small stūpa dome. It has a central through hole measuring 1 inch in diameter.

References Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/ANFKS6CQMREGDH86> (accessed June 28, 2024); Samad *et al.* 2021a: 133, 404, 506, figs. 024, 1104, 1105, 1509, 1510.

1.1.5.7. Stūpa Pinnacle

Pl. 66. Stūpa pinnacle with lotus petals decoration.

Acc. No.	NG 356	Material:	Green schist	Size (in):	5 5/8"x2 7/8"x1 3/4"

Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Raducha	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This architectural fragment, potentially part of a Stūpa pinnacle, exhibits a rounded groove in its back section (once the middle?). It was discovered in the remains of Stūpa no. 10 by Raducha.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A3E7LHEHBZ65AJ84> (accessed June 30, 2024); Filigenzi 2015: 93, fig. 32.

Pl. 67. Pinnacle of a miniature Stūpa.

Acc. No.	NG 061	Material:	Grey Stone	Size (in):	4 1/4" x 2 3/4"

Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Surface Find (1967-68)	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Probably a portion of a pinnacle of a miniature stūpa with lotus decoration and a hole at the center.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AAHBE46STPXDEG8I> (accessed June 30, 2024); Filigenzi 2015: 93, fig. 32.

1.1.5.8. *Yaṣṭi*

Pl. 68. *Yaṣṭi* of a stūpa model with three broken chattras.

Acc. No.	DMC 1190	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	8 Ht
Provenance:	Dir	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Stick/*yaṣṭi* of a miniature stūpa model with three broken *chattras*.

Reference: cf. with *Yaṣṭi* of a miniature stūpa in Jongeward 2019: 25, fig. 3.

1.2. Vihāra:

1.2.1. Vihāra without Buddha image

Pl. 69. Vihāra with rectangular lower body surmounted by pointed arch.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-178	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	35.5x35.5x20.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

This relief scene is one of the four carved faces of a cubic *harmikā*, showing the veneration of a vihāra by four worshippers. The vihāra stands on a square-shaped flat podium and having rectangular lower part with perpendicular jambs, receding from outer to inner part and in the middle, a double-door entrance is provided. Above the doorway, a voluted semi arch type lower roof can be seen on both left and right sides, followed by a vertical intermediate body and surmounted by a pointed arch with a well-defined cornice and row of lunettes just below the frame. The intermediate body or nave is depicted with beams or row of dentils demarcated by dividing architraves. The four monks are shaven headed, dressed in long over robes and kneeling around the vihāra with hands joined before chest in *añjalimudrā*. The scene is enclosed by Indo-Corinthian pilasters on both sides and bordered by lanceolate leaves pattern above.

References: Swati 1997a: 39, pl.10 and 2007: 136, pl. 10; Spagnesi 2006: 156-57, fig. 5; Khan, G.R. 2015: I, 60, fig. 29.

Pl. 70. Straw-roofed vihāra with a flight of steps on front side.

Acc. No.	SM-1234 (Inv. no. GT 50)	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	30x26.5x5.5
Provenance:	Gumbatuna Swat	Source:	Exc. 1992	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel shows a model of straw-roofed vihāra, approached by a flight of four steps that leads directly to the main entrance of the building. The front of the vihāra is beautifully decorated with rosette pattern. The entrance door is also decorated with small rosettes and surmounted by a pointed arch with a big lotus flower inside. The thatched roof is covered with palm leaves. Remains of a Persepolitan column can be seen on the left side of vihāra.

Reference: Ingholt 1957: 172, no. 465; Khan, M.A. 1993a: 44-46, no. 29, 1993b: 13, 32, no. 14; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 322, cat. no. 214.

Pl. 71. Vihāra with a double-leaf doorway and thatched roof.

Acc. No.	NG 060	Material:	Soap Stone	Size (in):	7 3/4" x 12" x 2 1/2"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Surface find	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A broken relief bordered on the bottom by a plain fillet. The remains of two incomplete scenes are separated by an empaneled column. Starting from the right, a defaced standing monk wearing a long robe with clasped hands in adoration is approaching a vihāra. The vihāra is built upon a podium with a square base and well-defined cornice. The body is made of a double-leaf doorway and walls that appear as a series of three jambs. A cornice separates the body from the first roof which looks like a low dome and four sided covered by grass (?). Then an intermediate cylindrical body separates the lower roof from the upper one (dome), which is also thatched. A fragmentary finial can be seen at the top of the structure. The scene on the left is quite fragmentary with only the feet of one figure and lower legs of another.

References: Raducha 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/APFP2D6QCO7ST78X> (accessed on January 13, 2024); Arif 2014: 23, pl. 30.

Pl. 72. Double-domed vihāra flanked by worshippers.

Acc. No.	PM_01077	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	33.04x30.50 cm
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi	Source:	Exc. ASI 1907-08	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The veneration of a double-domed vihāra is depicted on this pedestal. The pedestal bears the feet of the Bodhisattva, shown in traditional Gandhāran sandals. Below, two men are standing on each side of the vihāra with their hands clasped in adoration.

The vihāra sits on a square-based low podium with a double-door entrance to access the main building. Each leaf of the door is divided into three parts by horizontal bars. Doorjambs around the doorway and a projected cornice can be seen, above which a four-sided curved sloping lower roof (or dome) is depicted. An intermediate cylindrical body separates the lower roof from the dome above. Both the lower roof and dome are treated with leafy designs, giving the impression of a thatched roof. The finial is intact, and two flags are fastened to it which are flaring in the air. This scene is bordered below by a plain fillet and a plain fillet with a saw-tooth embellishment above. The whole scene is enclosed by Corinthian pilasters on either side.

Reference: Ingholt 1957: 174, no. 469; Kurita 1988-90: I, 260, no. 541; Ali and Qazi 2008: 276, no. 12.14.

Pl. 73. Double-domed vihāra and preaching Buddha with devotees.

Acc. No.	PM_01028	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	4.9x36.85x15.25
Provenance:	Ban Darra, Kharki	Source:	Donated by P.G.G. Pipon esquire I.C.S.	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This fragment of a rectangular relief panel depicts two scenes separated by a Corinthian pillar. Starting from the right, the first scene shows seated Buddha with his right hand resting on chest, flanked by one seated and two standing figures on either side. The scene on the left exhibits a defaced vihāra with two human figures on either side. The figure on the left is completely defaced except his feet and the one on right is carrying something (basket?) in his hands, standing frontally and looking over his shoulder to the vihāra. The vihāra is circular in plan, resting on a quadrangular podium above which a four-sided curved sloping lower roof is placed. An intermediate cylindrical body demarcates the lower roof from a dome above. Because of its poor state of preservation, details of other features cannot be retrieved.

Reference: Spagnesi 2006: 164, fig. 11.

Pl. 74. A complete vihāra with a square plan, worshipped by monks.

Acc. No.	SRO-267	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	16.5x15
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Unknown	Location:	SRO

Description

This relief panel depicts a vihāra flanked by worshippers on either side with clasped hands in adoration. The vihāra is structured with a square plan consisting of low plinth, slightly tilted walls, a double-leaf doorway within a framed structure, and a high domed superstructure in the form of a trefoil arch with hanging cones from the volutes. The plinth is decorated with incised wavy lines and saw tooth pattern, whereas the façade is also embellished with wavy lines vertically. The doorway frame portrays slanting jambs supporting a horizontal lintel and a projected cornice decorated with a nail pattern. Both door-leaves are divided into three parts by horizontal bars and each showing an incised cross design. The two worshippers on

either side of the building are shaven headed and donned in knee length robes with deep folds. Behind them in each side is a pair of two devotees standing in the pose of adoration. The dome, as well as the figures at the back of the vihāra are defaced and worn.

Reference: Khan, Z. 2017: 195, Pl. 97.

Pl. 75. A double-domed vihāra with intricate designs on the facade.

Acc. No.	SRO-788 (Old no TR-64 and 385)	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	20x12cm
Provenance:	Thareli Buddhist site	Source:	Exc. 1964 season	Location:	SRO

Description

A relief panel illustrates the veneration of a vihāra. On the left side of the panel, a double-domed shrine is depicted with a clearly defined entrance, being approached by three men in different poses. Though the vihāra is showing signs of wear and chipping, yet from the surviving remnants, it can be inferred that it is situated on a low podium with quadrangular plan. The entrance is comprised of a double-leaf doorway, though only one leaf remains intact, divided into three sections by horizontal bars. On the left side of vihāra, the door frame is adorned with vertical lanceolate leaves. Just above the cornice of the doorway, lotus flowers are depicted. An intermediate cylindrical body, demarcating the two roofs, is also embellished with floral motifs. The upper part of the double-roof design taking the form of a dome.

References: Mizuno & Higuchi 1978: pl. 108/5, Khan, Z. 2017: 193-94, pl. 95.

Pl. 76. A double-domed vihāra with circular plan and floral embellishments.

Acc. No.	SRO-907 (Old no. TR-63)	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	23x15
Provenance:	Thareli Buddhist site	Source:	Exc. 1963 season	Location:	SRO

Description

Fragment of a relief panel depicting the worship of a vihāra. A double-domed vihāra, circular in plan is resting atop a quadrangular podium on the right corner of the relief panel. A four-petalled rosette scroll is embellishing the podium, above which a four-sided curved sloping lower roof and dome with a finial can be seen. There are two human figures in front of the vihāra, the one closest to the vihāra is depicted with hands folded in adoration, facing to his right. Adjacent to this figure, another headless figure is standing majestically. Judging by the posture and long monastic robe, this second figure is inferred to represent Buddha. Both figures are standing within the curvature of an arch, now missing, the interior of which is embellished with saw-tooth design.

Reference: Mizuno & Higuchi 1978: pl. 84/ 10.

Pl. 77. Elaborately decorated dome of a Vihāra.

Acc. No.	PM_2837	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	22.87x25.42
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol	Source:	Exc. Archaeological Department 1909- 10	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief presents the upper part of a vihāra whereas the lower part is broken. The fragmentary remains of the lower body show a main entrance flanked by Indo-Corinthian columns of which only capitals are intact, and flowers above (?). A cornice supports a rectangular balustrade of vertical and horizontal crossed bars. An ovolo forms the transition between the balustrade and the section above. This moulding is adorned with trilobate leaves, bordered by a grid of hatched triangles below and a bead-and-reel moulding above. Obscure remains of small figures may be discernible at the ovolo corners. (cf. Ingholt 1957: 173-74, no. 468; Burgess 1900: 32, pl. 7,1). Above, a double member consisting of a balustrade and a frieze portrays Buddha Figures in abhayamudrā under carinated arches with volutes. Both these sections rests on a row of modillions. The vihāra's dome exhibits decorative bands, including wavy lines, triangles, a row of opposite triangles filled with parallel lines and floral ornamentation resembling trilobate leaves.

Reference: Ingholt 1957: 173-74, no. 468; Burgess 1978: 32, pl. 7 (1); Foucher 1905: AGBG, I, 191, fig. 75; Faccenna 2001: tav 158, f; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 277, cat no. 206.

Pl. 78. Thatched double-domed roof of a vihāra.

Acc. No.	PM_02292	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	0.100x7.62x10.17
Provenance:	Takht-i- Bhai	Source:	Exc. Archaeological Department, 1907- 08	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

A thatched double-domed upper part of a vihāra is depicted here. The building seems circular in plan with a lower roof, a cylindrical intermediate body, small brackets supporting a dome with a finial at the top. Both the lower and upper domes are exquisitely carved with vine petals/acanthus leaves (?).

References: Zwalf 1996: II, fig. 110; Nishikawa 1994: II, 216, pl. 182 (41-43); Faccenna 2001: tav. 158 (e).

Pl. 79. Double-domed vihāra covered with vine leaves

Acc. No.	SRO 614	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	20x18 cm
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Unknown	Location:	SRO

Description

Portion of a relief panel illustrates the reverence of a vihāra, featuring a double-dome thatched vihāra on the right corner of the panel. The vihāra is beautifully adorned with vine petals/acanthus leaves and its finial is tied with a thick rope, gracing it a spiral look. Just in front of the vihāra are standing two human figures inside a broken arch in a gesture of adoration, possibly welcoming the Buddha or fellow worshippers to the shrine. Unfortunately, the panel is fragmentary, leaving the details beyond this point unknown.

Reference: Kurita 1988-90: I, 228, 260, figs. 473, 539, 540.

Pl. 80. Straw-roof of a vihāra.

Acc. No.	SS 1231	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	20x22x6 cm
Provenance:	Saidu Sharif I	Source:	Saidu Sharif I conservation (2011-2013)	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief fragment shows a straw roof of a vihāra. Below which a rectangular door frame and capital of a Corinthian pilaster is visible.

Reference: Ackermann 1975: 123, pl LI (b).

Pl. 81. Upper part of a vihāra with doorless entrance.

Acc. No.	PM_00643	Material:	Stone/Schist	Size (cm):	1.9x12.71x10.17
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bhai	Source:	Excavation of Archaeological Department Frontier Circle, 1907-08	Location:	Peshawar Museum Store

Description

The relief panel is badly broken and defaced but from the extant fragments, it is evident that the panel exhibits a vihāra on the right side and a niche or aedicula inhabited by meditative Buddha on the left. The vihāra seems circular in plan and an entrance devoid of door-leaves is provided at its lower section, followed by an intermediate cylindrical body, and a dome above. The lower body is adorned with acanthus leaves (?) while the dome is bordered with a row of tangential pearls enclosed within plain fillets both below and above. The hemispherical part of the dome is embellished with inverted lotus flower petals, complemented by swirling lines (stamen) and surmounted by a finial.

The aedicula or niche is supported by two columns with a raised round arch, under which the Buddha is seated on a low seat in dhyānamudrā. While the aedicula is supported by a structure below but due to poor state of preservation, nothing significant can be inferred.

References: Nishikawa 1994: II, 190, pl. 156 (1-4).

1.2.2. Vihāra with Buddha image inside/ Image Shrine

Pl. 82. Upper part of a *vihāra* (or image shrine) with birds and flags.

Acc. No.	SM-1078 (Inv. no. 3217)	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	41.5x17.5x5.5
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-58	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A fragment of a doorjamb broke off a false niche having scenes one above the other. Only two scenes are preserved that are sundered by an architrave of leaf-and-dart pattern and a course of bead-and-reel design. The upper scene is composed of an erotic couple standing under a *caitya* arch having bird-headed volutes, supported by Corinthian pillars. On either side of the arch, the spandrel is inhabited by naked *amorini*.

The surviving remains of the lower scene represents an upper part of a *vihāra*, having double-domed roof decorated with lozenge pattern and surmounted by a crescent and two flags. This super structure is supported by Corinthian pilasters. Two long-tailed birds are sitting on the roof. A head of the Buddha with a devotee at left side can be seen under the chapel.

References: Faccenna 1962: II, 73-74, pl. CCXCI (Inv. No. 3217, a & b); Khan, M.A. 1993b: 46, no. 27; Khan, M. 1999: 99, pl. 37; Kurita 2003: 200, no. 579.

Pl. 83. Image shrine with Buddha in *abhayamudrā* flanked by worshippers.

Acc. No.	SM-14 (Inv. no. 79)	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	57x14x7
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-58	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A piece of a doorjamb detached from a false niche depicting two scenes one above the other with a well-defined moulded cornice below. The upper scene consists of a shrine, supported by small Corinthian pilasters with double dome on which birds are sitting and a small nude figure is standing on the right corner of the dome. The haloed Buddha is seated cross-legged inside the shrine in *abhayamudrā* accompanied by two worshippers on either side. This scene is separated from the one below by a cornice with acanthus leaves. The lower part shows a couple in romantic pose under a niche, supported by Corinthian columns with triangular pediment surmounted by two winged *amorini*. The pediment is decorated with bead-and-reel motif internally.

References: Faccenna 1962: II, pl. CCXCII (a & b), Kurita 2003: 200, no. 577.

Pl. 84. Image shrine inhabited by Bodhisattva Padmapani.

Acc. No.	SM-0347 (Inv. no. 3991)	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	36x21x8
Provenance:	Butkara-I	Source:	Exc. 1956-58	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel is reconstructed from three fragments, showing a shrine (or chapel) with double roof, decorated with lozenge pattern and bell-pendants. The roof is supported by Corinthian pilasters, of which only chipped capitals can be seen. Inside the chapel, a haloed Bodhisattva (Padmapani), is seated in *Padmāsana* or lotus pose, holding bunches of lotus flowers in his raised hand. He is wearing *paridhana*, *uttarīya*, turban and exquisite jewellery with a beautiful smile and half-closed eyes.

Reference: Faccenna 1962: II, 83, pls. CCCXXVI (a & b), CCCXXVII (a & b).

Pl. 85. Image shrine with Buddha seated on a throne, supported by double row of acanthus leaves.

Acc. No.	SRO-854	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	32x25cm
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Unknown	Location:	

Description

Part of a false gable arched panel depicted with a devotee and an image shrine. The pavilion-shaped shrine consists of a double domed roof, supported by two Corinthian pillars. Inside the shrine, Buddha is shown seated cross-legged in *dhyānamudrā* on a low seat supported by two rows of acanthus leaves. Both of his shoulders are covered by the monastic robe. A worshipper with clasped hands is standing inside an arch. Turning to his left, he is clad in a short loin cloth with a turban and *uttarīya*.

References: Zwalf 1996: I-II, 125, pl. 110; Khan, Z. 2017: 193, pl. 94.

Pl. 86. Upper part of an image shrine inhabited by Buddha seated in meditation.

Acc. No.	PM_00675	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79x20.33
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol	Source:	Exc. A.D.F.C 1906-07	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief panel is partially broken and defaced, exhibits the figure of Buddha seated in *dhyānamudrā* under a decorated canopy. A flying cupid and another defaced figure can be seen on his left side. The shrine/canopy is supported by two Corinthian pillars which are broken now, except their capitals. The canopy consists of a four-sided curved sloping lower roof, decorated with lozenges. An intermediate cylindrical body with brackets supports the upper roof or dome above. The dome is carved intricately with a row of upward lunettes and leaves.

Reference: Ali and Qazi 2008: 162, no. 9.3.5.

1.2.3. Relic Shrine

Pl. 87. Vihara enclosing a stūpa .

Acc. no.	Inv. no. 920	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	0.46x0.56x0.07
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	National Museum of Oriental Art (Rome)

Description

Part of a relief is reconstructed with several fragments, having no frame. It depicts a viihara on the left, with a high base adorned with garlands. The double dome of the viihara is decorated with acanthus leaves, turned downward, surrounded by a pillared balustrade with a festooned base. The viihara's door is decorated with rosettes and a leaf of *aśvattha* (sacred fig) at the tympanum, crowned by a voluted carinated arch. Inside the viihara, a stūpa is visible through the door, portraying a *vedika*/balustrade around the drum, a dome decorated with undulating garland, *harmikā*, and a disc. On the right side of the relief are devotees arranged in three rows, wearing *paridhana* and *uttariya*. One of the worshippers in the top right corner is haloed and his hair done in a chignon. In the background, scattered rosettes or lotus flowers are incised around the dome of the viihara.

References: Faccenna 1962: II.2, 39, pl. CXXXIX, 2001: tav. 80 (a); Brancaccio and Behrendt 2006: 83-106, 210-224, fig. 9.3.

1.3. Temple

Pl. 88. Thatched sloping roofed temple engulfed in flames.

Acc. No.	SM-2418 (Inv. no. V-721)	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	15.5x20.2x5.5
Provenance:	Tokar Dara	Source:	Varia Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The broken relief panel depicts a scene featuring a temple engulfed in flames on the right side. The temple is positioned on a low platform, with a wide entrance, slanting doorjambs, and a thatched domical roof adorned with palmette leaves. Apex of the roof is tied with a thick rope. Flames are visible inside the temple. Next to the temple stands the Buddha securing hem of his robe with his left hand and extending his right hand towards Kāśyapa, who stands to his right. Kāśyapa is depicted receiving a bowl from the Buddha with his right hand, from which a rising snake can be seen.

References: Ghafoor 2017: 158-59, fig. 138; Kurita 1988: I, 157-60, pls.300-309.

Pl. 89. Double-domed fire temple.

Acc. No.	PM_01268	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	19.06x22.87
Provenance:	Dangarzai Dheri Nowshera	Source:	Purchased, 1954	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The relief panel depicts a double-domed temple with flames emerging from it. Ascetics on either side of the temple are seen carrying water pitchers and pouring water onto the structure to extinguish the fire, which is visible through the temple's doorway. The bottom of the panel is bordered with simple fillets, while the scene is enclosed by two Corinthian pilasters, although one is damaged. The temple is situated on a low base with a wide double-leafed doorway and door jambs. The left side door-leaf is divided by two horizontal bars while the right one is engulfed by flames. The double dome consists of a four-sided curved sloping lower dome and a similar smaller upper dome, separated by an intermediary cylindrical body. The finial of the upper dome is a round structure, and the cornice is adorned with a sawtooth design. The overall appearance of the temple closely resembles a Buddhist vihāra.

References: Ingholt 1957: 166, no. 433; Ali and Qazi 2008: 197, no. 10.4.

Pl. 90. Temple with an entrance and domical roof covered with leaves.

Acc. No.	SRO 598	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	20x40 cm
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	The Railway Police, Peshawar	Location:	SRO Peshawar

Description

This rectangular panel is divided into two sections by a band of lanceolate leaves. In the upper section, a domed shrine or temple is depicted, approached by figures from both directions. Starting from the right, Vajrapāṇi is standing with a thunderbolt in his left hand and possibly a flywhisk (?) in his right. In front of him, the Buddha stands with a bowl containing a serpent (?) in his right hand and his left holding the hem of his drapery. Another male figure stands in front of the Buddha, pointing towards the shrine. The temple is standing on a low base having plain fillets, an entrance and domical roof covered with leaves. The finial above the roof is a disc shaped structure. Flames are rising from inside the temple. On the left side, figures continue to approach the shrine, with one holding a round object, likely a water pitcher or basket of flowers. Behind them, more figures are depicted, some carrying palm branches or pots and an ascetic person is sitting in a hut on the extreme left.

In the lower section, divided by a Corinthian pilaster, scenes of the child Siddhartha's horoscope and the distribution of charity among the Brahman community are shown.

References: Khan, Z. 2017: 142-44, pl. 17; see also. Khan, Z. 2014: pl.8.

Pl. 91. The fire temple at Uruvilvā.

Acc. No.	PM_02794	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79x31.77
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi	Source:	A.D.F.C 1907-08	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief appears to be the pedestal of a large frieze. It portrays two carvings of a fire temple separated by a Corinthian pilaster in the center. On the left side, a disciple of Kāśyapa is leading the Buddha towards the fire temple. On the right side, the Buddha is depicted seated in *dhyānamudrā* within the temple. A poisonous snake is depicted ascending the stairs towards a begging bowl placed on the steps. Ascetics are shown pouring water from pitchers, presumably to extinguish the fire. The temple is situated on a high podium with side stairways, a pseudo-trefoil arch entrance, and a domed roof covering, culminating in a pointed finial.

References: Ingholt 1957: 35, no. 84; Thewalt 1982: fig. 227; Sehrai 1982: 44-45, pl. 42; Faccenna & Filigenzi 2007: 64, fig. 2; Ali and Qazi 2008: 195-96.

2. Secular Architecture:**2.1. Huts****Pl. 92. Hermit's hut with bamboos and straws fastened with a rope.**

Acc. No.	PM_02793	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	39.39x29.55
Provenance:	Swat *	Source:	Guides Mess Mardan, 1942	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This detached piece of a square relief panel depicts Buddha standing in a gesture of *abhayamudrā* in front of Kāśyapa, who is seated inside a hut. Behind Buddha, stands Vajrapāṇi, clad in Greek fashion and holding a vajra in his right hand. Kāśyapa is seated on a rolled mat within the hut, which is made of bamboo poles up to dado level and then layered with vertical straws. These layers are secured with a rope to prevent them from being blown away by the wind. Behind the hut, there is a Śālā tree with upward branches. The panel is decorated at the bottom with a row of trifid calices, alternating between vertical and reverse orientations, while the upper border is missing.

Reference: Marshall 1973: 47-48, pl. 42 (fig. 66); Ingholt 1957: 63, no. 54; Murthy 1977: 14, pl. I (7); Burgess 1978: 32-33, fig. 31; Sehrai 1982: 34, fig. 26; Ali and Qazi 2008: 193-94, no. 10.

*According to James Burgess (1978), this sculpture belongs to the Swat Valley.

Pl. 93. Hut with plain outer surface.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-67	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	24.0x16.5x4.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

A rectangular panel depicts the Buddha visiting the Hindu ascetic Kāśyapa and performing a fire miracle in front of him. On the extreme right of the panel, the Buddha stands next to a tree (possibly Śālā tree) with upward branches of lanceolate leaves. On the opposite end, a similar tree is shown beside a hut, in which Kāśyapa is sitting on a low stool. Kāśyapa points to the Buddha with his right hand while holding a water flask with his left hand between his legs. Between the Buddha and the ascetic is a big fire-altar with a square base and cornice, upon which a tapered pile of fire is depicted. Behind the fire-altar stands another large tree with upward branches like the other trees. Unlike typical panels where the hut is marked with straw, here it appears as a plain structure (perhaps mud-plastered) with a wide, round-arched entrance and a circular disc-shaped finial.

Reference: Khan, G.R. 2015: 104-105, no. 64.

Pl. 94. Hut with layers of vertically arranged straws.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1982-1-11	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	25.0x20.0x4.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

The vertical rectangular panel exhibits an elderly ascetic seated within a hut with a standing male figure and a fire altar in front of him. The bearded ascetic is having a high uṣṇīṣa (symbolizing supreme wisdom), leans slightly forward as he sits on a low stool, raising his right hand while holding a water flask with his left. In the background, a small tree with upward-reaching branches can be noticed. The hut is characterized by a broad entrance and is built with layers of vertically arranged straws, designating its composition of grasses and straw. It is provided with a conical finial at the apex.

References: Nagar 1981: 13, 16, 17, no. 8 & 10; Meister and Coomaraswamy 1988: 5-26; Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 63, pl. 29 (3.2); Khan, G.R. 2015: 104-105, no. 65.

Pl. 95. Hut decorated with vertical layers of straws.

Acc. No.	NG 459	Material:	Green schist	Size (in):	6 5/8"x11 7/8"x2 1/2"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel is depicted with a scene that shows the Buddha coming from the right with a bowl containing a coiled snake and presenting it to Kāśyapa. Buddha is accompanied by Vajrapāṇi as they approach a group of three standing young ascetics and the elderly Kāśyapa, who is seated in front of his grass hut. Walls of the hut are treated with vertically arranged layers of dry grasses. We cannot see any horizontal binders in between the layers of straws. A conical- shaped finial can be observed just above the head of the elderly ascetic. The relief panel is framed above by an acanthus

leaf cornice, below by a plain fillet, and on the side by an empanelled Gandhāran-Corinthian half-column.

References: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AXGTG4E7OBTUJO8X> (accessed July 20, 2024); Arif 2014: 232, pl. 73.

Pl. 96. Hut with pīpal scroll decoration.

Acc. No.	NG 121	Material:	Green Schist	Size (in):	4 ½"x3"x1 ½"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	surface find	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A fragment of relief depicts an intricately carved hut adorned with a vertical pīpal scroll design. Remains of a tree behind and head of a person in front of the hut can be seen. The scene is provided with an acanthus moulding above, with the bottom section missing.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/ALEYD5J4GAGV669B> (accessed July 20, 2024).

Pl. 97. Hut with acanthus leaves decoration.

Acc. No.	KNS 1981-1-18	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	21.0x15.0x4.5
Provenance:	Kani Sapar	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

A broken piece of a relief panel shows a hut with a spacious, rounded entrance framed by two projected moulds. The hut is depicted with vertical bamboo poles up to dado level, above which intricate acanthus leaf (?) design adorn the structure. At the top, there's a rectangular finial, and a bird is perching on the back of the hut. A person emerges from the hut, grasping it with his left hand, while an ascetic is holding a water flask and sits on a rolled mat at the back side of the hut.

Reference: Faccenna 1962: 69, pl. CCLXIX (a & b).

Pl. 98. Huts made up of wooden planks.

Acc. No.	SRO 282	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	36x18.5
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Unknown	Location:	SRO

Description

The rectangular panel is comprised of two distinct registers, demarcated by a band adorned with lanceolate leaves. Within the lower register, a Corinthian pilaster further divides the scenes, with the right portion illustrating a tablet writing contest while the lower left portrays an archery competition involving Prince Siddhārtha and fellow contestants.

In the upper register, starting from right to left, Buddha accompanied by Vajrapāṇi is turning towards an ascetic who is seated in front of his hut. Adjacent to it is another hut and an ascetic is depicted in front, gesturing towards the approaching Buddha. The huts are characterized by domical structures with wide round arched entrances and walls comprised of horizontally arranged wooden planks. The domed roofs exhibit circularly arranged planks, culminating in pointed finials.

A tree with curved trunk serves as a visual divider between the scenes. Vajrapāṇi and Buddha are shown flying towards the left where a human figure is seated on a low stool facing left. The cornice above the upper register is embellished with overlapping lotus petals.

Reference: Khan, Z. 2017: 147-48, pl. 24.

Pl. 99. Hut with a hanging drapery/curtain before the entrance.

Acc. No.	ASC 172	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	23.0x15.5x4.0
Provenance:	Abba Sahib Cheena	Source:	Exc. 2020- 21	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A broken and defaced fragment of a relief panel illustrates a hut being approached by two defaced human figures from the left and one from the right. The hut features a hemispherical dome atop a circular base, with a knob on the apex of the vault. A draped curtain hangs down from the roof, tied in the center before the entrance. Despite the panel's poor state of preservation, it suggests that the hut may be constructed with dry grasses arranged in vertical layers.

References: Ackermann 1975: 69, pl. XIII b; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 171, no. 172.

2.2. Military Architecture

Pl. 100. The city gate of Kuśinagara flanked by double dome-shaped towers.

Acc. No.	MJN 1983-1- 94	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	24.5x17.0
Provenance:	Marjanai	Source:	Exc. 1983	Location:	University Museum

Description

The relief panel elegantly illustrates the scene of the distribution of Buddha's bodily relics at the city gate of Kuśinagara. On the extreme right of the panel, two royal figures are standing prominently and holding relic bowls with both hands. Behind them, the city gate and wall stand majestically. Another royal figure step down the doorway of the gate while holding a bowl in both hands. The architraved doorway sits on an elevated platform and is flanked by two rectangular towers. The broad bases of the towers are carved with zigzag decorations, while the shafts are pierced with oblong arrow-slits both in lower and upper zones. A projected niche or small window is also visible at the middle of each tower. Above the doorway and towers, merlons or crenellations are provided in landscape orientation, followed by a plain space and then projected timbers running from one tower to the other. Above this,

both towers are capped with four-sided curved sloping lower roof and a dome, decorated with crisscross pattern. In between the two towers, just above the gateway, a projecting balcony with three human heads, sheltered by a flat roof, is worth noticing.

Reference: Khan, S.N. 1995: 14, 55, pl.17b.

Pl. 101. The city gate of Kuśinagara with projected towers and city wall.

Acc. No.	PM_02831	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.25x24.14
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Purchased 1934	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The square relief panel depicts the scene of the distribution of the Buddha's relics, with the city gate of Kuśinagara shown projected in the centre. The gate is flanked by two nude yakshas, each standing under a canopy of a Śālā tree atop a pitcher-shaped pedestal. While the gate itself is depicted as closed, the inner scene of the relic distribution is shown atop the city walls. Here, the Brahman arbiter Drona is shown surrounded by seven rajas, seated around a draped table upon which the eight portions of relics are displayed.

On either side of the gateway, there are rectangular tapering towers, divided into upper and lower zones by a broad horizontal band. Base of the towers features three large lotus petals while there are three triangular arrow-slits positioned to form an inverted triangle in the upper zones. The doorway of the gate stands upon a stepped moulded threshold and consists of a double moulded wooden jamb. Each leaf of the doorway is divided into two large panels by a horizontal wooden bar and provided with a well-defined architrave and a projected cornice supported by semi-circular pilasters. Above the towers and doorway lies a flat roof embellished with a row of saw-tooth designs on the front side, supported by projected brackets or merlons—three upon each tower and six upon the doorway.

References: Ingholt 1957: 97-98, nos. 152, 153, 154; Ali and Qazi 2008: 265, no. 12.6; Rahman 2011: 100-01, pl. 7.

Pl. 102. City gate with towers.

Acc. No.	DMC 538	Material:	Blue schist	Size (cm):	14.5x44.3
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A circular panel exhibits two registers separated by a horizontal band embellished with a row of lozenges and disks between upper and lower plain fillets. In the upper register, a central tree is dividing the scenes on either side. There are six men on each side, armed with shields, swords and clubs, perhaps indicating a military contest between pairs of soldiers. The sixth figure on the extreme right is broken off. The lower register displays three distinct scenes, each separated by encased Corinthian pilasters. Starting from the right, the first scene portrays a horse rider accompanied by an elephant carrying a palanquin, with a human head visible in the background

(mahout?). In the middle scene, two royal figures holding bowls emerge from a city gate. The gate is flanked by square shaped watchtowers pierced with triangular arrow-slits; a guard's head looks out from between the towers. The left scene, as interpreted by Dani (1968-69), depicts the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha seated under branches of a tree on a stool, holding a wooden tablet, with a standing teacher to his right and an attendant with folded hands to his left. The presence of trees on either end of the scene, suggesting an outdoor school setting.

In our opinion, the right scene illustrates the transportation of Buddha's relics in a palanquin on an elephant, accompanied by a horse rider in a ceremonial procession to the city of Kuśinagara, where the arrival of different rulers is anticipated to claim their share of the relics. Alternatively, it may portray the arrival of these rulers. The central scene probably depicts the rulers departing from the city gate after receiving their share. The third scene on the left may document the rulers' documentation either upon their arrival before entering the city gate or upon their departure, confirming receipt of their share before returning to their respective states.

References: Dani 1968-69b: 97, pl. 59 a. no. 115; Khan, Z. 2017: 188-90, pls. 86-88; Ingholt 1957: 95-97, nos. 145, 149-5; Kurita 1988: I, 44, 45, 254, nos. 68, 70, 520.

Pl. 103. The half-closed gate of the fortified city of Kuśinagara.

Acc. No.	PM_02834	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	20.33x40.67
Provenance:	Jamal Garhi	Source:	Exc. 1923-24	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The relief panel under study depicts guarding of the Buddha's relics. The scene shows a semi-closed gate of the fortified city of Kuśinagara inside which the relics are kept. The gate is standing on a stepped base and provided with a double-leaf doorway. Each leaf of the door is divided by horizontal bars, creating three compartments. Just behind the gateway, at a higher level, there is a projected balcony. The gateway is flanked by two massive rectangular-shaped towers, resting on striated bases and featuring railings at the top. Although the towers may have arrow-slits, the panel's chipped surface makes it difficult to confirm. The summit above the gateway and the area connecting one tower to another is adorned with crenellations or merlons. Within the scene, two guards wearing tunics and armed with lances are shown standing on either side of the gateway near the bastions. Furthermore, amorini figures standing on water pot bases are visible on both sides of the bastions.

References: Ingholt 1957: 97, no. 151; Sehrai: 1982: 59, pl. 66; Ali and Qazi 2008: 263, no. 12.5; Rahman 2011: 101, pl. 8.

Pl. 104. Architraved door of a city gate with bastions.

Acc. No.	DMC 856	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.7x17.7
Provenance:	Tribanda	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Fragment of a relief depicts the relic distribution scene of the Buddha at the city gate of Kuśinagara. The panel is divided into two compartments: the lower register is bordered by a damaged Corinthian pilaster on the extreme right. Two royal figures wearing elaborate headdresses stand holding bowls, emerging from a city gate and moving towards the right. The architraved doorway is positioned on a raised platform with two merlons above the cornice. The gate is flanked by two massive octagonal towers, each equipped with loopholes in the lower and upper zones and topped by two merlons. A guard's head is visible peering out from across the gateway. The upper register is divided by a Corinthian pilaster showing two intact busts on the right side, while only one damaged bust is visible on the left. In between the two compartments, there is a balustrade draped with textile on the right side, suggesting the figures are seated on a balcony.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 590, figs. 288, 289, 292. Kurita 1988: I, 44, 45, 254, nos. 68, 70, 520.

Pl. 105. Indian-style city door and a sturdy crenellated city wall.

Acc. No.	PM_02742	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	20.33x33.04
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Church Mission Society Peshawar, 1914	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This rectangular panel depicts the scene when King Śuddhodāna ordered to send the great state elephant to bring back Siddhārtha from the field after his triumphant participation in various contests arranged by Dandapani, the father of Yaśudhara, who wanted a worthy husband for his daughter. However, Siddhārtha's wicked cousin, Devadatta, got jealous by this action of the king and killed the elephant with a single blow as it emerged from the city gate. Siddhārtha's half-brother, Ananda, dragged the dead elephant aside to ensure traffic flow. Subsequently, when Siddhārtha himself arrived, he lifted the elephant with one hand and threw it beyond the city's seven walls and moats to prevent the decomposing animal from contaminating the town.

The panel is bordered by a Corinthian pilaster on the right side, while the background illustrates the city gate and fortification wall. The city gate resembles an Indian-style railing door (*torāṇa*) with doorjambs adorned with alternating horizontal bars and fully bloomed lotus flowers. The bent architrave consists of three lunettes, decorated with a beaded pattern in the upper and lower fields. The sturdy city wall is provided with merlons or crenellations at the summit, along with oblong arrow-slits running its length.

References: Hargreaves: 1930: 25-26, no. 10; Ingholt 1957: 172, no. 464; Ali and Qazi 2008: 71, 72, no. 4.4, Rahman 2011: 100-101, pl. 6

Pl. 106. Indian-style city gate accompanied by towers and crenellated city wall.

Acc. No.	MK-120	Material:	Dark grey schist	Size (cm):	12.2x30x4.8
Provenance:	unknown	Source:	Malakand Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Fragment of a relief is divided by a vegetative pattern into two horizontal registers. The lower register is mostly missing except for a pīpal scroll. In the upper section, there is a depiction of a city gate and wall on the right side, and on the left, Buddha with a devotee is depicted. The city gate is semi-closed and resembles the Indian *torāṇa* type, with prominent jambs and a bent voluted architrave. To the left of the gate is a stretch of fortified wall with multiple arrow-slits and battlements and a balcony far above, and what appears to be a guard's head peering out. The wall is followed by a large rectangular tower with similar defensive features. This arrangement is mirrored on the right side of the gate, except the tower, which is broken now. On the left side, Buddha is surrounded by a full body halo, stands in *abhayamudrā* beside a Bodhi tree, while a devotee with clasped hands is standing in front of him.

References: Rahman 2011: 100-101, pl. 6; Pervaiz 2016: 204, fig. 105.

Pl. 107. The city gate and tower of Kuśinagara.

Acc. No.	DMC 916	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	9.6x21
Provenance:	Bambolai?	Source:	Excavation	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This broken panel depicts two distinct scenes. The left scene shows only remnants of two figures, possibly a couple. The scene on the right is enclosed by two Corinthian columns and bordered with chevrons facing right at the top. From right to left, the scene shows the city gate of Kuśinagara, wherein a man shown from behind is about to enter the gate. He stands with crossed legs and left arm akimbo, carrying the funerary urn with its precious contents on his left shoulder. Adjacent to the gate is a large circular tower pierced with loopholes and a railing at the top, to which a person is climbing on a ladder (?).

Note: The provenance of this sculpture is written as Bambolai in the accession register of the Dir Museum. But according to Dani, this site yielded only one sculpture in stone, i.e., *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka* whereas few stucco heads were also recovered (Dani 1968-69: 10, 63, pl. 29b. no. 50). Therefore, we believe that the sculpture bearing accession number DMC 916 originates from a different site rather than Bambolai.

References: Ingholt 1957: 97, no. 151; Rahman 2011: 106, pl. 8.

Pl. 108. Square towers of a city gate.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1982-1-35	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	27.5x17.5x4.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

This damaged rectangular panel exhibits two scenes of a man (probably Sundrananda or Nanda) lifting a dead elephant. In the first scene, the man is shown hoisting the elephant onto his right shoulder. A square tower, likely part of a city gate, is partially visible behind them. In the second scene, the man stands in front of the same tower, facing forward with his right hand raised and empty after he has thrown the said elephant. The tower is well-defined, with a solid base providing stability and support. It tapers as it ascends, having two platforms and slightly projecting string courses. Both the lower and upper stories of the tower have oblong arrow slits or loopholes for defensive purpose. The panel is bordered on the right with an encased Corinthian pilaster and the upper cornice is embellished with acanthus leaves, each having a central drooping lobe for decoration.

References: Khan, G.R. 2015: 42-43, no. 16; Murthy 1977: 8-9, fig. 1.

2.3. City Gates**Pl. 109. A rectangular shaped city gateway with merlons above.**

Acc. No.	PM_02718	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	30.50x40.66
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Purchased, D.G. Archaeology 1903	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief panel illustrates two different scenes separated by an Indo-Corinthian pilaster. The first scene belongs to the story of *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha. Starting from the left, Sumati is shown standing, holding a purse in his right hand and a water pot in his left. He is busy in talking with a girl who stands in the rectangular entrance of a city gate, holding a water jar and lotuses.

In the same scene, second depiction of Sumati is shown showering lotuses at *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha with his right hand, and these are suspended in the air above *Dīpaṅkara*'s head. Above Sumati, another figure is depicted kneeling in *añjalimudrā*, suggesting it is also Sumati.

In front of Sumati, *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha stands in *abhayamudrā*, appreciating Sumati's gesture as Sumati spreads his hair before him. A shaven-headed monk holding a wreath, stands behind *Dīpaṅkara*. Above the monk, the head of a bearded Vajrapāṇi is depicted, although the thunderbolt is missing.

The gateway is designed as a rectangular entrance with wide jambs and a well-defined cornice above. Rectangular-shaped merlons, pierced with arrow-shaped slits, are positioned just above the cornice of the doorway. Additionally, two balconies are depicted in the background. The first balcony shows a lady on the right and a man on the left, while the second balcony mirrors the first in detail. A

fortification wall, pierced with oblong arrow slits, can be seen behind Sumati and in front of the Buddha.

