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The Cameo of Warahrān II and the Kušano-Sasanians

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The Cameo

This cameo, commonly ascribed to the founder of the Sasanian dynasty Ardaxšahr I, son of Pābag (*Ardaxšahr ī Pābagān*), and deposited over a century ago at the Cabinet de Médailles in Paris,¹ has regrettably fallen into desuetude ever since, owing to a lack of scholarly interest as a result of the imperfect state of its preservation (fig. 1). The cameo is engraved on agate with alternating layers of brown and blue, much like the better-known cameo depicting the Persian king Šābuhr I jousting with the Roman emperor Valerian, equally in the trust of the Cabinet de Médailles (fig. 2c).² Due to the vagaries of time, the right half of the cameo was broken at some point, but the missing scene can be plausibly reconstructed.

Ernst Babelon had already recognized in his *Catalogue des camées antiques et modernes de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (1897) the iconographic composition of the cameo as depicting a Sasanian king taming the sacred bull Nandī (whose tail, rear, and rump we can still clearly discern), although his conjunctural attribution of the piece to the first Sasanian monarch Ardaxšahr, son of Pābag, ought to be revisited:

Ardeschir I^{er} Babegan, domptant le taureau Nandi. Le roi est debout, de profil, à droite, les jambes écartées, les deux bras tendus en avant. Il est barbu et coiffé d'une tiare dont les fanons plissés flottent au vent ; son cou est orné d'un collier ; son costume consiste en une tunique de fine soie, serrée à la taille par une ceinture; ses jambes sont couvertes des anaxyrides, et ses pieds sont chaussés de souliers noués à l'aide d'élégants cordons. Le taureau est placé au second plan, à côté du roi.³

The attribution to Ardaxšahr, although not explicitly discussed by Babelon, seems to have

rested upon the analysis of the male figure's coiffure on the cameo, a typical *Kunstfrisur*, a hair knot (or korymbos) on the top of what appears to be a ribboned diadem, and a chignon in the back, which partially evoke the depictions of Ardaxšahr on his equestrian relief at Fīrūzābād (F I) in Persis (fig. 2a),⁴ and his coinage of type VII (fig. 2b).⁵

Although the individual hairstyle or crown of Sasanian sovereigns may serve as a distinguishing token in identifying rulers on coinage and reliefs, they certainly may not serve as an absolute criterion, as variations within one medium, and discrepancies across different ones, render the attribution of a specific crown uncertain. A case in point is the depiction, on the Šābuhr (Paris) Cameo (fig. 2c), of the Persian king sporting solely a draped korymbos on top of a diadem (and a "skull cap"⁶), which remains without parallel on Šābuhr's coinage,⁶ and possibly reliefs,⁷ but resembles the headgear used by Ardaxšahr I on his investiture scenes in Persis.⁸ The thematic composition of the Šābuhr Cameo reflects the Sasanian narrative of the wars conducted against Rome and the capture of Emperor Valerian by Šābuhr, as reported on his inscription on the Ka'abe-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam. Indeed, on this cameo, the Persian sovereign is shown, within the framework of an equestrian single combat, seizing the hand of the Roman Caesar, a scene that visually complements the tenets of Šābuhr's *res gestae*: *ud Wālarṇyōs Kaysar wxad pad wxēbeh dastgraß kerd* "and (We) ourselves with our own hand made Valerian, the Caesar, captive."⁹ And were it not for this obvious allusion to an episode known to us from historical records, the sovereign's hairdress would have been of limited utility in identifying the Sasanian king.

It is generally assumed that the early Sasanian kings were depicted, in addition to their main crowns, also with separate, occasional headgear to complement their associations with specific deities, or mark their presence in distinct contexts,¹⁰ such as in the bellicose settings of the equestrian relief at Fīrūzābād (F I) (fig. 2a), or the Šābuhr Cameo,¹¹ where Ardashāh and Šābuhr display a diadem accompanied by a(n) (un-) wrapped korymbos.¹² It is thus conceivable that media such as the cameo not necessarily reflected a sovereign's main crown, but a simplex, or special crown (headgear). The hairstyle of the ruler on our fractured cameo, with a hair ball carefully placed above his diadem, and another on the back of his head, although displaying strong similarities with the effigies of Ardashāh, as discussed, is still more akin to Arsacid iconographic precedents, which also served as a source of emulation for Ardashāh's (and early Sasanian) coinage.¹³ In particular, the coinage of the Arsacid king Osroes (Husraw) exhibits pertinent resemblance with the arrangement of the hair on the cameo's iconography (fig. 3a).¹⁴

Intriguingly, on a previously little-known cameo, formerly belonging to the collection of Jean-Pierre Collot, Napoleon's financier, and recently offered at auction,¹⁵ one may discern the portrait of an Iranian prince who wears a ribboned diadem, but no headgear, or korymbos, (fig. 3b). The features of the prince on the "Collot Cameo" evoke comparison with the effigy of the Arsacid king Miθrdāt II on coinage and, more importantly, with the king on the Hyacinth of (the Duke of) Gotha, kept at the Cabinet des Médailles, which also emulates Arsacid models, but assuredly belongs to the Sasanian era (fig. 3c).¹⁶ Assuming the "Collot Cameo" is a genuine piece—which it likely is—then on none of the three extant cameos from the Sasanian period is a crown being displayed. Instead, in the case of the Šābhur Cameo, we find that archaizing, "Parthianizing" tendencies might have been at work in the depiction of the king's simple headgear, which also characterizes that of Ardashāh I, whereas in the case of our damaged cameo and the "Collot Cameo," the coin portraiture of Arsacid rulers, such as Osroes/Husraw I and Miθrdāt II, might have served as models. From all this it appears that the depiction of the headgear on Sasanian cameos responded to other, political, considerations and was not subjected to the strict norma-

tive framework of coinage. Thus, other elements in the damaged cameo's composition, and whenever applicable the historical context that might have prompted its production, may help identify the ruler on the cameo.

The Nandī Bull

One of these elements is the Nandī Bull (Śiva's guardian deity) we observe on our fractured cameo, which was not only widely depicted in the Kušān empire, but also well known among the Kušāno-Sasanian rulers, or the *kušanšāhs*, in the third to fifth century C.E.¹⁷ Among others, several coins of the *kūšanšāh* Ōhrmazd 1¹⁸ (fig. 4)—whose titulature, aside from the usual "Ōhrmazd, the great king of Kušān" (Ὀυρομαζδο οοζορκο κοβανο βαο), also entails the grandiloquent "Ōhrmazd, the (great) king of kings of Kušān" (Ὀυρομαζδο (οοζορκο) κοβανο βαοβαο βαο)¹⁹—illustrate the Nandī on the reverse. The bull serves here as the companion of the Bactrian Oēšo (Oēšo read *Wēš*), who was associated with the Indian deity Śiva by the Kušāns,²⁰ and could be hence depicted with two, four, or six arms and three heads,²¹ and an erect phallus (*lingam*), along with a vessel, as well as the guardian bull Nandī,²² before adopting under the Kušāno-Sasanians the more modest Sasanian garb (knee-length tunic over trousers), beard, and hairdress (including side buns and/or flaming hair surrounded by a halo), as well as holding a ribboned diadem in the right, and a trident in the raised left hand. Oēšo is called (like other divinities of the Kušān pantheon) an "exalted divinity; the divinity in possession of heights" (βορζαονδο ιαζαδο; Middle Persian: *burzāwand yazad*),²³ which is also a reflection of his association with the Iranian "god of wind" Vaiiu (qualified in the Avesta as *vaiiuš yō uparō.kairiō* "Vaiiu, whose work is above/superior").²⁴

Although Oēšo's iconography is evocative of other deities in the Indo-Iranian borderlands, its continued presence, *mutatis mutandis*, in the Kušāno-Sasanian pantheon attests to its being perceived as an Iranian deity,²⁵ able to relate, by dint of its varied (inter alia Śivaite) symbolism, also to the Indian constituencies of the Kušāno-Sasanian realm.²⁶ What makes the depiction of the Nandī Bull on the coinage of the *kušanšāh* Ōhrmazd 1²⁷ particularly intriguing is its possible

link with the cameo heretofore attributed to King Ardashahr I.

Threats to the Persian Empire

In the latter half of the third century, on the occasion of Emperor Carus' campaign against the Persian empire, in 283 C.E., a few classical testimonies, recounting the state of affairs in the realm of the enemy, reported a fratricidal strife between two princes of the Sasanian house,²⁸ which appears to have prompted or facilitated the initially successful eastern campaign of Carus.²⁹ The opposing factions were on the one hand the king of kings Warahrān II, of whom we are well informed on account of his building activities, notably the many reliefs he commissioned in Persis,³⁰ and on the other hand, Prince Ōhrmazd (called Ormies in the Latin Panegyrics), who was either a younger brother of King Warahrān II (which is likely), or the king's first cousin, namely, the son of Warahrān II's uncle, king of Mesene, attested in Šābuhr's *res gestae*³¹ as "Ōhrmazd . . . son of the king of Mesene" (*Ōhrmazd . . . Mēšan šāhpuhr*).³² This Prince Ōhrmazd (or Ormies), who is being associated both with the Sakas and the Kušāns, may be identified either as the *Sagestān šāh* "king of the Sakas,"³³ or the *kušanšāh* "king of Kušan."³⁴ Establishing the identity of Ormies and his allied insurrectionists appears *prima facie* impossible in light of the ambiguity of our sources: was it Ōhrmazd, the king of Sakas, in unison with other oriental tribes, or was it Ōhrmazd, the *kušanšāh*, and an eastern alliance, as the *Panegyri Latini* report: *ipsos Persas ipsumque regem adscitis Sacis et *Cussiis et Gelis petit frater*, "Ormies [= Ōhrmazd] together with [his] allies the Sakas,³⁵ the *Cussi [Kušāns?]³⁶ and the Geli³⁷ attacked the Persians themselves, as well as their king."³⁸

What is more, the beginning of the Kušāno-Sasanian era being still in flux (with dates ranging between 270 and 350 C.E.), we cannot exclude the Kušāno-Sasanians as the agents of the uprising against the Sasanian throne at the time of Carus' invasion in 283 C.E.³⁹ To the contrary, a number of indices suggest that the selfsame Prince Ōhrmazd (or Ormies), responsible for the internecine strife in the Sasanian empire, was also identical with the Kušan king Ōhrmazd I,⁴⁰ whose coins exhibit the Nandī Bull. Indeed, the use by the *kušanšāh* of the title "king of kings" on gold and bronze/

copper issues—where next to the Bactrian legends designating him as "the great king of kings of Kušan" (κοῦανο οὐζορκο βασινο βασ), one also encounters the Middle Persian expression "[His Mazdean Majesty,] the great king of kings of Kušan" ([*mazdēsn bay*] *wazurg kušan šāhān šāh*)⁴¹—might suggest that he is to be equated with the contender, who challenged Warahrān II's reign and usurped the imperial title. However, it has been more recently posited that the title of "king of kings" among the Kušāno-Sasanians was restricted to the confines of the Kušan realm itself, and was hence not perforce projecting the will to contest the power of the Sasanian *šāhān šāh*.⁴² There are however no precedents in ancient Iran, where the adoption or conferral of the imperial title (even in association with a specific territory) may have been viewed as an emulation of Iranian practices bereft of political implications; to the contrary, the embrace of the imperial title ought to have been perceived as an infringement upon the privilege reserved for the Iranian suzerain, and those arrogating to themselves the right to assume it must have *ipso facto* intended it as a political declaration. What is more, on Ōhrmazd I's coinage also occurs the Middle Persian expression *mazdēsn bay* "His Mazdean Majesty," a crucial component of the Sasanian titulature that not only identified the king as supporter of the Mazdean faith (*mazdēsn dēn*), but also the empire of Iran (*Ērānšahr*) as its ideological heart.⁴³ The appropriation of both the title of "king of kings" and the expression *mazdēsn bay* for the Kušan realm, defines Ōhrmazd I's act of defiance against Warahrān II as one targeting both the political and religious hegemony of Sasanian sovereignty.

The Audience for the Cameo

As to the cameo, we may presume that, much like the Šābuhr Cameo, it was also intended for a *specific* audience, likely the Kušāns, for whom the Nandī Bull was of symbolic significance, with the aim of conveying the (re-)imposition of Sasanian royal authority in the East. The only act of serious eastern rebellion known to us that would have demanded the re-establishment of Sasanian power is precisely the one ascribed to Ormies/Ōhrmazd I, on whose coinage the Nandī Bull is well attested. This may well denote that upon overcoming Ōhrmazd I's uprising, Warahrān II

deployed the cameo for propagandistic purposes geared towards the Kušān and cosmopolitan élites of the borderlands by co-opting the iconography of the Nandī Bull. However, while the appropriation of the Nandī symbolism on the cameo allowed Warahrān II to pose as the rightful *kušānšāh* for an indigenous audience, the king's own image was replacing that of Oēšo on Kušān coinage.

Warahrān II and Zoroastrian Deities

Pondering on the causes of this “substitution,” one is reminded of the duality of the functions of Vaiiu, who, although supportive of Ahura Mazdā in the cosmic battle against the “creation of the Evil Spirit” (*aṇrahe mainiiōuš dāman-*), was still able to traverse both worlds (*uua dāma vaiiemi* “I fly through both creations”)—namely, that of Ahura Mazdā (*yasca daθaṭ spəntō mainiiuš* “the one the Life-giving Spirit established”) and that of the Evil Spirit (*yasca daθaṭ aṇrō mainiiuš* “the one the Evil Spirit established”).⁴⁴ In its Sasanian Mazdean garb, Wāy (with whom Oēšo is associated in the Kušāno-Sasanian pantheon) is described as the void that delimits endless light (the realm of Ōhrmazd) from endless darkness (the realm of Ahreman), and hence represents the place of mixture (*gumēzišn*) between these cosmic forces. As a consequence, Wāy as the (atmospheric) void was split into two deities in Sasanian cosmogony, “the good Wāy” (*wāy ī weh*), and “the evil Wāy” (*wāy ī wattar*); with one aspect striking the soul of the righteous out of the body (*Wāy ī wattar gyān az tan bē zanēd* “the evil Wāy strikes the soul from the body”) and the other taking it to their right abode and bestowing happiness upon it (*Wāy ī weh bē padirēd hunsandīh bē dahēd* “the good Wāy receives it [the soul] and bestows happiness upon it”). Two passages of the Middle Persian treatise the *Bundahišn* describe the functions of Wāy both as the atmospheric void between the two realms and with split personalities:

*pad weh-dēn ōwōn paydāg Ōhrmazd
bālistīg pad harwis-p-āgāhīh ud wehīh
zamān ī akanārag abar rōšnīh hamē
būd . . . Ahreman andar tārigīh pad pas-
dānišnīh ud zadār-kāmagīh zoṇr-pāyag būd
. . . u-šān mayān tuhīgīh būd ast kē Wāy
kē-š gumēzišn padīš*

“It is thus revealed in the Good Religion [that] Ōhrmazd was up in the heights in a state of omniscience and goodness for endless time in light . . . Ahreman was in darkness in the depths in a state of nescience [retrograde knowledge] and [bestowed] with the desire to kill . . . **And between them was the void; there is one who (calls it) Wāy (the Wind), wherein there is mixture.**”

[Great Bundahišn 1.1–5]

And:

*ud ruwān ī ahlawān ka pad *Čēh-widarg
widerēd Wāy ī weh dast abar gīrēd ud ō
ān ī xwēš gāh bared ēd rāy Rām gōwēd čē
rāmišn-dādār ō hamāg dahišn ka-iz Wāy ī
wattar gyān az tan bē zanēd ōy Wāy ī weh
bē padirēd hunsandīh bē dahēd*

“And the souls of the righteous when they cross over the *Čēh-widarg Bridge, the good Wāy seizes their hand and takes them to their abode. For this reason they call him Rām, for **he (the good Wāy) gives peace to all the creation. When the evil Wāy strikes the soul from the body, the good Wāy receives it and bestows happiness upon it.**”

[Great Bundahišn 26.29–30]

It is therefore conceivable that by placing the idealized image of the Sasanian ruler on the cameo, Warahrān II was intent on exploiting the inherent duality of Wāy by associating himself with the one personality that brought redemption and happiness to man and perforce exhibited opposition to the destructive nature of the evil Wāy (*Wāy ī weh kōxšīdār ud ham-padīrag ī Wāy ī wattar* “the good Wāy is the challenger and opponent of the evil Wāy”⁴⁵), who might have been implicitly tied to the *kušānšāh* Ōhrmazd 1.

Representations of Warahrān II's Victories

A tentative collage of the cameo and the reverse of Ōhrmazd I's gold issue depicting the Nandī (fig. 5), allows us to assess the iconographic complementarity between the two objects, and the attention paid by the royal workshops to reproducing an image that would correspond to, and even hone, the esthetic and symbolic affinities of the Kušān audience. It is likely that a conse-



Fig. 1. Extant fragment of the cameo representing Warahrān II and the Nandi Bull. Originally attributed to Ardaxšahr I, son of Pābag. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques inv. no. camée 359.



Fig. 2a. Ardaxšahr's headgear on the equestrian relief of Firūzābād; see <https://www.salfbase.com/en/firuzabad/the-investiture-relief-of-ardashir> (SALF Base: Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in the Fars Region Base).



Fig. 2b. Ardaxšahr I's coinage (type VII).



Fig. 2c. Cameo depicting Šābuhr's triumph over the Roman Caesar Valerian. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques, inv. no. [1893].



Fig. 3a. Obverse of Osroes I's silver drachm depicting the king with hair knots above the diadem and behind ears/head. Type: S(ellwood) 80.1, see <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18202795>.



Fig. 3b. The "Collot Cameo" depicting an early Sasanian king, perhaps King Narseh?, see n. 15.



Fig. 3c. The Hyacinth of (the Duke of) Gotha possibly depicting King Narseh.



Fig. 4. Gold coin of the wazurg Kušan šāh "great king of Kušan" Ohrmazd I. The reverse represents Onpo in the company of the Nandi Bull; Ohrmazd I's gold issue with the Nandi Bull, see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hormizd_I_Kushānshah_circa_a.d._285-300.jpg.



Fig. 5. Collage of Warahrān II's cameo and the Nandi Bull on the reverse of Ohrmazd I's gold issue. After Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 210–11, no. 2211.



Fig. 6. Double equestrian joust of Warahrān II on superimposed registers at Naqš-e Rostam: on the upper panel against a Roman enemy (Carus?); and on the lower panel against the *kušanšāh* Ōhrmazd I, see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Naghsh-e_rostam,_Irán,_2016-09-24,_DD_10.jpg (Wikimedia Commons—Diego Delso, delso.photo, License CC-BY-SA).

quential event such as Warahrān II's victory over the *kušanšāh* would have been celebrated on media other than the cameo, especially in light of Warahrān II's prodigality in dispensing bas-reliefs and art objects exhibiting departures from established norms.⁴⁶ Indeed, on one of Warahrān II's reliefs at Naqš-e Rostam (NRm 7) (fig. 6),⁴⁷ which consists of two vertically arranged registers, we encounter the king engaged in a dual equestrian single combat. The upper panel evokes the confrontation between Warahrān II and an enemy who is being unhorsed, whose panoply and har-

ness we scarcely can discern in order to infer his identity, but in whom we are tempted to recognize the Emperor Carus.⁴⁸ The lower register, however, either appertains to the selfsame episode, that is, the Roman campaign against Warahrān II, or depicts the king—or his son the future Warahrān III—confronting the Kušan enemy, possibly, Ōhrmazd I.⁴⁹

Thus, the *double* combat of Warahrān II at Naqš-e Rostam (NRm 7) may reflect his prevailing, in two temporal spheres, over the two major afflictions—Roman and Kušan—that befell the



Fig. 7. Warahrān II at Sar-e Mašha, the king confronting two lions and holding hands with a female figure (the queen?). Two dignitaries stand behind the king: the high priest (*mowbed*) Kerdīr with a pair of scissors on his tall hat as heraldic emblem (*nišān*); and an unknown personage. After Trumpelmann 1975, pl. 7, with the addition of the ornament added on the shoulder of the attacking lion by Tanabe 1990: 30, fig. 2b.

empire during his reign; a theme whose symbolic and esthetic realization may more pertinently be observed in Warahrān II's relief at Sar-e Mašhad (fig. 7). There, the king is portrayed confronting two lions, one already slain and lying on the ground and the other being thrust with the king's sword, while he is protecting his queen, held by the hand, and two imperial dignitaries, among them the chief magus (*mowbed*) Kerdīr, standing in the foreground.⁵⁰

The Symbolism of the Lions

The lions have been in the past interpreted as allusions to the selfsame menaces (Carus' invasion and Ōhrmazd I's rebellion) Warahrān II was forced to ward off, and which were likely represented on Warahrān's bipartite equestrian composition at Naqš-e Rostam.⁵¹ Although the opinion that the relief at Sar-e Mašhad was a hunting scene is prevalent in scholarship, its genesis may suggest other inferences. The motif of the king hunt-

ing two lions is not attested in Sasanian dynastic art prior to the composition of the relief at Sar-e Mašhad in the third century C.E. However, it occurs more abundantly on official Sasanian silver-gilt plates in subsequent centuries, such as on the plate attributed to Ōhrmazd II at the Cleveland Museum, dated to the fifth or sixth century C.E.,⁵² or the British Museum "Bahrām-e Gōr" lion-hunt plate, dated to the sixth to seventh century C.E.⁵³ Hunting scenes, including those exhibiting two lions, on Sasanian silver-gilt plates may have originated in provincial production of the third century,⁵⁴ before being adopted by the Sasanian court iconography. These early hunt scenes appear to have represented princes and rulers of the Sasanian borderland, who either expressed therein their individual prowess as a warrior, or established—in the case of royal princes instated as *šāh* "(sub-Sasanian) kings" in the provinces—their credentials as potential heirs for all to behold.⁵⁵ It is only later, towards the beginning of the fourth century, that hunting scenes became a royal monopoly and its production and distribu-



Fig. 8a; 8b. Drawings of the *kušānšāh* Ōhrmazd I's equestrian hunt of two tigers on silver-gilt plate in a private collection in Japan (right); and Ōhrmazd I's hunt of two lions on the Sari silver plate (left). After Tanabe 1998: 94, fig. 1 and 97, fig. 3.

tion controlled by the state.⁵⁶ Thus, intriguingly, the earliest hunting scenes with the display of lions (or felids) have been attributed to the provincial ateliers of Kušān. In particular, a silver-gilt plate (in a private collection in Japan), discussed by Katsumi Tanabe and depicting an equestrian tiger hunt with the sword (fig. 8a),⁵⁷ as well as the so-called Sari Plate displaying a mounted archer (likely a Sasanian prince) confronting two lions (fig. 8b),⁵⁸ appear to be Kušān productions.⁵⁹ On both silver plates, ornamental whorls bedeck the shoulder and rumps of the felids (figs. 9a and 9b), which seems evocative of Gandhāran artistic practices whereby lions are adorned with similar design patterns on the shoulder, whence its adoption in Kušān.⁶⁰ Since such adornment (that is, an ornamental whorl) is also found on the shoulder of one of the two lions depicted on the relief of Warahrān II at Sar-e Mašhad (fig. 9c), both a temporal and thematic link between these early silver-gilt plates and the relief may be considered.⁶¹

These early Sasanian era silver-gilt plates may indeed be attributed to the early (third cen-

tury C.E.) Kušāno-Sasanian polity, and could have served as *Vorlagen* for the composition of the Sar-e Mašhad relief by the Sasanian king Warahrān II.⁶² The commission of these provincial Kušān silver-gilt plates was likely synchronous with Warahrān II's reign, and in view of their magniloquent iconography—that is, the display of feline quarries traditionally a royal prerogative—they probably belong to the reign of the contender Ōhrmazd I. Taken together, the *kušānšāh*'s use of the imperial title “king of kings” and the expression *mazdēsn bay* on his coinage, as well as his self-presentation in equestrian hunt scenes with feline quarries on silver-gilt plates, may all be deemed as manifestations of his contesting Warahrān II for royal power. In this light, the Sar-e Mašhad relief ought to be regarded as a composition inspired by, but also countering, the iconography of early Kušāno-Sasanian silver-gilt plates, by reasserting the royal prerogatives encroached upon by Ōhrmazd I's imagery. Warahrān II's adoption of the theme of the sovereign confronting two lions on his relief ought to



Fig. 9a. Ornamental whorls on the shoulders of felids on the silver-gilt plate in private Japanese collection.

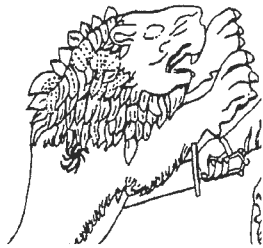


Fig. 9b. Whorls on the Sari silver plate.



Fig. 9c. Whorls on the relief of Warahrān II at Sar-e Mašhad (c). Drawings after Tanabe 1998: 94, fig. 1 and 97: fig. 3.

be seen in tandem with his reclaiming the Nandi Bull on the cameo; on both media the king is co-opting symbolisms employed or introduced by the *kušānšāh* and reapplying them to project royal authority.

A note on the significance of the lion symbolism is required. Whereas felids were more often associated with the expression of royal authority

in ancient Orient and Iran, the perception of them within the Mazdean religion is usually a negative one. Although they will come to constitute, after their ephemeral appropriation by the Kušano-Sasanians, the chief quarries in the depiction of Sasanian royal hunt, they might have done so as vile creatures forged by the Evil Spirit—the principle agent of evil in Sasanian Zoroastrianism.⁶³ In the *Bundahišn*, the felids belong to the category of the *xrafstar* “noxious creatures,” which are part of darkness’ evil creation. They belong to the family of wolves (*gurg-sardagān* “wolf-species”) that encompasses fifteen kinds, among them the lions, tigers, and leopards⁶⁴:

gōwēd pad dēn kū Gannāg Mēnōy ān ī duzd gurg dād kūk ud tom-arzānīg ud tom-zahag ud tom-tōhmag ud tom-kerb ī syā ī gazišn-kerdār ud nēst-mōy ud hušk-kūn ud pad ān kerb ī wišuftag pad ēn kū ka gōspand darrēd fradom mōy aziš bē rūnēd
 “It is said in the religion that the **Evil Spirit created that thievish wolf**, short and worthy of darkness, **the offspring of darkness, the seed of darkness, the shape of darkness**, that is black, biting, hoof-less, *impotent; and (the wolf), in that crooked body, is intent on—when he tears apart the sheep—pulling out its fleece first.”

[Great Bundahišn 23.1]

u-š pad 15 sardag frāz kīrrēnīd nazdist gurg ī syā ud kūk ud sturg sardag kū pad harw tis ayārēd andar dwārēd ud pas abārīg gurg-sardagān čiyōn babr ud šēr ud palang kē kōftaz xwānēnd.

“He [the Evil Spirit] created forth 15 kinds (of wolf); first, the black wolf, of a short and coarse kind that is able to run after all things. And then, (he created) the other **wolf-species, such as the tiger, lion, leopard**, whom they call mountain-roamers.”

[Great Bundahišn 23.2]

Thus, it is likely that the depiction of the two lions at Sar-e Mašhad, one already put to death and another being put to the sword, also symbolically referred to the Sasanian king as the champion of the *weh dēn* “good religion” confronting (the creations of) darkness, which on a less allegorical register could still refer to the enemies of the empire, themselves manifestations of darkness: the rebel brother, the *kušānšāh* Öhrmazd I; and the Roman emperor Carus.⁶⁵ Incidentally, the



Fig. 10. The lion-head crown (with lotus blossom on top) of the *kušanšāh* Ōhrmazd I. For the image, see fig. 4.

main component of the *kušanšāh* Ōhrmazd I's headgear, as revealed on his coinage, is the lion-head crown with or without a lotus blossom/bud (see fig. 10),⁶⁶ which may further reinforce the assumption that the lion symbolism at the Sar-e Mašhad relief partially referred to Ōhrmazd I as an agent of evil.⁶⁷

Conclusion

If these conjectures were to be substantiated, then the Warahrān Cameo would have represented a *pendant* to the Šābuhr Cameo, not only on account of the craftsmanship that links them—which may suggest a shared provenance, possibly the selfsame royal ateliers—but also in the purpose they fulfilled as portable objects destined to impress the royal message upon cosmopolitan enemies, or Iranicate élites on the borderland.

The adoption of the Nandī Bull symbolism by Warahrān II evinced the Sasanian desire to individualize its ideological discourse by negotiating the mental sensibilities of its target audiences. It was expressly composed for the benefit of the Kušan élites, to whom Warahrān II displayed his resumption of direct control in the garb of Kušan traditions. Moreover, the presentation of the king on the cameo in the company of Nandī, in a setting reserved for the Kušan god Oēšo, with whom Vaiiu/Wāy was associated, fulfilled the purpose of accentuating the benevolent, redemptive nature of the Sasanian king, identified with "the good Wāy," in contrast to the destructive nature of the rebel Ōhrmazd I, who perforce was linked with "the evil Wāy." This duality again plays a decisive role in the thematic composition of Warahrān II's relief at Sar-e Mašhad, which ought to be interpreted in conjunction with the king's cameo. The relief was no doubt a response to the theme of the royal hunt with two feline quarries introduced by the Kušano-Sasanians, while reinvesting it with elements of a Mazdean discourse. The hunter-king finishing off two lions would refer to two metaphorical registers: the cosmic opposition between good and evil, which complemented the selfsame duality at work in the cameo; and the defeat of the instruments of darkness (Carus and Ōhrmazd I) by the sustainer of the *weh dēn*, Warahrān II, a symbolism that also underlay the theme of Warahrān II's double joust at Naqš-e Rostam.

Notes

Acknowledgments

A note of thanks to the anonymous reviewer for the judicious remarks; Dr. Jeffrey Spier, Senior Curator at the Getty Museum, for having critically read and commented on an early draft of this paper; and Carol Bromberg for accepting to publish a contribution of mine in the BAI (after a long absence) and her, as usual, superb editing.

1. For the initial inventory and description of the cameo, see Babelon 1894: 195, fig. 147, who describes it as follows: "Un fragment de camée sur une belle sardonix à trois couches, conservé au Cabinet des médailles, représente un prince Sassanide, peut-être Ardeschir Babegan, le fondateur de la dynastie, domptant le taureau Nandi . . . Cette œuvre, d'un travail si achevé et si délicat, serait célèbre si elle nous était parvenue dans son intégrité." And again Babelon 1897: 193,

no. 359: "Par suite de la mutilation de la gemme, il ne reste malheureusement: que la moitié de la scène: il manque la partie antérieure du taureau, les mains et une partie des bras et du pied gauche d'Ardeschir." See also Dieulafoy 1885.5: 124, fig. 111.

2. For an inventory of the Šābuhr (Paris) Cameo deposited in the Cabinet de Médailles (Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques, inv. no. 1893) of the Bibliothèque Nationale, see Gyselen 2006: 203, no. 145; compare also von Gall 1990: 56–59, who regards Šābuhr's adversary on the Cameo as Emperor Jovian. See more recently Dignas and Winter 2007: 81–82. For a detailed discussion of the Cameo's iconography and intent, see Canepa 2009: 68–71, and 265, n. 52; also, Shayegan 2017: 445–46.

3. Babelon 1897: 192–93, no. 359, pl. 52.

4. See already Göbl 1960: 38, who describes Ardaxšahr's early hairdress as: "ein reiner Kunstfrisurtyp, den man vielleicht nicht als eigentliche Kronenform, aber doch als großköniglichen Repräsentationstyp rechnen kann und mitzählen muß."

5. On the typology of Ardaxšahr's coinage, see Alram and Gyselen 2003: 93–134. For a discussion of the Sasanian headgear and korymbos, see Farridnejad 2018: 343–47; and Alram and Gyselen 2003: 93; also, Göbl 1983: 325. On (the iconography of) Ardaxšahr's type VII issues, see Alram and Gyselen 2003: 99–100; 131, and pl. 16, A49–A53.

6. For a typology of the iconography on, and styles of, Šābuhr's coinage, see Alram and Gyselen 2003: 184–86; 190–92; 195–204; 217–55.

7. The reliefs of Šābuhr at Salmās and Dārābgerd represent the king with a headgear consisting of a diadem (and "skull cap"¹) supporting a korymbos and two large side/back buns, which is unlike Šābuhr's main crown consisting of a mural crown (also entailing a korymbos on top and a large hair bun on the back). Although Šābuhr's headgear on the reliefs of Salmās and Dārābgerd resembles Ardaxšahr's crown on his three investiture scenes at the bas-reliefs of Naqš-e Rostam (NRm I), Naqš-e Rajab (NRb III), and Fīrūzābād (F II), it is still distinct from the hairdress the king displays on the Šābuhr Cameo, where no typical large side/back buns are to be seen, and where it more closely matches the main crown of Ardaxšahr (type IIIa). For the investiture reliefs of Ardaxšahr, see Vanden Berghe 1983: 62–67, fig. 9; and 126–27, nos. 34–36, pls. 17–18; still indispensable Herrmann 1969: 66–71. For the crown of Šābuhr on the reliefs of Salmās and Dārābgerd, see Alram and Gyselen 2003: 32; also Meyer 1990: 266 (and 268): "Die Zinnenkrone, die fester Bestandteil der Krone Shapurs ist, fehlt hier . . . Die Krone des Königs besteht nur aus Kappe, Reif und Korymbos und gleicht darin derjenigen Ardashirs."

8. Vanden Berghe 1983: 64: "Le roi porte son couvre-chef caractéristique: un diadème posé très bas sur

le front, surmonté d'un globe ou korymbos. C'est-à-dire que la chevelure du monarque est nouée au sommet de la tête et drapée dans un tissu très léger."

9. The passage in question reads (ŠKZ, Pth. 11): *Ud aṣ hō ārag Harrān ud Urhā abāg Wālarṇyōs Kay-sar wazurg raf būd ud Wālarṇyōs Kaysar wxad pad wxēbeh dast dastgraṣ kerd ud *ōyādag *rabēsf sanātōr ud hēgemōn kē hō zāwar sārār būd harw dastgraṣ kerd ud bē ō Pārs wāst ahēnd*, "And on that side of Carrhae and Edessa, there was a big battle with Valerian, the Caesar, and (We) ourselves with our own hand made Valerian, the Caesar, captive, and the others, the Praetorian Prefect and senators and generals (hegemons) who were the leaders of that force, all (We) made captive and led to Persis."

10. See already Göbl 1960: 41: "Es gibt kurzlebige, vorübergehende Kronenformen, die einen bestimmten Anlaß, z. B. Beilehnung durch eine bestimmte Gottheit, bedeuten, und Dauerformen, die den Herrscher in jenem Maße kennzeichnen, daß wir imstande sind, schriftlose Darstellungen königlicher Personen mit Hilfe dieser individuellen Kronenformen zu identifizieren"; also Göbl 1974: 33–38; and Göbl 1983: 326: "For several kings we know of special crowns and their presence has caused some confusion for art historians. But they are always based on parts of the regular crowns of the respective rulers, and . . . may be described as reduced regular crowns. The purpose of these and the reason for their introduction are not entirely obvious, but it is clear that they appear on special issues connected with the commemoration of events now forgotten." Also Alram and Gyselen 2003: 100.

11. See Alram and Gyselen 2003: 100–101, n. 63: "In diesem Zusammenhang sei auch auf die Bildnisse Shapurs I. auf dem Felsrelief von Darab und dem Pariser Kameo verwiesen, wo Shapur bei der Gefangennahme des römischen Kaisers Valerianus gezeigt wird und lediglich die verhüllte Kunstfrisur (one Zinnenkranz) trägt."

12. Also Alram and Gyselen 2003: 100: "So mag Ardashir bei offiziellen Auftritten bei Hofe in der Regel seine Hauptkrone . . . getragen haben, während er zu besonderen (religiösen?) Feierlichkeiten, die für uns heute nicht näher bestimmbar sind, Sonderkronen verwendete. Im Kampf trug Ardashir hingegen nur den unverhüllten Korymbos und das Diadem," with discussion of older literature.

13. See Alram and Gyselen 2003: 94.

14. See also Alram and Gyselen 2003: 99: "Die Kunstfrisur selbst ist jedoch parthischen Ursprungs und geht auf den asrakidischen Osroes I. . . zurück."

15. This new cameo was brought to my attention by the good graces of Dr. Jefferey Spier, Senior Curator at the Getty Museum, who not only kindly communicated to me the catalogue of the auction house Mil-lon & Mathias (28th of March 2018), wherein the item was listed as lot Nr. 9, but provided the photography

used in the present contribution. The cameo set in gold frame and further adorned by a triple row of diamonds, dated to the late 19th century, is described in following terms: "Important pendentif rectangulaire en or jaune . . . et argent orné d'un camée de même forme en sardoine à trois couleurs, profil d'homme dans le goût persan . . . dans un cadre en or . . . finement perlé et guilloché, cerné d'une triple ligne, comme le noeud de ruban qui la surmonte, sertie de diamants taillés à l'ancienne . . . Vers 1870."

16. The Hyacinth of Gotha likely belongs to the reign of the Sasanian king Narseh; see Alram and Gyselen 2012: 287. The strong iconographic similarity of the "Collot Cameo" with the Hyacinth might suggest a date close to the latter, thus, possibly pertaining to the reign of Narseh as well. On the Hyacinth, see Seyrig and Curiel 1974: 55–59; Gignoux 1978: 30, no. 3.32; and pl. vii, no. 3.32; Gyselen 1993: 45, 56, 104, 20.J.1 and pl. 16, 20.J.1; Gyselen 2007: 74; and Shayegan, forthcoming.

17. For the representation of the Nandī Bull on the reverse of the Kušān and Kušāno-Sasanian coinage, notably the gold issues of Vima Kadphises, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: pl. 11, nos. 258–64; for Vasudeva, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: pl. 35, nos. 1082–98; 1101–10; for Vasiška, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: pl. 43, nos. 1610–11; for Kaniška III, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: pl. 44, nos. 1643–45; for Vaseduva II, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: pl. 45, no. 1650. As to Kušāno-Sasanian coins, notably those pertaining to the reigns Pērōz, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: pl. 55, nos. 2154–59; and for Ōhrmazd, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: pl. 57, nos. 2206–13.

18. Following a practice established by Austrian scholars, such as Göbl, Alram, and Schindel, Arabic numbers are being suffixed to the names of Kušāno-Sasanian rulers, in order to distinguish them from their Sasanian homonyms, for whom Roman numerals are being used; thus, Ōhrmazd I (*kušānšāh*) versus Ōhrmazd I (*šāhān šāh*).

19. See Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 210–13, nos. 2206–10 (for the royal title) and nos. 2211–12 (for the imperial title). See also Alram 1986, 319 "Ōhrmazd," legends nos. 1–3, for the title "king" and nos. 4–6 for the title of "king of kings."

20. See Carter 1997, especially 152–53, arguing for an amalgamation of aspects of Rudra/Śarva and Vaiiu for the emergence of the Kušān Oēšo. See also Humbach 1975: 407, arguing that the syncretism of Vaiiu "god of wind" and Śiva owes to the latter's function as Rudra, the deity associated with wind and storm: "der Synkretismus zwischen Vayu und Śiva [war] nur unter der Voraussetzung möglich . . . daß Śiva zur fraglichen Zeit noch deutliche Kennzeichen seiner alten Funktion als Sturmgott an sich trug, die er vom vedischen Rudra ererbt hatte." More importantly, Humbach 1975: 404, has related the name Oēšo to that of

the Sogdian divinity Wēšparkar, whose iconography compares with those of Oēšo and Śiva, and derived the term *wēš-parkar* from the name and epithet of vaiiu- "god of wind" in the Avesta, namely, *vaiiuš yō uparō.kairiō* "Vaiiu, whose work is above/superior": "Wēš-parkar und mit ihm Oēšo [ist] nichts anderes . . . als die ostiranische Fortsetzung des Namens des zoroastrischen Windgottes, aw[estisch] *Vaiiuš Uparō.kairiō* . . ." For an excellent discussion of Oēšo, see Shenkar 2014: 154–58; see also Cribb 1997: 29–40, who discusses the polyvalence of a Kušān divinity that could relate to a wide register of deities (including Śiva, Herakles, Nana, and Oēšo), thereby remaining pertinent to the belief systems of multiple audiences: "The evidence of both the Shiva-like images on Kushan coins and the contexts, numismatic, artistic and archaeological, within which they were created, show the devotion of the Kushan kings for a god who they saw as related to both the Indian god Shiva and the Greek god Heracles. The Kushan kings associated the god with the Bactrian goddess Nana as his consort. This god appears, from his name Wesho and from his survival into later Zoroastrian iconography, to have been a form of the Avestan wind god Vayu."

21. This is especially true for the iconography on the reverse of the coinage of Kaniška and Huviška; see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 283–84, nos. 371, 554, 754, 776, and 1017.

22. The fully developed iconography of Oēšo in company of Nandī is first discernible beginning with the coinage of Vima Kadphises; see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 266, nos. 258, 261, and 263.

23. See Tanabe 1991/1992: 59. For a discussion of the title and its usage for Oēšo and other deities, see also Shenkar 2014: 82, 90–92, 156–58; and Farridnejad 2018: 322–25.

24. See the following passage of the Avestan *Yašt* dedicated to Vaiiu (Yt.15.3), where his epithet *vaiiuš yō uparō.kairiō* "Vaiiu, whose work is above/superior," occurs, and his undertaking in the service of Ahura Mazdā against the creation of the Evil Spirit (*aṇrahe mainiiōuš dāman-*) is mentioned:

aom jaiḍiaṭ [ahurō mazdā]
auuaṭ āiiaptəm dazdi mē
vaiiuš yō uparō.kairiō
yaθa azəm nijanāni
aṇrahe mainiiōuš dāmanəm
naēciš auuaṭ yō spəntahe

"[Ahura Mazdā] asked him:
Give me that prize,
Vaiiu, whose work is above/superior,
that I may smash down
(all) the creation of the Evil Spirit,
but not a single one that belongs to the life-giving
(spirit)."

25. See Cribb 1997: 37: "The clearest confirmation of the Iranian nature of this god [Oēšo] is his continued depiction by the Sasanian princes who conquered Kushan territory and adopted the title Kushanshah, known to modern scholars as the Kushano-Sasanians."

26. Grenet 2001: "Mais sur les émissions légendées en bactrien émises par les mêmes souverains, le dieu désigné comme BORZAOANDO IAZADO est un Shiva au taureau, vaguement grisé en roi sassanide, et dans la main duquel le trident a remplacé la lance . . . La nouvelle dynastie n'aurait pas pu marquer plus clairement sa volonté de promulguer un compromis acceptable par ses sujets tant iraniens qu'indiens."

27. See Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 210–11, no. 2211. For the photograph of Ōrmazd I's gold issue with the Nandi Bull, see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hormizd_I_Kushanshah_circa_AD_285-300.jpg.

28. The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (SHA *Car.* 8.1–2) mention that during the campaign of Carus against Warahrān II, an internal strife was ravaging the Persian empire, to the extent as to facilitate Carus' exploits against the Persians: *contra Persas profectus nullo sibi occurrente Mesopotamiam Carus cepit et Ctesiphontem usque pervenit occupatisque Persis domestica seditione imperatoris Persici nomen emervit* "He [Carus] moved against the Persians and without any opposition, Carus wrested away Mesopotamia and arrived at Ctesiphon, at the very time when the Persians were engaged in a domestic strife, and won the title of conqueror of Persia." A second source, the *Panegyri Latini* (*Pan. Lat.* 3.17.2), while also reporting on the seriousness of the sedition in the Sasanian empire, provides further information as to the identity of the leader of this insurrection, namely a certain Ormies (= Ōhrmazd), who in concert with his eastern allies had challenged his sovereign brother, the king of kings: *ip-sos Persas ipsumque regem adscitis Sacis et *Cussiis et Gelis petit frater Ormies nec respicit vel pro maiestate quasi regem vel pro pietate quasi fratrem* "a brother, Ormies [= Ōhrmazd], together with [his] allies the Sakas, the *Cussi [Kušāns¹] and the Geli attacked the Persians themselves as well as their king, whom he did not respect either as king on account of the royal majesty, or as a brother on account of piety." Eutropius (9.18.1) finally also comments on the political crisis in the Persian empire, which, according to him, first occasioned Carus' campaign: *nuntiatio Persarum tumultu ad Orientem profectus res contra Persas nobiles gessit*. "Once news of an insurrection among the Persians was brought, he [Carus] set out for the East and achieved some noble exploits against the Persians."

29. See also Luther 2006: 211, "Die Gelegenheit für die Römer war günstig, da im Sāsānidenreich Bürgerkrieg herrschte." Mosig-Walburg 2009: 56–57 does not opine as to whether Sasanian internal vicissitudes may have incited Carus' campaign, but posits that concrete strategic causes ought to have prompted it: für den

Feldzug des Carus ist von realen Zielen auszugehen, die man mit Hilfe eines erfolgreichen Vorgehens gegen die Perser in ihrem Kernland durchsetzen wollte."

30. For the reliefs of Warahrān II, still invaluable, see Vanden Berghe 1983: 76–82, pls. 26–30; also, Canepa 2013: 867–68; Canepa 2018: 265–66. For a fuller discussion of Warahrān II's reliefs at Barm-e Delak, Tang-e (Sarāb-e) Qandil, Sar-e Mašhad, and Naqš-e Rostam (NRM III), see below nn. 45 and 52.

31. ŠKZ Pth. 21.

32. See Weber and Wiesehofer 2008: 218, n. 8; and p. 222, where the authors considering the two possibilities, judiciously opt for Prince Ōhrmazd, brother of Warahrān II (rather than the son of the *Mēšān šāh*), as the author of the eastern uprising against the Sasanian king: "Vielmehr spricht dafür, dem Panegyriker von 291 zu vertrauen und in Ormies (Hormezd) einen Bruder Wahrams II. zu sehen, der–aus welchen Gründen auch immer–selbst nach der Königswürde strebte und zu diesem Zweck . . . zahlreiche Helfer um sich scharte." See also Weber 2012: 166, n. 49; 167; and 218. Similarly, also Daryaei 2012: 191–92.

33. Compare Weber and Wiesehofer 2008: 222, who consider Ōhrmazd/Ormies to have been the king of the Sakas (*Sagestān šāh*), whose rulership over *Sagestān* had been then transferred to Warahrān II's namesake son, Warahrān III, once Ōhrmazd's/Ormies' rebellion was crushed: "daß Wahram III. vor seiner Thronbesteigung König von Sagestan war, könnte dafür sprechen, daß auch Ormies zuvor diese Stellung bekleidet hatte und nach seinem Tod vom königstreuen Neffen und Kronprinzen ersetzt wurde." See similarly Chaumont 1969: 100: "Investi, selon toute vraisemblance des fonctions du gouverneur de Sacastène (*Sakānšāh*), le prince Hormizd s'était mis à la tête d'un vaste soulèvement englobant Saces, Gèles, et Kushans."

34. Already Herzfeld 1930: 34 identified Ormies with Ōhrmazd I, the *kušānšāh*: "Ormies, i.e., Hormizd, who was supported against the king by the Saka, Kūshān and Gēlān, and hence was at least the *vuzurg Kūšānšāh*, caused Varhrān II to make a disadvantageous peace with Rome." Similarly, Bivar 1983: 210 "Moreover, a Roman panegyric of the reign of Maximian (A.D. 285–305) describes how the Persian king, presumably Bahram II (A.D. 276–293) was attacked by his brother 'Ormies', a name which could well designate the Kūshānshāh Hormizd I. The issue by Hormizd I Kūshānshāh at Marv of Sasanian-type gold coins with the title Kūshānshāhānshāh 'Kushan king of kings' was thus in all probability an act of open rebellion." Gyselen 2010: 195, however, does not ascribe a specific territory to Ōhrmazd I: "Il est probable que son [Warahrān II's] frère Ōhrmazd était vice-roi d'une région orientale dont la superficie ne peut cependant être définie."

35. Intriguingly, Agathias (4.24.8) reports the "ethnos of the *Segestanoi*" (τὸν Σεγισταῶν ἔθνος) was even-

tually forced to submit to Warahrān II (Οὐαραράνης), who then conferred kingship thereof to his son (Warahrān III)—known from the Paikuli inscription as Warahrān, king of the Sakas—and made him the *Sagān šāh* (Σεγανσαά), that is the “king of the *Segestanoi*” (Σεγεστανῶν βασιλεύς). What this testimony clearly indicates is that the Sakas eventually had to bow to Warahrān II’s dominion, and were hence likely in a state of rebellion prior to that, in conjunction with Ōhrmazd I’s uprising, as whose allies we have encountered them. On Agathias’ note on this passage, see still Cameron 1969/1970: 123–24 and 143.

36. The majority of modern editions read for this passage: *Sacis et Rufiis et Gelis*; see already Baehrens 1874: 114; also the latter’s son, Baehrens 1911: 288, “*Sac[c]is et Rufiis et Gel[l]is*”; Galletier 1949; Mynors 1964: 268; and Nixon and Saylor Rodgers, 1994: 541. Traditions based on manuscript M, however, present a slightly different variant, with a gemination of the middle consonants, thus: *Saccis et Ruffis et Gellis*, which is the lesson retained by Markwart (1901: 36, n. 2; 50; 208), in his emendation of *ruffi(s)* to **cussi(s)* “Kušāns”: “Für *Ruffi* ist zu lesen *Cuffi*.” See also Chaumont 1969: 100, n. 5; Felix 1985: 98–99; Dodgeon and Lieu 1991: 112, and 373, n. 7. For the reading *ruffi*, see Weber and Wieschöfer 2008: 217; Weber 2009: 579; Weber 2012: 166; and Gyselen 2010: 196: “il n’existe pas une réelle preuve que se soient les Kouchans qui se cachent sous le nom de *Rufi*.”

37. Ammianus Marcellinus associates the *Gelani* (= Geli) with the *Chionitae* (= Hephthalites) and situates them at the oriental confines of the empire during the reign of Šābuhr II (*rex Persarum in confiniis agens adhuc gentium extimarum iamque cum Chionitis et Gelanis . . . pignore icto societatis* “the king of the Persians operating at the confines of the frontier tribes, and having made an alliance with the *Chionitae* and the *Gelani* . . .”; Amm. Marc. 17.5.1. These Geli are most likely unrelated to the people of Gēlān on the Caspian Sea, but probably a tribe to the west of the Kušāns; see already Huyse 1999.2: 118, § 36.8, n. 199; and Weber 2009: 579, n. 72.

38. *Pan. Lat.* 3.17.2.

39. Göbl 1999: 161–62, had placed the beginning of the Kušāno-Sasanian era around 350 C.E.: “Thus the first stages of any attempt to create a Kushano-Sasanian kingdom can be fixed only after 350 A.D.” Schindel 2012: 69, 73; and Schindel 2015: 154, is of the opinion that the Kušāno-Sasanian coinage was initiated around 300 C.E.: “Meiner Ansicht nach beginnt die kushano-sasanische Münzprägung um 300 n. Chr., etwa 70 Jahre später als Cribb glaubt und 50 Jahre früher als Göbl meint.” In contrast Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 197–98; and 210–16, suggest the date 230 C.E. for the start of the Kušāno-Sasanian era, and propose the year 270 C.E. as the first regnal year of Ōhrmazd I.

40. Already Bivar 1983: 210.

41. Alram 1986: 319 “Ōhrmazd,” legend no. 6; see also Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 212–13, nos. 2214–20 and 2225–43.

42. Compare Schindel 2015: 148–49: “Nichts ist nur naheliegender, als die Verwendung des Titels ‘König der Könige der Kushan’ auf die Stellung des Ōhrmazd I als Oberbefehlshalter in Kushanshahr zu beziehen; eine Herausforderung des sasanidischen Großkönigs ist keinesfalls eine zwingende Deutung.”

43. On the term *mazdēsn* in Sasanian epigraphic material and Middle Iranian writings, see Alram, Blet-Lemarquand, and Skjærvø 2007: 30–33.

44. On the duality of Vaiiu/Wāy, see Zaehner 1955b: 80–91. See also the following passages of the Vaiiu Yašt (Yt.15.43–44):

vaiiuš bā nāma ahmi ašāum zaraθuštra
auuaṭ vaiiuš bā nāma ahmi
yaṭ uua dāma vaiiemi
yasca daθaṭ spəntō mainiiuš
yasca daθaṭ aṇrō mainiiuš
apaiiate nāma ahmi ašāum zaraθuštra
auuaṭ apaiiate nāma ahmi
yaṭ uua dāma apaiiemi
yasca daθaṭ spəntō mainiiuš
yasca daθaṭ aṇrō mainiiuš
vanō.vīspā nāma ahmi ašāum zaraθuštra
auuaṭ vanō.vīspā nāma ahmi
yaṭ uua dāma vanāmi
yasca daθaṭ spəntō mainiiuš
yasca daθaṭ aṇrō mainiiuš

“I am indeed called Vaiiu, O Orderly Zarathustra.
Thus, I am called ‘Vaiiu’
because I fly through both creations,
both the one that the Life-giving Spirit established
and the one the Evil Spirit established.
I am called the Reacher, O Orderly Zarathustra.
Thus, I am called ‘Reacher’
because I reach both creations,
both the one that the Life-giving Spirit established
and the one the Evil Spirit established
I am called All-Conqueror, O Orderly Zarathustra.
Thus, I am called ‘All-Conqueror’
because I conquer both creation
both the one that the Life-giving Spirit established
and the one the Evil Spirit established.”

45. The entire passage as reported in the Dādestān ī Dēnīg (DD 29.4) reads . . . *čiyōn Wāy ī wattar appurdār ud zadār ēdōn-iz Wāy ī weh kōxšīdār ud ham-padīrag ī Wāy ī wattar u-š wizūdār az gyān-apparišnih ud padīriftār ud pānag ī gyān* “. . . just as the evil Wāy is a reaver and striker (of the soul), so is the good Wāy the challenger and opponent of the evil Wāy, and the one who thwarts his robbing the soul, and he (the good

Wāy) is the one who receives and gives refuge to the soul . . ."; see Jaafari-Dehaghi 1998: 90–91. On the good and evil Wāy, see also the Pahlavi Widēwdād (5.8–9) in Moazami 2014: 128–31.

46. Among his intriguing bas-reliefs are the depiction of Warahrān II in the company of his queen at Barm-e Delak, Tang-e (Sarāb-e) Qandil, and Sar-e Mašhad, eventually leading to the tripartite depiction on coinage and medallion vessels (notably the Sargveši silver cup) of the royal family (king; queen; heir). The illustration of Warahrān II's family on coinage (and medallion) could have emanated from the reception of Philip the Arab's *Concordia Augustorum* issues, which depict the imperial family in a similar constellation: the Caesar and the *augusta* Otacilia Severa in profile facing their son and heir Philip (II) the Younger, which *mutatis mutandis* is evocative of the later coins of Warahrān II, his queen and heir. For Warahrān II's reliefs of Barm-e Delak and Tang-e (Sarāb-e) Qandil, see Overlaet 2010; Overlaet 2013: 321 (for the states of the inscriptions); and Shahbazi 1998: 61–63. Compare also Herrmann (1983: 31–36, fig. 4), who attributes the relief at Tang-e Qandil to a local magnate ("Lord of Qandil") possibly a member of the royal family imitating the royal relief of Barm-e Delak; compare also Levit-Tawil 1993, in particular pp. 148–89, who attributes these inscriptions to Ardashahr I, based upon the uncertain reading of the poorly preserved inscription at Barm-e Delak. Compare also Farridnejad 2018: 385–400, who deems the female figure on these two reliefs (as well as the one on the relief of Sar-e Mašhad and the Sargveši silver cup) to be the divine *daēnā*- (Middle Persian *dēn*). On the Sargveši silver-gilt cup, the identity of the personae depicted on its four medallions, and their parallelism with those on Warahrān II's coins (of Types V–VIIc), see still authoritatively Harper and Meyers 1981: 30 and 37–38; on Warahrān II's coinage and its relation to Philip the Arab's *Concordia Augustorum* issues, see Alram and Gyselen 2012: 205, 273–75, in particular p. 274: "L'avvers de type VI s'inspire de médailles romaines de Philippe l'Arabe qui met en scène l'impératrice et son fils, tous les deux de rang auguste. Il s'agit d'une propagande dynastique d'un empereur qui a beaucoup de mal à imposer son fils comme son successeur et on peut penser que c'est une même idée qui a animé Warahrān II à choisir ce motif." See also Gyselen 2010: 199–200, and 203, on the evolution of portraits on Warahrān II's coinage, with the superimposed effigies of the king and queen, and later with the addition of the young prince and heir, opposite the imperial couple, in emulation of Roman coinage.

47. Carus was also likely depicted on another equestrian relief of Warahrān II at Naqš-e Rostam (NRm III), where the helmet of the Roman Caesar is more clearly visible. For the relief, see Vanden Berghe 1983: 82 and

139, no. 71: "le cavalier à droite porte un casque d'où s'échappe sa chevelure."

48. See Bivar 1972: 279, who seems to distinguish in the headgear of the opponent a Roman helmet: "The headgear of the opponent is not well preserved, but there are certain indications which support the view that it represents the plumed helmet of the Roman cavalry"; and Bivar 1972: 281, "The opponent, with 'coal-scuttle' helmet, may rightly be taken for a Roman." See also Alram and Gyselen 2012: 203, n. 6.

49. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Naghsh-e_rostam,_Iran,_2016-09-24,_DD_10.jpg.

50. The title of the chief magus Kerdīr under the rule of Warahrān II is given in the former's private inscription at Naqš-e Rostam (KNRb) as: Kerdīr ī bōxt-ruwān-Warahrān (i) Ōhrmazd mowbed, "Kerdīr whose soul was saved by Warahrān, the mowbed of (god) Ōhrmazd," which bespeaks his unique and exalted status under this sovereign.

51. See Bivar 1972: 279–81, in particular p. 280: "the great achievement of Bahram's reign was to defeat the simultaneous attacks of the Roman Emperor Carus, and of the rebellious Kushanshah. It will be seen that the same hypothesis suggests a symbolical interpretation of the Sar-Mashhad rock relief in South Persia as alluding to the same events." Also Bivar 1979: 326. For an excellent review of past interpretations of the this inscription, see Tanabe 1990. More recently compare Farridnejad (2018: 396–400) who has interpreted the female figure as the *dēn* (< *daēnā*-) that plays an important role as the companion to the likeness of the chief magus Kerdīr in his journey to the world beyond, which is reported on the latter's inscription (next to King Warahrān II's relief) at Sar-e Mašhad. This hypothesis had already been posited by Peter Calmeyer in Calmeyer and Gauber 1985: 48–49: "Man muß sich ferner fragen, ob an dieser Stelle 'diese Frau' dieselbe ist, die sonst dem Ebenbild Kartīrs die Hände reicht, oder ob sie nicht eher entsprechend dem Bahram zugeordnet ist, also etwa die *dēn* des Herrschers."

52. See Harper and Meyers 1981: 60–61; 215; pl. 14. Also, Demange 2006: 89, no. 29.

53. See Harper and Meyers 1981: 76–77; 81; pl. 25. Also, Overlaet 1993: 194–95, no. 53; Harper 2000: 51, no. 12; pl. 23; and Simpson 2006: 91–92, no. 31 (with additional bibliography).

54. See Harper and Meyers 1981: 126, which states on the basis of a thorough investigation of early Sasanian silver-gilt plates that: "From the evidence of these earliest silver vessels, it is apparent that in the third and early fourth centuries the king was not represented on silver plate in hunting scenes; only princes or rulers of recently conquered provinces were depicted in this fashion."

55. See Tanabe 1990: 40: "Apparently the king of kings did not need to proclaim his bravery, prowess, or hunting skills and so on, by producing and distributing silver plates depicting such a hunting scene, because

he had already accomplished the required rite of passage for accession to divine kingship. Rather, it was the princes who were in need of personal propaganda for receiving the legitimate nomination for accession to the status of the king of kings. This was the reason why Sasanian princes and governors made and distributed such silver plates . . ."

56. See Harper and Meyers 1981: 126–27: “At some time, no earlier than the middle or late fourth century, there was a change. The hunter-king became the most common motif on the silver plates. Moreover, after the fourth-century Sari plate, there are no Sasanian silver vessels with representations of a human figure other than the king, until the end of the Sasanian period in the seventh century. This is a clear indication of the initiation of controls over the production of silver plate. The standardization of the compositional and stylistic features, and the use of a single silver source differing from the sources that provided silver for the majority of third- and early fourth-century vessels, offer support for the thesis that the manufacture of vessels with Sasanian royal images represented an innovation and marked the initiation of a dynastic monopoly.”