The second scene shows adoration of Bodhisattva by lay disciples and monks, while Bodhisattva is seated in abhaya mudrā pose with a fire altar in front of his well-decorated raised throne.

Reference: Sehrai: 1982: 15: fig.1.

Pl. 110. The city gate of Banaras consisting of broad recessed door frames.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1982-1-164	Material:	Green Phyllite	Size (cm):	(59) 42.0x43.0x5.8 (62) 29.0x8.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

This vertical rectangular panel exhibits the story of *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka*. In the middle, the haloed *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha, stands with his right hand raised in abhaya mudrā. Sumati is standing to his left, holds a water flask in his left hand and showering lotus flowers on the Buddha with his raised right hand. In another depiction, Sumati is kneeling before the Buddha with his hair spread at the Buddha's feet. The panel is framed by elaborate recessed door frames with various moulds and topped by a cavetto with acanthus leaves having a central drooping lobe. Additionally, the frame is bordered with vertical rows of acrobats on either side.

References: Faccenna 2001: tav. 110 (a); Khan, G.R. 2015: 22, no. 4.

Pl. 111. A broad gateway with a balcony above.

Acc. No.	DMC 557	Material:	Shist	Size (cm):	17.5x41
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

The relief panel depicts a complete scene of Buddha taming an elephant as it emerges from a city gate. Buddha, with his right hand on the elephant's forehead, is accompanied by Vajrapāṇi and two shaven-headed monks. Another man in the background appears to be astonished by touching his upper lip with his left hand. The gate itself is a grand structure, with double jambs, a multi-moulded cornice, and a balcony atop it. Busts of three men separated by Corinthian pilasters, are positioned on the balcony. The panel is framed by Persepolitan pilasters on either side.

References: Dani 1968-69b: 65-102; Kurita 1988: I, 211, no. 432; Faccenna 2001: tav. 145c.

Pl. 112. City gate with a projected balcony having chequered grid design.

Acc. No.	DMC 725	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.3x36.1
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This relief panel is divided in to two scenes by a Corinthian pilaster embellished with a seated Buddha figure in *dhyānamudrā*. On the right side, it depicts the story of offering a handful dust to Buddha by two naked children. On the left, it depicts the tale of Buddha taming an elephant sent by his wicked cousin Devadatta. The elephant emerges from a city gate, with Buddha, depicted taller than the elephant, placing his right hand on its head. Vajrapāṇi is standing behind him, followed by another figure and two monks in the background.

The gateway is spacious, with wide door jambs and rectangular shaped brackets above the cornice to support a balcony. The balcony is beautifully adorned with a chequered grid design, devoid of human figures seen in other such panels.

Reference: Dani 1968-69b: 84, pl. 45a, no. 86.

Pl. 113. City gate with double-leaf doorway and a projected balcony above.

Acc. No.	WS-187	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	53x38x7
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Wali-e-Swat	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The relief panel illustrates the story of Buddha subduing a wild elephant. The panel is framed by a row of dentils-and-bars (with bars of same height and smaller width) pattern above and a plain fillet below. The figured field depicts Buddha gently taming the wild elephant by placing his right hand on its head. A dagger near Buddha's feet suggests a moment of potential danger, perhaps symbolising the initial hostility of the elephant. It is conjectured that the elephant may have brought the weapon to harm Buddha but discarded it upon experiencing his compassion.

The city gate is in the shape of a perpendicular doorway, flanked by double jambs on all four sides and the door consists of two leaves. There is a triangular structure on the right side of the city gate, just below the cornice, with its exact purpose unknown. Perhaps it represents the mis-rendered perspective view of the lateral side of the wall.

Above the doorway, *cyma-reversa* type brackets provide structural support for a plain roof, upon which a projected balcony is positioned. The balcony is adorned with vertical railings and slightly deviates from the alignment of the doorway's cornice (Once again, the composition suggests challenges in the sculptor's grasp of linear perspective). Two women on the balcony, adorned with elaborate headdresses, are about to shower flowers on Buddha. Meanwhile, other women with intricate hairstyles and different objects in their hands, observe the scene from adjacent balconies.

Reference: Tanveer 2010: 58, pl. 147.

Pl. 114. City gate with stepped base and lozenge pattern on the cornice.

Acc. No.	NG 279	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	36x16
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Rectangular relief panel is bordered by Gandhāran-Corinthian pilasters having a central flute decorated with a wavy pattern, on both sides. The figured field depicts Siddhārtha's departure from the city of Kapilavastu to renounce his princely life. He is shown seated on his embellished horse. Two *yakṣas* have raised the horse's hooves to prevent any noise that might hinder his renunciation. Vajrapāṇi has turned behind where the City Goddess is standing and mourning the departure of Siddhārtha. A heavenly being floats before Siddhārtha, while another figure, possibly Māra, is standing frontally.

The gate is shown oblique with a stepped base and well-defined cornice decorated with lozenge pattern.

References: Arif 2014: 47, pl. 124; Khan, M.A. 1993b: 78, no. 52.

Fig. 115. Indian style *torāṇa* arched doorway of the city gate of Kapilavastu.

Acc. No.	PM_01959	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	24.15x48.29
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Unknown	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This panel exhibits Prince Siddhārtha's departure from the city of Kapilavastu while mounted on Kaṇṭhaka with his right hand raised in *abhaya mudrā*. Māra is shown standing in front of the horse, and his companions are depicted in the upper part of the panel. Behind the gateway, stands Mara's daughter (or possibly the city goddess). The gateway is depicted in the form of a raised round arch of Indian type (*torāṇa*), carved oblique, thus allowing only a side view. The three bent architraves of the doorway are decorated with a beaded pattern, and the same pattern is also applied to the door jamb. The door jamb is further decorated with broad petalled rosettes at the top. This scene is enclosed by two Corinthian pilasters.

References: Faccenna 1962: II-2, 40, pl. CXLI; Kurita 1988: I, 85, no. 156; Ali and Qazi 2008: 97, no. 6.3.

2.4. Palace Gates

Pl. 116. Palace Gate with a projected balcony above.

Acc. no.	BKIII 1985-1-178	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	35.5x35.5x20.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

The relief is carved on one of the four sides of a cubic *harmikā* block (no. 174), depicting 'The Great Departure', when Prince Siddhārtha leaves his luxurious life at Kapilavastu. The prince is shown riding his horse (Kaṇṭhaka) to the left of the panel.

He emerges from a broad and slightly angled doorway with a double recessed frame and a projected balcony above. Triangular arrow-slits or loopholes adorn wall of the balcony at regular intervals. While below the horse, two yakshas emerge from the ground to hold up the horse's (Kañṭhaka) hooves to ensure noiseless departure. A male figure, possibly Mara or Indra, stands directly in front of the horse, while another male figure (Chandaka?) is visible behind the horse's head. The scene is enframed by Corinthian pilasters on both sides, and the cornice is adorned with lanceolate leaf patterns.

References: Ingholt 1957: 60-61, nos. 45, 48; Marshall 1973: fig. 119, pl. 84; Ackermann 1975: pl. XVb, Khan, G.R. 2015: 50-51, no. 21.

Pl. 117. Palace gate with a tall arched doorway.

Acc. no.	SM-1047 (BI 6447)	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	H. 15
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-1962	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

One of the four carved faces of a square *harmikā* depicts the haloed Siddhārtha emerging out of the palace gate on the back of his horse Kañṭhaka. Two divine beings are shown lifting the horse's hooves, while Chandaka holds a parasol over the prince, helping him in his departure from worldly life. The palace gate behind Siddhārtha is illustrated as a tall, arched doorway, with a cornice resembling a round arch and adorned with lunettes.

Reference: Faccenna 2001: tav. 156 b.

Pl. 118. Palace gate with multiple recessed door jambs.

Acc. no.	CGP 1981-1-17b	Material:	Grey schist	Size (cm):	20x20x13
Provenance:	Charg-Pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	SSAQ Museum

Description

This scene is carved on one of the four sides of a square *harmikā* that depicts Prince Siddhartha's 'Great Departure' from his luxurious palace. He is shown mounted on his horse Kañṭhaka, whose hooves are being lifted by two yakṣas to ensure a noiseless departure in the serene night. Chandaka, the prince's groom, stands in the background while a bearded man, possibly Vajrapāṇi, is standing amidst the palace gate. The gate is intricately designed with recessed door jambs composed of multiple moulds.

Reference: Swati 2012: 3, pl. 2b.

Pl. 119. Palace gate shown from inside.

Acc. no.	SM-945 (S-361)	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	0.32x0.55x5
Provenance:	Saidu Sharif	Source:	Exc. 1964-1982	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel illustrates the return of Chandaka and Kaṇṭhaka to the palace after leaving Prince Siddhartha in the woods. Chandaka is shown presenting the prince's jewellery and parasol to his aunt-cum-stepmother, Prajapati. The scene portrays the interior of the palace gate, which is depicted with a strong, broad frame and reinforced by double jambs.

References: Ingholt 1957: 62, no. 51; Khan, M.A. 1993b: 82, no. 56; Alam, H. 1998: 38; Khan, M. 1999: 91, pl. 21; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 224, cat. no. 160; Rahman 2011: 102, pl. 11

Pl. 120. A palace gate with crenellation above the cornice.

Acc. no.	PM_2796	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	21.60x38.13
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Donated By Maj. C.B. Rawlinson C.I.E	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This rectangular panel belongs to a detached lower part of a false gable arch, depicts an important event involving Śrigupta's attempt to harm Buddha. According to legend, Śrigupta of Rājagṛīha planned to kill Buddha by creating a flaming ditch covered by false flooring at the palace entrance. However, instead of falling into the fiery ditch, Buddha and his followers are shown standing on lotus flowers that emerged miraculously from the fire. In the scene, Śrigupta is welcoming Buddha at the palace gate, while Buddha and his followers stand on the lotus flowers. The Buddha figure dominates the scene, holding the hand of a figure to his right side who is standing just behind Śrigupta. Other figures behind Buddha are shown busy in conversation and face different directions. Three figures are depicted in the background. Three Buddha figures are seated in *dhyānamudrā* inside niches on either side of the panel. The palace gateway stands on an elevated platform with door jambs on all four sides. Its cornice is decorated with a leaf-and-dart design, topped with four cylindrical merlons pierced with arrow-shaped loopholes. Similarly, the panel's parapet exhibits the same leaf-and-dart motif. Above the parapet, a balustrade is carved, supported by three Corinthian pilasters. The panel's lower border is decorated with *cyma-reversa* type brackets. This legendary scene is surrounded by a moulding adorned with a straight festoon with overlapping lanceolate leaves.

References: Foucher 1905: 458, fig. 229; Ingholt 1957: 74, 77, nos. 91, 100; Kurita 1988: I, 188, nos. 176, 177; Ali and Qazi 2008: 206-07, no. 10.8.

2.5. Palace Interiors:

2.5.1. Royal Bedrooms

Pl. 121. Royal bedroom with a canopy supported by Persepolitan columns.

Acc. No.	SM-1051 (Inv. no. BI 2642)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	17.2x20
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The relief fragment is topped by a cornice embellished with acanthus leaves. The figured field depicts Queen Māyā's dream. The queen is depicted reclining on a bed, her head resting on her left hand, under a canopy supported by four Persepolitan columns. At each end of the canopy are *kudu/caitya* arches, both represented in a conventional front-facing view. The bed is draped with a decorated cloth and mattress, and four attendants are standing around it. Above the canopy, a white elephant is shown descending within a halo.

Reference: Faccenna 1964: II-3, 140, pl. CDLVIIIb.

Pl. 122. Royal bedroom with a trapezoidal roof supported by Corinthian half-pilasters.

Acc. No.	1932,0709.1	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	Di: 6.5xHt: 19.30xW: 32.40
Provenance:	Jamalgarhi	Source:	Acquired in 1932	Location:	British Museum

Description

This relief panel shows the Dream of Queen Māyā. She is shown lying on her left side with her right side slightly forward. Her right leg is bent, and her head rests high against one or two pillows next to her open left hand. Her right hand is placed on the mattress, slightly depressing it. Above her, an elephant is depicted within a halo in relief, with its trunk slightly protruding downward.

The bed she lies on has legs with turned elements at the top and lion's paws at the bottom, and a textile with turned corners hangs above a small footstool. Behind the bed is a slender post with a burning oil lamp. The room features a trapezoidal roof supported by Corinthian half-pilasters and bases. On the left side of the chamber, there is a cross-hatched triangular panel, which may represent a curtain or part of the roof.

Outside the sleeping chamber, a female guard (*yavani*) is depicted holding a spear and raising her right hand in amazement. Above her is a half-length, turbaned celestial being. On each side of the chamber is a framed and stout *amorino*, one arm raised to hold foliage above his head, naked and crossing the legs at the ankles on a pot base with everted rim. One raises a hand with open palm, the other rests it on his thigh. A saw-tooth cornice is above and a plain framing fillet below.

Reference: Zwalf 1996: 145-46, pl. 141.

Fig. 123. Royal bedroom with a raised round arch in the centre, flanked by segmental trapezoidal architraves.

Acc. No.	PM_02722	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79x22.87
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol	Source:	Exc. ASI, 1906-07	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This fragmented panel illustrates the dream of Queen Māyā as she sleeps on a couch in her royal bedroom. Female attendants are standing behind the couch. The scene is shown under a round arch supported by Indo-Corinthian pilasters, though one pilaster on the panel's right side is missing. An elephant enclosed in a halo is descending and entering Queen Māyā's womb. Defaced busts of figures can be seen in the balconies at each corner of the arch above, with raised right arms as if showering flowers.

The left side of the panel portrays a palace scene. Under a portal arch, a female figure lies on the ground, resting on a pillow, while a female guard stands nearby. The guard holds a staff in her right hand and rests her left hand on her hip. The arch and cornice feature a sawtooth design, and the top border is decorated with overlapping lanceolate leaves motif. The panel is damaged on both the right and left sides, and the upper border is badly scratched.

References: Spooner: 1910: 6, 7; Ali and Qazi 2008: 50, no. 3.2.

Pl. 124. Siddhārtha's bedroom with flat roof supported by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns

Acc. No.	ASC 227	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	25x16x6
Provenance:	Abba Sahib Cheena	Source:	Exc. 2020-21	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel, though slightly broken and defaced, depicts a significant moment: the night of the Great Renunciation, when Siddhārtha decided to leave the palace, his wife and son forever. In the scene, Yaśodharā is sleeping on a couch with her head resting on two pillows, while the haloed Siddhārtha is seated frontally on the same couch, stepping down with the help of a foot stool.

Musicians and dancers, seemingly intoxicated, are seated on the floor around the couch. The flat roof of the sleeping chamber is supported by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns. These columns rest on a stepped plinth and a pot, having a well-defined tapering shaft and bell-shaped capital, with modillions above.

On either side of the sleeping chamber there is a female guardian (or Yavanī), each standing cross-legged beneath a voluted round arch. They hold Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns with one hand and perhaps spears in the other. Defaced figures are shown seated above the modillions, and a winged goddess (?) is depicted above the sleeping chamber.

The panel is framed on each side by Gandhāran-Corinthian pilasters, though the right pilaster is broken, except for its capital. The upper border is adorned with a row of dentils and bars, while the lower border is a plain fillet.

Reference: Samad *et al.* 2021a: 185, pl. 227.

Pl. 125. Royal bedroom with flat roof supported by Gandhāran-Corinthian type columns.

Acc. No.	DMC 879	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	20.5x37
Provenance:	Bajaur	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This relief panel, though partially defaced, represents the scene of the Great Departure. Siddhārtha is shown seated on a high couch, stepping down to leave the palace. Behind him, Yaśodharā is sleeping on the same couch, her head resting on a pillow. There is a slender post with a burning oil lamp behind the bed. To the right, female musicians and dancers look intoxicated, except for one who stands close to the bed. This royal bedroom is designed as a spacious hall with a flat roof, supported by two Gandhāran-Corinthian columns. There may have been a third column on the left side of the panel, now broken. The columns are having stepped bases, rounded shafts with horizontal incised bands, and well-defined capitals with modillions. The cornice is embellished with brackets at regular intervals.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 351, fig. 179; Marshall 1973: pl. 63 (fig. 92), Kurita 1988: I, 71, nos. 140-41.

Pl. 126. Royal bedroom having segmental trapezoidal architrave, supported by Corinthian pillars.

Acc. No.	PM_02752	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	30.05x69.90
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Purchased, 1934	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief panel depicts Siddhārtha's renunciation of the palace life. He is shown seated on an elevated couch with raised right hand and left rests on his left thigh. He has placed his right leg on a stool and about to leave the palace. Behind him, his wife Yaśodharā sleeps with her right hand beneath her face on a pillow. To Siddhārtha's right, Chandaka stands, holding Kaṇṭhaka's bridle in his right hand and a turban in his left. The richly decorated horse stands in front of a Corinthian pillar. The bedroom looks quite spacious and designed with a row of segmental trapezoidal architrave, supported by Corinthian pillars. The underside of the central arch above the sleeping chamber is decorated with hanging garlands while a row of saw-tooth pattern above. The upper most cornice is adorned with a leaf-and-dart motif. On either side of the central arch just above the abacus of the Corinthian capital, there are balconies inhabited by human figures. Below, two women stand behind the horse under a segmental trapezoidal arch on the left side of the panel, which is partially missing.

A similar segmental trapezoidal arch on the right side of the panel is also badly defaced. This section shows traces of a figure, possibly with a raised left arm, while a woman with an elaborate headdress beats a drum lying next to the pillar.

References: Marshall 1973: 72-73, pl. 63 (fig. 92); Ingholt 1957: 60, no. 44; Kurita 1988: I, 72, no. 143; Ali and Qazi 2008: 94-95, no. 6.2.

Pl. 127. Royal bedroom with a flat roof flanked by arched-niches.

Acc. No.	NM 507	Material:	Schist?	Size (cm):	62 x 52 x 7
Provenance:	Jamrud	Source:	?	Location:	National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi

Description

This relief panel is comprised of two scenes separated by a horizontal band of overlapping lanceolate leaves. In the top section Siddhartha is reclining on a couch, under a canopy of voluted, raised round arch, supported by two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns. The lady seated on the edge of the couch with her feet resting on the foot stool is undoubtedly Yaśodharā. The royal couple is entertained by female attendants with dance and music. On the right side of the central arch, there is a balcony decorated with chequered design and draped with a textile, inhabited by now broken human figures. Unfortunately, the right-side balcony is completely broken.

The scene depicted in the lower section is representing the great departure. Here Yaśodharā is sleeping on a couch and sleep has also overpowered the two drummers seated in front of the couch. Siddhartha is stepping down carefully, giving orders to his horseman Chandaka, who is standing behind the couch to the left. Two female guardians, or Yavanīs, stand in each of the two niches flanking the couch, seemingly oblivious to their surroundings. These niches are supported by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns adorned with back-to-back bull capitals. Each niche is crowned by a voluted, raised round arch with a carinated extrados and a coffered ceiling. The sleeping chamber has a flat roof with a balcony above, which connects the two carinated arches. From the balcony, five divinities peer over the balustrade, with a bull's head in the center. Parakeets can be seen bustling atop the arches.

References: Foucher 1905: II, 178, fig. 391; Ingholt 1957: 58-59, no. 39; Kurita 1988: I, 15, no. P1-XII; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 222, cat. no. 156.

ii. Court Halls

Pl. 128. A luxurious courtroom of the royal palace.

Acc. No.	PM_02724	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.25x27.96
Provenance:	Swat*	Source:	Donated by Guides Mess Mardan in 1942	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief depicts the scene of interpretation of Māyā's dream by Brahman. King Śuddhodana is shown seated on a throne under an ornate canopy, fringed with

tassels. He is depicted in the centre, the sage Asita to his left and a younger Brahman, Naradatta, to his right, identified as Asita's nephew. Both Brahmans hold characteristic water flasks in their left hands and sit on basketry stools. The king's throne is richly decorated, with his feet resting on a low pedestal carved with lotuses. In the background, two female chauri-bearers with flywhisks lean against each end of the throne, though one is defaced. The scene is framed by two Indo-Corinthian pilasters on each side, with the left pilaster unfortunately broken. This scene authentically captures the essence of a royal palace courtroom, even though architectural elements are scarcely depicted. The lavishly decorated furniture and the presence of royal dignitaries strongly evoke the ambience of a grand court hall.

References: Foucher 1905 AGBG: I, 299, fig. 151; Burgess 1978 rpt: 22, fig. 7; Ingholt: 1957: 51-52: no. 12; Marshall: 1973: 42-43, pl. 34, fig. 54; Sehrai 1982: 23, pl. 7; Kurita 1988: I, 11, fig. PI-IV; Ali and Qazi 2008: 51, no. 3.3.

*According to Marshall (1973: 42-43), this panel, along with another depicting the seven steps of the infant Siddhārtha, now housed in the Peshawar Museum, was recovered from the same site in Swat. Luckily, these panels were photographed by Mr. Caddy before being acquired by the Guides Mess, Mardan.

Pl. 129. A courtroom graced by a king and royal dignitary.

Acc. No.	1981-1-66	Material:	Green phyllite	Size (cm):	30.5x13.0x5.3
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

This finely carved panel is bordered by a Corinthian pilaster on the left with its shaft adorned with a spiral band. The figured field portrays a royal figure, possibly a king (though the head is missing), seated cross-legged on a throne under a royal canopy, with his feet resting on a footstool. A male chauri-bearer stands behind the king, and another figure kneels in adoration before him. To the left of the king, five dignitaries stand in a row, facing forward. The scene appears to depict a court scene, guarded by four soldiers equipped with various weapons. One soldier holds a dagger in his right hand and a long spear in his left, another, an elephant rider with a shield, draws a bow while the elephant holds a quiver in its trunk. A camel-rider carries a spear in his left hand, and the head of a fourth soldier is partially visible. The soldiers wear armour-coats, while the other figures are donned with shawls, dhotis, and ornaments.

According to Swati (2012: 10-11), this relief narrates the moment when emperor Aśoka was informed that the stūpa of Rāmagrāma, one of the eight original stūpas housing the Buddha's bodily remains and guarded by *nāgas* (interpreted as serpents or elephants), could not be opened to collect relics, as ordered by the emperor. Following this, Aśoka himself visited the site and commanded the stūpa's renovation. The story recounts that after the Buddha's cremation, his bodily remains were divided and buried in eight stūpas at various locations: Rāmagrāma, Rājagṛha, Vaiśālī, Kapilvastu, Allakappa, Vetha Dīpa, Pava, and Kuśinārā. Subsequently, Aśoka opened all except the Rāmagrāma stūpa, which was protected by the *nāgas*, and redistributed the relics among the numerous stūpas he constructed in the length and breadth of his empire.

Reference: Swati 2012: 10-11, pl. 13.

Pl. 130. A court-hall with a flat roof flanked by segmental trapezoidal architrave.

Acc. No.	PM_02734	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79x47.02
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol	Source:	Exc. 1906-07	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The relief panel represents three distinct scenes, though only the central scene remains fully intact. This central depiction illustrates King Śuddhodana and Queen Māyā seated together on a throne. To their right, Rishi Asita sits on a stool, holding the infant Siddhārtha in his lap, and is foretelling the child's horoscope. The royal couple is seated in a court hall under a flat roof supported by two damaged Corinthian pilasters, flanked by a segmental trapezoidal architrave. Rishi Asita is seated under the trapezoidal architrave to the right of the royal couple, while two bejewelled female attendants are standing under the trapezoidal architrave to their left. Above the central roof, leonine brackets support the cornice, and stepped pediments above the trapezoidal architraves also provide support. The cornice is decorated with a denticulate design.

The entire scene is framed by two Corinthian pilasters. The top border of the relief is intricately carved with overlapping lanceolate leaves motif while both right and left sides of the panel are badly damaged.

References: Sehrai 1982: 26-27, pl.13; Ali and Qazi 2008: 65-66, no. 4.2.

Pl. 131. A court-hall with a flat roof and niches with voluted raised round arches on either side.

Acc. No.	PM_02735	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79x36.85
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol	Source:	Exc. of Archaeological Department 1906-07	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief panel is broken in the middle and rejoined, depicts the interpretation of Queen Māyā's dream. In the figured field, the royal couple is seated on a couch under a flat roof supported by two Indo-Corinthian pilasters. On either side of this central scene, there is a niche with a raised round arch, having leonine volutes. The right niche is inhabited by two standing female attendants, while Rishi Asita is seated on a stool in the left niche. Garlands are hanging down from the ceilings inside the niches, enhancing the ornamental detail.

The cornice above the central roof is supported by leonine brackets. The cornice itself is adorned with a saw-tooth pattern below and overlapping lanceolate leaves above. The entire scene is framed by encased Indo-Corinthian pilasters.

References: Foucher 1905: II, 211, fig. 408; Kurita 1990: II, 55, no. 137; Ali and Qazi 2008: 51-52, no. 3.3.

Pl. 132. Palace interior with a raised round arch standing on mixed type of columns.

Acc. No.	PM_01190	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	20.33x25.42
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi	Source:	Exc. of Archaeological Department, 1908-09	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The relief panel is broken on both sides, except for the central portion which is depicted with a Bodhisattva seated on a high stool with a raised right hand. Another figure, also seated on a high stool and holding something in both hands can be seen at his back. In the background, a human figure (Bodhisattva), is seated cross-legged in *dhyānamudrā*. These figures are shown under a round arch supported by two mixed-type columns featuring Gandhāran-Corinthian capitals and Gandhāran-Persepolitan bases with stepped plinths and pots. The interior of the arch is strengthened with a *cyma-reversa* design having central grooves. Remains of a similar round arch are visible on the left side of the panel, showing a standing figure holding a sword (guard?). On the right side, a straight festoon of overlapping half-opened lotuses, facing upward, separates the scene. Fragmentary scene on the right shows seated Buddhas and Buddha's begging bowl in bold relief. The arch is flanked by balconies with human busts on either side, while the cornice is supported by a row of leonine-shaped brackets.

Reference: Ingholt 1957: figs. 257, 258, 262 (for similar roof design).

2.5.3. Dressing Room

Pl. 133. A dressing room like structure with trapezoidal arch and side chambers

Acc. No.	BM-1900,0522.1	Material:	Limestone	Size (cm):	Diameter: 7 Height: 30 Width: 52.10
Provenance:	Haḍḍa (S. Afghanistan)			Location:	British Museum
Source:	Purchased from: Henry Graves & Co Acquisition date 1900 Acquisition notes ‘Said to have been collected at Hadda by William Simpson’.				

Description

This relief panel is depicted with the scene 'the Conversion of Sundarananda (or Nanda)'. The whole scene is presented here under a trapezoidal roof with a saw-tooth cornice supported by Corinthian columns. Central to the scene is Sundarī, Sundarananda's wife, who is seated and richly adorned with fine clothes and jewellery. Sundarī is surrounded by three similarly dressed women, who are helping her to get ready. A fourth woman stands in a side chamber to the right of the panel.

The haloed Sundarananda himself appears in the side chamber to the left, carrying a bowl and looking back over his shoulder. The continuous narration technique shows Sundarananda again, beyond a doorway, kneeling before the tall, haloed Buddha. The Buddha has raised his damaged right hand in *abhayamudrā*, gazing down at Sundarananda.

The palace superstructure features columns, leonine brackets, balconies with openwork faces, and saw-tooth details. Heads of women are depicted watching from the balconies. Above the door frame, capped battlements with triangular loopholes are visible. A male figure with a crested turban leans over the battlements, raising a hand as if to throw flowers over the Buddha.

The scene is framed by pilasters with recessed oblong panels, Corinthian capitals and distinct base mouldings. Above the capitals, a decorative course is comprised of bead-and-reel patterns, and the cornice is decorated with overlapping lanceolate leaves.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 465, 234; Marshall 1973: 94, pl. 86 (fig. 121); Kurita 1988: I, 139, no. P3-V; Zwalf 1996: I,II, 186-87, pl. 205; Errington 2017: 20, fig. 6; Tanabe 2019: 44, fig. 8.

2.6. Royal Stables

Pl. 134. Representation of a royal stable.

Acc. No.	DMC 286	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.5x20.5
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This broken and defaced panel shows the birth of Kaṇṭhaka and Chandaka, Siddhārtha's horse and groom, respectively. On the far left of the panel, a defaced figure is seated, holding a baby in her lap, probably the mother of the infant Chandaka is nursing him. Meanwhile, a mare is eating fodder from a manger and at the same time feeding her foal, Kaṇṭhaka, who would later become Siddhartha's favorite horse. In the background, two horse heads are peering over a wall. The scene is divided by a Corinthian pilaster on the right, where a seated figure (woman feeding a baby?) can be seen under a side chamber of a central arch, with two human busts in the balcony above. The overall depiction of the scene gives the impression of a royal stable.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 318, fig. 163; Ingholt 1957: 53-54, no. 19; Dani 1968-69a: 33-61; Nishikawa 1994: II, 152, pl. 118 (3).

Pl. 135. A royal stable setting.

Acc. No.	PM_02726	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	13.98x24.15
Provenance:	unknown	Source:	unknown	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief panel illustrates the birth of Chandaka and Kaṇṭhaka within a royal stable setting. Chandaka's mother is shown seated on a high stool and bathing the infant boy in a water tank. The little foal, Kaṇṭhaka is depicted being nursed by his mother, who is eating fodder from a rack. Behind them, a brick wall is visible with three horse heads in the background. Another defaced standing figure appears behind

Chandaka's mother. On the right side of the panel, an Indo-Corinthian pilaster is enclosed within a rectangular frame.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 318, fig. 163; Ingholt 1957: 53-54, no. 19; Sehrai 1982: 24-25: pl. 9; Nishikawa 1994: II, 152, pl. 118 (3).

3. Funerary Monuments

Pl. 136. A tomb or grave with round arched entrance and domed roof covering.

Acc. No.	PM_02817	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	36.25x27.50
Provenance:	Jamal Garhi	Source:	Loan, D.G.A, 1923	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This panel illustrates the story of the nursing of the dead woman and the conversion of her son Sudāya. Starting from the left, Buddha is depicted standing and facing left. A naked boy, converted by the Buddha, stands before him with clasped hands in adoration. Another devotee is shown standing in front of the Buddha. Vajrapāṇi is standing behind the Buddha holding *vajra* in his right hand. At the center of the panel, a tomb is represented as a brick vault with round arch entrance and domed roof covering. The upper body of the deceased woman is lying outside on the ground.

On the right side of the panel, a Bodhisattva is depicted in *abhayamudrā*, accompanied by a devotee and Vajrapāṇi. Two flying cupids holding garlands, facing each other can be seen above the head of the Bodhisattva. Figures showering flowers are depicted in the upper left corner of the scene. The top border of the panel is decorated with acanthus leaves, while the remaining borders are plain.

References: Hargreaves 1921-22: 59-60, pl. 24; Shakur: 1954: 46-47, 94; Ingholt 1957: 85, no. 121; Sehrai 1982: 52-53, pl. 55; Ali and Qazi 2008: 208-09, no. 10.10

Pl. 137. Dome-shaped tomb with a rectangular entrance and a square-shaped ventilator above.

Acc. No.	DMC 651	Material:	Blue Schist	Size (cm):	13.8x38.5
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A circular panel carved with two distinct scenes separated by a Corinthian pilaster. The scene on the left illustrates the offering of honey to Buddha by monkeys, while the scene on the right portrays the nursling of the dead woman. The tomb is carved as a domed structure with a rectangular opening and a square-shaped window/ventilator above the entrance. Half of the dead woman's body is lying outside the tomb, with her hair scattered. In this scene, the child is seated cross-legged under a tree, holding his mother's body with his right hand. He looks over his shoulder at Buddha, who stands behind him in *abhayamudrā*, followed by Vajrapāṇi and a tree.

References: Ingholt 1957: 85, pl. 121; Dani 1968-69: 85-86, pl. 46 b. no. 89; Kurita 1988: I, 223, 224, nos. 462, 462, 465.

Pl. 138. A cubic-shaped tomb with a high arched roof covered with a leaf pattern.

Acc. No.	BM-1899, 0609.22	Material	Schist	Size (cm):	23.50x29.880
Provenance	Kafir-Kot, D.I. Khan			Location:	British Museum
Source:	Acquired by Sir Harold Arthur Deane in 1899				

Description

Part of a stūpa drum panel illustrates the story of the Nursling of the Dead Woman. Starting from the right, a broken Buddha figure is facing a nude boy named Sudāya, standing with clasped hands in adoration. A half-length figure is depicted above the boy who has also joined his hands in adoration. The body of a woman is shown emerging from a tomb and her upper body is lying in the foreground. Beside her kneels a nude male figure (her son?), touching her body (cf. with Inv. no. I.S 78-1942 at V&A Museum). Above him Vajrapāṇi is shown holding a short flywhisk over his left shoulder and perhaps a *vajra* in his damaged right hand.

The tomb is a cubic hut-like structure with a high, arched roof decorated with a leaf pattern, topped with a horizontal semi-cylindrical element that supports a large bird. The front face is plain, and the back has a plain curved lower roof. The hut stands on a plinth with torus moulding, and its front wall is divided into patterned panels with triangles, each containing a small, indented triangle. A tree with a curving half-trunk and upward-pointing branches is positioned behind the hut at the right corner of the panel. The panel is framed with a straight festoon of overlapping lanceolate leaves above while the bottom framing fillet is plain.

Reference Ackerman 1975: 128-29, pl. LVI a; Kurita 1988: I, 223, 224, nos. 462, 462, 465; Zwalf 1996: 201-202, pl. 225.

4. Architectural Elements:

4.1. Balconies

Pl. 139. A balcony comprised of railing and Corinthian pilasters.

Acc. No.	BI-1768 & 422	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	0.39x0.34x0.05
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Part of a relief depicts a section of a door frame topped with a cornice decorated with acanthus leaves. Above this, there is a balcony supported by beams of which the ends are visible. The balcony is comprised of a railing and three Corinthian pilasters that support a roof. Four female busts with different gestures are emerging onto the balcony. The roof is also covered with acanthus leaves and a bird is perched on its right corner.

Reference: Faccenna 1964: 128, pl. CDVII.

Pl. 140. A balcony comprised of railing and voluted round arch.

Acc. No.	SM-124 (1685)	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	18.8x28.2x7.5
Provenance:	Butkara I?	Source:	Exc. 1956-62?	Location:	Swat Museum store

Description

Fragment of a relief panel shows upper part of a man appearing on a balcony. The balcony consists of a railing, above which half Corinthian pilasters support a voluted round arch of uniform thickness. A four-petalled rosette embellish each haunch of the arch, while an enframed vertical acanthus leaf decorates the right side of the panel. Inside the arch, the bust of the turbaned and bejewelled man holds a bunch of flowers in his right hand.

Reference: Kurita 1990: II, 207, no. 604.

Pl. 141. Balcony with a railing and flat roof above.

Acc. No.	PM_01333	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	12.71x27.96
Provenance:	unknown			Location:	Peshawar Museum
Source:	Donated by Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E. in 1916 (Knight Commander of the Indian Empire).				

Description

Fragment of a relief depicts a balcony with a railing and a flat roof above. The upper bodies of two female figures are visible in the balcony, each placing their left hand on the railing. Both of the ladies are fully draped and adorned with jewellery and elaborate head dresses. The figure on the right holds an enormous bunch of flowers in her right hand, while the figure on the left also holds a round object in her raised right hand. On the right side of the panel, remnants of an encased Corinthian pilaster can be seen.

Reference: Kurita 1990: II, 284, no. 873.

Pl. 142. Balcony with a crisscross railing topped by triangular-shaped crenellations.

Acc. No.	PM_00754	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	12.71x10.17
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi			Location:	Peshawar Museum (Res)
Source:	Excavation of Archaeological Department Frontier Circle, 1907-08.				

Description

Part of a relief panel, broken on the right side, illustrates a balcony with a female figure emerging onto it. The balcony is comprised of a railing featuring a base composed of double fillets, followed by bars and crossbars making a crisscross pattern, and a cornice also consisting of double fillets. The railing is crowned by triangular-shaped crenellations. The lady is wearing elaborate ornaments and a

lavish headdress, holds a bunch of lotus flowers in her raised right hand. Above her head, a flat roof is supported by cyma reversa type brackets with vertical grooves.

Reference: Foucher 1905: I, 543, fig. 268.

Pl. 143. A Balcony supported by beams with a railing consist of bars and cross bars.

Acc. No.	NG 337	Material:	Soapstone	Size (in):	6 ½"x5 ½"x1 ½"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Part of a relief depicts Bodhisattva Maitreya in Tushita Heaven. The panel is bordered at the bottom by a plain fillet, beneath which lies a fillet decorated with a sawtooth pattern. Maitreya is seated on his lion throne covered with a cloth and his feet rest on a foot stool. His right hand is raised in *abhaya mudrā*, while his left hand holds a *kamaṇḍalu* hanging in front of his knee. He is seated in the European position with crossed ankles. Two other male figures, seated with their legs in a similar style to the Bodhisattva, devote their attention to him. The torsos of two bejewelled women are visible in a balcony above. The balcony is supported by beams and consists of a railing with bars and cross bars, framed by plain fillets both below and at the top.

References: Arif 2014: 55, pl. 160; Kurita 1990: II, 208, no. 607.

Pl. 144. Balconies with chequered pattern balustrade and hanging curtains.

Acc. No.	DMC 787	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	10.5x31.5
Provenance:	Jabagai	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Part of a circular panel depicts four balconies, each separated by a half Corinthian pilaster. Within each balcony, there are busts of a man and a woman. Below the balconies, a frieze of balustrade is embellished with a chequered pattern and hanging curtains.

References: Dani 1968-69: 95-96, pl. 57, no. 111; Kurita 1990: II, 207, no. 602.

Pl. 145. Balconies supported by Corinthian pilasters and balustrade with hanging curtains.

Acc. No.	SM-2557 (V-1022)	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	38x12x4.5
Provenance:	Gumbatuna	Source:	Varia Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Part of a long frieze featuring intricate engraving in four vertical sections. The fragment is bordered on the right by a leaf-and-dart moulding. The frieze is divided into five sections with the top of the upper section broken and missing. In each of the

upper three naves, there is a devotee standing behind superimposed balconies supported by dwarf Corinthian columns.

Starting from the bottom, the first section is inhabited by a half Corinthian pilaster adorned with two flowing ribbons and flanked by two small Corinthian pilasters. In the second compartment, a male figure is standing behind a balustrade decorated with chequered pattern and a hanging curtain in the middle. The cornice is decorated with a festoon of overlapping lanceolate leaves.

In the third section, a female figure holding an object in her hands, stands behind a railing of bars and cross bars with a curtain in the middle. The cornice is similarly embellished with a festoon of overlapping lanceolate leaves.

In the fourth surviving compartment, a female figure stands behind a railing decorated with a grid having alternate relief triangles and a hanging textile. She holds a lotus flower in her right hand, while her left hand rests on the railing.

References: Zwalf 1996: I, 220-221, II: pls. 258-260; Kurita 1990: II, 208, no. 606; Ghafoor 2017: 71-73, fig. 37; Tanabe 2019: 30, figs. 1, 2.

4.2. Arches:

4.2.1. Voluted Carinated Arches

Pl. 146. Voluted carinated arches separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-177	Material:	Green Phyllite	Size (cm):	29.0x16.0x4.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

This rectangular relief panel depicts three voluted carinated arches, separated by two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns. The raised arches have carinated extrados at the top and volute ends on both sides, each having suspended cone-shaped objects.

From right to left, the male figure under the right arch is shown in profile, with his right hand raised in *abhayamudrā*, and a water flask in the left. The tapering jamb of this arch is adorned with a beaded pattern, and the tympanum has a pīpal leaf.

The figure under the central arch looks like Kāśyapa, stands cross-legged to the right, holding a water flask in his left hand. The sloping jamb of this arch is decorated with a row of alternating trifid calices, most of which are unfinished.

The figure under the left arch is no doubt the Greek goddess Athena, holding a spear against her right shoulder in her right hand and a large shield over her left arm. The tapering jamb of the arch is enriched with a band of ascending pīpal leaves, and the tympanum bears an open flame palmette.

Inside each arch, remnants of artificial beams can be seen. The Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns consist of a plinth with a pot-shaped base, a round tapering shaft with moulds, a bell-shaped capital, and an entablature of four fillets supporting a horizontal beam. This beam is decorated with a beaded motif and topped by a plain projected cornice.

References: Ingholt 1957: 168-69, no. 443; Khan, GR. 2015: 134-35, no. 91.

Pl. 147. Voluted carinated arches delineated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-190	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	50.0x21.0x5.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

A partially broken rectangular panel depicts three compartments, each illustrated with voluted carinated arches separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns, with similar columns bordering the panel on either side. The carinated arches illustrates cones hanging from the volutes, and the sloping jambs are decorated with various designs. The arches are supported with artificial beams from inside.

From right to left, the sloping jambs of the first arch are enriched with a pīpal scroll, and the tympanum displays a half-flower motif. The male figure standing under this arch wears a girdled skirt and has hair tied with a ribbon at the top.

The central arch's tapering jambs portrays a row of opposing scales, with a closed palmette in the tympanum. A bearded ascetic is standing under this arch, holding a water pot in his left hand and kneeling in profile to the right.

The left arch is adorned with a vine scroll motif on its sloping jambs and a half-flower in the tympanum. The figure beneath this arch resembles the figure under the first arch but holds a water flask in his left hand.

The columns are comprised of a stepped plinth, a pot with a base, round tapering shafts with moulds, an intermediate dome, and cup-like elements supporting the entablature with horizontal fillets. The lower fillet contains two volutes on either side.

References: Swati 1997a: 43, pl. 23, 2007: 140, pl. 23; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 325, cat. no. 221; Khan, G.R. 2015: 136-37, no. 92.

Pl. 148. Voluted carinated arches with sloping jambs enriched with overlapping leaves of pīpal.

Acc. No.	1981-1-68	Material:	Green Phyllite	Size (cm):	20.8x16.3x4.4
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

Part of a rectangular relief panel illustrate two standing figures under intricately carved voluted carinated/*caitya* arches, which are separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan column. These arches are designed as pointed-true arches with cross rafters visible under their soffits. The ends of these arches terminate in volutes, from which cones are suspended. The door jambs are exhibited with overlapping pīpal

leaf scrolls, while the tympanum of each entrance is divided into two sections decorated with a row of opposite triangles filled with parallel lines.