57. See Tanabe 1998: 93–102.

58. See Demange 2006: 84, no. 26; Harper and Meyers 1981: mainly pp. 52–54, pl. 10; Tanabe 1998: 96–98, fig. 3; Tanabe 1989: 6–62, 65.

59. See Tanabe 1998, 96: "It may be concluded, therefore, that this plate was produced in an area where Gandharan art flourished or in area that could be readily influenced by this Buddhist or Kushan art. The Kushano-Sasanian territory . . . was undoubtedly such an area"; and p. 98: "We may conclude that the earliest examples of gilt-silver plates depicting 'Sasanian' royal hunts for two male lions were actually manufactured in the Kushano-Sasanian kingdom."

60. Tanabe 1989: 65–71; Tanabe 1990: 37; and Tanabe 1998: 95–97.

61. Tanabe 1990: 34–37 ; Tanabe 1998: 99–100.

62. Tanabe 1998: 100: "the two Kushan-Sasanian silver plates may be dated from the period prior to the enthronement of Bahram II in AD 276"; and: "Bahram II showed an unusual preference for depicting his queen and heir-apparent together with his own image. In the same way, he made a partial borrowing from the older tradition of investiture scene when he modelled his on the Kushano-Sasanian hunt for two male lions."

63. See Zaehner 1955a: 237–38.

64. In another passage of the Bundahišn the killing of one serpent is equated with that of four lions, as pious acts are concerned: *az awēšān gurg-sardagān garzag wattar | čiyōn gōwēd kū kē 4 gurg ī šēr bē ōzanēd kerbag and bawēd čand ēk garzag ī kūk-dumb bē ōzanēd*, “Worse than the wolf-species is the serpent, for it is said that *he who kills four “lion-wolves” is as meritorious as the one who kills the short-tailed serpent*” (*Great Bundahišn* 23.4–5).

65. The two-lion symbolism seems to have played a role (either symbolically or realiter) in the later Sasanian empire, as pretenders to the throne might have been tasked to confront two ferocious lions in a trial for accession. This is reported for Warahrān V (ī Gōr), among others by al-Thaʿālibī, who states that the royal crown (تاج الملك) was placed between two ferocious lions (ابن اسدين ضاريين) for the rightful challenger (here Warahrān V vs. Xosrōy) to recover. While jousting with two lions serves here as a *rite de passage* for those vying for the throne, the analogy with Warahrān II's case is insofar pertinent, as his overcoming the two existential threats to his kingdom, might have been deemed as a new beginning, the establishment of a new era. For the al-Thaʿālibī passage, see Zotenberg 1900: 552. Compare also Tanabe 1989: 99–100, and Tanabe 1990: 36–39, who sees in the Sar-e Mašhad relief an investiture scene.

66. For the different crowns of Öhrmazd 1 with a lion-head, see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 200; and pls. 57–58, in particular nos. 2206–13; and 2238–43.

67. See already Bivar 1972: 281: "It is a not unhappy touch, on this interpretation, that the headgear of the presumptuous Kushanshah was decorated precisely with a lion's head. A good Zoroastrian would not forget that such a beast was the familiar of Ahriman, the Spirit of Evil."

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From Babylon to Sasanian Iran and Sogdiana: Rituals of Royal Humiliation and the Substitute King

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Several rituals staging a fictitious subversion of the political order are documented in Babylon during the Achaemenian period, from close or more remote sources. All these rituals involved the royal function or the royal person himself. Their heritage can be traced in the Iranian culture as late as the Safavid period.¹

Babylon, Scythians, Alexander

The first ritual I shall mention is attested by a direct source. It is the royal humiliation performed in the Marduk (Bēl) temple every year on the fifth day of the month Nisan, the first month of the year, corresponding to the 25th of March or around that date. It is described in a famous text in the Akkadian language, dealing with various festivals. This text, reconstituted from four fragmentary tablets, was compiled during the Seleucid period, from earlier material. I quote here the passage concerning the royal humiliation:

"The king having arrived, the High Priest comes out of the sanctuary, he takes (from the king) the sceptre, the ring, the scimitar; he takes his royal crown. He presents them to Bēl and in front of Bēl he places them on a seat. Coming out of the sanctuary, he strikes the King's cheek (. . .), he places himself behind him, introduces him to Bēl (. . .), he pulls his ears, he makes him kneel on the floor (. . .). The king says, once only: 'I have not sinned, Lord of the Country, I have

not neglected what is (required) by Thy divine reign. I have not destroyed Babylon, I have not ordered its downfall. I have not harmed the Esagil, I have not forgotten the rites. I have not slapped the cheeks of one of my subordinates. I have not humiliated them.' (. . .) [*The High Priest having lectured the king, the king resumes his dignified aspect. The High Priest leads him out of the sanctuary and gives him back his ornaments.*] The High Priest strikes the king's cheek. If tears follow when he strikes his cheek, Bēl is well disposed; if tears do not come, Bēl is angry; the enemy will surge and cause his downfall."²

Among the Babylonian festivals I am going to discuss here, this is the only one in which the king participates in person. The High Priest forces him into an inferior position (but possibly without other witnesses) and he molests him, first within the sanctuary, then outside, this time in a kind of ordeal aiming at checking the sincerity of the oath he has previously made in front of the statue of the god. The tears have also an oracular function as they represent the rain on which good harvests depend. The importance of the ears in the body language is understandable as well, for the good king is the one who listens to the commands of the gods and the complaints of his subjects. For this last detail it is tempting to compare the gallery of royal kinsmen or ancestors (a fragmentary label inscription mentions a "king's son"), discovered in recent years at the ceremonial site of

Akchakhan-kala in Khorezm (Chorasmia). They date from around the turn of the Christian era and are executed according to very conservative Achaemenian artistic traditions. All these royal characters, possibly involved in the Frawardigān commemorative and purification festival at the end of the Zoroastrian year, present the strange feature of red ears contrasting with their white skin (fig. 1).³

A second ritual, which was also celebrated every year, is the one called "Sakaia" by the Babylonian scholar-priest Berossus, who wrote his *Babyloniaca* during the Seleucid period. It occurred around the 4th of July, a time which coincided with the *akitu* of Dumuzi, though descriptions of the latter in cuneiform texts do not contain the same details. In the form presented by Berossus in his Book 1 (*apud* Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XIV.44.639C) it is not a strictly royal ritual, but a carnival where each household is ruled by a slave dressed as a mock king:

"In the month Lōos, on the sixteenth day, there was held in Babylon a feast called *Sakaia*, extending over five days, wherein it was customary for the masters to be ruled by their slaves, and one of them, as leader of the household, was clothed in a robe similar to the king's; he was called the *zōganēs*."⁴

This last name sounds Iranian, at least superficially, but it has never been elucidated. The name of the festival itself is problematic, for it is also given by Strabo to another festival allegedly instituted by Cyrus after a victory gained in Pontus over Saka (i.e. Scythian) nomads, hence the name. It does not seem to have anything else in common with the Babylonian carnival except its annual and orgiastic character. In the case of the *Sakaia* described by Strabo, the dancers are dressed in Scythian garb, and it has been suggested that they would imitate or parody a real Scythian ritual of communal drinking, which is known from its depiction on a diadem from the Sakhnovka kurgan on the Dnepr (fig. 2).⁵ No such features are mentioned by Berossus in his account of the Babylonian ritual. In addition, Strabo's *Sakaia* are celebrated under royal control in all temples of the Iranian goddess Anāhitā, while those described by Berossus are a private ritual celebrated in each household, though the king is symbolically present through

the costume assumed by the slave who plays the overseer.

This last feature is reminiscent of still another Babylonian ritual, namely that of the substitute king, abundantly documented since the Neo-Assyrian period and splendidly commented on by Jean Bottéro.⁶ Contrary to the other rituals it is not annual but occasional: when bad omens tend to accumulate, the priests select a man of humble birth, or a prisoner, who is dressed in the royal costume, enthroned in the palace, and even provided with a virgin "queen," while the power continues to be exercised by the real king confined to a section of the palace protected from the impurity by ritual barriers made of reeds. When the substitute king is considered to have attracted upon him all the evil which had been predicted, he is executed together with his ephemeral consort, and everything he has touched is burned.

As recognized quite recently, this custom explains a strange incident which occurred in the Babylon palace shortly before Alexander's death. It is described in almost similar terms by Diodorus Siculus (XVII.116.1–7) and Arrian (VII.24.1–3): a local man of humble origin, or a criminal, managed to sit on the throne while it was empty and to put on the royal insignia which Alexander had left behind him. Instead of arresting him the eunuchs began to lament all around; put to the question, the man said he had acted on his own initiative, and he was executed. When they were eventually asked their opinion, the priests considered that the affair boded no good. While the religious background is clear, modern authors differ about how to interpret the incident itself: according to Pierre Briant it was fully controlled by Alexander himself in agreement with the Babylonian clergy in order to appease the local population after a succession of bad omens;⁷ differently, Pierre Chuvin considers that the initiative came from the clergy and that something went wrong, possibly because the Greeks did not properly understand the implications of the ritual and put to death the poor fellow before he had been able to take all the evil upon himself.⁸ Whatever the true explanation is, the stratagem did not help Alexander.

The ultimate association of this ritual with Alexander could have influenced the discourse allegedly addressed by Diogenes to Alexander, who visited him on the eve of his Persian expedition, and which is known through Dio Chrysostomus (*Oratio* IV.66–67):

(Diogenes speaks): "Have you not heard of the festival of the *Sakaia*, which is celebrated by the Persians, against whom you are eager to make an expedition? (. . .) They take one of the prisoners who are under sentence of death, set him on a golden throne, give him the king's clothes and allow him to give orders and to drink and to indulge himself and to consort with the king's concubines during the days of the festival, nobody offering any opposition to his doing anything he pleases. After this they strip him and scourge him and impale him."⁹

This passage seems to combine two rituals which were actually distinct: the domestic seasonal ritual of the *Sakaia* and the palatial and occasional ritual of the substitute king. On the other hand, as the *Sakaia* were celebrated in each household, one may conjecture that they took place in the palace as well and that some kind of a mock king appeared there also on this occasion, though probably not with such dramatic consequences as in the occasional ritual. There is also some uncertainty about the interpretation of the words which Diogenes (or perhaps the transmitter Dio Chrysostomus) uses to qualify the mode of execution: ἀποδύσαντες καὶ μαστιγώσαντες ἐκρέμασαν. They are often translated "strip, scourge and impale," but Chuvin in his previously mentioned article on Alexander's death proposes "strip, whip and suspend," which, coming after the clothing of the mock king with royal ornaments, would suggest a fascinating continuity with the Passion of Jesus.¹⁰

Sasanian Iran

So much for the Babylonian rituals down to the time of Alexander. During the subsequent Seleucid and Parthian periods we do not hear of them being performed, though some of the texts which document them were compiled then. After centuries of silence they appear again in texts pertaining to the Sasanian period, both in Iran itself and in independent Sogdiana. They are no longer associated specifically with Babylon, though one can presume a certain degree of continuity from Babylon to the neighbouring Sasanian capital Ctesiphon. Some features have changed, while others appear strikingly similar.

A kind of royal humiliation, occurring during the New Year festival as it did in Babylon, is described by Nizām al-Mulk, vizir of the Saljuks in the eleventh century, in his didactic treatise *Siyar al-Mulk* "Manners of the Kings," otherwise known in Persian as *Siyāsat-nāme* "Book of Government." Although he does not always mention his sources, Nizām al-Mulk puts together earlier material faithfully reproduced, some of which ultimately derives from genuine Sasanian Pahlavi sources. The passage which concerns us here runs as follows:

"They say that it was the custom of the Persian kings to give special audiences for the common people at the festivals of Mihrjān and Nauruz, and nobody was debarred. (. . .) When the day came the king's herald stood outside the palace gate and shouted, 'If any man this day impedes another from submitting his needs, the king will be innocent of his blood.' The king then received the people's petitions and laid them all before him; one by one he looked at them, and if amongst them there was one complaining against himself he rose and came down from the throne and **knelt before the mowbed-mowbedān**, saying, 'Before all other cases judge between me and this man, impartially and regardlessly.' Then the king would say to the *mowbed*, 'In the eyes of God there is no sin greater than a king's sin. (. . .) When a king is a tyrant all his courtiers begin to practise tyranny. (. . .) **Then the kingship is transferred to another house.**' (. . .) Then the *mowbed* considered the case and having decided between the king and his opponent, he awarded judgment in full to the winning party; but if anyone had made a false accusation against the king and had no proof, he was severely punished. (. . .) When the king had finished with these disputes **he returned to the throne and put on the crown.**"¹¹

Several details deserve a special comment. Besides Nowruz, the Zoroastrian New Year, the ritual is reported to take place during the festival of Mihrjān, in Pahlavi Mihragān, the second occasion when the Sasanian king gave audience to representatives of all classes of the population. It does not take place in a temple but in the royal palace, and the violence inflicted on the king is

now considerably reduced in comparison with the ancient Babylonian ritual. One can even suspect that the complaints are more a comedy than a reality, because of the threat of harsh punishment for anyone who would not be able to prove his claim. Despite all this, some essential features are retained: the king kneels in front of the high priest; he is explicitly threatened with a takeover by enemies if he does not observe justice; the fact that he puts on his crown at the end of the ceremony indicates that he has left it at the beginning, as was the case in Babylon, most probably because the dignity of the royal function must not be affected by the temporary humiliation of its incumbent.

Still according to Nizām al-Mulk, this ceremony had been observed by all Sasanian kings but was eventually abandoned by Yazdgird I, whom the Zoroastrian tradition portrays as a tyrant. Even if this information is true,¹² it appears that a similar procedure could be revived under the pressure of exceptional circumstances. One can deduce it from a story told in al-Bīrūnī's *Chronology* about Pērōz, Yazdgird's great-grandson. When Iran was affected by a terrible drought, as the story goes:

"Pērōz went to the famous fire-temple in Ādharkhurā in Fārs; there he said prayers, prostrated himself, and asked god to remove that trial from the inhabitants of the world. Then he went up to the altar and found there the ministers and priests standing before it. They, however, did not greet him as is due to kings. So he felt that **there was something the matter with the priests**. Then he went near the fire, turned his hands and arms round the flame, and pressed it thrice to his bosom, as one friend does with another when asking after each other's health; the flame reached his beard, but did not hurt him. Thereupon Pērōz spoke: 'O my Lord, thy names be blessed! If the rain is held back for my sake, **for any fault of mine, reveal it to me that I may divest myself from my dignity**; if something else is the cause, remove it, and make it known to me and to the people of the world, and give them copious rain.' Then he descended from the altar, left the cupola, and sat down on a (seat) made of gold, **similar to a throne, but smaller** (. . .). Now the ministers and priests came near him and greeted him as is due to kings."¹³

Here again some details are very consistent with the earlier information. The king is met coldly by the priests to whom this temple, the Ādharkhurā or Ādur-Farrbay, belongs specifically. His behaviour with the sacred fire is not that expected when the ritual is celebrated by priests: during the embrace his beard comes in contact with the fire, a polluting accident which the mouth-cover worn by Zoroastrian priests is intended to avoid. The situation is actually an ordeal, as it was in the Babylonian ritual, and the fact that the king has not yet passed the test is probably the main explanation for the priest's initial coldness. He begs for the coming of rain, in the same way as the Babylonian king was forced to shed tears to obtain rain from Bēl-Marduk. At the end of the ceremony he takes a humble position, seated on a low stand instead of a proper throne. Only at that moment the priests greet him.

Sogdiana

Let us now turn to Sogdiana and its main city Samarkand, a country which was never part of the Sasanian empire but where the Zoroastrian calendar had remained in use since the Achaemenian period, as well as some Mesopotamian customs linked with the royal cult of the goddess Nana, in part assimilated to Anāhitā. From the early seventh century onwards Chinese envoys left precise descriptions of various ceremonies celebrated there as well as in neighbouring principalities. One at least is strongly reminiscent of the Babylonian *Sakaia* and their New Year King. I quote here the account of the envoy Wei Jie, who visited Samarkand in 607:

"They make the first day of the sixth month the start of their year (. . .). In the forest east of the capital city on the seventh day they shoot arrows from horseback until they feel like stopping. On that day they set up a gold coin on a placard and the archer who hits it **becomes king for one day**."¹⁴

In 607 the seventh day of the sixth month of the Chinese calendar (the one the text refers to) coincided or nearly coincided with the fourth of July, the date of the Babylonian *Sakaia* according to Berossus. One can however, doubt that a solar date could have been kept completely consistently during one millennium, while the Zoroastrian calendar in use

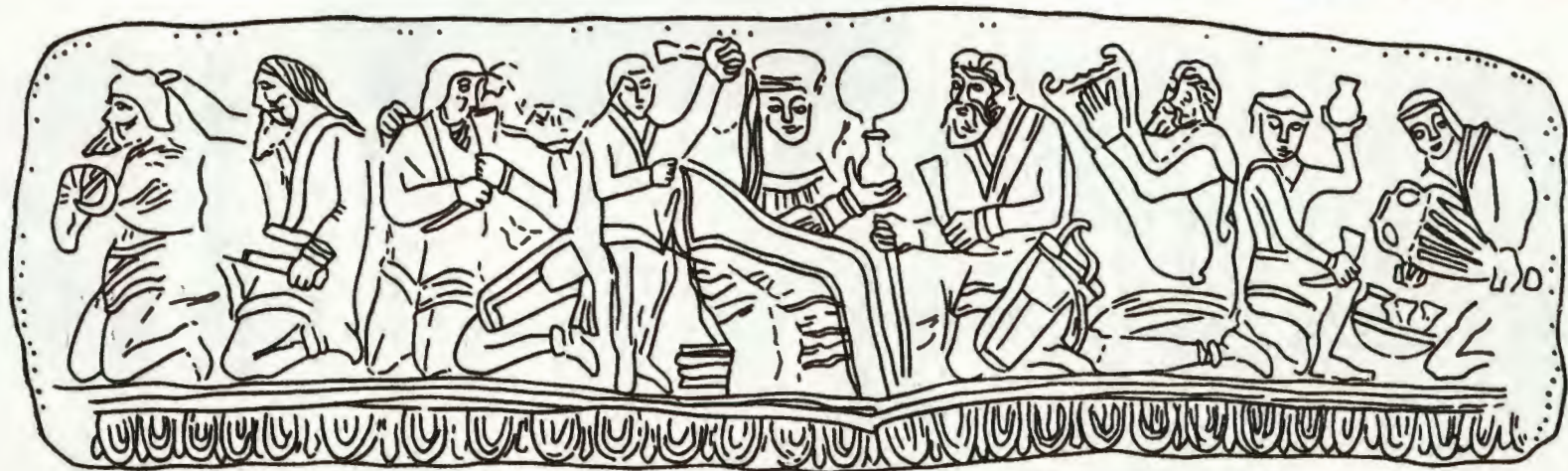


Fig. 1. A figure from the royal portraits gallery, Akchakhan-kala (Khorezm), end 1st c. B.C./beginning 1st c. A.D. Photo: © Karalpak-Australian Expedition in Chorasnia.



Fig. 3. "Ambassadors Painting," Samarkand, c. A.D. 660: left part of the southern wall, showing the procession of sacrificial animals to the mausoleum of royal ancestors. Photo: © MAFOUZ-Sogdiane.

was based on the "vague" year or 365 days which receded by one month every one hundred and twenty years. More probably, the ritual of the New Year King was appended at the end of the six days Nowruz cycle and moved together with it, coincidentally reaching again its ancient Babylonian date by the beginning of the seventh century.

A detail possibly inherited from the ritual of the temporary substitute king (but which might have also existed in the Babylonian yearly *Sakaia*) is the withdrawal of the real king. It is mentioned in another Chinese account, that concerning the principality of Chāch, today Tashkent, preserved in the chronicles *Beishi* and *Suishu* (the last source mentions the sacrifice to the shrine of the royal ancestors at Samarkand as well, but without details):

"To the southeast of the capital there is a building with a seat in the middle. On the sixth day of the first month [*here the reference is to the Zoroastrian calendar*] they take the ashes of the father and mother of the king, they put them in a golden urn and they place it on the stand. (. . .) The king followed by his dignitaries leaves a sacrificed animal on the spot. Once the ceremony is accomplished, **the king and his wife leave and go to a tent pitched at a distance**. The dignitaries and the others sit in order, enjoy a banquet and conclude the ceremony."¹⁵

The procession and the king and his court accompanying sacrificial animals to the memorial building out of the city is actually depicted on the famous "Ambassadors Painting" at Samarkand, executed in about 660 (fig. 3). On the southern wall of the painted hall, the king accompanied by dignitaries rides behind a cortege of sacrificial animals (a harnessed horse, four geese), themselves preceded by three co-spouses and the queen (on an elephant, figure missing); the aim of the procession is a small building which can be identified as the royal mausoleum.¹⁶ Though the Chinese passage does not mention the One Day King, a possible reason why the king and queen withdraw from the ceremony is that their substitute is about to come (this is the sixth day of the Nowruz Cycle, and according to the above-mentioned account by Wei Jie the One Day King was appointed on the seventh day, at the end of the archery contest).¹⁷ One cannot forget that in Babylon, during the fictitious rule of the substitute king, the real king was relegated to a ritual enclosure made of reeds. In this respect I

would like to draw attention to the castle *Qala-i Navruzshāh*, "the Castle of the King of Nowruz" thirty kilometers to the east of Panjikent,¹⁸ which might have been the place where the One Day King of Panjikent held his "court" every year, or the place where the real king withdrew.¹⁹

Postscript: Safavid Persia

Nothing in our post-Alexander documentation suggests a circumstantial use of the substitute king, who functions only in cyclic rituals. Or, rather, two such episodes are recorded, but they belong to a considerably later period. In 1593, when the court astrologers feared for Shāh 'Abbās I's life because of an inauspicious conjunction of Mars and Saturn, a man condemned to death as an "unbeliever" sat for three days on the Safavid throne before he was executed.²⁰ In 1669 the young Shāh Safi II became severely ill.

"The doctors were blamed; they in their turn blamed the astrologers for having made a mistake in casting the horoscope from the time the Shah ascended the throne. So they thought to correct this by a piece of buffoonery. Having discovered, to their notion, an unlucky day to be followed by a lucky one, they placed a Gabr [*a Zoroastrian*], who boasted of being descended from Rustam, on the throne, clad in royal robes with, behind him, a statue in wood resembling him. The nobles came to do homage to him as long as the hour was unlucky, but, when it became lucky, the Gabr fled and one of them cut off the wooden head with a sword. Then in ordinary clothing appeared the king, who, seated on the throne, was robed and placed there with the name of Sulaiman."²¹

The substitute, a Zoroastrian, thus belonging to the lowest social status (except that of slave) in Iran at that time, was not a criminal and was fictitiously linked to a prestigious lineage in order not to offend the throne he was to occupy briefly consequently he was executed only in effigy. In this case at least civilization had progressed since ancient Babylon.

So far I have been unable to discover another such episode in the earlier periods, which is very surprising considering the extreme importance of astrology in all Iranian courts. Any relevant information is welcome.

Notes

1. A first version of this paper was presented at the workshop "Picturing Royal Charisma in the Near East," organized by Arlette David and Rachel Milstein at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on 12–15 January 2015, where it benefited much from the discussions. I also thank my colleagues Samra Azarnouche, Mihaela Timuş and Antonio Panaino for valuable suggestions and references they gave me when finalizing it.

2. My translation from the French version by Thureau-Dangin 1921: 144–45. For the Mesopotamian background of Achaemenian kingship generally see Panaino 2000.

3. Kidd and Betts 2010: 657–66, figs. 8–9, and my remarks: 868.

4. Athenaus, *Deipnosophists* 14.44.639C, trans. C. B. Gulick, Loeb Classical Library. On the various festivals called "Sakaia" in ancient literature see de Jong 1997: 379–83, with a discussion of the relevant texts.

5. Boyce and Grenet 1991: 292. On this image and some related ones see the excellent description and commentary in Schiltz 1994: 184–89, figs. 134–38. The attendants drink but, contrary to the *Sakaia* described by Strabo, they do not dance, and the only woman is the enthroned goddess who holds a human-faced mirror and presents the cup, possibly as a symbol of investiture. According to Schiltz she could well be Hestia-Tabiti, a goddess particularly linked with Scythian royalty (see Herodotus IV.7, 59, 127, and generally on this question Dumézil 1978: 125–45); in this case her role would have been transferred to Anāhitā in the Iranian version of the festival. Compare, however, Bessonova 1983: 40, 98–107, and Shenkar 2014: 86–87, who interpret some details differently and keep to Rostovtzeff's old identification with Aphrodite-Artimpasa.

6. Bottéro 1978; republished in Bottéro 1992: 138–53. The Neo-Assyrian texts published since do not appear to contain any new material of this subject (the text 250 in Hunger 1992, dated 672 B.C., mentions a "substitute for the king," but in this particular case his role is only to supervise the cutting of dikes at night: a flood is predicted and such hazardous preventive action cannot be assumed by the king himself).

7. Briant 2002: 726, 863.

8. Chuvin 2006.

9. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* IV.66–67, trans. J. W. Cohoon, Loeb Classical Library.

10. Chuvin 2006: 61. The relevance of this passage to Jesus as a "mock king" had already been noticed in Eddy 1961.

11. Trans. Darke 1978: 43. Christensen 1934:151–53, had already translated and commented this text, but only in relation to Berossus' *Sakaia* and not knowing of the Babylonian ritual of royal humiliation.

12. Some other sources ascribe this decision to his grandson Yazdgird II, see Christensen 1944: 283, 302–3.

13. Trans. Sachau 1879: 215 (text 228).

14. Trans. C. B. Wakeman, quoted in Compareti 2016: 274–75. On this festive cycle see Grenet and Marshak 1998, ignored by Cristoforetti 2006/2007 (who draws much on a comparison with the Chronicle of Arbela, a source which, even if not a forgery as assumed by some, is suspected to have been heavily manipulated by its successive redactors and by its first modern editor, see especially Jullien 2001).

15. From the French translation by the late Joël Thoraval in Grenet 1984: 254 (more literal for this specific passage than that of Wakeman quoted in Compareti 2016: 253).

16. Marshak 1994; Compareti 2016: 126–50; Grenet 2020.

17. This was also the opinion of Boris Marshak (in a discussion at the conference *Royal Naurūz in Samarkand*, Venice, Centro Studi e documentazione della Cultura Armena, 14 March 2005).

18. Iakubov 1988: 50–54, figs. 12–12a; Iakubov 1996: 14–20, figs. 8–9. In Western Iran and among the Kurds a folkloric survival of the New Year King is recorded as late as the last century, with the clownish *Mir-e Nowruzi* "elected" on the sixth day of Nowruz and "ruling" from one to five days (Epinette 2014).

19. Another custom, though seemingly unrelated to the New Year described by the Chinese, shows that a yearly rite akin to a "royal ordeal"—in this case a champion ordeal—existed at Samarkand. This custom of the "Horseman of Soghd" (i.e. the Knight of Samarkand, the State's champion who must expose his life every year to defend his position) is mentioned by the Arab chronicler Ṭabarī under the year 704 (A.H. 85; ii.1146), in relation to Mūsā ibn 'Abdallāh, an Arab rebel and soldier of fortune who had taken control of Termez and was visiting Samarkand, which had not yet been conquered.

"Now the people of Soghd have a table on which are put greasy meat, bread, and an ewer of something to drink. On a particular day every year that is set out for the Horseman of Soghd, and no one but he may go near it; it is his food on that day. If anyone else eats from it, he fights a duel with him, and the table goes to whichever kills the other" (trans. Hinds 1990: 91).

The continuation of the story shows that the competition was not open to foreigners: a companion of Mūsā challenges the Horseman and kills him, infuriating the king of Samarkand, who declares: "I accommodated you and honored you, and you have killed the Horseman of Soghd. Had I not given you and your companions a safe-conduct, I would kill you. Get out of my territory!"

This occurrence is the only one which could testify to a survival of that cruelty which had once characterized the Babylonian ritual of the substitute king, while the Sogdian New Year ritual previously discussed does

not imply any violence inflicted on the substitute after he has finished his office.

20. Epinette 2014. This episode is related in Shayegan 2012: 39, n. 13, from a British source (Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia*, London, 1829: 346). Shayegan's book deals with ideological conceptions he considers as later reflections of the ancient Mesopotamian rituals, but for the rituals themselves he describes only the Babylonian "substitute king," not the royal humiliation or the Sasanian and Sogdian testimonies.

21. *Carmelites* 1939: I. 405.

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Studies in Some Documents from the “Pahlavi Archive” (3)

DIETER WEBER

BERLIN

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- B. Berlin 7 (Salt for the Bathhouse)
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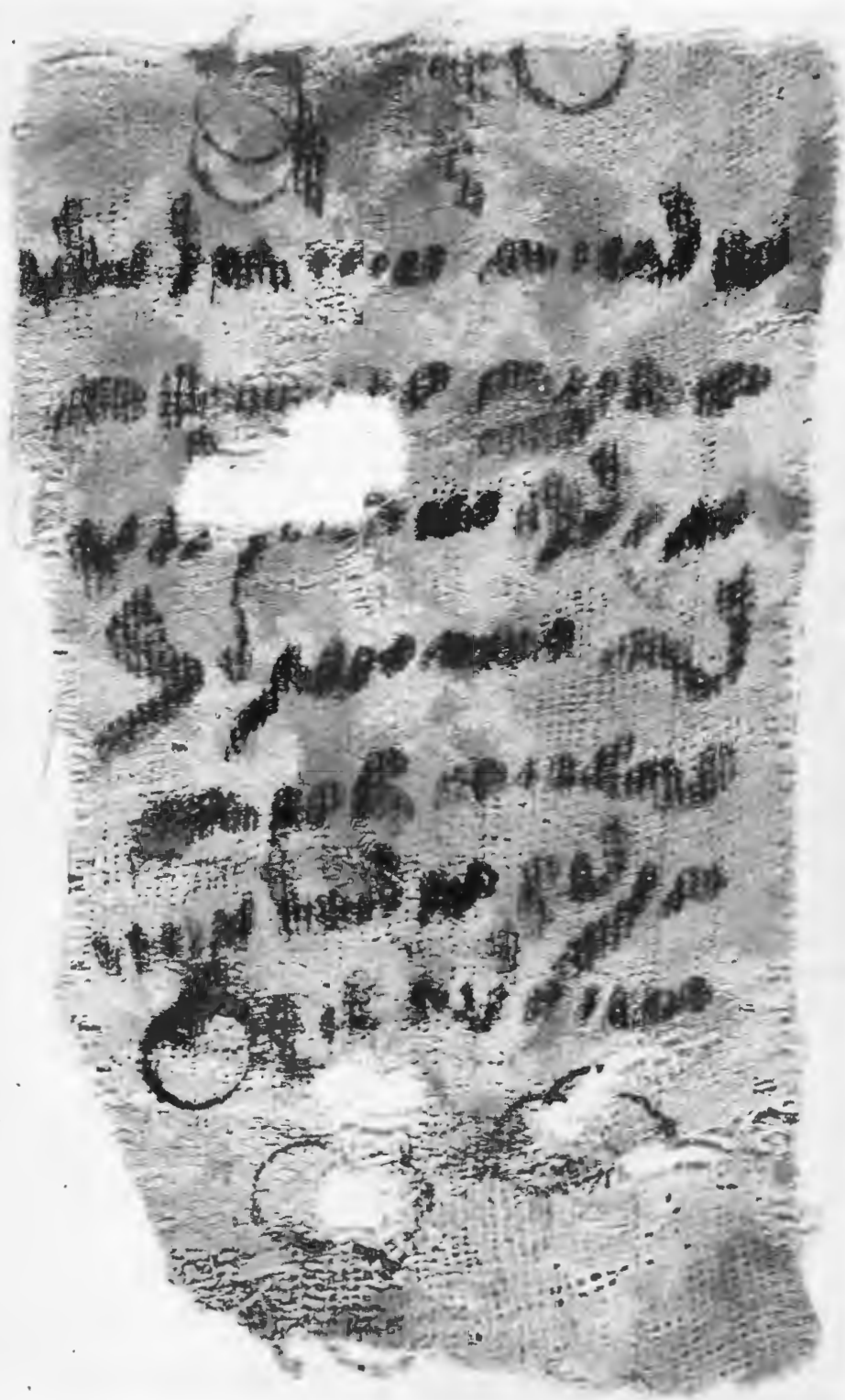
References

Word Index

I. Breeding of Poultry

These documents belong to the most informative texts from the “Pahlavi Archive” as they provide us with detailed information on poultry breeding in Sasanian, resp. post-Sasanian times. Unfortunately in the book by von der Osten-Sacken 2015 the author does not consider Iranian matters. But, as a matter of fact, poultry, especially geese, have been domesticated and bred for at least 3,000 years.

A. Berlin 6
On Poultry



Description of the document in Weber 2008: 29

Transliteration

○ ①
 1 plyk' Y PWN nmywl d'lyk
 2 ZNH BYRH' rṭwhšṭ Y
 3 ŠNT ʔX-III-(III-III) (l)wcyk
 4 l'd ŠG G-III ʔL
 5 d'ṭyn' Y hmwck Y
 6 'nblk'n ʔDYN L'WHL YHBWNṭ'
 7 z'ṭ'nplhw' ḤṬYMWVNṭ ○
 ① †[Bulla] ①

Transcription

○ ①
 1 *Friyag ī pad Namēwar dārīg*
 2 *ēn māh Ardwaššt ī*
 3 *sāl 3(9) rōzīg*
 4 *rāy ʔaw grīw 3 ō*
 5 *Dādēn ī hammōzag ī*
 6 *ambaragān ēg abāz dād*
 7 *Zādānfarrox āwišt ○*
 ① †[Bulla] ①

Translation

[1] *Friyag*, the manager in *Namēwar*, [2] on behalf of the ration (lines 3–4) of this month *Ardwaššt* (2nd month) of [3] year 3(9) [4] thereupon attributed² (line 6) 3 *grīw* of barley to [5] *Dādēn* the person in charge of [6] the *poultry. [7] *Zādānfarrox* sealed (it).

Commentary

Ed. Weber 2008: 28–33; corr. Gignoux 2010: 115.

Line 5: *Dādēn* already in the 2008 edition.—The term *hammōzag* is discussed in Weber 2017: 137.

Line 6: *ambaragān* (replacing older incorrect readings and interpretations), pl. of **ambarag** [ʔmblk' | N *anbara*] 'hairless (animal)' (CPD), meaning 'feathered' or 'winged' animals, i.e. 'birds'. also in **Berk.** 121, 7–8 *ō rahīgān ud ambaragān* as well as in **Berk.** 184, 4–5 (see below **Ab**) *pad dast čar frēzēnēd āb ī* [5] *ambaragān garmak pad sang*, and in **Berk.** 73, 6; the meaning 'poultry' becomes evident in **Berk.** 246 (see here the next text **Aa**) where in the beginning of the text geese are mentioned but later, in lines 9–10, we find *hamōg 2 ī ahlaw ramīg 3 | ī ambaragān* 'two equally righteous boys out of three (for watching) the poultry'.—For the phrase *abāz dādan ō* MacKenzie (CPD) offers the translation 'attribute, ascribe to'.



Berlin 6, 6



Berk. 121, 8



Berk. 246, 10

Aa. Berk. 246

Poultry



Berk. 246

Leather, bell-shaped, 10 × 9.5 cm

Bulla absent, crumpled

13 lines, verso blank

Transliteration

- 1 mwlw'ndlw'n PWN hwlš'n BYN
- 2 yzd'n'pšt'n 'wcynk' Y sy Y
- 3 plhw'tl hw't'kr't' l'd BYT' Y
- 4 hwd'hk (MN) ZK plyk' Y (PWN nmywl)
- 5 lmt'c'n wnd't' (YK'YMWN)t' (MN)
- 6 stplyh twb'n L' 'pšp'ltn'
- 7 'yc ○ (hngt) 'ckynmwst
- 8 (l'd 'k) lmyk' ZK wnd'tn' wlck'
- 9 hmwg-II Y 'hlwb lmyk' III
- 10 Y 'nblk'n wh'k S-II ○
- 11 'P-m ZNH pt[w]ck'
- 12 p'tgl(?)n)
- 13 HTYMWNt

top vertically illegible

Transcription

- 1 *murw-andarōnān pad x^warišn andar*
- 2 *Yazdānābestān uzēnag ī sī ī*
- 3 *farroxtar X^wadāgird rāy xānag ī*
- 4 *hudāhag (az) ān Friyag ī (pad Namēwar)*
- 5 *ram-tāzān windād (ēštā)d (az)*
- 6 *stabrih tuwān nē abespārdan*
- 7 *ēč ○ (hangad) āzgēnmust*
- 8 *(rāy ak) ramīg ān windādan warzag*
- 9 *hamōg 2 ī ahlaw ramīg 3*
- 10 *ī ambaragān wahāg s(atēr) 2 ○*
- 11 *u-m ēn paywāzag*
- 12 *pādīr(ān)*
- 13 *āwišt*

Translation

[1–2] Birds are inside for food on (the estate of) *Yazdānābestān* because of the expenses of the geese of [3–4] the very fortunate *X^wadāgird*. [5] The benevolent house of that *Friyag* (in *Namēwar*) has been looking for a run for the flocks but with [6] effort it was not possible to consign [7] any ○ because of the greed (to become rich) of the [8] guards for the flock(s) being bad he has to find those of workers [9] who are equally (good) two or three honest boys [10] to watch the poultry at 2 staters [11–13]. And I sealed this response held back

Commentary

Unpublished

Line 1: *murw-andarōnān* is an unusual formation, but cf. *ud nāmag pad dast ī an-andarān frēstēd* 'and a copy to be sent to the attention of uninvolved persons'.³

Line 2: (sy) *sī* 'geese' are well documented in Pahlavi documents; cf. **Berk.** 55, 26 in a list together with cereals; **P.** 80 [1] *x^wār ud bār ud sī* [2] *ō makōg burdan* 'to bring victuals and geese on the ship';⁴ **P.** 139 [7] *man jud az arzan* [8] *////// frēstīd ayāxrd* [9] *murw ī šašgānag 300* [10] (*sī* 4) *kabōtar 40* 'Apart from millet [8–9] [.....] I sent the birds in question of six kinds, viz. 300: [10] 4 geese, 40 pigeons[...] [11] [.....]'.⁵

Line 3: For the proper name *X^wadāgird* cf. already Weber 2013: 174 where it is said that "the name may denote a relationship to a *x^wadāy* 'lord' just as *Yazdāngird* to *yazdān* 'god(s)'. "Here all occurrences are put together to show the commonly used writing:



Berk. 27, 8 year 42



Berk. 41, 4 3 year 5/36



Berk. 41, 6



Berk. 41, 10



Berk. 110, 6 year 36



Berk. 158, 6 year 36



Berk. 192, 2 no year



Berk. 251, 8 year 36

Line 4: *Friyag* is dated from year 37 through 40: **Berlin** 6, 1 (year 39), **Berlin** 19, 1 (year 37), **Berlin** 38, 1 (year 37), **Teheran A**, 1 (year 38), **Teheran F**, 1 (year 40), **Mazda** 2, 1. 11 (letter, no year), **Berk.** 4, 1 (year 37), **Berk.** 5, 1 (year 37), **Berk.** 14, 1 (year 39), **Berk.** 29 R 1 (year 40), **Berk.** 31, 1 (year 38), **Berk.** 62, 4 (year 38), **Berk.** 224, 1 (year 38), **Berk.** 258, 1 (no date preserved).

Line 5: *ram-tāzān* 'run for flocks', cf. *asp-tāzān* 'horse paddock' **Tab.** 24, 16.

Lines 8 and 9: *ramīg* is formed like *uštariḡ* '*camel driver, rider' **Berk.** 56, 9. pl. **Berlin** 1, 7, denoting a person who is concerned with camels.

Line 11: (plc[?]p[?]tk') = *frazāftag* 'finished, completed'.

Line 12: *pādīr(ān)* is fairly certain, but the rest of the line remains unknown.

Ab. Berk. 184
On Poultry Breeding



Leather, vertical rectangle, 12 × 7.5 cm
Bulla absent, Torn band at bottom
Traces of 12 lines, verso blank

Transliteration

1].
2]. Y dyn'p̥zw[t
3 MN plyk' Y ...[
4 PWN YDH cl plyc(p')nyk MY' Y[
5 'nblk'n grmk' PWN sng Y[
6 dwɬk' hm'y G-I hng'lwyh 'y
7 'wcynyt X-II ○ sng
8 ZNH ptgl'b PWN gl'myk'
9 dwstyh [
10 PWN gwk'dymwdl[
11 d'tynpn'h[
12 HTYMWNt (sic)

Transcription

1].[
2]. ī Dēnabzū[d
3 az Friyag ī ...[
4 pad dast čar frēz(bā)nīg āb ī[
5 ambaragān garmak pad sang ī[
6 dūdag hamē g(rīw) 1 hangārweh ē
7 uzēnēd 12 ○ sang
8 ēn padirāy pad grāmig
9 dōstih [
10 pad gugāy-muhr[
11 Dādēnpanāh[
12 āwišt

Translation

[1] [...]. [... [2] ...], of *Dēnabzū* [d] [3] from *Friyag* ... [4] when free range grazing (i.e. not within an enclosed run) water is absolutely mandatory for the [5–6] poultry (and) as always 1 *grīw* of *beans as weight unit of the “house” to be carefully considered [7] he should expend: 12 weight units. [8–12] He sealed this receipt with affectionate friendship [] with the witnesses’ seal(s) of *Dādēnpanāh* []

Commentary

First ed. Gignoux 2009: 129 (with fig. 142). The middle part of the document, which is relatively well preserved, is not discussed there; the numbers in the text do not refer to a year but to the amount (weight) of *garmak*. This document gives us the final proof that *garmak* indeed are 'beans' (and not melons) as already proposed in Weber 2012: 220 (fn. 21) and Weber 2014: 63; 'beans (*Vicia faba*)' are a well-known feed for geese regarding their need of proteins (and yet, of course, of the Persian *cuisine* too).

Line 2: Instead of *Dēn-abzū*[*d* even $\langle \text{dyn}^{\text{'}}\text{p}^{\text{'}}\text{z}^{\text{'}}\text{n}[\text{yt}^{\text{'}}] = Dēn-abzān[\bar{i}d$ would be possible.

Line 4: *pad dast čar* is rendered by 'during free range grazing (i.e. not within an enclosed run)'; that means that there is no run for the flocks (*ram-tāzān*) as there was none found in **Berk. 246**, 5 (see above **Aa**). This way of grazing was surely undertaken by some shepherd boys who watched the flocks, particularly geese, when strolling around.—Regarding the necessity of water for the poultry see the letter **Berk. 121**.⁶

Line 5: On *āmbaragān* see above.

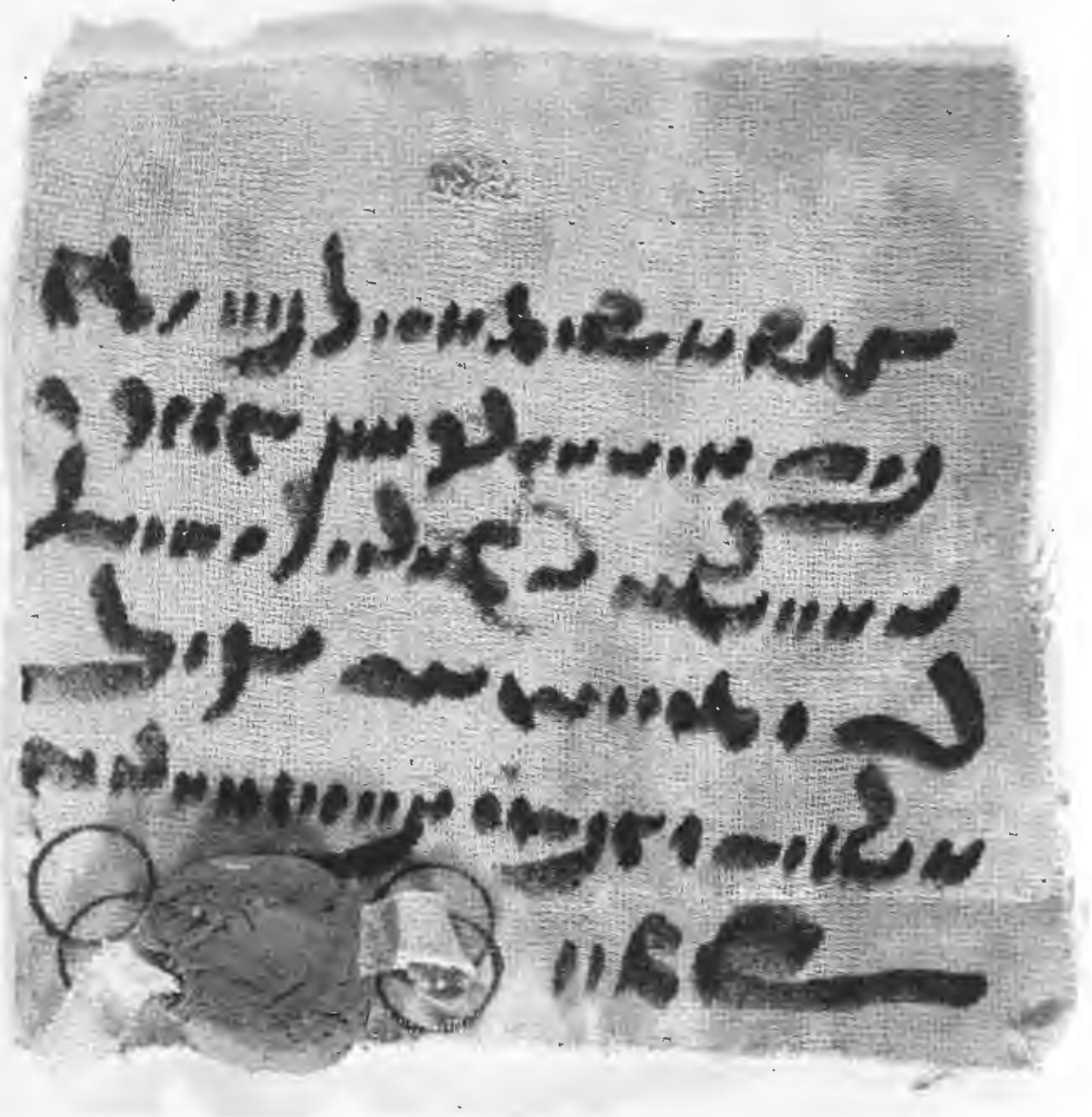
Lines 5 and 7: ⟨sng⟩, MP *sang* ‘weight’, cf. *saxtan*, *sanʃ* ‘weigh’ (CPD). The word is well known from inscriptions on silver bowls indicating their weight, cf. Weber 2010: 349–50.

Line 6: For the reading see already Weber 2011a: 299. The actual meaning, of course, is 'family'; but as is shown by **Berk. 91**, 6 *pad kabīz ī dūdag*, **Berk. 108**, 2–3 *pad kabīz ud dōlag ud paymān ī | šahr* and **Berk. 93**, 9–13 *pad kabīz | ī 'Amīr gandum g(rīw) 1 | k(abīz) 9 ē bawēd | pad kabīz ī dūdag | g(rīw) 3 k(abīz) 5* the reference to *dūdag* means that the common weight unit (of the home) will be used.

Line 11: On *Dādēnpanāh* (meaning 'having lawful protection') see below **D.** comm. on line 14.

II. *Aspbād*, the 'caretaker'. The following documents reveal, by presenting various contents, the name *Aspbād* which, in Berk. 65 (= document H.), is classified as 'caretaker'. There all occurrences are put together to show small differences in writing the name. This document is quite unique as it seems to guarantee the compensation of loss of wine (destroyed or spilled during the transport) by the caravaner.

B. Berlin 7
Salt for the Bathhouse



Description of the document in Weber 2008: 35

Transliteration

- 1 'sṣp'ṭ' MN ZK Y 'L bwn' ZNH
- 2 BYRH ddw' Y ŠNT' X-III 'wcynk'
- 3 Y PWN glmyh Y hmplhwṭl 'wst'nd'l
- 4 l'd nmk' wh'k ŠG G-I 'L
- 5 pylwc' Y nywbyhk'n YHBWNṭ' ck' plhwd'n
- 6 ḤTYMWNṭ' ♂ [Bulla] ♂

Transcription

- 1 *Aspbād* az ān ī ō bun ēn
- 2 *māh Day* ī sāl 34 uzēnag
- 3 *ī pad garmīh* ī ham-farroxtar ōstāndār
- 4 *rāy namak wahāg* jaw grīw-ēw ō
- 5 *Pērōz* ī Nēwbēhagān dād čak Farroxyān
- 6 *āwišt* ♂ [Bulla] ♂

Translation

[1] *Aspbād* from that which (belongs) to the *bun* this [2] month *Day* (10th month) of year 34: because of the expenses [3] of the *bath of the equally very fortunate *Ōstāndār*, [4] gave (*dād*, line 5) salt worth 1 *grīw* of barley to [5–6] *Pērōz* ī *Nēwbēhagān*. *Farroxyān* sealed the *čak*.

Commentary

Ed. Weber 2008: 34–39.

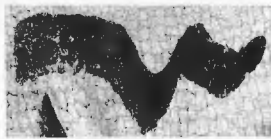
Line 1: The compilation of the name given in Weber 2008: 66 is to be replaced by that one under **Berk.** 65 (= document H.).

Line 3: ⟨pṭ' dlm'n⟩ (Weber 2008) definitively is an incorrect reading; it runs ⟨PWN glmyh⟩ which is also known from **Berk.** 48, 11, **Berk.** 106, 6 and 8 as well as from **Berk.** 141, 3, **Berk.** 143, 5 and **Berk.** 237, 1. It very probably denotes a bathhouse (Turkish bath?).

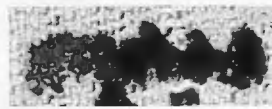
Line 4: For the writing of ⟨ŠG⟩ (*left*) vs. ⟨HG⟩ (*right*) cf.



Berlin 7, 4



Berk. 62, 16, 6



Berlin 14, 5



Berk. 105, 1

Line 5: Cf. *Čahārbōxt* ī *pad Nēwbēhagān* **Berk.** 62, 3–4 and *Pērōz* ī *pad Anārgarān* **Berk.** 62, 7.

C. Berlin 8
Distribution of Wine to Horsemen



Berlin 8
Description of the document in Weber 2008: 41

Transliteration

1 'šp'ṭ' MN ZK Y 'L
 2 bwn' lwcyk Y BYRH 'ṭwr'
 3 W BYRH ddw' Y ŠNT X-II Y
 4 kwlṭwdy l'd HS-XXX ○
 5 dwlk' 'HRN Y PRŠY'
 6 GBR'-I HS-X ○ dwlk[
 7 YHBWNṭ ck' dyn'pzwṭ'
 8 ḤṬYMWVNṭ ○
top vertically dhk

Transcription

1 *Aspbād* az ān ī ō
 2 *bun rōzīg ī māh Ādur*
 3 *ud māh Day ī sāl 32 ī*
 4 *Kurdōy rāy may 60 ○*
 5 *dōlag any ī aswār*
 6 *mard 1 may 20 ○ dōlag*
 7 *dād čak Dēnabzūd*
 8 *āwišt ○*
top vertically dahag

Translation

[1–2] *Aspbād* from that which (belongs) to the *bun*, on behalf of the ration of month *Ādur* (9th month) [3] and month *Day* (10th month) of year 32 of [4–5] **Kurdōy* gave (*dād*, line 7) 60 pails of wine, for each single horseman [6] 20 pails of wine. [78] *Dēnabzūd* sealed the *čak*.—*top vertically*: *issuing office.

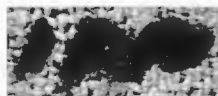
Commentary

Ed. Weber 2008: 40–43; corr. Gignoux 2010: 115.

Line 1: Gignoux 2010b: 115 correctly recognised that the reading (ʔšp'ṭ') of the 2008 edition is not verifiable, on the other hand neither is his alternative *Yazdānpād*. A collection of all occurrences of this name (see **Berk.** 65) resulted in a tentative reading *Aspbād*.

Line 4: The name *Kurdōy* again documented in **Berk.** 43B, 8 and **Berk.** 233, 10.

Line 5: The reading of (ʔHRN) seems to be certain when comparing the writing in **Berk.** 107, 7:



Berlin 8, 5



Berk. 107, 7

However the syntax of the phrase *any ī aswār mard-ēw* still is in need of explanation. (PRŠY) itself is certain and well attested in the documents (**Berk.** 48, 8, **Berk.** 63, 10, **Berk.** 156, 6 etc.).

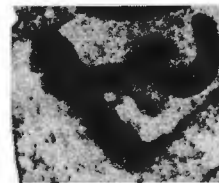
Line 6: The quantity of wine which is due to a horseman does not amount to 10 *dōlag* (as was given in the 2008 edition) but 20 *dōlag* for two months; this matches the quantity given in **Berk.** 48, 8–9 where the same quantity is intended.

Line 7: The name *Dēnabzūd* after Gignoux 2010: 115.

top vertically (dhk) is present participle, lit. 'giving', here denoting the '*issuing office', also occurring on an ostrakon from Ray.

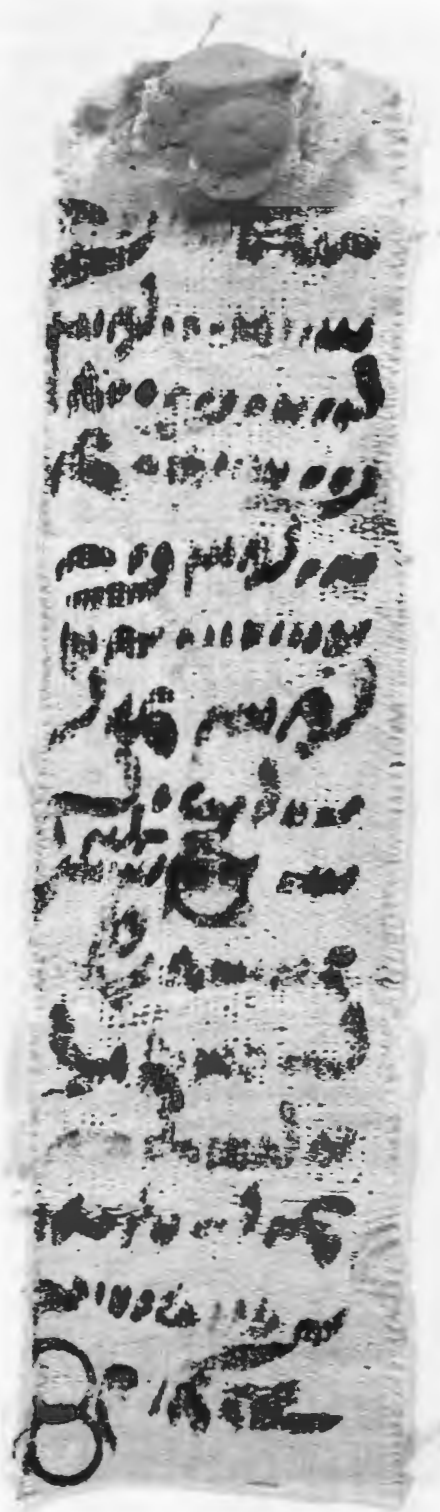


Berlin 8 top vert.



O. 133a, 4

D. Berlin 9
Distribution of 6 grīw of Wheat for Three Months



Description of the document in Weber 2008: 45

Transliteration

1 'spp't' ZNH BYRH
 2 sṇdrmt Y ŠNT X-III
 3 lwcyk Y BYRH whwmn'
 4 BYRH sṇdrmt Y hm
 5 ŠNT X-III BYRH
 6 prwrtyn' Y ŠNT
 7 X-III 'MYt
 8 Y plhwz't' l'd
 9 HG O G-III-III [Y hwlšn']
 10 cygwn HWHyt
 11 l'd dwš(l)m 'L
 12 plst'l Y
 13 'MYt Y plhwz't'
 14 YHBWNt' d'tynpn'h
 15 HTYMWNt ⑥

Transcription [Bulla]

1 *Aspbād ēn māh*
 2 *Spandarmad ī sāl 33*
 3 *rōzīg ī māh Wahman*
 4 *māh Spandarmad ī ham*
 5 *sāl 33 māh*
 6 *Frawardīn ī sāl*
 7 *34 mādar*
 8 *ī Farrozzād rāy*
 9 *gandum O grīw 6 [ī x^warišn]*
 10 *čīyōn hēd*
 11 *rāy dōš(ār)am ō*
 12 *paristār ī*
 13 *mādar ī Farrozzād*
 14 *dād Dādēnpanāh*
 15 *āwišt ⑥*

Translation

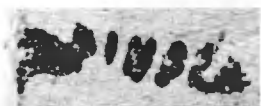
[1] *Aspbād* this month [2] *Spandarmad* (12th month) of year 33 [3] gave (*dād*, line 14) on behalf (*rāy*, line 11) of the rations of month *Wahman* (11th month) and [4] month *Spandarmad* (12th month) of the same [5] year 33 [and] month [6] *Frawardīn* (1st month) of year [7] 34 for the mother [8] of *Farrozzād* [9] 6 *grīw* of wheat [8 *bis*] [as food] [10–11] kindly (in love)—as is right and proper—to [12] the maidservant of the [13] mother of *Farrozzād* [14] given. *Dādēnpanāh* [15] sealed (it).

Commentary

Ed. Weber 2008: 44–47; cf. Gignoux 2010:115.

Line 11: The reading of *Gušnasp* in the 2008 edition is obsolete now. The interpretation as *dōš(ār)am* is very probable.

Line 14: *Dādēnpanāh* (meaning 'having lawful protection'), earlier erroneously read *Zādānfarrox*, is a well-known person in the documents (*deest* Gignoux 1986).