From right to left, the figure under the first arch is a soldier holding a sword in his right hand and a scabbard in his left. The figure under the second arch is a female wearing a long-sleeved tunic. The upper bodies of both figures are defaced and chipped off.

Reference: Swati 2012: 11-12, pl. 16.

Pl. 149. Four voluted carinated arches inhabited by different objects.

Acc. No.	DMC 842	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	10x42.5
Provenance:	Macho	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A complete relief panel, exhibiting interesting objects beneath four voluted carinated arches, each separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns. These arches have a squat appearance, with their ends terminating in volutes from which cone-like objects are suspended. Cross rafters can be noticed beneath the soffits of the arches.

Starting from right to left:

The first arch houses intertwined *nāgas* (or a closed flame palmette?).

The second arch depicts triratna placed on a plain pedestal.

The third arch is inhabited by a Bodhi tree with upward-branching limbs, standing on a low base.

The fourth arch exhibit a floral motif, likely a lotus bud at the top with stylized leaves arranged upward on the stalk.

The cornice is decorated with a row of bordered ogival leaf-and-dart motif, while an encased Persepolitan column is located at the right corner of the panel. The Gandhāran-Persepolitan column features a torus-shaped base, a round tapering shaft and a capital. The capital is comprising of a bell-like element, followed by an intermediate element, a dome-like element, another intermediate element, a cup-like element and an entablature consisting of two plain fillets.

Reference: Cf with similar panels at the Dir Museum bearing acc. nos. DMC 840, DMC 1123.

Pl. 150. Volute carinated arches separated by encased Indo-Corinthian columns.

Acc. No.	DMC 919B	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	61x16
Provenance:	Bambolai	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A broken panel depicts a seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*, flanked by two devotees with folded hands, their heads turned towards the Buddha. Each figure is seated within a carinated arch, separated by encased Indo-Corinthian columns.

These carinated arches are broad and unadorned, except for cones-like objects suspended from their volutes. The Indo-Corinthian columns feature round, tapering shafts decorated with incised horizontal bands. The cornice is adorned with a leaf-and-dart motif.

Reference: Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 325, cat. no. 222.

Pl. 151. Voluted Carinated arches separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan type.

Acc. No.	MJN 1983-1-18	Material:	Green Phyllite	Size (cm):	24.5x14.5x4.0
Provenance:	Marjanai	Source:	Exc. 1983	Location:	University Museum

Description

The relief panel is divided into two compartments by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns. Each compartment consists of *caitya* arch terminating in volutes from which cone-like objects hang. The arches are enriched with artificial beams under the soffits. The sloping jambs of the first arch are decorated with a row of overlapping grape leaves, and the tympanum accommodates a honeysuckle or palmette motif. The sloping jambs of the second arch are decorated with a row of opposite triangles filled with parallel lines, and its tympanum is adorned with a palmette motif. A male figure with raised right hand is standing under the first arch and a female figure is standing under the second carinated arch.

The Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns consist of a stepped plinth, above which is an intermediate element carved with a rope motif. On top of disc like element is a pot with a horizontal band in the middle. The rim of the pot has three inverted tiers from which a shaft emerges, diminishing towards the top. The capital consists of two moulds and an inverted bell, with an intermediate element, carved with a rope motif, between the bell and dome. Above the bowl, two back-to-back bulls support three inverted steps of the modillion.

References: Khan, S.N. 1995: 18, pl. 20 a; Brancaccio and Behrendt 2006: 210-224, fig. 9.2; Sehrai 2018: 51, pl. 22.

Pl. 152. Carinated arches terminates in volutes with suspended tendril-shaped pendants.

Acc. No.	NG 149	Material:	Black Schist	Size (in):	6 7/8"x9"x2 5/8"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Part of a curvilinear frieze is defined at the top by a band with a dentil and bar pattern, followed by a plain fillet, a cornice of leaf-and-dart, and another plain fillet above.

Two carinated arches are separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan pillar. These arches terminate in volutes from which tendril-shaped pendants hang. Inside each arch, the remains of artificial cross rafters are visible. The doorframes under the arches are adorned with scales in the right arch and wavy lines in the left.

The figure under the right arch is partly broken, holds an object shaped like a drum. The other figure under the left arch wears tunic and trousers, with his right hand slightly raised and his left hand resting on the handle of his sword.

References: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A7ZSMTTC5FOFZL82> (accessed August 20, 2024); Arif 2014: 31, pl. 60.

Pl. 153. Volute carinated arch with sloping jambs decorated with full-blown lotuses.

Acc. No.	SRO-571 (SRP-653)	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	20x22
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Shahbaz Garhi Police	Location:	SRO Peshawar

Description

Partially broken square panel illustrates a voluted carinated arch in the center flanked by two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns. The column on the left side of the panel is almost broken and defaced, while the one on the right is intact. A stout male figure stands inside the arch, dressed in a knee-length skirt. He carries something in an inflated goat skin over both shoulders, holding its two hanging corners with both hands. The tapering jambs of the arch are decorated with full-blown lotus flowers, each separated by a beaded fillet. The tympanum is illustrated with a row of opposite triangles filled with parallel lines, bracketed in a beaded fillet.

Reference: Khan, Z. 2017: 204, fig. 115.

4.2.2. Volute Round Arches

Pl. 154. Volute round arches separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan column.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1982-1-20	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	22.5x12.5x4.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

A rectangular panel, partially broken and defaced, features two arches separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan column, with identical columns on either side of the panel. The arches are voluted round shaped and adorned with suspended cones from their volutes.

From right to left, the first arch has door frames decorated with a lunette (scales) design, beneath which a monk stands. The second arch displays sloping jambs adorned with a row of opposite triangles filled with incised parallel lines. A figure, probably of the Buddha without a halo and uṣṇiṣa, stands in *abhayamudrā* under this arch.

The central column remains intact, with a wide plinth, pot-shaped base, shafts with moulds, intermediate and cup-like elements, and superimposed horizontal fillets. The cornice is decorated with a dentil-and-drop pattern followed by a plain projected fillet.

Reference: Khan, G.R. 2015: 124, pl.84.

Fig. 155. Voluted round arches with Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*.

Acc. No.	DMC 619	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15x37.5
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A long curvilinear frieze depicting three voluted round arches with hanging cones from their volutes. Every arch is inhabited by a Buddha seated in *dhyānamudrā*. These arches are separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns with similar columns on either side of the panel. The base of the Gandhāran-Persepolitan column consist of a square plinth, an intermediate disc-like element, and a pot with thick rim from which the moulded shaft emerges. This shaft is crowned by a bell, separated by a disc from a bowl that supports a voluted bracket, which in turn supports a modillion. The internal frame is decorated with a saw tooth motif. The panel is topped by a plain fillet followed by cyma reversa type brackets, supporting cross rafters, and a plain projected cornice. Base of the panel is decorated with overlapping leaves of pīpal tree.

Reference: Dani 1968-69b: 65-102.

Pl. 156. Voluted round arches with cross rafters under the soffits.

Acc. No.	P 387	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	13.5x26.7x3
Provenance:	Panr	Source:	Exc. 1960-64	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This rectangular panel depicts two round arches terminates into volutes from which bunches of grapes are hanging. Starting from right to left, the first arch has sloping jambs decorated with wavy lines and a full size five-petalled rosette in the tympanum. A nude figure is standing under this arch. An Gandhāran-Persepolitan column is in the middle followed by another arch inhabited by a monk. The sloping jambs of the second arch are adorned with a band of four-petalled rosettes and a big rosette in the tympanum. The soffits of both arches are supported with artificial beams. Remains of Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns are visible on either side of the panel.

Reference: Khan, M.A. 1993a: 28-29.

4.2.3. simple raised round arches with carinated extrados

Pl. 157. Raised round arches with carinated extrados.

Acc. No.	DMC 1985	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	14 x 31.5 cm
Provenance:	Baghrajai	Source:	Exc. 1980	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A broken panel depicts two figures standing under arches, separated by a Gandhāran-Persepolitan column. Starting from the right, the first compartment shows a raised round arch with a carinated extrados that terminates in volutes with suspended tendril-shaped objects. The soffit of the arch is adorned with artificial beams, while the sloping door frames are adorned with a row of overlapping pīpal leaves. A female figure, standing cross-legged under this arch, holds a branch of a Śālā tree in her left hand. The Gandhāran-Persepolitan column consists of a stepped base, a disc, and a pot with everted rims. From the pot's mouth, a round tapering shaft emerges, topped with a capital consist of a bell, dome, and a bowl, which is crowned by back-to-back bulls supporting stepped modillions on their backs. The second arch is partially broken and mirrors the first, except for the decorative motif on the sloping jambs, which is a band of parallel lanceolate or Śālā tree leaves.

Reference: Khan, S.N. 1995: 59, pl. 21-b.

4.2.4. Voluted Raised Round Arches with Carinated Extrados

Pl. 158. Voluted raised round arches with carinated extrados.

Acc. No.	DMC 426	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	27.2x61 cm
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A rectangular panel, broken on the extreme left, depicts two devotees standing under separate arches, separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns. The arches are raised round shaped with carinated extrados that terminate in volutes, from which spiral cones hang. The soffits of the arches are adorned with artificial beams, while the inner door jambs lack any decoration. The two devotees are dressed in Indian dhoti and turban. The figure on the left is with clasped hands, while the other holds something in both hands (urn?). The column on the right side and in the middle of the arches are intact, whereas the one on the left side is broken except for its middle part.

Reference: Dani 1968-69a: 48-49, pl. 11 a.

Pl. 159. A raised round arch having carinated extrados terminates in Garuda-headed volutes.

Acc. No.	PM_00951	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	29.23x38.12
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi, Mardan	Source:	Exc. of ADFC, 1912.	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

A relief panel exhibits a Buddha seated in *dhyānamudrā* on an inverted-lotus throne inside an arch. The arch is raised and round with carinated extrados, terminated in Garuda-headed volutes embellished with suspended bunches of grapes. The Garuda heads are also wearing turbans with crests. The inner side of the arch is framed by a series of brackets or modillions. Additionally, two parrots perch on either side of the arch, facing outward.

References: Ingholt 1957: 118, pl. 244; Rhi 2008: 254-256, fig. 1, 3.

4.2.5. Voluted Trefoil Arches

Pl. 160. An interrupted voluted trefoil arch.

Acc. No.	PM_00187	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79x16.52
Provenance:	Ban Darra, Kharki	Source:	P.G.G. Pipon, Esquire, I.C. S	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This broken relief panel depicts a segmental trapezoidal architrave above which rests a voluted interrupted trefoil arch. Remnants of two pillars each support a balcony comprised of a balustrade and cornice. From the inner edges of the balconies rises a segmental trapezoidal architrave, while the outer edges give rise to the half arch of the voluted interrupted trefoil arch above. Kneeling devotees with hands clasped in adoration, facing inward, are depicted within the half arches. Below the architrave, a defaced haloed head of the Buddha is visible. Another Buddha in *dhyānamudrā* is seated on a raised square podium above the architrave, under a round arch with carinated extrados ends in volutes from which cones hang. Internally, the arch is embellished with a saw-tooth design while head of a celestial being (?) emerge from each side of the arch and looking inward. Outside, A large bird perches on the left half of the arch, and the remains of standing devotees can also be observed on either side of the arch.

References: Ingholt 1957: 123-24, no. 256; Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 86, pl. 15 no. 3.

Pl. 161. Voluted trefoil arch with Buddha image without halo inside.

Acc. No.	PM_00768	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	17.79x15.25
Provenance:	Takht-i-Bahi	Source:	Exc. of ADFC, 1907-08	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief panel is partially broken and defaced, depicting a Buddha seated in meditation under a voluted trefoil arch. The portable niche-shaped arch is placed on a balustrade with a chequered pattern. The arch is round and embellished with saw-tooth pattern internally, culminates in volutes. The Buddha figure is without halo and there is an object (a basket?) above his head.

Reference: Jansen and Luzanits 2008: 223, cat. no. 158.

4.3. False Gable Arches

Pl. 162. A false gable in the form of a carinated and voluted arch.

Acc. No.	Inv. no. BK 283	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	0.53x0.34x0.07
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-58	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A false gable in the form of a carinated and voluted arch with pinecones hanging from the volutes. The inner frame of the niche is adorned with overlapping lanceolate leaves and topped with a rosette. The outer cornice is supported by false brackets and embellished with a beaded pattern. The arch's span is crowned with two crescent-shaped panels displaying acanthus tufts, alternating with a band of vine scroll pattern and a row of rosettes. Two figures are standing beneath the arch on a low base, a bejewelled and turbaned man offering a necklace to a richly adorned woman, who stands in a *tribanga* pose. Her right hand touches the garland that binds her loop-shaped knot of hair, while her left hand holds the handle of a round mirror.

References: Faccenna 1962: 46-47, pl. CLXVI; Kurita 1990: II, 197, no. 569; Brancaccio and Behrendt 2006: 211, fig. 9.1; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: cat. no. 181.

Pl. 163. Decorated upper lunette of a false gable bordered by a trilobate bracketed frame.

Acc. No.	SM-1137 (WS-84)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	41x45x6.5
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Wali-e-Swat	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Decorated upper lunette of a false gable is bordered by a trilobate bracketed frame and positioned on a moulded cornice. The narrative scene is related to 'The gods entreat the Buddha to preach'. The haloed Buddha is seated on a low throne under a pīpal tree, in a *padmāsana*, with right hand raised in *abhayamudrā* and left holding the hem of *saṅghāṭi*. He is flanked by Indra and Brahma on either side, both with hands clasped in adoration. At the sides are two worshippers smaller in size, kneeling in adoration.

References: Faccenna 1962: 60, pl. CCXXVI; Tanveer 2010: 41-42, pl. 68.

Pl. 164. Part of a false gable depicted with successive scenes.

Acc. No.	SM-0329 (Inv. no. 3732)	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	11x29x7
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-58	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel represents a curvilinear frieze with a series of scenes. Each of the side scenes is framed by Corinthian columns and crowned by a bracketed cornice. The central scene is higher in appearance with a trapezoidal shape and adorned with acanthus leaves cornice. The right-hand scene depicts a haloed Buddha seated in dhyānamudrā under a tree, flanked by two worshippers. The central scene exhibits the haloed Buddha in *padmāsana* and *abhayamudrā*, also beneath a tree and between two worshippers. The left-hand scene also shows a Buddha as in the central panel, accompanied by a figure holding a flower or fan in his left hand. Traces of red color can be seen among the brackets, and there are remnants of gilding in various parts of the central panel.

References: Faccenna 1962: 26-27, pl. LXXXI a-b; Iori 2018: 126-128, fig. 3.

Pl. 165. False gable in the form of a carinated arch depicted with ‘The Attack of Mara’.

Acc. No.	1138 (V-729)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	51x45.5
Provenance:	Katelai	Source:	Varia Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This panel represents a false gable in the shape of a carinated arch. The central scene illustrates the attack of Māra and attempt of his daughters to seduce the Buddha. Besides this, on the extreme left, Bodhisattva Siddhārtha is sitting in pensive pose on a high cane stool. Above the central scene, the panel is divided into three concentric arches, depicting the worship of the wheel of law, alms bowl and a relic casket.

In the first compartment, the wheel of law is placed on a platform, under a dense foliage, flanked by two kneeling worshippers and followed by a winged sea horse with a spiral tail. The second compartment shows the alms bowl of the Buddha, placed on a throne worshipped by three devotees followed by the same winged sea horse on each side.

The third compartment exhibits worship of the Buddha’s relics. The relic casket is placed on a throne, with three worshippers kneeling in adoration, followed by a Śālā tree, and a winged sea horse with scrolled tail.

These scenes are enclosed by a running scroll of five-petalled rosettes, and the tympanum is adorned with an open flame palmette. The outer cornice is projected and decorated with overlapping five-petalled rosettes and an open flame palmette at the apex. Saw-tooth motif and a plain fillet are the final decorative motifs of the cornice.

Reference: Ghafoor 2017: 53-55, fig. 17.

Pl. 166. False Gable with scenes from the life of the Buddha.

Acc. No.	342-1907	Material:	Grey schist	Size (cm):	59.5x62
Provenance:	Swat Valley	Source:	Bought (Source not recorded)	Location:	Victoria and Albert Museum

Description

This arch-shaped relief panel was probably part of the top portion of a false gable panel from a stūpa, portraying scenes from the life of the Buddha. The lower arched compartment depicts the main scene of this panel, enframed by a round arched moulding decorated with saw-tooth motif. A haloed Buddha is standing in abhaya mudrā facing an ascetic who is pointing to his leafy hut. Buddha is accompanied by Vajrapāṇi and three devotees. Above the central scene, two upper compartments are divided by a torus moulding with overlapping lanceolate leaves decoration. Both compartments showing the Buddha in dhyāna mudrā with worshippers depicted as winged *ichthyocentaurs* with coiled tails. At the bottom of the outer frame there are two kneeling worshippers with clasped hands in adoration, seated on double-tiered acanthus leaves podium and facing towards the central scene. The outer frame has two mouldings: the exterior with curled-over acanthus leaves with a central drooping, and the inner with a running scroll of five-petalled rosettes, followed by the arched moulding with saw-tooth design.

References: Ackermann 1975: 104-105, pl. XXXVIII b; cf PM_2809; Kurita 1988: I, 219, 276, nos. 452, 453, 591.

Pl. 167. False gable arched voluted panel with floral decoration.

Acc. No.	SM-455 Inv. no. P-793	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	0.42x 0.32
Provenance:	Panr	Source:	Exc. 1960-64	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The false gable arched voluted panel is carved with an open flame palmette with flowered tuft (?) or a highly conventionalized lotus flower. The lower cornice is depicted with full-blown lotuses separated by a vertical fillet.

References: Ingholt 1957: 169, no. 444; Khan, MA. 1993b: 38, no. 20; Faccenna 1964: II.3, 114, pl. CCCLIX a (Inv. no. 2505); 2007: 121, 123, pls. 82.4, 84.1; Khan, G.R. 2015: 214, 215, pl. 156.

Pl. 168. Carinated arched panel is illustrating a full-blown honeysuckle.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1982-1-7	Material:	Green Phyllite	Size (cm):	19.0x23.0x4.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

Carinated arched relief panel is illustrating an open flame palmette with flowered tuft (full-blown honeysuckle), enframed by the plain border of arch.

References: Ingholt 1957: 169, no. 444; Khan, M.A. 1993b: 38, no. 20; Faccenna 2007: 121, pl. 82 no. 4; Khan, GR. 2015: 214, 215, no. 156.

Pl. 169. False gable arched panel in the shape of a voluted carinated arch.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-104	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	29.0x28.0x6.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

False gable arched panel in the shape of a voluted carinated arch depicted with multiple scenes separated by lunette arches. The lower compartment represents the main scene with Buddha seated on a raised rectangular throne in abhayamudrā under leafy branches, flanked by devotees on either side. Above the central scene are two more compartments. The lower lunette is showing the worship of the Buddha's alms bowl by kneeling figures with clasped hands, followed by winged monsters on each side. The upper lunette is depicting the worship of the turban by kneeling devotees and winged monsters like those shown in the lower register.

The compartments are separated by round dividing arches embellished with opposite trifid calices and enclosed by vertical frames decorated with vine scrolls and superimposed standing figures in *añjalimudrā*. The tympanum is decorated with an open flame palmette. The projected outer frame of the carinated arch is embellished with saw-tooth motif enclosed within plain fillets.

References: Kurita 1988: I, 124, 276, nos. 242, 590; Khan, GR. 2015: 96-97, no. 60.

Pl. 170. False gable arched panel in the shape of a voluted interrupted trefoil arch.

Acc. No.	CGP 1981-1-16/10 (CGP-34/38)	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	CGP 34: 29.0x28.0x6.0 CGP 38: 32.0x32.0x4.5
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

The relief panel is comprised of two pieces, exhibits a voluted interrupted trefoil arch. The narrations presented here depicts three miracles performed by the Buddha. The first piece, forming the lower tier, is a vertical rectangular slab showing the Buddha with Vajrapāṇi to the right and a dog on a couch to the left, commemorating a miracle at Śrāvastī. This scene is bordered with rosette scrolls on the sides, a vine scroll above, and a projected cornice decorated with vertical acanthus leaves.

The second piece, encompassing the second and third sections, is designed to be placed above the first. The second tier shows 'The Miracle of Fire at Uruvilvā,' with the Buddha in *abhayamudrā* followed by Vajrapāṇi, a small fire kindling in the center. Kāśyapa is standing in front of a straw hut to the left, raising his right hand to argue with the Buddha. This tier is enclosed by a semicircular projected cornice on both sides. The inner frame of the cornice is decorated with a beaded pattern, and a soffit supported by artificial beams. The outer frame is embellished with a saw-tooth motif enclosed by plain fillets. This tier is separated from the upper one by a band of four-petalled rosettes.

The third, uppermost tier represents 'The Miracle of Fire and Water.' The Buddha suspending himself in the air, emitting water from his feet and flames from his shoulders while four devotees in *añjalimudrā* facing him. This scene is enclosed by an inner frame decorated with a running wavy line. The outer frame, shaped as a carinated arch terminating in volutes forming the head of a Garuda, is supported by cross-rafter and exhibits a cornice decorated with a saw-tooth design within plain fillets.

References: Kurita 1988: I, 82, no. 145; Swati 2012: 5-6, pl. 5.

Pl. 171. False gable shaped as a voluted raised round arch with carinated extrados.

Acc. No.	DMC 726	Material:	Blue Schist	Size (cm):	13.4x20.5
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A false gable in the form of a raised round arch with carinated extrados that ends in eagle-headed volutes. Two parrots are perched on either side of the arch, looking outward. The external projected frame of the arch is embellished with a saw-tooth motif. Inside the arch, the Buddha stands on a balcony decorated with a chequered pattern with plain fillets both below and above. Two devotees with their hands clasped in adoration, standing on either side of the Buddha. Above the figures, a round arch or crescent-shaped ceiling is exhibited with a row of dots. The scene is enclosed in a frame adorned with continuous opposite trifid calices. The round arch or crescentic ceiling, along with the inner frame, has a hollow space covered by four artificial wooden planks with regular intervals, thus creating a false ventilator-like structure.

References: Dani 1968-69b: 100, pl. 56-b. no. 110; Faccenna 2007: 85, pl. 50 no. 4.

Pl. 172. Upper part of a false gable divided into three lunettes with different scenes.

Acc. No.	PM_02809	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	61.00x68.62
Provenance:	Landi			Location:	Peshawar Museum
Source:	Donated by P.G.G. Pipon, Esquire, I.C.S				

Description

Upper part of a false gable is carved with important events of the Buddha's life. The arch is divided into three lunettes wherein the central scene is depicted in the lower section. Here the Buddha is depicted as standing under an arboreal canopy with a raised right hand, facing left. Where Nāga Apalāla and his family is seeking forgiveness for bringing flood in the area of ancient Uḍḍiyāna. Above them, Vajrapāṇi is emerging with a thunder bolt in his right hand and stopping the flood with the left.

To the right side of Buddha, Vajrapāṇi is standing with a flywhisk or perhaps a lotus bud in his right hand and a thunder bolt in the left. Three shaven headed monks are standing behind him.

The middle lunette shows a seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā* under tree branches, flanked

by two standing and one kneeling princely worshiper on either side. They are followed by *Ichthyocentaurs*. The uppermost compartment exhibits the Buddha's alms bowl placed on a royal throne, worshipped by two devotees and ichthyocentaur on either side. All the three lunettes are enframed by a broad round arched frame decorated with a festoon of overlapping lanceolate leaves. A haloed Bodhisattva kneeling in adoration and facing towards the Buddha is seated on a double acanthus leaves base on either side of this arched frame. The outer frame is decorated with acanthus leaves. The space between the inner and outer frame is filled with a row of superimposed *amorini* or acrobats in different gestures facing towards the inner scene. The lower border is adorned with saw-tooth motif.

References: Ingholt 1957: 106, no. 188; Kurita 1988: I, 219, no. 453; Ali and Qazi 2008:235-236, no. 11.6.

Pl. 173. A complete false gable divided into three compartments.

Acc. No.	PM_03128	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	66.08x39.40
Provenance:	Swat	Source:	Purchased, 1931	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

This relief panel is in the form of a complete false gable arch. The panel is comprised of three parts i.e., a rectangular shaped lower compartment which is slightly tapering as goes upwards, a middle portion and a voluted carinated arch makes the upper most part of the gable. Collectively these three parts make an interrupted trefoil arch displaying different events from the life of Buddha.

The lower trapezoidal compartment has moulded borders. Above, a modified bead-and-reel or dentil-and-drop moulding is surmounted by a register of acanthus leaves with drooping lobe in the middle. Inside the rectangular frame, Buddha is shown seated in *dhyānamudrā* on a low podium under a leafy canopy, slightly turned to his left and flanked by a devotee on his right side and two on his left.

The middle compartment shows Buddha seated in *abhayamudrā* with two standing devotees in *añjalimudrā* on either side. Two more devotees are kneeling in adoration

in the right and left-hand quadrants of the middle section. The curved oversailing outer border has sawtooth embellishment and, at the bottom, a beaked head as volute.

At the top, Buddha is seated in *dhyānamudrā* on a low base inside a hut-like structure, facing to his right where a man is standing with an object (?) in his hands. The scene is enframed by a raised round arch with carinated extrados that ends into bird's headed volutes. The arch has saw-tooth enrichment on its inner sides. An indistinct finial, flanked by part of a bird's tail can also be seen at the apex.

References: Zwalf 1996: I, 217-18, II, 152-53, nos. 251-52; Ingholt 1957: 101-103, nos. 166-69; Kurita 1988: I, 173, no. 337.

4.4. Pillars/Columns/Pilasters

4.4.1. Free Standing Columns

Pl. 174. Free standing winged column crowned with *triratna*.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1982-1-77	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	18.0x18.0x4.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

This rectangular panel exhibits a winged column being worshipped by two kneeling and two standing monks. The square shaped base of the column is broad, having a torus moulding above, which supports the wide tapering shaft, topped by a Gandhāran-Persepolitan capital. The capital consists of a bell, dome and cup-like elements, crowned by a *triratna* arranged in a row. Each *ratna* is decorated with an eight-petalled rosette with a circular disc in the center. Two wings are attached to the shaft, one on each side.

References: Faccenna 1962: II.2, 61, pl. CCXXX a & b; 1963: II.3, 158-59, pl. DXXXVII a & 2001: inv. no. B 6447, tav. 156c; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 214, cat. no. 141; Khan, G.R. 2015: 58-59, no. 27.

Pl. 175. Free standing Persepolitan column topped by three jewels.

Acc. No.	SM-1047 (BI-6447)	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	30x15
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief is carved on one of the four faces of a square *harmikā*. The scene is framed by a Corinthian pilaster on either side. In the centre a square pedestal supports a Persepolitan column on an ionic basis. The three jewels are represented with three wheels arranged in a row, resting on the Persepolitan capital and supported by two bracket like naked *amorini*. The *amorini* are holding long ribbons hanging down in front of the devotees. The column is worshipped by one kneeling and two standing monks on each side.

References: Faccenna 1962: II.2, 35, 61, pls. CXIX, CCXXX a & b; 1963: II.3, 158-59, pl. DXXXVII a & 2001: inv. no. B 6447, tav. 156c, Ghafoor 2017: 136-37, fig. 111.

Pl. 176. Freestanding Persepolitan column enclosed within a two-tier square box.

Acc. No.	AKD-326	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	36x33x5
Provenance:	Amlukdara Swat	Source:	Exc. 2019-20	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The relief panel illustrates a freestanding Persepolitan column enclosed within a square box. The column is almost sunken within the box, exposing only a glimpse of its shaft while completely exposing its capital. The capital consists of a bell, dome, and cup-like elements, topped by two back-to-back lions and a third lion facing forward. All the three lions are supporting the three wheels of triratna, arranged in a row. The back-to-back lions hold long ribbons (?) in their forepaws that hang down in front of the worshippers below. The column is being worshipped by one kneeling and three standing devotees in añjalimudrā on either side.

References: Faccenna 1962: II.2, 35, 61, pls. CXIX, CCXXX a & b; 1963: II.3, 158-59, pl. DXXXVII a, 2001: inv. no. B 6447, tav. 156c, Ghafoor 2017: 136-37, fig. 111, Samad *et al.* 2021b: 219, no. 326.

4.4.2. Gandhāran-Persepolitan Type Columns and Pilasters

Pl. 177. Semi-column of the Gandhāran-Persepolitan type, engaged.

Acc. No.	DMC 125	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	27.2x28
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

This relief depicts a nude male figure (Herakles?) under a voluted carinated arch with a semi-column of the Gandhāran-Persepolitan type at the left end. The base of the semi-column consists of a four stepped plinth, with a pot placed on a disc at the top. The shaft rises from the pot, slightly tapering as it goes upward. The capital is comprised of two stepped fillets, followed by a bell-shaped object, separated by a disc like element from the dome above. Another disc like element serves as a demarcation between the dome and a bowl-shaped object above. A voluted carved modillion and three stepped fillets are placed directly over the bowl-like object.

References: Dani 1968-69a: 48-49, pl. 19a, no. 18; Faccenna 2007: 77, pl. 42.2.

Pl. 178. Persepolitan column stands on a pot base and trifold calices motif on the capital.

Acc. No.	DMC 931	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	16x18.5
Provenance:	Ramora	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A small rectangular panel depicting in high relief a Persepolitan column on the right and a princely figure standing within a voluted carinated arch on the left. The column stands on a base formed of a squat carinated pot. The pot has high neck and thick rim from which emerges the round tapering shaft. The shaft is crowned by an inverted bell, a disc-like element, a dome, another disc like element and the uppermost is a wide-mouthed bowl. The capital has a row of trifold calices motif, surmounted by three-stepped modillions.

Reference: Dani 1968-69a: 61-62, pl. 27b. no. 46.

Pl. 179. Gandhāran-Persepolitan column with stepped plinth and inverted stepped modillions.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-78	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	32.0x16.0x4.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The relief panel depicts human figures under three voluted carinated arches, each separated by Gandhāran-Persepolitan column and similar columns also shown on the right and left of the panel. The Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns have three stepped plinths, pot-shaped bases, from which emerges the round tapering shafts towards the capital. The capital consists of a mould, an inverted bell, and a disc like element, followed by a bowl. On top of the bowl are inverted stepped modillions, supporting the horizontal beam adorned with denticulate design and topped by an undecorated cornice.

Reference: Khan, G.R. 2015: 130-131, no. 88.

Pl. 180. Gandhāran-Persepolitan column with pyramidal shaped plinth and inverted stepped modillions on the top.

Acc. No.	CGP 1981-1-4	Material:	Green Phyllite	Size (cm):	21x16x5.7
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

This relief panel is partially chipped off depicting two figures entering the slanting doorways, topped by voluted carinated arches. The two arches are separated by a Gandhāran-Persepolitan column. The Gandhāran Persepolitan column has a pyramidal-shaped stepped plinth, and a pot-shaped base having band on the shoulder and a thick rim. The cylindrical tapering shaft emerges from the mouth of the pot and topped by a bell, dome and bowl like moulding separated by disc like elements. The bowl is accommodating a square abacus and above are inverted stepped modillions.

Reference: Swati 2012: 13, pl. 19.

Pl. 181. Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster with squat pot-shaped base and round tapering shaft.

Acc. No.	DMC 840	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	9.5x34
Provenance:	Macho	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Relief panel depicting two palmettes with closed flame and one lotus-bud with stylized leaves under voluted round arches with carinated extrados. The arches are separated by two Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilasters and one framed pilaster on the right of the panel. The pilasters stand on a low plinth and a squat pot-shaped base. The round tapering shaft is emerging from the squat pot. The capital consists of a thick mould (or a band) and an inverted bell, followed by a disc like element, a dome, second disc like element and a bowl topped by a modillion. These pilasters are supporting a horizontal beam-shaped projected cornice, decorated with ogival leaves motif.

Reference: Sehrai 2018: 84-85, pl. 67.

Pl. 182. Gandharan Persepolitan pilaster with an incised band on the shaft and voluted modillion.

Acc. No.	DMC 652	Material:	Grey schist	Size (cm):	14.7x45.5
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Circular panel illustrating two incomplete and one complete scene in the middle separated by two encased Persepolitan pilasters. From right to left, the first scene preserving only standing Buddha and a worshipper. The second or middle scene shows Buddha seated in *abhayamudrā*, flanked by four standing worshippers. The third scene is also incomplete depicting the Buddha standing with two worshippers.

The encased Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster consists of a square plinth, with a disc above which supports a pot having thick rims. From its mouth emerges the round tapering shaft, having an incised horizontal band in the middle. The capital is comprised of a bell, separated by a disc from a bowl above. The bowl is supporting a voluted modillion and a plain fillet. The inner frame surrounding the pilaster is decorated with saw-tooth enrichment. While the outer frame is supporting a cornice decorated with double wavy band and a plain fillet above. The base moulding is enriched with a straight festoon of opposite ovate leaves, facing right and torus moulding above.

Reference: Sehrai 2018: 70, pl. 46;

Pl. 183. Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster with addorsed bulls on the capital.

Acc. No.	SM-147 (V- 737)	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	18.5x18.5x5.6
Provenance:	Swat Valley	Source:	Varia Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The relief panel depicts an incomplete scene and an encased Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster on the extreme right. The pilaster stands on a square stepped plinth which supports a pitcher-shaped base. The round tapering shaft is emerging from the globular pot. The capital is comprised of an inverted bell decorated with acanthus leaves in downward position. Above the bell are two bowls, placed in opposite direction to each other and adorned with a lotus flower. Two addorsed humped bulls are seated on the last bowl.

The incomplete scene on the left of the pilaster shows two standing tall men, first with clasped hands in adoration and the other a princely figure, followed by a headless figure.

Reference: Ghafoor 2017: 157-158, fig. 137.

Pl. 184. Capital of the Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster.

Acc. No.	SM-1922 (MK-0015)	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	25x16.2x6.3
Provenance:	unknown	Source:	Malakand Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Fragment of an encased Persepolitan pilaster with only the capital remaining intact. The capital consists of a bell decorated with acanthus leaves in downward position. The bell is topped by a disc-like element, followed by two inversed bowls separated by another disc like element. The bowls are decorated with full-blown lotus flower. Two humped bulls are seated back-to-back on the top of the last bowl. In between the two bulls appear a defaced head of a lion, supporting the voluted stepped modillion above.

Reference: Pervaiz 2016: 51, fig. 106.

Pl. 185. Encased Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster with back-to-back bulls on the capital.

Acc. No.	PM_02952	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	30.5x12.71
Provenance:	Khazana Dheri (Charsadda)	Source:	Purchase, 1930	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The encased Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster stands on a stepped plinth and a pitcher-shaped base, give rise to a round tapering shaft above. Top of the shaft has two incised horizontal bands, followed by an inverted bell, a disc-like element, a hemispherical dome separated by another disc-like element from a cylindrical-shaped bowl above. Two bulls are seated back-to-back on the capital, with a lion's face emerging between them. The lion's head is embellished with a floral crown, supporting a voluted modillion, followed by a beaded pattern and a plain fillet.

References: Kurita 1990: II, 218, no. 643, 2003: 218, no. 643; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 330, cat. no. 233.

Pl. 186. Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster with a capital having addorsed bulls.

Acc. No.	DMC 884	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	31.7x37.4
Provenance:	Bajaur	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

The relief panel is partially broken and defaced with two registers. The upper tier represents two royal figures surrounded by five attendants and Vajrapāṇi in the right upper corner. The lower scene is completely broken, except remnants of a halo encircled with rosettes and two turbaned defaced heads. The top border of the panel depicts three busts in arches. A Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster is depicted on the extreme right of the panel. The base is missing, and the cylindrical shaft has a horizontal band of two incised lines. The capital consists of an inverted bell, with two incised lines on its body, followed by two disc-like elements, topped by a hemispherical dome. Another disc-like object separates the dome and a big bowl with thick rim, topped by two back-to-back bulls, supporting a stepped modillion.

References: Nishikawa 1994: II, 213, pl. 179, nos. 3, 4, 7, 10; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 214, no. 345.

Pl. 187. Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster with *caryatid* instead of a shaft.

Acc. No.	PM_01338	Material:	Grey schist	Size (cm):	34.31x15.25
Provenance:	unknown	Source:	unknown	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

The enframed Gandhāran-Persepolitan pilaster is carved in high relief. The base consists of a stepped plinth and globular pot decorated with lotus flower and beaded pattern. The shaft is replaced by a *caryatid* who is carrying the capital on her head. The inverted bell is adorned with downward acanthus leaves, topped by two inversed pots decorated with lotus flower and separated by a disc. A cylindrical pot having thick rim is decorated with chequered design, supporting the two addorsed bulls above. A lion's face is emerging between the two bulls, crowned with a square object, supporting a voluted modillion enriched with saw-tooth motif.

The scene on the right is broken except for two standing devotees in *añjalimudrā*.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 253, 455; Kurita 2003: 218, no. 641; Sehrai 2018: 92, pl. 75.

Gandhāran-Corinthian Semi-Columns and Pilasters

Pl. 188. Gandhāran-Corinthian semi-column with scotia type base.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1-45	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	22.0x14.0x5.5
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

This relief panel depicts the Buddha seated in *abhayamudrā* under a canopy of upward Śāla tree branches, flanked by standing devotees in *añjalimudrā*. The panel is provided with an encased Gandhāran-Corinthian semi column on the left.

The Gandhāran-Corinthian semi column is having scotia base which consist of a square plinth, a scotia moulding between double torus and the round tapering shaft is emerging from the collar. The shaft tapers towards the capital and presents two fillets, from which emerges the capital. A double tier of acanthus leaves, having equal height and separated by a groove, makes the capital. The lower tier comprises the crown of acanthus leaves, with lobes separated by sinuses and the central lobe bending downwards. In the upper tier, there is a high central leaf of three rigid, detached lobes set within a trapezoidal rising on the abacus between two volutes with flattened curves supported by acanthus leaves, and the abacus with two fillets.

References: Khan, G.R. 2015: 62-67, nos. 30-33; Sehrai 2018: 103-105, pls. 89-92.

Pl. 189. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with torus type base.

Acc. No.	DMC 901	Material:	Blue Schist	Size (cm):	32x64.6
Provenance:	Bambolai	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A rectangular slab depicting the scene of *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka* bordered by two Gandhāran-Corinthian square pilasters. The base of each pilaster is of torus type with a single collar above, from which the flat square shaft emerges. The shaft has a vertical flute in the centre with concave ends both above and below. The capital is emerging from a single fillet above the shaft, decorated with double tier of ornamental acanthus foliage. The lower tier has a row of acanthus leaves, each with a central drooping lobe. The upper tier is comprised of a middle high leaf with detached lobes, flanked by slightly bent leaves with central drooping lobes.

According to Dani, this piece of sculpture was brought from somewhere else and refixed at the site of Bambolai, Dir (Dani 1968-69: 10).

References: Dani 1968-69: 63, pl. 29 b. no. 50.

Pl. 190. Corner Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with scotia base and oblong flute on the shaft.

Acc. No.	CGP 1981-1-6	Material:	Soapstone	Size (cm):	16.0x7.5x7.5
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

Corner Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster is carved with a base of scotia type, having a high square plinth, and double fillet above from which the square shaft is rising. The shaft has a rectangular concave flute in the middle. The capital emerges from a collar of double fillet, decorated with acanthus leaves. The foliage in the lower part shows a central lobe bending downwards, while in the upper tier, a high central leaf is

crowned with a four-petalled rosette. Two volutes with flattened curves and the central leaf supporting the abacus with three fillets.

References: Swati 2012: pls. 2a, b, c, d; Sehrai 2018: 121, pl.111.

Pl. 191. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with Attic type base moulding and crossed bands on the shaft.

Acc. No.	CGP 1981-1-73	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	12.6x7.4x4.5
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

The encased Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster has base moulding of Attic type with a scotia, and from the two fillets emerges the round slightly tapering shaft. The shaft is tied with crossed bands, decorated with lattice, having oblique relief fillets. The capital emerges from the double filleted collar, having distinct upper and lower parts with pronounced volutes and abacus.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 252, no. 453; Kurita 2003: 218, no. 645; Sehrai 2018: 119, pl. 109.

Pl. 192. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with torus type base and crossed bands on the shaft.

Acc. No.	PM_02957	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	33.04x12.71
Provenance:	Khazana Dheri Charsadda	Source:	Purchased in 1930	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

Enframed Gandhāran-Corinthian Pilaster with a bead and reel pattern on the inner frame. Above a framing fillet the base consists of a high plinth, a torus and stepped fillets from which the shaft emerges. The shaft is wrapped in crossed bands, having beaded motif. The rounded shaft terminates into a fillet from which emerges the capital. The capital is comprised of two distinct parts, the lower, with a row of acanthus leaves, each having a central drooping lobe. The upper, with high middle leaf and corners holding the abacus with outer volutes.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 252, NO. 453; Sehrai 2018: 119, pl. 109.

Pl. 193. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with shaft divided into three sections.

Acc. No.	DMC 905	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.9x34
Provenance:	Bambolai	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Broken panel with remnants of seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā* under an arch and a devotee kneeling in adoration under a separate arch, facing towards the Buddha. An encased Gandhāran- Corinthian pilaster in the center separates the two arches. It has

a high plinth and torus moulding, from which the round tapering shaft is emerging. The shaft is divided into three sections by two horizontal bands.

The capital rises directly from the shaft and is divided into two registers. The lower one features acanthus leaves, each with central drooping lobes. The upper register depicts a large central leaf, flanked by slightly bent leaves in opposite directions, providing support to the abacus above.

References: Dani 1968-69: 10; Sehrai 2018: 141-142, pl. 139.

Pl. 194. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with a capital of acanthus leaves and volutes.

Acc. No.	SM- 1062 (Inv. no. BK I 3358)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	21x52
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Part of a curvilinear frieze with successive scenes separated by small pilasters, the scene on the right shows offering to the Buddha by a princely figure. The scene on the left shows offering of flowers to the Buddha by a royal man, accompanied by his servant with flower basket in his hands. The Gandhāran-Corinthian pilasters has a square plinth and torus type moulding with two fillets above, from which the square shaft is rising. There is a long vertical groove on the shaft, crowned by double tier of acanthus leaves and large supporting elements with conventionalized volutes and a course of saw-teeth. The relief is defined below by a leaf-and-dart moulding.