Berlin 9, 14 year 33/34

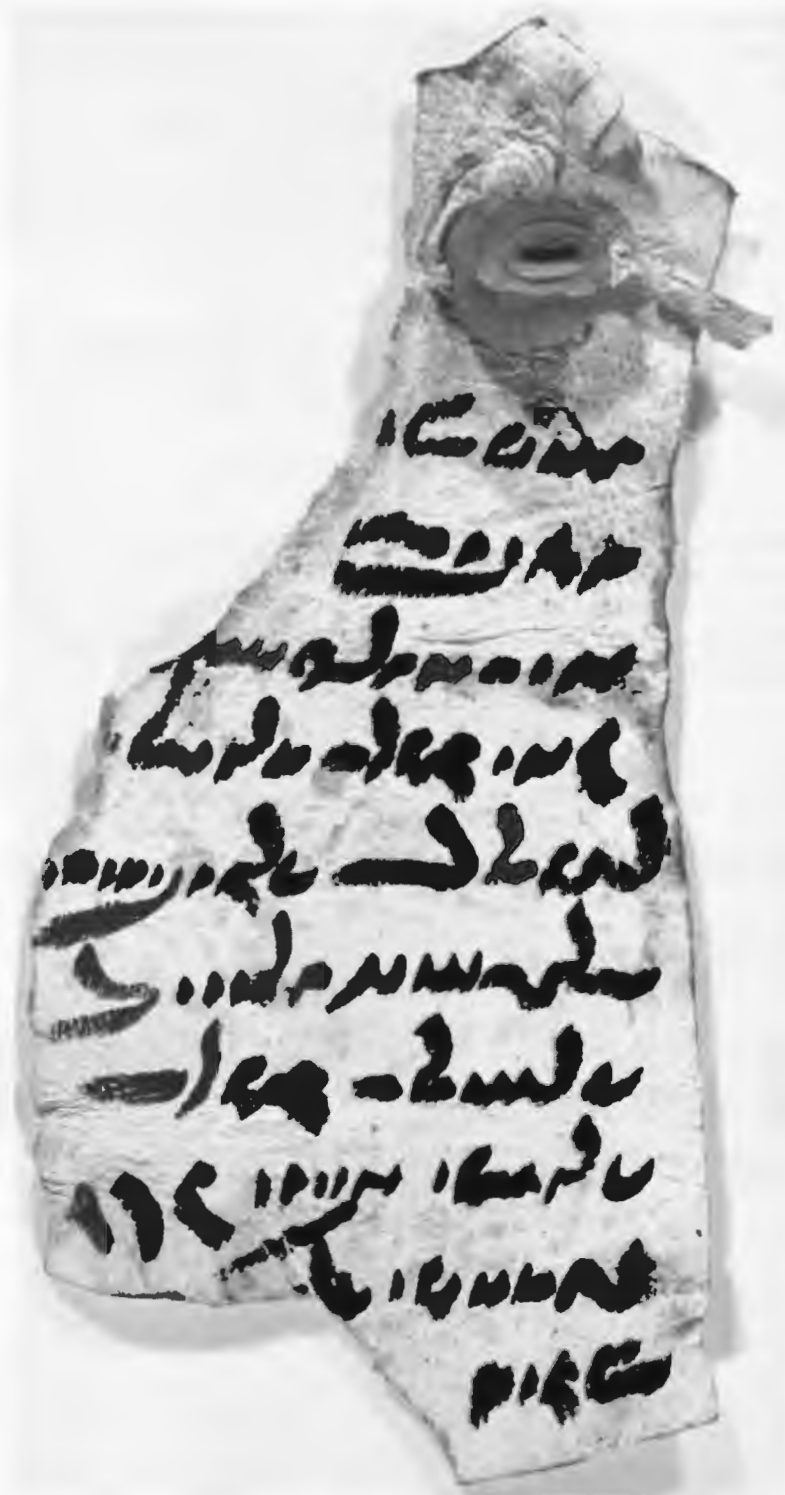


Berk. 225, 12 year 39



Berk. 184, 11 no year

E. Berlin 12
Vinegar for the *Butcher



Berlin 12
Description of the document in Weber 2008: 57

Transliteration [Bulla]

1 'spp't'
2 ZNH BYRH
3 ddw' Y ŠNT X-III
4 cygwn 'MYtł Y plhwz't'
5 l'st'l Pd plmwł B'YHWNstn
6 HLY-III-II dwłk' 'L
7 plst'l Y 'MYtł Y
8 plhwz't' YHBWNt ck'
9 dyn'pž'nyt'
10 HTYMWNt

Transcription [Bulla]

1 *Aspbād*
2 *ēn māh*
3 *Day ī sāl 34*
4 *čiyōn mādar ī Farrozzād*
5 *rāstār rāy framūd x^wāstan*
6 *sik 5 dōlag ō*
7 *paristār ī mādar ī*
8 *Farrozzād dād čak*
9 *Dēnabzānīd*
10 *āwišt*

Translation

[1] *Aspbād* [2] this month [3] *Day* (10th month) of year 34. [4] Since the mother of *Farrozzād* [5] on behalf of the *butcher ordered to request: [6] he gave (line 8) 5 pails of vinegar [7] to the maidservant of the mother of [8–10] *Farrozzād*. *Dēnabzānīd* sealed the *čak*.

Commentary

First published Weber 2008: 56–59.

Line 1: For the name *Aspbād* s. **Berk. 65**.

Line 5: I now assume that instead of ⟨lšt'ln⟩ 'Färberinnen' rather ⟨l'st'l⟩ = *rāstār* is to be read; the *nomen agentis* belongs to a verb *rāstan* 'coordinate, treat', attested in **P. 81**, 3. The phrase *rāstan rāy ud āsūdan rāy* also in **P.Pehl. 373**, 12 and **P.Pehl. 373a**, 9, is an idiom in official or semi-official documents. The verb *āsūdan* belongs to *āsāyišn* which is an abstract formation or part. necess. attested in **Berk. 37**, 1.⁷ The phrase was still misunderstood in both Weber 1992: 186 and 2003: 137 and 190f.; *rāstan* on the other hand is a problem as this verbal form does not exist any more in Pahlavi⁸ but only the past participle *rāst* as adjective 'true, straight, direct' (CPD) though the verb is also indirectly attested through *rāyišn* [l'dšn'] 'order, arrangement' (CPD). The *nomen agentis* *rāstār* must denote a person who is 'treating', cf. French *traiteur* with its various meanings, as is also shown in **Berk. 222**, 6 where sheep's meat is being "treated"; therefore in this particular case it possibly denotes a 'butcher' who is also capable of producing canned food by preserving it with the help of vinegar.—The instance in **Berk. 222** is comparable and seems to corroborate this interpretation because there is talk of vinegar too, in this particular case of *sik-šīrag* 'syrup of vinegar', a kind of '*defrutum*':



Berlin 12, 5



Berk. 222, 6

The writing of ⟨l'st'l⟩ recalls the form of ⟨l'st⟩ 'right, true, verified' as used on the verso pages of economic documents:



Berk. 3b

Berk. 4b

Berk. 104b

Berlin 6b

Berlin 9b

Line 9: For the slightly modified reading *Dēnabzānīd* see now Weber 2019: 95. Whether or not the remains of ink at the end of the line have any relevance is uncertain; therefore they will be disregarded here.

Ea. Berk. 222
Syrup Vinegar for the *Butcher of Sheep



Textile, vertical rectangle, 12 × 7 cm,
Bulla is at top, 12 lines, verso marked

Transliteration

- 1 hwlyn' MN ZK Y 'L bwn ZNH
- 2 BYRH štrywr Y ŠNT 𐬭𐬭-III-III
- 3 cygwn 'HṬH Y plhwz't'
- 4 sk šylk' l'd B'YHWNst
- 5 HS Y šylk' X-III-II
- 6 𐬭𐬭-III-II dwlk' p'h l'st'l
- 7 l'd G-II pyt Y
- 8 šylm'tk' hm'k-gwhlk'
- 9 l'd B'YHWNst G-III HG
- 10 G-I 'L plst'l 'YŠ
- 11 L'YN' YHBNt' ck'
- 12 (pl'dy ?) HṬYMWNt

Transcription

- 1 *Xʷarin az ān ī ō bun ēn*
- 2 *māh Šahrewar ī sāl 47*
- 3 *čiyōn xʷah ī Farrozzād*
- 4 *sik šīrag rāy xʷāst*
- 5 *may ī šīrag 15*
- 6 *15 dōlag pah rāstār*
- 7 *rāy g(rīw) 2 pid ī*
- 8 *šīrmādag hamāg-gōhrag*
- 9 *rāy xʷāst g(rīw) 4 gandum*
- 10 *g(rīw) 1 ō paristār kas*
- 11 *pēš dād čak*
- 12 *(Frāy ?) āwišt*

Translation

[1] *Xʷarin* from that which (belongs) to the *bun* this [2] month *Šahrewar* (6th month) of year 47: [3] since *Farrozzād*'s sister [4] on behalf of syrup vinegar asked for [5–6] 15 *dōlag* of "syrup wine" on behalf of the **traiteur* of sheep [7–8] for 2 *grīw* of meat fed up by mother's milk of consistent quality [9] she asked for 4 *grīw* of wheat, [10] 1 *grīw* to the maidservant [11–12] already given. (*Frāy* ?) sealed the *čak*.

Commentary

Deest Gignoux 2009. Unpublished.

Line 3: The 'sister of *Farrozzād*' is mentioned in several documents.

Line 4: The word *sik-šīrag* must be a compound which—provided *šīrag* has a similar meaning like NP شیره *šīra* 'new wine, expressed juice, syrup' [Steingass]—probably could be a kind of *Aceto balsamico*.

This interpretation is corroborated by the information given in the following line that *may ī šīrag* 'new wine' or 'syrup', possibly 'grape juice', is needed in relatively big amounts for obtaining *sik-šīrag*.

For the writing of *šīrag* cf. the name *Šīrīn* in *Berk.* 235, 4:



Berk. 222, 5: *šylk'*



Berk. 235, 4 (šylyn')

Line 6: At the beginning of the line the number <X-III-II> has been repeated but later crossed out.—*rāstār* is a 'coordinator' belonging to the verb *rāstan* (*deest* CPD) attested in the idiomatic phrase *rāstan rāy ud āsūdan rāy* 'on behalf of coordination and disposal' (*P.* 81, 3 and also in *P.Pehl.* 373, 12 and *P.Pehl.* 373a, 9) and indirectly through the adj. *rāst* 'right' = past part.

Line 11: Cf. *Berk.* 9, 5–7 *ō | paristār kas | pēš dād*.

F. Berlin 14
Distribution of Wheat for Two Months



Berlin 14
Description of the document in Weber 2008: 65

Transliteration

- 1 'sṣp'ṭ' MN ZK Y
 - 2 'L bwn' ZNH sṣndrmṭ'
 - 3 Y ŠNṬ ŠX-III lwcyk Y
 - 4 BYRH whwmn' W BYRH
 - 5 sṣndrmṭ' l'd HG
 - 6 G-III K-#III-III 'L
 - 7 yzdṭdwhṭ' YHBWNṭ'
 - 8 ck' plhwd'n HṬYMWVNṭ'
- ⊙ [Bulla] ⊙

Transcription

- 1 *Aspbād* az ān ī
 - 2 ō bun ēn Spandarmad
 - 3 ī sāl 34 rōzīg ī
 - 4 māh Wahman ud māh
 - 5 Spandarmad rāy gandum
 - 6 g(rīw) 3 k(abīz) 6 ō
 - 7 Yazd-duxt dād
 - 8 čak Farroxyān āwišt
- ⊙ [Bulla] ⊙

Translation

[1] *Aspbād* from that which [2] (belongs) to the *bun* this (month) *Spandarmad* (12th month) [3] of year 34 as ration of [4] month *Wahman* (11th month) and of month [5] *Spandarmad* (12th month) [6] 3 *grīw* (and) 6 *kabīz* of wheat (*gandum*, line 5) to [7] *Yazdduxt* given. [8] *Farroxyān* sealed the *čak*.

Commentary

Ed. Weber 2008: 64–67.

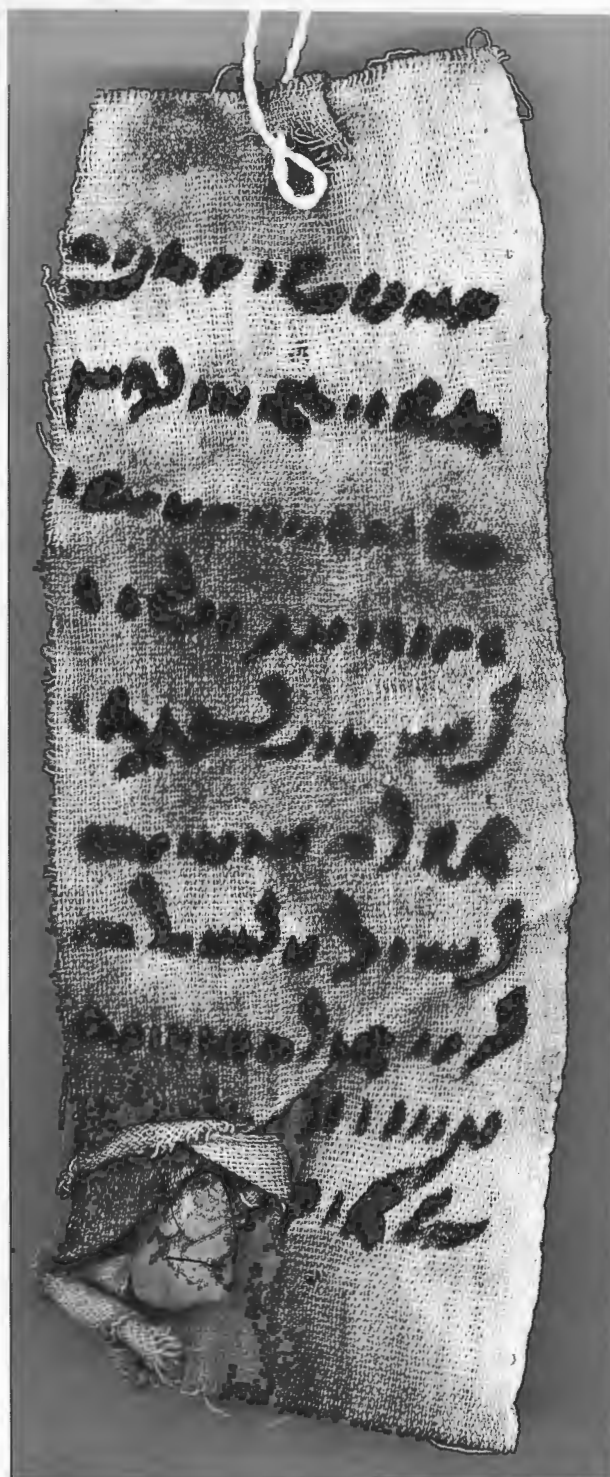
Line 1: For the name **Aspbād* see below under **Berk. 65** (document **H.**).

Line 4: The name of the month is not to be read ⟨mṭr[']⟩ but ⟨whwmn'⟩ which fits better since the two months *Wahman* and *Spandarmad* follow each other, and usually at the beginning of the sponsored period the distribution took place.

Line 7: The reading of the name as ⟨kw'ṭdwsṭ'⟩ is obsolete now; read instead *Yazdduxt*.

Line 8: Instead of *Farroxān* read now *Farroxyān*.

G. Berk. 21
Lentils and Cheese



Textile, vertical rectangle, 12.6 × 4.5 cm
Bulla is at bottom, 10 lines, Verso, marked only by overlapping circles

Transliteration

1 'sṣp'ṭ' ZNH BYRH
 2 mtr' QDM ŠNT' X-III
 3 hc-š krṭn' Y 'p'dsṭ'
 4 wynwk' G-II kylwk'
 5 l'd pnyl-II mn'
 6 'MYṭl Y yzd'npn'h
 7 l'd 'L plst'l Y
 8 L'YN' 'MYṭl Y yzd'npn'h
 9 YHBWNṭ' W ck' (.....)
 10 ḤṬYMWVNṭ

Transcription

1 *Aspbād ēn māh*
 2 *Mihr abar sāl 33*
 3 *az-iš kardan ī abāyist*
 4 *wēnōg g(rīw) 2 kirrōg*
 5 *rāy panīr 2 man*
 6 *mādar ī Yazdānpanāh*
 7 *rāy ō paristār ī*
 8 *pēš mādar ī Yazdānpanāh*
 9 *dād ud čak (.....)*
 10 *āwišt*

Translation

[1–3] *Aspbād* from this month *Mihr* (7th month) of the year 33 onwards to do which was necessary, [4] (viz.) 2 *grīw* of lentils for the craftsman [5] (and) 2 *man* of cheese [6] for the mother of *Yazdānpanāh* [7] to the maidservant [8] who (is) with the mother of *Yazdānpanāh* [9–10] given, and sealed the *čak*.

Commentary

Unpublished.

Line 1: For *Aspbād* see *sub Berk. 65*.

Line 4: *wēnōg* 'lentil' also in **Berk. 154**, 8 (in a list of taxable victuals). Another sort of lentils, viz. *miṭūg*, are mentioned in **Berk. 203**, 3 and 6.

Line 8: The sequence *ī pēš mādar* also in **Berk. 142**, 9–10; cf. *ī pēš xwah* **Berk. 31**, 12–13.

The name *Yazdānpanāh* again in **Berk. 104**, 5, and **Berk. 142**, 11.

Line 9: The name of the person who sealed the document is not to be regained due to a fold in the textile.

H. Berk. 65
Compensation for Lost or Spilled Wine



Parchment, vertical rectangle
8.5 x 5.5 cm
Bulla is at top center, recto 8 lines, verso marked

Transliteration

- 1 [wh]ʾk ʾnd HS wšwptkʾ
- 2 [h]cdl Y QDM ckʾ MNW ZNH
- 3 ʾdybʾtkʾl ʾwb-š wylʾstʾ
- 4 W npštʾ YKʾYMWNyʾ MN plhwʾ
- 5 MKBLWNty W bnd Y ZNH
- 6 ʾdybʾtkʾl kʾlwʾn)yk PWN gw<k>ʾdy-mwdlyhʾ
- 7 Y ʾsṣpʾt Y ktksṣtʾ
- 8 HṬYMWNt ⑩

Transcription

- 1 [wah]āg and may wišuftag
- 2 [a]zēr ī abar čak kē ēn
- 3 ayādgār awi-š wirāst
- 4 ud nibišt ēstēd az Farrox
- 5 padirēd ud band ī ēn
- 6 ayādgār kārāwānīg pad gugāy-muhrihā
- 7 ī **Aspbād** ī ***kadagsbed**
- 8 āwišt ⑩

Translation

[1] [Val]ue of as much wine was spilled [2] when presenting the čak [be]low on which this [3] *ayādgār* is established [4] and written, from *Farrox* [5] he receives. And the tie of this [6–8] *ayādgār* was sealed by the caravaneer (leader of the caravan) with the witnesses' seals of *Aspbād*, the *caretaker.

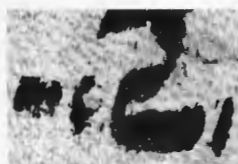
Who presents the čak will receive the value of wine as much as was spilled (during caravaning).

Commentary

Two seal prints. First published by Gignoux 2019: 132–33, with completely different interpretation which will not be discussed here.

Line 1: *may wišuftag* will denote the loss of wine during the caravan journey.

Line 6: The designation of the person who seals this *ayādgār* clearly is *kārāwānīg* though -ān- in the middle of the word is only to be seen when heavily enlarged on the screen since it is partly covered by a fragment of the material:



Line 7: The name *Aspbād* was misunderstood in the 2008 edition as †*Āštābād*; here follow the extant instances:



Berlin 7, 1 (year 34)



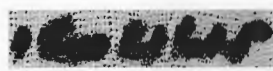
Berlin 8, 1 (year 32)



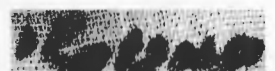
Berlin 9, 1 (year 33)



Berlin 12, 1* (year 34)



Berlin 14, 1* (year 34)



Berk. 21, 1* (year 33)



Berk. 65, 7* (no year)



Berk. 166, 3 (year ?)



Berk. 166, 4 (year ?)



Berk. 168, 1 (no year)

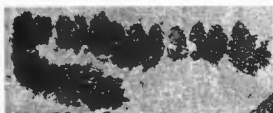


Berk. 218B, 1* (years 34/35)



Berk. 226, 7* (no year)

On ⟨kṭk-dst-pt⟩ **kadagdastbed* > *kadagsbed* 'master of domestics, caretaker'⁹ see **Berk. 48**, 10 with clear historical (etymological) writing:



⟨'ṭ ṭ—s k ṭ k⟩ **Berk. 48**, 10



⟨'ṭ ṭ—s k ṭ k⟩ **Berk. 65**, 7

The ⟨ṭ⟩ at the end of the word *kadagsbed* has the same form as that one in ⟨ḤṬYMWNTṭ⟩; the *final vertical stroke* is rather large, similarly in ⟨wylṣṭ'⟩ (line 3).

I. Berk. 166
Fragment



Leather, horizontal hemisphere, 6 × 9.5 cm
Bulla absent, empty bands at bottom,
4 lines, verso marked

Transliteration

- 1 \\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
- 2 ('m'l) pṭ-š krṭn' 'p'yṭ [
- 3 ○ I-M glṭ' 'L 'sṣp'ṭ' YḤBWNṭ[
- 4 W MN 'sṣp'ṭ pṭgl'b pṭ-š [
- 5 YNSBWN^{tny} ck' dyn'pzwṭ (ḤṬYMWVNṭ)

Transcription

- 1 \\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
- 2 (*āmār*) pad-iš kardan abāyēd
- 3 ○ 1000 gird ō **Aspbād** dād[
- 4 ud az **Aspbād** padirāy pad-iš [
- 5 stadan čak Dēnabzūd (*āwišt*)

Translation

[1] \\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\ [2] it is necessary to make a taxation on it. [3] He gave 1,000 bundles to *Aspbād* [4] and from *Aspbād* on presenting the receipt [5] to receive it. *Dēnabzūd* (sealed) the *čak*.

Commentary

Unpublished.

K. Berk. 168
Making a Felt Protection for the Breast



Leather, wedge, 9 × 4 cm
Bulla absent, 7 lines with unusual red mark at the end of line 3

Transliteration

1 'sṣp'ṭ YWM[
 2 štrywr HS-I
 3 dwlk' 'L 'p('n') (Y)
 4 nmt wl MHYTṬNṭn
 5 Y pnbk' l'd
 6 YḤBWNṭ'
 7 dyn'p'z'nyṭ'
 8]...[

Transcription

1 *Aspbād rōz*
 2 *Šahrewar may 1*
 3 *dōlag ō Ābān (ī)*
 4 *namad war zadan*
 5 *i pambag rāy*
 6 *dād*
 7 *Dēnabzānīd*
 8]...[

Translation

[1] *Aspbād* gave (*dād*, line 6) day [2–3] *Šahrewar* (4th day) 1 *dōlag* of wine to *Ābān* (?) [4] for (*rāy*, Zeile 5) milling (lit. striking) a felt "breast" [5–7] of cotton. *Dēnabzānīd* [8] (sealed it ?).

Commentary

Unpublished.

Line 4: *namad war*, must be a felt protection for the breast.

Line 7: *Dēnabzānīd* is known from the years 34 until 42.

L. Berk. 218B

Distribution of 8 gr̥w of Wheat for the Wife of X^warin and a Baby



Textile, vertical rectangle, 12 × 9 cm
Bulla is at bottom, flanked by circles,
9 lines, verso blank

Transliteration

- 1 'šp'p't' MN ZK Y 'L bwn'
- 2 lwcyk Y BYRH ddw' W BYRH whwmn'
- 3 W BYRH spndrm't Y ŠNT' X-III
- 4 W BYRH prwrtyn' Y ŠNT' X-III-II
- 5 l'd HČ G-III-III 'L
- 6 NYŠH Y hwlyn' W cygwn kw'tk'
- 7 Y m'hwnd't' PWN d'hk'n
- 8 YHSNNyt YHBWNt' ck' plhwd'n
- 9 HTYMWNt'

Transcription

- 1 *Aspbād az ān ī ō bun*
- 2 *rōzīg ī māh Day ud māh Wahman*
- 3 *ud māh Spandarmad ī sāl 34*
- 4 *ud māh Frawardīn ī sāl 35*
- 5 *rāy gandum g(rīw) 8 ō*
- 6 *zan ī X^warin ud čiyōn kōdag*
- 7 *ī Māhwindād pad dehgān*
- 8 *dārēd dād čak Farroxyān*
- 9 *āwišt*

Translation

[1] *Aspbād* from that which (belongs) to the *bun*, [2] on behalf of the ration of month *Day* (10th month) and of month *Wahman* (11th month) [3] and of month *Spandarmad* (12th month) of year 34 [4] and of month *Frawardīn* (1st month) of year 35 [5] 8 *grīw* of wheat to be given (line 8) [6] to the wife of *X^warin*, and as long as she keeps the boy [7] of *Māhwindād* with the farmer. [8–9] *Farroxyān* sealed the *čak*.

Commentary

Unpublished.

Line 1: On the name *Aspbād* see above H.

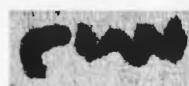
Line 5: The ration then is 2 *grīw* per month.

Line 6: *X^warin*'s wife (*zan ī X^warin*) is also attested in **Berk. 12**, 1–2 and **Berk. 33A**, 1.

Line 7: *Māhwindād* also in **Berk. 8**, 6, **83**, 6, **109**, 3, **145**, 2.—(d'hk'n) again in **Berk. 219**, 6.



Berk. 218B, 7



Berk. 219, 6

Line 8: The verbal form at the beginning of the line can only be read with certainty when greatly enlarged on the screen.

M. Berk. 221
Asking for 1.2 grīw of Wheat



Textile, square, 8.5 × 8 cm
Bulla is at bottom right, 5 lines, verso marked

Transliteration

- 1 'spp't' ZNH BYRH 'mwrđt
- 2 Y ŠNT X-III cygwn 'clmykdwhṭ
- 3 plmwṭ' Z B'YHWNstn' HG G-I K-#II
- 4 'L plst'l Y 'clmykdwhṭ
- 5 YHBWNt' 'clmykdwhṭ ḤTYMWN[t]

Transcription

- 1 *Aspbād ēn mäh Amurdād*
- 2 *ī sāl 33 čiyōn Āzarmīgduxt*
- 3 *framūd x^wāstan gandum g(rīw) 1 k(abīz) 2*
- 4 *ō paristār ī Āzarmīgduxt*
- 5 *dād Āzarmīgduxt āwiš[t]*

Translation

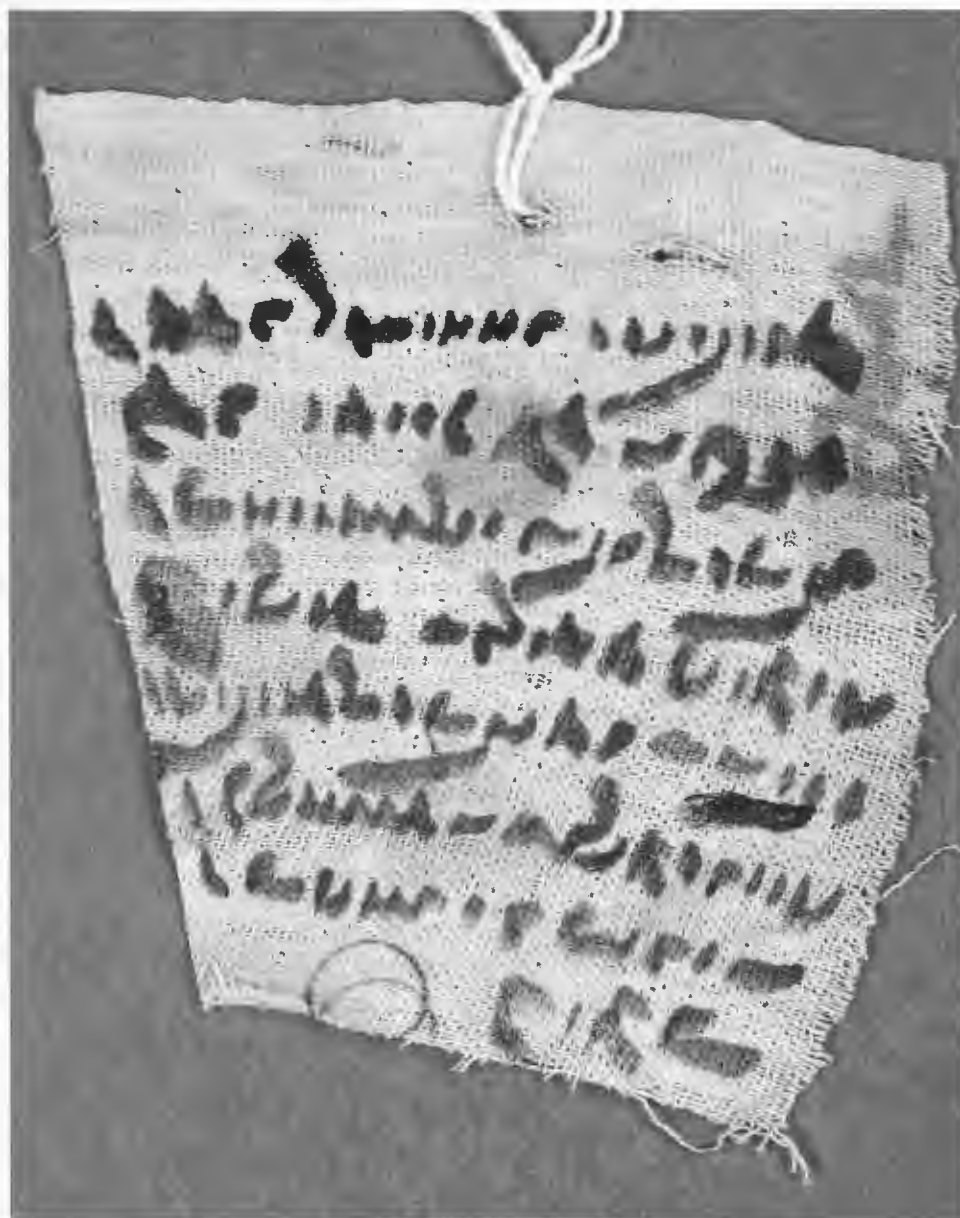
[1] *Aspbād* this month *Amurdād* (5th month) [2] of the year 33 gave (*dād*, line 5) as *Āzarmīgduxt* [3] ordered to ask for 1 *grīw* (and) 2 *kabīz* of wheat [4] to the maidservant of *Āzarmīgduxt*. [5] *Āzarmīgduxt* sealed (it).

Commentary

Unpublished.

Lines 2, 4 and 5: *Āzarmīgduxt* was a popular female name in 7th century Iran recalling the famous beauty of King Xusrō's (II) daughter.

N. Berk. 226
ayādgār on 30 *grīw* of Beans



Textile, nearly square, 9 × 8.5 cm
Bulla absent, 8 lines, verso marked

Transliteration

- 1 mṭrbndk' gwpt' 'YK L grmk'
- 2 G-XX Y QDM ck' MNW ZNH
- 3 'dyb'ṭk'l 'wb-š wyl'sṭ W npšṭ'
- 4 YK'YMWNYṭ MN mṭlwy MKBLWNty
- 5 W bnd Y ZNH 'dyb'ṭk'l mṭrbndk'
- 6 PWN gwkdymwdlyh' Y m'hpylwc'
- 7 Y nhwz't'n W 'sṭp't'
- 8 HṭYMWNYṭ

Transcription

- 1 *Mihrbandag guft kū man garmak*
- 2 *g(rīw) 30 ī abar čak kē ēn*
- 3 *ayādgār awi-š wirāst ud nibišt*
- 4 *ēstēd az Mihrōy padīrēd*
- 5 *ud band ī ēn ayādgār Mihrbandag*
- 6 *pad gugāy-muhrihā ī Māhpērōz*
- 7 *ī Noxzādān ud Aspbād*
- 8 *āwišt*

Translation

[1–4] *Mihrbandag* ascertains that he will receive (*padīrēd*, line 4) 30 grīw of *beans (*Vicia faba*) from *Mihrōy* on (presenting) the cheque on which this reminder has been established and written. [5–8] And *Mihrbandag* sealed the tie of this *ayādgār* with the witnesses' seals of *Māhpērōz*, (son) of *Noxzād*, and *Aspbād*.

Commentary

First published by Gignoux 2019: 135–36 (with different names in the last line).

Line 1: For the interpretation of *garmak* as '*beans (*Vicia faba*)' cf. Weber 2014: 63 and notes 56 and 57.

Lines 1–4: For the correlation *man ... padīrēd* see Weber 2018: 130 and note 6.

Lines 6–7: *Māhpērōz ī Noxzādān* also in **Berk. 160**, 9–10 (*ayādgār*, no date).

Word Index

- 'ckynmwst *āzgenmust* greedy force **Aa 7**.
- 'dyb'ṭk'l *ayādgār* memoir **H 3. 6. N 3. 5**.
- 'clmykdwhṭ *Āzarmīgduxt* p.n. **M 2. 4. 5**.
- 'DYN *ēg* then, thereupon **A 6**.
- 'hlwb *ahlaw* righteous **Aa 9**.
- 'HRN *any other* **C 5**.
- 'HṬH *x^wah* sister **Ea 3**.
- 'k *ak* bad **Aa 8**.
- (m'l) *āmār* reckoning, sum **I 2**.
- 'mwrđt *Amurdād* cal. 5th month **M 1**.
- 'MYṭl *mādar* mother **D 7. 13. E 4. 7. G 6. 8**.
- 'nblk'n *ambaragān* pl. birds, poultry **A 6. Aa 10. Ab 5**.
- 'nd *and* so much, many **H 1**.
- 'P- *u-* and: 'P-m *u-m* **Aa 11**.
- 'p'dsṭ' *abāyist* prt. be necessary, fitting **G 3**.
- 'p('n') *Ābān* p.n. **K 3**.
- 'p'yṭ *abāyēd* it is necessary **I 2**.
- 'psp'lt'n' *abespārdan* inf. commit, entrust, consign **Aa 6**.
- 'rtwhṣṭ *Ardwahišt* cal. 2nd month **A 2**.
- 'sṭp't' *Aspbād* p.n. **B 1. C 1. D 1. E 1. F 1. G 1. H 7. I 3. 4. K 1. L 1. M 1. N 7**.
- 'twr' *Ādur* cal. 9th month **C 2**.

- 'wb-š *awi-š* to him, it; postpos. to **H 3. N 3**.
- 'wcynk' *uzēnag* expenses **Aa 2. B 2**.
- 'wcyn- *uzēn-* vb. spend: 'wcynyṭ *uzēnēd* **Ab 7**.
- 'wsṭ'nd'l *ōstāndār* title *Ōstāndār* **B 3**.
- 'y *ē* opt. particle **Ab 6**.
- 'yc *ēč* (not) any **Aa 7**.
- 'YK *kū* where; that **N 1**.
- 'YŠ *kas* person, somebody **Ea 10**.
- 'L *ō* prp. to, at **A 4. B 1. 4. C 1. D 11. E 6. Ea 1. 10. F 2. 6. G 7. I 3. K 3. L 1. 5. M 4**.
- B'YHWN- *x^wāstan*, *x^wah-* vb. seek, want, request B'YHWNsṭ **Ea 4. 9**. B'YHWNsṭn **E 5**. B'YHWNsṭn' **M 3**.
- bnd *band* tie, bond **H 5. N 5**.
- bwn' *bun* **B 1. C 2. Ea 1. F 2. L 1**.
- BYN *andar* in, among, concerning **Aa 1**.
- BYRH *māh* month **A 2. B 2. C 2. 3. D 1. 3. 4. 5. E 2. Ea 2. F 4(2x). G 1. L 2(2x). 3. 4. M 1**.
- BYṭ' *xānag* house **Aa 3**.
- ck' *čak* cheque, payment (order) **B 5. C 7. E 8. Ea 11. F 8. G 9. H 2. I 5. L 8. N 2**.
- cl *čar* grazing **Ab 4**.
- cygwn *čiyōn* as, like, how, when **D 10. E 4. Ea 3. L6. M 2**.
- d'hk'n *dehgān* farmer **L 7**.
- d'lyk *dārīg* manager **A 1**.

- d'tyn' *Dādēn* p.n. **A** 5.
d'tynpn'h *Dādēnpanāh* p.n. **Ab** 11. **D** 14.
ddw' *Day* cal. 10th month **B** 2. **C** 3. **E** 3. **L** 2.
dhk' *dahag* *issuing office **C** top vert.
dwlk' *dōlag* pail **C** 5. **E** 6. **Ea** 6. **K** 3. dwlk[**C** 6.
dwstyh *dōstih* friendship, love **Ab** 9.
dwš[ʔ]m *dōšāram* love **D** 11.
dwtk' *dūdag* family **Ab** 6.
dyn'pzy'nyt' *Dēnabzānīd* p.n. **E** 9. **K** 7.
dyn'pzw[ʔ] *Dēnabzūd* p.n. **C** 7. dyn'pzw[ʔ] **I** 5.
dyn'pzw[t] p.n. **Ab** 2.
G grīw abbr. measurement for cereals etc.:
G-I **Ab** 6. **B** 4. **Ea** 10.
G-I **K-#** **II** **M** 3.
G-II **Ea** 7. **G** 4.
G-III **A** 4.
G-III **Ea** 9.
G-III-III **D** 9.
G-III **K-#** **III-III** **F** 6.
G-III-III **L** 5.
G-XX **N** 2.
GBR' *mard* man: **GBR**'-**I** **C** 6.
gl'myk' *grāmīg* treasured, dear **Ab** 8.
glmyh *garmih* warmth, heat; bath **B** 3.
gl't' *gird* bundle **I** 3.
grmk' *garmak* beans (*Vicia faba*) **Ab** 5. **N** 1.
gwk'dymwdlyh' *gugāy-muhrihā* pl. the witnesses' seals **N** 6. gw<k>'dy-mwdlyh' **H** 6.
gwk'dy-mwdl[**Ab** 10.
gwpt' *guft* prt. say, speak **N** 1.
hc- *az* from: hc-š *az-iš* postpos. from **G** 3.
[h]cdl *azēr* below **H** 2.
HG *gandum* wheat **D** 9. **Ea** 9. **F** 5. **L** 5. **M** 3.
HLY' *sik* vinegar: HLY'-**III-III** **E** 6.
hm *ham* also; same **D** 4.
hm'k-gwhlk' *hamāg-gōhrag* of consistent quality **Ea** 8.
hm'y *hamē* always **Ab** 6.
hmplhw[ʔ] *ham-farroxtar* equally very fortunate **B** 3.
hmwck *hammōzag* master, proctor **A** 5.
hmwg *hamōg* equal, like: hmwg-**II** **Aa** 9.
hng'lwyh *hangārweh* to be carefully considered **Ab** 6.
hngt' *hangad* fortunate, rich **Aa** (7).
HS *may* wine **Ea** 5. **H** 1.
HS-**I** **K** 2.
HS-xxx **C** 4.
HS-š **C** 6.
HṬYMWN- *āwištan*, *āwāš*- vb. seal: HṬYMWNt
A 7. **Aa** 13. **B** 6. **C** 8. **D** 15. **E** 10. **Ea** 12. **F** 8.
G 10. **H** 8. **I** (5.) **L** 9. **N** 8. HṬYMWN[t] **M** 5.
HṬYMWNt (sic) **Ab** 12.
hwd'hk *hudāhag* beneficent, benevolent **Aa** 4.
HWH- *h*- defective vb. be: HWHyt **D** 10.
hwlšn' *xwarišn* food **Aa** 1. **D** [9].
hwlyn' *Xwarin* p.n. **Ea** 1. **L** 6.
hwt'kr[ʔ] *Xwadāgird* p.n. **Aa** 3.
K *kabiz* abbr. measurement for cereals etc., 1/10
grīw:
G-I **K-#** **II** **M** 3.
G-III **K-#** **III-III** **F** 6.
k'lw[ʔ]yk *kārawānīg* caravaneer **H** 6.
krtn' *kardan* inf. do, make **G** 3. **I** 2.
kṭkspt' **kadagsbed* master of domestics, *care-taker **H** 7.
kwlṭwdy *Kurdōy* p.n. **C** 4.
kwtk' *kōdag* young, small; baby **L** 6.
kylwk' *kirrōg* craftsman **G** 4.
L *man* I, me **N** 1.
L' *nē* no, not **Aa** 6.
l'd *rāy* postpos. for, for the sake of **A** 4. **Aa** 3. 8.
B 4. **C** 4. **D** 8. 11. **E** 5. **Ea** 4. 7. 9. **F** 5. **G** 5. 7. **K** 5. **L** 5.
l'st' *rāstār* *butcher **E** 5. **Ea** 6.
L'WHL *abāz* back, again **A** 6.
L'YN' *pēš* before **Ea** 11. **G** 8.
lmyk' *ramīg* shepherd boy **Aa** 8. 9.
lmṭ'c'n *ramtāzān* run for flocks **Aa** 5.
lwcyk *rōzīg* ration **C** 2. **D** 3. **F** 3. **L** 2. (l)wcyk **A** 3.
m'hpylwc' *Māhpērōz* p.n. **N** 6.
m'hwnd'ṭ' *Māhwindād* p.n. **L** 7.
MHYTṆ- *zadan*, *zan*- vb. hit, beat, strike:
MHYTṆtn *zadan* inf. **K** 4.
MKBLWN- *padiriftan*, *padir*- vb. receive, accept:
MKBLWNty **H** 5. **N** 4.
MN *az* from **Aa** (4). (5). **Ab** 3. **B** 1. **C** 1. **Ea** 1. **F** 1.
H 4. **I** 4. **L** 1. **N** 4.
mn' *man* a measure for cheese etc. **G** 5.
MNW *kē* who, which **H** 2. **N** 2.
mṭlwy *Mihrōy* p.n. **N** 4.
mṭr' *Mihr* cal. 7th month **G** 2.
mṭrbndk' *Mihrbandag* p.n. **N** 1. 5.
mwlw'ndln'n *murw-andarōnān* pl. birds being inside **Aa** 1.
MY' *āb* water **Ab** 4.
nhwz'ṭ'n *Noxzādān* patr. **N** 7.
nmk' *namak* salt **B** 4.
nmṭ *namad* felt **K** 4.
nmywl *Namēwar* (mod. *Nīmwar*) geogr.n. **A** 1.
Aa(4).
npšt' *nibišt* prt. write: npšt' **YK**'**YMWN**ty **H** 4. **N** 3-4.
NYŠH *zan* woman, wife **L** 6.
nywbyhk'n *Nēwbēhagān* geogr.n. **B** 5.
p'h *pah* sheep **Ea** 6.

p'tgl(ʾn) *pādīrān* restrained, held back **Aa** 12.
 (pl'dy ?) *Frāy* (?) p.n. **Ea** 11.
 plhw' *Farrox* p.n. **H** 4.
 plhwd'n *Farroxyān* p.n. **B** 5. **F** 8. **L** 8.
 plhw'tl *farroxtar* very fortunate **Aa** 3.
 plhwz't' *Farrozzād* p.n. **D** 8. 13. **E** 4. 8. **Ea** 3.
 plmw't *framūd* prt. order **E** 5. plmw't' **M** 3.
 plst'l *paristār* maidservant **D** 12. **E** 7. **Ea** 10. **G** 7.
M 4.
 plyc(p')nyk *frēz(bā)nīg* obligatory **Ab** 4.
 plyk' *Friyag* p.n. **A** 1. **Aa** 4. **Ab** 3.
 pnbk' *pambag* cotton **K** 5.
 pnyl *panīr* cheese: pnyl-II mn' **G** 5.
 PRŠY' *aswār* horseman **C** 5.
 prwrtyn' *Frawardīn* cal. 1st month **D** 6. **L** 4.
 ptgl'b *padīrāy* receipt **Ab** 8. **I** 4.
 pt-: pt-š *pad-iš* to him, it; postpos. = *pad* **I** 2. 4.
 pt[w']ck' *paywāzag* response **Aa** 11.
 PWN *pad* prp. to, at, in, on **A** 1. **Aa** 1. (4). **Ab** 4. 5.
 8. 10. **B** 3. **H** 6. **L** 7. **N** 6.
 pylwc' *Pērōz* p.n. **B** 5.
 pyt *pid* meat, flesh **Ea** 7.
 QDM *abar* prp. up; on, over **G** 2. **H** 2. **N** 2.
 S *satēr* abbr. stater: S-II **Aa** 10.
 sk *sik* vinegar **Ea** 4.
 sng *sang* weight, weight unit **Ab** 5. 7.
 spndrm't *Spandarmad* cal. 12th month **D** 2. 4. **L** 3.
 spndrm't' **F** 2. 5.
 stplyh *stabrīh* coarseness; strength, force **Aa** 6.
 sy *sī* goose **Aa** 2.
 ŠG *šaw* barley **A** 4. **B** 4.
 ŠNT *sāl* year **A** 3. **B** 2. **C** 3. **D** 2. 5. 6. **E** 3. **Ea** 2. **F**
 3. **G** 2. **L** 3. 4. **M** 2.
 štrywr *Šahrewar* cal. 6th month **Ea** 2. 4th day **K** 2.
 šylk' *šīrag* "syrup wine" **Ea** 4. 5.
 šylm'tk' *širmādag* mother's milk **Ea** 8.
 twb'n *tuwān* (+ inf.) it is possible to, one can **Aa** 6.
 W *ud* and **C** 3. **F** 4. **G** 9. **H** 4. 5. **I** 4. **L** 2. 3. 4. 6. **N**
 3. 5. 7.
 wh'k *wahāg* value; worth **Aa** 10. **B** 4. [wh]'k **H** 1.
 whwmn' *Wahman* cal. 11th month **D** 3. **F** 4. **L** 2.
 wl *war* breast **K** 4.
 wlck' *warzag* working **Aa** 8.

wnd't' *windād* prt. find, obtain, acquire **Aa** 5.
 wnd'tn' *windādan* inf. **Aa** 8.
 wšwptk' *wišuftag* spoiled, spilled **H** 1.
 wyl'st' *wirāst* prt. arrange, prepare **H** 3. wyl'st'
N 3.
 wynwk' *wēnōg* lentils **G** 4.
 Y *Izāfe* **A** 1. 2. 5(2×). **Aa** 2(2×). 3. 4. 9. 10. **Ab**
 2.3.4.5. **B** 1. 2. 3(2×). 5. **C** 1. 2. 3(2×). 5. **D** 2. 3. 4.
 6. 8. [9]. 12. 13. **E** 3. 4. 7(2×). **Ea** 1. 2. 3. 5. 7. **F** 1.
 3(2×). **G** 3. 6. 7. 8. **H** 2. 5. 7(2×). **K** (3.) 5. **L** 1. 2. 3.
 4. 6. 7. **M** 2. 4. **N** 2. 5. 6. 7.
 YDH *dast* hand **Ab** 4.
 YHBWN- *dādan*, *dah-* vb. give: YHBWN't' prt. **A**
 6. **B** 5. **D** 14. **Ea** 11. **F** 7. **G** 9. **K** 6. **L** 8. **M** 5.
 YHBWN't **C** 7. **E** 8. YHBWN't[**I** 3.
 YHSNN- *dāštan*, *dār-* vb. have, hold, keep:
 YHSNNyt' **L** 8.
 YK'YMWN- *ēštādan*, *ēst-* vb. stand; be:
 (YK'YMWN)t' **Aa** 5. npšt' YK'YMWNyt' **H** 4. **N**
 3-4.
 YNSBWN- *stadan*, *stān-* vb. take: YNSBWNtny
stadan inf. **I** 5.
 YWM *rōz* day **K** 1.
 yzd'n'pšt'n *Yazdānābestān* geogr.n. **Aa** 2.
 yzd'npn'h *Yazdānpanāh* p.n. **G** 6. 8.
 yzdtwdht' *Yazd-duxt* p.n. **F** 7.
 z't'nplhw' *Zādānfarrox* p.n. **A** 7.
 ZK *ān* that, he **Aa** 4. 8. **B** 1. **C** 1. **Ea** 1. **F** 1. **L** 1.
 ZNH *ēn* this **A** 2. **Aa** 11. **Ab** 8. **B** 1. **D** 1. **E** 2. **Ea** 1.
F 2. **G** 1. **H** 2. 5. **M** 1. **N** 2. 5.

Numbers

III **Aa** 9.
 X-II **Ab** 7.
 X-III-II **Ea** 5. X-III-H **Ea** 6.
 §X-II **C** 3.
 §X-III **D** 2. 5. **G** 2. **M** 2.
 §X-III **B** 2. **D** 7. **E** 3. **F** 3. **L** 3.
 §X-III-II **L** 4.
 §X-III-(III-III) **A**.
 §X-III-III **Ea** 2.
 I-M **I** 3.

Abbreviations

abbr. abbreviation
 geogr.n. geographical name
 inf. infinitive
 patr. patronym
 p.n. personal name

postpos. postposition
 prp. preposition
 prt. preterite
 vb. verb

Notes

1. I am indebted to Carol Bromberg, who kindly corrected and improved my English. The following *sigla* will be used:
 Berk. Pahlavi documents, Berkeley.
 Berlin Pahlavi documents, Berlin, ed. Weber 2008.
 P. Pahlavi papyri and parchments, ed. Weber 2003 (P. 125–P. 343).
 P.Pehl. Pahlavi papyri and parchments of the *Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Vienna (with original inventory number, mostly unpublished).
2. For the function of *abāz* cf. Brunner 1977: 157.
3. Weber 2019: 83.
4. See Weber, *Pahlavi Letters*: 184.
5. See Weber, *Pahlavi Letters*: 201, in particular for the interpretation of *ayārd*.
6. See Weber, *Pahlavi Letters*: 59.
7. Ed. in Weber 2016: 62–64.
8. See W. B. Henning, "Das Verbum des Mittelpersischen der Turfanfragmente", in *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* 9 (1933), 158–253, 187: "nicht mehr verbal gebraucht".
9. The underlying meaning is 'master of the "(helping) hands of the house'; cf. **dastyār** [*dstyd'r*] (P *dstd'r*), N ~] 'helper' (CPD).

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| <p>Brunner 1977</p> <p>CPD</p> <p>Gignoux 1986</p> <p>Gignoux 2009</p> <p>Gignoux 2010</p> <p>Gignoux 2019</p> | <p>C. J. Brunner. <i>A Syntax of Western Middle Iranian</i>. New York.</p> <p>D. N. MacKenzie. <i>A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary</i>. London 1971. (Reprints 1986, 1990.)</p> <p>Ph. Gignoux. <i>Noms propres sassanides en moyen-perse épigraphique</i>. Wien.</p> <p>_____. "Les documents économiques de Xwarēn". In <i>Trésors d'Orient: Mélanges offerts à Rika Gyselen</i>, ed. Ph. Gignoux, Chr. Jullien and F. Jullien, 81–102. <i>Studia Iranica</i>, Cahier 42. Paris.</p> <p>_____. "Un nouvel ouvrage de référence de la papyrologie pehlevie: Note de lecture". [Rev. of Weber 2008.] <i>StIr</i> 39.1: 111–20.</p> <p>_____. "Les 'Mémoires' dans l'archive pehlevie de Berkeley/Berlin". In <i>A Thousand Judgements: Festschrift</i></p> | <p>von der Osten-Sacken 2015</p> <p>Steingass 1963</p> <p>Weber 1992</p> <p>Weber 2003</p> <p>Weber 2008</p> <p>Weber 2010</p> <p>Weber 2011</p> <p>Weber 2012</p> <p>Weber 2013</p> | <p>for Maria Macuch, ed. A. Hintze, D. Durkin-Meisterer and C. Naumann, 127–40. Wiesbaden.</p> <p>E. von der Osten-Sacken. <i>Untersuchungen zur Geflügelwirtschaft im Alten Orient</i>. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 272. Fribourg.</p> <p>F. Steingass. <i>A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary</i>. Fifth Impression, London.</p> <p>D. Weber. <i>Pahlavi Papyri, Pergamente und Ostraca</i>. (Textband). CILr. London.</p> <p>_____. <i>Papyri, Pergamente und Leinenfragmente in mittelpersischer Sprache</i>. Unter Mitarbeit von W. Brashar herausgegeben von Dieter Weber. Fotografien von Margarete Büsing und Eva Maria Borgwaldt. (Textband). CILr. London.</p> <p>_____. <i>Berliner Pahlavi-Dokumente: Zeugnisse spätsassanidischer Brief- und Rechtskultur aus früh-islamischer Zeit</i>. Mit Beiträgen von Myriam Krutzsch und Maria Macuch. IRANICA 15. Wiesbaden.</p> <p>_____. "The Pahlavi Script as a Medium of Iranian Identity: Some Palaeographical Notes". In <i>Iranian Identity in the Course of History: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Rome, 21–24 September 2005</i>, ed. C. G. Cereti, 347–56. Serie Orientale Roma CV, Orientalia Romana 9. Roma.</p> <p>_____. "Philippe Gignoux' Beitrag zur Interpretation der Dokumente des 'Pahlavi Archive' in Berkeley, Ca". In <i>Florilège offert à Philippe Gignoux pour son 80e anniversaire</i>. Textes réunis par Rika Gyselen et Christelle Jullien, 283–303. Paris.</p> <p>_____. "New Arguments for Dating the Documents from the 'Pahlavi Archive'". <i>BAI</i> 22 (2012 [2008]): 215–22.</p> <p>_____. "Taxation in Pahlavi Documents from Early Isla-</p> |
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| Weber 2014 | _____. "Villages and Estates in the Documents from the Pahlavi Archive: The Geographical Background". <i>BAI</i> 24 (2014 [2010]): 39–67. | Weber 2019 | _____. "Studies in Some Documents from the 'Pahlavi Archive' (2)". <i>BAI</i> 29 (2019 [2015–2019]): 79–116. |
| Weber 2016 | _____. "Studies in Some Documents from the 'Pahlavi Archive' ". <i>BAI</i> 26 (2016 [2012]): 61–95. | Weber forthcoming | <i>Pahlavi Letters: A Survey of Documents from the "Pahlavi Archive" together with those from Egypt and Tabarestan</i> . London (forthcoming). |
| Weber 2017 | _____. "Accountancy of a Zoroastrian Craftsman in Early Islamic Times (662–664 CE)". <i>BAI</i> 27 (2017 [2013]): 129–41. | | |



Plate 1 (Sims-Williams, "Two Sogdian Dice-Divination Texts," fig. 1). So 14410/i/, Recto. Depositum der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung.

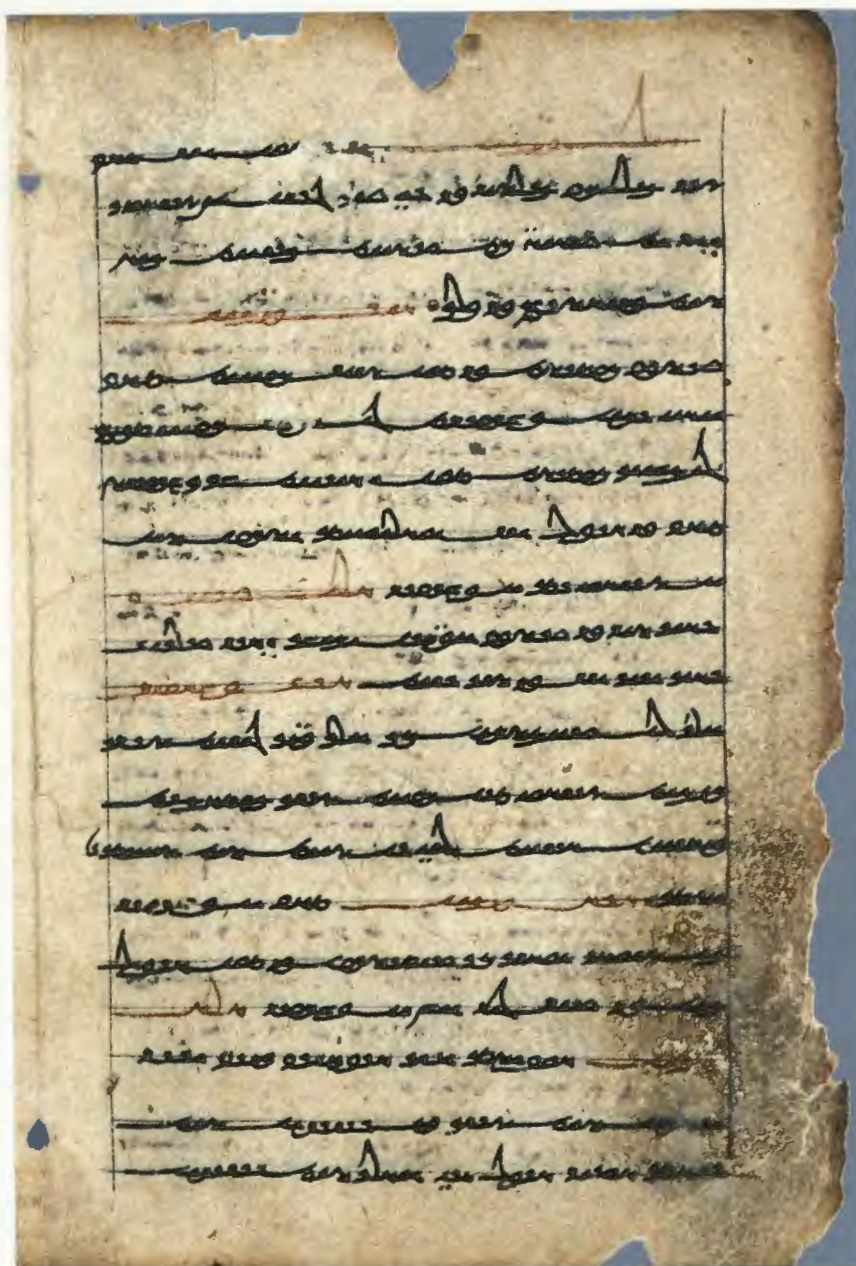


Plate 2 (Sims-Williams, "Two Sogdian Dice-Divination Texts," fig. 2). So 14410/i/, Verso. Depositum der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung.

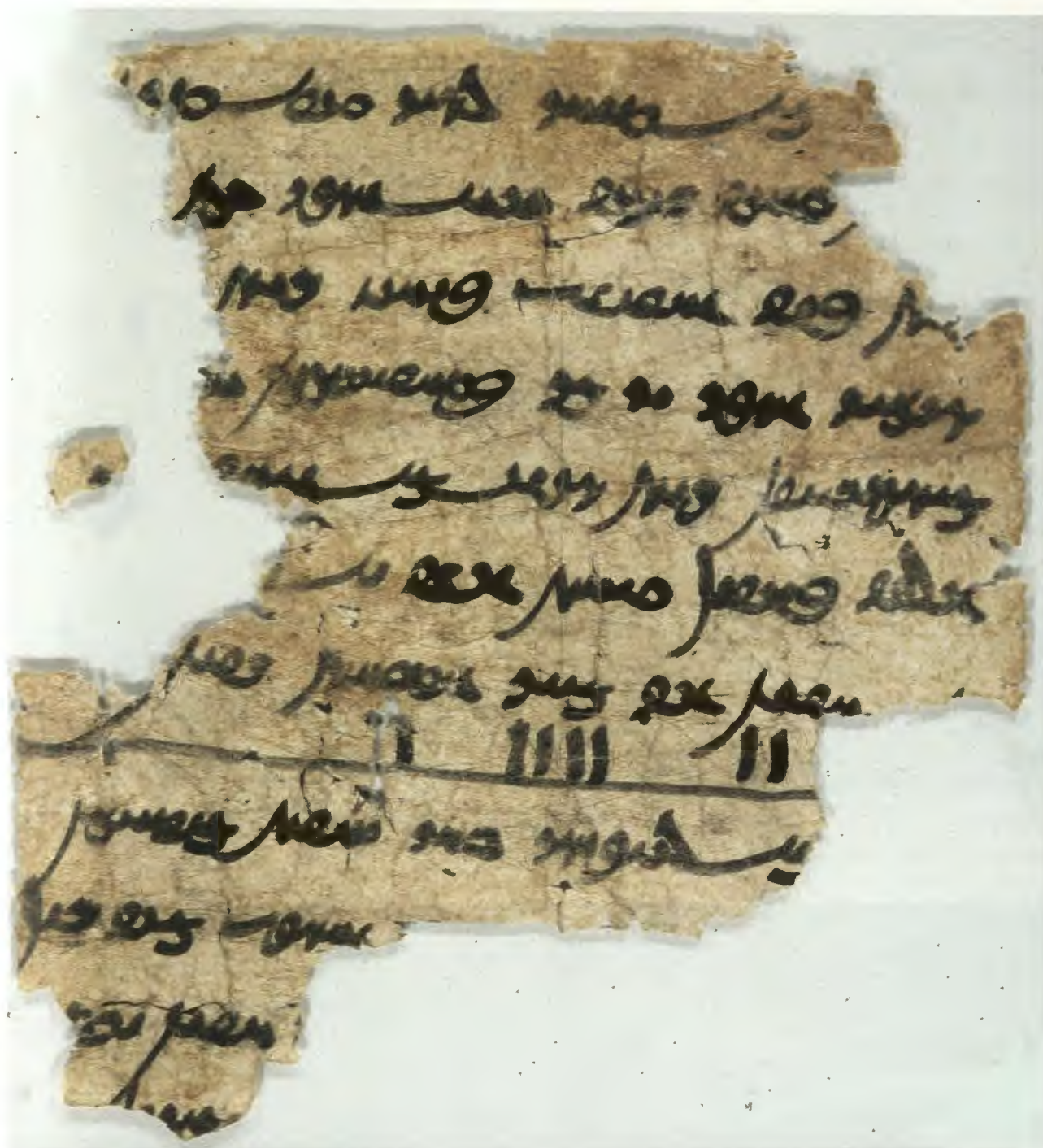


Plate 3 (Sims-Williams, "Two Sogdian Dice-Divination Texts," fig. 3). Ch/U 6828, Verso. Depositum der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung.



Plate 4 (Salomon et al., fig. 1). Ladakh within the network of the so-called Silk Routes. Photo: Devers 2014.



Plate 5 (Salomon et al., fig. 4). Inscriptions documented by Laurianne Bruneau at Kanutse. Photo: Devers.



Plate 6 (Salomon et al., fig. 5). Inscription documented by Tashi Ldawa Leh and Sonam Wangchuk at Kanutse. Photo: Devers 2018.



Plate 7 (Salomon et al., fig. 6). Inscriptions at Lehdo Bridge. Photo: Devers 2017.



Plate 8 (Salomon et al., fig. 7). Some of the petroglyphs at Waru Bridge. Photo: Devers 2020.



Plate 9 (Salomon et al., fig. 8). Waru inscription 1. Photo: Devers 2020.



Plate 10 (Salomon et al., fig. 9). Waru inscription 2. Devers 2020.



Plate 11 (Salomon et al., fig.10). Waru inscription 3. Devers 2020.



Plate 12 (Salomon et al., fig. 11). Waru inscription 4. Devers 2020



Plate 13 (Salomon et al., fig. 12). Waru inscription 4, showing designs below the inscription. Devers 2020.



Plate 14 (Salomon et al., fig. 13). Inscribed stone at Kharul with inscriptions labeled. Photo: Devers 2016 and annotations Salomon 2020.

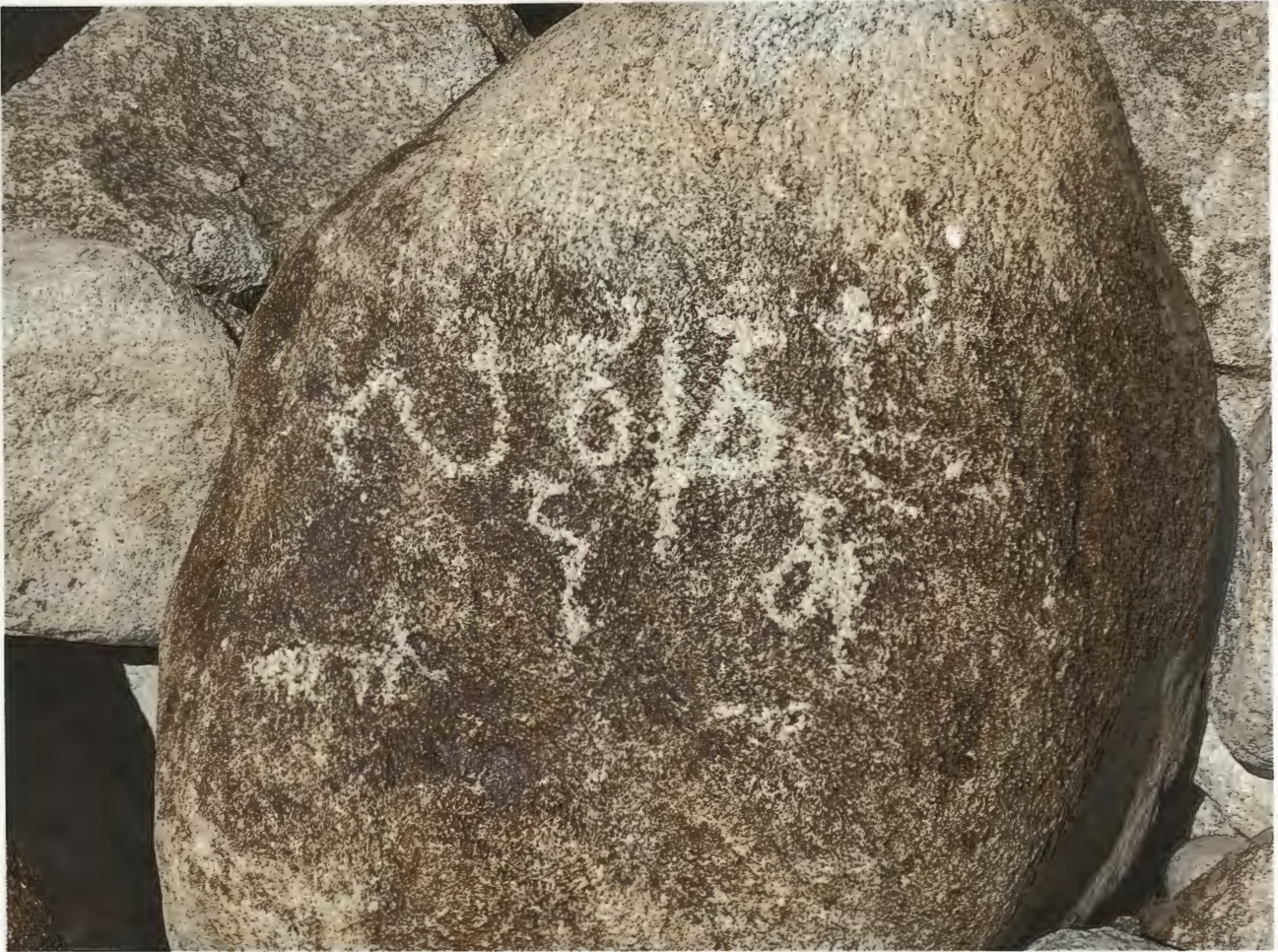


Plate 15 (Salomon et al., fig. 15). Inscription at Henache. Photo: Devers.



Plate 16 (Salomon et al., fig. 16). Depictions of images at the Zaskar-Indus confluence (left, photo courtesy Viral Mehta) and between Alchi and Lardo (right, photo courtesy Devers 2016).



The Bactrian Inscription of Jaghori: A Preliminary Reading¹

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The subject of this paper is a so-far unpublished Bactrian inscription on a large rock in the district of Jaghori, province of Ghazni, Afghanistan. It was first made known by Rohullah Jawadi, who posted a photograph taken by himself on social media in 2012, and came to wider attention when the same photo appeared on the Facebook page of Dr Shariyati Sahar. Here it was noticed by Alexandre Montagne (Alimadad Mohammadi), a native of Jaghori, who sent the photo to Dr Agnes Korn, who in turn sent it to me. At my request, transmitted by Dr Korn and Mr Montagne, Dr Sahar asked Ahmad Jawid Bakhtyari to take more detailed photographs. It is these photographs which have made it possible to decipher the text of the inscription, the historical importance of which will be clear from what follows. I am extremely grateful to all those named here, without whom this publication would not have been possible.

The rock bearing the inscription is located at or close to 33.143623, 67.348772, near the village Marqol, in an area known as Siyah-zamin, a few kilometers to the west of Sangi Masha, where the administrative office of Jaghori district is located;² an adjacent rock bears a petroglyph showing an ibex (figs. 1–3). The site is not listed in the *Archaeological Gazetteer of Afghanistan* (Ball 2019), though several other sites in the surrounding area attest petroglyphs, inscriptions or graffiti, e.g. Bidsai (Ball no. 125), Dulāna (Ball no. 306), Girdi (Ball no. 379), Qal’a-i Jafar Sultān (Ball no. 851), Sibi Chub (Ball no. 1104). This last site, where a traveller in 1841 is said to have observed “inscriptions on a large block of dark-coloured granite,” may be the place now known as Sabzchob, where another boulder bears a still undeciphered inscription in Brahmi, of which I have also received photographs from Alexandre Montagne.

It remains to be seen whether this poorly preserved inscription can be deciphered and whether it has any historical connection with the Bactrian inscription published here. Considerably further away, to the south-west and the north-east respectively, are the well-known Bactrian inscriptions of Ūruzgān (Ball no. 1221) and of Jaghatū (Ball no. 461), both of which seem likely to be approximately contemporary with the newly discovered Jaghori inscription (fig. 2).

Unlike the inscriptions of Ūruzgān and Jaghatū, the Jaghori inscription bears a date, expressed as usual in what has come to be known as the Bactrian era: “Year 535, month Sabol (III), day Tir (13).” On the basis of the arguments and assumptions presented in detail in Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018, this date should correspond to 27 July, 757 C.E. (The precise date was kindly calculated for me by François de Blois using the program “Kairos” version 3 created by Dr Raymond Mercier.)

Regarding the political history of the Ghazni area at this period we are largely reliant on Chinese sources. Two famous rulers, known both from the Chinese histories and from their coins, are “Tegin king of Khorasan” and his son “Frum Kesar,” whose name means “Caesar of Rome.” The reign of Tegin began at the latest in the year 480 of the Bactrian era, that is 702/3 C.E., since this date is clearly legible on some of his coins (Sims-Williams 2009: 123). In 738 or 739, according to Chinese sources, he abdicated at a great age in favour of his son Frum Kesar, who ruled until 745, when he too was succeeded by his son (Chavannes 1903: 132, 213–14, 295; Vondrovec 2014: 568). The name of the son is given as Bofuzhun 勃匍準 (Late Middle Chinese [LMC] pfūt-fñjywk/fñuwk-tşyn’), or, with omis-



Fig. 1. Ibex petroglyph adjacent to the Jaghori inscription.
Photo: Ahmad Jawid Bakhtyari.

sion of the second character, as Bozhun. Yet another alternative spelling of his name attested in the *Tang Huiyao* is Bopuzhun, with *pu* 葡 (LMC pfiuǝ) as the second character (see Inaba *apud* Balogh 2020: 106). It seems not to be known how long Bofuzhun ruled, but it is quite likely that he was still on the throne some twelve years after his accession at the time when our inscription was written. This mentions a certain Frum Kesar with the title $\chi\omicron\delta\delta\eta\beta\omicron\pi\omicron$ “son of the lord,” i.e. “prince.” The person referred to here cannot be the famous ruler of this name, the son and successor of Tegin, but could well be his eldest grandson. The Bactrian convention of naming the eldest son after his paternal grandfather is well demonstrated by the family of Bek, which attests the sequence Bek (I) – Kamird-far (I) – Bek (II) – Kamird-far (II) – Bek (III) (Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018: 37, Table 5). To judge from the text of the inscription, Frum Kesar the younger appears to have had the authority to make a treaty with an Indian prince. If Frum Kesar was the heir apparent or crown prince at the time of the Jaghori inscription, it is possible that he shared sovereignty with his father, either as a co-ruler or as a viceroy over some part of the kingdom. A similar arrangement may have existed when his namesake, the earlier Frum Kesar, was the crown prince, as has already been suggested (Inaba 2010: 448–49; Sims-Williams 2015: 40).

According to Ma 2012, Bofuzhun was succeeded by his brother, who is named in the biography of a Chinese traveller as Zhantan 旃檀 (LMC tʃian-tʃan) and who issued coins with the name $\sigma\alpha\nu\delta\alpha\nu\omicron$ in Bactrian script and *candāna* in Brahmi (cf. Vondrovec 2014: 535–36); we may add that countermarks with the name *cndʹn* in Pahlavi script may be attributed to the same ruler (see Sims-Williams 2010: 124, no. 412, where Ma’s article is cited from a pre-print). If Ma is correct, the succession could not have taken place until some time after 762, when Zhantan is not mentioned as the king of Jibin but as his younger brother. However, although the names Zhantan and $\sigma\alpha\nu\delta\alpha\nu\omicron$ /*candāna*/*cndʹn* are probably identical, there is no essential reason to identify the two persons or to assume that Zhantan ever became king. In any case, my hypothesis that Frum Kesar (II) was the crown prince in 757 C.E. is not incompatible with Ma’s hypothesis that, some years later, Bofuzhun was succeeded by Zhantan rather than by Frum Kesar.

It is probable, but not quite sure (see discussion in the commentary below), that the “Indian prince” and the region from which he came may be named in the inscription, but so far at least neither can be identified. However, it is well known that the “Turk Shahi” dynasty, to which Tegin and Frum Kesar belonged, was succeeded by that of the so-called “Hindu Shahis.” The battle, perhaps merely a skirmish, recorded in the new inscription may have been a prelude to this change of regime, the date of which remains to be determined. As noted by Vondrovec (2014: 568), different scholars have argued that the Hindu Shahis may have taken possession of Kabul as early as the 750s, the period of the Jaghori inscription, or as much as a century later.

The Jaghori inscription is on the whole well preserved, although a few letters may have been lost at the end of some lines where the rock is broken away at the right-hand side. The unusual shape of certain letters makes it difficult to read at first, but the occurrence of the same forms in several well-known or easily recognizable words tends to allay any initial doubts. Thus the first letter of the inscription, the χ of $\chi\pi\omicron\nu\omicron$ “year,” which looks like the mathematical symbol $\ni$, occurs again in the words $\chi\omicron\delta\delta\eta\beta\omicron\pi\omicron$ “prince” (twice) and $\nu\alpha\beta\iota\chi\tau\omicron$ “wrote.” In the figures indicating the year, $\phi' \lambda' \epsilon'$ “535,” the second character looks like a normal *v*. However, this inscription uses a different form of *v*, with upward-facing semi-circle, as seen in $\mu\alpha\nu\omicron$

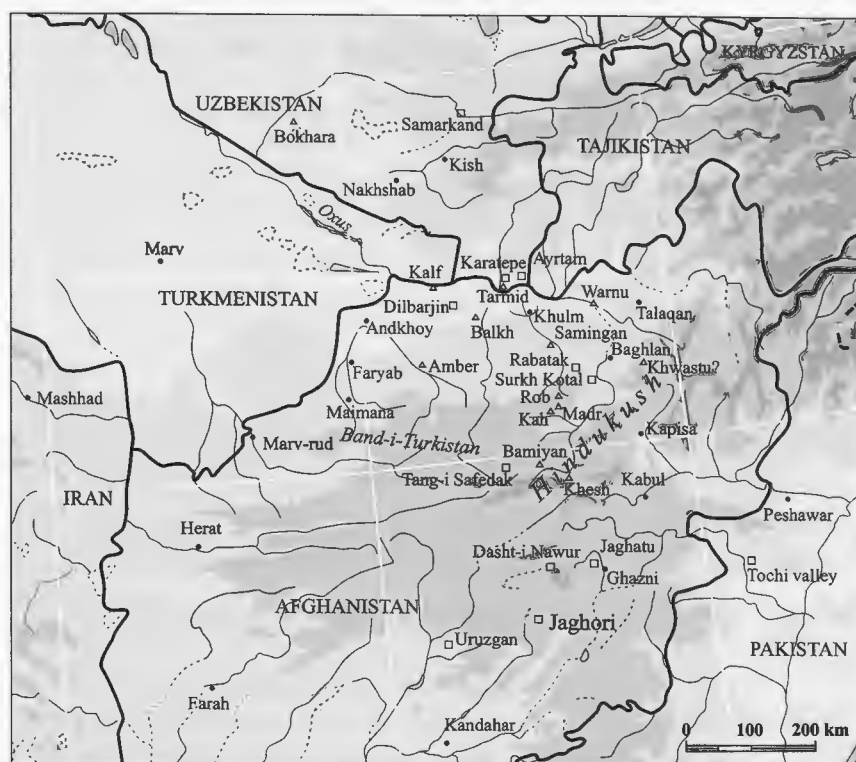


Fig. 2. Afghanistan and adjacent regions, showing places mentioned in the Bactrian documents (Δ) and sites where Bactrian inscriptions have been found (□). Map by François Ory. After Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018: 13, Map 2, with the addition of Jaghori.

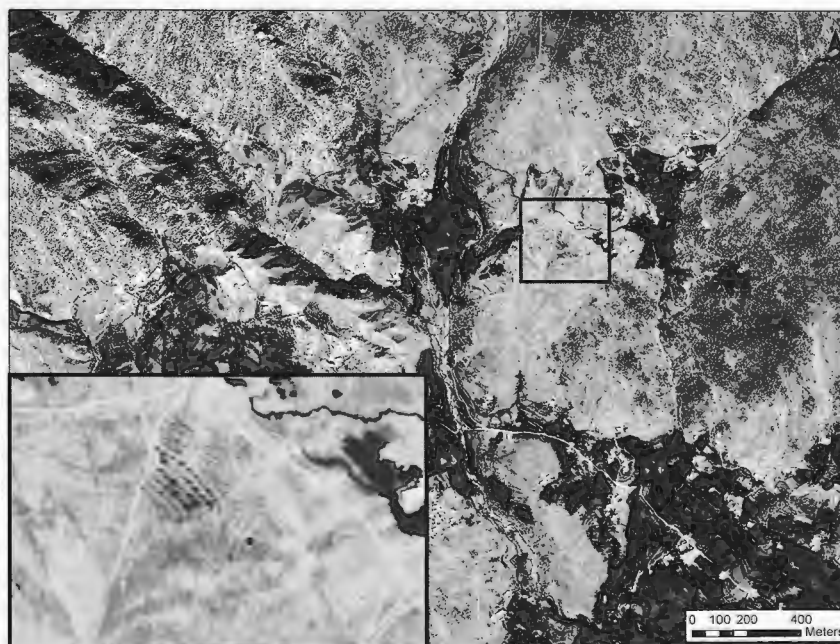


Fig. 3. Map showing the location of the Jaghori inscription. The main picture shows the village of Marqol (above right) and below it the village of Siyah-zamin with the road westwards towards Sang-i Masha. Inset, the area to the west of Marqol, with the approximate location of the inscribed stone marked by a dot (•). Map by Anthony J. Lauricella, Afghan Heritage Mapping Project/Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes, University of Chicago.

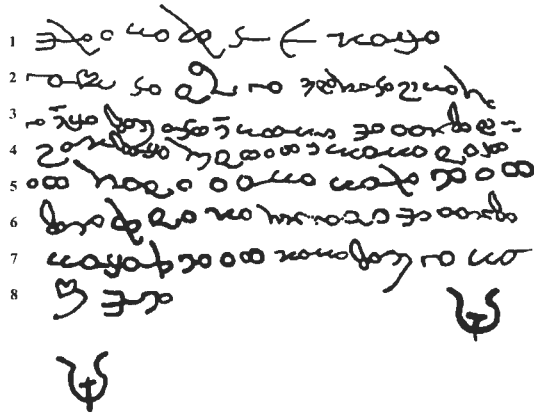


Fig. 4. The Jaghori inscription, tracing from the montage.

"month" and other words (a fact which is remarkable in itself, since in manuscripts this type of υ is not attested later than about 475 C.E., see Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018: 58). Moreover, υ "400" cannot stand between ϕ "500" and ϵ "5," where a decade is required. The reading of the numeral as λ "30" is confirmed by the occurrence of an identical form as λ in the month-name $\sigma\alpha\beta\omega\lambda\omicron$. This month-name also attests an unusual heart-shaped variant of β , which is also used in $\nu\alpha\beta\iota\chi\tau\omicron$ "wrote" beside a more standard shape in other words. The name $\phi\rho\omicron\mu\omicron$ $\kappa\eta\sigma\alpha\rho\omicron$ "Frum Kesar" attests several other characters with a surprising shape: ρ with its tail stretching to the right rather than downwards (also in $\rho\omega\sigma\omicron$ "day," $\kappa\iota\rho\delta\omicron$ "made," etc.); μ without initial upstroke (also in $\mu\alpha\upsilon\omicron$ "month"); κ with a rounded top like a cursive Roman h (also in $\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\sigma\alpha\nu\omicron$ "army," etc.); and a truncated η lacking the usual tall ascender (also in $\chi\omicron\delta\delta\eta\beta\omicron\rho\omicron$ "prince").

Text (figs. 5, 6, 7)

- 1 $\chi\rho\omicron\nu\omicron$ ϕ' λ' ϵ' $\mu\alpha\nu\omicron$
- 2 $\sigma\alpha\beta\omega\lambda\omicron^a$ $\rho\omega\sigma\omicron^b$ $\tau\iota\rho\omicron$ $\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\zeta\iota\nu\omicron^c$ $\kappa\alpha^d$
- 3 $\sigma\omicron\iota\nu\omicron$ $\beta\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha\lambda\delta\omicron$ $\iota\nu\delta\alpha\nu\omicron$ $\chi\omicron\delta\delta\eta\beta\omicron\rho\omicron^e$
- 4 $\zeta\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\nu\omicron$ $\kappa\iota\rho\delta\omicron$ $\omicron\delta\omicron$ $\iota\nu\delta\alpha\nu\omicron^f$ $\rho\omicron\gamma\delta\omicron$
- 5 $\omicron\delta\omicron$ $\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\sigma\alpha\nu\omicron$ $\nu\alpha\beta\tau\omicron$ $\omicron\delta\omicron$
- 6 $\beta\alpha\gamma\omicron$ $\phi\rho\omicron\mu\omicron$ $\kappa\eta\sigma\alpha\rho\omicron^g$ $\chi\omicron\delta\delta\eta\beta\omicron[\rho\omicron]$
- 7 $\nu\alpha\nu\alpha\beta\tau\omicron$ $\omicron\delta\omicron$ $\mu\alpha\nu\omicron$ $\beta\alpha\gamma\iota\sigma\omicron$ $\nu\alpha$
- 8 $\beta\iota\chi\tau\omicron$ ^{h} $tamgha$
 $tamgha$

^aI am grateful to Dr G. D. Davary, Heidelberg, for pointing out to me that the fourth letter is probably omega, not omicron as I had read at first. ^bAbove the line is inserted $\langle\delta\iota\rangle$. ^cLess likely $\kappa\omicron\lambda\omicron\zeta\iota\nu\omicron$. ^dOr $\kappa\omicron$. ^eAt the edge of the stone one sees what looks like a trace of a further character, but it cannot be identified with any known letter. ^fHere the superscript line is not very clear. ^gOr $\kappa\eta\sigma\omicron\rho\omicron$. ^hBelow the β of $\beta\alpha\gamma\iota\sigma\omicron$ is what looks like an isolated $\omicron$.

Translation

Year 535, month Sabol, day Tir. Kaluzin, the *lord of *Kasu, the prince of the Indians, made war, and the Indians were defeated and (their) army was destroyed. And lord Frum Kesar the prince made a treaty, and I, Bagis, wrote (this inscription).

Commentary

Line 2. The month-name $\sigma\alpha\beta\omega\lambda\omicron$ is attested in the spelling $\sigma\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron$ in the Bactrian document O and in the spelling $\sigma\beta\omega\lambda\omicron$ in the Tang-i Safedak inscription (Lee and Sims-Williams 2003). On the basis of the position of the form $s'fwl$ in Arabic script in a list of Bactrian month-names found in some manuscripts of Beruni's *Chronology*, Sabol can be identified with a high degree of probability as a later name for the third month of the year, which in Kushan times had been known by the Babylonian name Nisan (Sims-Williams and de Blois 2005: 190, 192).

Above the word $\rho\omega\sigma\omicron$ "day" is a circle, from the right side of which a curving line descends to touch the letter ω . Since this combination of a circle and descending line cannot form part of the letter ω , I read it as $\langle\delta\iota\rangle$. This may imitate the Brahmi akṣara di , a common abbreviation for $divase$ "on the day," here as a sort of interlinear gloss.

The day-name Tir is not attested elsewhere in Bactrian, but is no doubt the 13th day of the month, which has the same name in the Middle Persian calendar.

Lines 2–3. The sequence $\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\zeta\iota\nu\omicron$ $\kappa\alpha\beta\omicron\iota\nu\omicron$ $\beta\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha\lambda\delta\omicron$ is the most problematic part of the text, since even the word division is unclear. The date at the beginning of a Bactrian document or inscription is often followed by $\kappa\alpha\lambda\delta\omicron$ "when" (one must understand "[It was] the year such-and-such when . . ."), but the existence of an otherwise unattested $\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron$ beside the very common



Fig. 5. The Jaghori inscription, montage. Not exactly to scale, since the photos used are taken at various distances and angles.



Fig. 6. The Jaghori inscription. Photo: Rohullah Jawadi.

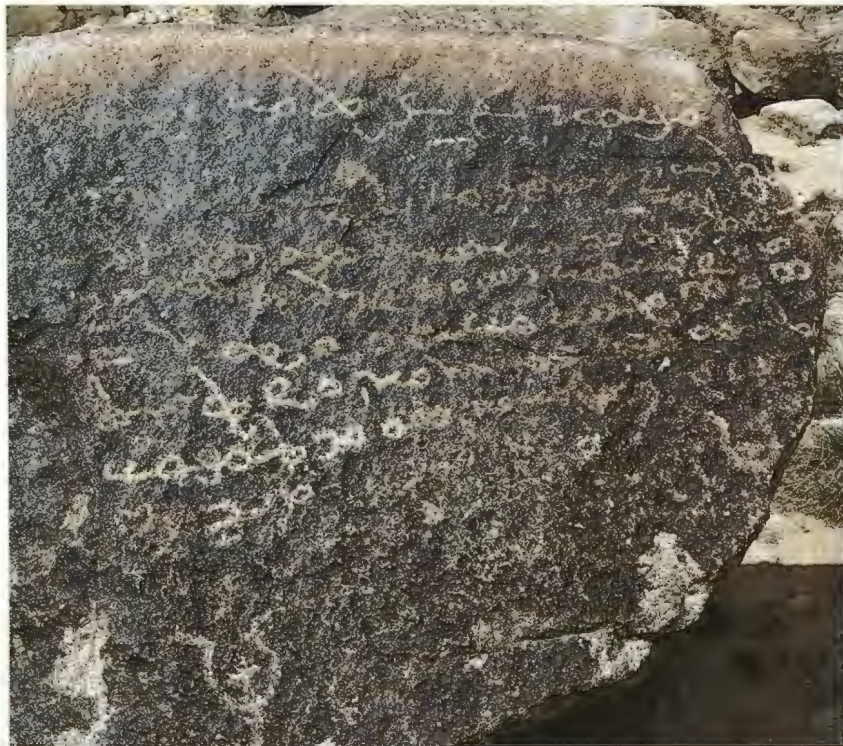


Fig. 7. The Jaghori inscription from a different angle. Photo: Ahmad Jawid Bakhtyari.

καλδο does not seem likely. More probably, καλο and ζινο should be taken together, perhaps as a personal name. Several names beginning with καλ- or κολ- are attested in Bactrian (Sims-Williams 2010: 74–75, no. 199; 81, nos. 219–21), including κολζανο, attested in 659 C.E. as the name of the leader of the people of Lizg in Gozgan, of which καλοζινο might be a variant spelling. On the other hand, if καλοζινο was an Indian prince, as the inscription seems to indicate (see below, note to line 4), it may be better to seek an Indian etymology. As for βαγιαλδο, although it is tempting to understand αλδο as the attested conjunction meaning “if, or if, or, and,” this would leave the previous word ending in -ι, which is hardly possible at this period, when all words end in -ο. Thus βαγιαλδο or βαγιαλαο must be taken as a single word, perhaps a title with βαγ- “lord” as its first component.

Since -ο [h] is common as a late Bactrian equivalent of earlier -γο [-g], the intervening κα|σοῖνο or κο|σοῖνο could be understood as an adjective formed with the suffix -ιγο, perhaps from a place-name, which is one of the most common uses of this suffix. A place-name *κασο or *κοσο is not attested, so far as I am aware. In theory such a name could lie behind the adj. κασιγε in the Rabatak inscription, where the phrase αβο μα κασιγε ραγα “in the Kasig plains” seems to define the site of Rabatak itself. However, it seems unlikely that a “lord” from somewhere north of the Hindukush would be involved in the events described in our inscription. In the case of Rabatak, moreover, there is the alternative possibility that the adj. contains the synonymous suffix -σιγο added to the attested place-name Ka(h) (see Sims-Williams 2008: 63). In the case of κασοῖνο or κοσοῖνο such an analysis is ruled out by the internal -ο-, which must belong to the underlying place-name *κασο or *κοσο. This name may have ended with the usual silent -ο or with an underlying vowel such as [u], which would have disappeared in final position but would re-emerge in internal position before a suffix such as -ιγο. A parallel case is οαρνο [Warn] from older *Warnu, the Bactrian name of the city of Qunduz, adj. οαρνοσιγο [Warnuwīg] (Sims-Williams 2007: 242). Thus κασοῖνο or κοσοῖνο may represent a place-name such as *Kāsu, *Kācu, *Kusu or *Kucu, rather than merely *Kās etc. This reconstruction may even be supported by the presence of the superscript line, which usually indicates an abbreviation. Here the mark of abbreviation may

indicate that only one -ο- is written rather than two as in οαρνοσιγο.

Line 3. Ἰνδανο “Indians,” also in line 4. The mark of abbreviation probably indicates the omission of υ [h], its most common function, allowing the reading [hindān]. In texts of much earlier periods, we have the forms υνδο [hind] “India” and υνδοσοο [hinduwāw] “in Indian (language)” in the Rabatak inscription (Sims-Williams 2008: 59–60) and υνδογανο [hind(u)gān] “the Indians” on the seal of Kanishka III(?) (Sims-Williams and Tucker 2005: 588–89).

χοδδηβορο “son of the ruler,” i.e. “prince,” also in line 6. The formation and meaning are clear although elsewhere the Bactrian term for prince is οισβορο, lit. “son of the house.”

Line 4. ζαμβανο presumably stands for an older *ζαμβαγο. This was not previously attested in Bactrian but can easily be recognized as equivalent to Parthian *zmbg* “fight, battle,” hence, with the verb κινδο, “made war, did battle.” The most straightforward interpretation of this sentence is, as I have translated above: “Kaluzin, the *lord of *Kasu, the prince of the Indians, made war.” However, it is not quite impossible that “Kaluzin, the *lord of *Kasu” and “the Indian prince” are two different persons. In that case one would have to assume that the phrase ζαμβανο κινδο was treated as a simple verb “battled, fought,” which would allow one to take “the prince of the Indians” as its object, thus: “Kaluzin, the *lord of *Kasu, fought the prince of the Indians.”

Another new word is ρογδο, the form of which suggests a verb in the past tense. A suitable root is **raug*/**rauḡ* “to break,” which is not yet known from Bactrian texts but is widely attested in both Western and Eastern Iranian languages (Cheung 2007: 318). Here “broken, smashed” would presumably imply “defeated.”

Line 5. In this context, καροοανο [kāruwān], another new word, no doubt has the meaning of Parthian *k’rw’n* “army” rather than that of its Persian cognate *kārwān* “caravan.”

Line 7. The only other occurrence of νααητο “settled” is in the following passage from the second copy of the double contract O, lines 8’–9’: ταδο παητο νααηταμο χοαδο οδο πιδολαδδιγο πιαγαδαμο “so we ourselves have settled a pact and have agreed legally” (see Sims-Williams 2012: 80–81). Since the first copy has only the second of these two expressions (πιδολαδδιγο πιαγαδαμο “we have agreed legally,” lines 11–12), it is likely that their meaning is approximately the same.

Etymologically, the past stem ναυαβτο is probably from **ni-šāšt*, assimilated from **ni-šāst*, cf. Manichaean Middle Persian *nš'st* "settled, established," the transitive equivalent of *nšst* "sat down" (Sims-Williams 2007: 239). Even without ναβτο "agreement, pact" as the object of the verb, ναυαβτο "settled" may be assumed to have much the same meaning, that is, "made a settlement, concluded an agreement or treaty."

Finally, βαγισο is a very typical Bactrian name, a hypocoristic in -ισο < **iča-* derived from the common name-element βαγο "god, lord." Previously this name was only attested in Bactrian by the variant βαγιζο, which appears to be a Western Iranian or dialectal form (Sims-Williams 2010: 39, no. 44), but its true Bactrian form may now be attested by the spelling *Bagīcca* in Brahmi script, if that is the correct reading of the name of a recently discovered Hunnic ruler (Tandon 2020). It is very typical of Bactrian inscriptions, both early (e.g. Surkh Kotal) and late (e.g. the Tochi valley), to mention the name of the writer, usually at the end of the text.

Line 8: A *tamgha* stands at the end of the line, after a gap. The same *tamgha* is repeated below the beginning of this line. I have not found an identical symbol elsewhere, but the closest analogy seems to be the family of *tamghas* numbered by Robert Göbl as S61 and 61a–d (Göbl 1967: Vol. 2, 209–10; Vol. 4, Taf. 15), to which two further variants, both(!) labelled 61e, are added in Göbl 1987: 212 with Taf. 33; 1993: 233 with Taf. 2). These *tamghas* are found on many coins attributed to the "later Nezaks" (see for example Vondrovec 2014: 601–10) as well as some of their "Turk Shahi" successors such as Pangul (ibid.: 661–64). I am grateful to Dr Jonathan Lee for pointing out that the rather faint marks behind the ibex on the adjacent rock (fig. 1) might represent another variant of the same *tamgha*, here turned on its side.

Notes

1. The Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum kindly underwrote the publication of the color images accompanying this article.

2. I am grateful to many people who have assisted in pinpointing the exact location of the inscribed rock: Alexandre Montagne, Jonathan Lee, Reza Huseini, Namatullah Kadrie, Anthony J. Lauricella, Harrison Morin, Jawid Omid and Rohullah Jawadi.

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Two Sogdian Dice-Divination Texts

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One of the most remarkable of the manuscripts discovered at Dunhuang by Sir Aurel Stein and now preserved in the British Library, London, is the Old Turkish *Irk Bitig* "Book of Omens" in the so-called Turkish Runic script. This is a collection of oracles which is clearly intended to be consulted by casting three four-sided dice or, more likely, since the order of the three numbers is significant, casting one four-sided die three times.¹ In theory this should give a total of 64 possible results, though the text actually contains 65 oracles as a result of several mistakes, some of which cancel one another out. Each oracle is headed by three groups of one to four circles representing the three throws of the die, e.g. 000 00 0000. In general the oracles consist of a very short and somewhat enigmatic story or vignette followed by a statement that the omen is good or bad. To cite just one example (Tekin 1993: 9):

000 000 000. I am a predatory eagle with golden wings. Although the feathers of my body are not yet fully grown, lying down by the sea, I catch what I please (and) I eat what I like. That powerful am I. Know thus: (The omen) is good.

Sir Gerard Clauson (1961: 218–19) expressed the opinion that the "ideas underlying the *Irk Bitig*" and "its whole flavour" are typically Turkish, ruling out the possibility of either a Chinese or an Iranian origin. This opinion needs to be qualified in some respects. Although the "Turkish flavour" of the work is not to be denied, it has significant forerunners and parallels in works in many other languages. These include dice-divination texts in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese, the oldest being the Sanskrit text of the Bower manuscript found near Kucha.² Most obviously, the four-sided long

dice bearing one to four circles on each side, which are implied by the circles at the head of each of the oracles in the *Irk Bitig*, are characteristically Indian, of a type which is attested from an early date in Indian and Central Asian contexts.³

Here my main purpose is to present two unpublished Sogdian dice-divination texts from the Berlin Turfan collection and to demonstrate what they do and do not have in common with the *Irk Bitig* and other such texts from Central Asia. Both Sogdian texts were no doubt consulted by three rolls of a four-sided long die, but this apparently did not bear circles on its four sides but in one case the letters 'β γ δ and in the other a series of one to four short parallel lines. These and other peculiarities will be discussed at the end of this article. To begin with, however, I present the text and translation of the two texts, together with a philological commentary in which the details of the translation are explained and where necessary justified.

Text No. 1: So 14410/i/ (figs. 1–2)

The first of these two oracle texts is attested by So 14410/i/, a folio from a Manichaean "Sammelhandschrift," whose very miscellaneous contents have been described in Reck 2010: 71–72. In addition to hymns and other unambiguously Manichaean texts in Middle Persian, Parthian and Sogdian, in some cases with Turkish headlines, the manuscript included several texts of a more practical or secular nature, in particular a folio containing the end of another divination text, giving prognoses for the thirty days of the month, followed by the beginning of what the editors describe as a "medicinal calendar text," which lists



Fig. 1. So 14410/i/, Recto. Depositum der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung. See also pl. 1 in gathered color plates.

the various parts of the body into which "life," i.e. the "vital spirit," is said to enter on each day of the month (Morano and Reck 2019). It is worth pointing out that the combination of medical and mantic texts in the same manuscript seems to be characteristic of the genre, other examples being the Bower manuscript and British Library, S. 5614, a Dunhuang manuscript containing *inter*

alia the *Moxishouluo bu* 摩醯首羅卜, a Chinese dice-divination text described by Dotson (2020: 24 with n. 36).⁴

The folio containing the Sogdian dice-oracle has been studied and described in detail by Christiane Reck (2006: 119–21; 2010: 72) but has not yet been edited or translated as a whole. The adjoining folio 14410/ii/ contains a hymn to the Sun

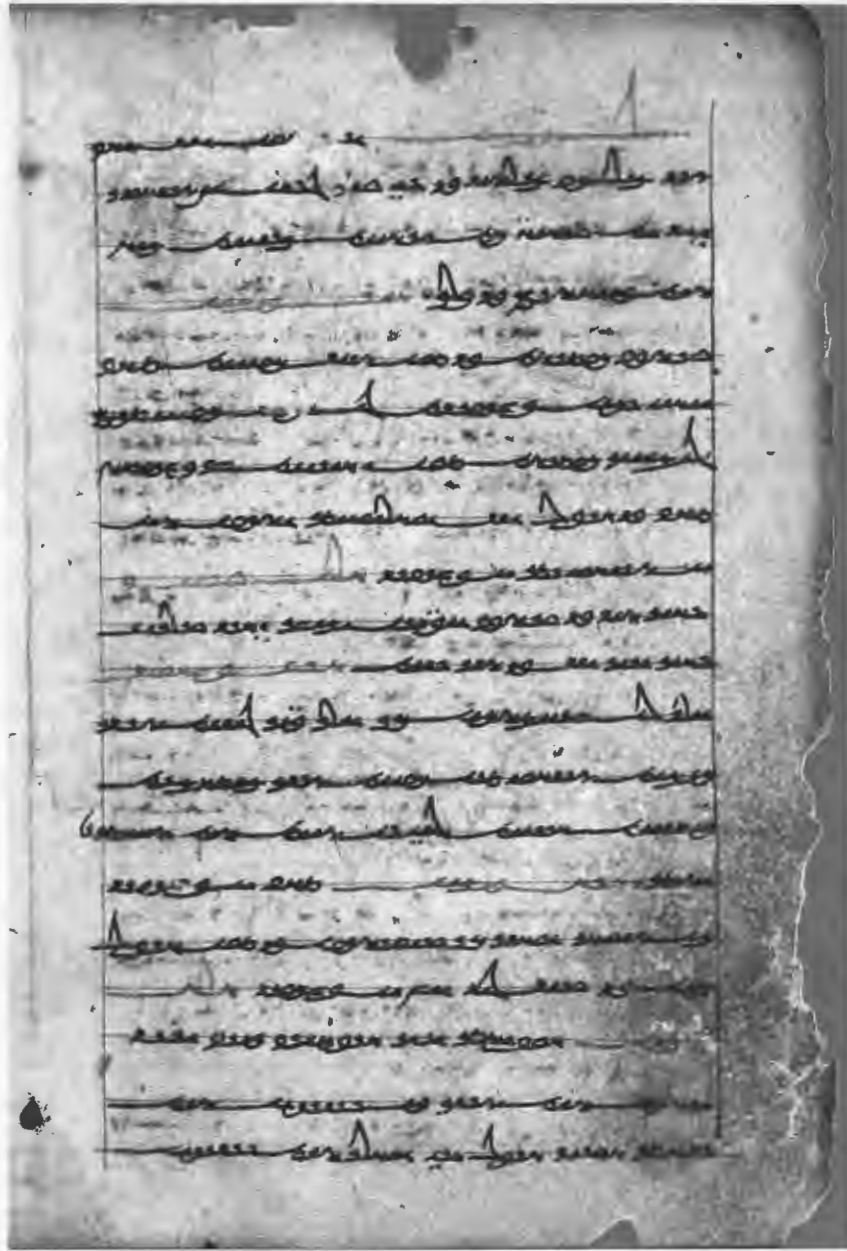


Fig. 2. So 14410/i, Verso. Depositum der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientalabteilung. See also pl. 2 in gathered color plates.

god which was published in Sundermann 1997: 92–95.

For convenient reference, I have numbered the oracles in both this text (§§1–12) and the next (§§13–16). Although these section numbers run on from one text to the other, this should not be taken to imply that they belong to a single work, which is certainly not the case.

Text^a

- R1 [end of §1] šyrxwz-yt pr xypδ z-ʿyb špʿrkt:
ʿkrtʿnt
R2 kδry βytyc ʾyz-ny ʾrʿmy sʿr βʾwδʿrt MN
R3 δymyδy ptyʿp ʾsty twʿsʿr [§2] ʾyʾ fr̄mʿn
R4 z-ymʾsy šyr ž-ʾrt tyw ʾntwxc nʾ xwrʿ
βrtwxy^c

- R5 škṛ' pr βγ'y o MN γw'ny 'z-wrt twp'
 R6 kwn' pr xypδ'rk wr'kwn' [§3] γββ p(cxw')k
 R7 'δy wty' nyst wyrky 'M γ'w o šrwyy pryw
 R8 wkwy' nyst xyδ 'rk tw' xypδ m'γwny
 R9 'xw [§4] γδδ pcxw'k nyx 'skw' pr xypδ γryw
 R10 z-yny n' xwr' s'nty xws'nty-³ n' kwn'
 R11 MN 'yny 'rky γryw δwr δ'r L' wβy 'yy
 'xšnky
 R12 pw-pδy pw-pšy kw prm n'-³yt 'sty tw'
 R13 s'r [§5] γδβ pcxw'k 'yny 'rk tw'
 R14 wyn'mskwn pr βž-'wxt³ tw' MN 'rky
 R15 'c βyr(m)y^d nyst pr nyxy-³ 'skw' kw prm
 R16 n'-³yt 'sty [§6] γ'γ wyn'w
 R17 mryy MN β'γty kpy MN 'py 'y mrtxmy
 R18 'c k'mp L' wyn'mskwn tw' pyδ'r 'y fry-y
 R19 xyδ m'γwny šyr ž-γ'rt z-'rxsyk'm^c cn
 'ntwxcy
 R20 krwmyⁱ pw šm'r' wβyk'n βγ'y s'r 'γδy xwž
 V1 [§7] γδ frmn' 'y(n)[y^g] (t)w' 'rk 'xw
 V2 šyr myδ kw myδs'r pr βž-w(ny) δβr'
 n'-šyrxwz-y
 V3 ž-'r 't wry'x kt wyš'nt myr'nt m'x
 V4 s't pr'xsym pr pδy o [§8] γβ frmn'
 V5 wyspw kwtyšt pr tw' š'r'k kwn'nt tγw
 V6 'γ'z-yk'n pckwyr L' ('kt') kwn'(n)t(k)m
 V7 δ'mc'ny kwtyšt tw' z-γ'y't cw pckwyr(y)^h
 V8 tγw pr xypδ 'rk 'wxδ'w'nty 'skw' s'n
 V9 n'-šyrxwz-yty n' pckwyr [§9] γδ' wyn'w
 V10 βγ'y s'r pr wyspw 'fryn nm'cy ž-γyr wyδβz-
 V11 βγ'y 'yny 'rk pr sry β'r't [§10] γβ' pcxw'k
 V12 'δy L' wyn'msk'n ky 'δy fry δ'r't šyry
 V13 k'm't šyrxwz-ty' kwn't šyry mrtxmyt
 V14 f'tr'nt xyr'nt δrž-y' šnnt s't s'n'wty-³
 V15 '(s)tyⁱ o [§11] γβγ prm'n tγw n' pckwyr
 V16 MN šrwyy 'wryy ky wyntyskwn pr tw'
 xypδ
 V17 m'n pr wy'k δ'r 'c n' pckwyr [§12] γδy
 V18 (fr)m'p'n xwp'sty 'yny xypγryw pryw nβyr
 V19 nyškr'^j s't šyry p' βyryk'n s't
 V20 yryty^k xwy'r xypδ ryž 'γδy s't βyryk'n

^aRed ink is indicated by underlining. The following features of the orthography are worthy of notice: *aleph* and *n* are only distinct in initial and sometimes in final position; *z* never joins the following letter and is thus distinct from *n*; *β* and *y* are not distinct except in final position or where *β* is indicated by a single superscript point above; two subscript points are used in the case of *z* (transliterated *ž*); two superscript points are used in the case of *p* (transliterated *f*) and once in the case of *x* (in *wry'x*, V3). ^bThus Yoshida 2008: 58; not ZY with Reck 2006: 120. ^cPoint over *β*. ^dThe *m* is rather small,

but *βyryy* seems less likely. ^eSic, for expected *z-r'xs-*. ^fThus Reck 2006: 120. Less likely *knwmy*. ^gThus restored by Reck 2006: 120. ^hFor the unusual final -y one may compare the writing of *rm'y* "people" (?) on the adjoining folio /ii/R7 (read *rms* in Sundermann 1997: 92). ⁱLooks like 'yty, but probably intended for 'sty as suggested to me by Christiane Reck. ^jLess likely *nyškn'*. Not *nyškr'n*. ^kReading suggested to me by Yutaka Yoshida. Reck (2006: 120) reads *βrxt^y*, which is equally possible from a palaeographic point of view.

Translation

§1. . . . well-wishers in their place became ashamed, (but) now he has come to fortune, treasure, wealth. Of this there is a share for you.

§2. γ'. Command. You (will) get gold very quickly, do not worry! Trust in God, turn from sin, repent(?), profit by your work!

§3. γββ. Prohibition. A wolf has no trouble with a cow, (but) does not associate with a lion. This business is like yours.

§4. γδδ. Prohibition. Be careful in yourself, do not consume what you hold in trust, do not delight (your) enemies! Keep yourself away from such business. O excellent one, may you not be without footing, without backing(?), so long as it is in the future for you!

§5. γδβ. Prohibition. (As for) this business, I see you in distress. There is no profit for you from (this) business. Be careful so long as it is in the future!

§6. γ'γ. Hesitation. A bird without gardens, a fish out of water—O man, I see no way out for you. O friend, (it is) like this. You will very quickly be delivered from distress, you will be . . . without thinking. Ask God for what you desire!

§7. γδ'. Command. This is your business. Very much, increasingly from day to day, give (your) ill-wisher(s) poison and *wry'x* so that they die (and) we all are left standing.

§8. γββ. Command. All the dogs (will) bark at you, (and) you will begin to be afraid, (but) this world's dogs will not be able to bite you. Why are you afraid? Be diligent in your work (and) do not fear enemies (or) ill-wishers.

§9. γδ'. Hesitation. Bless God for everything, in prayer call and cry (to Him). God (will) accept this work.

§10. γβ'. Prohibition. I do not see anyone who loves someone, wishes (him) well, (or) performs

(acts of) friendship. Good men have passed away, departed (and) shuddered in (their) heart. All is enmity.

§11. γβγ. Command. Do not fear being swallowed by a lion which appears to you! Keep your mind in place, fear nothing!

§12. γδγ. Command. This is good. Take counsel with yourself, examine(?) every(thing) good, for you will obtain every(thing) comfortable, you will easily obtain all your desires (and) wishes.

Commentary

§2. z-yrn'sy "you (will) get gold." This is one of several examples in this text of a sequence of two words written as one. Cf. xypδ'rk, wr'kwn' (R6), xwp'sty, xypγ'rw (V18).

βrtwxy' škr' pr βγ'y "trust in God." Yoshida (2019: 128) notes that the basic meaning of škr- is "to lead, pursue" but that it sometimes means "to do, accomplish." Here it seems to be used to create a verbal expression ("to perform trust" = "to trust") from the noun βrtwxy' "trust, confidence."

twp' kwn' "repent," lit. "perform repentance." This is just a guess, based on the context and the idea that twp' might be a loanword from Arabic *tawba* "repentance." A loanword from Syriac and Aramaic *twb'* "goodness" can also be considered, but one would probably expect twβ', showing the fricative realization of Syriac /b/ in post-vocalic position. Arabic loanwords are certainly not common in Sogdian, but their occurrence in late texts cannot be excluded a priori. It is worth noting that another folio of this manuscript contains the form xyδyw "lord," which in view of the vocalization of the first syllable is probably a loanword from New Persian *xiδēv* rather than directly from Bactrian *χδδηο*. (Both possibilities are considered in Sundermann 1997: 155.)

§3. This oracle was cited by Henning 1946: 737. In this text the word 'rk "work" often seems to be used in a rather general sense which may be paraphrased as "business" or "matter" (cf. R11, 13, V1, 11). Henning translated "position."

m'γwny "like" also occurs in R19. Henning translated "wholly like," evidently thinking of *mγwn*, which means both "whole" and, especially in the combination 'yw *mγwn*, "like" (Sims-Williams 1985: 147). The contexts support the translation "like," though the consistent spelling with ' in the first syllable and in particu-

lar the final -y seem to rule out the possibility of interpreting m'γwny as a mere variant spelling of *mγwn*. (The explanation suggested in DMT III/2: viii must be withdrawn.) Possibly m'γwny may be understood as a cross between *mγwn* "like" and c'γwny "how, as." Manichaean Sogdian 'm'γwn in M767/ii/R6, which puzzled Henning (see Haloun and Henning 1952: 203, n. 2) is perhaps a variant of m'γwny, but unfortunately the context is not well enough preserved for its meaning to be clear.

§4. z-yny n' xwr' "do not consume what you hold in trust." For related expressions see Henning 1946: 716; Sundermann 1997: 128–29. A further example of (z)yny-xw'r'y "embezzler" occurs in P24, line 4 (not recognized or read in Benveniste 1940: 158).

Since a wide range of meanings is attributed to pδ-, including "foot, foundation, basis, foot (of a mountain)," "family, race, kind," and "step, undertaking" (DMT III/2: 136b; Sims-Williams 2016: 134), pw-pδy is quite ambiguous. Bearing in mind the context in Text 2 below, line 23, as well as here, the most appropriate interpretation seems to be "without foundation, without (secure) footing," thus, with the verb kwn-, "to undermine." The phrase pr pδy in V4, if it means "standing, upright," may be seen as an antonym of pw-pδy. The following pw-pšy is another new word, whose meaning must be close to that of pw-pδy. The translation "without backing" is suggested on the basis of a possible connection with pšy "posterior, behind" (DMT III/2: 150b).

The phrase kw prm n'-''yt 'sty occurs both in this and in the following oracle. Elsewhere n'-''yt, lit. "not-come," is attested as an adj. in the expression n'-''yt zwrn'k "future time" (MacKenzie 1976, II: 57). It is possible that it could also be used as a noun "the future," like Skt. *an-āgata-*, in which case one might translate "so long as it is in the future." Alternatively, one may think of an interpretation "so long as it has not come," i.e. "until it comes," though one might expect *L' (= nē) ''yt'y 'sty or *''yt'y nyst, with negation of the finite verb rather than of the participle. In either case, the "it" which is the subject of the verb is not clearly specified, but it seems likely that it refers to the proposed action regarding which the enquirer has consulted the oracle.

§5. From the context, the unknown word βyrmy seems likely to mean "profit" or "success." It is

tempting to read *βyryy*, since the noun *βyry* or *βyrʾk* “success,” written *βyryy* in Manichaean script, is actually attested (DMT III/2: 61b). In Sogdian script, however, such a word would hardly be written with double *-yy*.⁵ It therefore seems better to read *βyrmy* and to take this as an alternative formation from the same base.⁶

§6. *wynʾw* occurs again in V9 at the beginning of §9. While *frmʾn* “command” and *pcxwʾk* “obstacle, prohibition” introduce auspicious and inauspicious oracles respectively, *wynʾw* appears to be used for those which begin doubtfully but end positively. Rather than “visible,” as it is translated by Reck (2010: 72), evidently on the basis of a comparison with *wynʾwcyk* “id.,” *wynʾw* is likely to mean “delay, hesitation” and be connected with the Christian Sogdian verb *wynʾw* “to linger, wait” (Sims-Williams 2014: 122). As noted in Sims-Williams 2015: 8, the noun *wynʾw* “delay” is also attested in the Mug document B11, line 3 (read *wyzʾw* and translated “stop” in Livshits 2015: 126–28): *rtβγ ʾmw nʾβ tδyδ ʾycw wynʾw Lʾ prmʾy ʾkrty* “Sir, please do not cause those people to linger at all with you.”

krwmy (less likely *knwmy*) is unknown. Syntactically, it could belong either to the preceding phrase (*cn ʾntwxcy krwmy* “from the *k.* of distress”) or to what follows (*krwmy pw šmʾrʾ wβykʾn* “you will be *k.* without thinking”).

§7. *wryʾx* is the name of a specific poison, also attested as *wryʾ(γ)* or *wryʾ(x)* in P3, line 286.⁷ The writing with *x* suggests Uyghur influence, though the word cannot be Turkic in origin.

§8. The first part of this oracle is cited in Sims-Williams 2020: 17 in connection with the rare verb *zyʾy* “to bite” < **uz-gāh-aya-*.

ʾwxδʾwʾnty “diligent” is a new form. Its relationship to the synonymous Christian Sogdian *ʾxwdʾwny* or *ʾwxdʾwny* may be compared to that between *ʾyžnty* and *ʾyžn*. In preference to the explanation offered in GMS, §290, it may be suggested that the two forms represent active and middle present participles in *-*ant-a-(ka-)* and *-*āna-(ka-)* respectively.

§9. *βγʾy ʾyny ʾrk pr sry βrʾt*, lit. “God will bear this work on (His) head.” This appears to be a variant of the well-attested expression *prw srw ptryβ-* “to receive on the head,” i.e. “to accept respectfully” (MacKenzie 1970: 41).

§11. The noun *ʾwyr* “(act of) swallowing, gulping” is attested in one other passage, where it is used metaphorically in connection with the waves in a stormy sea (Sims-Williams 2014: 119).

§12. *xypγyw* < *xypδ γyw*. The form *xyp* was first noted in Sundermann 1997a: 110 n. 51 [= 2001: 736 n. 51]. It is interesting to note that it is also attested in Manichaean script, so far unrecognized, in BBB, line 622 (Henning 1937: 37, with a convoluted discussion in the footnote).

The meaning of the previously unattested verb *nyškr-* is not clear, though it is presumably connected with the noun *nškr* or *nyškr* “meaning, interpretation, explanation.” The translation “examine” is just a guess.

yryty (suggested by Yutaka Yoshida) would be a variant of *γryty* “wide, open, comfortable,” cf. the abstract *γrytyʾ* “openness, relief” in Manichaean script (M134/i/R2, unpublished, the form of which was perhaps influenced by the antonym *trytyʾ* in the following line).

Text No. 2: Ch/U 6828 (fig. 3) + Ch/So *12350, Verso

The second text consists of two fragments, lines 1–12 being attested by Ch/U 6828 and lines 7–27 by Ch/So *12350. The latter fragment is unfortunately lost, having presumably been destroyed during the Second World War.⁸ The two fragments are described in Reck 2018: 111–12 and 80–81 respectively, where the complete text of the lost fragment is given on the basis of a transcript in the notebook of the late Prof. Mark J. Dresden, now in the possession of Prof. Hiroshi Kumamoto, Tokyo, who kindly sent me a photograph of the relevant page. Another, seemingly more accurate, transcript is found amongst the papers of Dr Ilya Gershevitch, preserved at the Ancient India and Iran Trust in Cambridge, and it is on this that the edition below is based. The similarities between Dresden’s and Gershevitch’s transcripts, also in the case of other texts, show that they are not entirely independent. It seems likely that Dresden, when studying Khotanese in Cambridge with H. W. Bailey during the years 1947–1953 (see Dresden 1955: 397) also took the opportunity to read Sogdian texts with Gershevitch, some of which he copied from notes put at his disposal by the latter.

Gershevitch, Dresden and Reck have all recognised that the two fragments belong to the same manuscript, but not the fact that they can be joined, which greatly facilitates the interpretation of the lines in which they overlap. The text was evidently written on the blank verso of a Chinese scroll. No information is available concerning the

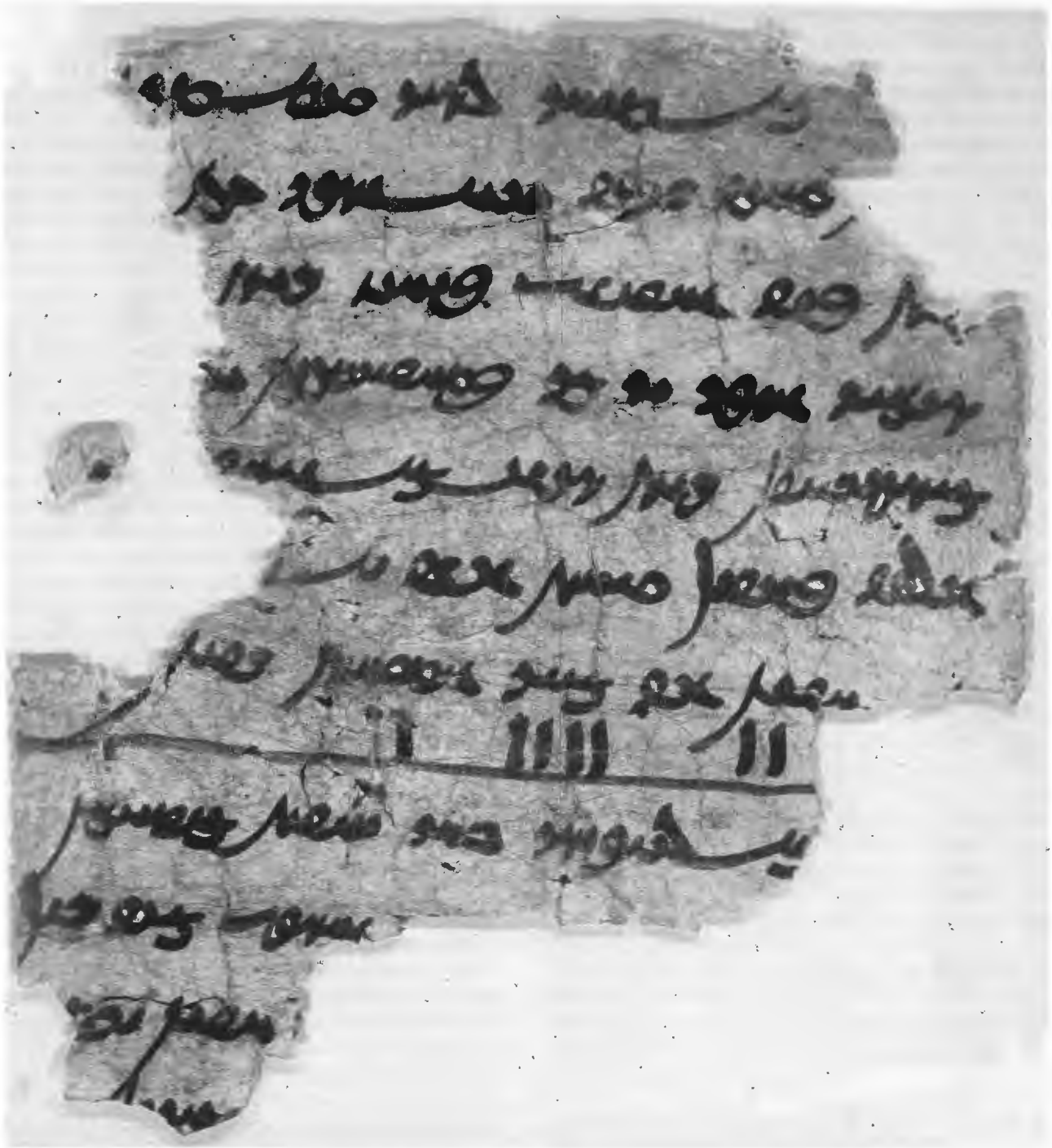


Fig. 3. Ch/U 6828, Verso. Depositum der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung. See also pl. 3 in gathered color plates.

recto side of Ch/So *12350, but the recto of Ch/U 6828 contains, in addition to the Chinese text, a couple of lines of Sogdian text in Sogdian script, apparently naming the owner of the manuscript (Reck 2018: 111).