Reference: Faccenna 1962: II.2, 12-13, no. XX.

Pl. 195. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with a princely worshipper on the shaft.

Acc. No.	SM 70 (BK I 782)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	20.5x45.6x7.0
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This relief panel represents two scenes of Buddha seated in *padmāsana* and *abhayamudrā*, flanked by worshippers on either side. The two scenes are divided by a small Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with base moulding of torus type and square shaft tapering slightly towards the capital. On the shaft is a princely worshipper, standing on a lotus pedestal, with clasped hands in adoration, facing right. The capital is provided with double tier, with the lower one having acanthus leaves, each with a central drooping lobe. The upper tier has a large central leaf, flanked by side leaves which supports the abacus above. The capital is crowned by a large element with conventionalized volutes and dentil decoration.

The relief is defined above by a cornice decorated with overlapping lanceolate leaves and a row of dentils or reels.

Reference: Faccenna 1962: II.2, 26, pl. LXXIX a & b.

Pl. 196. Corner Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster with two figures carved on the shaft.

Acc. No.	SM-1147 (WS-233)	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	43x16x15.5
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	Wali e-Swat Collection	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A corner framing Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster represents two carved faces. The base consists of a square plinth, torus moulding, and stepped fillet. Two haloed and bejewelled figures, standing on a lotus pedestal with their hands joined in añjalimudrā, are carved on both faces of the pilaster. The Corinthian capital is adorned with double tier of acanthus leaves, supporting the abacus above.

References: Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 330, cat. no. 232; Tanveer 2010: 68, pl. 191.

Pl. 197. Corinthian capital of a pilaster with a bust of female figure.

Acc. No.	SM-1090 (BI-7354)	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	36x53x28
Provenance:	Butkara I	Source:	Exc. 1956-62	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Corinthian capital of a pilaster with three rows of acanthus leaves and abacus decorated with two lotus flowers on each side, rising up on slender stems. A bust of a female figure, holding a reliquary in her left hand and right raised in abhayamudrā, is emerging from the foliage.

References: Faccenna 1964: II.3, 161-163, -pls. DL-DLXVI; Tanveer 2010: 42, pl. 69.

Pl. 198. Gandhāran-Corinthian capital carved with bust of the Buddha.

Acc. No.	SSA 1990-1-163	Material:	Soapstone	Size (cm):	34.0x27.0x10
Provenance:	Shnaisha	Source:	Exc. 1990	Location:	University Museum

Description

Capital of a Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster is comprised of three rows of acanthus leaves, the third tier ends in volutes on the outer sides. The haloed bust of the Buddha is emerging from the high middle leaf with a drooping lobe in front of him. Buddha has raised his right hand in *abhayamudrā* and securing the hem of his drapery with the left. The abacus is supported by the acanthus leaves and volute ends, decorated with five-petalled rosette with a stalk and leaf on each side.

References: Faccenna 1964: II.3, 161-163, -pls. DL-DLXVI; Tanveer 2010: 42, pl. 69; Rahman 1993: 36-37, 83, pl. XXIXa, 2023: gigs. 1-11; Sehrai 2018: 193-94, pl. 206-07.

4.4.4. Gandhāran Composite Pillars

Pl. 199. Gandhāran composite pillar made in round.

Acc. No.	BRJ 1980-1-7	Material:	Grey Schist	Size (cm):	25x5.3
Provenance:	Baghrajai	Source:	Exc. 1980	Location:	University Museum

Description

The Gandhāran composite type pillar, made in round, with the combination of a Persepolitan type base and Corinthian type capital. Unfortunately, the pot base is broken off, giving rise to a round tapering shaft. The shaft is decorated with three horizontal bands each of three incised lines. Between the second and third band is a horizontal projecting collar. The capital portion consists of a single row of acanthi and a disc like element above.

References: Faccenna 1991: 199-217; Sehrai 2018: 87, pl. 70.

Pl. 200. Gandharan composite pillar with Persepolitan base and Corinthian capital.

Acc. No.	PM_00979	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	21.6x39.39
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol			Location:	Peshawar Museum (store)
Source:	Excavation of Archaeological Department, Frontier Circle 1911-12				

Description

Part of a false gable arch depicting Buddha seated on a lotus throne in *dharmachakra* pose in between two Gandharan composite pillars. He is flanked by two flying figures on either side, and closely watched by six other Bodhisattvas across the pillars. Each of the pillar stand on a disc shaped plinth and globular pot like base, having a thick band on the shoulder and bold rim, giving rise to a round tapering shaft. The shaft is divided into 4 compartments by three incised horizontal bands. The capital emerges from the fillet and comprises of double tier of acanthi.

References: Faccenna 2007: 80, pl. 45; also, cf with PM_01059, PM_00303, PM_00011 & PM_01190 (Pl. 132 above) of the same collection.

4.4. Brackets

4.5.1. Voluted Bracket Support

Pl. 201. Voluted type bracket support with central groove.

Acc. No.	DMC 2037	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	8.7x29.5
Provenance:	Maṭkanai	Source:	Exc. 1980	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Bracket support with a double volute and a vertical central groove. There is a vertical socket for a bracket spacer between the body and the tenon of the bracket.

References: Khan, G.R. 2015: 260-263, nos. 202-205; Bibi 2020: 97, pl.128.

Pl. 202. Voluted type bracket support with vertical groove.

Acc. No.	CGP 1981-1-30	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.0x4.0x4.5
Provenance:	Charg-pate	Source:	Exc. 1981	Location:	University Museum

Description

A bracket support with double volutes and vertical incised lines in the middle. There are grooves behind the carved frontal portion.

References: Khan, G.R. 2015: 260-263, nos. 202-205; Bibi 2020: 97, pl. 128.

4.5.2. Cyma recta type brackets

Pl. 203. Cyma Recta type bracket support

Acc. No.	Material:	Size (cm):
Provenance:	Source:	Location:

Description

A cyma recta type bracket support has usually a convex curve at the top and a concave curve at the bottom, making a beautiful 'S' shape that flows downward. Generally, it is smoother and more flexible in design, often used for moulding or decorative architectural elements.

References: Fleming, Honour & Pevsner 1986: 89, fig. 36; Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 66, pl. 32, no. 10, 68, pl. 34, no. 1.3 (g), 96, pl. 61, no. 1.3.

4.5.3. Cyma reversa type brackets

Pl. 204. Cyma reversa type brackets with central incised line.

Acc. No.	DMC 977	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	9.5x40.5
Provenance:	Talash	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Part of a cornice with a plain projecting moulding under which is a series of brackets of the *cyma reversa* type with a vertical groove at the center.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 250, no. 450; Samad *et al.* 2021b: 192-95, nos. 224-234.

4.5.4. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster shaped brackets

Pl. 205. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster shaped brackets.

Acc. No.	NG 044	Material:	Black schist	Size (in):	L 1' 10"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Fragment of a curvilinear cornice at the top and underneath a design of Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster shaped brackets. Each pilaster is having a flute with concave top on the shaft and acanthus leaves decoration on the underside.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A2KCZOVFY4POIQ85> (accessed August 25, 2024); Samad *et al.* 2021b: 195-97, nos. 236-42. cf. with NG 093, NG 142, NG 070, NG 032, NG 080 and 081 (Swat Museum).

4.5.5. Figured brackets with human figures

Pl. 206. Figured bracket with a statue of a standing Buddha.

Acc. No.	SM 1204 (NG 327)	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	15.0x6.5x12.5
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

False bracket with a statue of a standing Buddha, his right hand raised in *abhaya mudrā* and left securing the hem of his drapery. He stands on a plain pedestal. The halo is carved with a single incised circle near the perimeter. The over robe covers both shoulders. There are vertical grooves on the bracket stone behind the figure and a tenon on the underside.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AYJGP5FVNAWXRH8T> (accessed August 26, 2024). cf. with NG 328 and NG 287 (Swat Museum).

Pl. 207. Figured bracket with a goddess.

Acc. No.	SM 1210 (NG-374)	Material:	Black schist	Size (cm):	16.0x5.0x13.0
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

A beautifully carved figured bracket, defined below by a fillet decorated with saw-tooth design. At the front of the bracket is a female figure (*Hārītī*?) with a child perched on her shoulder. She is holding the child with her left hand while the right is raised. She is wearing a robe, tied above the waist with a beaded belt, extends down to her feet. There is a tenon at the bottom just behind the figure and vertical grooves at the sides of the back tenon.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AW3RIUQ2JFQEQ28T> (accessed August 26, 2024).

Pl. 208. False brackets in the shape of turbaned men holding lotuses.

Acc. No.	DMC 728	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	4.5x50.4x 15
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Fragment of a curvilinear cornice with a plain projecting moulding at the top and underneath seven turbaned male figures are holding lotuses in their left hands. These figures are used as false brackets to support the roof with their backs.

Reference: cf. with DMC- 661 & DMC- 678 (Dir Museum).

4.5.6. Figured Brackets with Animal Figures

Pl. 209. Bracket with a figure of standing tusked elephant.

Acc. No.	DMC 631	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	11.8x21
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Bracket with a figure of standing tusked elephant as the frontal element. There are incised circles on the body of the elephant. The undecorated back of the bracket has a vertical groove.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 244, no. 436, 437; Kurita 2003: 246, nos. 740-43; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 327, cat. no. 226, 227.

Pl. 210. Projecting figured bracket with fore part of a lion as a frontal element.

Acc. No.	DMC 638	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	14.5x5x28
Provenance:	Chatpat	Source:	Exc. 1968	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Figured bracket with fore part of a lion as a frontal element. The lion is seated on its haunches but with its body erect, with crossed forepaws and protruding tongue.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 246, no. 441; Kurita 2003: 242-245, nos. 727, 728, 729, 731, 739; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 328, cat. no. 228.

4.4. Decorative Motifs

4.6.1. Stepped pyramid as a decorative motif

Pl. 211. Mastaba-shaped ziggurat/pyramid motif.

Acc. No.	DMC 782	Material:	Dark Grey Schist	Size (cm):	13.5x29
Provenance:	Jabagai	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Fragment of an architectural panel carved with mastaba-shaped ziggurat/pyramid motif. It depicts a four-tiered ziggurat with a vertical bar in the centre, provided with a railing design at the base. Each tier tapers, separated from each other through horizontal incised lines and with an additional vertical line running through the centre of all.

References: Samad *et al.* 2021a: 267, 483, 485, 487, figs. 557, 1416, 1425, 1435; Bibi 2022: 164, fig. 50, 2023: 276, figs. 17-18.

Pl. 212. Figured stepped pyramid decorative motif with a monk and lion image.

Acc. No.	Inv. no. GT 0049	Material:	Black Schist	Size (cm):	0.49x 0.21
Provenance:	Gumbatuna	Source:	Exc. 1992	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

The relief panel illustrates two stepped pyramids. The stepped pyramid on the right is depicted with a monk, perhaps holding flowers tucked into the folds of his over-robe. He holds an object (flowers?) in his right hand, gesturing as if about to shower them over someone. The other pyramid depicts a lion's head with a protruding tongue.

References: Ingholt 1957: no. 466; Khan, MA. 1993b: 48, no. 28; 1993a: 44-46; Kurita 2003: 229, no. 685; Bibi 2023: 272, figs. 7-8.

Pl. 213. Decorative stepped pyramids with Phytomorphic representation.

Acc. No.	AKD 70	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	39x15x7
Provenance:	Amlukdara	Source:	Exc. 2019-20	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

This panel exhibits two stepped pyramids with Phytomorphic decoration of an open flame palmette and nicely carved offshoots of pīpal leaves.

References: Samad *et al.* 2021b: 151, 154, 174, 221, nos. 60, 70, 150, 331; Bibi 2023: 278, 80, fig. 30.

4.6.2. Geometric decorative Motifs

Pl. 214. Net with diagonal lines or honeycomb design.

Acc. No.	DMC 335	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	8x24
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Two rows of opposite triangles containing a triangular indentation and divided by a horizontal straight line. The overall appearance resembles a net with oblique lines or honeycomb pattern.

References: Faccenna 2007: 105, 107, pls. 66.8 & 68.1; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 270, no. 570

Pl. 215. Architectural relief with geometric motifs.

Acc. No.	NG 046	Material:	Light Greenish Stone	Size (in):	2 3/8"x17 1/2"x5 1/4"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Architectural fragment comprised of two bands of design, the lower one with tangential beads between twisting ribbons and the upper with two wavy bands having geometric designs (two indented triangles?) in the resulting spaces.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AHXHPQMM6AJMF28J> (accessed August 29, 2024).

Pl. 216. Architectural fragment with two bands of geometric motifs.

Acc. No.	NG 053	Material:	Soapstone	Size (in):	2"x11 1/2"x4 1/4"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Architectural fragment decorated at the rim with a twisting rope interspersed with tangential beads. A plain fillet is separating it from another band with a row of opposite triangles filled with parallel lines.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A632RPEUU5EHRK8J> (accessed August 29, 2024).

Pl. 217. Chequered grid design.

Acc. No.	DMC 1144	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	7.5x25.5
Provenance:	Dir	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Panel decorated with chequered grid design with alternating relief squares.

Reference: Samad *et al.* 2021a: 155, 158, 187, nos. 109, 122.

4.6.3. Phytomorphic Decorative Motifs

Pl. 218. Architectural element carved with four different bands of decoration.

Acc. No.	SM 489	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	25.0x20.0x5.0
Provenance:	Saidu Sharif	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Fragment of an architectural element carved with four different bands of decoration. The top register is decorated with five rows of bead-and-reel motif. The second frieze is adorned with a pīpal leaf scroll, third is decorated with a vine scroll with leaves, tendrils and grapes. The fourth and last register is embellished with a full-blown

lotus scroll. Each of the carved bands is recessed and separated with projecting plain fillets.

References: Kurita 1990: II, 220, 228, nos. 648, 680; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 137, 282, 283, nos. 037, 039, 616, 620; Samad *et al.* 2021b: 159, 213, nos. 92, 308.

Pl. 219. A cornice fragment decorated with three different floral bands.

Acc. No.	AND 1966-1-5	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	35.0x23.0x2.0
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	University Museum

Description

A cornice fragment decorated with three floral bands. The top register is decorated with a straight festoon of overlapping lanceolate leaves, facing left. The second band is carved with a scroll of vine leaves and tendrils. The last band is decorated with rosettes separated by vertical fillet.

References: cf. DMC 482, both seems broken pieces of one panel; Dani 1968-69a: 50, pl. 20a; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 127, no. 003, Samad *et al.* 2021b: 180, 204, nos. 173.272.

Pl. 220. Architectural element decorated with four different motifs.

Acc. No.	BK-III 1982-1-176	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	47.0x21.0x3.0
Provenance:	Butkara-III	Source:	Exc. 1982	Location:	University Museum

Description

Long rectangular panel is partially broken and rejoined, illustrating four different bands of decorations, in two cases separated by plain fillets. The upper most decorative band is comprised of a row of bead-and-double reels motif, followed by four-petalled rosettes interspersed within bifurcated filleted lozenges and half rosettes in the resulting triangles. The main motif contains vine scrolls with nodes and tendrils, accommodating full blown multi-petalled lotus flowers in the upper and lower hollows. The lower band is depicted with overlapping acanthus leaves, facing right.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 221, fig. 97; Ingholt 1957: 112, no. 215 (for lotus scroll motif); Faccenna 1964: II.3, 155-56, pl. CXVIIa; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 331, no. 238; Khan, G.R. 2015: 210-11, no. 153.

Pl. 221. Architectural fragment containing four different decorative patterns.

Acc. No.	PM_02994	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	40.67x16.52
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	donated by Capt. CM Enriquez in 1913	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

An extended rectangular architectural fragment containing four different types of decorative patterns. The upper one is a running scroll of vine leaves, followed by a row of bead-and-double reel motif enclosed within plain fillets. The central or main motif is comprised of a standing human figure holding a scroll with vine leaves and grapes in the intertwined medallions and tendrils spreading outside. The last band is decorated with a straight festoon of overlapping lanceolate leaves, facing right.

Reference: Samad *et al.* 2021b: 180, nos. 173, 174.

Pl. 222. Panel with two decorative registers separated by a band of acanthi.

Acc. No.	DMC- 878	Material:	Greenish Schist/ phyllite	Size (cm):	15.5x29.0
Provenance:	Bajaur	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Architectural panel showing two registers one above the other separated by a band of acanthus leaves, each containing a central drooping lobe. The upper register depicts four *amorini* holding undulating garland. Three parakeets with spreading wings are depicted within the lower hollows of the garland while five petalled-rosette shaped pendants are hanging down from the lower curves. The lower band is decorated with a scroll of open flamed palmettes.

Reference: Kurita 1990: II, 220, 221,222, nos. 648, 653, 654-659.

Pl. 223. Decorative panel with full-blown multi petalled lotus scroll.

Acc. No.	BKIII 1985-1- 125	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	27.0x22.0x4.0
Provenance:	Butkara III	Source:	Exc. 1985	Location:	University Museum

Description

A broken piece of decorative panel, showing full-blown multi petalled lotus scroll. Below a horizontal band of lotus buds is shown. The upper frame has a projecting mould enclosed within plain fillets.

References: Ingholt 1957: no. 462; Kurita 1990: II, 228, no. 680, 2003: 228, no. 680; Khan, GR. 2015: 212-13, no. 154; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 331, cat. no. 238.

Pl. 224. Architectural frieze with a running vine scroll.

Acc. No.	SM 1197 (NG 185)	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	11.0x31.0x6.5
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Fragment of an architectural frieze with plain fillet above and rounded moldings below. The decoration includes running vine scroll with leaves, tendrils, grapes and one bird who is nibbling on a bunch of fruit.

References: Ingholt 1957: no. 461; Khan, M.A. 1993b: 33, 37, nos. 15, 19; Kurita 2003: 221, no. 652;

Pl. 225. Architectural element with rosette scrolls.

Acc. No.	DMC-940	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	7.6x30.2
Provenance:	Ramora	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Fragment of an architectural element decorated with a running scroll of four-petalled rosettes.

References: Foucher 1905: I, 221, fig. 96; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 242, no. 458.

Pl. 226. Panel with pīpal scroll decoration.

Acc. No.	SSA 1990-1-38	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	33.0x18.5x6.0
Provenance:	Shnaisha	Source:	Exc. 1990	Location:	University Museum

Description

A partially defaced panel depicted with a pīpal scroll.

References: Sehrai 1982: 28, pl. 16; Samad *et al.* 2021a: 137, 157, 232, nos. 039, 118, 415, 418.

Pl. 227. Intertwined pattern of pīpal branches.

Acc. No.	PM_02967	Material:	Grey schist	Size (cm):	22x50x9.5
Provenance:	Unknown	Source:	present by the Church Mission society (1914).	Location:	Peshawar Museum

Description

Part of a plinth depicted with an intertwined pattern, in which the pīpal branches start from a central knot and spread in four directions. A female figure is leaning on an altar at the side.

References: Ingholt 1957: no. 463; Faccenna 2007: 121, pl. 82.2; Kurita 2003: 220, no. 649; Jansen and Luczanits 2008: 332, cat. No. 240.

Pl. 228. Cornice frieze decorated with acanthus leaves.

Acc. No.	DMC 344	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	5x30.3
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A cornice frieze is decorated with a row of acanthus leaves, each having a drooping lobe in the middle. The decorative frieze is enclosed by a plain fillet above and a row of dentil-and-bar pattern below.

References: Zwalf 1996: II, 250, no. 449; Faccenna and Callieri 2003: 322, fig. 27; Khan, G.R. 2015: 252-255, nos. 189-92.

4.4.4. Composite Decorative Motifs

Pl. 229. Cornice piece decorated with acanthus leaves and bird.

Acc. No.	NG 039	Material:	Light Green Stone	Size (in):	8 ¾"x19"x2 ½"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Part of a cornice with saw-tooth design under a mould at the top. The main carved face depicts a row of acanthus leaves with drooping central lobes alternating with an open flame palmette, an open winged lophophorus (bird), a four-leaved design and another lophophorus.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A2GWX4GY76COAR8K> (accessed August 30, 2024).

Pl. 230. Figured cornice.

Acc. No.	NG 232	Material:	Black Stone	Size (in):	2 ½"x18 ¾"x5 ½"
Provenance:	Nimogram	Source:	Exc. 1967-68	Location:	Swat Museum

Description

Part of a figured cornice with flat upper and lower faces. The figured part is decorated with a rosette and two figures separated by acanthus leaves. The figure on the left side has raised his right hand in *abhayamudrā*, the other has covered head with his over robe and right hand on chest.

Reference: Radhuca 2011: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A56LG4X6MADBIL8L> (accessed August 30, 2024).

Pl. 231. Decorative frieze with closed flame palmette and pīpal scrolls.

Acc. No.	SSA 1990-1-153	Material:	Green Schist	Size (cm):	29.5x14.0x5.0
Provenance:	Shnaisha	Source:	Exc. 1990	Location:	University Museum

Description

Rectangular fragment of a decorative frieze divided into three sections by vertical fillets. The central decoration contains a closed flame palmette with tuft, sprouting from a lotus flower base. There is pīpal scroll decoration in each of the side frames.

References: Ingholt 1957: 49, no. 5 (for central motif); Rahman 1993b: 108, pls. LIVa, LIVb.

Pl. 232. Closed flame palmette with flower tuft.

Acc. No.	SSA 1990-1-77	Material:	Green schist	Size (cm):	18.0x9.0x5.5
Provenance:	Shnaisha	Source:	Exc. 1990	Location:	University Museum

Description

A stair riser relief decorated with a closed flame palmette with a flower tuft, in filleted frame.

Reference: Rahman 1993: 108, pl. LIVa, LIVb.

Pl. 233. Stylized closed flame palmette with tuft.

Acc. No.	PM_02961	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	31.77x31.77
Provenance:	Sahri Bahlol	Location:	Peshawar Museum		

Source: Exc. of Archaeological Department, 1906-07

Description

An architectural element decorated with a closed flame palmette with tuft, enclosed by a plain moulding and saw-tooth motif above and two plain fillets below.

References: Ingholt 1957: 153, no. 376; Faccenna 2007: 124, pl 85.7.

Pl. 234. Four petalled rosettes within filleted lozenges.

Acc. No.	DMC- 486	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	13.9x55
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

A rectangular slab decorated with four petalled rosettes within filleted lozenges and half rosettes in the resulting triangles. An encased Corinthian pilaster is provided on the extreme right.

References: Dani 1968-69a: 50 (d); Khan, G.R. 2015: 256-259, nos. 197, 198, 199; Samad *et al.* 2021b: 171, 197-199, nos. 140, 243-252.

Pl. 235. Slab embellished with rosettes alternating with sheaves.

Acc. No.	DMC 952	Material:	Phyllite	Size (cm):	7.5x16.7
Provenance:	Ramora	Source:	Exc.	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

An architectural slab embellished with a row of four petalled rosettes alternating with sheaves.

References: Faccenna 2007: 116, pl. 77.3; Samad *et al.* 2021b: 157, no. 84.

Pl. 236. Slab with a lattice of rosettes.

Acc. No.	DMC- 463	Material:	Schist	Size (cm):	12.8x49.6
Provenance:	Andan Dheri	Source:	Exc. 1966	Location:	Dir Museum

Description

Rectangular extended slab is adorned with a lattice of rosettes with six lanceolate bordered petals and pistil, with plain fillets above and below.

References: Rahman 1993: 109, pl. LVb; Faccenna 2007: 121, pl. 82.1.

Pl. 237. Slab decorated with lanceolate leaves.

Acc. No.	MTK 1980-1-37	Material:	Black Schist with red wash	Size (cm):	36.0x10.5x3.5
Provenance:	Maṭkanai	Source:	Exc. 1980	Location:	University Museum

Description

Rectangular slab decorated with a design of straight festoon with overlapping lanceolate leaves, facing right, fastened by a double ribbon. There is a groove at the bottom.

References: Faccenna 2007: 119, pl. 80.4; Bibi 2020: 97, pl. 127.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL REMAINS AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN RELIEF SCULPTURES

6.1 Introduction

The historically significant Swat Valley is renowned for its rich Buddhist heritage, characterized by numerous ruins that bear witness to the splendour of ancient Buddhist art and architecture. Hundreds of stūpas and monasteries that once flourished in this region were beautifully adorned with statues and relief sculptures. These relief panels are not mere ornamental fragments but are carved with a variety of sacred and secular architectural forms and elements, providing a comprehensive depiction of the original Buddhist edifices. These intricate carvings exhibit elements such as stūpas, vihāras, temples, shrines and secular structures that mirror the grandeur of the full-sized buildings. Although ravages of time have rendered the surviving monuments into ruins, the relief panels remain invaluable, providing in-depth knowledge about the original design and structural magnificence of these sacred sites.

The current chapter aims to identify and analyse relief panels that portray the complete forms of these ruined monuments. Through a comparative analysis of the relief panels and surviving physical remains, this research aims to reconstruct the sacred and secular architecture of the Swat Valley as it flourished during the zenith of Buddhism, thereby preserving its historical and cultural legacy.

6.2 Comparative analysis of Buddhist relief panels and surviving Buddhist monuments

As discussed earlier, the magnificent Buddhist structural heritage of the Swat Valley has endured significant damage over time due to natural calamities, coupled with human vandalism, leaving behind only the ruins of these once majestic structures. Fortunately, the relief carvings provide us with complete picture of these sacred monuments, offering a visual record of their original forms. These artistic representations serve as a window to the past, representing the architectural and

decorative elements in their entirety, even when the actual structures have been lost to time.

Hence, in the following pages, an attempt has been made to present a detailed and systematic comparison between the Buddhist monuments of the Valley and their representations in the Buddhist relief panels. References from our sculptural catalogue are paired with photographs and drawings of surviving ruins to highlight architectural similarities. This visual analysis aims to enhance our understanding of the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley.

6.2.1 *Stūpas in the relief panels and surviving ruins*

The relief panels illustrate stūpas with distinct architectural features, e.g., terraced bases, often provided with steps and one or two circumambulatory paths (*pradakṣiṇāpatha*), designed for ritual processions. The base/podium is followed by single or multi-tiered drums that serve as the foundation for a hemispherical dome (*aṇḍa*), symbolizing the core structure of the stūpa. A square-shaped box (or *harmikā*) positioned atop the dome, often depicted as a decorative railing. Finally, an umbrella-like pinnacle (*chattra*) rises from the *harmikā*. Together, these elements encapsulate both the architectural and symbolic essence of the stūpa as portrayed in the reliefs (Chakrabarti and Manatunga 2019).

6.2.1.1 *Comparison of pls. 1 and 3 with the Stūpa of Panr-I*

A relief panel from Barikot Ghwandai (acc. no. BKG-2269) pl. 1 of our catalogue depicts a stūpa flanked by two Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns, positioned symmetrically outside the podium on either side. The columns are standing on a pedestal with round shafts and bell-shaped capitals surmounted by lions. This arrangement mirrors the architectural layout seen at the stūpa of Panr I, where similar columns are also placed outside the podium (Olivieri 2023: 69, fig. 11).

While another piece from Chag-pate (acc. no. CGP 1981-1-67) pl. 3 of our catalogue exhibits a stūpa almost similar to the one at Panr I. The stūpa is placed on a simple square base, with a plain lower drum and the upper drum features a security railing. The dome is richly decorated with garland bearers and other

motifs, though some details are worn away. A now defaced, reverse stepped pyramid shaped *harmikā* and two *chattras* are positioned atop the dome. At the far corners of the precinct, Gandhāran-Persepolitan style columns with bell-shaped capitals, each topped by a seated lion, frame the stūpa.

The Site of Panr I is a Buddhist sacred area built on two main terraces connected by stairs. To the east, several rooms form part of a large building complex, which is the monastery. The lower terrace is comprised of a stūpa with an east facing stairway (decorated on the sides), there are rows of smaller stūpas packed closely together. These stūpas belong to different phases of construction, but most are heavily damaged.

The main feature of the upper terrace is a stūpa with a south-facing stairway (see figs. 3a and b). Smaller stūpas are symmetrically placed on either side, and two soapstone columns coated with plaster, stand at the back at equal distances from the main stūpa. One of the columns is comprised of a moulded plinth supporting a tapered shaft (see fig. 4). The only part left of another column is a plinth, beside which a later stūpa stands. It is believed that the sanctuary at Panr I was established shortly after the construction of the great stūpa 3 of Butkara I in the first century CE., marking the introduction of soapstone as a building material and new stūpa designs (Faccenna 1964: 53-55).

The similarity between the stūpas depicted in pls. 1 and 3 and the stūpa of Panr I lies in the presence of Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns outside the podium, flanking the stūpa on either side.



Fig. 3a. The main stupa of Panr I (N side) flanked by two columns. (Photo credit Majid F. Masaud).



Fig. 3b. Column at the sacred precinct of Panr I, East side. (After Faccenna 1964: pl. XII).

6.2.1.2 *Comparison of pls. 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 with the columned stūpas of Saidu Sharif, Gumbatuna and Tokar Dara*

Plate 2 of our catalogue is a relief panel from Butkara III (acc no. BKIII 1982-1-183), depicting a stūpa adorned with a single flight of steps and four columns, each surmounted by lions seated on their haunches. This representation bears a striking resemblance to the main stūpas of Saidu Sharif, Gumbatuna and Tokar Dara. The primary distinction between the Butkara III relief and that from the Saidu Stūpa lies in the depiction of the steps. While the relief panel illustrates the stūpa with a single flight of steps, the Saidu Stūpa features two, indicating either a chronological evolution in design or regional variations in stūpa construction.

Furthermore, pl. 4 of our catalogue is a relief panel from the Malakand collection (MK 13), housed in the Swat Museum. This panel portrays a stūpa resting upon a square podium, flanked on either side by two tall columns that exhibit a combination of Gandhāran and Persepolitan stylistic elements. These columns are characterised by stepped pyramidal bases, tapering round shafts, and bell-shaped capitals, each crowned with a seated lion. The key difference between the Malakand relief panel and the stūpas of Gumbatuna, Tokar Dara and Saidu Sharif is the absence of a flight of steps in the relief. Additionally, although the relief clearly depicts two prominent columns, it is plausible to infer the presence of two

additional columns positioned behind the visible pair, following the architectural symmetry observed in the surviving remains of the stūpas at Saidu, Tokar Dara and Gumbatuna. This inference aligns with the structural conventions of the period, where four-column arrangements were commonly used to signify both aesthetic harmony and symbolic completeness in sacred architecture.

Plate 6 (acc. no. PM_02832), depicts a stūpa with Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns on either side and false niche on the front. Whereas pl. 7 (acc. no. SRO-913) features a stūpa positioned on a square base, flanked by two columns at both corners of the podium. Plate 8 is a relief from Jamal Garhi, now in the British Museum (acc. no. BM 1880.66), showing a stūpa flanked by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns at the corners of the podium.

6.2.1.3 *The stūpa of Saidu Sharif I*

The Saidu stūpa is located in Saidu Sharif (Swat), dated back from the mid-first to the early fourth century CE (Olivieri 2022b: 11-12). Archaeological ruins at the site comprise of two main areas erected on vast artificial terraces at different levels. The lower terrace is dominated by the main stūpa with a flight of steps on the northern side, surrounded by cluster of votive stūpas. The central stūpa stands on a high platform with four columns positioned at its corners, surrounded by smaller structures such as stūpas, chapels, and columns (figs. 4a and 4b). In terms of architectural innovations, the Saidu stūpa is the oldest known large stūpa built on a high square podium with a central staircase (Olivieri 2022, 2023: 62).

The upper paved level of the podium is reached via a staircase, with each corner marked by a tall column crowned by a seated lion oriented towards the centre of the stūpa (although the columns are no longer intact, the surviving square bases indicate their original presence). A stone railing (*vedikā*) surrounds both the staircase and the podium. The first cylindrical structure, referred to as *medhi* (with podium acting as an elevated platform), has a diameter of 16 metres and is accessible through a secondary staircase aligned with the main one. At the top, a pathway for ritual circumambulation (or *pradakṣiṇāpatha*), encircles the stūpa. The stūpa itself has a circular design with a diameter of 14 metres, and its total height

is estimated to be under 15 metres. This structure represents the earliest and most significant example of a stūpa design, that later became a standard in Gandhāra.

Both terraces of the sanctuary were constructed simultaneously. The upper terrace is accommodating a monastery, square on plan with an open courtyard surrounded by monastic cells. The site was excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan with the collaboration of the DOAM Pakistan, from 1963 onwards and conserved later during the ACT Project with the support of DOAM, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Faccenna 2001: tav. 2 (a, b); Olivieri 2022: 43-46, 2023: 60-76).



Fig. 4a. Saidu Sharif I, main stupa. (Photo credit, Majid F. Masaud).

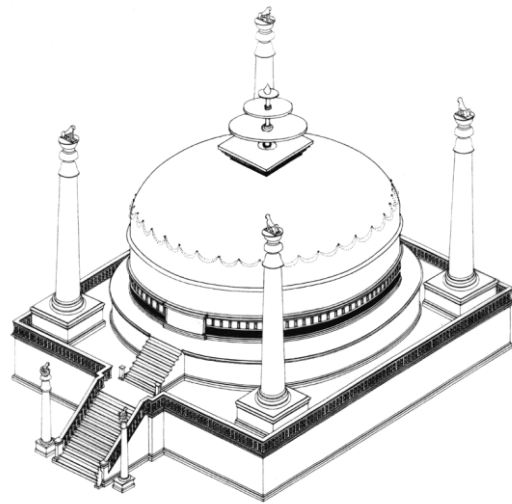


Fig. 4b. Saidu Sharif I, main stupa, isometric view (NW), (After Olivieri 2022: 50, pl. XI).

6.2.1.4 *The Stūpa of Gumbatuna*

The site of Gumbatuna is located on the right bank of the Swat River at the foot of the Shamoza mountains. Important feature of the site is its large stūpa with four columns on the first storey of the square base, surrounded by minor stūpas. Situated on elevated ground behind the stūpa are the remains of an ancient monastery, along with various other historical structures, some of which are now partially occupied by a village. To the northeast, there used to be a circular vihāra in decent condition, though damaged in recent times.

The main stūpa is positioned on a base, which is quadrangular in plan. Above the base, the structure consists of three cylindrical lower and one upper drum, topped by a hemispherical dome. Originally, the dome was crowned with a *harmikā* and umbrellas, but these are now missing. Around the stūpa, fragments of decorative elements of *chattras* and column pieces have been discovered, offering hints about its original design. At the four corners of the base of the first tier, the square bases of columns are still intact, suggesting that the stūpa was once adorned with four columns. The stūpa has a flight of 15 reconstructed steps with a projection facing east (Khan, M.A. 1993a: 44-46; Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 419-442).



Fig. 5a. Stūpa of Gumbatuna, general view (E. side), with stairway (Photo credit, Majid F. Masaud).

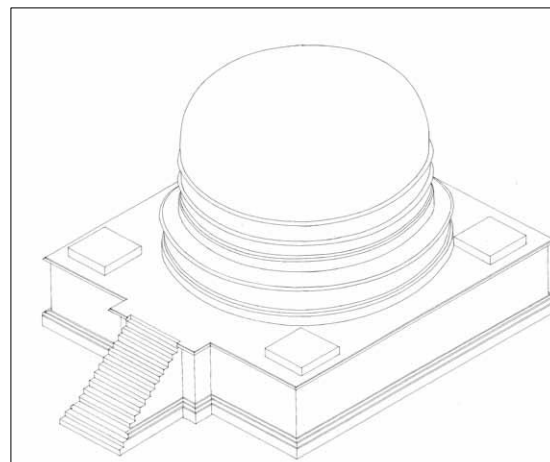


Fig. 5b. Stupa of Gumbatuna. Axonometric view. (After Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 442, fig. 436).

6.2.1.5 The Stūpa of Tokar Dara (Najigram)

Near Najigram, on the eastern slopes of Mount Sur-ghar (red mountain), a huge stūpa stands majestically at the entrance of a narrow valley surrounded by ancient ruins. The main stūpa was surrounded by auxiliary stūpas, destroyed recently by illegal diggers. To the east, near Najigram Khwar, lies a complex of historical structures. As the valley narrows, numerous ancient constructions can be seen, enhanced by two natural water springs (Khan, M.A. 1993a: 59-62; Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 331-337, Turco 2014).

The main stūpa has a rectangular base with a staircase facing west. Above this are three circular storeys/drums, with the lowest one being wider than the two above

it. The dome, which sits on top, has the same diameter as the lowest circular storey. The staircase continues upward through the second drum and reaches the third, where there is a niche at the front. On the rectangular base, four columns stand at each corner, and parts of their pedestals have been preserved. Core of the stūpa is made of stone slabs and small chips arranged in horizontal layers, held together with clay-based soil. Remains of plaster and traces of red paint are still visible, giving hints of its original appearance.

The Tokar Dara stūpa exhibits remarkable architectural similarities to the stūpas at Saidu and Gumbatuna, particularly the corner columns positioned on the podium. These Persepolitan type columns are typically topped with motifs such as seated lions, symbolising power, protection, and royal patronage. The flight of steps, prominently featured in all three stūpas, plays both a functional and ritualistic role. Architecturally, the steps provide access to the upper levels of the podium, while ritually, they facilitate the practice of *pradakṣiṇā* (or circumambulation), an important devotional activity in Buddhist tradition.

Collectively, the stūpas at Tokar Dara, Saidu Sharif and Gumbatuna are distinguished by their integration of columns above the first storey or podium, a feature that is relatively rare in the stūpa architecture of the valley. The comparison between the columned stūpas and the relief panels strongly supports the view that, although only three examples of columned stūpas have survived in the ruins of the Swat Valley, numerous depictions in reliefs indicate that this type of stūpa was prevalent not only in Swat but also throughout the Gandhāra region (see also, Faccenna 1995a).



Fig. 6a. Main stupa of Tokar Dara (Photo courtesy, Majid F. Masaud).

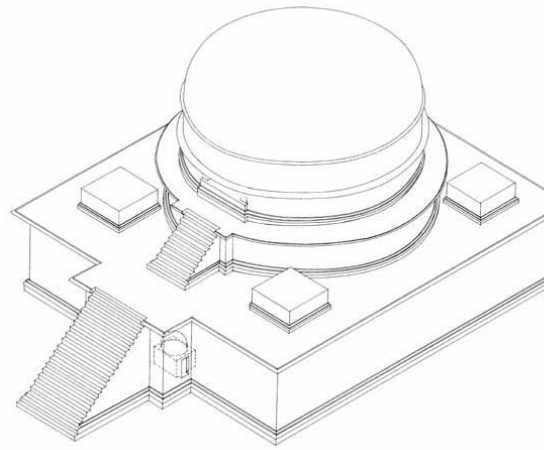


Fig. 6b. Stupa of Tokar Dara (Najigram). Axonometric view. (After Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 373, fig. 368).

6.2.1.6 *Comparison of pls. 5, 85, 166 and 172 with the lotus-based minor stūpa at Abba Sahib Cheena*

Plate 5 of our catalogue is a composite stele from Sahri Bahlol (acc. no. PM_02836), which exhibits a stūpa emerging from acanthus leaves as its central theme. Base of the stūpa takes the form of acanthus leaves, from which the superstructure emerges. Comprising two tiers of plain circular drums, the lower drum is succeeded by a row of modillions and a projecting cornice supporting the upper drum. This pattern repeats, supporting the dome atop the stūpa.

According to Ingholt (1957: 125-126, fig. 257), a similar stūpa with umbrellas on top and flanking columns once stood at Sahri Bahlol Mound ‘D’. However, the site is no longer intact, as it has been buried under the modern village of Sahri Bahlol.

Minor stūpa no. 5 at the site of Abba Sahib Cheena (fig. 7), comprising of a lotus base, was uncovered during the 2020-2021 archaeological excavation near the southern side of stūpa A. The lotus base has a diameter of 90 cm rising to a height of 50 cm. The structure is uniformly coated with stucco, although the plaster has become fragile and significantly damaged over time (Samad *et al.* 2021a: 26). Despite the damage, the base remains visually striking, depicting three distinct rows of lotus petals. The first row lies horizontally on the ground, while the other two rows are arranged vertically, overlapping to create a layered effect. Above this

elaborate lotus base, rests a quadrangular podium, though partially damaged, it gives the distinct impression of a stūpa rising gracefully from a blooming lotus flower. The drums and dome above the podium are badly damaged. This architectural design not only enhances the aesthetic appeal but also reinforces the symbolic representation of the stūpa as a sacred structure emerging from the purity of the lotus, signifying spiritual awakening and enlightenment.

As observed, pl. 5 depicts a stūpa emerging from acanthus leaves, while the minor stūpa at Abba Sahib consists of a lotus base, creating the impression of the stūpa rising from a full bloom lotus flower (fig.7). Although these two structures originate from different artistic traditions, they can be meaningfully compared due to their shared use of floral motifs to convey symbolic and spiritual significance within Buddhist architecture. Both the stūpa with acanthus leaves and the lotus-based stūpa at Abba Sahib demonstrate how nature-inspired elements were used to express universal themes of growth, transformation and eternal nature of the spiritual journey.

The acanthus leaves were also used as thrones for the Buddha and other divinities. For example, pl. 85 of our catalogue (acc. no. SRO-854) shows the Buddha inside a shrine, seated cross-legged in *dhyānamudrā* on a low seat supported by two rows of acanthus leaves. Similarly, pl. 166 (acc. no. 342-1907), lying in the Victoria and Albert Museum is an arch-shaped false gable. Plate 172 (acc. no. PM_02809) is also a false gable arched panel with a similar theme. At the bottom of the outer frames of the two arched panels, there are two kneeling worshippers with clasped hands in adoration, seated on double-tiered acanthus leaves podium and facing towards the central scene. In classical and Gandhāran art, the acanthus leaf is a symbol of vitality, immortality and the enduring nature of spiritual devotion. The double-tiered arrangement may further emphasize hierarchical importance, suggesting the elevated spiritual status of the worshippers or the sanctity of the central scene they face.



Fig. 7. Lotus based minor stūpa no. 5 at Abba Sahib Cheena. (Photo courtesy, DOAM, KP).

6.2.1.7 *Comparison of pl. 24 with the stūpas of Butkara I, Dharmarājika, Manikyala and Sānchī*

Plate 24 (acc. no. PM_ 01115) is a hemispherical domed stūpa model, enclosed by a massive stone railing pierced by four *caitya*-style *torāṇas*, strategically positioned on each side. The gateways are decorated with figures of the Buddha at their centres. At the top of the hemispherical dome, a recessed square with a central hole is designed to accommodate a *harmikā*, and a *yaṣṭi* to support *chattras*. This architectural manifestation reminds us of the characteristic style of Indian stūpas, exemplified by the renowned Sānchī stūpa located in the Madhya Pradesh state of India.

6.2.1.8 *The Great Stūpa of Butkara I*

The sacred precinct of Butkara I is an irregular four-sided enclosure located in the outskirts of Mingora city (see Faccenna 1980-81: 137). The ancient urban area of Mingora was identified by Giuseppe Tucci as the capital city mentioned in late ancient Chinese travel records as *Mengjieli* (Tucci 1958: 285). He also associated

the Buddhist sanctuary of Butkara I with the sanctuary known as *T'olo*, based on a re-examination of the Chinese sources (Tucci 1958: 280, 288). The Chinese Buddhist monk Song Yun (520 CE) has mentioned it as the monastery of *T'olo*, which housed a significant number of gold-gilded statues (Beal 1884, I: xcvi). The precinct is paved with schist slabs and centred around the Great stūpa, which is surrounded by *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. The site also contains a fair number of minor monuments, 227 stūpas, vihāras and columns (*stambha*), reflecting a long history of destruction and reconstruction due to natural calamities. The site of Butkara I is regarded as one of the largest and long lived in the entire region of Gandhāra. Through successive phases of reconstruction and extension it covered the period from the third century BCE to the tenth century CE, although it began its slow decline from the beginning of the last reconstruction carried out between the late seventh and early eighth century of our era (for details see Faccenna 2003).

The Great Stūpa 3 of Butkara I (figs. 8a and b) follows a circular plan with four stairways aligned with cardinal directions and a railing around the first level. The second storey is set back, but due to damage over time, the exact size of the upper drum and dome is not known for certain. This stūpa is unique as compared to others in the region because of its circular design, which differs from the more common square or rectangular bases seen in later Buddhist architecture. Its layout reflects both early Indian influences and later architectural developments (Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 135-36, 539).



Fig. 8a. The Great Stupa 3 of Butkara I, Swat.
(Photo Courtesy, Majid F. Masaud).

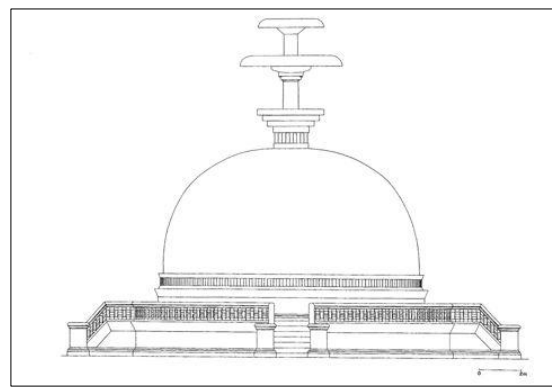


Fig. 8b. The Great Stūpa 3 of Butkara I, (After
Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: fig. 127).

6.2.1.9 *Dharmarājika stūpa*

The Dharmarājika stūpa, locally known as *Chir Tope*, is the oldest and largest Buddhist complex in Taxila. It is situated along the eastern route near the Tamra Nala, south of Hathial, approximately three kilometres from the Taxila Museum. Taxila was among the cities in the Mauryan Empire that received a portion of the Buddha's relics from Emperor Ashoka, who personally oversaw construction of the stūpa. The Dharmarājika complex spans nearly the entire Buddhist history of Taxila, from the third century BCE to the seventh century CE. The main stūpa, originally constructed during the Mauryan period, suffered damage from an earthquake in 40 CE and was subsequently rebuilt twice during the Kuṣāṇa period. The complex is divided into two main sections, the stūpa area and the monastic establishment.

The main stūpa is circular in plan (fig. 9), featuring a raised terrace around its base. There are four flights of steps, one at each cardinal direction. The core of the stūpa is made of rough rubble masonry, reinforced by walls that are 3 to 5 feet thick, radiating from the centre. The raised terrace and open passage at the base of the stūpa were used in ancient times as a procession path (*Pradakṣiṇāpatha*). The outer surface is made of limestone blocks, with carved kanjur stone for decorative elements like mouldings and pilasters. The entire structure was originally coated with fine plaster and painted (Marshall 1918: 35-58).



Fig. 9. Dharmarājika stupa.

<https://taxilamuseum.punjab.gov.pk/node/75>. (accessed 8th April 2025).

6.2.1.10 *Manikyala stūpa*

The stūpa at Manikyala is located about 35 kilometres from Islamabad in the village of Manikyala on the Grand Trunk Road. Manikyala is a union council of the Gujar Khan sub-division of Rawalpindi District and well known for the ancient stūpa of the same name (Dani 1988).

The second century CE stūpa of Manikyala (fig. 10) was described in detail by Sir Alexander Cunningham, then Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (Cunningham 1875: V, 75-79). According to him, the stūpa is positioned on a cylindrical base that is 15 feet high with a large hemispherical dome above, measuring 127 feet 9 inches in diameter. The base is surrounded by a raised terrace, which is 18 feet wide and 13 feet 4 inches high. The total height of the stūpa, as recorded by Cunningham was 92 feet 3 inches.

Four wide staircases, positioned at the four cardinal directions, lead up to the terrace, allowing pilgrims to walk around the stūpa in ritualistic worship. The staircases were once covered with massive stone coping (protective covering). It is believed that the stūpa was originally enclosed by a railing. However, no remains

of pillars have survived except a single fragment of rail, which led Cunningham to estimate that the railing would have been about 7 feet high.

The stūpa is decorated with Indo-Corinthian pilasters, similar to those found at Takht-i-Bahi and Jamal-Garhi. The stūpa has undergone various repairs and modifications over time. Originally constructed with sandstone, it was later reinforced with kankar blocks (Cunningham 1875: V, 75-79).



Fig. 10. Manikyala stupa.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/59/Mankiala_Stupa.JPG (accessed 8th April 2025).

6.2.1.11 The Great Stūpa of Sānchī

Historical accounts credit emperor Aśoka (r. 268-232 BCE) with reopening Buddhist stūpas, redistributing the Buddha's relics, and constructing 84,000 stūpas in all the major cities of his empire to enshrine these sacred remains (Marshall 1955: 32). The Great Stūpa at Sanchi is considered as one of those erected by Aśoka.

The stūpa (fig. 11) comprised of a hemispherical dome (*aṇḍa*), which is slightly flattened at the top. It is surrounded by a terrace (or *medhi*) at the base, which served as a processional path (*pradakṣiṇāpatha*) for ritual circumambulation. The terrace is accessed via a double flight of steps (*sopāna*) on the southern side. Encircling the stūpa on the ground level is another processional path, enclosed by a massive stone balustrade (*vedikā*). This balustrade is plain and unadorned, divided into four quadrants, each with an entrance aligned to the four cardinal directions. On each cardinal point, there is a gateway (*toraṇa*), richly decorated with elaborate relief carvings on both inner and outer sides.

It is believed that the original stūpa was built by Aśoka shortly before the erection of an Aśokan column near the Southern Gateway. It was a brick structure about half the diameter of the present stūpa. About a century later, the original stūpa was encased in stone, enlarged to its present dimensions, and surrounded by a stone balustrade. The four gateways were added to it sometime in the later half of first century BCE.

Little is known about the exact form and construction of the original stūpa, as it suffered significant damages between its erection and the later addition of the stone envelope. Notably, the bricks used in its construction measured 16" × 10" × 3", closely matching those found in other structures of the Mauryan period. It can be inferred that the original stūpa had a roughly hemispherical shape, featuring a raised terrace surrounding its base, a wooden railing, and a stone umbrella crowning its summit (Marshall 1955: 33-35).



Fig. 11. The great stupa of Sānchī.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stupa#/media/File:Stupa_1,_Sanchi_02.jpg (accessed 8th April 2025)

6.2.1.12 Comparative Analysis

The stūpa of Butkara I, Dharmarājika, Manikyala and Sānchī can be compared to our pl. 24, depicting a model stūpa with hemispherical dome and *caitya*-style *toranas* on all the four cardinal points. All the four stūpas (figs. 8-11) and the model stūpa depicted in our pl. 24 have a hemispherical dome representing the mound over relics, symbolising the cosmic mountain Mount Meru. Additionally, they follow the basic Buddhist architectural principles, a hemispherical dome, *harmikā*, *chattra* and circumambulatory path. Although each of the four stūpas and the model stūpa differs in style and decorative details, they all share a common architectural feature: the use of stone railings (*vedikās*) and gateways (*toranas*).

6.2.2 Depictions of vihāras in reliefs and excavated sites

Vihāras, traditionally defined as Buddhist monasteries, played a fundamental role in the development of Buddhist monastic life, serving as centres for residence, meditation, education and religious practices. The earliest vihāras probably emerged during the Mauryan period (third century BCE), initially as rock-cut caves before evolving into elaborate architectural complexes during the Kuṣaṇa period

(first-third century CE). However, references to the existence of viharas can be traced back to the lifetime of the Buddha. These vihāras/aramas were made of wood including bamboo, branches of trees and grass, and have, therefore, perished long before the rock-cut monasteries of later period.

The Buddhist relief panels from the vales of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyyāna portray vivid insights into the architecture, function and symbolic significance of vihāras. These artistic depictions show similarities between archaeological reality and artistic imagination, illustrating how vihāras operated as sacred monastic centres in ancient Buddhist communities.

Plates 70-71, 76, and 78-80 in our catalogue depict thatched or sloping-roofed vihāras, suggesting that early vihāras were built using perishable materials such as wood, bamboo and straw, rather than stone. These vihāras are shown on elevated platforms, with stone walls supporting wooden and thatched roofing. The roofs may have been reinforced with clay or other natural elements to provide durability. This aligns with archaeological evidence from early vihāra sites, where remnants of wooden beams and roofing materials have been found. Excavations at Butkara I and III revealed charred wood fragments, likely remnants of vihāra roofs. The vihāras, built on elevated platforms, had stone walls supporting wooden and thatched roofing. Indentations in the walls suggest supports for wooden beams or rafters (Faccenna 1980-81).

Excavations at Saidu Sharif uncovered stone vihāras with supports indicating wooden superstructures. Burnt wood fragments and post-holes suggest wooden roofs, possibly thatched or clay covered. Relief panels depict sloping, tiered roofs, confirming this architectural style in Swat monasteries (Olivieri 2016b). The early rock-cut vihāras at Ajaṇṭā (Cave 9, 10) were originally inspired by wooden vihāras, as seen in the rock-carved imitation of wooden ceiling beams. Although Ajaṇṭā is primarily a rock-cut site, the architectural details carved into the stone mimic earlier wooden structures, confirming that Buddhist vihāras originally used wooden beams and roofing. These vihāras also feature relief carvings that resemble those seen in Gandhāran carvings, further supporting the stylistic connection (Spink 2005).

The reliefs depict numerous vihāras made of straw or timber, indicating their once widespread presence. However, due to the perishable nature of wood, these structures decayed over time. Only a few vihāras built with durable materials like stone have survived in ruined form today.

Plates 72-73 exhibits double domed vihāras with circular plans. In the surviving archaeological ruins of the Swat Valley, such type of vihāra can be seen at the site of Balo Kalay Gumbat (figs. 12a and b). This site is located in Tehsil Barikot, Kandak Valley, Swat. It was first visited by Sir Aurel Stein in 1926 and later briefly excavated by Barger and Wright in 1938 (Barger and Wright 1941). The site was further studied by Domenico Faccenna in the 1960s, and more recently, conservation efforts were carried out by the ACT-Field School Project (Meister and Olivieri 2012).

Architecturally, the shrine falls under the vihāra-category chapel, characterized by a square plan with an enclosed ambulatory set on a high podium. The vihāra has a podium with stairway to the east, while the external walls are separated from the inner cella by a vaulted corridor, featuring windows on the south, west, and north sides. The ambulatory corridor is covered by a sloping lower roof, making it a significant example of Buddhist religious architecture in the region (Rahman 1984; Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 465-502). It remains uncertain whether the sanctum was intended to house relics in a stūpa-reliquary, as proposed by Behrendt (2006: 87) or a large votive stele or statue, as suggested by Stein and linked by Faccenna to the 'Great Vihāra' of Butkara I (2006: 191).



Fig. 12a. Vihāra of Balo Kalay Gumbat.
(Photo courtesy: Majid F. Masaud)



Fig. 12b. Front view of the Vihara of Balo Kalay Gumbat. (Photo courtesy: Majid F. Masaud)

The sole architectural parallel identified in the region is vihāra F of Abba Sahib Cheena (figs. 13a and b), as recorded by Tucci (1958: fig. 33) and Spagnesi (2006: fig. 11). This comparatively smaller vihāra exhibits a structural profile as same as Balo Kalay Gumbat. Built on a raised podium, this vihāra is characterized by slightly tapering side walls and a front opening that spans the entire width of the structure. Externally, it is topped with a double roof, the lower part formed by folded layers, and the upper shaped like a dome. The design is reminiscent of the architectural style seen in the courtyard buildings of Takht-i-Bahi (Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 547; Samad *et al.* 2021a).



Fig. 13a. Vihāra F of Abba Sahib Cheena, back view. (Photo credit: DOAM, KP).



Fig. 13b. Vihāra F of Abba Sahib Cheena, front view. (Photo credit: DOAM, KP).

6.2.2.1 *Vihāra of Gumbatuna*

At the site of Gumbatuna, in addition to the sacred area with the main stūpa, there once stood a vihāra to the north-east of the village. This vihāra was recorded by various scholars over the years (Stein 1930: 11, fig. 5; Barger and Wright 1941: 27). However, by the time Domenico Faccenna visited the site in 1993, the structure had been completely destroyed and replaced with a large house. Recognizing the historical significance of the lost monument, Faccenna and Spagnesi (2014: 521-27) undertook an effort to reconstruct its memory by relying on archival photographs, past surveys, and comparative analysis with surviving structures of similar typology.

Their reconstruction revealed that the Gumbatuna vihāra exhibited a circular plan and was built upon a base that opened to the north. It had a raised dome with an ogival vault, along with a roof covering that was also circular in design, characterized by sloping folds. The upper section of the front wall, including the

doorway, as well as the top of the roof covering, were missing, while a gap was observed in the southern wall (Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 521-23, figs. 518-524)

6.2.2.2 *Comparing pl. 87 with the Apsidal Temple at Barikot*

Plate. 87 is a bas-relief from Butkara I (Inv. no. 920), depicts a vihāra with a high base adorned with garlands. Its double dome, decorated with downward-facing acanthus leaves, is enclosed by a pillared balustrade with a festooned base. The doorway is richly decorated, through which a stūpa is visible, complete with a balustrade, a dome, *harmikā* and a disc (Faccenna 1962: II.2, 39, pl. CXXXIX).

In the surviving Buddhist monuments of the Swat Valley, this relief can be compared to an extraordinary Buddhist monument that was discovered in October 2021 at the site of Barikot (trench BKG 16: Building H). It is an apsidal podium with a circular chapel and stūpa (fig. 14), which closely resembles a type rarely represented in Gandhāran panels (e.g., Butkara I, panel no. 920). According to preliminary reports, the temple consists of an apsidal podium supporting a cylindrical cell that opens to the west and once housed a small stūpa. The monument is located inside a rectangular *temenos* (sacred enclosure), also facing west. On the sides of the front of the monument are, a minor stūpa, a separate cell and a large podium, possibly for a monumental pillar or column. A stairway leading to the cell demonstrates the evidence of three phases of reconstruction, with the most recent phase dating to the second-third century CE. More details on the newly discovered monument can be found in Olivieri 2022 (pp. 218-224).



Fig. 14. Barikot, aerial view of the Apsidal Temple. (After Olivieri 2022: 222, fig. 90).

6.2.3 *Comparison of pls. 162-173 with the false niches of Amluk Dara and Tokar Dara stūpas*

False niches or false gable arches are significant architectural elements frequently appear in both real architecture and Buddhist reliefs across the valleys of Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyyāna. Usually, it is a large central niche positioned at the top of monumental staircases in stūpas. However, despite their prevalence in museum collections and archaeological records, no false niches have been found *in situ*. One possible explanation for this absence is their strategic placement on stūpas, which may have made them easily accessible to looters. Over time, these niches might have been deliberately removed or destroyed as robbers sought entry into the stūpas, potentially to access relics or valuable offerings stored inside.

Elisa Iori (2018) is of the opinion that these niches may have been designed to look like celestial or spiritual doors rather than actual entrances. The idea is similar to *'trompe l'oeil'* meaning 'deceive the eye' (an artistic technique that fooling the viewer into perceiving something as real). Our catalogue contains many such

examples of false niches (pls. 162-173), each depicted with diverse shapes and themes. They were commonly used as figurative spaces to depict different scenes from the life of Buddha (pls. 163, 165, 166, 169-173), some are executed with floral motifs only (pls. 167-68) and even some are carved with secular scenes (pl. 162).

Decontextualized from their original settings, the placement of false niches on Buddhist stupas is not clearly documented. However, scholars have tried to understand their positioning by looking at relief carvings and miniature stupas, which provide indirect evidence.

Different artistic representations show false niches in various positions on stūpas. In some cases, they appear on the upper drum (pl. 5), while in others, they are positioned across the front of the stūpa, running through the circular drums and reaching up to the dome (pls. 6, 20, 23, 24). Additionally, some false niches are positioned on the elevated section of the dome itself (pls. 8, 48). A curvilinear frieze from Butkara I (pl. 164) offers a different perspective on the placement of false niches. This frieze, which once decorated a now-lost small stupa, features the lower portion of a false niche embedded directly between the figured panels of the horizontal frieze (Faccenna and Taddei 1962: pl. LXXXIa, b; fig. 3). Although the exact positioning of the frieze on the stupa remains uncertain, it seems unlikely that it was originally placed on the stupa's dome.

To truly understand the meaning and function of false niches, we shall now compare real architectural remains with artistic representations carefully. Despite the fact that false niches have never been recovered *in situ*, some archaeological evidence allows us to propose a series of considerations.

6.2.3.1 Evidence of false niche at the stūpa of Amluk Dara and Tokar Dara

The Amluk Dara stūpa, having almost a square podium, is the largest ever excavated in the Swat Valley. At the centre of its double stairway leading to the second level, there is a rectangular base, about 4 meters wide with a 90 cm protrusion, which was first noticed in 1956 by Tucci's team (Tucci 1958: figs. 38, 39) and restored in 1958-59 by the Department of Archaeology and Museums. Archaeologists believe this structure may have once supported a large, now-lost

false niche, that might have framed a statue or religious image (Khan, M.A. 1993a: 62-64; Olivieri 2014b: 321-325, 2018, 2022b; Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 171-221; Samad *et al.* 2021b).



Fig. 15a. Amluk Dara stūpa showing evidence of a now lost false niche. (Photo credit: Majid F. Masaud).

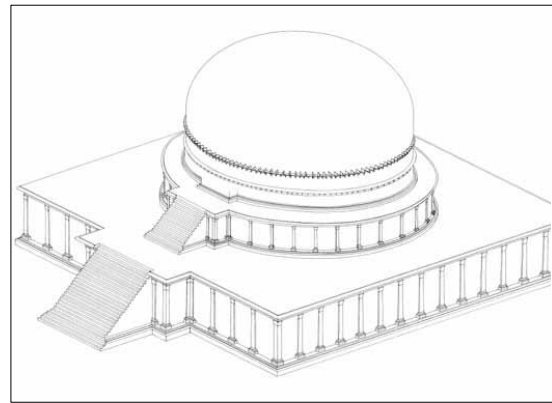


Fig. 15b. Stupa of Amluk Dara. Axonometric view. (Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 216, fig. 211).

The nearby Tokar-Dara stupa (see Figs. 6a and b above) is the only other large monument, which also has a double stairway leading to the second circular level. In front of this stairway, there are remains of a slightly protruding platform that suggests the presence of a shallow wall-like niche (Faccenna 1995b: fig. 232a).

6.2.3.2 *Stupas bearing false niches outside the Swat valley*

This architectural pattern is not unique to Swat, it also appears in the Zar Dheri stupa near Mansehra. Excavations in a cell at the monastery uncovered numerous reliefs and architectural elements that were once part of at least three large trefoil-arched false niches (Yoshihide 2011: 238, 282-284). These false niches are restored and currently on display in the Gandhāra gallery of the Peshawar Museum.

Similar architectural features can be observed in several stupas located in the Kabul/Kapisa region of Afghanistan, probably from a period later than those discussed above. The Shevaki 1 (Fussman 2008, II: pl. 48) and Top Dara 1 (Fussman 2008, II: pl. 91-92; see also Olivieri *et al.* 2018: fig. 31) stupas both feature a large trefoil niche on the dome, aligned with the stairway leading to the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. These niches were probably designed to house stucco sculptures.

A further reference to false niches comes from the Dharmarājika stupa in Taxila. During the final phase of its reconstruction, the stupa was modified to include four moulded bases, aligned with four stairways that provided access to the circular structure (Marshall 1951: I, 237; fig. 9). Sir John Marshall identified three-part niches at Dharmarājika, containing images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Rather than being simple, shallow recesses, these niches appeared more three-dimensional and elaborate.

In summary, the stupas at Zar Dheri, Amluk Dara, Tokar Dara, and Taxila exhibit a consistent architectural feature: the presence of one or, in some cases, four protruding rectangular bases or niches positioned in relation to the entrance stairways. Based on archaeological reconstructions, these structures probably served as the foundations for large false niches. These niches would have been aligned with the stairways and positioned either on or within the stupa, typically at the level of the walkway.

6.2.4 Depiction of pillars and pilasters in reliefs and their architectural counterparts

During our study, we identified the following main types of pillars and pilasters as depicted in the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley:

1. Freestanding pillars/columns (pls. 174-176)
2. Gandhāran-Persepolitan pillars and pilasters (pls. 177-187)
3. Gandhāran-Corinthian pillars and pilasters (pls. 188-198)
4. Gandhāran composite pillars (pls. 199-200)

We have already dealt above with these pillars and pilasters in relief depictions. Therefore, we now turn our focus to identify their presence in the surviving ruins of the Swat Valley.

6.2.4.1 Freestanding pillars/columns

Free-standing pillars were an essential architectural element in the vales of Gandhāra and Swat, serving both structural and symbolic functions. These pillars, often positioned at monastic sites and near stūpas, were used to demarcate sacred

spaces and provide structural support for entrances and corridors. The design of freestanding pillars was inspired by Indian Mauryan pillars, such as those of Aśoka, but with a distinct Gandhāran stylistic adaptation. Unlike the smooth and polished Mauryan pillars, Gandharan pillars often featured elaborate carvings. Examples of freestanding columns (*sthambha*) can be found at Butkara I, where a circle of columns was built around the Great stūpas 2 and 3. These columns evolved over time, the earliest columns were made of schist with plain, wide bases that looked solid and heavy. Some columns lacked a base altogether. Columns of the later period were made of soapstone and featured moulded plinths. The columns at the sacred precinct of Butkara I were not only arranged in a circle around the Great stupas (Gts. 2 and 3) but also stood isolated in the west and north-east (fig. 16a). However, we do not know about their exact height and capitals. It is also unclear what they were meant to support. Scholars like Faccenna believe that they might have supported limestone statues of lions. These lion statues were found nearby, saved from destruction (fig. 16b). These columns reflect a classical architectural style, possibly drawing inspiration from their Aśokan precedents (Faccenna 1964: 27-52; Faccenna 2003).



Fig. 16a. Free-standing columns at the sacred precinct of Butkara I.



Fig. 16b. Limestone lion statue, perhaps once positioned atop the nearby columns at Butkara I.

At Panr, the upper terrace features a main stupa with a stairway facing south. Two smaller stupas are symmetrically placed on either side, while two soapstone columns, coated with plaster, stand at the back at equal distances from the main stupa. One of these columns, partially preserved is having a moulded plinth with a

tapered shaft, making it a significant architectural element. Another column has only its plinth remaining, next to which a later stupa was built (see our figs. 3a and b; Faccenna 1964: 53-55).

Similarly, at Saidu Sharif, the central stūpa stands on a high platform with four columns positioned at its corners, surrounded by smaller structures such as stūpas, chapels, and columns. In terms of architectural innovations, the Saidu stūpa is the oldest known large stūpa built on a high square podium with a central staircase (see figs. 4a, b above; Olivieri 2022b, 2023: 62).

At the four corners of the base of the first tier of the stūpa of Gumbatuna (see our figs. 5a, b above), the square bases of columns are still intact, suggesting that the stūpa was once adorned with four columns. The stūpa has a flight of 15 reconstructed steps with a projection facing east (Khan, M.A. 1993a: 44-46; Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 419-442).

Similarly, the main stūpa of Tokar Dara (Najigram) has a rectangular base with a staircase facing west. On the rectangular base, four columns stand at each corner, and parts of their pedestals have been preserved (see figs. 6a, b above).

6.2.4.2 *Gandhāran-Persepolitan Pillars*

This style was influenced by the Achaemenid Persian columns, which were characterised by fluted shafts and elaborate capitals with seated animals such as bulls and lions. Based on comparison with architectural representations in the findings, the columns at the above-mentioned sites probably were provided with triple-bell capitals, a style known as ‘Gandharan-Persepolitan’. A clear example of this type of column was the Chakr-e-Minar (Minar-e-Chakari) in Kabul, which remained standing until 1998. It was one of the two votive columns in the area (Fussman 2008; Dorn'eich 2009). This massive column stood 27 metres tall, with a shaft measuring 12 metres and a base diameter of 5.76 metres. It was twice the size of the columns at Saidu Sharif and featured a Gandharan-Persepolitan capital on a square podium (Olivieri 2022b: 111-118).

Luca Maria Olivieri (2022b) opines that stupas with columns were rare in Gandharan architecture. Only a few sites in Swat, such as Saidu Sharif, Tokar Dara, and Gumbatuna had stupas with four columns on their podiums. Most stupas in Swat, Buner, Mardan, Peshawar and Taxila lacked columns. However, freestanding columns were still important religious symbols, especially in Swat and Taxila during the first century BCE/CE. By the first through to the third century CE, the stupa on a podium became the dominant architectural style.

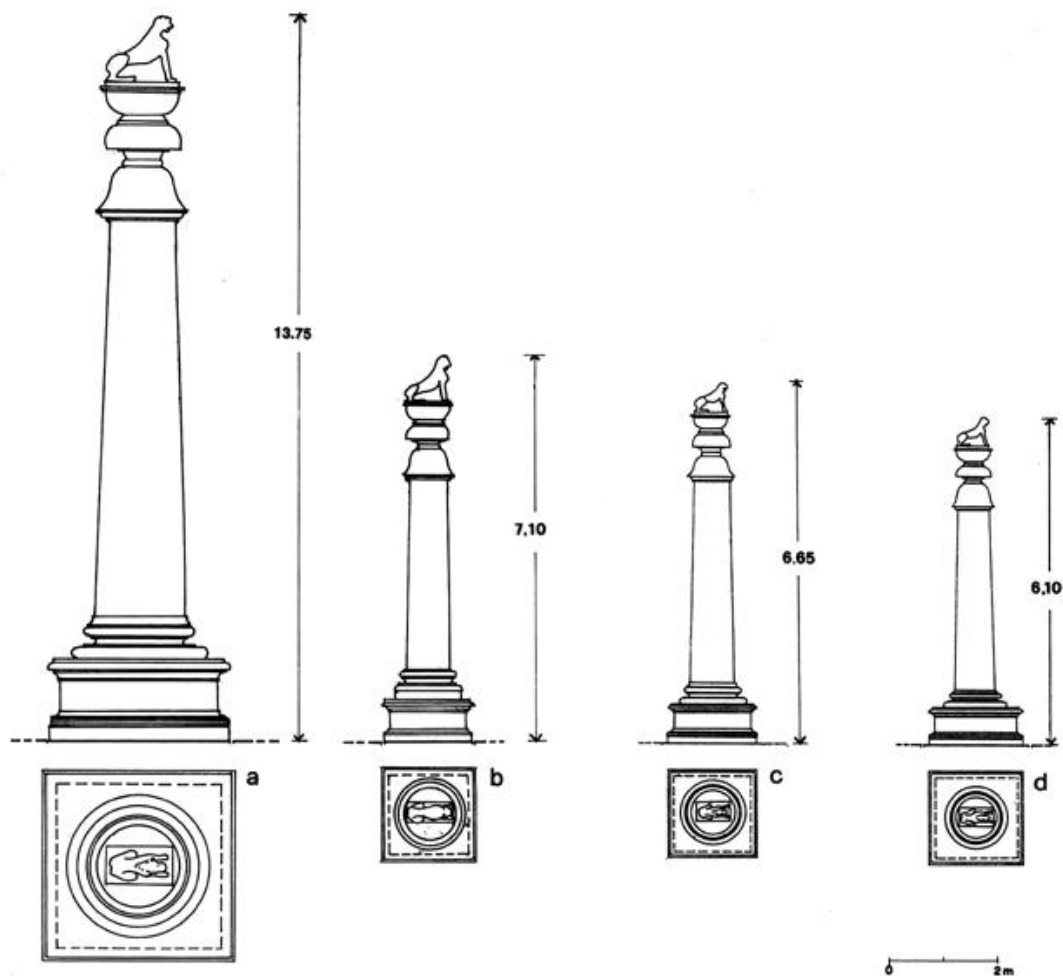


Fig. 17. (From left) Saidu Sharif I, column C; no. 24; no. 29; Panr I no. 8 (after Faccenna 1995b, fig. 229; Olivieri 2022b, fig. 34).

6.2.4.3 *Gandhāran-Corinthian Pillars and Pilasters*

The Gandhāran-Corinthian pillars and pilasters are among the most distinctive architectural elements found in the Buddhist ruins of Gandhāra and Swat. These structures reflect a fusion of Hellenistic, Roman and local architectural and artistic

traditions, characterizing Gandhāran architecture. In Swat, Gandhāran-Corinthian pilasters are typically found adorning Buddhist stūpas and monastic complexes. They are embedded in walls or placed at the corners of structures to provide support and ornamentation.

At Butkara I, columns and pilasters in the peripheral structures exhibit Corinthian-style capitals with floral motifs. For example, an important reference point is the semi-column and pilaster capital found in stupa no. 14 at Butkara I (fig. 18). Dating to early first century CE, this monument marks a clear stage in the development of the capital, along with other architectural features such as shaft, base and richly decorated architraved cornice. The refined and balanced design of capital links it to an already established architectural tradition (Faccenna 1991: 206-07).



Fig. 18. Corinthian style semi-column on stupa no. 14 at Butkara I.

At Amluk Dara, remains of Corinthian-inspired pillars were used in the platforms and stairways. These were constructed by using schist and limestone, and often plastered and painted. Some surviving examples still retain traces of red and gold paint, suggesting a richly decorated appearance in antiquity (fig. 19).



Fig. 19. Gandharan-Corinthian style pilasters at Amluk Dara.

6.2.4.4 *Gandhāran Composite Pillars*

The relief panels uncovered from Gandhara and the Swat Valley exhibit a remarkable blend of artistic influences, particularly in the form of composite or mixed-type Gandharan pillars and pilasters. These structures, whether freestanding or engaged, exhibit elements drawn from multiple traditions, incorporating elements from Persian, Hellenistic and Indian traditions. The fusion is evident in columns with bases of one style and capitals of another or in cases where capitals are superimposed, Corinthian elements below and Persepolitan features above. Some pillars have bases inspired by Gandharan-Corinthian forms, typically adorned with fluted or moulded designs, while their capitals exhibit the elaborate bell-shaped or stepped design of Gandharan-Persepolitan architecture. In some cases, a Corinthian capital, characterised by acanthus leaf motifs and volutes, is placed below a Persepolitan-type capital, which has a broad abacus supporting sculptural elements like lions or other symbolic figures.

Prominent examples of such hybrid columns include those with Gandhāran-Persepolitan capitals atop classical bases, or those featuring Gandhāran-Corinthian capitals with bases incorporating stepped elements or water pots. Similar compositions are observed at sites like Haḍḍa, where the superimposition of different pilaster orders further exemplifies this architectural phenomenon (Faccenna 1991: 209-210, fig. 40).

Ultimately, the transformation of mere superimposition into an integrated and singular capital is what defines these structures as ‘composite’. These elements not only reflect a synthesis of artistic traditions but also highlight the evolving architectural language of Gandhāra (for more details, see Faccenna 1991: 199-217).

6.3 Miscellaneous architectural elements and decorative motifs in the art and architecture of the Swat Valley

An in-depth analysis of both sculptural reliefs and the surviving architectural remains of the Swat Valley reveals a wide range of miscellaneous architectural elements and decorative motifs. These features not only served aesthetic and symbolic purposes but also provide details about the architectural language, construction techniques and cultural values of the time.

6.3.1 Monumental Stairways and Gateways

One of the significant architectural features found in both the relief carvings and physical remains is the monumental stairway. Excavations at several Buddhist sites in Swat, including Butkara I and III, Saidu Sharif, Amluk Dara, Shnaisha and Balo Kalay Gumbat have revealed massive figured and decorated stair-risers or stair riser friezes, often built from carefully cut schist blocks. The scale and alignment of these stair risers suggest that they led to grand ceremonial gateways, which marked the entrance to sacred spaces (Olivieri and Iori 2021:197-239).

These monumental gateways also appear frequently in the Buddhist reliefs, typically shown as elaborately decorated arched entrances, often flanked by columns, guardians and richly adorned panels. Such depictions can be seen in narrative scenes from the life of the Buddha or *Jātaka* stories, emphasizing the

ceremonial grandeur associated with these entrances (pls. 146-154, 156-158, 177-180).

6.3.2 *Stepped Pyramid as Decorative Motif*

A recurring architectural motif is the stepped pyramid design, commonly featured in both sculptural and structural contexts. In relief panels, these stepped designs are often used to decorate *harmikā*, cornices, platforms or throne bases (see pls. 211-213). Similarly, stepped cornices and base mouldings have been observed at sites like Nimogram, Saidu Sharif Stupa and Panr, reflecting how artistic conventions were translated into real architectural practice (for details, see Bibi 2023).

6.3.3 *Phytomorphic Decorative Motifs and Scrolls*

A variety of floral motifs and scrolls appear abundantly in both the Buddhist reliefs and the architectural decoration of the Swat Valley. Numerous examples within our catalogue depict elements such as the lotus flower, rosettes, palmette, pipal leaves, acanthus foliage and intertwining vine scrolls (pls. 218-235).

In architectural remains, these floral motifs are not merely ornamental but are integrated purposefully into the structural design. They appear on cornices, columns, stair risers, and architraves, reinforcing the sacred character and symbolic depth of the religious architecture they adorn. Of particular interest are the running floral scrolls, fashioned with stylized buds and curling leaves, which embellish pilasters, friezes and lintels with rhythmic and harmonious patterns. Whether decorating the structural elements of stupas or framing scenes in relief panels, these floral scrolls convey a sense of divine order, spiritual vitality and cultural refinement within the Gandhāran aesthetic tradition.

6.3.4 *Geometric and Abstract Designs*

Alongside floral and symbolic elements, Buddhist art and architecture of the Swat Valley features geometric motifs, such as, diamond shapes, chevron patterns, interlocking circles, row of separate discs, opposing scales, tangential pearls, bead-and-reel, dentils-and-bars, opposite triangles filled with parallel lines, opposite triangles containing a triangular indentation and square panels bisected into

triangles. These patterns were used to frame scenes, decorate stair risers and adorn the surfaces of railings and plinths.

6.4 Depiction of secular architecture in reliefs and archaeological evidence

While the Buddhist reliefs from the vales of Gandhāra and Swat depict a wealth of sacred architecture, such as stupas, vihāras and temple complexes, these representations can often be corroborated by the surviving structural remains in the region. However, when we turn our attention to the depiction of secular architecture in these reliefs, a striking contrast emerges. For example, while Buddhist reliefs vividly portray a variety of secular architecture, ranging from simple thatched huts to grand palatial complexes, elaborately decorated city gates, lavishly furnished interiors and imposing military fortifications, the corresponding structural evidence from the same historical period remains notably scarce. The only securely identified architectural remains that might align with such depictions are the citadel areas of Sirkap and Sirsukh at Taxila (Marshall 1951; Dani 1965), Birkot Ghwandai at Swat Valley (Olivieri 1996, 2003, 2012, 2014b, 2015b; Iori, Olivieri and Afridi 2015), along with Shaikhan Dheri in Charsadda (Dani 1965). The remains of these sites clearly show how cities were planned and protected during that era.

One plausible explanation for the scarcity of secular structural remains is that these buildings were perhaps constructed by using perishable materials such as timber, mudbrick or thatch, which would have naturally deteriorated over time. Once these structures decayed, there appears to have been little incentive or tradition to restore or reconstruct them, which led to their complete disappearance. In contrast, the devout followers of Buddhism considered it a deeply meritorious act to clean, maintain and restore sacred structures such as stūpas, monasteries and shrines. This sense of religious duty and spiritual reward ensured that these monuments were consistently taken care of and preserved for generations to come. Renovation and upkeep were not just acts of devotion but believed to accumulate karmic merit, aligning with the core principles of Dharma. Importantly, sacred buildings were rarely harmed, dismantled, or replaced, as such actions were considered as against the ethical code of the Buddhist faith.

Moreover, the artists of these Buddhist reliefs might have exercised significant creative freedom when depicting secular life. Unlike sacred architecture, where representations needed to align with actual religious structures, the portrayal of palaces and cities may have been idealized or drawn from broader cultural imagination rather than direct observation.

6.5 Conclusion

The current chapter was aimed to establish a dialogue between the architectural representations found in Buddhist reliefs and the structural remains uncovered across the Swat Valley. Through this comparative approach, it has become clear that the reliefs served not only as artistic expressions but as visual documentation of the architectural vocabulary prevalent in ancient Uḍḍiyyāna. Religious architecture such as stupas, viharas, temples and shrines depicted in the reliefs are traced in the surviving ruins of the valley. Architectural elements like columned façades, monumental stairways, railings, pilasters, gateways and variety of decorative motifs are also echoed in the archaeological remains of stupas and monastic establishments of the valley. While religious architecture enjoys strong representation both in sculptural and structural form, a significant disparity exists in the case of secular architecture. Palaces, city gates, military architecture and residential buildings richly illustrated in the reliefs remain largely absent from the material record. This absence raises important questions regarding construction materials, preservation and artistic license and will be addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7

COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter gathers the various strands of evidence explored in the preceding chapters to conduct a critical comparison and comprehensive discussion of Buddhist architectural forms in ancient Uḍḍiyāna (Swat Valley). By juxtaposing data gleaned from bas-reliefs, archaeological, textual and epigraphic sources, the current chapter aims to revive the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley. Central to this discussion is the relationship between artistic representation and architectural reality, as seen through the lens of bas-reliefs, which often served symbolic or didactic purposes. These visual depictions are analysed together with archaeological evidence from excavated sites to evaluate their accuracy and intended function. The goal is not just to compare the artwork with real buildings, but to understand the deeper cultural, religious and spatial meanings behind them.

7.2 Architectural typologies in the Buddhist relief carvings

We have catalogued a total of 237 relief sculptures that depict a variety of architectural forms and visual representations. In Chapter five of this dissertation, we took a closer look at the artistic representations of architecture exhibited in these sculptures. The collected data were thoroughly reviewed and organised according to subject matter and architectural representation. The relief carvings were carefully documented, classified and described, resulting in its division into four principal categories:

1. Sacred architecture
2. Secular architecture
3. Funerary monuments
4. Architectural elements

Having organised the collected material into four main categories based on their architectural content and thematic focus, this chapter now turns to a detailed comparative analysis of each category. By comparing visual, material and literary

perspectives, we seek to identify both continuities and divergences in architectural forms and symbolic meanings. Now, we will discuss each category individually, with particular attention to key findings, interpretive implications and the ways in which these representations inform our understanding of Buddhist architectural traditions in the Swat Valley.

In this chapter, we have tried to avoid repeating detailed descriptions, as each artwork has already been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 5. To avoid redundancy, we refer to specific sculptures briefly and instead concentrate on the architectural features, stylistic influences and the lasting legacy of the structures represented in the reliefs.

7.2.1 Sacred Architecture

Sacred architecture in the ancient Uḍḍiyāna served at the very heart of spiritual, cultural and communal life during the heydays of Buddhism, roughly from the second century BCE to the seventh century CE. During this time, the valley became a vibrant religious centre, closely connected to the wider Buddhist networks of Gandhāra and the Silk Road.

The sacred architecture depicted in the relief sculptures of the Swat Valley has been further classified into three distinct sub-categories: stūpas, vihāras and temples. Each of these categories reflects an important aspect of Buddhist religious and communal life as visualised through artistic representation. To capture the diversity and nuances within these forms, each sub-category is further subdivided into different types, based on architectural peculiarities, functional aspects and stylistic variations. This layered classification allows us to explore not only the structural elements of sacred spaces but also the evolving religious meanings they embodied during the zenith of Buddhism.

7.2.1.1 Stūpa as depicted in the relief carvings

Stūpas served as monumental reliquaries and pilgrimage centres, enshrining the relics of the Buddha and revered monks. Their construction was not only an act of devotion but also a public declaration of faith and royal patronage. Rising above

the ground with their hemispherical domes and crowning umbrellas (*chattrāvalī*), they marked sacred geography and spiritual aspiration (Hawkes and Shimada 2008).

We have further classified this sub-category into the following types:

1. Stūpa with columns
2. Stūpa without columns
3. Stūpa models
4. Stūpas as reliquaries
5. Individual parts of a stūpa

Now we will discuss, compare and analyse each type both quantitatively and qualitatively.

a. Stūpa with columns (plates 1-8)

Seventeen relief sculptures depicting stūpas were included in our catalogue; of these, only eight panels depict stūpas flanked by columns, while the remaining nine exhibit stūpas without columns. Thus, only 3.38% (8/237) of the total sculptures feature stūpas with columns.