It appears that this manuscript was consulted in a similar way to Text no. 1 or the *Irk Bitig*, but that the dice used bore a series of one to four short parallel lines rather than letters or circles. As Bill Mak kindly points out to me, these seem to be

the Chinese “counting rod” numerals, commonly used in mathematics and accounting (including at Dunhuang), in which the numerals 1–4 consist of the appropriate number of vertical lines, exactly as we see in Ch/U 6828 (Needham 1959: 8–9; Libbrecht 1982).⁹ Incidentally, this suggests that the Sogdian text was written horizontally, since a vertical orientation of the text would imply a horizontal orientation of the lines which form the numerals.¹⁰

Text^a

- 1 [§13] [^b MN tryy δšny w't t(w')[]
 2 [w'x](š) w'nk w c'nk w zy'n 'spy 'M [...]
 3 (k')s prw 'xwnch p'xyz k's [w'nk w]
 4 šym'r 'spy ZY-my ptxw'ytk'm ••[]
 5 mnš k'β'nt k's skr^c MN 'nxw[nch]
 6 'yδcw prywyδ w'xš 'ycw n' •[]
 7 n' xwr' 'yw-m'ny 'ntwxs kwn'
 8 // /// /
 9 [§14] 'prš MN δynp'šy βyy nywš mrtxm'
 10 tw' pr'yw w'nk w c'nk w 'xšph myw r'δ
 11 šw' zyw w'r pcywz *mywy^d ywn' n(βt)[y]
 12 wβ' ywn' wβ' r'δh L' (xrt)/[wβ'](?)
 13 βyyšt z'ry sy'nt xwyr sn' [mywy?]
 14 ywn' pty-w's tw' ms xyδ [βyyšt? z'ry]
 15 sy'nt-k'm cw p(...y)^e-skwnw pw pry'y
 16 wβ'y-k'm ywšⁱ pr xwm'r 'skw'
 17 || ||| |
 18 [§15] 'prš MN βny-'kk βyy tw' w'xš
 19 w'nk w c'nw m(?)sy mrt y wyrky wyn β
 20 pcykwyr pts'r δβtykw nyw wyrky ptyxw'y
 21 MN s'n pw δβn' wytr tyw mrtxm'
 22 n' p'y xwny mrtxm'kw ky tw' s'r
 23 pw-pδy kwn't prδβ't 'yw-m'ny 'skw'
 24 'rk šw'm'k βwt-k'm o
 25 || ||| |||
 26 [§16] 'prš MN wp'pynt'rw nywš tyw
 27 {.....y/w wysp[w

^aThe text of Ch/U 6828 is printed in *italics*, that of Ch/So *12350 in Roman type. ^bA restoration [^bprš] seems doubtful, as one would expect to see at least the tail of the final -s. ^cLess likely škr'. ^dOr just *myw? Gershevitch read *myt*, giving *mrt* as a conceivable alternative. At the broken edge of the manuscript, the circular top of w plus the upright tip of y could easily be mistaken for a t. ^eGershevitch p...δ/y. Noting that there is “hardly space for *pckwyr*,” he suggests restoring *prywyδ*. ^fThus Gershevitch and Dresden.

Translation

§13. . . . From the swift South Wind. Your [business] (is) just like a fierce horse in a fight with a . . . pig. The pig fell down. He thought: “The horse will kill me.” . . . they struggled, the pig was victorious from the fight. With regard to this matter, do not . . . (and) do not eat anything, strive single-mindedly.

§14. 2-4-1. Permission. From the god “Guardian of the religion.” Listen, O man. With you (it is) just like (when) the tiger was travelling by night. He met with heavy rain. The tiger’s hair became wet, there was a flood, [he could] not [go] on (his) way. The gods took pity (on him), the sun rose, [the tiger’s] hair (or: the flood) dried. On you too those [gods](?) will take [pity]. Whatever you . . . , you will be without pain. Rejoice(?), be comforted.

§15. 3-4-1. Permission. From the god Vināyaka. Your business (is) just like (when) an old man saw a wolf. . . . he was afraid. Then again (the wolf) killed another wolf, (the man) went away from (his) enemy without fear. You, O man, do not protect the man who undermines (and) deceives you. Be single-minded. (Your) work will be successful.

§16. 2-3-4. Permission. From the water-sprite. Listen, you . . . all . . .

Commentary

§13. Each of oracles 14–16 begins with the word ‘prš “permission,” which perhaps indicates a positive outcome like *frm'n* “command” in Text no. 1. Here it may be necessary to restore a different word.

After the introductory word, each oracle in this text is introduced by the preposition MN + the name of a god or semi-divine being. This phrase seems to have no syntactic connection to what precedes or follows but to indicate the source or speaker of the oracle. Here the divinity in question is the δšny w't “South Wind,” to whom a short hymn is addressed in the magical text P3, lines 203ff, and who is also named in a Manichaean list of gods (see Henning 1946: 729 and Sundermann 2001: 836–38 respectively).

[w'x](š) is restored here on the basis of the occurrence of this word in line 6 and especially line 18. Its use in the sense “business, matter, thing” is similar to that of 'rk in Text no. 1 above. It also seems to be attested in a Christian Sogdian

oracle, as well as quite frequently in other Christian texts (Sims-Williams 1977: 63–65, especially p. 64, n. 93; 2016: 201).¹¹

Rather than *zy'n* “child” (on which see DMT III/2: 235a and Sims-Williams 2014: 52), *zy'n* may be cognate with Persian *žy'n* “fierce” as suggested in Gershevitch’s notes. According to Gershevitch’s transcript *z* also occurs in *zyw* (line 11), which suggests that the scribe intended the diacritic to indicate [ž] as opposed to [z].

mnšk'β'nt, lit. “they split.” The translation proposed is based on a comparison with 14638/i/V15, where the noun *nšk'β* appears to be used of the fight between the Primal Man and Ahriman (thus Sundermann 2001: 155, n. 217, who translates “*Zerwürfnis(?)”).

A verb *skr-* is not otherwise attested. In his notes Gershevitch takes *skr'* as the 3 sg. imperfect of the verb to which the pp. *skrtty* “victorious” belongs. It is interesting to see that *skr-* forms its imperfect in the same way as (')*skw-*, whereas other verbs beginning with a sibilant + consonant cluster insert the “augment” -y- (e.g. *syxw'y*, *šykr*, *zyw'rt*, *zyyyr*, see GMS §§627, 629).

It is difficult to see what *'yδcw* can mean here. Erroneous anticipation of *'ycw* a few words further on?

§14. As noted by Reck (2018: 112, n. 7), a god named “Guardian of the religion” is not otherwise attested.

The word *γwn'* (which could of course be read *xwn'*, probably also *γw'n* or *xw'n*) seems to occur three times in four lines. For lines 12 and 14 Gershevitch suggested the translation “flood,” comparing *wynh* in P2, line 184, etc. The latter, also attested as *wyn'* (nom. sg. of a f. stem *wyn-*) in Christian Sogdian, certainly means “famine.” However, despite Henning 1946: 717, it seems that Avestan *vōiγnā-* does mean “flood” (cf. in particular Yasht 19, verse 67), so it is possible that *wyn-* also had this meaning in Sogdian, while a development of *wyn-* to *γwn-* is paralleled by that of *wyš-* to *γwš-* “to rejoice” in line 16. The fuller context now available strongly supports Gershevitch’s suggestion: *γwn' wβ' r'δh L' (xrt)[wβ']* “there was a flood, [he could] not [go] on [his] way.” On the other hand, the context in line 11, which was not known to Gershevitch, seems to require a different explanation, as *γwn'* “hair”: **mywy γwn' n(βt)[y] wβ'* “the tiger’s hair became wet.” In line 14 one could translate either “[the tiger’s] hair became dry” or “the flood dried

up,” but “hair” is impossible in line 12 just as “flood” is impossible in line 11. If the translation proposed is correct, the occurrence of two identically spelt words, neither of them particularly common, in the same passage may make one suspect a deliberate pun, which in turn would seem to imply that the text is an original Sogdian composition rather than a translation from any other language.

Since *γwš-* (older *wyš-*) “to rejoice” is a light stem, the form *γwš* for the regular 2 sg. impv. *γwš'* is unexpected. The word is recorded in the same way by both Gershevitch and Dresden. One could also consider emending *γwš* to *nywš* “listen!,” but this seems less appropriate to the context.

§15. The name of the god is recorded by Gershevitch as *βny-''kk*, with an indication that -' could be read for -n- and vice versa. His ingenious suggestion that this may represent Skt. Vināyaka, an epithet of Gaṇeśa, was subsequently rediscovered by Reck (2018: 81, n. 2). As I learned from a talk by Brandon Dotson, Vināyaka is also one of the divinities to whom an oracle is attributed in the Chinese *Moxishou-luo bu* (oracle 2-2-2). The unexpected vocalism of the Sogdian form could be taken to suggest transmission via Tocharian B, where the position of the accent commonly results in the sequence -ā-a- in an Indian loanword being replaced by -a-ā-, as in *kamāl* from Skt. *kāmala-* “jaundice” (see Isebaert 1983: 39).¹²

pts'r δβtykw nyw wyrky ptyxw'y “then again (the wolf) killed another wolf.” It is tempting to translate “then another wolf killed (it),” which would seem to provide a better explanation for the man’s escape, but one would expect the direct object to be expressed.

§16. *wp'pγnt'rw*, reversing the word-order of Avestan *gaṇdarəβō upāpō*, is found in the spelling *wp'pγntrw* in P3, line 131 (see Henning 1945: 482 n. 3).¹³

* * *

The commentaries above discuss various details of the interpretation of these two texts. Here I turn to more general questions about the nature of these texts and how they compare with other dice-divination texts from Central Asia and adjacent areas. The texts with which we will be concerned all have it in common that they seem to have been consulted by three rolls of a four-sided

die, a procedure which gives $4^3 = 64$ possible combinations.

The first point to be discussed is the way in which the numbers 1–4 are recorded in the texts and, presumably, on the dice.

As already mentioned, four-sided dice bearing pips or circles are well attested in the archaeological record, and their use is implied by the groups of circles which introduce each oracle in the *Irk Bitig* and many Tibetan dice-divination texts. I am not aware of any dice bearing one to four parallel lines, as found in Text no. 2, but it is possible that these lines are based on Chinese counting rod numerals as noted above. In the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Moxishouluo bu* each prediction is headed by three Chinese numerals (using the ordinary Chinese characters for the numerals). More remarkable is the fact that Text no. 1 uses the letters $\beta \gamma \delta$ rather than circles, lines or numbers. Evidently these letters stand for the first four letters of the alphabet, though not, as I pointed out *apud* Reck 2006: 120, of the Sogdian/Uygur alphabet, where the twelfth letter δ (from Aramaic *lāmedh*) never took the place of the fourth letter *dāleth*.¹⁴ Similarly in Tibetan, perhaps beginning in the 13th or 14th century, texts are found which imply the use of dice marked with the characters *a wa ya da*, while some comparatively modern instances from India attest *a ba* (or *bha*) *ya da* (Hoernle 1897: 214, n. 1; Strickmann 2005: 117; Dotson 2020: 25, 42). According to Strickmann, the derivation of this usage from the Greek numerical letters $\alpha' \beta' \gamma' \delta'$ is obvious, but of course the equivalent letters $\beta \gamma \delta$ are also found at the beginning of the alphabets used for most Semitic languages, where they are also commonly used as numerals 1–4. Reck (2010: 72) has suggested an Aramaic source for the Tibetan usage, while Dotson mentions the further possibility of an Islamic origin.

This last possibility is in fact very attractive in view of the fact that dice-divination texts known by names such as *Fāl-nāma* and using dice marked with the first four letters of the Arabic *abjad* are well attested in the Islamic world (Flügel 1861: 48, 52). Such an origin is also worth considering in the case of our Text no. 1, especially in view of the possible occurrence in the manuscript of Arabic and Persian loanwords (see above, p. 79) and the sententious morality of some of the oracles, which, as we shall see below, resembles that of the Turkish *Fāl-nāma* translated by Decourde-

manche (1899: 3–35) but is quite unlike what we find in most Central Asian dice-divination texts. However, given that the Sogdian text is attested in a Manichaean manuscript, it could well be that its immediate source was a text written in the Manichaean script. Whatever the language of such a putative source text, whether Sogdian, New Persian or something else, the letters introducing the predictions would no doubt have been $\beta \gamma \delta$, the first four letters of the Manichaean alphabet. Since the phonetic values of the letters $\beta \gamma \delta$ in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian include $[v \gamma \delta]$, this assumption could provide an explanation for their transcription as $\beta \gamma \delta$, the letters used to represent these sounds in the Sogdian script.

The order in which the 64 oracles are presented in texts of this type is a subject discussed in detail by Brandon Dotson (2020: 29–35). Some texts follow more or less strictly an order from high (e.g. 4-4-4) to low (e.g. 1-1-1) or vice versa. Others attest more haphazard arrangements, with perhaps some logical sub-groupings within the general chaos. One fairly common feature is that the four triplets (1-1-1 etc.) may be given special treatment. This may be done by putting all four triplets at the very beginning, regardless of the ordering of the rest of the text, as we find in one of the oldest surviving Sanskrit versions, that in Part IV of the Bower manuscript (Hoernle 1897: 192–202), as well as in the *Irk Bitig* and the *Moxishouluo bu*. An alternative strategy, attested in some Tibetan texts and in an Arabic *Kitāb al-fa'l* preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford,¹⁵ is to present the oracles in four “sections,” each section beginning with one of the triplets followed by the other fifteen combinations beginning with the same number or letter. The first of our two Sogdian texts seems likely to attest a version of this last arrangement, as all the combinations in the surviving part of the text begin with the same letter γ . The fact that the first three combinations attested all consist of γ + a pair (γ - α - α , γ - β - β , γ - δ - δ), with the notable omission of γ - γ - γ , suggests that the triplet may have stood at the beginning of the “section.” Moreover, since most of the throws beginning with γ are attested, it seems unlikely to be due to mere chance that not only the triplet γ - γ - γ is missing but also the other three combinations beginning with γ - γ , suggesting that they too may have appeared together as a group. A likely reconstruction of the original order would be: (i)

γ-γ-γ; (ii) γ-γ-α, γ-γ-β, γ-γ-δ; (iii) γ-α-α, γ-β-β, γ-δ-δ (= §§2-4); (iv) all other combinations beginning with γ in a fairly random order (= §§5-12, followed by γ-β-δ, the only combination beginning with a single γ which happens not to be found in the surviving part of the text). There is a close parallel to this arrangement in the Bodleian *Kitāb al-fa'l*, where the triplet (i) f-f-f is followed by all other combinations containing two f-s, in the order (ii) f-f-j, f-f-^c, f-f-r; (iia) f-j-f, f-^c-f, f-r-f; and then those containing f + a pair: (iii) f-j-j, f-^c-^c, f-r-r. It is this last group which corresponds, *mutatis mutandis*, to §§2-4 of our text. The parallel is certainly not quite exact—in particular γ-^c-γ, γ-β-γ, γ-δ-γ, the Sogdian equivalents of group (iia) f-j-f, f-^c-f, f-r-f, do not appear together—but the underlying principle of starting with the triplet and then combinations containing pairs seems likely to be the same in both cases.

After the letters or symbols which indicate the faces of the dice, each oracle is introduced by a single word. In Text no. 2 the word in question, where it is preserved, is always *”prs* “permission,” presumably indicating that the enquirer should feel free to pursue whatever course of action he had in mind, though it seems likely that a different word should be restored in §13. Text no. 1 employs three different words, *frm’n* or *prm’n* “command,” *pcxw’k* “obstacle, prohibition” and *wyn’w* “delay, hesitation.” Taking into account both the literal meanings of these words and the content of the omens to which they are attached, one may deduce that “command” and “obstacle” correlate with auspicious and inauspicious predictions respectively, while, as noted in the commentary to §6 above, “hesitation” indicates an oracle which begins doubtfully but ends positively. Such a tripartite division of the predictions is very common, being found in Indian, Tibetan and Islamic texts (e.g. Weber 1868: 282; Dotson 2020: 35; Flügel 1861: 51) as well as in the *Irk Bitig*. In this last, almost all the sections end: “Know thus: (the omen) is good/bad,” sometimes with emphasis: “very/extremely,”¹⁶ but oracle no. 57 uniquely has: “At the beginning of this omen there is a little pain; (but) later it becomes good again” (Tekin 1993: 25), just like the Indian dice-oracles described by Weber, *loc. cit.*, as neither good nor bad but mixed, “mit schliesslicher Hülfe aus Noth.” In §12 of Text no. 1, the introductory word *frm’n* is followed by the evaluation *xwp’sty’yny* “this is good,” equivalent to Turkish *ädgü ol*

“it is good,” confirming the association of *frm’n* “command” with auspicious results. As for *frm’n* itself, the Turkish equivalent would be *yarlık* “command,” which also has the secondary sense “permission,” like *”prs* in Text no. 2. Though *yarlık* does not occur in the *Irk Bitig*, it is used, in a context similar to that of *frm’n* and *”prs* in our Sogdian texts, in a divination text of a different kind, a Christian Turkish fragment belonging to the genre of *Sortes Sanctorum* (Le Coq 1909: 1205-8; Bang 1926: 54-55; Zieme 1977; 2015: 119-23).¹⁷ Here each oracle begins with the word *yarlık* accompanied by an ordinal number: “the . . .th *yarlık*,” this being immediately followed by the evaluation, either *ädgü ol* “it is good” or *yavlık ol* “it is bad.”¹⁸ In view of the latter usage, *yarlık* can hardly imply a “command” or “permission” to carry out the particular action regarding which the enquirer was seeking advice, but rather an “authoritative statement” by the saint named immediately afterwards as the one who “deigned to speak” (*yarlıkayur*) the oracle. A fragmentary Christian Sogdian parallel to this Turkish text is known (Sims-Williams 1977: 63-65). Unfortunately the opening words are missing, but one may guess that the equivalents of *yarlık* and *yarlıkayur* would have been *frm’n*, here in the sense “authoritative statement,” and the cognate verb *frm’y* “to speak (authoritatively).”

The predictions in the two Christian texts just referred to are spoken by named saints. Similarly, many dice-divination texts name the speaker or source of each oracle, often a divine being of one kind or another, as in the *Moxishouluo bu* and some of the Tibetan texts, whilst in the *Irk Bitig* it is often an animal which speaks. In our Text no. 1 the oracles are not put in the mouth of a named individual (so far as one can see), though a speaker seems to be implied by the presence of first person verbal forms, most commonly “I see.” In Text no. 2, however, each prediction is attributed to a named god or spirit. Characteristically, these are a mixed bag, including beings from both Indian and Iranian traditions. Although the text was very likely written by a Manichaean (thus Yoshida 2008: 56), no distinctively Manichaean divinity seems to be named. Text no. 1 was certainly copied by a Manichaean, as was the *Irk Bitig*, which was written in a *mānistān*, a Manichaean institution, by a *kičig dintar*, an “insignificant Electus,” with the Middle Persian name Murwā Xwarxšēd (Zieme 2006: 115 n. 3), but neither has

any recognizable Manichaean content. As noted by Strickmann (2005: xxvi) and others, oracles of this kind, even if they are placed in the mouth of a divinity or other religious figure, are basically secular and easily transferred from one religion to another.

Finally, something must be said about the content of the oracles themselves. In the earliest known dice-divination texts, those in the Sanskrit Bower manuscript, the oracles are straightforward predictions of future events. For example (Hoernle 1897: 198, English slightly modernized):

3-2-4. Long life is a great thing; you will not obtain this (which is) the best, (but) you will obtain wealth in money and grain, and tools, and also pleasures.

Similarly direct are the predictions in the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Moxishouluo bu*:

4-4-3. This is named the Vaiśravaṇa set. It protects your body. Everything you think of will be satisfied. You will be promoted as you wish. No need for worry. Relatives will see each other. Auspicious.¹⁹

A contrasting type of oracle consists of an evocative but mysterious poem, story or vignette. An example from the Turkish *Irk Bitig* is cited at the beginning of this article, but such oracles are also typical of the Tibetan texts. For example:²⁰

4-4-1. Lha myi lha rgyung says: "When the rain falls from above it will not fall on the chicks' nest. When the great river bursts its banks, it will not flood the fields." If an enemy comes, you will defeat the enemy. If you've cast this for hunting, you will have success/ will kill. A good divination.

Since the application of such an oracle to the enquirer's situation is not always evident, it tends to require some kind of interpretation, as we see in the example just cited. This interpretation may be given simply by a phrase such as "Know thus: (the omen) is good," as in the *Irk Bitig*, or in a more elaborate way, explaining how it applies to different matters such as the enquirer's health or wealth, or the likelihood of a visitor's arrival. Occasionally, the same oracle may have both positive and negative readings, depending on the question posed, as in another Tibetan example:

This divination is bad for other things, [but] if you have cast it to go hunting wild animals or to take care of a particular matter, or for relatives' fortune/ marriage fortune, then it will be accomplished, and it is an excellent [divination].

Sometimes, where the prognosis is something undesirable, a way of avoiding it is suggested. Thus, the passage just cited is preceded by the words:

Previously I, a great *smān*, was protecting you, human, but now I make great and evil hindrances for you. . . . Having arranged *mo* and *phyā* [divinations], and performed rituals, and searched for the hindrances, it would be good if you offered to the *smān* and to the sacred gods. If you don't do thus, it is a bad divination.

The different types of oracle attested in the dice-divination texts could be classified on the basis of many different criteria—whether or not the oracles are placed in the mouth of a god or other named speaker; whether they are in verse or prose; and so on—but it seems to me that the principal dichotomy is between those which lead directly from the throw of the dice to the practical prognosis, like the Indian and Chinese examples cited, and those which present a more or less allusive image, like the Turkish and Tibetan texts, as well as our Sogdian Text no. 2. An interesting feature of Sogdian Text no. 1 is the fact that it attests both of these contrasting types. Oracle no. 8 may be taken as a representative of the imagistic type:

γ'β. Command. All the dogs (will) bark at you, (and) you will begin to be afraid, (but) this world's dogs will not be able to bite you. Why are you afraid? Be diligent in your work (and) do not fear enemies (or) ill-wishers.

The direct type is represented, for instance, by §2:

γ'γ. Command. You (will) get gold very quickly, do not worry! Trust in God, turn from sin, repent(?), profit by your work!

It is noticeable that in this text oracles of both types commonly end with a command or prohibition. Instructions to trust in God, to turn from sin, etc. bear some similarity to the instructions for escaping from an evil prognosis of which a Tibetan example was cited above. Here, however, they appear even where no evil seems to be threat-

ened, either in the form of a direct statement or in that of an allusive vignette. Sometimes the command forms almost the whole content of the oracle, as in §9:

γδʹ. Hesitation. Bless God for everything, in prayer call and cry (to Him). God (will) accept this work.

A similar mixture of allusive vignettes and instructions or recommendations for future actions is found in the Christian Turkish oracle text discussed above, which contains many imperative forms and addresses the enquirer in the vocative like our Sogdian text (Zieme 2015: 121):

Du Menschensohn! Wasch deine Hände rein!
Fürchte dich nicht vor dem Bösen! Halte (deine)
Gedanken rein! Wie sehr du Gottliebe hast, tu
es vollkommen . . .

However, this Christian Turkish oracle-book, with its numbered predictions spoken by various saints, does not show the same formal features as our Sogdian text and was clearly not consulted in the same way. In this respect a closer parallel is the Islamic Turkish *Fāl-nāma* translated by Decourdemanche, which also shares the strongly moralizing tone of the Sogdian text. Some examples: “Après t’être sincèrement repenté de tes péchés tu seras pris en grâce par le Très-Haut;” “Il t’appartient de subir sans révolte la volonté de Dieu. Accoutume-toi donc à te soumettre à ses tout-puissants décrets . . .;” “Rapporte-toi au Très-Haut de t’assurer la tranquillité intérieure;” “Prends patience, cherche un refuge auprès du Seigneur . . .” (Decourdemanche 1899: 13, 16, 32, 32–33). To give a slightly more complete impression of the nature of this text it is worth citing the whole of some of the shorter oracles (ibid., 13, 16, 31):

ACB. Si ce sort t’est tombé cela veut dire que tu seras tiré d’angoisse. Le moment de te réjouir est venu. De même que Jonas fut joyeux d’être tiré du ventre d’un poisson, de même tu arriveras aisément à ce que tu désires, et, à l’issue d’un voyage, tu seras content. Ainsi, tous tes désirs seront accomplis, s’il plaît à Dieu.

ADC. Il t’arrivera comme au lion, autrement dit comme à l’individu qui se perdit. Comme si tu marchais de compagnie avec le lion, il faudra

te faire petit en vue de te faire pardonner tes fautes. Dieu t’en accordera le pardon et tu seras comblé de joie et de biens. Dans cette intention prends patience pendant douze jours et, en considération de cela, le Très-Haut te tirera de peine; ainsi tes désirs seront satisfaits, s’il plaît à Dieu.

DAC. C’est là un sort favorable: quantité de biens t’arriveront dans la main et cela avec promptitude. Ainsi arrivera un temps où tu n’auras plus à t’occuper du nécessaire. Ne néglige pas pour cela l’humilité, car alors tous tes désirs seront satisfaits, s’il plaît à Dieu.

The predictions in this text are notably unadorned. The imagistic elements are even fewer than in our Text no. 1 and typically very simple, like the reference to the “lion” in §ADC just cited. Much more common are allusions to stories of the prophets and other personages of the Qur’an and the Bible, like that of Jonah and the fish in §ACB, which of course have no parallels in the Sogdian. If the Sogdian text is an adaptation of an Islamic text, which is certainly not impossible, such references might have been excised by a Manichaean scribe or editor. On the other hand, it is also possible to regard the Sogdian text as exemplifying the particular variety of dice-divination text which became known to the Muslims and formed the basis for their own adaptation of the genre. I see no way of reaching a definite decision on this point on the basis of the material currently available. On the one hand, as we have seen, a Western origin could explain a few details of the Sogdian text—the letters which indicate the faces of the dice and a couple of possible loanwords from Arabic and Persian; on the other hand, there is no doubting the ultimate Eastern origin of the four-sided dice and the oracles to which they give access, so that our Sogdian text would fit neatly into the history of this type of literature as a intermediary between Central Asia and the Islamic West.

Notes

1. On this point see Lüders 1907: 22–23.

2. The date of the Bower manuscript is debated, but it is hardly later than the 6th century C.E., making it considerably older than any of the other texts which will be discussed here.

3. For Indian examples see Schlingloff 2013: 173 (from Taxila, Sonkh and Nagara); for Xinjiang see Stein 1907: 374, 411, pl. LXXIV; 1921: 403, 448, pl. XXXVI (from Niya and Loulan, both probably ca. 3rd century); for western Central Asia see Aripdzhanov 2008 (to which Soeren Stark kindly drew my attention), where some examples are said to be as early as the 1st century C.E. Forerunners of such dice were found at Mohenjodaro (with circles only on sides 1–3, while the fourth side is marked in some other way, e.g. with “parallel longitudinal lines,” see Mackay 1937: 561; 1938: pl. 138, nos. 41, 48; pl. 143, nos. 47, 49, 51) and later derivatives are known from the Islamic Near East (see Savage-Smith 1997: 150, 158, and the useful survey in Dotson 2020: 14–18).

4. From Timothée Chamot-Rooke, to whom I am most grateful, I have learnt of the Tocharian A manuscript Pelliot Koutchéen Nouvelle Série 1–6, which contains a similar combination of texts, the first folio (<https://www.univie.ac.at/tocharian/?m-pkns1>) having been identified as a dice-divination text by Georges-Jean Pinault in a lecture at the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris, on 10 February 2020.

5. The vocative particle 'yy in R11, also attested in this spelling in Tale H, lines 9–10 (Henning 1945: 478), is a special case, as is the writing of an extra -y to fill the line in R18, a device used elsewhere by this scribe (e.g. *rw'ny-y*, 14411/ii/V19).

6. Cf. GMS, §§1093–98, on the suffixes -m, -mē, -mā, to which one may perhaps add *βrmh* “gift” or “payment,” Nov. 3, R25 (see Livshits 2015: 32; differently de la Vaissière 2009: 78).

7. Read *wr'nt(?)* in Benveniste 1940: 72; *wr'nt'(γ)* was suggested in Sims-Williams 1977: 46.

8. It seems that a third fragment (referred to as Ch/So *12351) of this manuscript was known to Wolfgang Lentz in the 1920s, but of this no trace now remains. See Reck 2018: 80–81. (I thank Christiane Reck for kindly sending me copies of the lists referred to in her catalogue.)

9. I owe these references to Bill Mak, who points out that Needham's text is more correct than his Table 22 (on p. 7), where the symbols for the units and the tens in column H should be exchanged.

10. On the varying orientation of Sogdian writing see Yoshida 2013.

11. I take this opportunity to suggest a possible improvement to my interpretation of this text. In the sentence “God will deliver you from the *pw γw'n w'xš* which has come upon you” it may be that *pw γw'n* has its normal meaning “innocent” and can be understood as a transferred epithet, it being in fact not the “word, thing” which is innocent but the addressee “you.”

12. As Timothy Barnes kindly reminds me, the distinction between *a* and *ā* in Tocharian B is thought to be one of quality rather than quantity, the letter <*ā*> representing a low back vowel such as [a]. However,

the way in which the Sogdian script was adapted for Uygur Turkish, another language in which vowel quality was more important than vowel quantity, seems to show that Sogdian <*ā*> = /*ā*/ was phonetically [a:] (Sims-Williams 1981: 357–58) and would therefore have been an appropriate representation of the Tocharian <*ā*>.

13. The Avestan designation, cited by Henning as “*upāpō gandarawō*,” is not in fact attested with this word-order.

14. See the Sogdian and Uygur alphabets illustrated in Livshits 2015: 227 and Sims-Williams 1981: 351. For the alphabet O2502 the interpretation in Kudara et al. 1997: 77 is to be preferred to that in Livshits 2015: 231.

15. MS. Bodl. Or. 133, ff. 131a–163a, cited by Dotson (2020: 32). In this text, which is available online (<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/c80d2c44-075d-46ca-b7b9-5fdd2bcc33b5>) the letters on the dice are those of the personal name of its reputed author, Ja'far al-Šādiq, i.e. *j' f r*.

16. Note that *añig ādgū* is not a non-committal “evil or good,” as it was still understood by Arlotto (1971: 690), but “extremely good” with Tekin. Clauson (1972: 182a) leaves it open whether the meaning “extremely” derives from “evil” or vice versa, but it seems likely that *añig* in the sense “extremely” is a calque on the similar use of Sogdian *jγw*, *zγw* “harsh, cruel, extremely” (DMT III/2: 92a).

17. It is not clear how this text was consulted, but the fact that the oracles are numbered leaves open many possibilities, not excluding the use of dice.

18. It was partly on the basis of the use of *yarlık* that Arlotto (1971: 695) argued that the Christian fragment is not a divination text but “merely a collection of apocryphal sayings intended for inspirational reading,” an argument invalidated by the parallel use of *frm'n* in Sogdian.

19. I am grateful to Brandon Dotson for allowing me to cite his translation from an unpublished paper which he presented at the conference “Manuscript Culture and Multiculturalism along the Silk Road” (Fudan University, Shanghai, June 14–17, 2019).

20. The translations of this and the following Tibetan passages are cited from Dotson 2019: 11–12.

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Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī Inscriptions from Ladakh

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1. Previously Published Indian Inscriptions from Ladakh

1a. *Inscriptions Discovered by A. H. Francke in the Early Twentieth Century*

In view of its location between Tibet and the extreme north of the Indian subcontinent, it is not surprising that historical inscriptions in a wide variety of languages and scripts have been found in Ladakh (figs. 1–2). There are in Ladakh well over five hundred rock inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Śāradā, Chinese, Sogdian, Tocharian, Tibetan, and Arabic scripts. The present article focuses on the earliest stratum of Indian-language and -script inscriptions, namely those in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī. All of these but one are found in western (“lower”) Ladakh (i.e. west of the confluence of the Indus and Zaskar rivers), and some of them may date back as far as the first century of the Common Era. Only one is found outside of the Indus Valley, located along the Siachen River in Nubra, the northern region of Ladakh. We will review the previously published specimens in this section and present some newly discovered ones in the second section.

A few of the Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī inscriptions of Ladakh have been known since the early years of the twentieth century, thanks to the explorations of the Moravian missionary and pioneer scholar of Tibetan and Ladakhi culture, A. H. Francke. It was Francke who in 1905² discovered a rock at Khalatse or Khaltse (34.3233°N, 76.8597°E), forty-two miles as the crow flies down the Indus River from Leh (fig. 2), which bore a Kharoṣṭhī inscription (CKI no. 62) recording a date³ during the reign of the Kuṣāṇa emperor Vima Kadphises. This inscription was engraved alongside a figure

that is consistent with the iconography of Kuṣāṇa rulers as seen on coins and sculptures since Vima Kadphises’ reign.⁴ The rock bearing these carvings was unfortunately destroyed in recent times.

Less well known are four other Indian script inscriptions (two each in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī) that were found by Francke on other rocks nearby, which have never been published in definitive editions nor included in epigraphic anthologies. As far as we have been able to determine, the only published reproductions of them are A. H. Francke’s eye-copies⁵ (fig. 3), which seem to be less than reliable. Therefore Sten Konow, in his then-definitive corpus of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions (1929), declined to re-edit the shorter Khaltse inscriptions, citing only J.-P. Vogel’s “tentative readings” (presented in Francke 1907: 592–93 on the basis of his correspondence with Vogel) and commenting that “It is useless to discuss the reading and interpretation as long as no better materials are available”—which unfortunately seems to still be the case.⁶ So for now, Vogel’s readings of the two shorter Khaltse Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions (CKI 1122, 1123) must be provisionally retained: *sakhavasa* and *śaśakhasa* or *śaśatasa*.

An apparently early Brāhmī inscription from Khaltse was read by Vogel (1906: 31–32) as *bharad[v]āyasa* and equated with Sanskrit *bharadvāja*-. Its script is described as “Brāhmī characters of the Maurya period.” The forms of the letters, particularly *bha* and *ra*, do appear in the eye-copies to be quite archaic but as Vogel justly cautions, any conclusions based on those eye-copies cannot be considered conclusive.⁷ Such an early inscription in Ladakh would be unexpected, but not impossible.

Another somewhat later Brāhmī inscription from Khaltse was described by Francke (1906:



Fig. 1. Ladakh within the network of the so-called Silk Routes. Map: Devers 2014. See also pl. 4 in gathered color plates.

418–19 + pl. XVI.5; 1907: 594) and read by Vogel (1906: 32) as (*Śrī!*) *Sacamatīṣya*, which he took as the equivalent of Sanskrit *Satyamati*-. Vogel (*ibid.*) dated the script as “Brāhmī of the Kuṣāṇa [sic] period.” Francke (1906: 419) speculated that this was “the name of one of the ancient kings of the castle on the river.” But this is unlikely, for it is now evident that the Khaltse inscriptions record the names of passers-by, or perhaps of military personnel, and in this they resemble the new inscriptions which are the main topic of this article as well as the thousands of inscriptions⁸ of similar types which have been discovered in recent decades farther down the Indus River and in other river valleys in the Gilgit-Baltistan territory (formerly Northern Areas) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan.⁹ In fact, the Ladakh inscriptions now clearly testify to another branch, or rather a continuation, of

the trade routes between India and Central Asia which are reflected in the materials from northern Pakistan.¹⁰

Francke (1906: 416) reported two other inscriptions, one halfway between Khaltse and Nyermo and another between Gadpa sngonpo (Gadpa Gonbo) and Ullu drogpo (Ulley Tokpo), in what he calls “this half-Tibetan type.” By this he referred to the script of the inscription discussed in the previous paragraph, which he characterized as written “in characters which approach the Tibetan.” Since this one was subsequently identified by Vogel as being in Kuṣāṇa Brāhmī, presumably these two inscriptions were also in Brāhmī, and they are so listed by Bruneau (2010: 1. 38; 2011: 183). But this cannot be confirmed since “no copy or photography are known” (*ibid.*) for these inscriptions, and they have not been located by recent investigators.

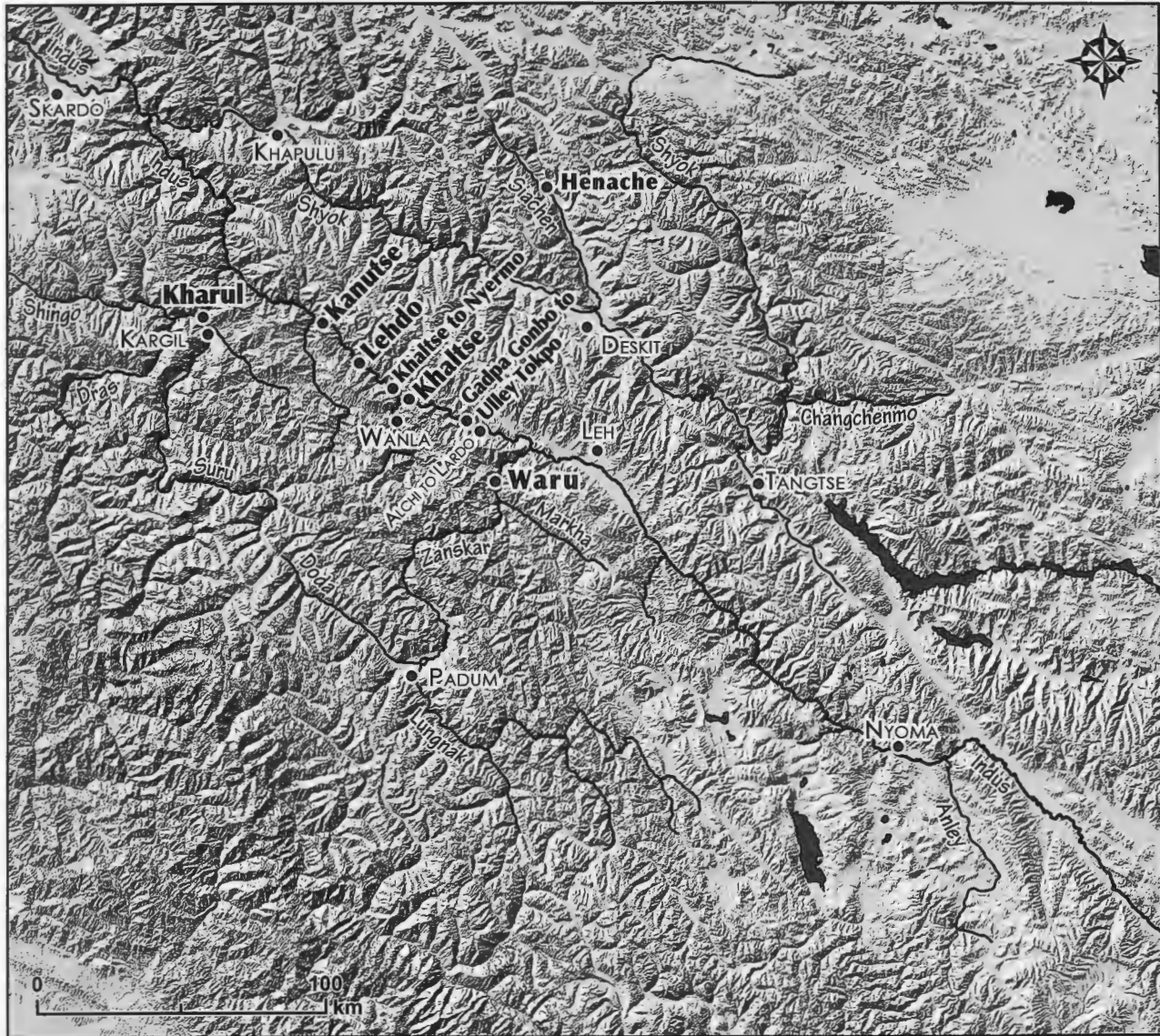


Fig. 2. Sites with Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī inscriptions (black) in Ladakh, and some of the main places of Ladakh and Baltistan (grey). Map: Devers 2020.

1b. Recently Published Inscriptions

Within the past two decades several other early Indic inscriptions have been discovered in western Ladakh, including three in Kharoṣṭhī at Kanutse and six in Brāhmī at Lehdo and Waru. The petroglyph site of Kanutse (34.5702°N, 76.5614°E) was discovered by Tashi Ldawa and Shiv Darshan Singh Jamwal in 2001, and further studied by Laurianne Bruneau in 2006. In that year she documented there two inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī (fig. 4) along with two other isolated syllables, all carved

on the same rock.¹¹ A third inscription located on a nearby rock was documented in 2016 by Tashi Ldawa and Sonam Wangchuk (Khardong) (fig. 5).

All three inscriptions consist of the same text with slight variations. Harry Falk described the first two examples as follows:¹²

The correct version reads: varṣarturajahasta 'The hand of the king of the seasons of the year', or 'Hasta is the king of the seasons of the year'. The form of the pre-consonantal r-hooks look rather archaic, and the text could have been written in the first century either BC or AD. The four-part compound is astounding, but easy to



Fig. 3. Indian inscriptions at Khaltse. After Francke 1907: Tafel II.

understand. The “king of the seasons” is spring, called this way in many instances in Sanskrit literature. The initial *varṣa*, “year”, is redundant, but admissible. The first letter *va* could also be taken as an initial *a*-, but the arising *arṣa*, Sanskrit *ārṣa* “relating to seers”, makes little sense when compounded with “spring” . . . Most likely, the *nakṣatra hasta* is meant, our constellation Corvus, which at that time was seen in the West after sunset in spring . . . The second version reads: . *ja-va-rṣa-rta-ha* and is obviously composed of the same letters, but some missing and some out of place.

Of the two translations proposed by Falk, the first one is surely preferable in taking *-hasta* as meaning “The hand of,” that is, “The signature of,” rather than as part of the name. The use of *hasta* in this sense is paralleled, for example, in the caligraphic signature of King Harṣa of Kanauj on the Banskhera copper plate, reading in part *svahasto 'yaṃ mama*, “This is my hand.”¹³ Functionally, it is comparable to *likhita* “written (by)” at the end of the inscription discussed below.

Falk’s estimate of an early date on the basis of the preconsonantal *r* in the syllable *rṣa* seems reasonable, as it consists of a curved line across the stem of the *r* rather than being written in a continuous loop at the bottom of the stem as is usual in later Kharoṣṭhī. Falk’s analysis of the name, however, is speculative, and is cast into doubt by the discovery at a later date of the third inscription containing the same name in which, however, the third syllable seems to be *ko* rather than *rv*, and this reading is at least possible in the two other copies. Thus the actual intended reading in all three versions may have been *varṣako-raja-hasta*, “The signature of King Varṣaka” or “The signature of Varṣakorāja.”¹⁴ Here, as is so often the case with graffiti inscriptions, the personal name is obscure and perhaps best not subjected to etymological analysis.

The petroglyph site of Lehdo Bridge (34.4578°N, 76.6796°E) was discovered by Tashi Ldawa and Shiv Darshan Singh Jamwal in 2001. Laurianne Bruneau, Martin Vernier, and Quentin Devers later documented there two inscriptions written in Brāhmī in 2007. Both contain essentially the same text (fig. 6), which was read by Harry Falk, who dated it to the first half of the first millennium CE and described it as follows:¹⁵

It can be read either a) *satirthyor vasā / likhita* or b) *satirthyo vesā / likhita*. The difference lies in the interpretation of the stroke above the letter *va*, which could be a preconsonantal *r* or an -e-vowel marker. The first reading seems to be preferable for palaeographical reasons, since the stroke above the *va* with its serif looks much more like an *r* than like an -e. In this case we have a feminine dual of *satīrthī* and a feminine personal name *vasā*. The construction is odd: instead of an instrumental (“was written by. . .”) we see a nominative (“NN written”), not even by an apposition (“NN is the writer”). This oddity is present, no matter if we prefer reading a) or b). Possibility (a) suffers from the assumption that two female students are responsible for the text, which is unexpected and remarkable. A feminine form *satīrthī* is not attested, but possible . . . Possibility (b) would have the advantage of providing first a well-known term *satīrthya*, masc. nominative *satīrthyo*, but we then have the difficulty of explaining a feminine ending coming with a masculine name, *vesā*. Contrasting the two possibilities, a name *vasā* is much superior to *vesā*, since it is attested in its masculine form *vasa* several times . . . So, despite the unexpected two girls present, everything speaks in favor of them and nothing, apart from the more usual general situation, speaks for the one student Vesa. The

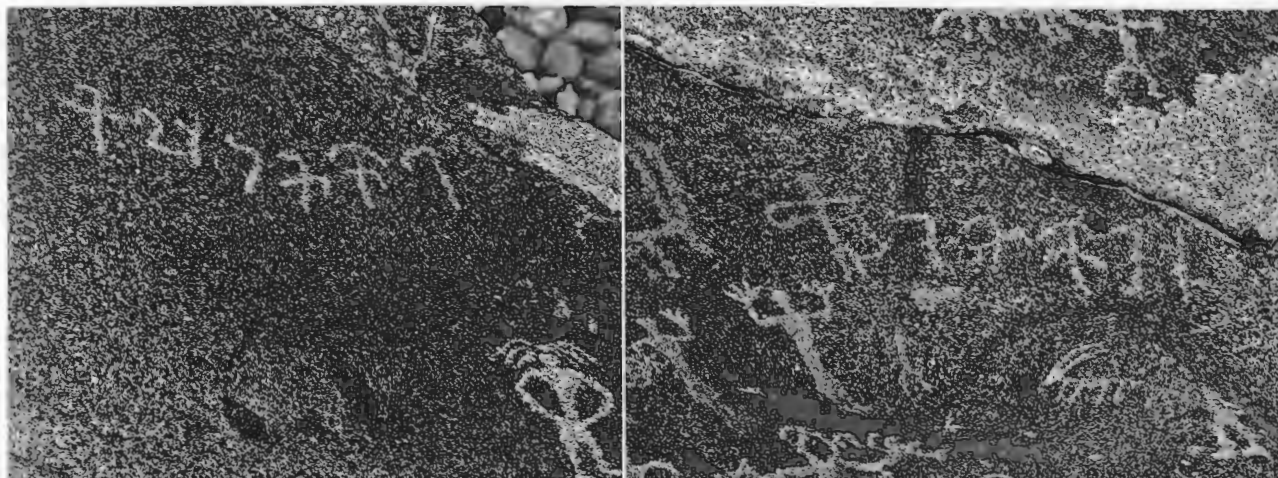


Fig. 4. Inscriptions documented by Laurianne Bruneau at Kanutse. Photos: Devers 2018. See also pl. 5 in gathered color plates.



Fig. 5. Inscription documented by Tashi Ldawa Leh and Sonam Wangchuk at Kanutse. Photo: Devers 2018. See also pl. 6 in gathered color plates.

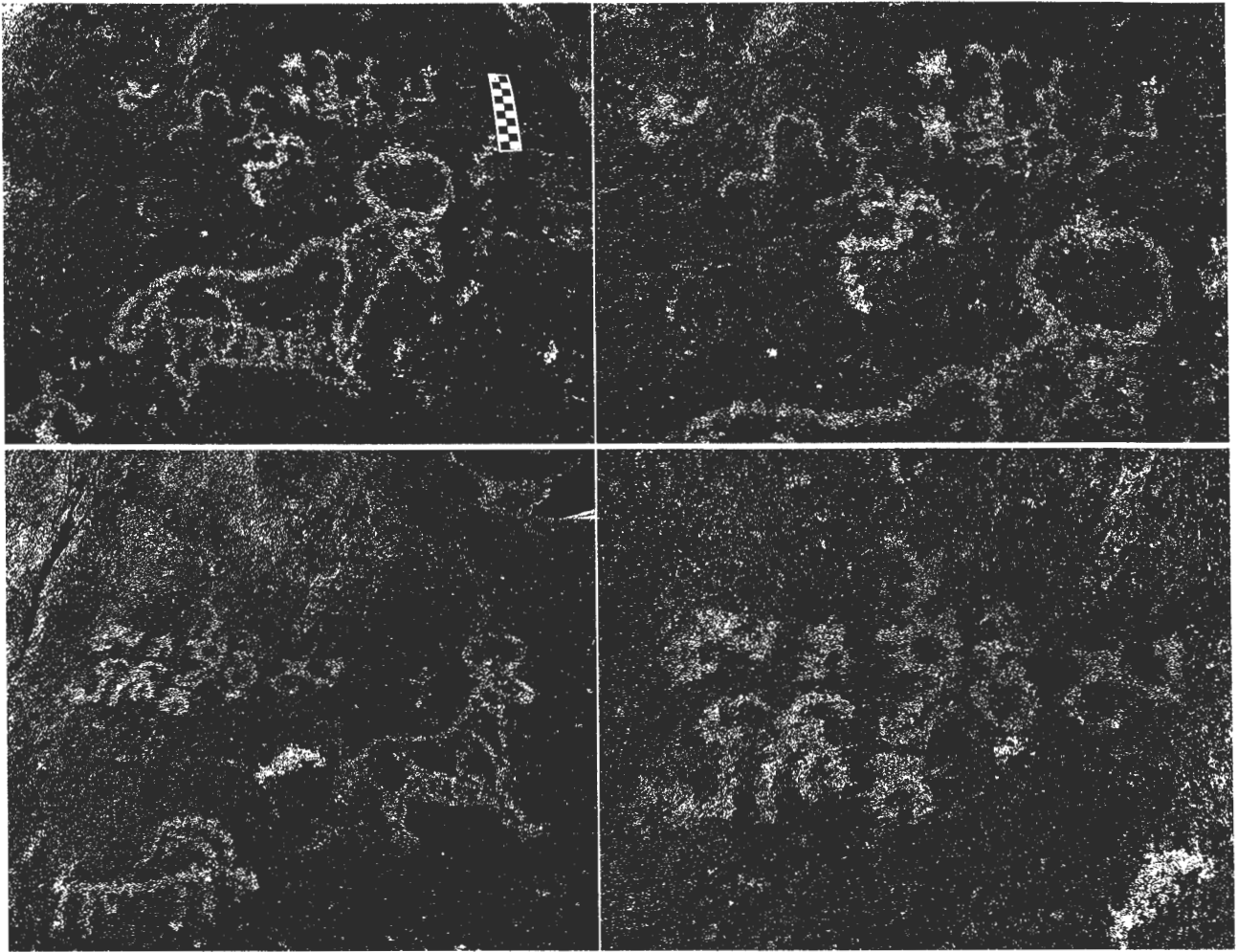


Fig. 6. Inscriptions at Lehdo Bridge. Photos: Devers 2017. See also pl. 7 in gathered color plates.

second inscription on the site is a complete blunder of the same text, where we first find *sa*, then *likhita* in barbarous letters, then *tirthyorvasā*. Preferring possibility (a) we can say that the scribe wanted to write: *satirthyor vasā likhita*, "Of the two girl co-students, Vasā (has this) written."

Although Falk's interpretation is less than entirely convincing, we have not been able to substantially improve on it, and would prefer to consider the inscription as undeciphered.

2. New Indian Inscriptions from Ladakh

2a. Waru

The petroglyph site of Waru (or Yaru) Bridge (34.0708°N, 77.2114°E) was discovered by Tashi

Ldawa in 2004. Martin Vernier, Laurianne Bruneau, and Quentin Devers subsequently documented four Brāhmī inscriptions there in 2007 (figs. 8–12).¹⁶ The site is located along the Zaskar River halfway between Sumda Do and Chilling, and appears to have been an important crossing, with the ruins of a bridge and a watch tower in the mountain above to protect it. Carvings include several dozen depictions of figures commonly seen in the region such as yaks, ibexes, snow leopards, anthropomorphs (including hunting scenes) as well as rarer motifs such as peacocks, *khyungs* (mythical horned eagles), elephants, and suns. The site suffered major damage in recent years when the road was widened and heavy debris of broken rocks was dumped and left covering a large part of the site. Several depictions of zoomorphs at this site (fig. 7) are remi-



Fig. 7. Some of the petroglyphs at Waru Bridge. Photo: Devers 2020. See also pl. 8 in gathered color plates.

niscent in style to those observed along with the Brāhmī inscriptions at Lehdo Bridge (fig. 6). The dating of these inscriptions is rather difficult, and only a general range of about the third to seventh centuries C.E. can be suggested.¹⁷

We propose, with due hesitation, the following readings for the Waru inscriptions:

Waru inscription 1 (fig. 8): The reading, *śrīr-ṇeśoko*, is fairly clear but the meaning and derivation of the name is obscure, as is often the case with such graffiti inscriptions. Perhaps some connection with the name Aśoka is intended. The form of the honorific prefix as *śrīr-* instead of the technically correct *śrī-* is sometimes seen in graffiti¹⁸ and occasionally even in more formal inscriptions. The formula of this inscription, consisting of a name in the nominative (as here) or stem form, or in the genitive case (as in the next inscription) prefixed by the honorific *śrī(r)* is characteristic of the corpus of graffiti inscrip-

tions along the Indus, including sites in Pakistan and in Ladakh, and is seen in several other of the new examples presented here, in both Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī.

Waru inscription 2 (fig. 9): The reading is fairly clearly *śrībhāṭasya*. In the photograph only the bottoms of the first two syllables are present, but in the copy on transparent sheets made by Bruneau, Vernier, and Devers and reproduced in Devers 2014: 2.42, fig. 57e, they are apparently complete. Evidently the portion of the stone that contained the upper part of these syllables has since chipped off.

The name is of a common Indic type, probably reflecting abridged forms of *bhaṭṭāraka*, "lord, master, etc." (itself derived from *bhaṭṭ*, "lord"), which is widely attested in Indian inscriptions and names generally in the forms *bhaṭṭa*, *bhaṭa*, etc. The genitive ending, implying "name of X" or "signature of X" (compare the use of *hasta* in



Fig. 8. Waru inscription 1. Photo: Devers 2020. See also pl. 9 in gathered color plates.



Fig. 9. Waru inscription 2. Photo: Devers 2020. See also pl. 10 in gathered color plates.

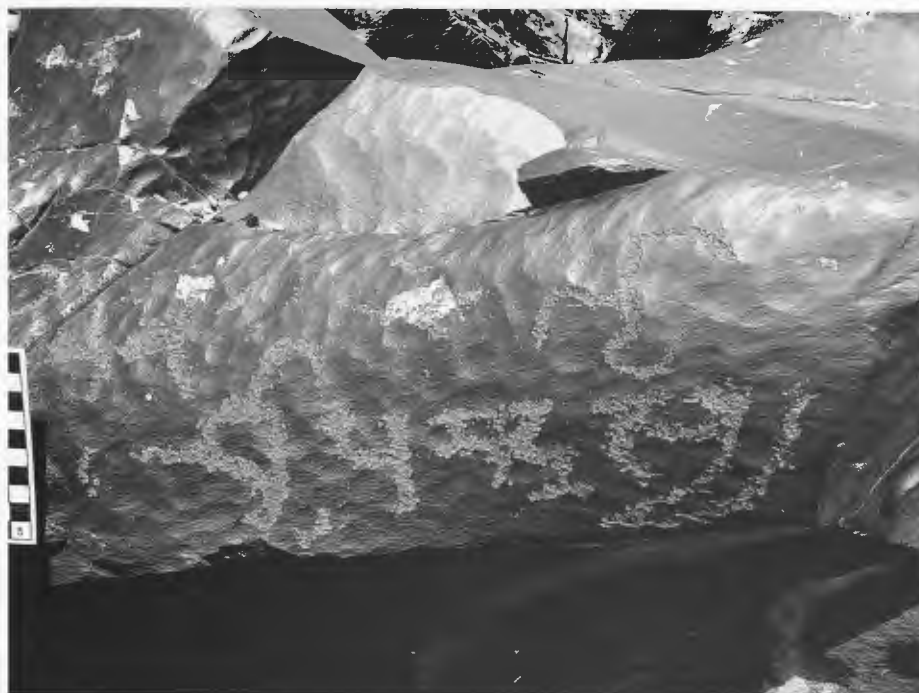


Fig. 10. Waru inscription 3. Photo: Devers 2020. See also pl. 11 in gathered color plates.

the Kanutse inscription), is normal in graffiti inscriptions, as noted above.

Waru inscription 3 (fig. 10): *śrī-pu[ṇudra]sya*: The reading of the third and fourth syllables is very uncertain (hence in brackets). They seem to have been faultily written, and it is possible that they were intended to represent a single *akṣara*. One could imagine that the intended reading was something like *śrīpuṇyasya* or *śrīpuṇyendrasya*, but the name as it stands cannot be convincingly interpreted.

Waru inscription 4 (figs. 11–12): *śrīcamdroṭaka*: Here the reading is relatively clear and the name can be readily connected etymologically with the common name element *candra*, “moon” and the suffixal element *-oṭ(t)a(ka)*, common in the far north and sub-Himalayan region.¹⁹ However, there remain some uncertainties and unusual features. The anusvāra is written to the right of the preceding *ca* rather than above it as is usually done. The syllable *ṭa* seems to have been squeezed in between *dro* and *ka* and is slightly misaligned, but it was presumably intended as part of the same name rather than being an in-

trusive or stray element. The upper curve of the *ī* vowel in *śrī* has been calligraphically extended upward to the right and then downward, forming an oblong curve ending above the head of the following syllable; this is clearer in the copy on transparent sheets made by Bruneau, Vernier, and Devers and reproduced in Devers 2014: 2.42, fig. 57g.

This part of the extended curve is partly obscured by the meander-like design which is carved vertically above the inscription. The design could be the work of Candroṭaka himself, to judge by the similar quality of its engraving. There are also several other stray marks above and below the name (see fig. 12), including a svastika and a peacock design below it.

2b. Kharul (Kharool)

The petroglyph site of Kharul (34.5933°N, 76.1163°E) was discovered by Tashi Ldawa in 2007. Quentin Devers later photographed four Brāhmī and two Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions there in



Fig. 11. Waru inscription 4. Photo: Devers 2020. See also pl. 12 in gathered color plates.



Fig.12. Waru inscription 4, showing designs below the inscription. Photo: Devers 2020. See also pl. 13 in gathered color plates.

2016, during surveys conducted in partnership with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) (fig. 13). The rock engraved with the inscriptions²⁰ is located below the hamlet of Kharul, at the confluence of the Shingo River with the Suru River (fig. 14), which in turn merges with the Indus about fourteen miles further north. This location is an important one, as it appears to have been the border between the three regions of Kashmir (which seems to have once controlled the valley of Dras all the way to Kharul),²¹ Baltistan, and Purig (the original name of the region of Kargil in Ladakh). Confluences and gorges in general were commonly taken as border features in these mountain regions, as opposed to passes which on the contrary were often considered as unifying features linking valleys together.

The Kharul site is about forty-seven miles as the crow flies from Khaltse. According to Devers, Martin, Khan, and Ldawa 2016: 4, "It is quite possible that the petroglyphs date to a time when the confluence of the Dras and Suru was a strategic crossing protected by a fort." They further point out (p. 17) with regard to similar sites in Ladakh that "All sites of this type have the same geographical context: they were crossing points over important rivers." This corresponds well with what has been noted regarding the similar inscription and petroglyph sites in the northern reaches of Pakistan, which have been interpreted as fords where travelers might pass time while waiting for a safe crossing by inscribing their names on rocks along the river bank, sometimes adding pious messages which they no doubt hoped would protect them during the often perilous crossings.²² A possible military or official identity for the authors of these inscriptions should also be kept in mind, as later Tibetan inscriptions found in these locations in Ladakh were explicitly left by soldiers,²³ apparently stationed to guard these strategic crossings. Posted soldiers or tax collectors would inevitably end up spending far more time waiting in these locations than any type of traveler.²⁴

The Kharul inscriptions are loosely grouped together on the southwestern face of the rock, which is intact at the left side but broken off at the right. The boulder includes several dozen carvings of figures commonly seen in the region such as ibexes, horses, stags, anthropomorphs (including dancing-like figures with large open

hands), stūpas, swastikas (both clockwise and counterclockwise), as well as rarer motifs such as lions and antelopes. Several periods of carvings seem to be represented. The inscriptions are immediately below two ibexes, underneath which are additional indistinct marks that might be the remnant of writing, but if so it is illegible. To their right are two Brāhmī characters of about the second or third century C.E. (fig. 13.1), reading *śriha*. This is likely to be an incomplete name, as the rock is broken off after the second *akṣara*. There are some names beginning with *śri-ha* . . . among the northern Pakistan graffiti (for example *śrī harimi* in the index in Bandini-König and von Hinüber 2001: 373), but none of them are likely to have been the same one as here.²⁵

Below the row of indistinct characters is a Kharoṣṭhī inscription (fig. 13.2) reading clearly, except for the last syllable, *śrīdharmā[sa]*, "Of Śrīdharmā." Above the first syllable and immediately to the left of the last one are two *svastikas*, as well as another farther to the left. The name *śrīdharmā* occurs in two inscriptions from Gilgit-Baltistan, at Shatial²⁶ and Hodur South,²⁷ the latter reading *śrī[dharma]sya bhavitavya[m] mara[ṇam]*, "[Signature] of Śrīdharmā; *memento mori*."²⁸ But since these two inscriptions are in Brāhmī script and are paleographically younger, they are not likely to be the work of the same person who recorded the Kharoṣṭhī inscription in question here.

Below this is another Kharoṣṭhī inscription (fig. 13.3) reading very clearly *spālasa*. Here the shape of the consonant *s*, appearing twice, is of the "open" variety in which the vertical stem does not bend up to or towards the top stroke but is instead combined with it in a single cursive stroke (𑖰). This is generally considered to be characteristic of later stages of Kharoṣṭhī script, around or after the second century C.E., and although such indices are highly approximate at best, my impression of the paleography of this and the other Kharoṣṭhī inscription on this rock is that they can reasonably be attributed to the second century or thereabout.