Both plates 1 and 3 show stūpas accompanied by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns positioned below the podium. In plate 1, the columns are placed close to the front of the stūpa, creating a balanced and symmetrical appearance. In contrast, the columns in plate 3 are set farther apart, placed toward the rear corners, which gives the scene a more spacious and open feel. This arrangement closely resembles the architectural layout of the stūpa at Panr I, where similar columns are positioned just beyond the podium (Olivieri 2023: 69, fig. 11). Plates 2 and 4-8 show stūpas flanked by Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns placed on the platform. Plate 2 shows a stūpa, surrounded by columns on four corners on a square platform. The base of the platform is moulded with a stepped cornice and a sloping flight of four steps is provided at front. The four columns on the platform are standing on stepped pyramidal shaped bases with rounded tapering shaft and bell-shaped capital which is surmounted by a lion seated on its rear haunches and facing to the stūpa.

Plates 4 and 7 also show stūpas with Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns positioned on a square platform. But unlike the previous examples, there is no flight of steps leading up to the stūpa in these scenes, which gives them a simpler, perhaps more symbolic appearance. Another striking feature can be seen in plates 5-6 and 8, where the stūpas feature false niches, architectural elements that are carved to look like doors/openings but aren't real. In some cases, like plate 5, the stūpa's base takes the form of acanthus leaves, from which the superstructure emerges. A small niche in the centre of dome depicts a cross-legged Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*, flanked by niches representing half-rosettes on either side of the stūpa. The relic chamber is topped by four parasols, supported by pillars emerging from the three niches below. Still in others, such as plates 6 and 8, the niche starts at the base of the drum and continues up onto the dome, creating a layered and more elaborate visual effect. These variations may reflect different artistic styles, symbolic choices, or shifts in architectural trends over time (Iori 2018).

In the valley of Swat, the stūpas at Tokar Dara, Saidu Sharif and Gumbatuna stand out for having columns placed above the first storey/podium, a feature we don't often see in typical stūpa architecture. When we compare these rare surviving examples with the many columned stūpas shown in relief sculptures, it becomes clear that this columned style was abundantly in vogue than the surviving ruins suggest. The frequent appearance of such designs in the reliefs tells us that this type of stūpa wasn't limited to just a few sites in Swat but was probably widespread across the broader Gandhāran region (Faccenna 1995a).

b. Stūpa without columns (plates 9-17)

As discussed in the preceding paragraph that nine (out of 237) catalogued figures show stūpas without columns, thus making it 3.80% of the total sculptures. Plate 9 depicts an elegantly carved stūpa worshipped by devotees. The stūpa rests upon a rectangular podium with a decorative cornice and moulded plinth. The lower drum features a flower pattern, framed by mouldings. Above, a plain register is bordered by a plinth and cornice, supporting a *vedikā* with a bracket cornice. Beneath the dome, an undulating garland hangs from pegs with rosettes. The dome itself is

adorned with a double row of lotus, topped by *harmikā* and three broken parasols of decreasing size.

Astonishingly, while this particular stūpa is richly decorated with detailed carvings and ornamentation, the stūpas in plates 13 and 17 are completely plain. Though, architecturally complete, with a distinct base, well defined drum, dome, *harmikā* and *chattras*, they show no signs of decoration at all. Their simplicity stands in stark contrast to the more elaborate example, and shows how varied stūpa architecture could be, even within the same region or tradition. Plate 10 depicts a stūpa sits on a quadrangular podium, accessed by a flight of steps in the front and a false railing on the upper drum. Though plate 11 is worn and weathered, we can still make out key features: a raised platform, a double-tiered drum and a hemispherical dome. Above the dome, there is an inverted, stepped *harmikā* topped with three *chattras*, from which garlands or flags appear to hang. Despite the damage, the stūpa's essential form is still clearly visible.

Interesting feature of the stūpa exhibited in plate 12 is having a drum, decorated with chequered design and provided with well-defined lower and upper fillets. Important feature of the stūpa depicted in plate 14 is having a hemispherical dome adorned with an inverted lotus flower emerging from the base of a square-shaped *harmikā*. The *harmikā* is supporting a thick cylindrical *yaṣṭi* with a single parasol. The stūpa depicted in plate 15 is profusely decorated from base to the dome, with a high platform, accessed by a flight of seven steps. Plate 16 shows three stūpas grouped in a single scene, each with slight variation in embellishment. They all feature decorated square bases, plain lower drums and simply decorated upper drums. While, the inverted lotus petals embellish the top of their domes, adding both detail and symbolic beauty.

c. Stūpa models (plates 18-26)

Apart from narrative relief panels, miniature stūpa models provide us valuable information about the architecture of ancient Buddhist monuments. These stūpa models were used as portable objects of veneration and symbolic design of full-scale stūpas that once flourished in the region. These scaled-down replicas are

exquisitely carved with architectural features and decorative elements, helping us better understand what these once-thriving monuments looked like and how they were built.

Total nine plates (18-26) of our catalogue show a variety of model stūpas, thus making it 3.80% of the total relief carvings. Plate 18 is a model stūpa, discovered from the site of Nimogram. It has visible traces of red pigment and remains of gold leaf on the *chattras*. The model stūpa is an excellent example of the full-sized stūpas erected in the region. From base to pinnacle, every architectural detail and decorative elements are exquisitely carved. Similarly, plate 19 is also depicting a model stūpa, recovered from the site of Shaikhān Dheri. Important feature of this model stūpa is floral decorations and three circumambulatory passages.

We have also included a model stūpa in our catalogue (pl. 20), now on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum. What distinguishes this stūpa is a finely carved false niche that rises from the lower drum to the hemispherical dome. It shows three distinct scenes, the death scene at the base, the Buddha in *dhyānamudrā* flanked by devotees in the central panel, and another meditative Buddha at the top with *nāgas* forming a vault over him. Plate 21 is a nearly complete stūpa model, comprised of four stages and a central hole at the top designed to accommodate the shaft of the *harmikā*. The structure is beautifully carved with floral and geometric designs.

Similarly, plate 22 is a stūpa model depicting three circular drums topped by a raised dome. The lower drum is adorned with six scenes, each depicting seated Buddha in meditation, flanked by a devotee on either side, with each panel separated by Corinthian pilasters. The stūpa model shown in plate 23 is in a bad state of preservation but with intricate decoration and broken trefoil arch. A defining feature of the model stūpa (pl. 24) is the presence of Indian style *torāṇa* arches on all four sides, reflecting strong influence of classical Indian architectural tradition and marking the sacred boundaries with ornate carvings. Plate 25 is exhibiting the upper part of a model stūpa with floral and geometric designs while plate 26 is a plain miniature stūpa model wrought out in one piece of stone.

d. Stūpas as reliquaries (plates 27-32)

In the region of Swat and Gandhāra, a variety of reliquaries have been unearthed through archaeological excavations. These relic containers, found in diverse sizes and forms, reflect the rich material culture and religious practices of ancient Buddhist communities. From this wide range, we have selected only six reliquaries carved in the form of stūpas, that constitute only 2.53% of our catalogue. The aim was to highlight a compelling phenomenon, the deliberate imitation of full-scale stūpas in the design of relic caskets. These miniature stūpas allow us to infer key aspects of ancient architectural design, including structural elements, decorative motifs and symbolic proportions. While their value in reconstructing the appearance of now lost stūpas is considerable, their symbolic value is even more profound. As sacred objects, they represent not only the Buddha's physical remains but also his spiritual presence, teachings and the path to enlightenment. These reliquaries thus serve as powerful expressions of devotion and as microcosmic reflections of the Buddhist cosmos (Jongeward, Errington, Salomon and Baums 2012)

The Stūpa-shaped reliquaries discovered across the Swat and Gandhara regions are remarkable miniature imitations of the original monumental stūpas that once stood majestically throughout these areas. Though the large-scale stūpas have now mostly fallen into ruin, these miniature versions provide invaluable insight into the architectural and symbolic elements of the original structures, preserved in detailed and scaled-down forms. We have noticed the essential elements in stupa-shaped reliquaries: a square or circular base, cylindrical drums, a graceful hemispherical dome, the *harmikā* and the *chattras* that once crowned the original structures. What makes these reliquaries more fascinating is the care with which their parts are assembled. The upper section, which includes the dome and other elements, typically fits neatly into a recessed cavity in the base. This cavity often held a smaller inner box, sometimes made of metal, used to enshrine sacred relics. The relics themselves could be as modest as a fragment of bone or ash, or as symbolic as a thin gold disc or an ancient coin. Whatever their form, these relics were treated with deep reverence, and the reliquaries that held them were created with equal

devotion. In this way, the miniature stūpas served a dual purpose, they were both sacred vessels and symbolic representations of Buddhist cosmology and presence.

e. Individual parts of a stūpa (plates 33-68)

Archaeological excavations across various Buddhist sites in the Swat Valley have yielded numerous individual components of stūpas, including both full-scale architectural fragments and elements from minor stūpas. Though many of these pieces were found in broken or displaced condition, they retain enough structural and stylistic detail to provide substantial understanding of the original form, design and symbolic meanings of the ancient Buddhist monuments. The following are key architectural elements frequently recovered from the region:

i. Stūpa base (plate 33)

The base of a stūpa, typically square or circular in plan, serves as the foundational platform upon which the entire structure rests. Architecturally, it provides stability, while symbolically it represents the earth element (*Prithvī*) and the grounded nature of the Buddha's teachings. Bases often contain mouldings, carvings, or reliefs that offer important clues about the period and stylistic influences of the structure. We have included only one piece of a stepped base of a small stūpa embellished with floral motifs, in our catalogue (pl. 33). In this way, only 0.42 % of our relief sculptures consists of the stūpa base.

ii. Stūpa drum (plates 34-42)

The drum is a cylindrical structure that rises directly above the base, acting as a transitional element between the base and the dome. Our catalogue includes nine pieces of drums broken off miniature stūpas and carved with different reliefs, making approximately 3.80 % of the total bas-reliefs. These drums are sometimes carved with garland bearers (pls. 34-36), narrative reliefs (pls. 37-39), decorative bands with floral and geometrical motifs (pl. 40), aniconic depiction of the Buddha, for example the alms bowl (pl. 41) and rarely the drum is left undecorated (pl. 42). The regional variations in drum ornamentation help scholars trace the evolution of stūpa architecture across different periods and geographic regions.

iii. *Stūpa dome/aṇḍa* (plates 43-48)

The hemispherical dome (*aṇḍa*) is the most prominent and defining component of a *stūpa*, symbolising the mound of relics or the spiritual body of the Buddha. While few complete domes have survived *in situ*, many broken sections preserve enough of their original curvature and surface decoration to allow for partial reconstruction and stylistic analysis. Notably, some of the best-preserved examples of domes are found in miniature *stūpas*. These scaled-down versions provide knowledge about the original structural form and ornamental details of *stūpa* domes across vales of Gandhāra and Swat, thereby enriching our understanding of their architectural and symbolic significance.

Our plates (43-48) illustrate different specimens of the domes, recovered from the Swat Valley. These six pieces thus make approximately 2.53 % of the catalogue. These domes are adorned with a rich variety of decorative motifs, reflecting the sophisticated artistic practices of the period. Among the most common embellishments are stylised lotus petals, including overlapping petal designs and sometimes round bifurcated petals. In some examples, the dome is depicted as a fully bloomed, inverted lotus flower, a symbol deeply associated with purity, spiritual awakening and the Buddha himself. Occasionally, these domes also feature a recessed niche at the front (pl 48), possibly intended to house a small image or object of veneration. The diversity and intricacy of these decorative elements not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the domes but also provide detailed information about the regional artistic traditions of Gandhāra and Swat.

iv. *Harmikā* (plates 49-55)

The *harmikā* is typically cubic, square or pyramidal-shaped structure positioned atop the dome (*aṇḍa*) of the *stūpa*. To accommodate this architectural element, the dome is usually pierced or recessed at its apex. In both full-scale and miniature *stūpas*, this part is sometimes delicately carved, reflecting the craftsmanship and symbolic significance attributed to this sacred architectural element. Plates 49-55 of our catalogue includes *harmikās* of the minor and model *stūpas* with variety of relief carvings. These seven pieces thus constitute 2.95% of our total collection.

The *harmikās* are often intricately carved, with each of their four faces depicting a variety of narrative scenes. These scenes include different episodes from the life of the Buddha, such as his conception, birth, departure and death. Some *harmikās* are carved with Buddha in different meditative postures flanked by devotees (pls. 49-51). Many of the *harmikās* decorated with floral designs, for example, full-blown lotuses and rosettes (pls. 52-53). The corners are bordered by Corinthian-style pilasters, sometimes bear short flute on its outer shafts. Both the upper and lower cornices of the *harmikā* are adorned with an array of geometric and floral motifs, reflecting the artistic richness of the region. The reverse stepped pyramid-shaped *harmikās* are usually lavishly decorated with variety of vegetative and geometric motifs (pl. 54). Sometimes, even, the *harmikās* are decorated with secular scenes, including Dionysiac activities (pl. 55).

v. *Chattras/Umbrellas* (plates 56-63)

Above the *harmikā*, a series of *chattras* (umbrella-like discs) are mounted on a central axis. These represent high spiritual attainment and are often associated with the nobility or sovereignty of the Buddha's teachings. Fragments of *chattras* found in Swat vary in size and number, which may indicate rank, ritual importance or regional architectural preferences.

Plates 56-63 of the current dissertation features six *chattras* of various sizes and decorations, thereby constitute 3.38% of the total relief carvings. The undersides of these disc-shaped elements are ornamented with floral and geometric designs, for example, empanelled lotuses and rosettes (pls. 56-60), bifurcated petals (pl. 61), acanthus leaves (pls. 62) and some are left plain and unadorned (pl. 63).

vi. *Spacers* (plates 64-65)

Spacers are often placed between the *chattras* to provide visual balance and structural clarity. Though rarely decorated, their presence in miniature stūpas reveals the precision of scale and the symbolic continuity maintained in smaller versions of sacred architecture. We have included two pieces of spacers in our catalogue (pls. 64-65), thus making 0.84% of the total sculptures. Plate 64 shows a spacer of a miniature stūpa with plain shaft and moulded rims at both ends, the

upper end is decorated with acanthus leaves. The other spacer (pl. 65) is also provided with moulded rims and incised lines. Both these objects have central through hole for functional purposes.

vii. *Pinnacles* (plates 66-67)

Pinnacles, often conical or spire-like in form, crown the top of the stūpa. They symbolise the culmination of spiritual ascent and enlightenment. Pinnacle fragments discovered in Swat show how even the uppermost elements of the stūpa were carefully crafted, often from stone or metal. Plates 66-67 (0.84% of the total sculptures), depicts pinnacles of the miniature stūpas, embellished with lotus flowers and incised lines.

viii. *Yaṣṭi/central axis* (plate 68)

Yaṣṭi is the vertical shaft or *axis mundi* running through the center of the stūpa, often symbolising the connection between the worldly and spiritual realms. Though it rarely survives intact, parts of this central pole or representations of it in miniature stūpas reflect its metaphysical importance and provide data on the internal structure of larger stūpas. We have included a *yaṣṭi* of a stūpa model with three broken umbrellas in our dissertation (pl. 68, 0.42% of the whole catalogue).

Together, these architectural elements, whether discovered individually or in miniature reliquaries, play a crucial role in the archaeological reconstruction of stūpas. Their detailed ornamentation, proportions and stylistic features offer a tangible link to the religious, artistic and architectural heritage of ancient Buddhist communities in the Swat Valley. Even in their broken state, they serve as important witnesses to a once-vibrant spiritual and cultural landscape.

7.2.1.2 *Vihāra* (plates 69-87)

Plates 69 to 87 in the current catalogue illustrates variety of Buddhist vihāras, image and relic shrines, captured through 18 sculptural representations. These constitute approximately 7.6% of the total sculptures under study. The sequence reflects a progression from simple and rudimentary dwellings to architecturally

elaborate sanctuaries, revealing shifts in function, symbolism and regional expression.

The earliest forms, such as plates 70, 71, 78 and 80, depict thatched-roof or straw-covered vihāras, modest in construction and reflective of forest monasticism. Characterised by organic roofing and minimal ornamentation, these structures were probably meant for the wandering monks or small communities, aligned with early Theravāda practices. Elements like the flight of steps (pl. 70) and double-leaf doorway (pl. 71) introduce early architectural formality, suggesting a role in communal gatherings in addition to solitary retreat.

Plates 69, 74 and 75 indicate a transition to more formalised layouts, with rectilinear or square plans, pointed arches, and façade ornamentation. These vihāras represent the emergence of permanent institutions, functioning as residences, educational hubs and devotional centres. Notably, pl. 74 depicts a square plan vihāra actively worshipped by monks, emphasizing its use as a ritual focal point.

The apex of architectural development is illustrated in plates 72, 73, 75, 76 and 87, where vihāras appear with double domes, circular plans, vine motifs and even enclosed stūpas. These evolved structures align with Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna paradigms, emphasising the cosmic dimension of sacred space. The vihāra enclosing a stūpa (pl. 87) exemplifies the synthesis of residence and relic veneration, symbolically centring the *Dharma* within the monastic framework.

A separate but related category appears in plates 81 to 86, which depict image shrines, architecturally similar to vihāras but with an explicit devotional focus. These include representations of the Buddha in *abhayamudrā* (pl. 83), Padmapāṇi Bodhisattva (pl. 84), and the meditating Buddha (pl. 86). Motifs such as flags, birds and Hellenistic acanthus leaves reflect the iconographic richness and syncretism of Uḍḍiyāna, suggesting these shrines occupied central sanctums within vihāras, serving both didactic and ritual functions.

In conclusion, we are now well informed that vihāra played multiple functions in the religious and cultural life of the Buddhist communities of the Swat Valley.

Architecturally, vihāras served as monastic residence to accommodate monks and nuns in individual cells (*kuṭi*) arranged around central courtyards, balancing solitude and community life. Excavations at Takht-i-Bahi, Jaulian, Mohra Muradu, Saidu Sharif and Butkara I and III, confirm such layouts with attached meditation chambers, reflecting both individual practice and institutional discipline (Khan 1993; Dani 1986).

Beyond residence, many vihāras became renowned academic institutions. While Indian sites like Nālandā and Vikramashila are prominent, the university of Takṣaśilā (Taxila) in present-day Pakistan was among the earliest. Described by Faxian and Xuanzang, Taxila offered courses in Buddhist philosophy, grammar, logic and medicine, attracting international scholars and spreading doctrinal knowledge across Central and South Asia (Beal 1884; Legge 1965).

Vihāra also served as devotional and ritual space. Integrated shrines, stūpas and prayer halls were standard components of mature vihāras. The Vihāra of Balo Kalay Gumbat is a best example of the more sophisticated and mature form of vihāra (Meister and Olivieri 2012; Meister, Olivieri and Vidale 2012; Qazi and Nawaz-ud-din 2013). The Stūpa court and votive Stūpas at Takht-i-Bahi, and the religious infrastructure at Dharmarājika and Jamal Garhi, demonstrate the ritual function of vihāras in supporting both communal worship and pilgrimage activity (Marshall 1951, I).

Vihāras also served lay communities through education, moral guidance, and hospitality. Donative inscriptions from Gandhāran sites show contributions by merchants, artisans, and rulers, suggesting active economic and social integration between monastics and laity (Rosenfield 1967; Khan 1993a: 17-19). This reflects the reciprocal patronage networks central to vihāra sustainability. Details of such donations are given in detail in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Strategically positioned along trade routes such as the Silk Road, vihāras in the north western regions of Pakistan played a critical role in the transmission of Buddhism to Central Asia, China, and beyond. Sites like Balo Kalay Gumbat, Butkara I and III, Saidu Sharif I, Nimogram, Amluk Dara, Tokar Dara, Taxila and

Takht-i-Bahi functioned as nodes of both spiritual and material exchange, reinforcing the global outreach of monastic institutions.

7.2.1.3 *Temples* (plates 88-91)

Plates 88 to 91 in our catalogue depict a distinct thematic and architectural typology within Buddhist narrative reliefs. Temples engulfed in flames, associated with the legendary conversion of Kāśyapa, the chief fire-worshipping ascetic at Uruvilvā, by the historical Buddha. These sculptures represent approximately 1.7% of the total reliefs under study.

These panels narrate one of the most dramatic episodes in Buddhist tradition, the subjugation of fire and serpent deities by the Buddha at Uruvilvā. The temples, engulfed in visible flames and housing serpents or nāgas, symbolise untamed natural and spiritual forces subdued by the Buddha through compassion and supernatural power. In each scene, the fire temple becomes the dramatic setting for Kāśyapa's spiritual awakening, thus functioning as both a mythic stage and architectural metaphor for the conversion of Vedic ritualism into the Buddhist path.

Despite regional variations, the temples in plates 88-91 share core architectural elements that collectively represent a sacred space undergoing transformation. Domical or sloping roofs are consistently present across the depictions, often detailed with palmette leaves, floral embellishments, or rope bindings at the apex (pls. 88, 90). These features mirror the stylised forms of Buddhist vihāras, blurring the distinction between temple and monastery, a point notably made in plate 89, where the fire temple closely resembles a vihāra.

Flames emerging from within are a unifying feature. These are often visible through wide entrances (pls. 88, 89) or illustrated as enveloping specific architectural components like the door leaf (pl. 89) or the interior dome (pl. 90). The flames signify not only physical danger but also spiritual impurity, which is subdued in each case through the Buddha's serene presence or intervention. The double-domed structures in plates 89 and 91, notably the intermediary cylindrical element between domes, suggest a more advanced and stylised construction. The

finial elements, often disc-shaped or pointed, function symbolically as cosmic connectors.

Ascetic figures with pitchers frequently flank the temples (pls. 89, 91), engaged in pouring water to extinguish the fire. These acts symbolised the failed ritual efforts of Brahmanical practitioners, contrasting with the Buddha's effortless taming of the elements. The presence of Kāśyapa receiving the begging bowl with a rising snake (pls. 88, 90) further reinforces the theme of miraculous transformation and doctrinal triumph. Architectural enclosures and pedestals are integral in plates 89 and 91. The temple in plate 91 rests on a high podium with staircases and a pseudo-trefoil arch, while Corinthian pilasters (pls. 89, 91) frame the composition.

The sacred architecture of the Swat Valley, as reconstructed through sculptural reliefs, archaeological remains, and textual sources, reveals a sophisticated and symbolically rich religious landscape. The triad of stūpas, vihāras, and temple complexes formed the spiritual and ritual nucleus of Buddhist monastic and lay life in the region.

Stūpas, serving as reliquary monuments, were central to devotional practice and pilgrimage. Often depicted in conjunction with processions or veneration scenes, they embodied the presence of the Buddha and were spatial anchors for ritual life. Vihāras, ranging from simple thatched-roof dwellings to elaborate double-domed complexes, served as residences, centres of learning and ritual spaces, demonstrating their role as both functional institutions and sacred enclosures. The evolving architectural styles, from forest hermitages to scholastic monasteries, reflect the expanding doctrinal and cultural roles of monastic communities.

The temple structures, often portrayed engulfed in flames in narrative panels, evoke key moments of doctrinal contestation and spiritual transformation, particularly in the episodes involving Kāśyapa and the fire-worshippers. These scenes dramatise the transition from Vedic ritualism to Buddhist insight, using the architecture itself as a narrative stage for enlightenment.

Across all three forms, sacred architecture was not merely built to house religious activity, it actively shaped the religious imagination of its time. Whether seen

through the intricate details of schist reliefs, the foundations of excavated sites like Butkara I, Saidu Sharif, Takht-i-Bahi and Taxila, or inscriptions that attest to patronage and community engagement, these structures reveal Swat as a vibrant and cosmopolitan hub of Buddhist devotion, art and scholarship. Collectively, they offer a layered and enduring vision of how sacred space was conceived, constructed, and commemorated in the Buddhist tradition of ancient Uḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra.

7.2.2 *Secular architecture* (plates 92-135)

Plates 92 to 135, comprising 44 sculptural panels, depict a variety of secular architecture, including palatial buildings, fortifications and urban settings. These scenes inform us about the civic and domestic environments that formed the backdrop of daily life in ancient Gandhāra and Swat. Representing approximately 18.6% of the total sculptures, these figures underscore the significant role that secular spaces played in the Buddhist visual narrative tradition. We have divided this category into different sub-categories such as:

1. Huts
2. Military Architecture: It includes forts, towers and city gates with fortification walls
3. City gates representing different cities of the ancient India
4. Palace Gates
5. Palace Interiors: 1. Bedrooms 2. Court Halls 3. Dressing Rooms
6. Royal Stables

We now turn to a detailed discussion and analysis of each sub-category of secular architecture, aiming to infer meaningful insights into the civic life of the people who lived alongside the Buddhist monastic community. Through these visual and material representations, we seek to reconstruct aspects of daily life, social structure and civic organization in the broader Gandhāran cultural landscape.

7.2.2.1 *Huts* (plates 92-99)

There are 8 hut-related reliefs included in our catalogue (pls. 92-99), depicting approximately 3.4% of the total collection. These figures demonstrate a variety of hermitages, forest dwellings and temporary huts, constructed from locally

available, perishable materials such as bamboo, straw, wooden planks and thatched grasses. These scenes offer rare glimpses into the modest, rural architecture that once coexisted alongside monumental sacred structures like stūpas and vihāras.

a. Typological Variations

Across these reliefs, the huts vary in form and detail, reflecting both functional differentiation and artistic interpretation. For instance, plates 92, 94 and 95 illustrate bamboo and straw huts. The walls of such huts were typically composed of bamboo poles up to dado level, with vertical straw layers above, secured by ropes. Conical or disc-shaped finials, often adorn the roof apex, used for decorative purposes. The conical and domed roofs reflect a practical understanding of structural design suited to the forested environment of the Swat Valley, allowing for effective water runoff and climate adaptation. In contrast to straw-based construction, plate 93 depicts a plain or mud-plastered hut. This hut lacks surface texture, possibly representing a mud-daubed structure, and includes a wide, arched entrance and a disc-shaped finial, reflecting vernacular architectural forms common in rural South Asia.

Still a wooden plank hut can be observed in plate 98. Such refined huts were made from horizontally laid wooden planks, with circularly arranged domed roofs and finials. Their depiction within a narrative involving Buddha and ascetics suggests a developed rural architecture, perhaps associated with learned ascetics or educators. We have also noticed surface decorations in huts (pls. 96, 97 and 99), such as pīpal leaf scrolls, acanthus decoration and even hanging drapery or curtains. These embellishments point to an aesthetic sensibility even in humble structures, suggesting that some hermitages may have been ritually or socially significant.

b. Architectural Elements and Craftsmanship

Despite their simplicity, the huts exhibit a consistent architectural uniformity. Entrances are typically arched and open, while some are enhanced with projected mouldings or curtains (pl. 99). Roofing styles vary between domical, vaulted or thatched forms, often topped with a finial, indicating symbolic height or ritual function. Although the actual construction materials have not survived

archaeologically, the reliefs clearly depict straw textures, bamboo frameworks and wooden planks, reflecting the sculptors' accurate knowledge of contemporary building practices. Surrounding landscape elements such as trees (often Śāla and Pīpal) frequently frame the huts, enhancing the association with forest-dwelling asceticism.

c. Context and symbolic significance

Narratively, these huts frequently appear in episodes involving the Buddha's encounter with Kāśyapa, a Brahmanical ascetic who is eventually converted. This setting marks a symbolic shift from ritual fire worship and austerity to Buddhist compassion and enlightenment.

d. Archaeological Relevance

From an archaeological standpoint, these depictions are invaluable. Perishable materials such as straw, wood and bamboo rarely survive in the archaeological record, especially in the humid region like Swat. These reliefs thus function as a visual archive for an architectural tradition otherwise lost to time. They enhance our understanding of non-monumental architecture in the Gandhāran cultural sphere and provide ethnographic parallels to rural structures still in use in some parts of South Asia today.

In conclusion, the depictions of huts in plates 92-99 constitute an essential sub-category of secular architecture in Gandhāran art. Through varied materials, decorative details and narrative settings, these reliefs document a vital dimension of ascetic, domestic and rural life that coexisted with monastic Buddhism.

7.2.2.2 Military Architecture (plates 100-108)

There are nine reliefs depicting military architecture (plates 100 to 108), represent approximately 3.8% of the total collection. These plates demonstrate military architecture, particularly through depictions of fortified city gates, towers and defensive walls. Thus, provide architectural details that reflect urban design, security infrastructure and the symbolic role of fortified spaces in Buddhist narratives.

Though the primary focus of these panels is religious, centered around the death of the Buddha and the distribution of his relics, the setting of these events is almost always a fortified city, complete with gates, watchtowers, crenellated walls and defensive loopholes. These elements serve not only to anchor the narrative in a recognisable urban space but also reveal how real-world military structures were imagined and represented in Buddhist art. Important architectural elements can be observed as follow:

a. City gates and doorways

City gates are often depicted with double-leaf doors, stepped thresholds and projecting architraves (pls. 100, 101, 103). Some gates resemble the Indian *torana* style (pls. 105, 106), complete with floral and beaded motifs. In other cases, wooden bars and panels are shown reinforcing the gates, indicating a concern for security and strength.

b. Towers and Bastions

Most gates are flanked by massive square or octagonal towers, often constructed in multiple tiers, and equipped with arrow slits, niches and railed balconies (pls. 100, 104, 108). Their architectural detailing, for example zigzag motifs, string courses, and corbelled balconies, suggests familiarity with urban fortification techniques. In some panels, guards are visible atop these bastions (pls. 103, 106), reinforcing their function as active defensive structures.

c. Walls and Merlons (Crenellations)

City walls are frequently shown topped with crenellations, known as merlons, which were used for defence and visual identity (pls. 101, 103, 105). These walls, with repeating arrow slits and projected balconies, form the backdrop for both military vigilance and sacred rituals, blurring the lines between religious event and urban setting.

d. Narrative and Symbolic Significance

These fortified structures served not only as architectural elements but also as narrative settings, thresholds where momentous events occurred. For instance, the

city gates, exhibit key moments such as the arrival and departure of royal figures bearing the Buddha's relics (pls. 100-102), or dramatic episodes like Siddhārtha lifting the dead elephant (pls. 105, 108). Moreover, the detailed portrayal of guards, ladders and balconies suggests that Buddhist artists were drawing upon familiar civic and military settings, making the stories more relatable to contemporary audiences who lived in or around walled cities.

e. *Architectural awareness and visual literacy*

The precision with which these military elements are carved, right down to door fastenings, battlements, and finials, demonstrates the architectural expertise of the sculptors. Although the actual fortifications of cities like ancient Kuśinagara remain archaeologically elusive, these panels provide information about urban fortification practices and Gandhāran perceptions of city life and protection.

In short, the military architecture depicted in plates 100-108 is not incidental. These gates, towers and walls were not just physical boundaries; they represented the threshold between the mundane and the sacred, the protected city and the open world, and the impermanence of even the most fortified spaces in the face of spiritual truth. In doing so, these structures humanise the stories, placing the Buddha's legacy within the built environments familiar to ancient viewers.

7.2.2.3 *City gates representing different cities of the ancient India*
(plates 109-15)

There are seven reliefs depicting city gates in plates 109-15, thus making approximately 3.0% of the total sculptures under study. City gates in the narrative reliefs of Swat and Gandhāra served not just as architectural settings that marked profound moments in the life of Buddha and associated legends. These figures illustrate several types of city gates, often connected with stories such as Siddhārtha's renunciation, the taming of the wild elephant and the *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka*. These gates are crafted with attention to structural detail, suggesting that artists were familiar with urban settings and aimed to embed spiritual events in relatable, everyday environments. Architecturally, the city gates share several common elements, yet they vary in form, reflecting both Indian, Persian and

Hellenistic traits. Majority of the gates are shown with broad, recessed doorways, often flanked by double jambs and topped with multi-moulded cornices (pls. 109, 110, 111). Some have double-leaf doors, sometimes rendered in perspective to suggest depth (pl. 113). Projected balconies or galleries are a recurring feature, often inhabited by onlookers, including women showering flowers on the Buddha (pls. 111, 112, 113).

Some city gates adopt the Indian *torāṇa style* archways, with bent architraves, decorated lunettes and detailed floral carvings (pls. 115, 106). These reflect sacred gateways found in stūpa architecture at Sānchī (Madhya Pradesh). Gates often stand on stepped bases and are accompanied by merlons or crenellations, arrow slits and lozenge or beaded cornices, which point to defensive and decorative functions (pls. 109, 114).

The city gates shown in plates 109-15 represent distant cities in the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Swat Valley. The cities of Kapilavastu, Rājagṛha, Śrāvastī and Kuśinagara hold a central place in Buddhist narrative tradition, each associated with key events in the life of the historical Buddha, his birth, renunciation, enlightenment, sermons and *Parinirvāṇa*. These cities, frequently depicted in Gandhāran relief panels, were not part of the geographical landscape of the Swat Valley or broader Gandhāra. Rather, they were located in the Gangetic heartland of northern India, at considerable distance from the regions where these reliefs were produced (Rahman 2011).

Despite their geographic remoteness, Gandhāran artists incorporated these urban settings into their visual narratives with remarkable consistency and detail. However, a close analysis reveals that the local architectural vocabulary of Gandhāra, particularly its reliance on stone, Hellenistic motifs, and Graeco-Roman elements, shapes the representation of these distant cities. This creates a uniform visual style, where symbolic Buddhist cities are shown not as they truly were, but in the style and materials typical of Gandhāra. For example, while cities like Kapilavastu and Kuśinagara would have featured mudbrick architecture, timber frameworks, and earthen compounds in the Gangetic plains, they are shown in Gandhāran art with fortified stone walls, merlons, arched gateways and Corinthian

pilasters, features far more typical of north western Indian or Graeco-Roman influenced constructions. Elements such as crenellated towers, arrow slits, and projected balconies appear uniformly in depictions of all cities, regardless of their actual architectural histories.

In doing so, Gandhāran art performs a subtle act of cultural translation. It brings distant, sacred places into the local visual language, integrating the Buddhist sacred landscape into the aesthetic and material world familiar to the region's patrons, artists and monastic audiences. This approach enabled viewers in Gandhāra and Swat to visualise the life of the Buddha within a framework that was intelligible, immediate and resonant, even if geographically displaced.

7.2.2.4 *Palace gates* (plates 116-20)

The palace gates are represented in five reliefs, approximately 2.1% of the total 237 sculptures. The palace gate of King Śuddhodana, father of Siddhārtha Gautama (the historical Buddha), features prominently in a series of Buddhist narrative reliefs, particularly those illustrating the scene of the Great Departure. The reliefs depicting palace gates (pls. 116-20) share elements with city gates but are tailored to royal settings. Several palace gates (pls. 116, 117, 118) are framed by multi-recessed jambs, often bordered with ornamental mouldings and double or triple doorframes. This conveys depth and prestige, highlighting the importance of the palace as a royal and sacred space.

Just like the city gates and fortified walls seen in earlier reliefs, the palace gates also include features such as projected balconies (pl. 116) and crenellated walls (pl. 120). These balconies, with their arrow-shaped openings, hint at a defensive role, even though the scenes themselves are peaceful and narrative-driven. This blend of royal elegance and military approach is a hallmark of Gandhāran palace design, showing how artists brought together elements of power, protection and storytelling in a single visual space. The gates vary in structural form, from arched entrances with rounded lunettes (pl. 117) to square or slightly angled doorways (pl. 116), sometimes shown in perspective or cutaway views to indicate both internal and external vantage points (pl. 119).

Some of the gates are adorned with decorative motifs such as, lanceolate leaf patterns on cornices (pl. 116), leaf-and-dart friezes (pl. 120), *cyma-reversa* mouldings, and festoon designs on framing mouldings. These elements show Hellenistic influence, blended with Indian architectural traditions to form a localised Gandhāran idiom. The palace gate in plate 120 rests on an elevated base, emphasising its monumental character. This elevation not only adds visual prominence but may also reflect real architectural practices in palace construction across ancient South Asia (Olivieri and Iori 2021).

The Great Departure (plates. 116-19), where the palace gate becomes the boundary between worldly life and renunciation. The act of Siddhārtha leaving silently, assisted by divine beings and guarded by magical silence, elevates the gate into a site of cosmic transition. Śrigupta's deception and Buddha's miracle at the city of Rājagṛha (pl. 120), where a flaming trap set at the palace gate is transcended by the Buddha, who walks upon miraculously blooming lotus flowers. This elevates the gate to a stage of divine proof, underscoring the Buddha's spiritual power. Although the cities of Kapilavastu and Rājagṛha were geographically distant from Gandhāra, the palatial structures depicted in Swat and surrounding regions adopt the local architectural language of Gandhāra.

7.2.2.5 *Palace interiors* (plates 121-33)

These thirteen reliefs account for approximately 5.5% of the total sculptural corpus. Although the complete architectural layout of the palace interior is not explicitly revealed in the Buddhist relief panels from the vales of Swat and Gandhāra, a composite image emerges through multiple narrative scenes depicting key episodes from the early life of Prince Siddhārtha. These fragmented yet detailed visual moments acquaint us with the interior spaces and domestic settings of royal life. The following represents the most commonly depicted architectural layout of palace interiors in the reliefs:

a. *Royal bedrooms or sleeping chambers* (plates 121-27)

The royal bedrooms are depicted in seven reliefs (pls. 121-27), approximately 2.95% of our catalogue. The depiction of royal bedrooms in the Buddhist reliefs

portray a rare and intimate window into the imagined interior life of the historical Buddha as Prince Siddhārtha. Spread across a sequence of narrative episodes, from Queen Māyā's dream to the Great Departure, these scenes allow the viewers to imaginatively reconstruct palace interiors within the context of early South Asian architectural traditions.

Most bedrooms consist of flat or trapezoidal roofs, supported by Gandhāran-Persepolitan and Gandhāran-Corinthian columns (pls. 124-127). These columns are frequently placed on stepped plinths and display modillion brackets, fluted shafts and bell-shaped capitals, indicating a fusion of Graeco-Roman, Persian and Indigenous architectural practices.

Some of the scenes incorporate voluted round arches (pl. 127) or segmental trapezoidal architraves (pls. 123, 126), sometimes enhanced with *caitya* arches (pl. 121). These elements frame the sleeping chamber, adding ceremonial grandeur and highlighting the sanctity of the scene. The royal beds are often set under canopies (pl. 121), elaborately draped with textiles and surrounded by attendants, lamps and pillars. Beds have turned legs, lion's paw feet (pl. 122), and are sometimes shown elevated, complete with footstools, suggesting a stratified space emphasising status and comfort. Upper sections often include projected balconies (pls. 123, 126, 127), occupied by divine or human figures, observing or participating in the narrative. These balconies sometimes connect flanking niches, each containing female guardians (*Yavanīs*) or symbolic creatures (pl. 127), reinforcing the idea of a protected, ritualized royal space.

b. *Court Halls* (plates 128-32)

Plates 128 to 132 depict royal courtrooms or court halls, thereby its representation is approximately 2.1% of the total sculptures under study. Court halls and audience chambers are portrayed in scenes where King Śuddhodana and Queen Māyā are engaged in discussions with Brahmins or soothsayers, interpreting the dream and horoscope of the new born prince. These spaces are typically more formal, furnished with thrones, attendants and decorative architecture, suggesting the structured and hierarchical nature of royal court life.

The courtrooms and palatial halls (pls. 128-132) display a set of recurring architectural and compositional features. For instance, nearly all scenes (e.g., pl. 128) show king and queen enthroned, often under tasselled or ornamented canopies, emphasizing status and ceremony. Thrones are typically pedestalled, decorated with lotus carvings and accompanied by footstools, signifying royal comfort and ritual hierarchy. Roof structures vary across panels, from flat roofs (pls. 130, 131) to arched canopies (pls. 128, 132). These are supported by a range of column types, for example, Corinthian or Indo-Corinthian pilasters, Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns and Composite columns with mixed stylistic bases and capitals (pl. 132). Leonine brackets, dentils, and architraves with trapezoidal or round arches are commonly used to enhance the upper structural portions. Framed niches and projected balconies appear above or beside court spaces, inhabited by onlookers, divinities or attendants (pls. 131-32). These upper elements reinforce the idea of the court as a spectacle space, both earthly and celestial.

The courtrooms and royal halls depicted in the Buddhist reliefs serve as theatrical settings where sacred stories intersect with political reality. They allow us to visualise how Buddhist narratives were rooted not only in monasteries and stūpas, but also within palaces, courts and civic life.

c. *Dressing rooms* (pl. 133)

The dressing room scene as depicted in the Conversion of Sundarananda relief, corresponds to one sculptural panel, approximately 0.42% of the total sculptural corpus. The Conversion of Sundarananda relief presents one of the most detailed and symbolically rich depictions of interior palace space in Gandhāran Buddhist art. Central to this composition is a dressing room like structure, occupied by Sundarī, the wife of Prince Sundarananda. This private space carefully constructed through architectural and narrative choices, reflects a gendered domestic environment, contrasting sharply with the renunciatory path Sundarananda is about to take. The dressing room is visually constructed as a self-contained architectural unit, defined by a trapezoidal arch that crowns the central space, giving it a vaulted appearance. The central trapezoidal arch is accompanied by side chambers, probably representing spatial extensions of the room, suggesting privacy and depth.

Corinthian columns supporting both the arch and flanking chambers, highlighting a classical influence fused with indigenous South Asian palace design. Additionally, the saw-tooth cornice, leonine brackets and bead-and-reel frieze decorating the upper architectural registers, enriching the sense of ornamental luxury. This layout is not erratic rather it reflects a deliberate effort by the sculptor to execute a distinct architectural setting, a royal dressing chamber, or *antahpura*, typical of elite women's quarters in ancient palaces (also called harem). The structure communicates female space, designed with privacy, elegance, and social function in mind, reinforcing the distinction between inner (domestic) and outer (public or spiritual) spheres.

The technique of continuous narration in the Buddhist relief panels allow multiple moments of the story to unfold within a unified architectural space. For example, in the panel under discussion, in the left side chamber, Sundarananda is seen carrying a bowl and glancing back, reflecting emotional hesitation. In the right foreground, beyond the architectural threshold, he kneels before the haloed Buddha, who stands calmly in *abhayamudrā*, marking the spiritual pivot of the episode. This interchange between interior domestic space and exterior sacred encounter mirrors the internal transformation of Sundarananda, from worldly attachment to awakening. The trapezoidal arch, Corinthian columns and segmented side chambers of the so-called dressing room offer a glimpse into imagined palace interiors of the time, shaped by Gandhāran aesthetic values.

Taken together, these sequential depictions allow us to reconstruct an imagined interior of Śuddhodana palace, comprising bedchambers, audience halls, private dressing rooms and spaces for ceremonial interaction. While idealised and symbolic in nature, these representations provide a culturally rich vision of royal domestic architecture, embedded in the narrative fabric of Gandhāran Buddhist art.

7.2.2.6 *Royal stables* (plates 134-35)

Plates 134-35 represent two relief panels depicting royal stables, approximately 0.84% of the total reliefs under study. These are scenes related to the birth of Chandaka and Kaṇṭhaka, prince Siddhārtha's loyal groom and favourite horse

respectively. Though rare in Gandhāran sculpture, the depiction of royal stables offers a fascinating window into the domestic infrastructure of the palace and the symbolic role of animals and servants in the life of the Buddha. Both plates 134 and 135 illustrate the birth and early care of Kaṇṭhaka (the horse) and Chandaka (the groom), important figures central to the dramatic event of Siddhārtha's Great Departure.

The space is visually articulated as a stable enclosure with mangers and fodder racks for the mare. Walls pierced by horse heads peering from the background (in both panels), effectively conveying the atmosphere of a royal animal quarters. Bathing tanks, stools and feeding troughs indicate a well-maintained and functional domestic environment. The architectural framing includes Indo-Corinthian pilasters, arched side chambers, and balconies, consistent with the broader palace idiom used in Gandhāran art, blending narrative realism with courtly elegance.

Though limited in number, depictions of royal stables in Buddhist reliefs enrich our understanding of the broader ecosystem of palace life, extending beyond kings, queens and courtiers to include loyal attendants, animals and symbolic birthplaces of future agents of the Buddha's path.

Discourse and analysis on the depiction of secular structures in the Buddhist art of Gandhara and Swat Valley is concluded here. Now we know that secular buildings reflect the social fabric and material conditions of the time. Reliefs in this group show elaborate palatial façades with colonnaded halls, sloping tiled roofs, fortified gates and different scenes of courtly life.

What makes these representations particularly important is that, as noted in Chapter 6, actual archaeological remains of secular architecture are rare in the vales of Swat and Gandhāra. Sites like Barikot Ghwandai identified as the ancient city of Bazira/Vajīrasthāna (Olivieri 2012, 2014; Olivieri 2015), Uḍigrām (Faccena 1964: 17-24), Sirkap and Bhir Mound at Taxila Valley (Marshall 1918, 1951 I-III; Dani 2000), and the Charsadda sites of Bala Hisar and Shaikhan-dheri (Wheeler 1962; Petrie 2013; Dani 1965-6), have yielded limited but critical evidence of domestic and administrative buildings, yet much of what we know about secular architecture

comes from these relief panels. The sculptures thus serve as a visual archive, preserving the memory of architectural forms and social functions that have left little trace in the ground.

7.2.3 *Funerary monuments* (plates 136-38)

Three sculptural panels (Pls. 136-38) represent funerary monuments, approximately 1.27% of our collection. As we know that Buddhist architecture is typically dominated by stūpas and monastic structures, these rare depictions of tombs and graves in relief carvings increase our knowledge about non-stūpa funerary practices, embedded within a Buddhist moral and doctrinal context. Across these three panels, we see a clear architectural variation, for instance, plate 136 shows a brick vault tomb with a round-arched entrance and a domed roof, resembling vernacular burial structures. Plate 137 features a domical tomb with a rectangular doorway and a square-shaped ventilator, a pragmatic architectural addition possibly indicating air circulation. The use of frontal and elevation views mirrors temple and vihāra design conventions.

A cubic tomb structure with a steep arched roof, intricately covered in leaf motifs and topped with a bird figure is displayed in pl. 138. The structured plinth, patterned wall panels and torus moulding show an elevated level of architectural style, merging realistic and symbolic design. These monuments differ significantly from stūpas in form but retain narrative and rituality. While stūpas house relics of the Buddha or eminent monks, these tombs serve as emotional and ethical focal points, often shown alongside the Buddha offering compassion or guidance to grieving or spiritually awakening individuals. Architecturally, these tombs represent non-monastic commemorative architecture. They also reflect Iranian and Central Asian burial styles, showing shared architectural ideas across trade and pilgrimage routes.

7.2.4 *Architectural elements* (plates 139-237)

Approximately 41.8% of the total relief sculptures of our collection (99 out of 237) from Swat and Gandhāra portray architectural elements such as balconies, arches, false gable arches, pillars and pilasters, brackets and decorative motifs. Following

is a comprehensive discussion and critical analysis on each sub-category of the various architectural elements:

a. *Balconies* (plates 139-45)

Balconies are represented in seven relief panels, approximately 2.95% of the total sculptures under study. Balconies, while a small architectural detail, hold great visual and symbolic value in the narrative art of Swat and Gandhāra. They not only represent architectural realism, but also serve as expressive spaces of interaction, spectatorship and symbolic presence. We witness a remarkable diversity in balcony design, each composition adding to our understanding of built environments in the ancient architectural traditions of Uḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra. The balconies vary in form and finish, but all share common structural elements. For instance, the railings were made with vertical bars, crisscross designs or chequered balustrades. The support systems comprised of visible beams, Corinthian pilasters or dwarf columns. Roofs of the balconies varied from flat roofs to voluted arches, often adorned with acanthus leaves, crenellations, or festooned motifs. In several examples, balconies are populated by busts of women or royal figures, creating layered spaces of gaze and presence.

Important details and key variations of the balconies represented in our figures are discussed here briefly: Plate 139 depicts a beautifully carved balcony supported by three Corinthian pilasters, where four female busts look out over a railing. The roof is decorated with acanthus leaves, a hallmark of Gandhāran decor, while a bird perched on the corner adds a naturalistic touch.

Similarly, plate 140 introduces a voluted round arch above the balcony, with rosettes in the spandrels. The figure inside is a bejewelled man holding flowers, may represent a royal or celestial observer. This design blends classical Roman arches with local narrative cues. In contrast, plate 141 opts for simplicity with a flat-roofed balcony, inhabited by two ornately dressed women, both engaged with the scene below, observing a key moment. Plate 142 uses a crisscross railing topped by triangular-shaped crenellations, giving the balcony a fortified, ceremonial

appearance. A flat roof is supported by decorative *cyma reversa* type brackets, while a bejewelled lady holding lotus flowers stands within.

A scene in the Tushita Heaven is depicted in plate 143, where Maitreya Bodhisattva is seated in *abhayamudrā*. Here, the balcony with bars and crossbars above emphasizes celestial spectatorship, reinforcing divine presence and layered storytelling. The balcony in plate 144 is creatively adorned with chequered balustrades and hanging curtains. The repetition of man-woman pairs inside each balcony suggests domestic or royal life, and the textile elements bring the architecture to life, softening the stone's form with visual rhythm. Four elaborately carved balcony compartments are depicted in plate 145, each differing in railing pattern e.g., chequered, barred and triangular grid designs, all draped by hanging textiles. Figures stand behind these balustrades are holding objects or lotus flowers. The variety suggests hierarchical spaces, each balcony marking status or emotional tone.

Though often small in scale, the balconies depicted in the Buddhist art of Swat and Gandhāra serve both narrative and architectural functions. They are more than just architectural ornaments; they are spaces of storytelling, emotion and visual engagement, bridging stone and story, structure and symbolism.

b. Arches (plates 146-61)

Different types of arches are depicted in 16 panels (pls. 146-61), approximately 6.75% of our total figures.

The architectural detailing of arches in the Buddhist reliefs reveals structural diversity, creative aesthetics, and symbolic meaning. The following categories represent distinct typologies used in Buddhist narrative panels.

i. Voluted Carinated Arches (plates 146-53)

These arches feature carinated extrados, ending in spiral volutes from which cone-like or tendril-shaped objects hang. They are often paired with Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns, a stylistic fusion that suggests influences from Achaemenid and Hellenistic traditions.

Plates 146-53 shows arches inhabited by divine figures, Bodhisattvas, Greek deities like Athena and even symbolic motifs such as Bodhi trees and nāgas. Their jambs are highly ornamented bearing pīpal leaf scrolls, palmettes, scales and other vegetal motifs. Architecturally, cross rafters or beams under the soffits enhance the illusion of three-dimensionality and strength. All these features reflect a high degree of architectural knowledge among the artisans.

ii. Voluted round arches (plates 154-56)

Voluted round arches are exhibited in plates 154-56. These arches terminate in volutes and suspend decorative cones or grape bunches. They are often populated with Buddha figures seated in *dhyānamudrā* and are separated by similar Gandhāran-Persepolitan columns as discussed in the previous category. Cross rafters and decorative soffits continue to be common, along with cornices adorned with saw-tooth or leaf-and-dart motifs. In contrast to the carinated version, the voluted round arches suggest a more fluid, softer curvature, possibly indicating interior spaces like meditation halls in monastic establishments.

iii. Simple raised round arches with carinated extrados (plate 175)

Plate 157 shows arches with carinated tops but simpler structural execution. Separated by majestic columns crowned with back-to-back bull capitals, they highlight a transition between the heavier Greco-Iranian forms and more indigenous, streamlined arch concepts. These arches are more functional in appearance, possibly reflecting the architectural language of transitional spaces like gateways or portals within larger complexes.

iv. Voluted raised round arches with carinated extrados (plates 158, 59)

Plates 158, 59 represent an evolved type where the arch is both rounded and carinated, combining strength with ceremonial flair. Garuda or eagle-headed volutes (pl. 159) enhance mythological associations, blending Hindu-Buddhist iconography and architectural grammar. These arches often house seated Buddhas and are decorated with mythical guardians and animal motifs. This suggests that the arches were designed not only for visual grandeur but also to create a sense of

sacred protection, marking the space as spiritually important and symbolically fortified.

v. Voluted trefoil arches (plates 160-61)

Plates 160, 61 display trefoil (three-lobed) arches, a motif perhaps influenced by Kuṣaṇa or Sasanian art. Architecturally, these are complex, with overlapping decorative layers, balconies, chequered balustrades and celestial figures. Such types of arches suggest special ceremonial settings, perhaps used to demarcate upper storey spaces or highly sacred precincts in the narrative. These trefoil forms, particularly with volutes and ornamented bands, mark moments of spiritual elevation or cosmic events, such as Buddha's manifestations.

All categories of the above-mentioned arches are not just structural elements but narrative tools. They organize space, accentuate key religious moments, and reflect the fusion of Indo-Iranian, Hellenistic, and local Gandhāran architectural vocabularies. The use of volutes, carinated extrados and columns shows how Gandhāran sculptors were not only narrating sacred stories but also encoding them in the architectural languages of their time.

c. False gable arches (plates 162-73)

False gable arches are depicted in twelve relief panels (pls. 162-73), account for approximately 5.1% of the total catalogued items. Based on the detailed architectural evidence presented in these plates, we can retrieve and analyse the false gable arches as a distinct and highly stylised element of Buddhist art in the vales of Swat and Gandhāra. False gables, often in the shape of voluted carinated or trefoil arches, served as ornamental frameworks rather than functional architectural forms.

i. Voluted carinated and trefoil forms (plates 162, 165, 169, 170, 173)

The carinated extrados and voluted ends, seen in many examples, reflect an amalgamation of architectural idiom combining Persian Persepolitan, Hellenistic and Indigenous traditions. Hanging cones or pinecones from volutes (pls. 162, 169) and eagle-headed terminals (pls. 171, 173) enhance the protective and decorative

symbolism, referencing celestial guardianship. Scenes such as Māra's attack (pl. 165), miracles at Śrāvastī (pl. 170), and Buddha's meditations (pls. 169, 173) suggest that these arches demarcate zones of intense spiritual transformation or metaphysical significance.

ii. Multi-layered lunettes and tiered narration (plates 165, 172, 173)

False gables arches often accommodate tiered narrative compositions, with lunettes stacked vertically, each housing different events like the worship of relics, miracles or divine interventions (e.g., Nāga Apalāla's surrender in pl. 172). The segmented layout, particularly in pls. 170, 172, and 173, mimics the structure of Buddhist cosmology i.e., lower world (human), middle (divine acts) and upper (relic or transcendental realm).

False gable arches are not just ornamental devices but carefully curated architectural elements that frame, elevate, and sacralise Buddhist narrative episodes. These arches, while architecturally 'false' in function, are true carriers of meaning, embodying the fusion of form, faith and cross-cultural artistry.

d. Columns and pilasters (plates 174-200)

A total of 27 plates (174 to 200), carved with a variety of pillars and pilasters, account for approximately 11.39% of the total corpus of sculptures. These relief panels from the regions of Swat and Gandhāra display a rich and sophisticated vocabulary of columnar and pilaster architecture. These elements do more than support; they define narrative space, denote sacred enclosures, and infuse Hellenistic, Persian and local architectural idioms into South Asian visual traditions. Now we will discuss and analyse different types of these architectural elements as depicted in the relief panels:

i. Free-standing columns (plates 174-76)

Our plates (174-76) exhibit monumental free-standing columns, often worshipped in their own right. These columns are not mere architectural supports but sacred markers, enshrining symbols like the *triratna* sometimes flanked by winged elements (pl. 174) or held by *amorini* or cherubs (pl. 175). They are based on square

pedestals with tapering shafts, often topped with Gandhāran-Persepolitan capitals. The use of addorsed lions or *amorini* and symbols like *triratna* wheels emphasizes the blending of Iranian-Achaemenid, Hellenistic and Buddhist symbology. Sometimes these columns are enclosed within architectural compartments (pl. 176), which mark them central cultic objects, visually and ritually significant.

While Gandhāran-Persepolitan pillars usually appear as free-standing worshipping elements in relief panels, a rare and notable exception was uncovered during the excavation of stūpa no. 163 at Butkara I. This particular example features a broken false gable arch panel, displaying Gandhāran-Corinthian pillar crowned by three wheels and venerated by monks (Faccena 1962: Pl. XVIIb).

ii. *Gandhāran-Persepolitan Columns & Pilasters* (plates 177-87)

Our plates (177-87) reveal the integration of Persepolitan pillars and pilasters, notably adapted from Achaemenid and Hellenistic styles into local Gandhāran architectural schemes. Typically, these pillars and pilasters begin with stepped plinths or pot-shaped bases. Their shafts are round and tapering, with decorative horizontal bands in some instances (pl. 182). The hallmark of these capitals is the elaborate superstructure which is comprised of an inverted bell (often decorated with acanthus leaves e.g., plates 183-84), disc-like elements, bowl shaped element, modillions or stepped brackets, occasionally decorated with saw-tooth or floral motifs. The crowning motifs include addorsed bulls (pls. 183-86), sometimes with lion faces in the center (pl. 185). Sometimes the shaft is replaced by a *caryatid* who is carrying the capital on her head (pl. 187), a possible derivative from Graeco-Roman precedents.

These columns and pilasters serve both architectural and symbolic functions. They are used as separating elements between different scenes or emphasising key scenes, often appearing in courtly, devotional or miraculous contexts. The capitals adorned with bulls, lions, and *triratna* motifs convey a mythic resonance, transforming the columns from mere architectural elements into sacred sculptural symbols.

iii. *Gandhāran-Corinthian Semi-Columns and Pilasters* (plates 188-98)

The Gandhāran-Corinthian columns and pilasters represent a decent architectural style in Buddhist reliefs from Swat and Gandhāra. These blend the classical Graeco-Roman Corinthian order with local aesthetic sensibilities to create a distinctly regional form that unites narrative, ornamentation and symbolic meaning.

Such columns are composed of multiple base structures, e.g., scotia base (pls. 188, 190), that features a concave profile between torus mouldings, creating a dynamic contrast with the upward shaft. Another type is torus base (pls. 189, 192, 194), a rounded convex profile that transitions smoothly into the shaft. Still a more dynamic one is attic moulding (pl. 191), which is classical in form, adding Graeco-Roman elegance. These bases typically sit on high square plinths, grounding the vertical thrust of the column.

The shafts are often round and tapering (pls. 188, 191, 192), some are having square or flat-faced shafts (pls. 189, 190, 196). Ornamentation of the shafts include, crossed bands with beaded or lattice motifs (pls. 191, 192), vertical flute for textural effect (pls. 190, 194). Narrative figures carved into the shaft, such as royal worshippers (pls. 195, 196). Important feature of these pilasters is their elaborately carved Corinthian capitals, composed of two or three tiers of acanthus foliage, the lower tier featuring drooping lobes and the upper often integrating volutes. Some capitals display volute ends transitioning into busts e.g., a female figure holding a reliquary (pl. 197). The Buddha himself, emerging in blessing gesture (pl. 198), revealing the elevation of structural form into sacred iconography.

These pilasters are not merely architectural but iconographic in nature as we know that figural shafts (pls. 195, 196) merge narrative and support structure, embodying the Buddhist ethos within the architectural framework. Capitals adorned with lotuses, rosettes, and busts reflect religious symbolism i.e., purity, divinity and cosmic centrality. Some examples represent corner pilasters with decoration on multiple faces (pl. 196), suggesting placement at transitional architectural zones like gateways or shrine corners. These often serve as narrative anchors as well as boundary markers within the sculptural tableau. Their consistent use across

monastic and narrative settings affirms their central role in visualising the cosmopolitan and devotional spirit of ancient Uḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra.

iv. Gandharan composite pillars (plates 199-200)

We have included only two examples from this category. Even though they make a modest appearance, the Gandhāran composite pillars offer an incredibly rich window into the cultural and artistic fusion that defines Gandhāran Buddhist art. These columns are called ‘composite’ because they blend two iconic architectural traditions i.e., the sturdy, ceremonial base from the ancient Persian Persepolitan style, and the ornate floral crown borrowed from the classical Greek Corinthian order. Together, they are more than just structural device, they are visual expressions of how different worlds came together in ancient Gandhāra.

Plate 199 is a simple standalone pillar, yet elegant. The shaft tapers upward, divided by three clean bands and a neat collar, all carved with precision. Though its base is broken, it likely had the typical Persian style pot base. At the top, a modest Corinthian capital consists of a single tier of curling acanthus leaves, crowned by a flat disc. Plate 200 represents two sacred pillars with a more elaborate and fully integrated version. This panel shows the Buddha seated in his first sermon, the *Dharmachakra*, surrounded by flying beings and Bodhisattvas.

The scene is flanked by two towering composite pillars, with a pot-shaped Persepolitan base, a tapered shaft divided into compartments and a lush double-tier Corinthian capital, with layered acanthus leaves and delicate ridges. The combination of Iranian grandeur, Greek elegance, and Indian sacredness emphasize the cosmopolitan nature of Gandhara art. Architecturally, they are hybrid, rare, refined, and crafted with intent. Symbolically, the pillars serve as bridges between heaven and earth, supporting not just a roof but the spiritual weight of the Buddha's presence. Culturally, they reflect a multilingual visual vocabulary, where Persian, Greek and Indigenous elements were woven together to tell sacred stories in stone.

e. Brackets (plates 201-10)

Different types of brackets depicted in the sculptural reliefs (pls. 201-10), making up 10 panels or 4.22% of our collection. Although often small and easily

overlooked, brackets in the Buddhist architectural reliefs are intricately carved elements that serve both structural and symbolic purposes. These sculpted supports, whether realistic or stylised, are tucked under eaves, cornices and false gables, providing visual rhythm and architectural detail.

Now, we will carry out an in-depth discussion and analysis of these bracket types in the following lines:

i. Voluted bracket supports (plates 201-02)

These brackets reveal the classic double volute design, a scroll-like form borrowed from Ionic and Corinthian traditions. A central groove and socket mechanisms suggest real architectural application or at least symbolic imitation of support. They are simple, functional in form yet carved elaborately, indicating a blend of aesthetic and structural awareness in design.

ii. Cyma Recta type brackets (plate 203)

These are shaped in a graceful S-curve, known as *cyma recta* in classical architecture. The convex top and concave bottom flow seamlessly, exhibiting a sense of movement and elegance. Often used as cornice mouldings, These brackets served both decorative and structural purposes, to frame the scenes and to guide the viewer's eye, adding elegance to architectural transitions. They show how the sculptors of Gandhāra and Swat absorbed Graeco-Roman motifs and reinterpreted them locally.

iii. Cyma Reversa type brackets (plate 204)

A reversed version of the above bracket type, *cyma reversa* brackets present a concave upper curve and convex lower. Carved with central incised grooves, they add subtle decoration beneath mouldings. These brackets are usually carved on roof edges or cornices. They add visual interest and help support parts of the structure that stick out. Their design shows a clear understanding of shapes and balance in stone carving.

iv. Gandhāran-Corinthian pilaster-shaped brackets (plate 205)

These are miniature, bracket-like vertical elements shaped like Corinthian pilasters, complete with fluted shafts and acanthus leaves. Usually carved below the cornices, they imitate full-sized pillars but in reduced scale, showing a playful and artistic reinterpretation of major architectural features for minor support roles.

v. Figured brackets with human forms (plates 206-08)

In this category, the brackets go beyond support, they also tell stories and carry sacred meaning. For instance, plate 206 is a bracket in the form of a standing Buddha, here the bracket becomes a divine pedestal. In another example (pl. 207), the bracket takes the image of Hārītī, a protective goddess, holding her child, reflecting maternal compassion and spiritual guardianship. Plate 208 turns turbaned men into human supports, Atlas-like, holding the symbolic weight of spiritual architecture on their backs while offering lotus flowers. These examples show how Gandhāran artists anthropomorphised support, transforming load-bearing elements into living carriers of narrative and devotional presence.

vi. Figured Brackets with Animal Forms (plates 209-10)

Brackets are also found in zoomorphic form and symbolism. For example, plate 209 is a false bracket in the shape of a tusked elephant, revealing strength and royal dignity. Whereas plate 210 is a lion-shaped bracket, with regal bearing and a protruding tongue, carved with character and naturalism. These animals are not shown randomly. In Buddhist iconography, elephants represent strength, patience and moral virtue. The lions frequently serve as thrones of the Buddha, The emphasizing his sovereignty over the spiritual realm.

f. Decorative Motifs (plates 211-37)

A total of twenty-seven decorative panels, comprising of 11.39 % of our catalogue, reveal a variety of ornamentation. In the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Swat, where nearly every panel is tied to sacred imagery, these motifs were probably chosen not just for embellishments, but to enhance the spiritual tone of the scenes. They may

have echoed the sacred atmosphere, reinforcing the religious importance of the events being depicted.

i. Stepped pyramid motifs (plates 211-13)

Plates 211-13 show stylised ziggurats or stepped pyramids, resembling mastaba or stūpa bases. These are often segmented with horizontal and vertical lines, and sometimes include symbolic figures such as Buddha, monks and lions. The architectural and spiritual function of these forms reflects Buddhist cosmological order, referencing ascent, elevation, or sacred hierarchy (for details, see Bibi 2023).

ii. Geometric decorative motifs (plates 214-17)

Geometric designs, including chequered grids (pl. 217), interlocked triangles or honeycomb patterns (pl. 214) and lozenges with rosettes, appear widely on structural elements. These patterns enhance visual rhythm while communicating stability and harmony. Architectural fragments (pls. 215-16) combine ropes, beads and triangle bands that suggest mathematical order infused into sacred architecture.

iii. Phytomorphic (floral) motifs (pls. 218-28)

Phytomorphic decoration forms the most expressive category. These include, pīpal scrolls (pls. 218, 226-27), signifying enlightenment. Vine scrolls with grapes (pls. 219, 220), representing abundance and spiritual nourishment. Lotus scrolls (pl. 223), symbolises purity and divine rebirth. Acanthus bands and rosettes (pls. 222, 224, 25, 228), Graeco-Roman elements merged seamlessly into Buddhist symbolism. Many relief panels layer these bands in tiers, separated by fillets, forming structured aesthetic compositions.

iv. Composite motifs (pls. 229-37)

Composite motifs demonstrate narrative and symbolic complexity. For example, flame palmettes with birds and *amorini* (pls. 229, 230), suggest a celestial or divine realm. Palmette sprouting from lotus (pl. 231) and stylised palmettes (pls. 232, 233), blend Indian and Hellenistic traditions in sacred expression. Rosette-based patterns (pls. 234-36), alternate with sheaves or lattice designs, used in friezes and cornices for rhythmic beauty. Lanceolate festoons (pl. 237) are arranged with

overlapping leaves, often fastened with ribbons, show the fusion of textile and vegetal motifs.

In conclusion, these motifs were more than just decoration; they were carefully chosen visual tools that reflected both the sacred stories of Buddhism and the rich cultural exchange that shaped Gandhāra and ancient Uḍḍiyāna. At the same time, their forms borrowed freely from Graeco-Roman, Persian and Indian traditions, explain how the Buddhist art of the two regions flourished in a multicultural world

7.3 Foreign influences on the architectural depictions in relief carvings

The Buddhist relief carvings of the Swat Valley reflect a rich blend of foreign influences including Greek, Roman, Persian, Central Asian and Indian. We can trace this remarkable confluence of multiple foreign impacts due to the region's strategic location at the crossroads of ancient trade routes and major civilizations. This cultural intersection gave rise to a distinct architectural style that harmoniously combined local traditions with imported forms, notably seen in columns, brackets, bases, capitals and ornamental friezes. The result is an architectural tradition that is both embedded in Buddhist spirituality and enriched by global artistic exchange. Below is a summary of the foreign influences identified during our study of the various structural and architectural elements depicted in the Buddhist relief carvings of the valley.

7.3.1 Achaemenid Persian influence (sixth to fourth century BCE)

We have already discussed in Chapter 2 of our dissertation that Gandhāra came under the direct control of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia around the mid-sixth century BCE. The impact of Achaemenids' rule is evident in the Buddhist art and architecture of the Swat Valley because of its strategic location and close proximity to Gandhāra. However, there is no textual or archaeological evidence to confirm whether Swat, or Uḍḍiyāna, also came under their suzerainty (Swati 1997a: 154). The Achaemenid rule in Gandhāra ended in 327 BCE with the arrival of Alexander the Great. Though there is no direct evidence of Persian political rule over Swat, artistic and cultural exchanges are evident in the following architectural depictions:

7.3.1.1 *The Persepolitan pillars and pilasters*

The Buddhist art of the Swat Valley represent a unique architectural adaptation of ancient Achaemenid (Persian) models within the sacred Buddhist context. The frequent appearance of the Persepolitan columns and pilasters in the relief carvings across sites such as Butkara I, Butkara III, Nimogram, and Amluk Dara indicates both the popularity and symbolic weight of this foreign-derived element.

The term ‘Persepolitan’ refers to the distinctive Persian imperial style of monumental columns and capitals that developed at Persepolis, notably in the grand halls (like the Apadana). Darius I of Persia commissioned the construction of this unique ritual city during 518 to 516 BCE. The city of Persepolis, also known as Parsa, Parseh, or Takht-e-Jamshid, is situated in the southwestern region of Iran within the vast plain named Marv Dasht. Remarkable characteristics of these pillars include, tall and fluted shafts, resting pot-like bases, crowned by bell-like elements and animal protomes (bulls, lions, griffins), often used to support monumental roofs in audience halls (Apadana). This style filtered into the Swat region via Central Asia, likely through interactions with the Achaemenids, Indo-Greeks, Śakas, and Parthians, who carried Persian architectural elements across the Hindu Kush into the Indian subcontinent.

In the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley, these Persepolitan columns are localised, miniaturised, and sacralised. Their usage in Swat includes, pot-like or kalasha-shaped bases, influenced by both Persian and Indian wooden architecture. Often placed on pyramidal plinths as seen in plates 177, 179 and 180. Their shafts are round and gradually taper as they rise. Sometimes the shafts are decorated with incised horizontal bands or collars (e.g., pl. 182), and in rare cases, they are replaced with human figures, such as *caryatids* as depicted in pl. 187. They have complex capitals combining inverted bell (campaniform), domes or bowls, animal motifs like addorsed bulls or lions (pls. 183-187). In some cases (pls. 174-76), these pillars are crowned by *triratna* symbols or triple wheels, representing Buddhist ideas of the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha).

Persepolitan pilasters and semi-columns are used to frame scenes in friezes, featuring similar structural elements as full columns, base, shaft and capital. In

plates 177 and 179-82, they separate narrative panels and give architectural rhythm to reliefs.

7.3.1.2 Stepped pyramid as a decorative motif

Achaemenid sculptural influences are also evident in decorative motifs like the 'stepped pyramid or stepped merlon', which are frequently incorporated into various architectural elements and often blended harmoniously with traditional Indian railing designs. This motif is a frequent architectural element known for its series of stacked, progressively decreasing tiers or steps. It is commonly used as an embellishment in relief sculptures and sometimes used as an architectural ornamentation.

The stepped pyramid motif, frequently seen in Achaemenid architecture, was probably introduced into Persian artistic vocabulary during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. This decorative element is notably applied to the summits of structures at Susa and Persepolis (Gates 2003: fig. 10.16). One of the most prominent examples is the platform beneath the Apadana, whose outer walls are carved in high relief with tribute-bearing processions representing twenty-three subject nations of the Achaemenid Empire, each distinguishable by their ethnically specific attires. The parapets of these walls are ornamented with a series of stepped pyramids or battlements, often termed 'crenellations' or 'stepped merlons,' regardless of any defensive purpose. These motifs are widely interpreted as symbolic representations of the sacred mountain, a concept deeply embedded in Persian cosmology. Their symbolic resonance extended beyond architecture and appeared in various media, including tombs, altars, ceramics, bronzes, crowns, doorways, and textiles (Nehru 1989: 30, figs. 65, 66).

After a thorough analysis of the stepped pyramid as a decorative motif found in the relief carvings at our disposal, we have identified five main varieties of this motif, which are:

1. Figured-stepped pyramid (pl. 212)
2. Reverse-stepped pyramid (pl. 54)

3. Stepped pyramid as an abstracted version of a three-dimensional ziggurat (pl. 211)
4. Stepped pyramid with Phytomorphic Decoration (pl. 213)
5. Stepped *Harmikā* (pls. 18-20)

For a more detailed discussion on the stepped pyramid decorative motif, please consult the scholarly article derived from this research (Bibi 2023).

Farooq Swati (1997a) is of the opinion that the Persian forms were introduced during the Indo-Greek or Śaka-Parthian periods, when Hellenistic, Central Asian and Persian elements became part of the local artistic traditions. This suggest that Persian artistic traits had seeped into the Swat region through long-standing cultural interactions rather than conquest alone.

7.3.2 Greek or Hellenistic influence (c. 190 BCE-50 BCE)

Greek presence in Swat became significant after Alexander the Great's invasion in 327 BCE and especially with the Bactrian Greeks settling in the region around 130 BCE after being displaced by the Śakas. These Indo-Greeks carried with them the full force of Hellenistic artistic sensibilities. The standing Buddha image, particularly in *abhayamudrā*, was inspired by Greek anthropomorphic traditions (Swati 1997a).

7.3.2.1 Corinthian pillars and pilasters

The Corinthian style of pillars and pilasters originally started in Corinth Greece and was in practice during the Roman era. Double-layered acanthus leaves are used for the capitals, which is called Indo-Corinthian style (Kurita 2003: 322). The Indo-Corinthian pillars and pilasters, usually blend Hellenistic and Indian elements, are frequently depicted in the sculptures of the Swat Valley. They are used either to separate different scenes or served as a frame of a specific episode and rarely depicted individually (see Rahman 2023). Our plates 16-20, 49-53, 188 to 192 depict the Gandhāran- Corinthian (also called Indo-Corinthian) pillars and pilasters.

Corinthian capitals similar to those found in Ai Khanum, a Hellenistic city in Bactria dating to the third century BCE, were also used in Gandhāran architecture,

particularly during the Śaka-Parthian period in the first century BCE and the first century CE. A prime example of this architectural fusion is the stūpa of the double-headed eagle at Sirkap in Taxila, dating to the first century CE. This stūpa reveals a combination of Indian, Parthian and Greek design elements, incorporating Corinthian pilasters, triple architraves, modillions, and ashlar masonry, all of which are rooted in Greek architectural tradition (Woodcock 1966: 47-61, figs. 4-5).

Moreover, the Ionic order based on Greek prototypes appears in the temple at Jandial near Taxila, a site that also exhibits partly Iranian architectural features. Such amalgamations demonstrate the extent to which Gandhāran architecture accommodated and localised Hellenistic and Roman classical forms, thereby creating a unique Buddhist visual culture that transcended geographic and stylistic boundaries (Marshall 1960: 100-108).

7.3.2.2 *Acanthus leaves decorative motifs*

Apart from appearing in the capitals of Indo-Corinthian pilasters, acanthus leaves were also used in different architectural motifs and friezes in the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley. We know that the acanthus plant is native to the Mediterranean world and thus a foreign element which was used in Greek architecture around fifth century BCE. Like the Greeks, the Romans also used the acanthus leaves in their architectural decoration. In the present collection, plates 4, 11, 17, 83, 95-96, 108 and 121 show acanthus leaves decoration mostly in cornices and base mouldings. Plate 5 has a stūpa emerging from an acanthus leaves base while plate 8 shows acanthus leaves decoration on the stūpa's drum. *Chattra* (pl. 62) and spacer (pl. 64) decorated with acanthus leaves can also be seen in our collection. Sometimes the roofs of double-domed vihāras are embellished with acanthus leaves (pls. 78-79, 81, 87). Buddha seated on a throne of double-layered acanthus leaves is gracefully depicted in pl. 85. Surface of a hut (pl. 97) and roof of a balcony (pl. 139) are also treated with acanthus leaves. Close observation of these motifs reveals that acanthus leaves do not look like real leaves, rather stylised, with simplified lines and graceful curves.

Decorative motifs like bead-and-reel (pls. 77, 82, 83, 133, 173, 192, 218, 220), leaf-and-dart (pls. 51, 120, 126, 145, 149, 150, 152, 194), honeysuckle or palmette motif (pls. 88, 146-147, 149, 151, 165, 167-169, 181, 213, 222, 229, 231-233) and vine scrolls (pls. 15, 169, 220) are few of the many Hellenistic Ornamental motifs found in the Buddhist relief carvings of the valley.

We have also observed some Greek deities like Athena in the relief carvings from the Swat Valley. Plate 146 of our collection depicts the Greek goddess Athena, standing under an arch, holding a spear against her right shoulder in her right hand and a large shield over her left arm (Swati 1997a: 43, pl. 22). In another example, a stepped *harmikā* (pl. 55) portrays scenes of Dionysian festivities. The incorporation of Greek mythological iconography into Buddhist visual culture serves as compelling evidence of cultural diffusion from the West.

7.3.3 *Roman Influences*

The Roman impact on the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley cannot be ignored. During the rule of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, diplomatic and commercial ties with the Roman Empire were frequent. In Uḍḍiyāna, we find a remarkable blending of cultural influences, where a fair number of motifs from distant lands were gracefully woven into the local artistic traditions. Although motifs often travelled widely and their exact origins are sometimes difficult to trace, certain elements in the art of this region strongly reflect Roman artistic traditions. One of the most intriguing examples of this is the appearance of *amorini* (sing. *amorino*), which are small, winged, often nude male figures similar to the Cupids or Erotes of classical Greek and Roman mythology. Cupid was the god of love in classical Greek and Roman mythology (for comparison, see Swati 1997a: 46, Pl.31).

While *amorini* have no roots in Buddhist religious texts or iconography, their presence in the Buddhist reliefs speaks volumes about the valley's role as a cultural crossroads. The development and diffusion of these cherubic figures (*putti* or *amorini*) holding or carrying garlands, is a motif that originated in Hellenistic art and gained widespread popularity in the Roman world. *Putti* (sing. *Putto*) holding garlands, commonly found the Hellenistic ceramic vessels, sarcophagi, altars and

friezes, often associated with funerary contexts and Dionysian themes. The motif reached its climax during the Roman Imperial Period, where it adorned monuments, temples and tombs. It was particularly popular on funerary altars and sarcophagi, where the garland symbolised honour, offering and continuity of life, and the putti were symbolic carriers of blessings or sacred joy. For example, The Mausoleum of the Julii at Glanum, shows putti carrying a garland on a square podium base (Bromberg 1988; Bente Kiilerich 1988).

In the relief carvings of Swat and Gandhāra, these figures are typically found in decorative contexts, e.g., supporting arches (pls. 82-83, 172), holding garlands on the stūpa drums (pls. 34-36, 222), standing on water pots (pl. 103), attached as brackets to the columns (pl. 175), or attached to stūpa elements like the *nāgadanta* (ornamental pegs) used to hang garlands (see Bibi 2020: pl. 106). In some carvings, they are even found perched elegantly on Corinthian capitals, or nestled among floral scrolls and acanthus leaves, bringing a lightness and charm to otherwise solemn religious spaces (For garland-bearer *amorini* see Swati 1997d, 2008 and Rahman 1995). In this way, *amorini* remind us not only of the skilled sculptors of Uḍḍiyāna but also of their openness to foreign imagery which they absorbed, transformed and placed gently within the folds of a distinctly Buddhist vision.

The chequered grid motif found in the Buddhist relief carvings of ancient Uḍḍiyāna as well as Gandhāra is evidence of another foreign idea that was absorbed and reimagined by local artisans. This geometric design, made up of alternating relief squares in a grid-like pattern, closely resembles decorative features commonly seen in Roman art and architecture, such as mosaic floors and wall panels. But in Swat, this motif wasn't just imitated, it was adapted. Instead of being used for floors or tiles, as it often was in Roman settings, the chequered grid became a part of the sculptural and architectural vocabulary of Buddhist monuments. Sometimes this chequered grid pattern is used on the Stūpa's drum (pls. 12, 21, 25, 30, 40), in the decoration of a *harmikā* (pl. 54), balconies with chequered grid pattern balustrade (pls. 112, 127, 144-145, 161, 171) and decorative bands (pl. 217).

7.3.4 *Central Asian impacts*

The Buddhist art and architecture of ancient Uḍḍiyāna display a confluence of multiple cultural streams, with Central Asian impacts playing a critical and transformative role. The strategic location of the valley along the ancient Silk Road, the primary corridor of trade, pilgrimage and cultural exchange, facilitated contacts between South Asia and the vast steppe and highland regions of Central Asia. This gave rise to a complex visual culture where local, Indian and foreign traditions intermingled.

Central Asian contacts began intensifying around the first century BCE to the second century CE, coinciding with the movements of the Śakas (Scythians) and Kuṣaṇa migrations from Bactria. These groups brought with them Central Asian nomadic traditions as well as Persian, Hellenistic and Graeco-Bactrian art forms which had already fused in regions like Bactria and Sogdiana. The Kuṣaṇa dynasty, in particular, became a dominant political force in the region. They established their capital in Purushapura (modern Peshawar) and encouraged Buddhist patronage across the region including the Swat Valley.

7.3.4.1 *Artistic reflections of Central Asian influence*

Central Asian influence is visible in the architectural ornamentation, figure types and iconographic motifs. For instance, facial features of the figures, their attire, long boots, headdresses, thick belts and jewellery are strongly influenced by Central Asian traits. Apart from these, we have also observed some influences on the architecture depicted in the Buddhist relief carvings:

7.3.4.2 *Tomb architecture*

The tomb or grave like structures depicted in plates 136-38, strongly reflect Central Asian and Iranian funerary traditions. They represent a non-monastic, commemorative form of architecture that carries deep cultural resonance. Their design features, such as stepped bases and cubic hut like structure (as in pl. 138), and domed superstructures (pls. 137-36), mirror the architectural grandeur found in Central Asian and Iranian tomb architecture, particularly from regions like Bactria, Sogdiana and Parthia. These stylistic borrowings suggest that the builders

and patrons of these monuments were familiar with, and perhaps directly influenced by, the funerary practices of those distant regions. This connection is no coincidence. Swat lay at the heart of transregional networks of trade, conquest and pilgrimage, linking South Asia with the cultures of the Iranian plateau and Central Asia. As caravans and pilgrims moved through this vital corridor, they brought not only goods and stories but also artistic ideas and building techniques. The Buddhist sculptors and architects of Swat absorbed these foreign forms and integrated them into their own architecture.

7.3.4.3 *Architectural elements*

Composite friezes and votive elements, e.g., decorative motifs like stepped merlons (already discussed under Achaemenid influence), lion-headed protomes (pl. 5), and flame-palmette scrolls (already discussed under Hellenistic influence), combined with mythological or divine figures, reflect a Persian-Central Asian adaptation merged into Buddhist cosmology. The use of figural brackets (pls. 206-10), elaborate niches (pls. 162-73), rounded Stūpa drums (pls. 34-42), and dynamic scrolls (pls. 218-26) reflect nomadic and Central Asian aesthetics. Central Asian impact is also seen in stūpa platforms, where multi-tiered terraces echo Zoroastrian fire altars and step-based mountain shrines (pl. 33), as noted by Kurita (2003) and Filigenzi (2015). The use of Persian-style column bases and capital styles, e.g., Persepolitan-type and Ionic influences (already discussed under Achaemenid influence), were transported through Central Asia and transformed in Uḍḍiyāna.

7.3.5 *Indian influence (Mauryan to later Indian dynasties)*

From as early as the Mauryan Empire under Aśoka (third century BCE), Swat came under sustained Indian Buddhist influence. Architectural forms such as stūpas, *caityas*, fence-like railing (*vedikā*) and *torāṇas* (pls. 105-06, 115) reflect Indian prototypes, particularly those from Barābar Hills, Bhārhut, Bhājā, and Kārli. The use of *kalasha* (pot-shaped) column bases, derived from Indian wooden architecture, is consistently depicted. Indian influence remained strong throughout, even as foreign styles fused into the regional Swati Style.

7.3.5.1 Fence-like railing or *vedikā* (pls. 1, 3, 10, 24, 29, 41, 113, 139-143, 145)

The fence-like railing, commonly known by its Sanskrit term '*vedikā*', is a significant architectural and symbolic feature in early Buddhist art and architecture, particularly in the stūpa tradition of ancient India. It physically and symbolically separated the sacred space of the stūpa from the mundane world. It guided devotees in circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇāpatha*) around the stūpa. It also provided space for sculpted *Jātaka* stories, floral motifs and donor inscriptions. The fully sculptured limestone railing that surrounded the stūpa of Amravati is one of the best examples of surviving Indian railing design (Shimada 2006: fig. 2).

The *vedikā* originated from wooden railings that once surrounded sacred trees or objects, later reproduced in stone as Buddhist monuments evolved. Later on, this feature was incorporated in the Buddhist art and architecture of Gandhara and the Swat Valley.