The name element *spāla* and variants thereof are very widely attested among the inscriptions from northern Pakistan as well as in the Central Asian Kharoṣṭhī documents from Niya and various other documents such as inscriptions and coin legends from the early centuries of the Common Era. The form *spāla* reflects a Bactrian



Fig. 13. Inscribed stone at Kharul with inscriptions labeled. Photo: Devers 2016; annotations: Salomon 2020. See also pl. 14 in gathered color plates.

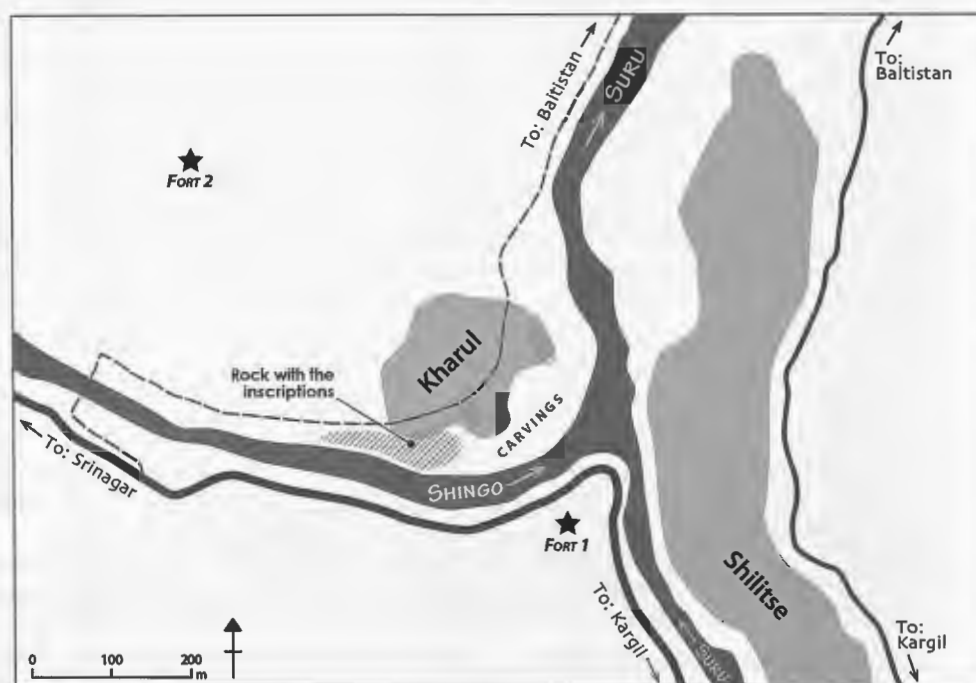


Fig. 14. Plan of the petroglyph site of Kharul. Devers 2020.

dialect form of the word corresponding to Avestan *spāda* “army.”²⁹ As noted by von Hinüber, it typically appears as the latter member of proper names, where it functions as the equivalent of Indic *–sena*. It occurs together with Indic elements as in *candraspāla* and *dharmaspāla*, and (less commonly) with Iranian ones as in *varjaspāla*, *maghaspāla*, and *guśuraspāla*.³⁰ Von Hinüber (1986: 150–51) lists twelve names ending in *–spāla* from the northern Pakistan inscriptions, and adds four more in a subsequent publication.³¹ These are all in Brāhmī script, to which can be further added two examples in Kharoṣṭhī: *śamaśpala*³² and *śudhaśpala*.³³

In all of these examples *spāla* is the latter element of the name, corresponding to Indic names in *–sena*. There are some cases in which *spāla* appears as the prior member of compound names, as in coin legends of rulers such as Spalahora, Spalagadama, and Spalapatideva, or of titles, as in the Kamra stone inscription of the time of the Kuṣāṇa king Vajheṣka (ca. 251 C.E.; CKI 230, line 2), *śpalasakari[ta](*sa)*, tentatively rendered (Falk 2015: 129) as “honoured by the army,” and in a bronze inscription of the Palola-śāhi dynasty, *spālapati-Dholaka-*, “des Heerführers Dholaka” (von Hinüber 2004: 65–66). But the present case is the only example, as far as I have been able to determine, of *spāla* appearing as a name by itself.³⁴ Given the numerous parallels, we can suppose that it is a hypocoristic form for an underlying compound name ending in *spāla*.

Finally, loosely grouped together at the right edge of the rock are three Brāhmī *akṣaras* reading, from top to bottom, *sū*, *se*, and *so* (fig. 13.4–6). The first and third of them are near the edge so that they could have been the beginning of longer words, but the second one is set well in from the edge so that it is clearly an independent graph. The sequence (if that is what it really is) *sū-se-so* resembles the traditional *dvadaśākṣarī* or *siddhamātṛkā* pedagogical order (. . . *su sū sṛ se sai so sau*. . .), so that it might seem as if the scribe was idly practicing his writing skills,³⁵ or perhaps refining his calligraphic style.³⁶

2c. Henache

The petroglyphs of Henache (34.9741°N, 77.4068°E) were documented by Quentin Devers in 2020 during surveys conducted in partner-

ship with INTACH. The contiguous villages of Henache and Tongsted are the last ones on the left bank of the Siachen River in Nubra (only a single house is located further north, at Washi), some 93 km north of Leh as the crow flies. The carvings are found alongside a ruined structure set on a low mound, known as Dza Chorgog. Interestingly, the name “Chorgog” is also found in the area of Tangtse, where two ruined fortifications bear this name, in Pholongley and Yerad.³⁷ There, their overall context is suggestive of a non-Tibetan phase of occupation of the area, with “five-headed” stūpas that are reminiscent of Central Asian architecture. The carvings of Henache consist of zoomorphs, anthropomorphs, stūpas, and geometric images, including dancing figures similar to those typically found in western Ladakh.

The carvings include an inscription written on a small side rock in late Brāhmī characters of about the fifth century C.E. (fig. 15), which seems to read *saṃvirabha ? / da na* (the last syllable on the first line is indistinct). The inscription apparently refers to a “Gift (*dana* [sic]) of Saṃvira. . .” If this interpretation is correct, the gift may refer to the images of stūpas carved on the main boulder or, alternatively, to an actual stūpa that may have been within the ruins of the Chorgog. Tibetan *Chorgog* is supposed to be short for *chorten gogpo*, or ruined stūpa, implying that the Chorgog fortifications may have been fortified religious establishments, or that they may have once contained important stūpas. The Henache inscription is the northernmost Brāhmī inscription in Ladakh and the first ever found outside of the Indus Valley, and thus the *de facto* oldest known inscription of the Nubra region.

3. Historical Significance of the Ladakh Inscriptions

Perhaps the most interesting point about the Indian-language inscriptions from western Ladakh is their evident kinship to the thousands of graffiti found along the Indus and other river valleys of northern Pakistan. The mixture of Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī scripts seen at the Ladakh sites is entirely typical of the earlier phase of this vast epigraphic corpus, as is the simple recording, in most cases, of personal names without further information. These graffiti have



Fig. 15. Inscription at Henache. Photo: Devers 2020. See also pl. 15 in gathered color plates.

been convincingly interpreted as artifacts of the flourishing trade routes between India and Central Asia in the early centuries of the Common Era. While the majority of the sites at which they are found suggest that the main routes followed the Indus Valley to the Hunza River and then turned northward toward the Khunjerab and other passes into the Tarim Basin, the new material indicates that an alternate route continued along the Indus as it turns eastward into Ladakh, whence travelers could head northward to cross over the Karakorum pass toward Khotan and Yarkhand. Such routes are attested well into the historical period, even as recently as the nineteenth century (Neelis 2011: 264). These routes also served to reach Ladakh itself as well as connecting to upper Tibet, where such high

added-value commodities as gold, musk, pashmina, shahtoosh, salt, and sapphires were produced in large quantities.³⁸

This information also clarifies the presence of an inscription bearing the name of Vima Kadphises in a region which would have been, at best, on the fringe of his sphere of influence, a long and difficult journey from his capitals in Bactria and Gandhāra. Interestingly, carvings of *tamgas* (fig. 16) similar to those seen on coins of early Kuṣāṇa rulers were documented by Tashi Ldawa and Viraf Mehta at the Indus-Zaskar confluence in 2013 (34.1609°N, 77.3390°E; the rock on which they were engraved has unfortunately since been destroyed) and between Alchi and Lardo along the Indus (34.2329°N, 77.1372°E), reinforcing the plausibility of Kuṣāṇa influence in the western

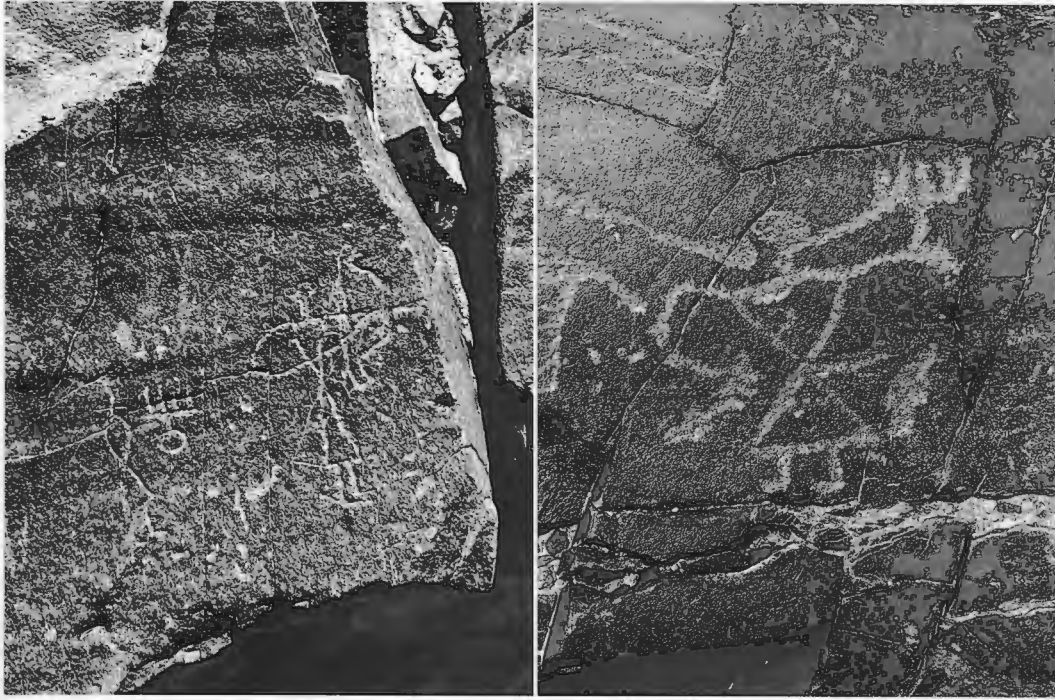


Fig. 16. Depictions of *tamgas* at the Zaskar-Indus confluence (left, photo courtesy Viraf Mehta), and between Alchi and Lardo (right, photo courtesy Devers 2016). See also pl. 16 in gathered color plates.

parts of Ladakh during the period in question. More generally, potteries that reflect the broad ware culture of Central Asia during the Kuṣāṇa and post-Kuṣāṇa periods in terms of typology, decoration, technique, etc. were identified by S. Broglia de Moura at various sites in Western Ladakh (mainly in Dras), as far east as Wanla.³⁹ As recently noted by Skinner (2017: 63–64), the Kuṣāṇa rulers seemed to have located their inscriptions in areas along the fringes of their territories or spheres of influence (as had been done by Aśoka some three and a half centuries earlier). The position of Vima's Khaltse inscription and the *tamga* carvings suggests that the Ladakh routes to Central Asia and to the precious resources of both Ladakh and upper Tibet, distant and difficult as they may have been, were significant enough to be chosen for display of Kuṣāṇa power.⁴⁰ This in turn suggests that the routes were fairly well traveled during the heyday of the Kuṣāṇas in the later first century and the second century C.E. The later inscriptions at Lehdo, Waru, and Henache are clues that this pattern was a durable one, lasting well into the post-Kushan period.

Notes

1. R. Salomon read and commented on the inscriptions, while Q. Devers and T. Ldawa documented the inscriptions and provided the overall contexts of the sites. We are very grateful for the help, advice, suggestions, and comments from Samara Broglia de Moura, Nils Martin, Viraf Mehta, and Kacho Mumtaz Khan (Yogma Kharbu), and for the help in the field of Jigmet Namgial (Pharkapa, Teya), Kacho Sikundar Khan (Yogma Kharbu), Hassan Khan (Yogma Kharbu), Martin Vernier, and Laurianne Bruneau.

2. A. H. Francke reports (1907: 592) that he discovered this inscription in the autumn of 1905.

3. The date was read by Konow (1929: 81) as 187 (or 184). We have elsewhere (Salomon 2005: 376) tentatively accepted Joe Cribb's proposal that the hundreds figure be read as 200 rather than 100, which, if attributed to the Indo-Greek era of 186/85 B.C.E. would yield a date around 100 C.E., or, following Falk and Bennett's (2009) revised epoch of 175/74 B.C.E. for that era, around 110 C.E. See also the further discussion and references in Bruneau 2011: 180–81.

4. See the discussions in Francke 1929: 110; Konow 1929: 80; Tucci 1958: 295; Orofino 1990: 181; Bruneau 2010: 1.36; and Bruneau 2011: 182.

5. Francke 1907: Tafel II (between pp. 592–23); Francke 1906: pl. XVI.5. These inscriptions are also briefly referred to in Francke 1909–1910: 103, where he reports that “We took photographs of the Brāhmī and the longer Kharoṣṭhī inscription,” but as far as we have been able to determine these photographs have not been published.

6. Konow refers here (1929: 81) to four short Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, but it seems to us that here he has misunderstood Francke’s presentation. For the single *akṣaras sa* labeled as nos. 5 and 6 in Francke’s Tafel II are apparently not inscriptions on the rock, but rather only examples provided by Vogel to Francke for paleographic comparison: “äussert sich Dr. Vogel über die Datierung der drei Karoṣṭhī[sic]-Inchriften in folgender Weise : In den Aśoka-Inchriften haben wir die geschlossene Form des s, wie auf Tafel II, Nr. 5 angegeben; in den Kuṣaṇa[sic]-Inchriften dagegen die offene Form, wie auf Tafel II, Nr. 6” (Francke 1907: 593). This is confirmed by Francke’s “Verzeichnis der Abbildungen” (p. 597), in which he skips over II.5 and II.6.

7. “I am to point out, that, as only hand-copies are available to me, this and the following readings are not to be considered as final” (Vogel 1906: 31, n.1; cited in Francke 1907: 592, n.1 as “Es ist daselbst bemerkt worden, die Lesung dieser Inschriften beruhe nicht auf Abklatschen, sondern auf Kopien, und sei deshalb nicht als endgültig zu betrachten”).

8. Some five thousand according to the estimate in Neelis 2011: 268.

9. These inscriptions as well as the many petroglyphs and elaborate rock carvings which accompany them have been scrupulously documented in the eleven volumes of the series *Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans* (MANP), published between 1994 and 2013. The material as a whole is generally referred to as “Upper Indus inscriptions,” although this name is not entirely accurate, since many of them are found in the Hunza and other valleys. Moreover, the label “Upper Indus” is particularly inappropriate in the present context of Ladakh, where the Indus in Pakistan would be considered the “lower” Indus.

10. This topic will be further elaborated in the third part of this article.

11. Bruneau 2010, vol.1: 207–8; Bruneau 2011: 182.

12. As quoted in Bruneau 2010: 1.207–8; see also Bruneau 2011: 182.

13. Salomon 1998: 69–70.

14. *Varṣako-* instead of the expected *varṣaka-* can be understood as an example of pseudo-compounding, not infrequently seen in Kharoṣṭhī and other informal inscriptions.

15. As quoted in Bruneau 2010: 1.206–7 and Bruneau 2011: 183–84.

16. See Devers 2014: 1.45–46, and the carefully executed copies of these inscriptions in Devers 2014: 2.42 (fig. 57d–g), which were helpful in establishing the

readings. These inscriptions were previously studied by Jason Neelis, but have not been published.

17. Dating such informal inscriptions on the basis of their paleographic features is particularly difficult and imprecise, even more so than paleographic dating in general. If the readings proposed here are correct (and several of them are considerably less than certain), the Waru inscriptions seem to show a particularly wide range and combination of archaic and developed forms of certain characters. For example, the archaic form of the character tentatively read as *ṇa* in Waru 3 contrasts with the much later form of the same consonant in Waru 1; and in Waru 1, the later shape of the vowel diacritic in *śo* contrasts with what seems to be the much older type in the following syllable *ko*.

18. For example in *śrīr-viṣṇugupte* in a graffito from Oshibat on the Indus in Pakistan (Bemmann and König 1994 [MANP 1]: 84, no. 21:7).

19. On the name suffix *-oṭa/-oṭṭa/-oṭaka/-oṭṭaka* etc., see von Hinüber 1989: 44.

20. This rock was previously illustrated, along with a great number and variety of petroglyphs at Kharul, in Devers, Martin, Khan, and Ldawa 2016: fig. 17, but without discussion of the inscriptions other than tentatively identifying them as Kharoṣṭhī (“Confirmation of their identity is now being sought”). See also the description of the Kharool (= Kharul) site in Devers 2018: 159, mentioning inscriptions “perhaps” in Kharoṣṭhī.

21. See Devers 2018: 9 and Martin forthcoming.

22. See Neelis 2011: 262 and further references provided there.

23. See for instance Martin 2018 about the Tibetan inscriptions in Kharul and Takeuchi 2012 for similar inscriptions in Alchi.

24. The occurrence in Kharul inscription 3 of the name *spala*, meaning “army” in Bactrian, might be invoked in favor of this hypothesis.

25. The index of inscriptions in Bandini-König 2009 (= MANP 9): 308 lists *śrī ha* for inscription 18.2 from Ha[rban], but the edition under this number (p. 265) does not correspond to this reading. There seems to have been some editorial error here; perhaps the intended referent was Harwan 18.5 (ibid.; unillustrated), read by O. von Hinüber as *śrī*.

26. No. 39.7; Fussman and König 1997 (= MANP 2): 224 + pl. 54 (reading by O. von Hinüber; “Die Lesung *-rma* ist unsicher”).

27. No. 21.1; Bandini-König 2009 (= MANP 9): 268 + pl. 78.

28. Or, as translated (by O. von Hinüber), ibid., “Des Śrī Dharma unausweichlicher Tod.”

29. von Hinüber 1986: 151.

30. Given their frequency, Schmitt (2002: 159) opines that such mixed names need not be understood as hybrids, as von Hinüber characterizes them, but rather as purely Indo-Aryan, on the grounds that Ira-

nian *spāla* has in effect become a loan word into north-western dialects such as Gāndhārī.

31. In Bandini-König 2013 (= MANP 11): 239. Further comments on *spāla*-names are found in von Hinüber 2017: 137 and 2018: 13.

32. Bandini-König 2009 (= MANP 9): 165, no. 540.1. In spite of the editor's (G. Fussman) hesitation ("La lecture du *la* est douteuse"), the reading seems secure. However, Fussman transcribed the third syllable as *spa*, where I would read *śpa*, as in the following example. The alternation of *sp* and *śp* is well attested in Gāndhārī.

33. Bandini-König 2013 (= MANP 11): 256, no. 211.8. The inscription was read by the editor (Fussman) as *śudhakaē*, but the correct reading *śudhaspāla* is clear in the accompanying illustration (pl. 92).

34. Although the stone is broken off to the right of the inscription, enough of it remains that, if there had been any *akṣaras* before *spalasa* at least some trace of the immediately preceding one would have been visible.

35. If so, the absence of *sṛ*, *sṛ̃*, and *sai* in the sequence may reflect a Prakrit or Prakritic version of the alphabetic sequence in which vocalic *ṛ/ṛ̃*, and perhaps also the long diphthong vowels, were omitted; compare Salomon 2016: 10 and n. 5.

36. The similarity between the sequence of Brāhmī s-s here and the two Kharoṣṭhī sa-s in Francke's eye-copy of the Khaltse inscriptions is merely a coincidence since, as pointed out above (n. 6), the latter were not actually found on the rock itself but were merely supplied by the author for paleographic comparison.

37. Devers 2019: 173, 181

38. To understand the scale of this wealth, considering solely the production of gold, we can look at the accounts of Mirza Haidar, a Turco-Mongol general from Kashgar who led several expeditions in Ladakh and Tibet in the first half of the sixteenth century and described aspects of gold production in these regions that were reported to him by local informants. The soil of some of the mines was such that a sieve of soil could yield ten *mithqāls* of gold (about 42.5 grams): a single person could carry and wash up to twenty sieves of soil, bringing the production of gold up to 850 grams per person per day (Elias and Denison Ross 2009: 356). In the province of Guge, the earth was said to be so rich that soil simply spread on a cloth would reveal gold nuggets varying from the size of a pea to that of a sheep's liver. While he was negotiating tribute from Guge during one of his campaigns, a man told him that somebody recently struck his spade in a rock at the center of which was a large chunk of gold, which after extraction proved to weigh 1,500 Tibetan *mithqāls* (about 9.5 kg). Gold mines were so important in the landscape that they were actually taken as landmarks to delineate the northern and eastern borders of Ladakh during the Ngari Skorsum period (tenth to thirteenth centuries C.E.; Devers 2019: 12). Mining was considerable, and

an integral part of the defining identity of both Ladakh and upper Tibet.

39. Broglia de Moura forthcoming; Devers 2018: 9–10, 167–69.

40. Although Vima's inscription itself consists merely of his name and the date, it is accompanied by an armed figure in typical Kuṣāṇa military pose, as if to mark the territory as belonging to the Kuṣāṇa ruler.

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Revision of Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions in the Light of New Material

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Kharoṣṭhī texts provide many stumbling blocks other scripts fortunately can do without: many characters can look the same, vowel length is not marked, words are not graphically separated, and there is no standard orthography, but many local variants both in spelling as in grammar. Wherever there is no non-Gāndhārī parallel the editor will hardly be in a position to clear all of the difficulties, and he will have to leave unsolved terms or tentative solutions to future work, to be done by himself, or, still better, by others with a fresh view. The result is a sort of ping-pong game where the final solution includes a major amount of earlier achievements.

The following paragraphs provide mainly such ping-pong returns, enhanced by new material. In addition, some new material is presented, including a rare biscriptual text providing the first piece of epigraphy—in two scripts—issued by a king of the Pāratarājas.

The Stūpa Donation of the Kuḍiya Sons at Haḍḍa

In 1996 A. Sadakata presented a series of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions in the *Journal Asiatique*. For some philological intricacies and adjustments to French editorial habits he had found an expert adviser in Gérard Fussman. The material included a gold sheet that was once part of a relic chamber in a stūpa, hidden in a reliquary made from limestone. This large gold foil was inscribed to about half its length. Sadakata and Fussman provided a reading and a translation realizing that much of the letters could not be read satisfactorily. On the gold sheet the letters were incised with a pointed instrument and packed rather closely together so that it is sometimes

difficult to decide to which letter some of the dots belong.

While Fussman was and still is (2015: 160f.) convinced of the genuineness of the object, it was R. Salomon (1999: 144, fn. 3) who pointed to “peculiarities about the formulation of [its] date, and this is one of several reasons, including the untypical phrasing and formulation, unusual format, and peculiar handwriting, that I strongly suspect that this inscription is a modern forgery.” At least up to 2005 Salomon maintained this evaluation, when he called this gold foil “clearly a forgery,” an opinion meant to support his view that another text in Sadakata’s collection, dated to Azes 98, was a fake as well.¹

As a result of the negative evaluation this text is not found in Baums’ collection of reliquary inscriptions of 2012. In 2018a Baums still sees a “possible forgery,” but uses the text nonetheless for chronological considerations, “because (it) has attracted a certain amount of discussion in the secondary literature” (2018: 58), a remarkable methodological stand, certainly not of much help for those unable to judge the nature of such a texts on their own.

This paper aims to show that all the objections voiced by Salomon can be countered after taking a new look at letter shapes, structure, and meaning of the donation record. My base is a substantial collection of photographs which I received some years ago through I. Kurita from Tokyo. They include 52 images from this reliquary and its contents. The deposit was found inside a rather large reliquary, 17.5 cm high, of whitish stone with a flat lid. This container and its rich contents are shown by Jongeward (2012: 55, fig. 3.7c).²

Initially, the inscribed part of the gold leaf was photographed in two close-ups, in high quality. These were published in Sadakata (1996: 317,

pl. 2). The additional 46 photographs are machine-labeled “Video print” on their backside. They show smaller sections, taken with a video camera. Because of the medium the light is without contrast and the punched dots slightly out of focus. This is why I worked on the two larger photographs, identical to those published by Sadakata in black and white. The two photos were scanned and then the dots one for one marked on a separate layer and extracted for the accompanying figure 1. This shows that the donors provided a gold sheet much larger than what was finally inscribed, judging from the lower half, which is left bare.

My reading differs in a number of cases from the one offered by Sadakata. The analysis of the text shows that it is well structured and provides full sense, as maintained by Fussman (2015: 161). It contains some terms and ideas which were so far not found in other, that means younger, texts, and its handwriting is not more peculiar than many other ones. In fact, the text is consistent from beginning to its abrupt end and the script is devoid of most of the scribal embellishments which in later texts become customary, and thus an important testimony of the state of Kharoṣṭhī at the time of its origin, year 39 of Azes, that is ca. 10/9 B.C. That makes it one of the earliest reliquary inscriptions we have from Gandhara.

The text presents its content in 15 lines, without spaces:

- (1:) *vaṣaye 20 10 4 4 1 ayasa mase jeṭhe diva-*
sahi aṭhahi
- (2:) *imeṇa cetreṇa thuvo praṭiṭhaveti sahay-*
arae apra
- (3:) *tiṭhaviṭapruvami heḍaiami*
*gramakṣetrami*³
- (4:) *savabudhaṇa puyae taṇvadamaye*⁴
sahayaraṇa dhamaso
- (5:) *ṭaro a*⁵ *kuḍiaṇe*⁶ *madapotudhitore*⁷ *zade*⁸
*ca papiaputre*⁹
- (6:) *hidue*¹⁰ *mahomavaputre parthive*¹¹ *zadila-*
*putre*¹² *hidue*¹³ *supa-*
- (7:) *ḍita*¹⁴ *-putre jihonīe zadila*¹⁵ *putre hasti-*
*mite*¹⁶ *joṇaputre*¹⁷
- (8:) *mardaṇe*¹⁸ *uvariṇaputre mardaṇe*¹⁹
*budhaṭevaputre*²⁰ *budharakṣi-*
- (9:) *te zadilaputre*²¹ *budhāiri saghamite ca*
budhatevaputra
- (10:) *mahapuṇe*²² *utoḍaṇaputre*²³ *mahaladha*²⁴
*supaḍite*²⁵ *maha-*
- (11:) *zade*²⁶ *mahadeve*²⁷ *ca mahadevaputre*
mahasamate

- (12:) *praseṇaaputre idrahoti*²⁸ *yoṇaputre sara-*
- (13:) *vaṇe zadilaputre*²⁹ *raṇite*³⁰ *papiaputre sive*
- (14:) *zoṇaputre devarakṣite jihonīaputre sagha-*
- (15:) *e śita putra*³¹ *ṇa uvee*³² *kuḍiaṇa putra [ṇa]*

The structure complies with other texts as becomes evident through the translation:

1. *When (time):*

“In the year 39 of (king) Azes, in month Jyeṣṭha on the eighth day, at that date of the year starting with month Caitra,”

2. *What (donation):*

“the company men established the *stūpa*”

3. *Where (place):*

“on village ground of Hiḍḍa, where there was no foundation before,”

4. *Why (the beneficiaries):*

“(a) for the veneration of all the Buddhas,”

(b) for the self-control of the company men.”

5. *Condition of the laypeople:*

“For one, the mothers, the fathers and daughters of the Kuḍiyas hear the *dharma*, and also

Zada, son of Papia,

Hidua, son of Mahomava,

Parthiva, son of Zandila,

Hidua, son of Supaṇḍita,

Jihonika, son of Zandila,

Hastimitra, son of Joṇa,

Mardaṇa, son of Uvariṇa,

Mardaṇa, son of Buddhadeva,

Buddharakṣita, son of Jodila,

Buddhagiri and Saṅghamitra, sons of

Buddhadeva,

Mahāpuṇya, son of Uttodaṇa,

Mahālabdha, Supaṇḍita, Mahāzanda and

Mahādeva, sons of Mahādeva,

Mahāsammata, son of Prasenaka,

Indrabhūti, son of Yona,

Śaravaṇa, son of Zandila,

Raṇjita, son of Papia,

Śiva, son of Zona,

Devarakṣita, son of Jihonika,

(viz.) the sons, are sympathetic towards the Saṅgha.

They have not entered (the Saṅgha) as laymen (of the higher order).

The sons of the Kuḍias (do?) not . . .”

Despite some uncertainties, the text provides no evidence that leads us to doubt its genuineness. All parts of it furnish us with information, some of which is unique and deserves in depth comments:

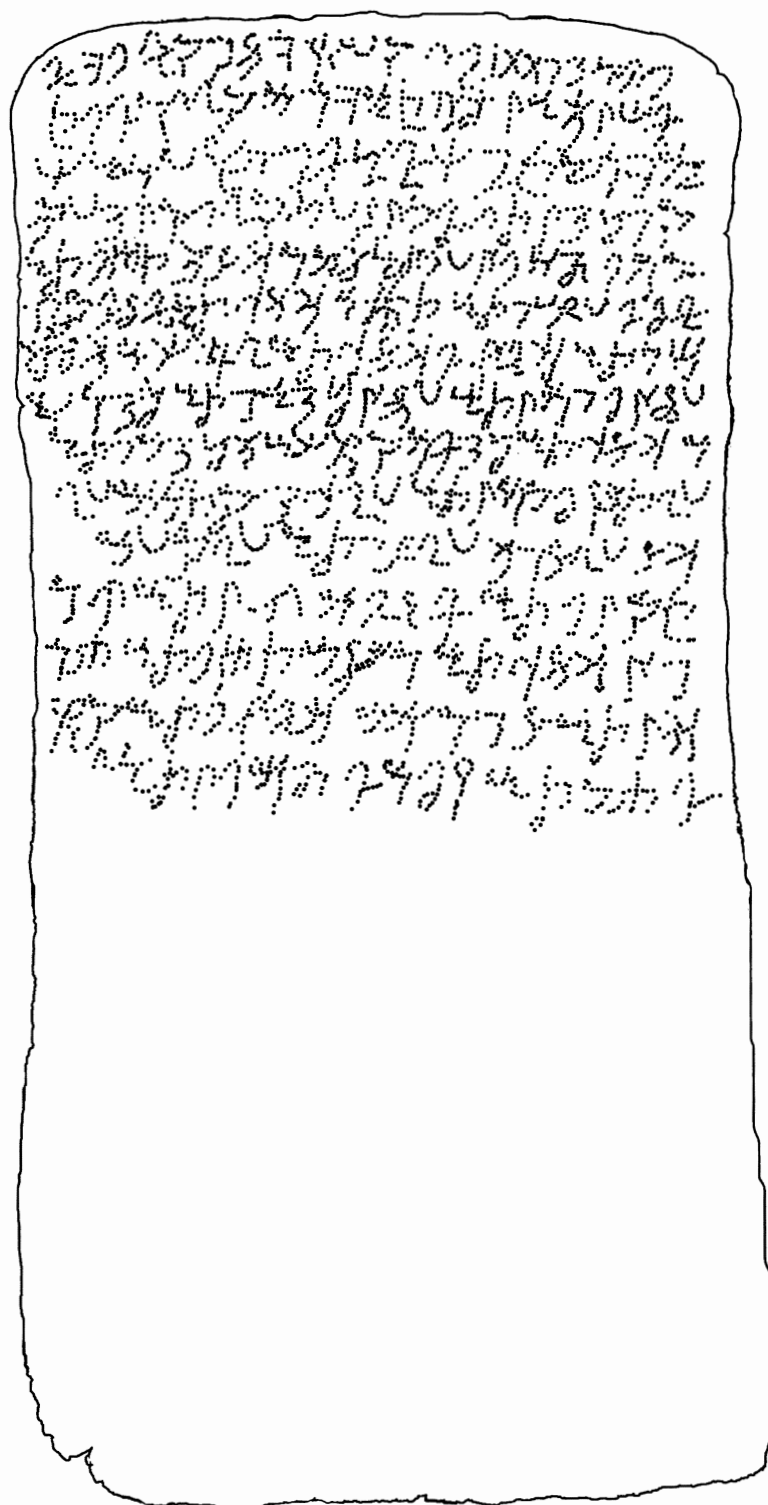


Fig. 1. Tracing of the dots in the gold foil. The text lists the circumstances of the donation and the Kuḍiya donors at a stūpa near Haḍḍa. Original size, ca. 19.5 cm in length. Base photography courtesy Isao Kurita.

1. The Date

(1:) *vaṣaye 20 10 4 4 1 ayasa mase jeṭhe diva-*
sahī aṭhahi (2:) *imeṇa cetreṇa*

Skt: *varṣe 39 ayasya, māse jyeṣṭhe, divase aṣṭame, asmin caitrye* <*kṣaṇe*>

"In the year 39 of (king) Azes, in month Jyeṣṭha on the eighth day, at that date of the year starting with month Caitra,"

The year 39 of the Azes era corresponds to 10/9 B.C. The script is in line with such an early date, as it makes use of sophisticated footmarks only sparingly, and the *sa* has its stem drawn as a separate line. The only phonology-based peculiarity is the occasional use of *tra*, i.e. under-barred *ta*, for a simple intervocalic lenated dental, and the identically shaped *tra* for /tra/, mainly in *-putra*. When it comes to names ending in *-mitra*, we observe the use of *ta* for spoken /tta/.

Graphically, in standard hands only *ta* and *sa* start with a tiny curl; our clerk uses the curl also for starting *ra* and sometimes also for *ḍa* and *va*. He uses the underbarred *ḍa* only for *heḍaia*, "pertaining to the Hiḍḍa land," a term also written *hiḍaga* on a water pot to be edited by Ingo Strauch. In other cases the *ḍa* shows no under-bar to the right.

In 10/9 B.C. King Azes should have already been succeeded by the Apraca king Vijayamitra, but still the term "deceased" is not yet used for references to the famous king.³³

The term *cetra* connoting a certain type of year is rare in Gāndhārī dates. It corresponds to Skt *caitrya*, that means a year "starting with month Caitra," and not with month Phālguna (alternatively in spring) or Kārttika (in the fall). The only other occurrence (*cetrike*) so far is found on the assuredly genuine Indravarma casket of the year Azes 63, 24 years later than our gold leaf.³⁴ Baums (2018: 61) noticed the twofold occurrence without using it with regard to judging genuineness. The twofold occurrence poses the question of whether our text is genuine or whether it was faked by someone who knew and understood, or even had produced the Indravarma text as well. I have recently (Falk 2019: 22b) reread a coin legend from the eastern Panjab as *cetreśvara*, where the deity responsible for the yearly renewal is depicted, the coin type dates to the early first century, so rather close to our text.

2. The Stūpa

thuvo praṭiṭhaveti sahayarae

Skt: *stūpaṃ pratisthāpayanti saha-carāḥ*

"the company men established the stūpa."

The basic term *sahayara* corresponds usually to Skt *sahacara*, "co-mover," a companion in long-distance trade, but extended to all sorts of communal business. The nom.pl. in *-ae* is not frequent, but also found in *śarira preṭhavidāe* on the Charsadda-II casket.³⁵

3. The Place

apra(3:)ṭiṭhaviṭapruvami heḍaiami

gramakṣetrami

Skt: *apratisthāpitapūrve haiḍḍaye grāmakṣetre*,

"on village ground of Hiḍḍa, where there was no foundation before."

The reading of Sadakata and Fussman, and still so in Baums (CKI 455), was *gramaramma*, with doubled *m*, taken for Skt *grāma-ārāma-*, taken to be a "monastère du village" and at the same time "où il n'y avait pas de fondation auparavant," although a monastery presupposes such a foundation. Our reading removes both the orthographical oddity and the contradiction in sense.

The question of whether this sentence implies a very first foundation at Haḍḍa itself or only at a certain spot in its vicinity remains open.

4a. The Religious Purpose

savabudhaṇa puyae

Skt: *sarvabuddhānāṃ pūjāyai*

"for the veneration of all the Buddhas,"

4b. The Benefit of the Founders

taṇvadamaye sahayaraṇa

Skt: *tānvadamāya saha-carāṇāṃ*,

"for the self-control of the company men"

This sentence introduces a new tenet with *taṇvadamā*, "self-restraint," found in the same case as *ātmanaḥ damāya* in the Bodhisattvabhūmi or as *ātmadamāya* in the Śrāvakabhūmi, both

Mahāyāna texts. Our term *taṇva*-, “one’s own,” Vedic Skt *tānva*, is already known under the forms *taṇuka* (*taṇukaami thubami*, Salomon 1996: 430), *tanuaka* (*taṇuakami thubumi*, Falk 2010: 18, repr. 2013: 216), or *taṇuva* (*taṇuvae bo-sisatvagahami*, Taxila silver scroll).

The ligature *ṇva* is long-drawn and reaches down into the following line. Sadakata (= CKI 455) reads *saṇamumaye* for *taṇvadamaye*, without trying to translate.

5. The State of Buddhist Religiosity within the Group

5a) Elders and women

dhamaso(5:)|taro a kuḍiāṇe madapotudhitore
Skt: *dharmasrotāraḥ ca kuḍiānām*
mātrpitṛduhitāraḥ

“For one, the mothers, the fathers, and daughters of the Kuḍiyas hear the Dharma.”

Companies have names of their own and here we are confronted with the term *kuḍia*, certainly not written *kuḥṣia* (Sadakata, CKI). The term *kuḍia* has been given here the Skt form *kuḍiya*, but there are numerous possibilities for an etymology, based on nouns starting with *kuḍ*, *kuṭ*, *kuṭṭ*. In addition, the root vowel assumed to be *-u* could as well be *-ū* or *-o*; the terms could end in *-ya*, *-iya* or *ika*. This way we could receive artisans (potter, thatcher) or inhabitants of a fortified or walled settlement (*kuṭa*, *koṭa*), possibly Hiḍḍa itself. The selection would necessarily be arbitrary, although a social group otherwise termed *koḍiya* appears the most likely. Some of them were at home in Pāṭaliputra and made donations at Sanchi. According to Lüders (e.a. 1963: 19), they are the Koḷiyas known from the Pali canon, neighbours to the Śākyas and the tribe of the Buddha’s mother. Other members built the *koḍiya-gaṇa* of the Jinas.

In our text, this group is subdivided into mothers, fathers, and daughters on the one hand, and sons on the other, the latter presented individually by name, because they created the action group for building the stūpa, providing funds or workmen or both.

These sentences describe the state of attachment of the *kuḍias* to the Buddhist foundation in the nominative, two fractions which are linked

by an enclitic *ca* or *a*³⁶ in their respective list. The old generation and the daughters come first. They are less relevant for the local *saṅgha*, but at least they come and listen to the *dharma* expositions at the monastery.

Madapotudhitore was difficult to read, mainly because the *va*-hook of *taṇva* from line 4 extends downwards into the space of line 5. The scribe while approaching this barrage in line 5 started to squeeze letters in front of it. This resulted in *madapotu* instead of *madapitu* and he also placed the *tu* just underneath the *-va*-hook. This resulted in Sadakata’s and Fussman’s (= CKI) reading *maśahimadi* instead of understanding *madapitudhi*^o. In most other cases the parents appear in a standard phrase as *matapitu-puyae*. In our text, however, we have the daughters in addition, who otherwise are rarely found in compounds. Exceptions are gen.sg. *saputradhitara-sa* in the Takht-i Bahi stone of Gondophares, gen.pl. *putradhitaraṇa* on a water pot (Odani 2005: 432).

5b) The younger men

zade ca papiaputre (. . .) devarakṣite jihoniaputre
Skt: *zaṃdaḥ ca pāpiyaputraḥ . . . devarakṣitaḥ*
jihoniaputraḥ
“and (then we have) Zanda, son or Papiya, . . . (up to) Devarakṣita, son of Jihonika (as hearers of the Dharma).”

This phrase includes a long series of sons in the nominative—to be dealt with in detail below—separated from the parents and daughters by another enclitic *ca*. The sons carry names in Greek, Indian, Scythian, and Iranian idioms and will be analyzed below. The disposition of the young men is addressed in the closing phrase: they are “attached” (*śrita*), but not more:

5c) *sagha(15:)|e śita putra ṇa uvee*

Skt: *saṅghe śritāḥ putrāḥ, na upetāḥ . . .*

“The sons (enumerated above) are sympathetic towards the Saṅgha, (but) have not entered (it) as laymen (of the higher order).”

The first three words were formerly taken as a son “Saṅgha, son of Śita,” followed by son “Naūvea.” However, when *saṅgha* and *upeta* are present in one sentence then a connection to the lay status of non-clerics is much more likely.

Aśoka speaks in his Minor Rock Edicts of a loose connection to the *saṅgha* for more than one year and a half in the state of an *upāsaka* (*yaṃ sumi upāsake*), and then he joined the order (*yaṃ mayā saṃghe upayīte/upete*), certainly not as a full-fledged monk, but as a layman of the higher order, obeying not five but ten commandments. If the connection holds true we can regard the list of young men as supporters of the *saṅgha*, certainly co-financing this first local stūpa, but, to the slight chagrin of the scribe not as committed laymen of the higher order.

6. Phrase Ending Unfinished

kuḍiaṇa putra [ṇa]

The last two words are difficult to evaluate. They could be added to *na uvee*, glossing *putrāḥ* as *kuḍiānāṃ putrāḥ*. But it is unclear whether we have to read *putra* = *putrāḥ*, or *putraṇa* = *putrāṇāṃ*, the uncertainty arising from the letter [ṇa] being only written in its upper part, the small bend. The vertical leg is unwritten. Either what we see is a sort of full-stop, unseen in this form before, or this is the upper part of a *ṇa*, then *kuḍiaṇa putraṇa* or *kuḍiaṇa putra ṇa* must have started a new sentence since a gen. pl. hardly connects to *na uvee*. Ample space for a number of further sentences is still empty on the sheet. For instance, we miss information about the sectarian orientation of the concerned group of monks.

We will never know why the scribe stopped in the middle of the sentence, or even in the middle of a character, but we see at least that all he wrote so far makes good sense and gives us the right to assume that in the year Azes 39, i.e. 10/9 B.C., there were stretches of land around the important city of Hidḍa where the building of a stūpa was regarded as a novelty.

The Names

A good number of names can easily be understood, all of them of Indian origin. One group is Buddhist and comprises fathers (f) and sons (s): Buddhadeva (f), Buddharakṣita (s), Buddhagiri and Saṅghamitra (ss), both sons of Buddhadeva (f). With given Buddhist names occur also

Mahāpunya (s) and Mahāsammatā (s). The majority amounts to five sons, with just two fathers.

Another group is Indic as well, but related to Śaivism: we have Śaravaṇa, that is Kumāra, who along with Śiva and Mahādeva is a son fathered by yet another Mahādeva.

One of the sons of Mahādeva is called *mahāladha*, which recalls Buddhist ideas and the name of a horse-specialist (*asavārika*) Sulabdhā, written *suladhā* at Bharhut (Lüders e.a. 1963: 6, A22).

Another group of names is Indic but of a neutral nature: Hastimitra most likely is a *nakṣatra* name, Devarakṣita provides no clue, and Indrabhūti fits anywhere. Again, all three are sons. The name of Rañjita (*rañjita*) simply expresses that his parents hoped that he would be “pleasing” to them.

There are a number of names expressing prowess or ruling capacities, possibly hinting at a *kṣatriya* background. We have *uvariṇa* (f), which could go back to Skt *udvāra*, “raised tail,” with *ṇi*-suffix, denoting possibly a lion marked that way on many seals and coins. His son is Mardana, a “crusher.” Another son is Pārthiva, “king,”³⁷ another Prasenaka, alluding to Prasenajit, the famous king of the Buddha’s time. Another father is *Uttodana (*utoḍana*), an “up-splitter,” comparable to the two Mardanas (*mardana*), both sons, “clubbing” to death their adversaries.

Some names can be explained easily when we assume an Iranian background. Papia will hardly be related to Skt *pāpika* (“sinful”). There was a co-regent of Shahpur I in Fars, on their common coins written *p’pky* in Parthian, “Pābag (?)” according to Alram (1986: 185, no. 653), while in Bactria or Margiana a Yuezhi or early Kushan king spells his name ΠABHC, *pabēs*. A Scythian origin or relationship is quite possible, given Παπαῖος as their name of Zeus (Herodotus 4.59). A further candidate for a Scythian background is the well-known Jihonika who ruled Kashmir in the late first century A.D. We have two namesake Jihonikas (*jihonika*), one son, one father, both of which have relatives with non-Indic names.

Possibly Scythian as well is Hidua, a name previously (Falk 2010: 27/2013a: 225, Baums 2018b: 37) misread as Hirmaa on the so-called Traśaka casket (for a new reading see below p. 119). But there this reading ignores a long vertical after the supposed *rma*, and with that vertical the letter can only be *pi*,³⁸ leading to *hipia*, Greek Hippios, Ἱππιος. That means that the cherished *hirmaa*,

allegedly Gāndhārī for Hermaios, is not present on the gold sheet, where *hidua* must be read, or on the so-called Traṣaka casket, where *hipia* is much more likely. *Hidua* could be **sinduga* in an Iranian garb. *Hidua* occurs twice on the gold sheet,³⁹ both times used for sons; one father is spelled most likely *maṇemava*, similarly inexplicable to me.⁴⁰

There are two two-syllabic names in the parents generation which pose problems. *Yoṇa* (l.12) may reflect *yavana*, “Westerner,” but *Zoṇa* (l.14), if not related to *dyuvan*, the “sun,” looks problematic.

In contrast to the names of the bellicose *kṣatriyas* we have two *Supaṇḍitas* (*supaḍita*), “well educated,” one son, one father. The name is hardly fit for *kṣatriyas*, but would suit brahmins versed in the śāstras.

All in all the impression arises that the Kuḍiya group is composed of families with a rather different religious and social background, which, however, does not exclude an ethnic unity. From a religious point of view it is noteworthy that any allusion to Viṣṇu is absent.

Quite a number of names may be linked to terms like *zada* or *zanda*. Still, *zada* is generally taken to be related to Skt *jāta*, “born, son.” Some years ago (Falk 2014: 10) I have adduced arguments in favour of a link to Mīr *zantu*, “clan, land of the clan.” The topic could cover a full paper, but a few examples may instigate scholars with more expertise than I can claim to have a deeper look. In our text we have:

- *mahazada*, rather *mahāzanda*, “large clan,” than “big son,”
- *zaṃdanama*, rather “who honours the clan” than “who is honoured by his son,”
- *zadapriya*, “dear to the clan” or “dear to the son.”

From outside our text a few examples suffice:

- *pharazada*: in his name a monastery was founded at Ahicchattra near Bareilly. On a *rākṣasa* figure we read in three lines in a Brāhmī script of the second or third century A.D.: *bhikṣusya dhamaghoṣasya dāna pharagulavihārā ahichatrāyā*, “donation of monk Dhāmaghoṣa in (read °*vihāre*) the Pharagula-monastery at Ahicchattrā.”⁴¹ The same name Pharagula appears also far away in Termez on a sherd inscribed in Kharoṣṭhī from a monas-

tery, possibly dating to the same period. The sherd is broken but the surviving letters were read as *///pharagulapharazadavi[h]///* by Vertogradova (2004: 53). This would mean that the vessel once was “(in) the monastery named after Pharagula (and) Pharazada.” The habit of naming a series of sons using one member in all the compounds is well attested, although father and son may show similarly structured names. In any way, we have two names and Pharagula being one of them. Unfortunately, the meaning “son” for written *zada* holds sort of a monopoly in present research and thus the editor (Vertogradova 2004: 53) was led to assume a “. . . phara, son of Gulaphara,” with the father’s name identified with Gondophares, which provided new but erroneous vistas to historians.⁴² With the *Rākṣasa* in mind we rather put *gula* and *zada* on one semantic level. When *gula* means Skt *kula*, as is commonly assumed, the “family” would make a nice pair with *zada* = *zanda*, “clan,” and the two related males were expected to be “belonging to a family with lustre” and “belonging to a clan with lustre.”

- *zaṃdasara* was found by I. Strauch (2007: 82f.) on a pitcher turned reliquary. Provisionally, he proposed to link *zaṃda* with Ir. *zad* “born” and *sara* with Ir. *sar*, “head,” without receiving a clear meaning. A “head of the clan,” however, makes sense and goes semantically along with *zandapati/zandbet* as referred to in Falk 2014: 10.

It remains to state that in our text *za* and *jo* can hardly be distinguished. So, *Joda* (as read in line 5 by S and CKI 455) and *Jodila* may be *Zada* and *Zandila* or *vice versa*. The frequency of *Za(m)da* and *Za(m)dila* in clear cases makes the latter readings preferable.

The “Traṣaka” Casket Again

An inscription on this casket was instrumental in finding a first reason for having the Azes era start in 47/48 B.C. rather than equating it with the Vikrama era of 56 B.C. (Falk and Bennet 2009).⁴³

Apart from that role the casket is one of the rare ones that was inscribed twice, either in the course of a renovation in the form of an enlargement of the *stūpa*, or because the first construction was damaged, by lightning or earthquake. There is some unique terminology found in all of its parts, its understanding impeded because

the handwriting is careless at places and the published photographs suffer from reflections on the surface. In March 2020 it was possible to inspect the object at the Ashmolean, Oxford, leading to the renewed insight that standard photographs in print media may be misleading while the object itself would allow a clearer decision about which reading is likely and which is not.

On top of the lid one reads the two letters *ho-ra*, a Scythian term meaning “donation,” found on a reliquary only here. The following two lines contain the first dedication:

- (2:) *saṃvatsaraye śaṃaṃcaīśaśadama maṣe
ire da⁴⁴ diasa 20-3 datraśake hipiapu-
tra muñji datraśakaputra thuvaṃ (3:)
pratiṭhaveti apratiṭhavitapruve sarvabud-
hana pujae matrapidu pujae budhaṇa
bhosi pravuṇama nia śpiho*

“In the year 156, in month *Ira*, on day 23, Datraśaka, the son of Hippios, (and) Muñji, son of Datraśaka, install a stūpa at a place where there was no installation before, in veneration of all the Buddhas, in veneration of mother and father. May we achieve the enlightenment of the Buddhas, as our own, for ourselves.”

The first text mentions a month *ira*, most likely the Babylonian month Aiaru (Falk and Bennett 2009: 199f./492f.), not mentioned in any other Gandharan text so far. The two donors are father and son, the latter called Muñji, perhaps a hypocoristic form of some name like *muñjapriya*, or *miñjupriya*. The father was first called Traśaka by Fussman (1985). There is a letter in front of each of the two occurrences, proposed (Falk 2010: 27/225) to be *sa*, *da* or *na*, with a preference for the first possibility, leading to Satraśaka. Baums (2012: 238, fn. 87) took the *tra* to be *ṭa* and linked the resulting Saṭaśaka to Saṭaśkaṇa, name of a son of Kujula, found on the Senavarma gold plate. The personal examination now revealed that the initial letter must be a *da*, or less likely *dam*, because the scribe uses long-drawn forms of *da*, and he adds a sort of an *anusvāra*-bend below.⁴⁵ When we take this bend as meaningful we get *dam*, if not just *da*. This leads to Da(m)traśaka or Da(m)ṭaśaka,⁴⁶ and the Kushan connection, alas, is gone. The father of this man was read as *hiphua* by Fussman, changed to *hirmaa* in Falk 2010 (27/225), being allegedly Hermaios like the well-known Indo-

Greek king, but the inspection led to *hipia*, Hippios, a rather frequent name through a number of Hellenistic regions. At least the Indo-Greek connection remains preserved.

Relevant as well is the remaining *niaspiho*, read from the object as was done by Fussman resulting in *niamspiho*. This term appeared incomprehensible. My alternative proposal to read *na agho duho* (Falk 2010: 27f./226f.; CKI 328) must be given up and the new form, rather close to the first reading, is again in need of an explanation. The tentative translation “forever, for ourselves” presupposes a Skt *chāyā* of *nijaṃ svīyaṃ*, but the interpretation must revert to the Sanskrit dictionaries which tell us that *nijaṃ* is used in two meanings, *svīye ca nitye ca*.⁴⁷ This way we would have two sides, one the temporal “forever” and the possessive “for me personally,” or a more repetitive “for our own, for us personally.”

The sequence a) grandfather with Greek name Hippios, b) Sythian Da(m)traśaka (father), and c) Mūñji (son) may reflect a tendency to abandon giving Greek names.

There is one short sequence of letters at the bottom, inside, of the bowl. Written in faint letters, without applying the usual pressure, someone wrote *aviṇavaliēhi*, read by Fussman (and all to come, without the high-placed *m*) as *aviṇavulie^mhi*, inexplicable and so far untranslated. The bend of the alleged *vu* is not full, hardly half a circle, and such that it can be an *u*-bend or as well not. The first reading was not without foundation, but not the only possible one. Let us imagine the situation: The inside, where the text is found, would be covered with all the metal boxes, jewels, and ashes, while the lid, outside or inside, would always be easily accessible. So it seems that the scribe was not terribly keen at letting others see what he wrote.

Now, when we give preference to the likewise possible reading *valiehi*, instead of *vuliehi*, we are reminded of the Senavarma gold plate inscription, where the last sentence, similarly unrelated to all sentences before, reads: *io ca suṇe solite valieṇa makaḍakaputreṇa ga[m]hapatiṇa*, “and this gold was punctured by the *valia*, a householder, son of Makaḍaka.”

This bold translation depends on the interpretation of two terms and needs an explanation. First, the term *valia* so far was expected to be a personal name by all editors, on the natural supposition that a father’s name should be preceded

by the name of the son. But there are exceptions. The second term is *solite*. Although my previous proposal to regard it as a clerical mistake for *tolite*, “weighed,” has been adopted without further reference (CKI), I rather prefer now to keep *solite* as it is and understand a reference to the action of applying script, based on the attested root *sul*. On gold a clerk could scratch, and the result is *likhita*, “scratched,” but on the Senavarma plate the clerk did not scratch, but puncture, the material; he pressed thousands of dots into the malleable metal sheet. The root *pra-sul* is found in the Black Yajurveda tradition in just one stanza⁴⁸ and means “to press something into something,” rendered by the small Petersburg Dictionary as “hineinstoßen,” meaning “to push into.” This verb is replaced by *pra-til* in the Vājasaneyi (VS 23,24) tradition of the East, equated with *ā-han* (TB 3.9.7.5), and explained as *praveśayami* by the commentators. The indigenous collections of verbal roots, the Dhātupāṭhas, never mention root *sul*. That means, a root *sul* is rare, but it was in use in Vedic times, not in the East of upper India, and it connoted the pressing of something into something.

This way *solita* could refer to the puncturing process, and not to donating (von Hinüber 2003: 42). This puncturing would then be done by a person named Valia, or by a functionary called *valia*, who referred to himself by his father's name and who mentioned his deed because he wanted to be included in the distribution of merit.

But what is a *valia*, possibly found twice on reliquaries? On the Senavarma gold plate we have one *valia*, busy with puncturing a gold sheet, and on the Datraśaka casket we may have a number of anonymous *valias* in a sociative instrumental case. I propose to take *valia* as the Gāndhārī form of Skt/Pali *vārika*, a person entrusted with a particular duty in a monastery or a private court. The change from *-ika* to *-ia* is common (*kartia* : *kārttika*, *ṇaveamio* : *navakārmika* etc.), the change from *r* to *l* is likewise met with (*jalayuga* : *jarāyuja*; *palichina* : *paricchinna* etc.). Normally, the *vārikas* are referred to in compounds, with the object of their duty as the first member. A long list of duties fulfilled by *vārikas* is found in the Buddhist literature, itemized by O. von Hinüber (2012), dealing with monks or laymen who temporarily lend their services, and are free for their own business at other times.⁴⁹

With this interpretation in mind we can return to the faintly scratched *aviṇa valiehi* inside the bowl and attempt an explanation. Either we have a compound, and the *vārika* is busy with *aviṇa*, whatever that is, or we had two short, rudimentary sentences, *api naḥ, vārikaiḥ*, “O, could we as well⁵⁰ (*achieve the *bodhi*), along with the commissaries (involved).” Perhaps we expect too much when we link this wish to *ṇia śpiho*, the end of the primary text, when the donor Datraśaka wanted to achieve the *bodhi* of the Buddhas “for our own, for us personally?”

Whatever solution will finally be accepted it will probably not dispense with the *vārikas*, the many part-time helpers in the service of the monastery or the donor.

The second dedication is found on the inside of the lid, consisting of two lines. Probably, because on the supposition that the second line must begin where the first one ends, Fussman's and all following editions start with *ime bhagavato*, but the first word of the second line starts two letters earlier than *ime*. The first line runs in an almost perfect circle, but the beginning was thought to be marked. There are two passages where the script has been given special impetus by outlining the letters twice in bold scratches. One is *ime bha*, with *bha* only halfway boldened, and the other is *aprakhakasa*, and this word in fact is where the line starts on a slightly higher level compared to the end of the line meeting the beginning from the right. It seems as if the clerk received the order to mark the beginning and he started to highlight *ime bha*, then recalling that *aprakhakasa* was the proper start. The second line contains nothing but the date formula and seems to have been added with a free choice of where to begin it:

- (4:) *aprakhakasa heliuphilaputrasa ime
bhagavato śarira praṭṭhapita savabudhana
pujāe*
(5:) *duasataṭṭṣaḍama gurpiya yaṃbulima maṣa
saste 4 4*

“For Aprakhaka, son of Heliophilos, these relics of the Lord are installed, in veneration of all the Buddhas.

(Year) 172, intercalary month Gorpiaios, on day 8.”

With the person addressed in the genitive we surmise that Aprakhaka was not present and someone else, unnamed, was active in his place.

Another Nameless Donor?

Some donors withholding their name in favor of those of their parents or spouses were listed earlier (Falk 2006a: 149–51). The person called *valia/vārika* who inscribed the gold sheet mentioned only the name of his father. Such a case is not singular, although a systematic collection of similar cases from Gandhara is so far missing. The short text following needs to be listed among them.

The object (fig. 2) was allegedly found near Babuzai, on the western side of the Kashmir Smats mountain range and was with a collector in London some decades ago. A seated Buddha with his hand in blessing attitude in a solid but late Kushan style is ornamented with a dedicatory inscription saying:

maruakaputrasa ṣaveasa daṇamukhe
 “This is the pious donation of a monk, son of Maruvaka.”

The donor mentions his position as a *śrāvaka*, and, probably for reasons of merit, cites only the name of his father. The name seems to refer to Skt *maruvaka*, denoting Tulsi and other herbs from the *Origanum* family, possibly with the common *vaiṣṇava* background.

Giving for Personal Profit

The phrase *ṇia śpiho* was taken to mean “for our sake, for us personally” and stands in its egoistic perspective in some contrast to the commonly displayed philanthropy including some care of others. This egoistic aspect may have a parallel. The following inscription is found on the socle of a tiny gilded statue (fig. 3). Pictures of the socle reached me five years back through Prof. Harald Hauptmann, who, alas, left us a year ago. The text reads, without the spaces:

īyo thubhagoṭhi mahovarma ṇija deti
taṇuvaga vihāra sohasṭami acarya
śarvastivādāna parigrahami
 Skt: *ayam stūpagoṣṭhīm mahāvarmā nijam*
dadāti tānve vihāre suhaste ācāryāṇām
sarvāstivādīnām parigrahe.
 “Mahāvarma gives this stūpa-house for his own sake (at) his own *vihāra* at (the shrine for) Suhasta into the care of the Sarvāstivādins.”

The differences between Gāndhārī and Sanskrit demonstrate a certain laxness regarding orthography. We can discuss whether *thubhagoṣṭhi* must be read, or whether *thubhagriho* was meant. The equivalent Skt term *stūpagrha* is found in the BHS texts from the area, while the members of a community venerating a stūpa are called *goṣṭhika* in the *Ratnamālāvadāna* and the *Avadānaśataka*. The last letter is somewhat blurred, but could best be a *ṭhi*. In any case a religious meeting place is meant.

The name Mahāvarma is found as *mahābarma* written in Brāhmī at Thalpan IV (“HoS 49:1”) on the upper Indus. Certainly earlier in time is a stone slab, dated to Azes 74 (Fussman 1980b: 6, line 8/9), that is A.D. 26/27, where a *mahaverma* occurs. Our small statue with its inscribed socle is certainly not that old.

The place name seems to refer to the local Buddha. Suhasta⁵¹ means “He with a beneficial hand” and compares to other site names like “He with a friendly eye” (*kalyāṇanetra*; Falk 2010: 93, repr. 2013: 238) or “He with the golden necklace” (*svaṇamala*), epithets of the Buddha or Bodhisattva present and depicted at a particular shrine.

What makes this text interesting is its egocentric diction. No veneration of the Buddhas, no care for parents, no “all beings” are made to participate into the merit of the foundation. We see Mahāvarma, acting for himself, in his own sacred compound (*vihāra*). But at least, if well understood, this late donation record would put further weight to my interpretation of *ṇia śpiho*, as *nijam svīyam*.

A “Votive” Stūpa for the Personal Afterlife

Only photographs are so far available of a square socle (fig. 4) that shows by a hollowed out central round portion that it once carried something. Its sides measure about 50 cm. Three of its sides are inscribed in Kharoṣṭhī. There are holes in the center of the top cavity and in the middle of the underside (fig. 4, e, f), probably meant for a dowel to connect the object to the ground and to what came on top of it inside the depression. It would be natural to expect the base to have held a pillar, but the inscription tells us that the complete object was a *thuba*, and from its size we can tell that we have to expect a small, “votive” stūpa. Such objects are found in dozens around the main





Fig. 3. Donation record around the socle of a Buddha statue from the Karakorum area. Courtesy Harald Hauptmann.

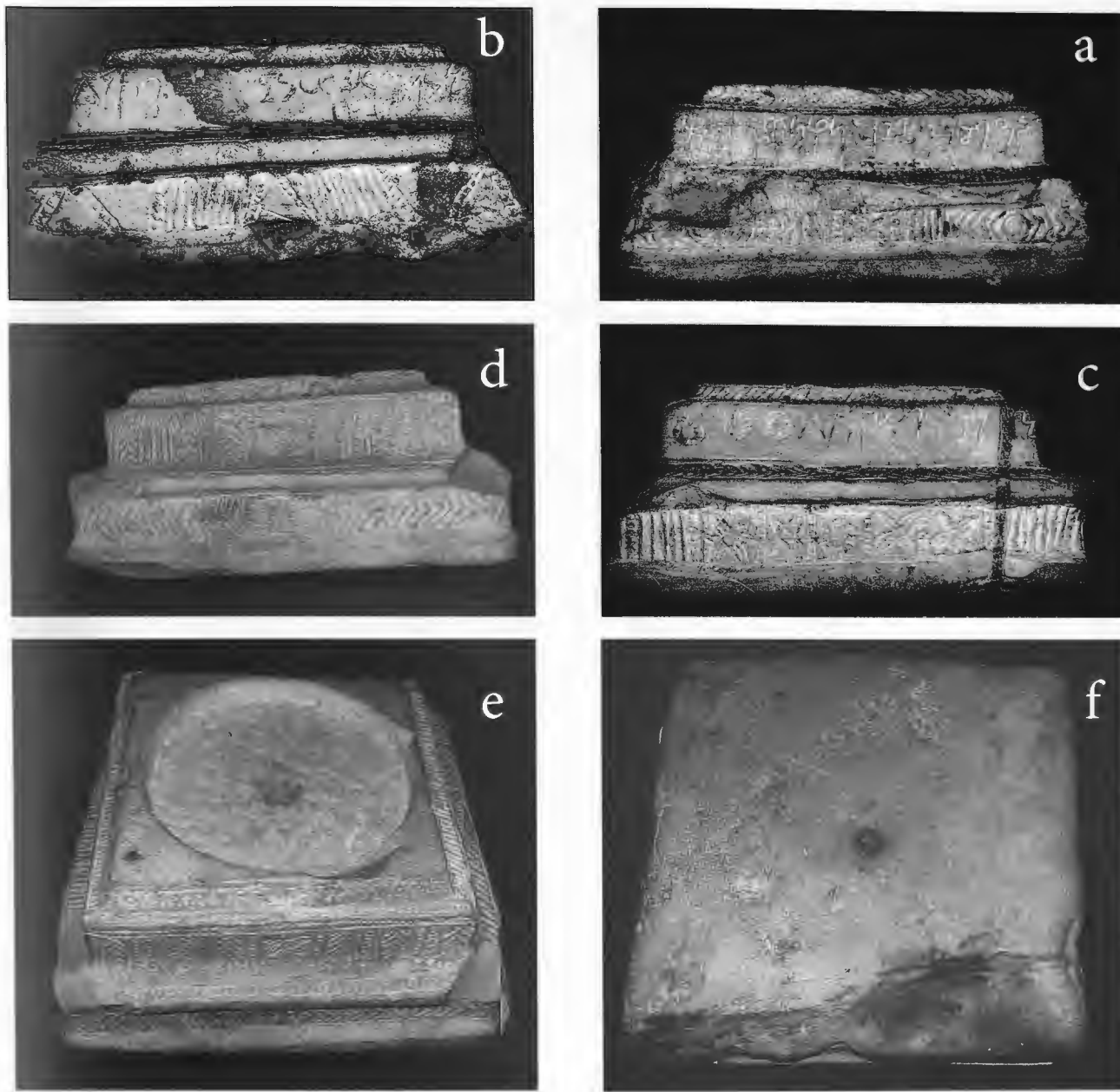
[illegible]

Fig. 4. Socle of a so-called "votive" stūpa with a tracing of the inscription covering three of its sides mentioning Sogdian personal names. Private collection.

stūpa inside the monasteries. Schopen has repeatedly (cf. 1994) dealt with the topic and stressed the fact that there is nothing “votive” about them, as they are nothing but graves, containing parts of the bone remains from a funeral. The bone remnants are those of a layman or laywoman, not of a monk who should not be burned. These “grave” stūpas are given a place as close as possible to the main stūpa, to put the remnants *ad sanctos*, so that the defunct person can profit from the radiation of the Buddha.

Our piece was provided with a rounded relief running horizontally above the vertical sides, three of which are inscribed with a legend which reads, without hyphens, and without spaces, apart from two instances (fig. 4):

1: *sidha aturaboṣza-putra-bagaboṣzeṇa thubogha-*

2: *ṭita b(u)dhāṇa ñāṇa ma⁵² tatra _⁵³ upajeya⁵⁴*

3: *<ya>tra _ b(u)dhāṇa akṣi paśeye*

Skt: *siddham aturaboṣza-putra-bagaboṣzene*

stūpaḥ ghaṭitaḥ buddhānām jñānaṃ me tatra

udpadyeta yatra buddhānām akṣi paśyeyam

“By Bagaboṣza, the son of Aturaboṣza, this stūpa was devised. May the knowledge of the Buddhas arise for me there where I may see the eye of the Buddhas.”

The writing is somewhat defective. Twice, the *u*-loop at the foot of *budhāṇa* was reduced to a short fork, and one *ya*, of *yatra*, may have fallen prey to haplology.⁵⁵

The two names Aturaboṣza and Bagaboṣza introduce a Kharoṣṭhī ligature, so far undocumented, which is thought to render a sound current in an Iranian language. This *ṣza*, that is a *za* topped by the “umbrella” of a *ṣa*, has a formal parallel in *ṛa*, which was used for the names Koṛaṇa and Koṛiya of the Pāratarājas (Falk 2007), graphically that is a *za* topped by a small circle and a sort of backward bend at its foot. The Pāratarāja solution for rendering a “voiced counterpart of the sibilant *ṣa*” (Falk 2007: 4 = 2013a: 129) will not have been known outside Loralai, but this sound is found in many languages of Iranian stock and thus the need to invent a suitable form will have arisen repeatedly.

The two names relate the donor to *atura*, that is Adur, “fire,” and his father to *baga*, “god.” I thank N. Sims-Williams for explaining that “in Sogdian there is a PN *βwc*, possibly from the verb *βwc* ‘to save,’ of which *bož* would be the Parthian equiv-

alent.” This way the names express the idea that *baga* respectively *atura* may protect the persons.

Generally, such small stūpas are not inscribed, but our object makes an exception. We read that the small stūpa was planned and designed by the person when he was envisaging his demise. In addition Bagaboṣza expressed two wishes: in yonder world (*tatra*) he would like to take part in the knowledge that characterizes the Buddhas, and he wants to see the eye of the Buddhas. This reminds one of *kalyāṇanetra*, the Buddha “with the friendly none eye,” known only from a lamp stand offered to that shrine (Falk 2010b) in the lower Swat Valley.

Unfortunately, the find spot of this inscription is not documented. The round shape of the *dha* has a parallel on a relief from Kham Zargar, 15 km from Charikar in the Kabul plain, dated to ca. A.D. 201.⁵⁶ This locality was certainly visited by men from the north carrying Middle-Iranian personal names, but an origin beyond the Hindu Kush in Bactria would equally make sense. The beginning of the third century witnessed the end of the Arsacid dynasty and the takeover of the Sasanians with conquests that included parts of Sogdiana, and so a Sogdian name south of the Oxus is no surprise, although names written in Kharoṣṭhī are very rare so far.⁵⁷

For our purposes it is important to see that a person takes precautions about his own position within the Buddhist world, here and thereafter. The personal disposition turns egocentric; no one else is linked to the merits or to the afterlife of Bagaboṣza.

Kalliphon Revisited

In 2009 (repr. 2013a: 166ff.) I assumed that Greek, Makedonian, or local authorities with Greek names knew about the Vedic god Bhava and donated silverware to his treasure-house, Greek style. The basis was the so far most important Kharoṣṭhī inscription from the period between Aśoka and the early birch-barks, found on a silver phialē from the area between the Kunar River in Afghanistan and the land of Bajaur in Pakistan. Together with further silverware that came with it, it was published in Falk 2009, reprinted in 2013a (166–83). On the phialē in question we read in Greek and in Gāndhārī that one Kalliphōn, a Meridarchēs, “after a promise repaid (this phialē).” This is a standard Greek donative formula. Then follow crucial phrases contain-

ing the name of the benefited deity, both on the Greek and on the Kharoṣṭhī side. The complete reading on the Kharoṣṭhī side is (2009: 27 = 2013a: 168) *kaliphōna meridarkhena praṭiśunita nirakaṭe boasa*, understood as “By Kalliphōn, the Meridarchēs, after a promise (this) was repaid for Boa.” There is nothing wrong with this reading, but it compels us to explain who Boa is. The Greek text is likewise nicely written and the reading as such cannot be disputed and reads, without the spaces: ΚΑΛΛΙΦΩΝ ΜΕΡΙΔΑΡΧΕΣ ΕΥΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ΤΩΙ ΧΑΟΣΕΙ. All is clear and fine, apart from the name of the honored god. Where Gāndhārī has *boasa* the Greek side reads *χαοσει*. Any phonetic resemblance between the two terms is not obvious, and so I tried to link the two through semantics. Behind *boa* Skt *bhava* is at least thinkable, a Vedic deity linked with the first, “chaotic,” stages of the evolution of the world. Behind Greek *χαοσει* the idea of Chaos is the first association, although grammar only shows that *χαος* cannot be the noun behind the derivative. The solution came from two sides. K. Hallof, Berlin, at an early stage guessed at a river god in general, and independently D. Rougemont (2012: 268–70) proposed thinking of the river called *Χοης* in the Alexander biography of Arrianus (4.23.2), a river today still called Kunar in eastern Afghanistan. The *Geography* (7.2.26) of Ptolemy presents the same river by the name *Kōa* (Κώας), and places the river not far from the home of the Lambatas (7.2.42). When we presuppose a clerical mistake, a metathesis of *χαοσει* instead of *χαοσει*, then grammar is paid its dues and the Greek god we look for is Zeus or Poseidon responsible for the Kunar.

Rougemont was not fully content with his proposal because it would not explain the Indic corresponding *boa*. There are two possible explanations: the first one would include yet another clerical mistake. Kharoṣṭhī *ba* and *kha* share the same movement, only the left arm of *kha* is longer and protrudes beyond the upper limit of the line. A metalworker may have shortened the arm. A variant of the standard *kha* written in one stretch starts with a sort of *ba* and then tops it with a horizontal bar.⁵⁸ Such a bar may have been forgotten or a line drawn in ink was daubed away in the process of replacing the ink lines with punched dots.

Reasonable as it is, this solution faces the fact that the *b* in *bo* cannot be part of a *kha*, and only an outright confusion could explain the exchange:

a clerk not fully fluent in Kharosthi writes *bo*, believing it to be *kho*.

The alternative to assuming a writing mistake is to expect a consciously intended *boa*. For this solution we have to look at the river Son that falls into the Ganges near Patna. It used to carry gold. This led to it having two names, one is *śoṇa*, modern Son, derived from Skt *suvarṇa* or *svarṇa*, “gold;” the other is *hiranyavāha*, “carrying gold.” Both are listed in the ancient dictionary Amarakośa (1.10,585). Much earlier, both terms were known to Megasthenes, who uses the Graecised form *Erranoboas*, ἔρρανβοας, for the latter.⁵⁹ Later authors erroneously expected the two names to refer to separate rivers (Karttunen 1997: 120).

If Indic *-vāha* can lead to Greek βοας, then *boa* on our phialē may likewise be just another name of the same river called *χοας*. After all, *Vāhā* as a river name or epithet is not rare,⁶⁰ as it characterized every river as a “carrier” of water and fresh soil.

The trouble with this solution is that the Greek text would use the local, Indic name *khoa*, while inversely, the local language is assumed to use a Greek deformation *boa* instead of its own *vāha*. Not only must we assume a writing mistake in *χαοσει* for *χοας* but also a crosswise confusion of terms.

My own preference is for the writing mistake, **χαοσει* equalling **khoasa*, but further material may put that in question.

Whichever solution one prefers, we still have a Greek or Makedonian making a Greek-style donation in Gandhara, we have lost the Indic donee god *Bhava*, and we have to complain that a clerk in all likelihood made two mistakes, one in each script, both concerning the name of one and the same deity, the river god of the Kunar.

The Stone Box of the Meridarchēs

On the phialē the Meridarchēs came with a Greek name; on a small stone case (fig. 5) a Meridarchēs is mentioned as the donor of a monastery. His name remains hidden. The case is rather small, in size suitable to hold rolled-up birch-bark manuscripts. Any other content can be imagined as well. The text reads in two lines:

*saghasa catudiśasa meriyakhaviharami
na keṇaci hadava danamu[kha]*



Fig. 5. Stone box, formerly with lid, being a donation to a monastery founded by a Meridarchēs. Private collection. Photo author.

Originally, the second line held nothing but *danamukha* and the whole text meant "This is a pious donation for the Order of the four directions in the Meridarchēs monastery." We can assume that one of the office-holders founded the monastery. Either the founder or some later benefactor donated the casket to the monastery as such, not to any particular monk.

It seems that at a later point in time monks felt authorized to take the casket under their personal supervision. An addition tried to prevent such attempts at appropriation: "This (object) must not be taken away by anyone."

Such a formula is often found on objects from monasteries all over Buddhist India. For Bactria and Orissa, examples were collected by O. von Hinüber (1991/2009: 814ff.). A first case from Gandhara was an inscribed oil lamp.⁶¹ The spelling in Kharoṣṭhī is slightly different, *haṭavaṃ* instead of *hadava*; both forms render Skt *hartavyaṃ* obeying common sound laws.

Nothing is known about the find place of the casket. The name of the monastery may be of some help as a *μεριδάρχης* is known from a number of inscriptions. His duty was it to administer a certain region. In Bajaur and Swat this office was known right into the first century A.D. Closest to the Greek spelling and the oldest case is the *meridarkha* Kalliphon encountered above, a "Bactrian" adaptation with *l* for *d* is *merilakha* (CKI 33, reading *meriakha*). There is also a *meriakha* with hiatus, dropping the dental at the joint of the compound in (CKI 265, 454). The hiatus is closed finally with a *ya-śruti* in the present case on the box. Wherever the provenance is certain or likely the region of origin lies north of the Malakand Pass in Swat or Buner. The same most likely applies as well to our stone casket.

Two names of office-holders are preserved. Both names are Greek, one is local (**Tārāpriya*, *tara-via*, CKI 454), in one case at least the name of the mother is local (*śreṣṭhā*, CKI 265).

The casket was donated not into the possession of monastic individuals, but into the care of all. Most texts on birch-barks would probably belong to the monastery, but others might well be in the hands of individuals, then in need of a suitable container. Using the box for manuscripts regarded as sacred could explain why it needed a Meridarchēs to look after its supply.⁶²

Some New Reliquaries

It seems that some time ago a group of stūpas came to light, according to rumors, in the vicinity of Jalalabad. Three caskets made it to the bazar in more or less complete shape.

a) The first one is a well-known type presented by Jongeward (2012: 270) in more than a dozen exemplars (fig. 6). It builds up to a complete stūpa. Lowest is a round base with sunken cavity. This is topped by a ring building the vertical stūpa wall, enlarging the cavity inside. On the ring the hollowed-out cupola is placed. The top of the cupola carries an inverted stepped pyramid, which again is the basis of an umbrella of three or five chattras. In our case this umbrella is not preserved. The lower end of the cupola is turned into two seams between which a band shows flowers and grapes. Around the cupola an inscription is found incised (fig. 7), reading, without spaces and hyphens:

sa 1-100 20-20-20-10 3 jeṭhasa 20-10
paṭiṭhāvīda thube budhapriena ṇavakamiuṇa
ṣamaṇaṇa madapidue
 "(In the) Year 173, (day) 30 of the (month of) Jyaiṣṭha, the stūpa was established for the monks by Buddhapriya the architect, with (his) parents."

The date is interesting in that year 173 of Azes corresponds to A.D. 125/6. That is shortly before the introduction of the Kushan era by Kaniṣka in A.D. 127 put an almost general end to the reckoning in other eras, including the one of Azes. Day 30 of Jyaiṣṭha coincides more or less with the beginning of the rainy season, at least in the center of northern India. If this nearness was intended we do not know. Graphically, the cipher for 3 is remarkable in not being three vertical strokes of equal length, but the former strokes are shortened and connected by bends, as is common also in Brāhmī ciphers, but only from much later. Kharoṣṭhī ciphers change earlier,⁶³ with such a 3 found first at Kamra (Fussman 1980a: pl. V, line 1), a rock inscription which is dated into the year (*100+)30 under Kaniṣka III, that is ca. A.D. 257, more than hundred years after this piece. In Central Asia, at Niya, such late forms are found more frequently (Glass 2000: 140).



Fig. 6. Composite reliquary in the shape of a stūpa, with parts disassembled. Courtesy Tha Rattanasuk.

b) Rather damaged remnants of another reliquary, possibly from the same site, have been glued together without any care (fig. 8). The preserved text reads

///mi priavuḍaami budhadeviharami
dhamaūteaṇaparigrahami sarvabudha ///
“... at . . ., in Priya. . . in the monastery (founded)
by Buddhadeva, into the care of the Dharmagup-
takas, (in veneration of) all the Buddhas . . .”

There are many Buddhadevas⁶⁴ in Gandharan epigraphy, so that we do not know where his foundation was located. The Dharmaguptakas

are equally well distributed from Swat to Kāpiśi and Kunduz, so that this casket presents just one more case. The date—if ever there was one—is lost. A decorative band runs around the body with two alternating patterns. One is a series of overlapping roundish flowers, the other looks like a long-drawn E-s ending in a vertical string of dots. This motive is of Greek origin that originally represented naturalistically outlined strings of myrtle branches with leaves and berries (Falk 2016: 152). The combination of this myrtle band with the overlapping flowers is so far only known on a reliquary consisting of a tubular pyxis with a flattish lid, published in Falk (2003/2013: 85/78,



Fig. 7. The full inscription around the reliquary dome, assembled from photos taken by Tha Rattanasuk.

fig. 19). Both reliquaries certainly were made close to each other, close both in distance as in time. Unfortunately, none of them preserves a date. But at least we may now locate both in Nangarhar.

Sound or Letter: Vema or Grema?

The second Kushan king was for a long time only known as *sōtēr megas*, the “Great Saviour.” Coins

with his personal or crown name were not understood, and presented in context first by Cribb (1995/96: 115–18), along with the pivotal Rabatak inscription which unmistakably listed the sequence of Kushan kings from Kujula up to Kaniška. There was some resistance to accepting this OOHMO TAKTOO as a fully fledged king, and as an additional complication his name was read variously.

On his most frequently found coins his name appears as *vema takho* in Kharoṣṭhī script; on



Fig. 8. Fragmentary donation record around a damaged cylindrical reliquary box, "into the care of the Dharmaguptakas." Courtesy Tha Rattanasuk.

the famous Maṭ statue he is called *vema takṣu* (Falk ed. 2015: 107) in Brāhmī, but on some other coins and on a seal we find a Kharoṣṭhī spelling including a T in the second part of his name: *takhtu*. The name on the seal in full reads *gramatakhtuasa* for certain, possibly with an *e*-stroke by the right side of the *gra*, turning it into *grema*-. For the at that time unique reading I offered an explanation taking the *gra* as a sloppily written *ye*. This explanation became dispensable when M. Allon (2020) published a birch-bark manuscript from the time of Vima Kadphises which speaks of this king as *grema kata(p)///*, nicely written in Kharoṣṭhī, but truncated at the left end. That means that any *vema* or *vima* could be spelled *grema* as well. Allon explains the variance on the basis of occasional changes in Iranian terms from *vi* to *gu*, as in *vindaphara* to *guduphara*, we could add *viṣpuhr* to *guṣūra*. But this change covers only *v* and *g* in *vema* and *grema*, has the *u* missing and disregards the *r*. A

change from *ve* to *gre* is so far unattested elsewhere. The following lines are meant to throw more light on the process by outlining phonological differences found in two neighboring or merging language groups.

To understand the principle behind the difference a look at modern European languages is helpful. There are two main basic possibilities of pronouncing an initial labial spirant. Some languages, mainly Germanic, distinguish in pronunciation as in writing between a simple labiodental *v* and a much different bilabial *w*, labelled "double-u, double-vé," a name that concerns only the graphic form, not the pronunciation, since what is doubled is not the simple dento-labial *v*. Instead, for pronouncing *w* the lips need not be touching anything at all. For an example we may contrast English *veal* and *wheel*. "Wheel" was not adopted in any Romanic language, but *ward* is, as in *wardrobe*, but not as **varde*, but as *garde*, *guardia*, *garde-robe* etc. That means, speakers of

languages without an inherited double-*v* hear something like *gva* when *wa* is spoken, or, if they do not hear it this way, they at least believe that their pseudo-equivalent *gva* will be understood by the other group as *wa*.

This process is nicely illustrated for Gandhara by the inscription of Helagupta (Falk 2014: 9), dated to Azes 121, A.D. 74, where a middle form between the Middle Persian name *Wirāz* and its New Persian form *Gurāz* is written as *gvaraza* in Kharoṣṭhī, likewise attempting to render a foreign bilabial sound by splitting it into a biphonemic surrogate.

This process shows that all changes from *v* to *g* could involve two sets of languages, one with and the other without an inherited bilabial *w*, and in each case the form with *g*- is younger, the adopter.

Within the Gandharan context of Kushan times we have a second solution, attested so far only once. It consists of splitting the spoken /*w*/ into the written character pair of *u* and *v*. And so /*wema*/ is written *uvima*- at Khalatse in Kharoṣṭhī, positioned beyond Kashmir on the way to Leh, with regard to pronunciation it is close to what OOHMO expresses in Greek letters.

This process, if regarded as relevant, accounts for the *g* in *grema*. But how to explain the *r*? A simple explanation could be that a soft -/*r*/- was thought to come close to the role the *v* played in *gv*. But corroborative evidence is lacking.

A more complicated explanation begins with the name of Vima Kadphises on his coinage. The legend on the obverse is rather defective in the earliest issue, found exclusively on the earliest, 8 g gold coins showing the king on a chariot. It ends in *logaiśa/raja-mahaiśarasa vima kalpiśa*. This legend was soon partly changed and partly corrected into *sarvalogaiśvarasa mahaiśvarasa vrima kalpiśa tratara*. The main change with regard to contents is that the king is no longer “born from the Lord of the Worlds (**logaiśvaraja*),” being instead himself the “Lord of all the Worlds” (*sarvalogaiśvara*). For the Kharoṣṭhī equivalent to the second part of his name, in Greek spelling of Kadphises, this early first edition uses consistently only one slanting stroke crossing the *pi* (never *phi*). Such a single stroke is known from Central Asia, where it indicates preconsonantal *l*, hence my rendering as *kalpiśa*. However, if *lpa* really was intended, it would not have needed a correction. In the enlarged version used for the coppers, the *pi* is crossed twice resulting in the

shape of an X crossing the foot of the *pi*, which by convention is interpreted as a *tha* letter, because an upright cross in fact expresses *tha*. Its preconsonantal position is deduced from preconsonantal *r*- which has its place as well where we find the *l*-hook or the St. Andrew’s cross. The result of this assumption is an enigmatic letter *thpi*, in the older literature even *thphi*, as if two aspirated plosives could follow each other. Help can be gleaned again from the name of the king as found written at Khalatse. There the term is written *kavthisa(sa)*, and, as in the coin legend the *p* is beyond dispute, leading us to *kaphiśa* on the coins, preserving the graphic succession of *p* above and the cross below for one, and in addition leaves the aspiration where it belongs, at the end of the cluster.

But the full reading is more complicated and found in the Senavarma inscription on gold. It spells the name as (*kuyula*) *kataphiśa*.⁶⁵ The Greek legend of the curule coppers of Kujula reads *kadaphes* (καδαφης) and so preserves the sequence dental to labial, while the Indic side (*kaphsa-sa*) drops the dentals twice. On the Herkules coppers of Kujula the Greek (*kadphisou*, καδφισου) drops the second dental again, while the Gāndhārī (*kasa-sa*) drops almost everything apart from the sibilant. It is only the spelling of Vima Kadphises which dissolves the *ta-phtśa* of the Senavarma plate from the time of Kujula into *-phtśa*, akin to *-vthiśa* at Khalatse. Despite the complications provided by the tricky consonant cluster we see that it was kept almost intact over three generations, only the two dentals merged into one.

So much for Kadphises. With regard to our *grema* the first part *vima/vema* is more important, in that the first edition of Vima Kadphises reads nothing but *vima* in Kharoṣṭhī script, while all following issues read *vrma* or *vrema*. On the same coins the Greek spelling is OOHMO, that is spoken /*wēm*/ or /*wīm*/, the double omicron indicating that not a labiodental fricative or approximant *va* is represented, but a bilabial /*w*/. Presently, there is consensus that what looks like *vra* is not pronounced /*vra*/, but should be transcribed with under-bar *ya*, or, in our case, *yi*, and have sounded like W in English “water,” which can explain why the clerk at Khalatse was not content with *vemo* in Kharoṣṭhī, but prefixed it with a U: *uvemo*, well in line with Greek OOEMO. Be that as it may, we saw that a Germanic bilabial accounts for a Romanic /*g*/, so

that under similar conditions /wema/ may have led to /gvema/, but no variant of Vema's name explains the R in *grema*. Allon (2020: 25) objected to my explaining written *grema* through graphological considerations, taking *grema* as a too fluently written *vema*. His "warning against the tendency to emend a reading when it is difficult to explain" sounds well meaning only for those cases where the emendation can later be proven to have been wrong. In our case such a proof has come, through a second occurrence in a manuscript. Such a lucky instance may be contrasted with the many emendations which later can be proven to have been not only likely, but also correct. No one points a finger at such cases after a confirmation has come. Instead the proof is registered as a matter of course. Another scenario is an emendation with no further justification or counter-proof. What to do? In all cases where a solution seems possible I object to a methodological minimalism that leaves everything as is, with no attempt at an explanation. Instead, the possible methodological pluralism requires that all approaches are considered justified which consider lexical, philological, graphical, and graphological distortions. Now, with the second occurrence of *grema* at hand I naturally abstain from upholding the solution offered before, but insist on two aspects. First, as assumed and against a first glance, *grema takhtu* and *grema kata[pi](śa)* contain a term which is written *vema* or *yema* by other scribes. *Grema Takhtua* (seal) and *Vema Takhtu* (coins) are graphical representations of just one name, held by the same person. Second, I uphold the idea that the R in *grema* can only be explained through reflections on the peculiarities of writing. Twice *grema* presents a lexical reality, and a phonological oddity at the same time. Two possibilities can have led to *grema*: either *yema* on the coins was read as /vrema/, as this is the absolutely normal reading for everybody who was not initiated into the secrets of Kharoṣṭhī under-bars, that is 99% of all coin legend readers, and then this perfectly natural R effected some influence on the phonetically changed /wema/ turned /gvema/ and turned it into /grema/. This approach again includes graphological factors. Or, R was read correctly from the coins but so low that it could pass for a labial, so that pronunciations similar to /uwema/ and /gvema/ came close to /grema/. This solution is fully phonological. That means that the

R of *grema* is either a misunderstanding based on a graphem which can legitimately be read as *vra*, or it represents a sound which was heard as the latter part of a seemingly biphonemic /w/ turned /gv/. For the moment the final solution is everyone's guess. I prefer the graphical solution but look forward to further evidence.

The Foundation of a City by a Pāratarāja King

Although known to the epics as most hostile enemies from the western fringes of classical India, very little was known about the Pārata- or Pārada-rājas until about 20 years ago when more and more coins from their mints found their way into the market. These coins are originally in silver, then in debased silver, and finally in bronze, and are easy to make out by a *svastika* in the center of the reverse. Their legends were either in Brāhmī or Kharoṣṭhī, but never inscribed in two scripts at once. Some misread names were corrected in Falk (2007), where also a few successions were pinned down based on patronyms that allowed the reconstruction of three short stemmata. It was mainly P. Tandon who advanced our knowledge by putting these separate strings into one single pedigree which included also some newly found further members of the dynasty. The sum of our knowledge was presented by Tandon in 2012 where he dealt with the geographical limits of their realm. From the outset it was clear that it must include or even center around Loralai, a mountainous area east of the Bolan Pass in Baluchistan. The classical accounts show that the Pāratas held countries in Arachosia and Gedrosia before they advanced to the lower Indus Valley. Ptolemy (7.1.58) lists a town called Pardabathra on the Indus, and this was taken by Tandon as reflecting the name of the Pāradas. This is possible, although not absolutely certain. It would be the only town name to be linked with this dynasty.

I present here a document which is less ambiguous in that it must have adorned a gate or another prominent place of a city founded by a well-known Pāratarāja king, Dattayola. The inscription is found on a slab of whitish stone, 29 cm high, 92 cm wide, and close to 25 cm deep (fig. 9). In congruence with the two coin series, the text is presented in two scripts, Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī. The text is simple and its content limited:

On top the Kharoṣṭhī part reads, without spaces:

*datayolasya datarvharṇaputrasya paratarāṇo
saṃvatśare ṣoḍhaśe saṃ 10-4-1-1 paṇemasya
masasya divase dvi tiṭhi 6 di 2 atra divase
imaṃ datayola(2:)puram pratiṣṭhapita maha-
raṇa datayolena*

The Brāhmī version is written below, again in two lines:

*datayolasya dataḥphvarṇaputrasya
pāratarāṇos savatśare ṣoḍaśa saṃ 10-6
śrāvaṇasya māsasya (2:) divase dvi tiṭhe
6 di 2 atra divase imaṃ datayolapuram
pratiṣṭhapitam rājñā datayolena*

With few variants both versions say the same: "In the year 16 of the Pāratarājan Dattayola, son of Datarvharṇa/Dātahphvarṇa, in the month of Pānema / Śrāvaṇa, on the second day, – *tithi* six, day 2 –, at this date this Dattayola-city was founded by the *mahārājan* / *rājan* Dattayola."

P. Tandon (2012: 34) has calculated the coin-issuing phase of the Pāratarājas as lasting from A.D. 125 until A.D. 300, including eleven kings, the last one being our Dattayola with estimated 15 years from 285 until 300. The foundation text shows that this last king ruled at least one year longer compared to Tandon's estimation, but at the same time the almost complete accordance suggests that the foundation of the town has something to do with the end of the dynasty. In standard chronologies A.D. 300 would fall into the time of the Sasanian king Narseh (r. A.D. 293–302), who had successfully rebelled against his grandnephew Bahram III. As governor he had been in charge of Hindustan under Shahpur I, who also listed Pardān as a country under his sway, which may signify a total subjugation prior to the demise of Shahpur in A.D. 290. In the unlikely case that the Pāratarājas were allowed to issue their own coins even after succumbing to Shahpur, they may have stood on the wrong side when Narseh assembled troops to end the reign of his grandnephew Bahram III one or two decades later. In any case, the end of the Pāratarājas can hardly be explained as being unconnected to the dynastic events in Sasanian Iran.

Apart from the historical value of the double inscription the fact that it is written in the same language in two Indian scripts shows that the ad-

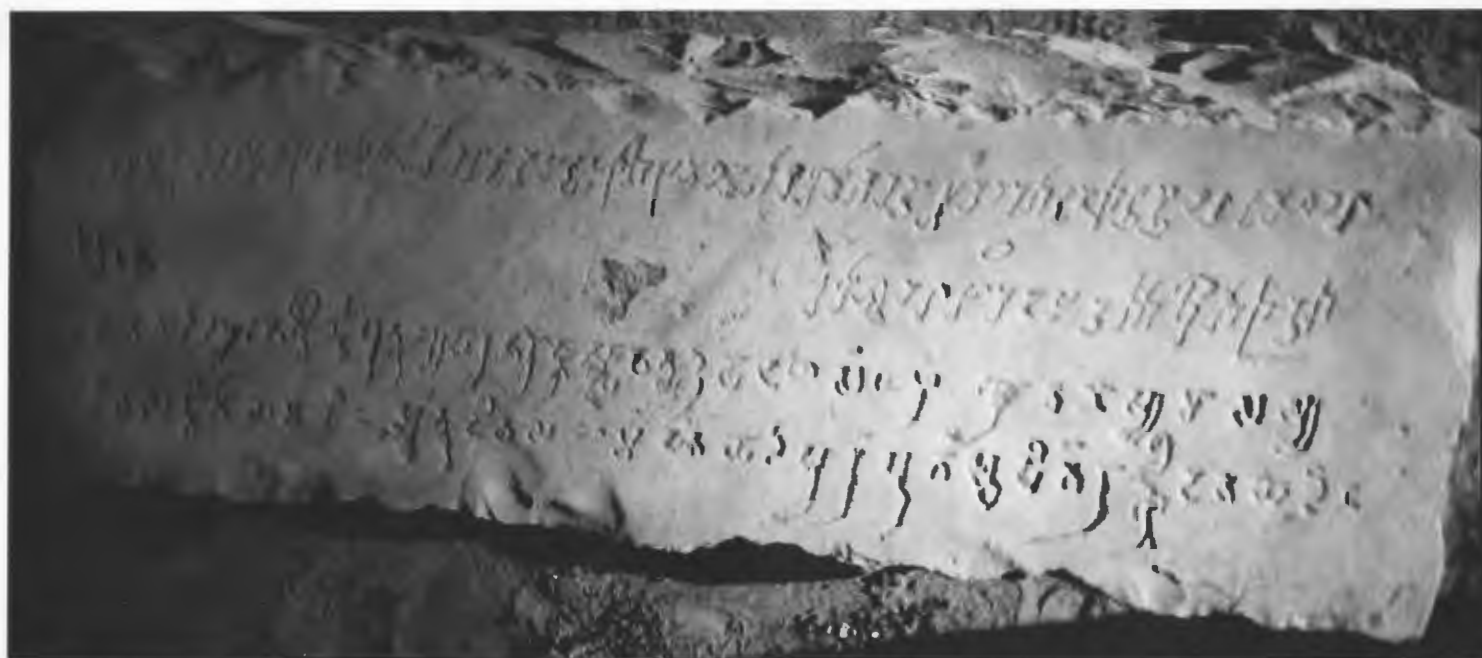
herents of either script also showed differences in their diction:

- The Khar. side uses the old Macedonian month name of Panemos (*paṇema*), while the Brāhmī side preferred the Sanskritic *śrāvaṇa*.
- The Khar. side calls the king *mahārājan*, while the Brāhmī side uses simple *rājan*.
- The Khar. side writes *vharṇa*, in *datarvharṇa*, while the Brāhmī side produces a most "learned" *dataḥphvarṇa* with *upadhmanīya* wheel preceding the cluster *phv*. This *phva*, irritating as it may appear at first, is not unique but was also used to express /f/ in the Bactrian name *οαυρανοφαρδαρο, *wahranfardar*, spelled *urāṇaphvardara* in Brāhmī letters at Mathura about the same time⁶⁶ on the statue of a sitting Buddha (Falk 2006b: 84b), once fervently accused of being a forger.

In general we see that the Khar. writing clerk is more influenced by western, Iranian ideas, while the Brāhmī writing clerk prefers Indian terminology.

Graphological particularities are, on the Khar. side:

- 1) When a consonant sign occurs with an *u*-vowel, not a more or less circular bend indicates the vowel, but a horizontal stroke, in line with the original design from Mauryan times 500 years ago.
- 2) *sya* is expressed by a wavy vertical, ending in an upward bend, resembling more a *śva* than *sya*.
- 3) Preconsonantal *r*- is directly attached to the lowest point of the letter stem, without loop, in line with the habits found on Pāratarāja coins.
- 4) The letter *ma* is underdotted in all three cases where it occurs. The habit seems to have started with Indo-Greek coin legends, where the underdot simply shows where in the round the legend starts, commonly with *maharajasa*. From the coin legends it was taken to be an integral part of the character and can then be found also in post-Indo-Greek documents, as on the copper plate of Helagupta from A.D. 74 (Falk 2014: 20).
- 5) The cipher 2 is written with two strokes, of which the last one is prolonged. This habit leads to the "garlanded" shape of 2 and 3, one of which we have encountered above.
- 5) Most telling is the cipher 6, which resembles the letter *ga*, but is clearly copied from a Brāhmī cipher, while a true Khar. cipher 6 is written *XII*,



(Faint handwritten script at the bottom)

Fig. 9. Foundation stone marking the opening of Dātarvharṇa-pura of a Pāratarāja king in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī. Courtesy Tha Rattanasuk, with tracing by author.

that is 4-1-1, at the beginning of the same line. Glass (2000: 139–40) shows that the ciphers for 1, 2, 3 from Niya are written as horizontal strokes, that means the Brāhmī way. Our slab adds yet another reformed cipher with the same ancestry.

On the Brāhmī side we find the following particularities:

- 1) After *r a t* or *ṇ* is doubled, as in *attra*, *puttra*, *dataḥphvarṇṇa*, but not when it is not accompanied by a *repha*, as in *datayola*, Skt *dattayola*.
- 2) The compound *pāratarājan* is treated as an *-n*-stem, with genitive in *-as*, as in *pāratarajñas sam°* with the doubling of sibilants, as common in Kashmir.
- 3) The number 6 looks like a Khar. letter *ga*, comparable to the cipher 6 “slightly truncated” on a silver plate from Swat, recently dealt with again by Bakker (2020: 44f.), which ends in 200-6 *ka*, in my opinion rather “206 *kārṣāpaṇas*” than “year 206” in an undefined era.⁶⁷
- 4) The learned clerk used an *upadhmaniya* wheel for *visarga* preceding *phva*, in *dataḥphvarṇṇa*.

It is interesting to note the occurrence of the *tithi*, the 30th part of a lunation, lasting from the moment of a true full moon to the next. Since a lunation measures slightly less than 30 days, a *tithi* is shorter than 24 hours and its beginning or end cannot be observed in the sky. It is a purely theoretical unit, useful in calculating the position of the moon in relation to the position of the sun. From the theoreticians the unit found its way into everyday life where astrologers use it to find auspicious and unlucky times. Both our clerks use similar, but erroneous forms. Khar. reads *tīṭhi*, and Br. *tīṭhe*, probably due to the fact that this measurement was not yet in public use for a long time and its orthography had not been adjusted to what the *jyautiṣas* had in mind.

Apart from the text, the inscribed space also shows two signs, which may be interrelated. One, to the left is a *svastika*, the family sign of the Pāratarājas on all of their coinage. The other is a circle. As the *svastika* symbolizes the sun, the circle may symbolize the moon. As on Aśokan stones the two could have indicated “as long as sun and moon exist,” i.e. this foundation was meant for eternity—a short eternity indeed.

Notes

Acknowledgments

I thank Isao Kurita for letting me work with his photographs of the gold sheet. Prof. M. Kumbera Landrus was most forthcoming at the Ashmolean, and Tha Ratanasuk provided access to his treasures. My friends G. Fussman and St. Zimmer added valuable thoughts and corrections, as did Elisabeth Steinbrückner who in addition surveyed diverse drafts. Carol Bromberg looked after comprehensible English. My heartfelt thanks are due all.

1. Salomon 2005: 369, fn. 19. In my view Azes 98 is genuine too.

2. In comparison to the older takes it seems that for the picture in Jongeward 2012 the collection was enlarged by the two small golden containers in the right upper corner, and also by the golden finger-rings, stone inlays, and glass bangles on the left side, while a series of large but unappealing light stone or ivory objects were left out. The composition and nature of the contents recalls the large pot on display in the Peshawar University Museum from Pātaka (Jongeward 2012: 56, no. 3.8) which contains a coin of Apollodotus II, a contemporary of Azes and Dionysios, around the middle of the first century B.C.

3. S, CKI 455 *gramarammami*.

4. S, CKI 455 *saṇamumaye*.

5. S *dhamasotraroa*; CKI 455 *dhamasotrar[i]a*.

6. The final *-e-mātrā* is defective and should be ignored; S *kukṣiana*; CKI 455 *-kukṣiaṇa*.

7. So for intended *madapitudhitore*; S, CKI 455 *maśahimadi tore*.

8. S, CKI 455 *jode*.

9. S, CKI 455 *papiaputra*.

10. S, CKI 455 *hirmae*.

11. S, CKI 455 *papie*.

12. S, CKI 455 *jodilaputre*.

13. S, CKI 455 *hirmae*.

14. S, CKI 455 *soṇakṣita*.

15. S, CKI 455 *jodila*.

16. S *haṭhemite*; CKI 455 *hathemite*.

17. S, CKI 455 *cadaputre*.

18. S, CKI 455 *marmape*.

19. S, CKI 455 *marmape*.

20. S *budhatrevaputra*.

21. S, CKI 455 *jodilaputre*.

22. S, CKI 455 *mahaparma*.

23. S, CKI 455 *upeḍaṇaputre*.

24. S, CKI 455 *mahaludha*.

25. S, CKI 455 *sapaḍaputre*.

26. S *maha jode*; CKI 455 *mahajode*.

27. S, CKI 455 *mahadeva*; the *ve* is partly obliterated by sinter.

28. S, CKI 455 *itrahoti*.
 29. S, CKI 455 *jodilaputre*.
 30. S, CKI 455 *ramadite*.
 31. S *sagha/e śitaputre*; CKI 455 *Saghae Śitaputre*.
 32. S *na uree*; CKI 455 *Naūree*.
 33. The terms *atīta*, *kālagata* etc. are so far found only from the Azes year 63 onward, cf. Falk 2010: 14f. = repr. 2013a: 212f.
 34. The month *caitra* itself is either misspelled or abbreviated *cesa masa* on the likewise suspect Abdagases reliquary of the Azes year 98.
 35. Read as *presthevida* by Majumdar 1937/1938: 10, although his own fig. “Casket II, b” leaves no doubt about *tha* instead of *sthe* (sic) and the word-closing *e* with long flourishing e-stroke. The misread and truncated reading is maintained in Baums 2012: 250 and still so in CKI 177.
 36. Although *a* is listed as a phonetic variant of *ca*, I rather expect a writing mistake since an *a*-hook produces also the lower part of a *ca*, which needs a sort of *ma*-crescent above it. Where this crescent would have its place we find an *u*-bend of *buddha* in the line above. This may have led the scribe to the erroneous impression that the *ca* is already complete. For the syntax of the twice used *ca* cf. PW: “sowohl . . . als auch.”
 37. Cf. a seal from Huna times reading *śripā(r)tthiva* in Brāhmī by the side of a second legend in Bactrian (Lerner and Sims-Williams 2011: 144, BB2).
 38. I could inspect the casket at the Ashmolean in March 2020. What needed to be a small hook at the lower end of the *ma* is much wider than the rest and is most likely one of the many tiny concretions on the surface, while the long vertical is certainly there, read by Fussman (1985: 37) as *phu*.
 39. Twice in line 6; the one coming first, first word on the right, looks like *hi-u-e*, but the *u* is most likely a *du* with one aberrant dot in the middle of the upper bend.
 40. *maṇe*-reminds of *maṇi* in Manigula, name of the father of King Jihonika; while *-mava* recalls Khar. *moa* or *moga*, Gr. MAYOY, gen. of the name of Maues. Harmatta (1994: 410) understands a reconstructed **mava* on the base of Khotan Saka *mauya*, *muyi* and Sogdian *myw* as a Sythian “tiger, hero.”
 41. Lucknow Museum, acc.no. 52.1, published slightly differently by S. D. Trivedi in Seipel, ed. 1995: 137, no. 35; S. 258c.
 42. Cf. Stavisky 1997: 36, fig. 5. Fussman (2011,I: 78 “65 KT Nord”) dealt with this sherd and could see no reason for a reference to Gondophares being active in Termez in Kushan times.
 43. Bopearachchi (2011: 48) saw a second argument dealing with the Yavana era starting in 176 B.C., which is co-related to the Azes era. This year is in line with a year 30 under Antimachos, starting from the independence of Bactria granted by Antiochus III in 206 B.C. The date of 30 would then also be year 1 of Antimachos. This is possible, but other possibilities should not be excluded.
 44. The “day” *diasa* always clear as to its meaning; the actual writing started with a much too long and too little bent *da*. Then a letter closer in shape to *ta* was written and crossed to make it *di*.
 45. The uncertain interpretation of this *anusvāra*-like bend led Fussman to insert high-placed *anusvāras* (ṃ).
 46. As long as there is no etymology the choice between *tra* and *ṭa* is arbitrary. I prefer the *tra* because with it the reliquary can more easily be linked to the old wrong, but well-remembered Traśaka. In addition, *datraśaka* may refer to the same creator deity *dātṛ* as found in the name Dātarvhaṇa of the Pātararājas, for which see below.
 47. So the Nānārthaśabdakośa, p. 30; other dictionaries say the same in other words: *nijaṃ nitye tathātmīye*, *nijaṃ nityasvakīyayoḥ*, *nijaṃ svakīye nitye ca*.
 48. KS 4.8:165.10, TS 7.4.19.4, TB 3.9.7.5: *prā sulāmīti te pitā garbhē muṣṭīm ataṃsayat*. PW “hin-einstossen.” Less comprehensible is “vorwärts schlüpfen,” in Oberlies 1992: 126 “Ich schlüpfte vorwärts, der/dein Vater machte seine Faust hin- und herbewegen in deinem Schoße,” based on Prakrit similarities.
 49. Von Hinüber (2012/2019: 376/1378) misses a successor of *vārika* in the modern languages, but Hindī *vālā* shows the same change from *r* to *l*, and it also appears as second member of a compound, while the first names the specification.
 50. Cf. the examples given in the PW s.v. *api* 11): “am Anfange des Satzes mit einem potent. ‘ach wenn doch’,” Mbh 3.57,5 *api no bhāgadheyam syāt*, Manu 2,274 *api naḥ sa kule jāyāt*.
 51. The spelling *sohasta* could be a derivative, Skt **sauhasta*, or simply a common u/o variant.
 52. For *ma* instead of the more frequent *me* cf. Silverlock 2015: 336, who traces the form back to “scribal inaccuracy.” Our case rather supports a late but real variant.
 53. The scribe twice refused to incise where the stone shows dark streaks possibly fearing for the durability of this writing ground.
 54. For the subject cf. Sāmantapāsādikā I: 161: *vijjā uppajjeyya*, for the genitive construction cf. Strauch 2014: 821, line 4: *bhikhusa agalajivara upajea*. In our case I expect a haplography, *upajeya-⟨ya⟩tra*.
 55. Theoretically, a 3rd sg. opt. can also dispense with the *-yya*-ending, cf. *bhave* vs. *bhavea* (Schlosser version 2016: 96), then we would have to read *upajea yatra*.
 56. Falk 2010b: fig. 18b, 2nd letter from right.
 57. There is one sealing from Jiga Tepe, in the delta of the Balkh River. It is inscribed in Sogdian and in

Kharoṣṭhī. The Sogdian side breaks off after w'd'///. V. A. Livchitz (Kruglikova 1984: 146, 151) read the Khar. part as *vaḍanaśa rayaja*, “prince Vaḍanaśa?”. This reading is certainly wrong, but the use of the Khar. script is certain, the legible letters looking like *samunaaśaśatra*. All other sealings from Jiga Tepe date to the Sasanian period in Bactria.

58. Such a case is found on a stone plate depicting an elephant. The five letters were up to now read as *śastakhadhatu*, “The collar-bone relic of the Lord” (Konow 1929: 50; CKI 49), while the reading is *śasta khasatva*, “The teacher [i.e. the Buddha] as the [highest] being in the sky.” The elephant is the same as the one that came down into the womb or Māyā, of the elephants depicted by Aśoka at Kalsi and Dhauli, and referred to at Girnar (Hultzschi 1925: 26 *sveto hasti sarvalokasukhāharo*), Kalsi (50: *gajātame*) and Dhauli (92: *seto*).

59. The spelling particulars seems to reflect an analysis as ἐπᾶννός “lovely” and βοῖ “sound, roar” (Karttunen 1997: 145), when derived phonetically from *hiraṇyavāha*. An independent Greek formation without inspiration from the local term is unlikely.

60. Cf. Vāyupurāṇa 44, 13 + 20; Vāmanapurāṇa 31, 78; Skandapurāṇa *revakhāṇḍa* 50, 50.

61. Falk 2000: 225; corrected 2013b: 614.

62. There are two more stone boxes known to me, both larger and used as an outer casing for small reliquaries. One is published in Falk 2003: 83, fig. 1, a “block of schist” carefully carved out, its lid sunken into recesses and inscribed with the donation record. The second one contains about as much empty space, but its lid slides in slanting grooves so that it cannot be lifted but must be slid into and out from the front side. To use a library box for the outer casing of a stupa foundation appears as suitable as using an incense container.

63. A copper plate from the same period was published by R. Salomon (2016). The best photographs seem to show that for the cipher 3 in line 1 the first two vertical were decidedly shorter than the last one, thus preparing the ground for the garlanded form.

64. I expect another haplography, *budhadevihara*, instead of *budhadevavihara*. In principle, we could also reckon with a lady Buddhadevā. A nun of that name is known from Mathura (Lüders 1961: 166, § 126).

65. The reading is absolutely clear. There is no need to read *kataphsa* (Allon 2020, fn. 44) or *kataph[śpa]* CKI 249.

66. In 2006b: 86a I deduced from phrases with parallels on dated statues and through art-historical considerations that the piece should be dated around A.D. 260. The reading has been enlarged in Falk 2013a: 617.

67. The object weighs 819 g., which produces a *kārṣāpaṇa* of 3.97 g. A saucer of Jihonika from Taxila is said to weigh 191 ka, i.e. *kārṣāpaṇas* (Marshall 1951,

II: 611). On the same standard this would be equal to 758 g. Unfortunately, Marshall did not weigh the saucer, which was 20 cm long and 17,8 cm high. If the coincidence in the shape of the numeral 6 would permit assuming a coincidence in time, a date of ca. A.D. 300 would arise for the BM plate. Unfortunately, the saucer cannot be weighed as the museum staff at Taxila is unable to trace the object in their vaults.

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Alexander the Great in the Hephthalite Empire: “Bactrian” Vases, the Jewish *Alexander Romance*, and the Invention of Paradise

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انچه اسکندر طلب کرد و ندادش رورگار جرعه ای بود از زلال جام جان افزای تو

“That which Alexander sought and Fate denied him

Were the dregs from the crystal liquid of your soul-reviving cup.”

(Hafiz 410.7, transl. Dominic Brookshaw, *Hafiz and His Contemporaries*, London, 2019)

The “Greek Bowl” from Tibet—a Jewish Reminder of Alexander’s Late Antique Glory¹

The starting point of our study is a bowl that was never thought to shed any light on the reception of Alexander the Great’s figure in Central Asia, nor on the presence of Jews in the peri-Sasanian realms of the 5th–6th centuries. Brought to Europe in 1961, the earliest known silver bowl from Tibet (figs. 1) was successively published by Philip Denwood as a “Greek bowl” from Hellenistic or early Kushan times and by Boris Marshak as a “Bactrian” bowl from the Hephthalite period.² Denwood proposed a reading of the reliefs decorating the bowl’s exterior in relation to Homer’s *Iliad*, which never gained general acceptance. Marshak had limited his brief comments to typology and chronology. Only François Baratte expressed his reservations in writing, without presenting an alternative reading.³

The core of this paper proposes a new interpretation and suggests a new scenario for the bowl’s origin and transmission in Central Asia. In our opinion, this vase (fig. 1a–b), composed of a silver alloy rich in copper, illustrates two scenes from an ancient Jewish version of the *Alexander Romance*: Alexander the Great harvesting the

paradisiac Tree of Life and the same Alexander drinking and sprinkling the water of the Fountain of Life. These two scenes developed from two apocryphal letters of Alexander the Great reunited in the *Beta*-Recension (β) of the Greek Pseudo-Callisthenes’ *Romance of Alexander*, from the 5th century. First, the gathering of aromatic plants in the surroundings of the Oracle of the Sun and the Moon was related in Pseudo-Alexander’s *Letter about the Marvels of India* (cf. *Romance of Alexander* β III, 17). Second, Alexander’s accidental discovery of the Fountain of Life in the Land of Darkness and of the Blessed was related in Pseudo-Alexander’s *Letter to Olympias and Aristotle* (cf. *Romance of Alexander* β II, 36, and the additions of the L manuscript of the β II, 39, and 41, dated before the 8th century). The exotic Indian setting, which made this telescoping possible, is evocative of the quest for spices in which merchants living under Hephthalite rule were involved during the 5th–6th centuries, when their empire united Bactria to Sogdiana, Northwest India, and at times Margiana. At that time, the Judeo-Christian common opinion already had established the Earthly Paradise at the southeastern extremity of the world.

We consider this bowl to be the earliest attestation of the *Alexander Romance* in the Indo-Iranian world, contemporary with the late

Sasanian Empire, when Armenian, Syriac, and (possibly) Pahlavi versions were composed and circulated in or near Iran. Moreover, the vase is a unique visual representation of Alexander's legend in the Jewish context attested by the Talmud and the medieval Hebrew *Sefer Alexandrus Mokdon* (*Tales of Alexander the Macedonian*). This challenges our assumptions about Jewish iconoclasm in Late Antiquity, suggesting a Jewish contribution to the rich textual and iconographic traditions of Alexander's voyage to Paradise, as well as to the prophetic stature attributed to Alexander in Arab and Persian literature. Further, it provides insight into how the iconography of Paradise was invented through transfers among Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Indo-Iranian cultures.

In order to contextualize the Lhasa bowl, first we present the series of "Bactrian" bowls, their models and chronology in Marshak's steps, and we point to a class of objects illustrating Alexander the Great's prestige in the 5th–6th centuries Eastern Iranian regions. In the second part of the paper, we update Denwood's description of the Lhasa bowl with iconographic observations based on new photographs provided by the Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo. We describe each figure and gesture by recalling its Greco-Roman tradition, Indo-Iranian iconographic parallels, and the possible artistic and religious meanings of this dreamlike representation of the warm Indian land with aromatic plants, birds of Paradise, and dangerous serpents, as conceived by an artist influenced by the Greco-Roman, Sasanian, and Indian repertoires. Then, we consider the connections among the Greek, Syriac, Arab, Persian, and Jewish versions of the *Alexander Romance*, with the latter as the most likely source of inspiration. In the third part, we discuss the relevance of this identification to the historical status of the Jews in the Hephthalite Empire, to Jewish aniconism, and to the invention of the Earthly Paradise, located nearby, on the eastern edges of the (Hephthalite) world.

The "Bactrian" Bowls: An Overview

Models and Dates

The notion of "Bactrian bowls" was introduced by Kurt Weitzmann in his masterly article "Three 'Bactrian' Silver Vessels with Illustrations from Euripides" of 1943. Here he explained the images

carried by three specimens that he considered to be closely related typologically: two bowls from the Hermitage (S-62 and S-75), one discovered in Kustanai (Kazakhstan), the other from the former Stroganoff collection (figs. 2–3); and a bowl at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (F1945.33). In 1973, Denwood added the bowl from Lhasa, which is the subject of the present article (figs. 1). Later on, Marshak considerably expanded this group by including objects partly decorated with Classical subjects, or without any Classical subject at all; these objects were kept mainly at the Hermitage and in other USSR museums.⁴

Marshak's other decisive contribution was a revision of the chronology. Weitzmann and Denwood, joining earlier attempts by Kamilla Trever (1940), had attributed the group to the Greco-Bactrian kingdom or the early Kushans ("between 250 BCE and 100 CE").⁵ Marshak, on the basis of "local" subjects inserted into almost each vessel with figures put the main group in the 4th–5th centuries, not excluding the possibility of "later dates" for some specimens, including the one discussed here. This global time span coincides with post-Kushan polities: Kushano-Sasanian (c. 280–c. 400), Kidarite (c. 420–c. 470), Hephthalite (c. 460–c. 560), the last two supposed to have "Hunnic" origins. At least two bowls, one from Swat (BM 1963,1210.1) and another from Chilek (near Samarkand, now in the Samarkand Museum, fig. 4), can be dated quite precisely to the early Hephthalite period (last third of the 5th century) by the comparison of their rulers' crown types with those represented on coins.⁶

In a subsequent contribution, Marshak⁷ proposed that the sudden reappearance of Classical subjects on the metalware of this period was caused by the political disruptions that had occurred since the "Chionite" invasions in the second half of the 4th century, resulting in the plundering of treasuries and temples in Bactria. Consequently, precious objects, hoarded since the Hellenistic and Kushan periods, would have been put into circulation again, and made available for copying by local craftsmen not trained in this ancient repertoire. This idea is attractive when one considers a bowl decorated with acanthus leaves, stones, and glass inspired by Hellenistic models discovered in a 5th century Northern Wei tomb in Datong (Shanxi, China).⁸ It could also explain why Classicizing motifs seem to appear like *morceaux choisis* without a thematic continuity (as on the Freer bowl, mentioned above). In many cases, however, the "Bactrian"

vessels have Roman imperial parallels and reveal a very subtle knowledge of the Greco-Roman gods and heroes, transfigured into their Indo-Iranian counterparts. Therefore, as Marshak himself acknowledged it,⁹ the scenario of local survivals and rediscovery of motifs must be considered together with that of a continuous exchange of goods (not only in metal, but also in stones, textiles, and glass) along with that of the circulation of molds, craftsmen, and written and oral texts between the Greco-Roman and the Indo-Iranian worlds as well as within the Hephthalite Empire in Gandhara, Bactria, Sogdiana, and up to China.