Although we have no excellent example of railing (*vedikā*) in the architectural remains of Swat or elsewhere in Gandhara (except fragments recovered from Butkara I and Manikyala stūpa), their symbolic and aesthetic presence is vividly preserved in relief carvings. Railing motifs (*vedikās*) often appear as symbolic enclosures in relief carvings, especially around stūpa drums, to mark sacred space. These are typically stylised as, false railings around stūpas (pls. 1, 3, 10, 24, 29, 41) or on architectural panels, balustrades or fence-like forms rendered in profile. These stylised *vedikās* often include upright posts, crossbars, and medallions, reflecting an idealised sacred enclosure.

Beyond sacred settings, railing motifs also appear in representations of secular architecture within the reliefs, such as balconies (pls. 113, 139-43, 145) window screens, or terraces. This suggests that while the *vedikā* originated as a ritual boundary in Buddhist religious architecture, it was also adapted into more functional or decorative elements in everyday architectural depictions, blending sacred symbolism with representations of lived space.

In the relief panels, the *vedikā* is comprised of square or rounded pillars (*stambhas*) with capitals showing lotus, animal, or sometimes human motifs. Crossbars (*sūcīs*)

that connect the uprights, often carved with rosettes, geometric patterns or symbolic motifs like the *triratna*. Medallions on the railings, echoing designs seen in Bharhut and Sānchī but adapted with local materials and themes. The railing design in the Buddhist reliefs of the Swat Valley shows Indian roots, but also reflects Persian and Central Asian decorative adaptations. For example, the use of stepped battlements, rosettes and stylised flames aligns with Achaemenid art seen in Persepolis and Susa (pl. 211). We believe that the *vedikā* reliefs from Swat exhibit not only ritual and narrative functions but also reflect a deep cultural assimilation of foreign forms.

7.3.5.2 *Indian toraṇa style gateways* (pls. 105-06, 115)

We have noticed in the relief carvings under study that *torāṇa* style gateways were borrowed from Indian architecture and integrated into the Buddhist art of ancient Uḍḍiyāna. The gateways often depict bent architraves or lintels, forming the distinctive three-bar *torāṇa* structure seen in ancient Indian Stūpas like Sānchī (Marshall 1955) and Bharhut (Cunningham 1879; Guyton 2003). These architraves are often curved or voluted, lending dynamism and sacred framing to the scenes. The doorjambs are elaborately carved, typically with alternating horizontal bars and rosettes or fully bloomed lotuses, another hallmark of Indian decorative vocabulary. Use of beaded patterns and petalled rosettes on jambs and lintels reflect a high degree of ornamental sophistication influenced by Indian Mauryan and post-Mauryan architecture. Such decorative stylisations also mirror railing patterns found in Bharhut and Sānchī, where gateways were more than just entries, they were symbolic thresholds into sacred space.

These *torāṇa*-style gateways often appear in narrative scenes such as the Great Departure of prince Siddhārtha (pl. 115), or symbolic episodes involving city entries and exits. Their placement marks liminal transitions between sacred and secular domains, a notion central to Indian architectural philosophy. The reliefs not only depict Indian gateways but also integrate them into fortified cityscapes with crenellated walls, arrow slits and watch towers, revealing a fusion between Indian *torāṇa* symbolism and local or Central Asian fortified architectural styles.

The *torāṇa* design have clear parallels in early Indian Buddhist sites such as, the third century BCE Lomas Rishi cave entrance (Huntington 1984), the second century BCE Bhārhut Stūpa railings, Bhājā caves and Kārli *caitya* halls (Mitra 1971: 92-96, 151-55).

7.3.5.3 *Imitation of rock-cut caitya halls and caitya entrances in the relief carvings*

The word *caitya* originates from the Sanskrit term *chita*, meaning the mound of ashes formed after cremation. Initially referring to a funeral mound, *caitya* evolved to mean a sacred place of worship for Buddhists. Over time, it denoted both the reliquary stūpa and the prayer hall (*caitya-gr̥ha*) that houses it. A *caitya-gr̥ha* (or *caitya* hall) is a prayer or assembly hall built around a stūpa, often apsidal (semi-circular) in plan. Early *caityas* were rock cut, carved into cliffs, resembling cave temples. Approximately 1200 plus *caitya* caves have been found across India, with Ajaṇṭā and Ellora being the most prominent (Singh 1965, Mitra 1971: 175-88, 1996; Kail 1975: 80-92). These structures often had columns and arches, showing similarity to Roman architectural features.

The imitation of rock-cut *caitya* halls and *caitya* entrances in the structural and sculptural findings of ancient Uḍḍiyāna highlights strong architectural and religious connections between early Buddhist developments in the Swat Valley and the Indian heartland. It is assumed that the architectural and artistic heritage of early Buddhist India directly shaped the development of Buddhist monastic sites in Swat. Butkāra III, in particular, stands out as a spiritually and architecturally significant transplant of Indian *caitya* design. The stūpa-shrines at Butkāra III (Rahman 1993; Khan, G.R 2015), preserved under thick colluvial deposits, are described as among the earliest Buddhist religious establishments in Swat. Their architectural layout, including rock-hewn shrines cut into a mountain cliff, clearly imitates the rock-cut *caitya* halls of western India (like those at Bhājā, Kārli and Nasik. For details see Mitra 1977). The influence of Indian architectural traditions extended well beyond Butkāra III, shaping additional monumental religious complexes in the region. Notably, the vihara of Balo Kalay Gumbat and the Apsidal Temple at Birkot

Ghwandai also reflect the impact of Indian *caitya*-hall architecture (for details see chapter 6 of the current dissertation).

A relief carving from Butkara I (pl. 87), represents a stūpa inside a vihāra or double-domed shrine (Faccenna 1962: II.2, 39, pl. CXXXIX). This relief provides powerful evidence of Indian architectural influence, particularly the *caitya*-hall tradition. The enclosed stūpa format closely parallels rock-cut *caityas* of Western India (e.g., Bhājā, Kārī), where the stūpa was placed inside an apsidal shrine for circumambulation. This stylistic imitation strongly indicates that Buddhist monks from India were directly involved in planning and construction of these spaces, bringing with them established monastic and architectural traditions. This also underscores the role of Swat as a gateway for the transmission of Indian Buddhism into Central Asia, serving both as a place of settlement and as a staging ground for missionary activity.

The depiction of Indian style *caitya* entrances carved in reliefs offers compelling evidence of both stylistic and symbolic transmission from the Indian architectural tradition to the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley (Swati 1997a: pls. 2-3). These arches are typically horseshoe or semi-circular in shape, appear frequently in our sculptural corpus, especially in plates 146-62. Usually, these arches are shown with standing or seated figures under them. For example, donors, devotees, Buddha, Bodhisattva, Greek deities like Athena, Dionysos and *Amorini*, are depicted standing under these arches. The door jambs are usually decorated with floral scrolls, rosettes, lotus buds and geometric patterns, echoing the motifs seen on Indian *caitya* halls of the Mauryan and post-Mauryan periods. Furthermore, these arches are frequently paired with Persepolitan or Indo-Corinthian columns, highlighting a rich cross-cultural synthesis. While the arch form and religious symbolism derive from Indian *caitya* architecture, the structural framing elements like columns and capitals reflect Graeco-Roman and Achaemenid Persian traits, indicating that the artisans in Swat were not only inheriting traditions but transforming them.

7.3.5.4 *Depiction of Indian style stūpas*

We have an exquisitely carved Indian style model stūpa, with hemispherical dome and railing design and *caitya*-style *torāṇas* on four sides in our collection. The model stūpa, now housed in the Peshawar Museum and originally donated by the Guides Mess, Mardan, displays a touching example of how artistic ideas travelled, transformed, and took root in the Swat Valley. Though its provenance is uncertain, the design of the stūpa, having hemispherical dome and gateways facing all four directions, echoes the Indian stūpa tradition, especially the iconic stūpa at Sānchī. This style, where gateways (*torāṇas*) frame the stūpa like open arms welcoming devotees from every direction, symbolised the spread of the Buddha's teachings across the world.

In the Swat Valley, these ideas weren't simply copied, they were embraced and reimagined. Places like Butkāra I show clear signs of this influence, the Great Stūpa 3 (figs.) exhibits a distinctive circular plan with four stairways at the cardinal points and a railing around the first level. Though the upper drum and dome are damaged, its layout stands distinct from the more common square bases of later Buddhist architecture. The design reflects early Indian stūpa traditions, while also representing local adaptation and architectural evolution, characteristic of the Swat Valley's dynamic cultural exchange (Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: 135-36, 539; for more details see chapter 6 of the current dissertations).

7.3.5.5 *Indian decorative motifs*

The lotus and Bodhi tree (*pīpal*) are sacred symbols that appear throughout the Buddhist art of Swat and Gandhāra. Though originated on Indian soil, artists in Uḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra used the two motifs not just in religious scenes, but also to decorate architecture. Although the lotus is frequently appearing as the divine seat of the Buddha and Bodhisattva, or as a motif adorning headdresses of the figures, its significance goes far beyond symbolic ornamentation. In the Buddhist art of ancient Uḍḍiyāna, it also served as a key architectural motif. Likewise, the Bodhi tree (*pīpal*), revered as the place of Siddhārtha's enlightenment, is not only portrayed as an object of veneration but also reimagined into elegant vegetal scrolls that embellished sacred spaces.

Both motifs were skillfully adapted by the sculptors of Swat and Gandhara to infuse Buddhist architecture with sacred symbolism. A striking example of the Bodhi tree's sacred status appears in a relief from the site of Marjanai (acc. no. MJN 031), now housed in the University Museum. In this scene, the Bodhi tree is enshrined within a voluted *caitya* arch and flanked by Indo-Persepolitan columns. On the right, under another arch in the same panel, a figure of Buddha is standing in *abhayamudrā* (Khan 2005: pl. 19b).

Architecturally, the lotus takes on a more ornamental role in panels and friezes. For instance, plate 223 presents a full-blown multi-petalled lotus scroll used to decorate a stūpa drum, supported by a horizontal band of lotus buds. Similarly, the architectural panel from Butkara III (pl. 220) exhibits lotus flowers embedded within a vine scroll, sharing space with Indian and Graeco-Roman elements, such as bead-and-reel borders and acanthus leaves, reflecting a rich stylistic fusion. Full-blown lotuses were intricately carved on alternate (pl. 52) or all four faces (pl. 53) of the *harmikā* discovered at Butkara III, transforming these structural elements into vessels of symbolic beauty and spiritual meaning.

The pīpal leaf motif appears not only as a standalone decorative element but also in harmonious combination with other vegetal and geometric designs. In many relief carvings, the *pīpal* leaf is shown as part of elegant scrolls, either flowing on their own or woven together with grapevines, lotuses and other patterns. For instance, in plate 226, the motif appears as a classic *pīpal* scroll, while plate 227 shows intricately intertwined *pīpal* branches forming a complex pattern. A striking example (pl. 231) shows a flame-shaped palmette growing from a lotus base, with pīpal scrolls curling out from each side. Another relief from Saidu Sharif (pl. 218) places a row of pīpal leaves alongside grape and lotus designs in a single panel.

These examples confirm that Indian religious floral imagery was not only preserved in the Buddhist art of Swat but was deeply woven into its architectural imagination.

7.4 Tracing legacy of the Buddhist architectural features in the built heritage of Swat Valley

While Buddhism declined in the region after the seventh century CE, the architectural traditions that evolved during the Buddhist period did not vanish. Many features such as trefoil arches, bracketed columns, floral friezes, and stepped plinths persisted in vernacular and monumental architecture, revealing a remarkable degree of stylistic endurance and reinterpretation. Elements such as corbelled arches, lotus bases, domical superstructures and bracketed projections re-emerged in later Hindu Shahi temples and persisted through Islamic periods in modified forms.

The cultural legacy illustrated in the Buddhist art of the Swat Valley, provide a remarkable window into the continuity and transformation of local traditions across centuries. This legacy, reflected in both visual art and everyday objects, can be seen evolving through different periods of history, from the time of the Hindu Shahis and Islamic rule to the era of the Swat Princely State.

Buddhist reliefs from Swat are rich not only in religious symbolism but also in depictions of the lived realities of the time. These artworks portray clothing styles, jewellery, hairstyles, domestic utensils, musical instruments, furniture and objects related to daily household chores. Many of these elements, though transformed in form and function, have endured through the centuries. Today, one may still observe traces of these traditions in the attire, decorative arts, and rituals of the contemporary communities of Swat, pointing to a living heritage, entrenched in its Buddhist past.

Among the most profound and lasting contributions of the Buddhist art of the valley, however, is its architectural lexicon. The reliefs illustrate a range of structures, sacred (stūpas, vihāras and temples), secular (residential, royal and military buildings), and utilitarian or supportive (balconies, railings, pillars and columns, decorative motifs), that display a high degree of technical and aesthetic refinement. These architectural forms did not disappear with the decline of Buddhism in the region; rather, they evolved and were reinterpreted in succeeding cultural and political contexts.

Military architecture, for example, underwent significant transformation under the Hindu Shahi rulers and later Islamic dynasties. Fortresses, ramparts, bastions and watchtowers found in later periods often carry structural and decorative motifs that bear a striking resemblance to their Buddhist precursors (figures 20a-b, 21a-b). With the advent of Muslim rule, and later under the Walis of Swat, these architectural forms were further adapted, giving rise to a hybrid tradition that amalgamated pre-Islamic, Islamic, and European elements. Under the rule of Walis of Swat, around eighty forts existed, each with telephone access and a scribe responsible for daily reporting (fig. 22). The forts functioned not only as military outposts but also as residences for officers and their families (Martore and Olivieri 2016: 2, fig. 9).



Fig. 20a. Watchtower of the Hindu Shahi period at Gunyar, Malakand Agency (After Ijaz khan 2017: fig. 5.2)



Fig. 20b. Relief depicting watchtower with crenellated wall and toraṇa style gateway (pl. 106 of our catalogue).



Fig. 21a. Semi-circular Bastion attached to an enclosed chamber, Lower Dir (after Ijaz Khan 2017: fig. 5.5.)



Fig. 21b. City gate with bastions (Fig. 104 of our catalogue).



Fig. 22. Kotah Fort (1933) (after Martore and Olivieri 2016: fig. 9)

Religious architecture too shows a continuity of form and design. Elements such as domes, arches, niches, and columned halls found in Buddhist monasteries and stūpas reappear, often recontextualized, in Hindu temples and Muslim mosques. Decorative schemes, such as floral motifs, faunal representations and geometric patterns, persist as well, reflecting a shared sense of style and beauty that crosses religious boundaries.

The wooden architectural heritage of Swat (17th-20th Century CE), particularly in the lower and upper regions, is notable for its intaglio decoration and cultural significance. This tradition is most prominently seen in mosques and sanctuaries, with a few examples of secular architecture. The typical layout included both winter mosques (enclosed spaces for cold seasons) and summer mosques (open or porticoed structures), while in mountainous areas, mosques often featured an L-shaped layout with verandas. These buildings are richly adorned with carvings that reflect influences from Gandharan sculpture, Indian Islamic design, Central Asian elements and Dardic and Kafir folk traditions (see figs. 23a, 24a, 25a, 29, 30, 32, 33). Despite their historical and artistic value, much of this architectural heritage is now endangered due to rapid socio-economic changes, with many original structures being replaced by modern, anonymous buildings.



Fig. 23a. Wooden door frame on display at Swat Museum.



Fig. 23b. Panel depicting recessed door frames (pl. 110 of our catalogue).



Fig. 24a. Wooden carved double leaf doorway on display at Swat Museum.



Fig. 24b. Panel depicting the city gate of Kuśinagara with double-leaf doorway (pl. 101 of our catalogue).



Fig. 25a. Wooden capital and pillar from a mosque, (acc. no. 1787, gallery 9.1, Swat Museum).



Fig. 25b. Indo-Persepolitan pillars (pl. 147 of our catalogue).



Fig. 25c. Indo-Persepolitan pillars (pl. 158 of our catalogue).



Fig. 26a. Pillars decorated with triratna-shaped capitals. (Kolai Palas Fort, lower Kohistan)



Fig. 26b. Free standing Persepolitan column with triratna design (pl. 176 of our catalogue)

The most compelling evidence of this architectural continuity is found in the medium of ornamentation. The shift from wood and mud brick construction during the Vedic and pre-Buddhist periods to stone in the Buddhist era marks a significant technological and material transition. Yet, even as Buddhist sculptors carved

wooden architectural traditions into enduring stone reliefs, the motifs and styles they preserved would eventually return to wood.

Today in Swat, local woodcarvers are mastered in both floral and geometrical designs, many of which still decorate household furniture and buildings across the region. The availability of quality woods, like deodar, kail, walnut, and pine, played a crucial role in sustaining this tradition. The traditional wooden furniture in Swat is adorned with motifs strikingly similar to those seen in ancient stone carvings. This shows the return and transformation of earlier architectural forms (figs. 27, 28). This journey, from wood to stone and back to wood, now complemented by modern materials like brick and cement, shows how flexible and lasting the region's architectural traditions.



Fig. 27. Wooden sofa with intricate carved floral motifs (domestic use, upper Swat).



Fig. 28. Bed crown, displaying floral motifs, acanthus leaves, vine petals and rosettes (domestic use).



Fig. 29. Wooden capital from a mosque (acc. no. 1797, gallery 9.2, Swat Museum).



Fig. 30. Wooden capital from a mosque (acc. no. 1796, gallery 9.2, Swat Museum).



Fig. 31. Chest, locally known as Tawnrai (acc. no. 1786, gallery 9.1, Swat Museum).



Fig. 32. Wooden capital and pillar at Loye Jumaat (big mosque), Khwazakhela, Swat.



Fig. 33. Wooden capital and pillar at Loye Jumaat (big mosque), Khwazakhela, Swat.

Thus, the Buddhist artistic and architectural heritage of the Swat Valley is not merely a relic of the past, but a dynamic thread woven through the fabric of successive civilizations. From the stone-carved relics of Gandhara to the forts of the Hindu Shahis, the domed mosques of the Muslim period, and the administrative buildings constructed during the period of Princely state of Swat, a shared architectural language continues to evolve. Each era introduced new elements and stylistic innovations, yet consistently built upon the foundations laid in the Buddhist period. This layered history is manifested in the region's cultural landscape to this day, revealing a rich, ongoing dialogue between past and present.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the architectural depictions in Buddhist reliefs from the Swat Valley, focusing on their types, styles and cultural influences. The reliefs portray a wide range of buildings including sacred, secular and military. These structures were carved not just as symbols, but as reflections of real construction practices, originally based on wooden forms later translated into stone. The designs clearly show a synthesis of diverse cultural elements, blending Graeco-Roman, Persian, Central Asian and Indian styles. These forms did not vanish altogether with the decline of Buddhism. They evolved and persisted through later Hindu Shahi, Islamic and Swat State periods. Even today, traditional wood carvings on doors and furniture echo ancient Buddhist motifs. The shift from wood to stone and back again, now mixed with modern materials, shows how resilient and adaptable the region's architectural heritage is. These long-lasting forms still shape the valley's built environment, carrying forward a living cultural tradition.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

This research aimed to explore and reconstruct the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley, focusing on the period when Buddhism flourished in the region, roughly from the third century BCE to the seventh century CE. The study was based on the careful analysis of Buddhist relief carvings, which comprised of visual depictions of sacred, secular, funerary and supportive structures. These carvings were more than just decorative; they captured key details of the architectural world as it existed centuries ago.

To support this analysis, data were acquired from various museums in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and from international collections of Gandhāran art accessed through online platforms. A wide range of relief panels from these collections made it possible to conduct a comprehensive study of architectural styles and decorative motifs.

In chapter 4 of our dissertation, efforts were made to explore architectural evidence as documented in various textual and inscriptional records. Chapter 5 was dedicated to the classification and documentation of architectural data sourced from various collections. The data in hand were sifted and categorized based on their subject matter and architectural representation. Whereas in chapter 6, we conducted systematic comparison between the Buddhist monuments of the valley and their representations in the Buddhist relief panels. Chapter 7 provided a detailed discussion and comparison that helped reconstruct the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley, using Buddhist relief carvings as a primary source. The analysis revealed clear foreign impacts blended with local architectural styles. It also traced continuity of these architectural traditions through successive periods, extending into the modern era, highlighting the enduring legacy of Swat's architectural heritage.

By bringing together visual evidence from reliefs, structural remains, as well as written and inscriptional records, this research aimed to reconstruct a clearer picture of how architecture developed in ancient Uḍḍiyāna. It has also shed light

on how these structures were built, the meanings they carried, and how their legacy continues to shape the cultural and architectural identity of the region today.

We have now reached the point to conclude the present research, where we present some final thoughts and closing remarks on the findings of our study.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study was undertaken to fill a significant research gap, as no in-depth analysis had previously focused on the architectural details depicted in the Buddhist reliefs of the Swat Valley. At the beginning of this research, certain key questions were raised. We have tried to answer them through detailed analysis and a systematic approach. Now, we will address these questions one by one based on the findings of our study.

8.1 Questions / Problems

Q.1. What were the ancient architectural traditions of the Swat Valley?

In ancient Uḍḍiyāna, the society appears to have been highly stratified, with distinct monastic, royal and civic spheres playing integral roles in shaping the region's cultural and architectural environment. This stratification is evident in both textual and epigraphic sources as well as the material culture including architectural remains and Buddhist relief carvings.

a. Religious community and associated architecture

The monastic elite (*saṅgha*), composed of monks, nuns, patrons and possibly ritual specialists were central to the development and maintenance of sacred architecture such as stūpas, monasteries (*vihāras*), temples and shrines. These structures often occupied prominent positions in the society and were richly adorned due to royal patronage and the high social status of monastic institutions. The careful and accurate depiction of sacred architecture in the reliefs further implies the authority and reverence commanded by the religious class.

The reliefs carved in stone, often adorning monasteries and stūpas, illustrate a wide range of sacred structures and reflect the spiritual and architectural heritage of ancient Uḍḍiyāna. During our study, we have identified three principal categories of sacred architecture represented in the relief carvings of the Swat Valley: stūpas,

vihāras and temples. Each category includes further subcategories and architectural variants, reflecting both functional diversity and evolving stylistic practices.

Among these, the stūpa emerges as the most prominent structure, depicted in a variety of complex forms. In some reliefs, stūpas are flanked by free-standing columns placed outside the podium (Pls. 1, 3), while others show columns rising directly from the podium (Pls. 2, 4-8), possibly indicating ceremonial or symbolic significance. Several examples feature central staircases, placed at the front (Pls. 10, 15). Some stupas bear false niches in front (Pls. 6, 8, 20, 23) or oriented towards the four cardinal directions (Pls. 5, 24), enabling ritual circumambulation from multiple entry points. Majority of the stupas are profusely ornamented from base to top (Pls. 5, 9, 15, 18-22) while others are less decorated (Pls. 1-4, 7, 12, 16) or completely devoid of any decoration (Pls. 13, 17). In several instances, stone railings (*vedikās*) are shown enclosing stūpa (Pls. 1-3, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 24, 28, 29), further demarcating sacred space and guiding ritual practice. The stūpa types also included stupa models (Pls. 18-26) and reliquaries designed in the shape of a stupa (Pls. 27-32), which represent miniaturized sacred forms used for devotional, commemorative or ritual purposes. In addition, we have also examined individual components of the stūpa, from the base to the pinnacle, including fragmented elements of miniature or model stūpas (Pls. 33-68).

The variety of stūpa forms, along with smaller versions like model stūpas and reliquaries, shows how important and flexible the stūpa was in the sacred architecture of ancient Uḍḍiyāna. Furthermore, in Chapter 6, we compared the stūpas shown in the reliefs with the surviving ruined stūpas in the valley to better understand how they relate to actual architectural structures. Through this comparative study, it becomes clearer that the reliefs were not just works of art, they also functioned as visual records of the architectural styles used in ancient Uḍḍiyāna. Sacred structures like stūpas, vihāras, temples and shrines shown in the reliefs can also be found in the actual ruins across the Swat Valley.

The depiction of vihāra in the reliefs range from simple, thatched-roof dwellings to architecturally elaborate structures with double domes, decorative façades, and

enclosed stūpas, indicating the evolution of ritual and residential architecture under Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna influence.

Early vihāras (Pls. 70, 71) suggest modest, functional spaces for meditation and communal living, while more developed forms (Pls. 74, 87) show ritual complexity, including integrated stūpa sanctuaries. A distinct group of reliefs (Pls. 81-86) represents image shrines illustrating figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas under domed shrines. Patronage inscriptions indicate strong ties between monastic institutions and lay society, supported by donations from rulers, artisans and merchants (for details, see chapter 4). Positioned along important trade routes, these vihāras were also central to the spread of Buddhism into Central Asia and China, highlighting their global religious and cultural influence. The Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian visited Uḍḍiyāna in c. 399-414 CE. He remarked about Uḍḍiyāna as a thriving centre of Hīnayāna Buddhism. The valley had around five hundred *Saṅghārāmas* (monasteries), where monks lived either temporarily or permanently. Visiting monks were welcomed and hosted for three days, after which they were expected to find their own accommodation, reflecting both hospitality and monastic discipline (Legge 1886: 28-32).

Another Chinese pilgrim, Song Yun (518-521 CE), also described Uḍḍiyāna as a deeply devout Buddhist region, filled with stūpas, temples and monasteries housing large number of monks. He was moved by the evening sound of temple bells, symbolising the people's devotion to the Buddha's teachings. The valley was rich in flowers throughout the year, which monks and laity gathered as offerings to the Buddha. Upon learning that Song Yun and his companion Hui Seng were sent by the Empress of the Wei Dynasty, the local king received them with great respect, inquiring about their homeland and religious traditions. One notable site mentioned by Song Yun was the *To-lo* monastery (Butkara I), housing a tall stūpa and sixty gold-gilded Buddha images.

Another important feature of the sacred architecture is the depiction of temple structures engulfed in flames (Pls. 88-91). The reliefs that illustrate temple architecture are often associated with the legendary episode of the historical Buddha converting Kāśyapa, the chief fire-worshipping ascetic of Uruvilvā. These

dramatic scenes reflect the shift from Vedic rituals to Buddhist understanding, using the burning temples not just as settings, but as symbols of old beliefs giving way to new faith. The architecture becomes part of the story, marking a turning point in both faith and thought. The temple architecture shown in the reliefs highlights the sculptors' familiarity with actual temple forms in the valley, depicted with clear structural details.

The celebrated Chinese monk Xuanzang (c. 629-45) has mentioned some 1400 old *saṅghārāmas* on both sides of the river Swat but abandoned except few monks living there (Beal 2004: 97-134). Reference to ten 'Brahmanic temples' by Xuanzang further confirms that such structures were part of religious landscape of Uḍḍiyāna, and their inclusion in art reflects both narrative meaning and architectural awareness.

b. Nobility and its associated architecture

The royal and political class, comprising local rulers or governors (such as Oḍi/Uḍi Rājās) under larger imperial systems (such as the *Kuṣāṇa*), is represented in inscriptions (see chapter 4), coinage and reliefs depicting palatial buildings and royal processions. Their patronage of Buddhist sites and monuments also points to a close relationship between state authority and religious institutions, where rulers sought legitimacy and merit through temple construction and donation. This fact is further supported by the presence of administrative, military and palatial buildings in the narrative reliefs.

The administrative and defensive architecture as depicted in the reliefs includes a range of structures such as forts, watchtowers and fortified city gates (Pls. 100-108), often shown with crenellated walls and elevated platforms. These elements suggest the presence of organised urban planning and military infrastructure, indicating that ancient cities in the region were well-defended and strategically laid out. The monumental city gates are particularly notable (Pls. 109-15), as they are used to represent different ancient cities of India, symbolising both geographic awareness and political significance of urban centres.

In addition, the reliefs also feature palatial complexes, portraying various aspects of royal and elite life. These include grand palace entrances (Pls. 116-20), royal sleeping chambers (Pls. 121-27), audience or court halls (Pls. 128-32), dressing and bathing areas (Pl. 133), and stables for royal horses (Pls. 134-35). The architectural detailing, such as roofs (trapezoidal, flat, vaulted and domical), arched windows, decorated columns, carved doorways and multi-level balconies, reflects a refined aesthetic and a sophisticated understanding of courtly space. These depictions highlight the sculptors' familiarity with the architecture of royal households and administrative centres and serve as visual narratives that illustrate the social and political structures of the valley. Together, these elements provide a vivid portrayal of elite architecture in ancient Uḍḍiyāna and broader Gandhāran society.

c. Architecture of the laity in ancient Uḍḍiyāna

The civic or lay population included merchants, artisans, donors and possibly local landholders, also played a significant role for the development and propagation of Buddhism. Their contributions are evident in donor inscriptions, minor stūpas, and residential structures depicted in reliefs. These everyday architectural forms, while less monumental, reflect a thriving urban and semi-urban culture, where different social classes interacted within a shared built environment shaped by both practical needs and cultural ideals.

The depiction of civic architecture (Pls. 92-99) demonstrate a variety of hermitages, forest dwellings and temporary huts. These were constructed from locally available, perishable materials such as bamboo, wooden planks and thatched grasses. These scenes offer rare glimpses into the modest, rural architecture that once coexisted alongside monumental sacred and secular structures. In connection with hermitages and rural settings, the reliefs also reveal many aspects of civic life that are implied through narrative scenes and contextual details. These subtle visual cues will be explored in the following pages.

d. Unbuilt but evident: suggested civic structures in reliefs

In a number of narrative scenes aspects of daily life and civic infrastructure are implied, even though no physical structures are explicitly depicted. These include

activities suggesting the presence of forests (caves), schools, playgrounds, city roads, bathing areas and crematorium, reflecting the broader social and functional fabric of ancient urban life. We have carefully studied these ‘implied spaces’ through many sculptures in museum collections. However, their photographs have been excluded from the current catalogue to stay within the allowed limit of plates. Nevertheless, a complete reference list is provided below to guide interested readers to the relevant sculptures for further research.

Forests are depicted in accordance with the Buddha seated in Indra Śālā cave:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Acc. no.</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Location</i>
1.	CGP 1981-1-75	Charg pate	University Museum
2.	SM 1164	Nimogram	Swat Museum
3.	WS 83	Wal-i-Swat Collection	---
4.	ASC 363	Abba Sahib Cheena	Swat Museum
5.	DMC 558	Chatpat (1968)	Dir Museum
6.	DMC 869	Amlok Dara (Dir)	----
7.	DMC 2036	Maṭkanai (1980)	----

Schools are depicted in the context of Siddhārtha going to school:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Acc. no.</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Location</i>
1.	MJN 1983-1-87	Marjanai	University Museum
2.	BKIII 1982-1-27, 1982-1-175	Butkara III	----
3.	SM 1054	Butkara I	Swat Museum
4.	ASC 017	Abba Sahib Cheena	----
5.	DMC 260	Andan Dheri (1966)	Dir Museum
6.	DMC 587	Chatpat (1968)	----
7.	DM C836	Shamsi Khan	----
8.	DMC 946	Ramora	----

Playgrounds are shown in accordance with contests fought between Siddhārtha and his opponents:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Acc. no.</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Location</i>
1.	SM 1056	Butkara I	Swat Museum
2.	SM 1146	Nimogram	----
3.	SM 1055	Butkara I	----
4.	MJN 1983-1-19	Marjanai	University Museum
5.	BKIII 1982-1-165	Butkara III	----
6.	DMC 689	Chatpat (1968)	Dir Museum
7.	DMC 690	Chatpat (1968)	----

City roads in accordance with processions and transportation:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Acc. no.</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Location</i>
1.	ASC 678	Abba Sahib Cheena	Swat Museum
2.	AKD 185	Amluk Dara	Swat Museum
3.	SM 1228	Panr I	----
4.	MJN 1983-1-86	Marjanai	University Museum
5.	BKIII 1982-1-172	Butkara III	----
6.	DMC 620	Chatpat (1968)	Dir Museum
7.	DMC 621	Chatpat (1968)	----

Bathing areas are depicted in accordance with Siddhārtha's first bath:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Acc. no.</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Location</i>
1.	BKIII 1982-1-170	Butkara III	University Museum
2.	CGP 1981-1-11	Charg pate	---
3.	MJN 1983-1-20	Marjanai	----
4.	V 662 (Varia Collection)	Katelai	Swat Museum
5.	DMC 1984	Baghrajai (1980)	Dir Museum
6.	PM_2728	Mardan	Peshawar Museum
7.	PM_2733	Unknown	----

Crematorium is illustrated in connection with the Buddha's funeral rites:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Acc. no.</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Location</i>
1.	BKIII 1982-1-42	Butkara III	University Museum
2.	BKIII 1982-1-76	Butkara III	----
3.	MJN 1983-1-93	Marjanai	----
4.	SSA 1990-1-54	Shnaisha	----
5.	SSA 1990-1-171	Shnaisha	----
6.	MK-0076	Malakan Collection	Swat Museum

Though the architecture of these spaces is not carved in detail, the contextual cues within these narrative panels provide strong evidence of their importance in everyday life. Such scenes enlighten us about secular activities that supported the functioning of ancient communities in Uḍḍiyāna. These 'implied spaces' form a crucial part of the built environment, represented in Buddhist art.

e. Funerary Monuments

Non-stūpa funerary monuments are depicted in reliefs (Pls. 136-138), illustrating the story of the nursing of the dead woman and the conversion of her son Sudāya. These graves/tombs display diverse architectural styles, such as brick vaults,

domical roofs and provision for ventilation. Iranian and Central Asian impacts on these structures highlight architectural exchange along trade and pilgrimage routes. Such type of funerary monuments possibly represents the burial places of lay individuals, while stūpas were reserved for the spiritual elite.

The social stratification as evidenced in architecture shows that Uḍḍiyāna was not just a spiritual hub but also a well-organised society with complex political, religious and economic systems. The region's architecture reflects these overlapping roles, giving us insight into how status, purpose, and belief influenced the use and design of space in ancient Swat.

Q.2. Secular architecture is profusely exhibited in the relief panels, but remains of such edifices are scantily available. What may be the reasons?

This question has already been addressed in chapter 6 of the present research under the heading 'depiction of secular architecture in reliefs and archaeological evidence'. The limited presence of secular architecture in the archaeological record, despite its frequent depiction in reliefs, can be attributed to several key factors which are discussed below:

Secular buildings were typically constructed using perishable materials like wood, mudbrick, or wattle and daub, unlike sacred structures which were built in stone. As a result, they have not survived the ravages of time and neglect, especially in the climatic and geological conditions of the Swat Valley.

As we know that the region of Swat was inhabited by the immigrant Indo-Aryans from the second half of the second millennium BCE down to the sixth to fourth century BCE. Initially semi-nomadic, they built temporary settlements using perishable materials like timber, bamboo and thatch, easily available to them, thanks to the rich forested environment of the valley. Their carpentry skills, already demonstrated in chariot-making, were applied to constructing simple circular huts and, later, rectangular halls, often enclosed with timber fences for protection (Majumdar 1957: 398-99; Brown 1959: 3-4; Sundaram 1974: 22-24). Over time, these communities began to settle permanently, leading to more structured village life and durable architectural forms. Many features of their early wooden

architecture, such as pillared halls, wooden enclosures and circular huts are later echoed in the stone reliefs of Gandhāra, Uḍḍiyāna and mainland India. This shows a clear continuity of design traditions from wood to stone, and from temporary dwellings to permanent structures.

Another reason for the limited presence of secular architecture in the archaeological record of the Swat Valley is that, unlike monastic buildings, civic structures were rarely maintained. They were often repurposed or rebuilt over time instead of being carefully preserved. This has led to the destruction or concealment of ancient secular structures beneath later ones, making it almost difficult to access, document or preserve.

In contemporary contexts as well, secular buildings, once they deteriorate or fall out of use, are often dismantled, renovated, or entirely replaced to meet new functional demands. In contrast, sacred architecture such as temples, churches, mosques and other religious edifices are rarely subjected to such replacement. Due to their spiritual significance and communal reverence, sacred structures are typically preserved with care and, when aged or damaged, are restored rather than replaced.

The depiction of palaces in the Buddhist art of Uḍḍiyāna was not accidental. The sculptors were well acquainted with regal architecture, as such structures were prevalent in their time. Since these were primarily constructed of timber, a perishable material, their remains have not survived, explaining their absence in the archaeological record.

Q. 3. Do we find any foreign impact on the Buddhist architecture of the Swat Valley?

This question has also been answered in detail in chapter 7 of the present work under the heading, ‘foreign influences on the architectural depictions in relief carvings.’ After a thorough discussion and analysis of numerous examples from the Buddhist reliefs of the Swat Valley, it becomes clear that the architectural representations reflect a fusion of diverse cultural traditions. These depictions bear strong evidence of foreign stylistic elements, most notably from Graeco-Roman,

Achaemenid Persian, Central Asian and Indian architectural traditions. Features such as Persepolitan and Indo-Corinthian columns, arched niches, decorative friezes and geometric motifs were seamlessly integrated with local building practices. This synthesis illustrates the cosmopolitan nature of ancient Uḍḍiyāna, situated at the crossroads of trade, culture and faith.

8.2 Assessment of the research aim and objectives

This research began with the primary aim of analysing the secular and cultic monuments depicted in the Buddhist narrative relief panels of the Swat Valley, with the broader goal of reconstructing the architectural traditions of ancient Uḍḍiyāna. As the study progressed, each objective set at the outset was approached systematically and with academic rigour.

The first objective was to trace the role of textual and epigraphic sources in the reconstruction of architectural traditions of the Buddhist period in the Swat Valley. Chapter 4 of this dissertation gives an overview of the pilgrims' accounts, Buddhist and Jaina literature, royal decrees and reports of archaeological investigations. These sources provided contextual information that helped verify the functions, forms, and symbolism of architectural structures as depicted in relief carvings. Notable references from Chinese pilgrims such as Faxian, Song Yun, Xuanzang and I-Tsing, along with donative inscriptions from Gandhāran sites, significantly enhanced our understanding and allowed us to connect visual representation with historical reality.

The second objective was to explore legacy of architectural elements and decorative motifs in the built heritage of the later period. This was addressed in chapter 7 of our dissertation by tracing the continuity and transformation of stylistic features such as Corinthian capitals, pilasters, arched niches, stepped podiums, wooden brackets, and ornamental friezes into later architectural traditions. These motifs were found to have persisted through the Hindu Shahi, Islamic and even modern periods, particularly in the vernacular architecture, furniture carving, and mosque design in the different localities of Swat. This continuity reaffirms the idea

that Gandhāran Buddhist architecture left a lasting imprint on the region's built environment, extending beyond religious use.

The third objective was to probe into the past environmental, cultural, religious, and economic conditions of the Swat Valley using the tools of types and nature of buildings. The diversity of structures, ranging from stūpas and vihāras to grand palaces and watchtowers highlights the complex society of the region. The presence of both monumental and modest architecture suggests a stratified yet interconnected social fabric, where religious institutions coexisted with civic life. The depiction of features such as roads, schools, playgrounds, crematorium and bathing areas, though often implied rather than structurally defined, pointed to a well-organised urban setting, with attention to public amenities and social organization.

The fourth objective was to prepare an exhaustive catalogue of all the Buddhist relief panels that include representation of secular and cultic monuments. This was addressed through first-hand documentation from major museum collections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and abroad, supported by visual analysis and classification. Although some reliefs suggesting 'implied spaces' were not visually included due to catalogue limitations, a complete reference list was provided in the current chapter to guide future researchers. This catalogue serves as a valuable research tool and contributes significantly to the visual and academic documentation of Gandhāran architectural heritage.

8.3 Closing Remarks

In conclusion, this research has successfully fulfilled its central aim. It has demonstrated that the architectural representations in the Buddhist reliefs of Swat are not merely symbolic but are grounded in the actual built environment of ancient Uḍḍiyāna. The ancient architecture of the valley reflects a blend of local traditions and foreign elements, shaped by its location on key trade and pilgrimage routes. From early wooden settlements to the stone-built Buddhist monuments of the Gandhāran period, the region developed diverse architectural traditions. Buddhist reliefs depict sacred and secular structures, such as stūpas, vihāras, temples and

palaces, with distinct foreign impacts. While wooden secular buildings have already been vanished, except their depiction in relief carvings and continued into Hindu Shahi, Islamic and modern architecture, showing the legacy of Swat's built heritage. By bridging archaeology, art history, textual studies and cultural analyses, the present research offers a deep understanding and comprehensive reconstruction of ancient architectural traditions of Swat, reaffirming the valley's place as a cosmopolitan hub of artistic and architectural innovations.

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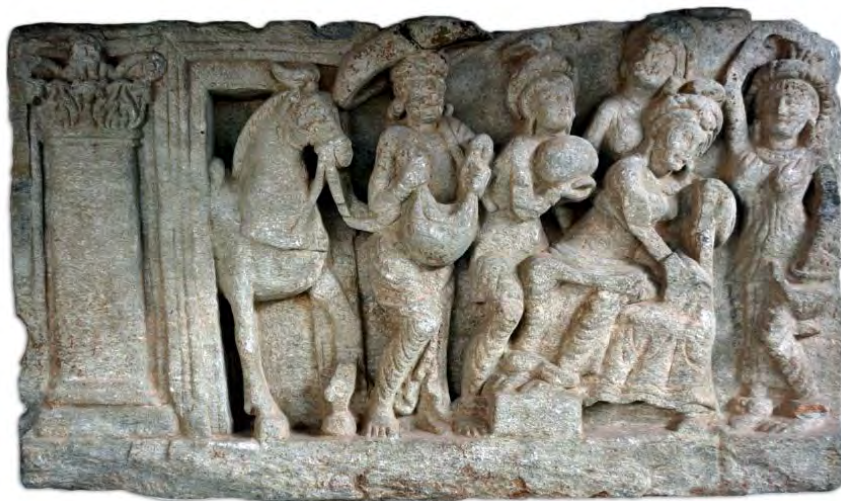
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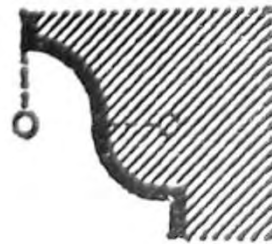
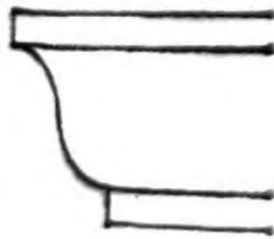
Pl. 200. Gandharan composite pillar with Persepolitan base and Corinthian capital.



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