Direct proof for these continuous transfers is provided by two silver dishes decorated on the interior that have precise parallels in the Roman Empire of the 2nd–4th centuries as well as inscriptions revealing their Eastern connections. One is a silver plate showing Dionysus on the back of a panther, surrounded by the *Dodekatheoi* and a wide garland of ivy and vine leaves, discovered in Beitán-Lanzhou (now in the museum of the Gansu province, China). The plate seems to have been cast. In spite of its “Roman” aspect, it has an inscription in Bactrian cursive that Nicholas Sims-Williams (1997) interpreted as referring to a local “light” drachm (1,020 x 3.12 = 3,180 g). The actual weight of the dish is 3,180 g, which is indeed close to 10 Roman pounds, as noticed by Baratte,¹⁰ which leaves the question of the origin of the plate open.¹¹ The second dish is decorated with low reliefs showing Dionysus between two maenads and surrounded by the Dionysiac *thiasos*. It was published in the catalogue of the al-Sabah Collection, *Arts of the Hellenized East* (henceforth *AHE*), no. 72 (fig. 5). The smooth figures, with lavish hips, loose veils, and lascivious movements recall Roman models—like the vases in the 4th century Mildenhall treasure. However, they are also evocative of later Gupta developments, like the rounded naked bodies on the “Reverie dish” in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 1972.71). Moreover, the reliefs are cast and crimped, according to a technique common in the Sasanian world but rather rare in the West.¹² The same technique was used for the “Graces” silver plate, which probably reproduced a late Hellenistic or early imperial Greco-Roman model, with slight Indo-Iranian accents, in the 3rd century, somewhere in Bactria, Kapisa, or Gandhara.¹³ In the 4th–5th century, the al-Sabah Dionysiac plate (fig. 5) was inscribed twice in Brahmi script: according to the first inscription, the dish

was “worship of the noble Uśūra, the great king of the Dards,” a mountainous population living between the Hindukush and Kashmir.¹⁴ The original weight of 50 staters, attested by this inscription, could suggest that even if the plate was made after Roman models, its silver content was measured in Gandharan staters. Consequently, even if we cannot identify the places where such vases were made, we may suppose the existence of networks of artisans and merchants seeking to satisfy a wealthy elite of the post-Kushan (Kidārite, Hephthalite) societies that displayed a taste for Greco-Roman arts.

The Inventory

In 1986, when Marshak updated his Russian doctoral thesis for the German edition, the inventory of the “Bactrian” silver vessels appeared as follows:¹⁵

– Ten bowls: Weitzmann’s three bowls with supposedly Euripidean scenes (including our figs. 2–3);¹⁶ our Lhasa bowl; the British Museum bowl (figs. 1) from Swat showing royal hunters, two Kidārites, one Hephthalite, and a character without a crown, repeated on the central medallion and therefore identified with the beneficiary; a bowl with six medallions illustrating a triple hunt of lion, bear, and wild boar, with the idealized helmeted head of a Hephthalite ruler on the bottom (Hermitage S–296); the bowl from Vereino at the Hermitage (S–8) showing three non-Hephthalite hunters, one spearing a tiger, while the other two shoot arrows at a terrifying lion (fig. 6, discussed below); a bowl found at Chilek near Samarkand, with paired ladies primping and a medallion with the Hephthalite ruler on its base (fig. 4);¹⁷ a bowl with four horses from Kvatspileevo (now at the Hermitage S–36); a bowl with four female heads, inspired by Greco-Roman *Tychai* (Hermitage S–73); a bowl purchased in Bukhara, then kept in Berlin, and now lost, with Classical mythological scenes in medallions and a ruler in “Kushan” dress. The layout of this lost bowl is comparable with that of the fragmentary bowl in the British Museum (Inv. 124088), decorated with four medallions with standing figures, which Osmonde M. Dalton tentatively identified with scenes from the Jataka stories of the Buddha’s previous lives.¹⁸

Typologically related are: a cup on a high slender foot with dancing satyrs and maenads, found

in Bartym and kept at the Moscow Historical Museum (GIM 83747 OK 14170, fig. 7); a jug from Bashkiria (in the National Museum of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Inv. 5606: Akhmerov 1963), on which we propose to identify scenes from Homer's *Odyssey*.¹⁹ The jug belongs to the same series as the ewer discovered in the tomb of the Chinese military chief Li-Xian, who died in 569 in Guyuan (Ningxia, China). For this last ewer, decorated with three scenes from the life of Paris and Helen, Marshak proposed a Bactrian place of manufacture.²⁰

Since 1986, Marshak's collection of Central Asian bowls of the 4th–6th centuries has been supplemented by vessels that have appeared on the international market of antiquities, or which were already known but hitherto not considered relevant for the “Bactrian” repertoire:

–One bowl (which perhaps has lost its stem) from the al-Sabah Collection, represents six standing figures separated by columns, apparently representing the ethnically diverse elites of the Hephthalite Empire.²¹

–A series of bowls (some of them stemmed) are decorated on their exterior with human busts in medallions, framed by stylized acanthus leaves. The earliest, discovered with the previously mentioned Dionysiac cup from Bartym (fig. 7), has small medallions with human heads in three-quarter view and was dated by Marshak between the 3rd and 4th century (Hermitage, inv. 83746). Further examples of Kushano-Sasanian heads appear on a stem cup in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Louis V. Bell Fund 2000.503). Two bowls, with “Hephthalite” heads, were excavated in Pingcheng (Datong), to which they were probably brought after 450, and are kept in the Shanxi Museum.²² One once had a stem; it has four idealized heads like the Sasanian cup of Bahram II, but their hairstyle recalls the hunters on the Vereino bowl (see below). The other Datong bowl has four heads with personalized features, which were convincingly interpreted by Marshak as an evocation of the four stages of life. The latest bowl, from the 5th–6th century, is in the British Museum (1963, 1210.2) and features five “Hephthalite” heads (with curls held in a band). A particular specimen in this series is the “busts” bowl in the al-Sabah Collection dated by Prudence Harper to the 4th–early 5th century (LNS 1560 M, see below).²³

Other metalwork, which seems to have been imported from Gandhara to Tibet and beyond

into Northern Wei China, shows indirect connections with the “Bactrian” specimens but allows a better understanding of the transfer and hybridization of the motives:

–A stem cup in bronze, gilded, with heads but also with masculine and feminine figures in high relief.²⁴ Eight deer without antlers welded on the lip and the vegetation spreading beyond the Dionysiac figures suggest springtime.

–Two molded cups with *putti* inhabiting vine scrolls, recalling the dense scrollwork of the Beitān-Lanzhou plate (mentioned above)²⁵; one, in gilded bronze, was found in the Datong necropolis, while the other, in gilded silver, is said to come from Tibet but has clear Northern Indian connections (through the lotus flower incised inside the bowl; fig. 8).²⁶

Common Features, Specific Topics

All “Bactrian” bowls are characterized by their shallow “calotte” shape (i.e. not a complete hemisphere) and their dimensions, not more than 21 centimeters in diameter and more than 6–7 centimeters in height, and set on either a low ring foot or on a stem. Similar to their Greco-Roman models, their rims are usually marked by a line of dots or, more seldom, a vine scroll or a wave motif. The decor follows the principle of *horror vacui*. Most of the artists show familiarity with Sasanian metalware. Yet, unlike that of many Sasanian vases, the background of most “Bactrian” bowls was gilded between the figures, but there is no consistent rule. It is also difficult to say if several of these bowls were made in the same workshop, since there is a great variety of subjects and styles in the execution of individual figures. As aptly remarked by Marshak,²⁷ this diversity most probably reflects the coexistence of many local courts in post-Kushan Bactrian (Tokharistan) and its southeastern extensions Kapisa and Gandhara.

The repertoire can be described according to the following topics:

– Sequences of local aristocrats, hunting (the Vereino [fig. 6] and the triple hunt bowls in Hermitage, the BM Swat bowl with Kidarite and Hephthalite horsemen), standing (AHE no. 94), or as idealized busts. This category corresponds to the main theme of royal Sasanian silverware, but in Central Asia the ruler is not shown alone.

–Evocation of the good life set in an “elsewhere” environment, in an idealized palace or garden (or

in Paradise, which amounts to the same in an Iranian context), where a banquet with music and dance can take place. Such topics are represented by the Chilek bowl (ladies with Indian-style bodies and transparent tunics, primping between fancy Indian columns, with the profile head of a Hephthalite ruler set in the bottom medallion, fig. 4),²⁸ and by the Bartym cup (dancing satyrs and maenads set between trees, fig. 7).

– Besides the representation of Dionysiac figures in medallions, the “Bactrian” bowls can illustrate specific scenes inspired from Dionysus’ life, *thiasos*, and theatrical scenes. Weitzmann thought that they derived from the Hellenistic silver models of the so-called Megarian bowls, none of which have been preserved, even if precious metal bowls with floral decoration are well attested in the Hellenized East, and in particular in Parthia. A significant production of terracotta molded bowls with epic and tragic scenes, going back to Late Classical and Hellenistic times, is well documented in several centers from the Aegean to Aï Khanoum.²⁹ Metal, glass, and *terra sigillata* (“Arretine”) vases with mythological motives are widespread in Roman times. Contemporary political rulers are sometimes alluded to by the choice of the topic, or introduced in an epic or tragic scene (like Augustus on bowls from the Boscoreale and Hoby treasures). In Bactria as well, in two cases (the Stroganoff [fig. 2] and Bukhara bowls), such scenes are interspaced with images of local rulers in Central Asian costume.

Alexander's Late Antique Revival in the East and the West

Several “Bactrian” bowls illustrate the power ideology of the post-Sasanian elites of Bactria, under Kidarite or Hephthalite rule, by evoking the figure of Alexander the Great: the first, already revealed as such by Prudence Harper, is a 4th–5th century bowl from the al-Sabah Collection (LNS 1560 M, mentioned above), which has three series of idealized portraits in eight medallions around Silenus. The head of young Dionysus with a royal headband, like the young Alexander the Great, occupies four medallions. The four others contain heads of helmeted warriors, presumably idealized figures of local aristocrats. All seem to take part in a Dionysiac feast and recall Alexander and his preeminence in the Late Antique ideologies

of power in both the West, where the prototypes of the medallions were created, and in the East, where they were hammered, with features recalling some representations of local Kidarite or Hephthalite rulers, for example on the bottom medallion of the vase with the triple hunt (Hermitage S-296).³⁰

Second, Alexander’s expression (deep-set, upturned eyes, and head bent towards the left) can be tentatively recognized on the Vereino bowl, to be dated in the 5th century or so (fig. 6). The position of the hunters recalls the heroic Macedonian horsemen with royal headbands, sometimes identified with Alexander the Great, on painted or sculpted funerary stelae from early Hellenistic Egypt, like the one in the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria (10228)³¹ or in the Allard Pierson Museum (Amsterdam. Inv. no. 7941).³² Besides the Sidon sarcophagus and the Messene relief (now in the Louvre Museum, Ma 858) supposed to imitate Craterus’ *ex voto* in Delphi (cf. Pliny the Elder XXXIV, 19; Plutarch, *Alexander* 40, 4–5), several statuettes representing Alexander on his horse were tentatively linked to the texts narrating his famous hunts and the monuments they inspired.³³ Relevant for this reading of the Vereino vase are not only the Macedonian and Roman paintings, mosaics, and statues³⁴ but also the bronze statuettes from Begram and Herculaneum (Napoli Museum, inv. 4996), representing Alexander as a horseman who hunts with a spear (figs. 9–10).

The Vereino vase shows two hunting scenes: first, a figure with royal headband is killing a tiger, which puts him in great danger. Reputed for his agility and power, the tiger was said to have the strength of two lions (Megasthenes *BNJ* 715 F21a quoted by Strabo XV, 1, 37). Second, on the opposite side of the bowl a lion, in a swift movement that makes him seem double-headed, faces the arrows of two horsemen. We had no direct access to the vase enabling us to check our identification of the tiger hunter with Alexander, but the hunting of lions and tigers in the Achaemenids’ closed gardens (*paradeisoi*) was reportedly one of the favorite distractions of Alexander, clad in the Persian costume—the dress of Artemis, in Ephippus’ words (*BNJ* 126 F5 *ap.* Athenaeus of Naucratis, *The Learned Banqueters* XII, 537e). The Vereino vase could show the manifestation of the royal power during the famous hunting in Bazaira (medieval Wizgird, near Samarkand)³⁵ in 328 B.C.E., when Alexander invoked his royal

privilege to kill the beast, and he would have done so with only one hit, as it appears on the vase. It is true that in the only text describing this hunt, Curtius Rufus' *History of Alexander* (VIII, 1, 14) mentions no tiger, but a "lion of rare dimensions." Yet, the replacement of a tiger with this exceptional lion is not impossible, since the two animals could be confused, the Persian lion having little mane and the Oxus tiger (like the last one, killed in 1973 in Khorezm and taxidermized in the Nukus Museum) a less visible striping. Moreover, in this passage Curtius Rufus conflates two or three different hunts, two of which dealt principally with lions: the hunt in Bazaira near Samarkand, another during which Lysimachus empty-handedly killed a lion, and probably a third hunt in 332 B.C.E. in Syria, when Craterus helped Alexander kill a lion. Moreover, Curtius Rufus explicitly associates "lions of rare dimensions" with "tigers" in a later passage (IX, 8, 1–2). In fact, before Augustan times, the Greeks and Romans had no coherent image and name for the tiger. Aristotle (*History of animals* II, 1, 501a, cf. Pausanias IX, 21, 4) identifies it with Ctesias' man-eater (*martichora*, fr. 45.15 and 45.15d–8 Lenfant), while in the 1st c. B.C.E. Varro defines it as "a kind of variegated lion" which had never been captured alive (*On the Latin language* V, 100).³⁶ It is therefore possible that the memory of a tiger hunt near Samarkand was lost in the Western tradition but remained vivid in Sogdiana, where tigers still existed in the 1950s.

The revival of Alexander's prestige in post-Sasanian Bactria and Sogdiana was never connected in scholarship with the analogous phenomena occurring in the Roman Empire. In fact, from the 3rd century onwards, Roman emperors used Alexander, the New Dionysus, in their political communication. Caracalla presented himself as a second Alexander and ordered statues and paintings of his hero to be put on public display in all cities (Herodian IV, 8, 1). In the 220s–240s, games were held in honor of Alexander in Macedonia. Bronze coins representing him with floating hair and a diadem or wearing a helmet were issued at the same time as the golden medallions discovered in Tarsus. By the middle of the 4th century, John Chrysostom reveals the new dimension of Alexander's cult when criticizing the people "who use magic charms and amulets, carry bronze coins of Alexander the Macedonian around their heads and feet" (*Instructions to Catechumens* 2, 5). From that time and throughout the 5th century,

medallions (today called "contorniates") commemorating Alexander were made in Rome and possibly offered as New Year gifts. The *Saturnalia* of 361 were precisely the joyful event for which the emperor Julian the Apostate imagined *The Caesars*, a satiric sketch staging a banquet animated by Silenus and Dionysus, where the Roman emperors are compared with Alexander. At that time, the Macedonian, represented as Heracles or with a diadem on horseback, is identified as "the Great" through Greek and Latin inscriptions.³⁷ This growing popularity overlaps with the wider diffusion of different versions of his *Romance*, including the Latin, Armenian, perhaps Pahlavi translations, and his integration into the Babylonian Talmud.

There are further possible indications that the Late Antique popularity of Alexander the Great could have reached Central Asia. At Afrasiab (the site of ancient Samarkand), from the 5th to the 7th century, terracotta images of Alexander were cast from older matrices. More than 140 specimens were found there and only there, constituting a substantial part of the local terracotta repertoire. Together with Heracles, Athena, and satyrs, this is the only Greek character that remains recognizable. Despite the permanent remodeling of the head covers and hair, at least four types could go back to Hellenistic models (fig. 11). Two juvenile figures wearing a worn-out head cover (rest of the lion head) recall 4th century B.C.E. types of Macedonian youths—like the ivory head from the Vergina tomb or the one from the Walters Art Museum (71.493—said to have come from Alexandria). These can be compared with the young Alexander now in Dresden (Albertinum, inv. Hm 174) or with Alexander on the sarcophagus of Abdalonymus, king of Sidon (Istanbul Archaeological Museum). Two other types can be related to the adult Alexander: one recalls Lysippus' portrait, with the turned neck, slightly bent to the left, and with the melting glance of the eyes looking upwards (Plutarch, *Alexander* 4, 1; *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* 2, 2, 335a–b). Parallels are well attested in the late 4th century B.C.E. Pella and in Hellenistic Alexandria (Greco-Roman Museum, inv. 3242). Another type of terracotta from Afrasiab has a square face, long wavy hair on the sides (when this feature is preserved), a long nose separated from the fleshy lips, and large, deep eyes; one can compare it with the early Hellenistic representations from Kerameikos (National Archaeological Museum, Athens

366) or Priene (Berlin Altes Museum Sk 1500).³⁸ This squared face was reproduced with numerous variants (fig. 11, nos. 4–8).

Unfortunately, we do not know if the lion's mane (*anastolè*) ever existed on any of the Afra-siab terracottas, either because they are worn out, or because their matrix was blunt. In fact, these images were repeatedly re-cast, touched up, stamped on various objects: ossuaries, independent figurines completed as praying people, musicians, horsemen, or mace bearers, fitted with a Phrygian cap or a beard, etc.³⁹ Their original molds were possibly taken from statuettes depicting Alexander (like the bronze statuette from Begram, now in the Kabul Museum, here fig. 9).⁴⁰ Although we can never be certain, it is tempting to suppose that in Samarkand this image could still have been identified as Alexander precisely at a time when he was locally remembered as the founder of the city and of the Nana temple.⁴¹

It is in this context, marked by the memory of Alexander, that the Lhasa bowl was made, perhaps several decades after the al-Sabah and the Vereino bowls. Like the "Bactrian" bowls evoking Alexander and Dionysus with his *thiasos*, the bowl has analogies among the Sasanian vessels, especially in their repertoire of dancing girls, boys, or *putti* picking grapes, along with animals associated with vineyards.⁴² Dancers and musicians as well as grape harvest scenes fit the banquet atmosphere in which Sasanian and "Bactrian" jugs, bottles, and oval and round bowls were actually used. The origin of the motif can be traced back to the Greek and Roman repertoire of harvesting wine and other different fruits (such as olives and dates), illustrated by a wide series of paintings, mosaics, architectural decorations, lamps, and especially metal, glass, or ceramic vessels. In the Roman as well as in the Iranian context, harvesting scenes can be compared and sometimes combined with scenes of hunting and bird chasing: they all reflect the variety and vitality of nature, enjoyed by animals, men, or human-like creatures.

The Lhasa Bowl (Figs. 1)

General Description

Dr. David L. Snellgrove, professor of Tibetan Buddhist studies at the SOAS in London, obtained this bowl in 1961 from a member of an old aristocratic

family in Lhasa, who declared it a generations-old family heirloom. Denwood (1973) published it while it was on loan in the Ashmolean Museum (until c. 1978).

As we have not been yet able to see the bowl,⁴³ we follow Denwood's description, comparing it with the photographs provided by Makiko Tsunura, chief curator in the Ancient Orient Museum. The bowl is shaped as a "calotte" cup 6.5 cm height, with a rim diameter of 21 cm and a medium thickness of c. 2 mm, soldered on a ring foot. It could contain c. 120 cm³ of water, and its weight is 1.134 g. Thanks to the work of Nicholas Sims-Williams (2016), we know that this weight corresponds to 250 drachms, according to a standard unit well attested in Bactria and Sogdiana, whose weight ranges from 4.43 to 4.55 g, being in this case 4.536 g. As this standard could not be known before Sims-Williams' research, and given the round number of local drachms used for the vase, we exclude all suspicion that the object is a fake. The interior surface is smooth; the exterior is fully decorated with cast reliefs of c. 1.5 mm width, crimped into the vase in order to form complex shapes projecting up to 9 mm outside the wall. Several incrustations are clearly visible on the pictures: small parts of the surface of the shell were sunken; the slight ridges of each cutting were hammered over the edges of the added pieces. Some details were chiseled after the insertion of the cast pieces, overlapping the join between figure and bowl at least in one place (fig. 1, c–d). No certain traces of gilding can be observed in the photograph, although it probably existed, at least on some parts of the background.

The base is occupied by a medallion showing a round pool where six fish swim in different directions, in three pairs of two. On the body, six characters are distributed at regular intervals. In fact, they correspond only to four mold models, as two are duplicated. The characters carry various objects and each acts in relation to a tree with multiple and twisted branches. A large snake crawls up each tree, attacking a nest in which birds appear at different stages of their annual life cycle: hatching the eggs as a couple, feeding and protecting two fledglings that are at first frightened and then eaten by the snake (as one deduces from the empty nest). Two figures, mirror images of each other, appear on either side of the tree with the hatched eggs. The figure on the left drinks from a cup, the one on the right gestures to the tree. Their bodies both follow the Greek canon, and

they are nude except for a wavering scarf thrown on the shoulders of the one on the left and a kind of cloak on the one on the right. Only the figure wearing a scarf is repeated in another section. There are two other characters, well differentiated. One, also depicted twice, wears a skirt and carries a fluted amphora on his shoulder. The other, dressed in a short tunic, strikes a drum with a stick while sketching a dance step with his feet. His head seems bald, but a strange appendix hangs on the right side, the only one that is visible.

Technical and Stylistic Parallels

The technique of a single shell with inserted elements in high relief is characteristic of the main ("central") school of Sasanian silverware until the late 5th or early 6th century, with the last datable specimens using this technique being plates attributed to either Pērōz or Kawād.⁴⁴ In the "Bactrian" series, the technique is especially noticeable on the Kustanai and Vereino bowls (figs. 2, 6) as well as on the stem cup from Bartym (fig. 7) and on the bronze stem cup with standing characters and deer from Datong (mentioned above).

Certain features of costume appear with some frequency on the "Bactrian" bowls. Of special interest is the scarf loosely wrapped across the shoulders of one of the repeated figures, to the left of the tree with the nest containing the hatched eggs. The scarf's fluttering ends terminate as a triple triangular shape. A similar form of scarf is seen on royal plates from the time of Shāpur II (309–379) on.⁴⁵ However, the Sasanian points end with pearls or some other small globular forms, which are absent on the "Bactrian" bowls (Lhasa, Kustanai, Stroganoff, Chilek, Vereino bowls, figs. 1–4, 6). Only the Bartym cup has both ends with and without pearls, in one case even on the same scarf belonging to a dancer who also wears a foot bracelet (fig. 7). In fact, the subtle design of the inner lines on the Lhasa bowl, on the scarf worn by the character drinking from a cup, is particularly close to what can be observed on the Vereino and Bartym examples (figs. 6, 7). This scarf is also worn by Zoroastrian deities on the Sogdian terracotta ossuaries from Ishtikhan, probably from the 7th century,⁴⁶ and by heavenly musicians on ossuaries from the Kashka-darya area (fig. 12).⁴⁷

The flapping cloak with fan-shaped folds worn by the figure to the right of the tree is less often depicted: on the "Bactrian" vases; it appears only on the Chilek bowl, worn by four ladies (the other two wear duplicated scarfs, fig. 4). It is never depicted this way on Sasanian vases. There are close parallels, however, in Sogdian paintings: worshippers in the Panjikent Temple II, in the 6th century (fig. 13)⁴⁸; two characters associated with the "Roman she-wolf" on a painting in the Shahristan palace in Ustrushana, at the end of the 8th century (fig. 14)⁴⁹; also some of the Zoroastrian deities on the ossuaries from Ishtikhan (fig. 15).⁵⁰

Trees with twisted and knotty branches with offshoots are common on this group of vases, as they are on both Roman and Sasanian silverware, but the specific shape depicted on the Lhasa bowl, with rounded stumps, is found only on the Vereino bowl (fig. 6) and the Bartym cup (fig. 7). Together with the rendering of the scarves, this is another stylistic feature that links this subgroup of three "Bactrian" vases.⁵¹ In the case of the Lhasa bowl and in this case only, we shall see that a precise botanical identification is possible. Although the open flower of the Lhasa bowl is identical with one on the Bartym cup, in the latest case the artist depicted the greatest diversity of flowers and mixed the Lhasa flower with all kinds of other buds, including the fanciful ones on the Vereino bowl and the trees and bushes of direct Roman inspiration on the al-Sabah dish representing Dionysos' *thiasos* (fig. 5). The birds living in flowering trees are a common feature of Sasanian metalware. Yet, the snake threatening a nest is paralleled only by a "Sogdian" lobed cup discovered in Tomyz' (Kirov oblast, now in the Hermitage), incised with a fanciful mixture of tree and vine stem (fig. 16).⁵²

Several body features relate the Lhasa bowl to the "Bactrian" series: the long feet of the characters are apparent on the Kustanai bowl (fig. 2). The almond-shaped eyes correspond to those observed on "Hephthalite" idealized heads, on bowls like the one in the British Museum (1963, 1210.2, mentioned above). The prominent ears, recalling a remote Dionysiac model, are similar to the satyrs and maenads of the Bartym cup (fig. 7) and to the *putti* that inhabit the living vine scroll of the other cup that is supposed to come from Tibet (fig. 8). There is also a great similarity in the treatment of the hair on these three vases, in particular between the nude figures on the Lhasa

bowl and the two types of hybrid Dionysiac characters of the Bartym cup: the two flute players mix features of Pan (with goat feet), Erotes (*putti* with wings), and satyrs (by their ears). The two female dancers mix the postures of Greco-Roman maenads (with naked or veiled breasts and stylized rough skirts reinterpreting the animal skins usually worn in the Dionysiac *thiasos* in vegetal forms) and those of the Sasanian paradisiac dancers with scarves.

Actually, the Bartym cup presents the closest stylistic match to our Lhasa bowl, which might suggest the same workshop or at least artists who shared the same register of shapes and techniques. Their respective weight, however, indicates different values for the silver drachm used in the making of the vase: the Lhasa bowl weighs 250 drachms of 4.536 g., the heavy unit used in Bactria and Sogdiana. The Bartym cup weighs 80 drachms of 4.023 g., the light unit used in the Sasanian Empire.

At its greatest extension, the Hephthalite Empire included three different weight zones (Sasanian, Gandharan, and Bactriano-Sogdian), and one cannot exclude that in each case itinerant artists used the local standard as they tried to adapt their expertise to local expectations.

A New Interpretation

Denwood recognized that the bowl illustrates a Greek subject: we follow him on this. For him, however, the key was the repeated motif of the snake attacking birds in the nest, which he recognized as the famous prodigy that happened at Aulis before the Achaeans embarked for the Trojan War. This episode is first told in Homer's *Iliad* II, 303–30: a snake crawls on a plane tree near the sacred spring in Artemis' sanctuary and devours eight fledglings, then their mother, after which he is turned to stone. The seer Calchas interprets this as the prediction of nine years of war.

This interpretation, although never openly refuted, manifestly failed to be convincing for good reasons: the tree is not a plane tree; none of the participants in the Aulis scene—Calchas, Agamemnon, and Ulysses—can be recognized. Moreover, the number of eight fledglings plus their mother, without which the omen loses all its significance, is found neither in the whole composition nor in the individual scenes.

The bottom medallion with fish (fig. 1a) is not attested on other "Bactrian" bowls and is certainly significant. Fish ponds are well attested from Gandhara (with the Begram bronze "aquarium") to China. Sasanian silver plates dated between the 6th and the 8th centuries reproduce a similar fish pond below two mouflons and a snake, or a tiger with two chicks and fishing aquatic birds surrounding a tree (Hermitage S-7, here fig. 17, and S-22).⁵³ Contrary to many other Sasanian, Bactrian, or Sogdian vessels showing trees or vine scrolls in narrative scenes, the trees of the Lhasa bowl not only frame the individual characters but are objects of their actions. Together with the fish, these trees are one of the keys to the bowl's interpretation. They all bear three oversized flowers (fig. 1d, nos. 3–7), which Denwood compared to lotuses, although the branches of the trees on the other vases bear stereotypical buds (the Vereino bowl, fig. 6) or conventional flowers and leaves (the Bartym cup, fig. 7). In fact, on the Lhasa bowl we are not dealing with lotuses but with open or half open flowers of *boswellia serrata* (also known as *boswellia thurifera*), in Sanskrit *śallakī*, the tree or bush that produces Indian frankincense most frequently known as *kundura* (fig. 18). The *śallakī* is already mentioned in the *Āyurveda* for its medical properties. Interestingly enough, *kundura* is the origin of the Pahlavi and Persian word for frankincense, *kundur*, which shows that India was, in competition with Arabia, one of the sources of the frankincense used in Persia and probably also in Central Asia.⁵⁴ The resin exudes from the bark, solidifies, and is collected in the shape of small balls.⁵⁵

Stories of snakes guarding aromatics in faraway countries were often told in Greek literature.⁵⁶ In India, these stories—very common in Sanskrit literature—were usually related to sandalwood growing on Mount Malaya, at the southern end of the subcontinent.⁵⁷ Similarly, Xuanzang relates that in the Malākuta country (i.e. Malaya) "at the height of summer, when one goes to a high place to look afar and sees a tree entwined by a large snake, one knows that it is a *candaneva* (sandalwood) tree; as this species of tree is cool by nature, snakes like to twist on it; having discovered the tree, one should shoot an arrow to mark it and come to cut it down after the winter solstice."⁵⁸ Unlike the tree on the Sasanian mouflons plate (fig. 17), the snake-infested tree on the Lhasa bowl cannot be sandalwood, whose flowers look

different and whose oil is obtained by crushing its wood. The *topos* of the snake guarding the aromatics could be applied to different kinds of trees. This is confirmed by the 9th-century Arab geographer Ya'qūbī, according to whom the aloe tree (at that time imported in China as a substitute for frankincense) grows in India in valleys infested by snakes, and so those who gather it have to wear boots with wooden or iron soles.⁵⁹

Another particularity of the Lhasa bowl is that the trees are also associated with birds, both adults and fledglings, in nests. Beautiful birds were imported from distant countries in order to adorn royal parks in Iran as well as in China.⁶⁰ Peacocks, pheasants, parrots, partridges, and ostriches are most often mentioned, but clearly none is the bird figured on the Lhasa bowl. Particularly famed in India was the *kalavinka* bird, whose melodious song was compared with Buddha's voice. The name of this legendary bird was eventually applied to a real bird, the "Paradise drongo" of India, Sri Lanka, and Java, praised over all because of its metallic plumage and melodious singing. In 813, 815, and 818 the kingdom of Kalinga (in Java) sent to the Chinese court *kalavinkas*, parrots, aromatics, and young "Zanj" boys (this term, which in Arabic designated black slaves from Eastern Africa, hence the name of Zanzibar, in this particular context was probably transposed to dark-skinned populations of the Southern Seas).⁶¹ The bird depicted on the Lhasa bowl has some general similarity to the "Paradise drongo," except for the "rackets," two long appendages of the tail, which are missing here but seem to be present on the later Sogdian lobed cup (fig. 16). Probably in this case we should not expect full realism, or any realism at all, as the phoenix bird, usually associated with the aromatic tree in the Western cultures, can take different shapes as long as it is characterized by the variety and the vivid colors of its feathers (fig. 1d, nos. 1–2).

Among the four characters (fig. 1c, nos. 1 and 4 of which are repeated elsewhere), the bare-chested young man with an amphora has a wavering skirt knotted at the waist, which could well be a free rendering of the Indian *dhoti*.⁶² He appears twice in complete profile with sloping forehead, a snub nose, and thick lips, none of which conforms to Classical canons. His long untrimmed hair is brushed to the back. He is the only figure wearing shoes. On his right shoulder, he carries a small

table amphora with a high, narrow neck, a fluted body and a flat foot (fig. 1c, no. 4 and fig. 1d, no. 10). Denwood linked the amphora to Parthian prototypes, but similar specimens of c. 20 cm high, albeit rare, are known in Panjikent. Marshak discusses at length possible models of these clay vessels and, in the absence of Sasanian intermediaries, concludes that they were probably inspired by late Roman amphoras or *amphoriskoi* appearing in c. 400 and imported into Sogdiana from the 6th century onwards (fig. 19).⁶³ Nevertheless, since there is no exact parallel to the amphoras represented on the bowl known today in Central Asia, we suppose that the author of the model of the vase had in mind Roman luxurious wares, most probably in blown glass, as suggested by the spiral ribs of equal length and shape, running from right to left on the whole body and neck of the amphora. Although the shape and the ribs are well attested on blown glass throughout Roman times, the closest parallels for these *amphoriskoi* date from the 3rd and the 4th centuries (e.g. fig. 20, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. 81.10.172). The carrier covers the mouth of the amphora with his hand, which indicates that it is full of a precious liquid. The best analogies for such a representation come from the Dionysiac *thiasoi* of Roman times, for example the Satyr on the 1st century wall painting from the Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome (now in the British Museum 1873,0208.1, fig. 21), or the 2nd–3rd century limestone reliefs from the Chakhil-i-Ghoundi stupa in Hadda, Gandhara (fig. 22, Musée Guimet, MG 17191).⁶⁴

A second male figure, for whom Denwood proposed only a general "Eastern" attribution, is ready to beat a drum and directs his piercing glance towards the snake and the nest. He wears a full tunic with loose sleeves rolled to the elbow. The motion of his bare feet seems to indicate that he is trampling the ground in order to add to the vibrations, a motion that is visible at the bottom end of his tunic.⁶⁵ The drum, held firmly under the left arm, is biconical with a lozenge network of strings that the musician pinches with his hand. The stick is long, thick, slightly curved, and rounded at the end. This shape of drum is sometimes depicted on Sasanian silverware.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, it is never beaten, not even on the Stroganoff bowl where it is played by two Indian macaques (fig. 3).⁶⁷ Indeed, the instrument is more typical of India, where this drum is known

in the Punjab as the *dhol* and is beaten on the bass side with a curved stick (*dagga*). There the drum is sometimes a plain barrel, sometimes an hour-glass shape (with sticks similar to those in fig. 23).⁶⁸ Consequently this character can be identified as an Indian musician or a priest-musician, who is called in order to divert the danger of the snake from the collectors of aromatics, or from the fledglings, or from both.

This priest-musician indeed has a strange characteristic: a large hairy appendix on the right side of his shaven head (the other side is not visible): (fig. 1c, nos. 10–11). Initially, we contemplated the possibility of a tuft of hair, the *śikhā*, still worn at the back or on the side of the shaved skull by some Brahmanic castes in South India.⁶⁹ They are, however, generally smaller and different in shape. Moreover, the character's face seems grotesque, with round eyes set within folds of skin and protruding nose and lips, rather evocative of a monstrous creature, perhaps with ape-like features. Although unusual for a modern viewer, monsters were not uncommon in ancient arts, either representing in-between species (in myths and legends, particularly numerous in an Indian setting) or a certain esthetic taste for mixture (like the Pan-Eros-Satyr figures on the Barmy cup, fig. 7). Thus, we are inclined to recognize him as a fictional creature, with a fully human body and a head inspired by a cynocephalus. The type of the cynocephalus baboon could in this case be mixed with that of the Indian macaque-drummer, more familiar in Bactria-Sogdiana, and exemplified by the musicians on the Stroganoff bowl (fig. 3). Later, we shall consider the literary connections of this figure.

We are now left with the main subject, two nude males standing on either side of the tree. Only the one to the left of the tree is repeated elsewhere in the ring composition. Except for a scarf and cloak, each is nude and stands so that one can see that they are circumcised (fig. 1c, nos. 7–9). This is a unique feature in Classical as well as Iranian and Central Asian art. Provocative nudity is in itself unusual in this repertoire. The few nude figures that appear on other "Bactrian" specimens are inspired by the eroticism of the Greek Dionysiac *thiasos*, as seen on the silver plaque in the al-Sabah Collection (LNS 1571 M, *AHE*: 196–98), and on the Dionysiac metalwork of the Indo-Greek or Indo-Scythian periods, dated to the 2nd–1st cen-

turies B.C.E.⁷⁰ On later vases, the genitalia are not exposed, as for Heracles on the Stroganoff bowl (fig. 3), or for satyrs and maenads on the Barmy cup (fig. 7), or seem to have been removed (like on one of Odysseus' representations on the Bashkiria jug, mentioned above).⁷¹ On Indian or Sasanian silverware, nudity, both male and female, is more frequent, but it is always very stylized, even when the pubic zone is shown. On a Sasanian gilt silver plate in the Metropolitan Museum, two youths identified as Heavenly Twins are treated somewhat like plump *putti*.⁷² In an Indian context, on the al-Sabah Dionysiac dish (fig. 5), smooth lines characterize Dionysus' body, as they do on the later "Reverie" dish in the Cleveland Museum, inspired by similar models (see above). Such a unique feature on the otherwise dignified composition of the Lhasa bowl certainly calls for a specific explanation.

The young man on the right holds a sack in his left hand (the shape does not correspond to any known metal vessel) and extends his closed right hand. There are two possible ways to interpret this gesture: he feeds the birds with grain in order to tame and capture them, or he is about to collect the resin of the tree, which actually exudes from an incision. This later interpretation is far preferable as his hand moves towards the tree, not the nest.

The young man to the left holds a kind of bottle in his right arm, while lifting a cup in his right hand. The bottle has a long narrow neck (with a movable head?) and a globular fluted body on a wider conical foot (fig. 1d, nos. 8–9). This general shape—well known in Late Antiquity as "pilgrim bottles," which were used to carry holy water in the West—is attested from Hellenistic times onwards. Three aspergillums in gilded silver from the al-Sabah Collection, dated in the 3rd–2nd century B.C.E., have a comparable body and foot (LNS 1331M, 1293–1294 M, *ANH*: 167–71, cat. 36–38). Two ring-handles on a globular body with oblique striations are attested for mold-blown flagons from layers of the 4th century in Egypt (like in Ismant el-Kharab, here fig. 24).⁷³ As in later Islamic contexts, the aspergillum or sprinkler is generally associated with rare fragrances and holiness. Most probably, the young man uses the bottle in his right hand to sprinkle a liquid, which can drip from a lid on the mouth.⁷⁴ The other vessel, a cup, is raised to the level of the mouth, obviously

in order to drink. Its low shape and fluting recall either the Roman crystal or glass bowls or the gold or silver palmate bowls frequent in northern India, Sasanian Iran, and Central Asia, from Hellenistic and Parthian times up to the late Sasanian period.⁷⁵

Shown in three-quarter view, the heads of both young men on each side of the tree are, like their bodies, mirror images of each other. In contrast with the other figures, they conform to the Classical canon. Their hair is short and abundant, fashioned into triangular locks and parted raised locks above the middle of their foreheads (*anastolè*). This feature, as well as the delineation of their faces and their heroic nudity, definitely points to Alexander.

The Literary Background: Excerpts from the Alexander Romance

The role played by the figure to the right of the tree corresponds closely to an episode in the Greek and Latin text of the *Alexander Romance*: the visit to an Indian sacred wood, abode of the oracles trees of the Sun and Moon. The episode is told in the *Letter to Aristoteles about the Miracles of India*, which was first translated into Latin by Julius Valerius in the 4th century (only a short Greek version was included in the recension β III, 17, in the 5th century):⁷⁶

(pp. 41–43 Boer/Gunderson): The grove was luxuriant, full of frankincense and opobalsamum. Very much of this develops on the branches of these groves and the inhabitants of this area were accustomed to eat it (. . .) I began walking through the whole grove, which means inside a roughly constructed wall, and I saw that opobalsamum, which had a very good odor, was dripping profusely from all the branches of the tree which were everywhere; taken by the odor of it I tore away lumps from the bark and my companions did the same thing . . .

(p. 53 Boer/Gunderson): We did leave the sacred trees but our nostrils were still affected by the odor of frankincense and opobalsamum. In fact the Indians, who tend the shrines of the gods towards ocean, said that I was also immortal since I was able to penetrate all the way to that point. Putting in my bosom what they believed about me, I thanked them.

Just before this passage, the “priest of the oracle,” a therianthrope creature to which we shall return, gives the following instructions:

(p. 42 Boer/Gunderson): (The priest) ordered my friends standing nearby and about 300 of my fellow soldiers to take off their rings and all their clothes as well as their shoes. I obeyed the man in every matter . . .

This explains why Alexander is nude and without a weapon (also prohibited according to III, 17 in the recension β : “In the neighborhood there was no iron, bronze or tin, not even potter’s clay”). The other figure, made from the same mold as Alexander the harvester, drinks from a cup while holding an aspergillum. But no drinking, no libation, no ablutions are taking place there, as the priest forbids any sacrifice and allows only prostration. It appears, therefore, that the figure as well as the amphora bearer with Indian *dhoti*, both represented twice, are taken from another episode, which also took place in a perfumed atmosphere, namely the discovery of the Fountain of Life during the unsuccessful march to the country of the Blessed. At this point it is necessary to draw attention to the image of the pool of water full of fish that appears at the bottom of the Lhasa bowl fig. 1a. Fish play a decisive part in this episode, for in the main Greek versions, the miraculous quality of the fountain is discovered by Alexander’s cook when he washes dried fish which are then revived by the water:

(β II, 39, ed. Bergson 1965, translation Stoneman 1991: (The cook) took a dried fish and waded into the clear water of the spring to wash it. As soon as it was dipped in the water, it came to life and leapt out of the cook’s hands. He was frightened, and did not tell me what had happened; instead, he drank some of the water himself, and scooped some up in a silver vessel and kept it.

A parallel episode, told earlier, presents another kind of miraculous water and fish occurrence near heliacal trees, but in association with birds of fire, which were not mentioned in the other aromatic woods:

(II, 36, 1–2 and 4–6, ed. Bergson 1965, translation Stoneman 1991): We marched on from there and came to a river. I ordered my men to pitch camp and lay aside their armor in the usual way. In the river there were trees which began to grow at sunrise and continued until the sixth hour, but from the seventh hour they shrank again until they could hardly be seen. They exuded a sap like Persian myrrh, with a sweet and noble aroma (. . .) In the river there were also many snakes and many kinds of fish, which could not be cooked by fire, but only in freezing cold water. One of the soldiers,

in fact, caught one of these fish, washed it and put it into a bucket, and shortly found it cooked. There were also many kinds of birds in this river, closely resembling our own; but if any of our people touched one of them, flames shot out of it.

This passage includes a theme shared with the above-cited episode of the sacred wood, namely the trees exhaling "Persian myrrh," their cosmic (heliacal) dimension, and the potential immortality of the one who manages to enter and take the substance that renders one immortal: the fragrance of the aromatics or the water. Clearly the version or versions accessible to the artist who executed our bowl combined elements that are split in the Latin *Letter* and the Greek version β of the *Romance* as we have it now.

This detail of the revived fish is absent from Ferdowsi and from the Syriac long version (which does not mention the Fountain of Life), but it remains in the Syriac poem *The Legend of Alexander* attributed to Jacob of Serūgh (§ 170–74),⁷⁷ and it is presented by Nizāmi (*Sharafnāma*) as the "Rumi" (i.e. Greek) version, the discovery being here attributed to the prophets Ilyās and Khizr.⁷⁸

In the Late Antique and medieval traditions of the *Romance*, there are several versions of the episode of the Fountain of Life, including the drinking of the reviving water, plus in some cases ablution or bathing. The difficulty arises from the various identities of the character who performs them. In the above-cited Greek version, the cook drinks after he has understood the miraculous properties of the water and keeps some in a silver container for himself. Later on, he informs Alexander only of his discovery, not of his appropriation of the water (II, 41, 2). At a first glance this could correspond to our image, but the cook is a man of low status, by no means an alter ego of Alexander. It would have been totally inconsistent to portray him as identical with Alexander, and to provide him with a scarf which, whatever its diverse possible functions, is always a marker of an elite or celestial individual. Further, this action of the cook is described in the β recension. In other versions, the cook does nothing after having witnessed the miracle.⁷⁹

Thus, in the Syriac poem, the cook plays a passive role: he understands that he has found the Fountain of Life, but he does not drink; he rushes

after Alexander, who in the dark cannot find the return path. In the *Shāhnāma* (verses 1369–1372, translation Samra Azarnouche), there is no cook and his function is transferred to Khizr, who actually drinks and washes himself in the spring:

On the third night, two ways appeared in the dark,
and Khizr lost sight of the King.
The prophet reached the Water of Life,
he stretched the end of his lifetime towards Saturn.
In the clear water he washed his head and body
looking for no other than the pure God as a
protector.
He drank, rested, quickly went back.
His praise was constantly increased by his homage
(to God).

This is, again, very close to our image. Moreover, in this version, the drinking and ablution are performed by a prophet, equal in status to Alexander.⁸⁰ But, of course, the young man on the bowl cannot be Khizr, who first appears in *Qur'ān* 18.59–64 (a garbled version of the fish revived), as the unnamed "servant" of Moses, both his pupil and his teacher. So, who is he?

A Jewish Version

There is one tradition in which the prophetic character assuming this role is Alexander himself: the Jewish version of the *Romance*. In the transmitted material, this version is attested by two sources. One is an Aramaic passage in the Talmud of Babylon (*Tamid* 32b), a compendium of oral traditions and Rabbinic opinions compiled in the 4th–6th centuries, and thus contemporary with ancient witnesses of the *Romance* (Greek recension α , Latin version, Armenian and Syriac version, Greek recension β). The other Jewish version is the text published and carefully translated by Rosalie Reich (Reich 1972) as *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian* (*Sefer Alexandrus Mokdon*), part of the Hebrew manuscript in Oxford, Bodl. Cod. Heb. d. 11 (No. 2797.10 in Neubauer 1906), which reproduces a collection of texts of various dates ultimately compiled by Eleazar, son of Asher hal-Levi in the region of Worms in c. 1325.⁸¹ Despite having been recorded several centuries from each other, at the opposite ends of the Mediterranean, both texts appear to reflect a similar set of narratives. The *Tamid* 32b passage runs as follows (in the William Davidson digital

edition of Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz's *Koren Talmud Bavli*, Noé edition):

With regard to Alexander, the Gemara relates: When he took himself and went on his way, he sat at a certain spring and was eating bread. He had salted fish [*guldeni*] in his hands, and while he cleansed them of their excessive salt, a particularly pleasant fragrance fell upon them. Alexander said to himself: I may conclude from this event that this spring comes from the Garden of Eden. There are those who say: He took from those waters and washed his face. And there are those who say: He ascended along the length of the entire spring until he reached the entrance of the Garden of Eden. He raised a loud voice, calling out: "Open the gate for me!" The sentry of the Garden of Eden said to him: "This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter into it" (*Psalms* 118:20). "Since you are not righteous, you may not enter." He said to them: "I too am worthy, as I am a king; I am very important. If I will not be admitted, at least give me something from inside." They gave him one eyeball. He brought it and he weighed all the gold and silver that he had against the eyeball, and yet the riches did not balance against the eyeball's greater weight.

And here is the narrative in the *Tales of Alexander*:⁸²

They set forth from there arriving at the land of Ofrat (Euphrates) where they found a large, unusual river pleasant to behold. The king and his army were thirsty, but were afraid to drink its waters. The king ordered wells dug in the vicinity of the river and much water was found, and the king and his men drank. The king said: "If it pleases you, we will camp here by the waters, for by their fragrance I know they are beneficial." They agreed to do so, and camped there for ten days. On the tenth day, the king's hunter caught some birds, wrung their necks and washed them in the waters of the river. As he dipped them in and washed them in waters of the river, they returned to life and flew away. Seeing this, the king's servant quickly drank from that river and went to the king to tell him all that had happened. "Obviously, these are the waters of the Garden of Eden," said the king. "Whoever drinks from them shall live forever. Go quickly and fetch me some and I, too, shall drink." The servant hastened, cup in hand, to bring some of those waters to him, but he could not find them. He returned and told the king: "I could not find the waters of the river for the Lord has hidden them from me." The king grew angry, drew his sword, and beheaded his servant. Then the headless servant ran away and Menahem, the secretary, related: "Our sages say that he is still headless in the sea where he overturns ships (. . .)"

Menahem explained this to the king who said: "Apparently, this is the gate of the Garden of Eden." Then he cried out: "Who is upon this gate?" A voice called back: "This is the gate of the Garden of Eden and no heathen or uncircumcised male may enter." That night Alexander was circumcised and his physicians came and immediately healed him with beneficial herbs. Nothing of this was known in the camp for the king ordered his physicians to keep silent. The next day, the king cried out to the keepers of the gate: "Give me a tribute and I will go on my way."

Despite some differences between both narratives (in the *Tales* birds are revived instead of fish, and there is no mention of Alexander's ablution), they come from a common stock of stories in which Alexander plays the active role, anointed in the Water of Life and eventually approaching the Garden of Eden. In order to enter it he accepts circumcision, which admittedly is not enough to bring him inside Paradise, but is sufficient to make some Jews claim him as one of them, or at least as a "Righteous" (*Tzadik*), according to a tradition first recorded by Flavius Josephus in his account of Alexander's entry into Jerusalem (*Jewish Antiquities* XI, 8, 3–5).⁸³ Considering that the Fountain of Life, Alexander himself taking hold of its water, his nudity, and his circumcision (fig. 1c) are all present on the bowl and set in a paradisiac setting evocative of the Garden of Eden, we cannot propose a better explanation for this image than a Jewish version or at least a tradition influenced by a Jewish version. There were many ways to evoke Alexander, but indeed the Fountain of Life is one of the few episodes to which the Talmudic literature pays attention.⁸⁴ The second scene, Alexander collecting frankincense with his own hands, is probably reinterpreted according to the Jewish (and then Christian) image of the Lord's Anointed, king or prophet—Alexander is king and, being divinely inspired, assimilated to a prophet.⁸⁵

The distribution of the cloak and scarf on both images of Alexander seems meaningful in this respect. On "Bactrian" bowls the billowing scarf is worn by a whole range of prestigious or paradisiac figures (see above for the precise references): Greek heroes (Kustanai, fig. 2), aristocratic hunters performing heroic deeds (Vereino, fig. 6), boys and girls with paradisiac overtones (Chilek, Bartym, figs. 4, 7). On Sogdian ossuaries it is worn by musicians and Zoroastrian deities, all inhabitants of Heaven. Like the scarf, the wide flapping cloak

with fan-shaped folds, ultimately derived from the Greek *chlamys* (with a knot instead of the fibula), is not a usual element of Central Asian dress. Instead, it is associated with deities (such as the Amesha Spentas on the Ishtikhan ossuaries), exotic characters (such as the Indian ladies on the Chilek bowl, fig. 4; the male—royal?—characters next to the Roman she-wolf on the Shahristan painting, fig. 14), perhaps also in contexts of theatrical performances (the worshippers at the Panjikent Temple II, one of whom is carrying a mask: fig. 13 here, after Marshak and Raspopova 1996, who interpreted this as “actors playing the part of the gods”). In the present case, Alexander gathering aromatics is endowed with the cloak, a clear symbol of kingship, as one can understand also from the Greek versions of the *Romance*, when Alexander threw his *chlamys* on the dying Darius (II, 20, 5) or later around Ptolemy’s shoulders when he tried to make his general look like him (III, 19, 4). On the other side of the tree, the billowing scarf probably associates him with Heaven, hinting at the immortality he is acquiring, or hoping to acquire through the balsamic fragrance and by drinking water from the Fountain of Life.

Back to the Two Minor Characters (fig. 1c, nos. 2–3)

The bare-chested Indian servant carries a precious liquid, which in our interpretation is the perfumed water from the Fountain of Life, brought to Alexander. He has a solar symbol tattooed on both sides of his chest, which is consistent with his function of servant of the sacred wood of the Sun and Moon, as well as with the Indian practice of real or fake tattoos.

The monstrous Indian drum player calls to mind the priest of the sacred wood described in the *Letter to Aristotle*:

(p. 41–42 Boer/Gunderson): . . . the priest of the oracle appeared. He was more than ten foot in height, with a black body, and with the teeth of a dog. From his pierced ears hung pearls and he was clothed in skins.

This description stems from Ctesias’ description of a fantastic people who live in the Indian mountains covered by trees that produce a sweet aroma, *psitthachora* or *zètacora* / *xètacora*, on the shores

of a miraculous river *Hipobarus* or *Spabaros*, “of all the goods” (recalling the Fountain of Life):

(*Indika*, fr. 45.37 quoted in Photius’ *Library*, codex 72 p. 47b Bekker; edition Lenfant 2004, translation Anca Dan): . . . (Ctesias) says that in these mountains live humans who have the head of a dog. They wear clothes made of savage beasts and speak no language, but howl like dogs and therefore understand dogs’ language. They have teeth bigger than the dog and claws like the dog, but longer and more hooked. They live in the mountains up to the river Indus, are black and righteous, like the other Indians with whom they are in contact. They understand what the Indians tell them, but they cannot speak: they make themselves understood by howls and movements of hands and fingers, like the deaf and dumb. The Indians call them “*Kalys-trioi*”, in Greek “Dog-heads” (*Kynokephaloi*).

These are the premises of the Greek tradition about the righteous yet monstrous people of the Cynocephali, located in Northern India, who were not actual dogs but humanoids with dogs’ teeth. The natural philosophers identified them with baboons (see e.g. Aristotle, *History of Animals*, II, 8–9, 502a), a species which fits well Greco-Egyptian imagery of temple servants. In Roman times, baboons lived in Hermopolis, in the temple of Thot, the Moon god, where they were treated like scribes and diviners (Strabo XVII, 1, 40; Horapollo, *Hieroglyphics*, I, 14–15). A cynocephalus-priest beating the drum was therefore an appropriate figure to illustrate the Oracle of the Sun and the Moon, awakening both distant Egyptian echoes of the Lunar cult and more familiar Indian ones.

Various other therianthropic beings are described in the *Romance*, helping Alexander overcome obstacles or access the confines of the world. A good example in the Persian tradition is the character called *Gush-bastar*, the one Who-Sleeps-in-His-Ears (*gush* meaning “ear” and *bastar* “couch”) described in the *Shāhnāma* (verses 1692–97, translation Samra Azarnouche), during Alexander’s crossing of the country of the Ichthyophagi:

Afar appeared an enormous man,
all over hairy, with big ears.
Under the hair his body was bluish,
his two ears were like elephant ears.
(The soldiers bring him to Alexander.)
“What kind of man are you?” he asked, “what is
your name?”

what are you seeking in the sea? what is your goal?"
 He answered: "O King! Mom and dad
 gave me the name *Gush-bastar*.

Again, this monster is helpful and serves as a guide between two worlds, the one of humans and the other beyond it: he crosses the lake and brings to Alexander eighty sages who live in an inaccessible city.

The Composition: Sources and Meanings

At first glance, it can seem strange to have two figures of Alexander, facing each other on both sides of the tree, each involved in a different action. However, this kind of "telescopic" composition is widely attested in Roman art. In a Christian context, two silver plates from Syria, both dated from 565–578, therefore probably contemporary with the Lhasa bowl, show the figure of Jesus in duplicate, once behind the same table and then under the same canopy, administering the Host on the right and the Chalice on the left (here the Riha paten from the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Byzantine Collection, BZ.1924.5: fig. 25).⁸⁶ This device is also known at Panjikent in the paintings of fables like the "Beauty and the Beast" (the girl on both sides of the flower which caused her misfortune),⁸⁷ and the "The Goose (here a female duck) with the Golden Eggs" (fig. 26).⁸⁸ This last Panjikent composition is the closest parallel to our scheme, as two images of the stupid owner of the bird face each other to either side of the duck.⁸⁹

Taken as a whole, the decoration of the Lhasa bowl can be viewed as a procession scene of Dionysiac tradition, taking place in a "Sacred Wood" (Persian *paradeisos*, in *Alexander Romance* β III, 17 and in the Latin version of the *Romance* by Julius Valerius III, 24), led by the therianthropic priest beating the drum to clear the way to the tree, and culminating with Alexander drinking the Water of Life and collecting frankincense. The water carrier is repeated once, and so is Alexander drinking. This could be explained by the constraints the silversmith faced: he had to fill the standard circumference of the "Bactrian" bowl with only four matrices of human figures, more difficult to produce than chiseled details (and perhaps acquired from another source). Even

when repeating the trees, he could not avoid duplicating two figures. Perhaps Alexander drinking the Water of Life was considered more important than Alexander gathering frankincense and thus deserved to be repeated.

Having more freedom with the chiseled details, the artist introduced some variations in the trees (fig. 1d, nos. 3–7). The fight between the snake and the birds is illustrated by alternate poses in which a couple of birds hatch the eggs (between the two Alexanders) and protect the fledglings (beyond the priest), or only one bird protects the two fledglings (twice) or finds out that they were eaten by the snake (twice). Not only does the snake approach the nest from different sides, but in five cases the side flowers are open and the middle one is withered (a telescopic image suggesting the heliacal trees). Once again, the tree between the two images of Alexander shows a more optimistic picture: the pair of (solar) birds take care of their eggs in the nest, while all the flowers are open. The overall message is the cosmic cycle of Life and Death, with the ultimate victory of Life, in an ideal spring-time—a theme that the Jewish *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian* associate with birds rather than with the original fish. On the Lhasa bowl, however, both are included in the composition.

The Date

We propose to date the bowl from the late 5th to the 6th century, thus putting it toward the end of the series of "Bactrian" bowls. Intuitively, Marshak inclined towards a date after the Bartym cup (fig. 7, which he dated "not earlier than the 4th–5th centuries") because of "more stylized trees."⁹⁰ In fact, the artist of the Bartym cup had a wide repertoire of motifs, including the floral designs and human as well as monstrous features, and this is also the case on the Lhasa bowl. The vessels depicted on it have Hellenistic origins but are best attested in Eastern Mediterranean glassware from the 3rd–4th centuries onwards, with local variants produced in Central Asia in the 6th century. The analogies for the scarves and *chlamys*, both in Iran and Central Asia, also cover a broad time span, from the 4th to the 8th century. We are on safer grounds with the strong Indian references, observed mainly on the Chilek bowl showing the portrait of a Hephthalite ruler with royal ribbons, henceforth not pre-dating the 460s

or 470s (fig. 4). The period 460–540 was the heyday of the Hephthalite conquests in Northwest India, under the rulers Khingila to Mihirakula.

The Invention of Paradise: The Jews and the Greco-Roman, Hindu, and Zoroastrian Gardens Beyond Human Life

The Lhasa bowl is not only the first attestation of an Eastern Jewish *Alexander Romance*, documenting the prestige of Alexander the Great in post-Sasanian Central Asia in general and among the Jews in particular. The bowl also shows that the Earthly Paradise, located at the eastern end of the world, was not a western myth: people who were probably involved in commerce with India, in the Hephthalite Empire, took part in its invention. The paradisiac topography was the result of cultural exchanges between different ethnic and religious communities of the East, among which the Jews—besides the Christians—played such a part that their iconography of Eden became the standard frame.

The Tree and Water of Life

From its earliest attestations as a “sacred tree” in Near Eastern traditions and as the “Tree of Life” growing on the banks of the cosmic Nile during its flood, the Tree of Life seems to have been related to the Water of Life, for the food given by the tree is associated with the drink necessary for all living beings. Many types of trees have been identified with the Tree of Life; they were all generally characterized by the sweetness, long conservation, or price of their fruit, and by the cosmic connection they make between the divinity and the earthly beings that the tree could nourish.⁹¹ In the Bible, the Tree of Life has different functions and meanings: it first appears in *Genesis* (2:8–10, NIV), where it directly surmounts the Spring of Life:

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the East, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden . . .

When the deceitful snake prompted Eve to eat the fruit of knowledge, he made men endowed with insight but pulled them away not only from God’s wisdom but also from the Tree which made them immortal. Hence, in the *Psalms*, the Tree of Life becomes the symbol of divine wisdom and prosperity, granted to the king or to the prophet: it is a living path to God and a tool for instruction and reflection. This is why, among the trees that could be assimilated to the Tree of Life, in addition to fruit trees, those providing oil and perfume for ointment occupy a special place. In Ezekiel’s vision of the Day of Atonement (47:9–12), the paradisiac image of the river coming from the East and surrounding the abode of the Eternal (YHWH-*shammah*) is completed by the living beings inhabiting its waters and the trees growing on its banks: the leaves of the trees are healing and their effect could be seen in the life gained by everything up to the sea. This healing function of the tree suggests its connection with the aromatics, which becomes explicit in later texts, like 2 Esdras 2:12 (cf. 8:52). Furthermore, Ezekiel’s vision of God’s dwelling is a major landmark for the Jewish tradition concerning not only the terrestrial or celestial Garden of Eden but also the New Jerusalem. It is this YHWH-*shammah* that we suggest recognizing, with its Trees of Life and Knowledge, on a 7th–8th century copper-alloy tray from Iran, in the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin (I.5624).⁹²

Further developments of the original image of the Tree and the Water of Life concern the meaning of “Life” as well as the real location of the terrestrial Garden of Eden. The “Life” given by the tree and the waters is not necessarily the immortal life on Earth: it can be wisdom (*Proverbs* 3:18, 11:30, 15:4, cf. 4 Maccabees 18:16; *Sirach* 24:12–17) or virtue (Philo of Alexandria, *Questions on Genesis* 1.10; *On the Migration of Abraham* 8.36–42; *Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis* 2 and 3 1.[17].56–1.[18].62).⁹³ From Hellenistic times onward, this Tree of Life/Wisdom is identified as an aromatic, for example in 1 Enoch 24–25 (translation Charles 1963; cf. 2 En. 8.3–7; 3 En. 5.1; 23.18).⁹⁴

24. And from thence I went to another place of the earth, and he showed me a mountain range of fire which burnt day and night. And I went beyond it and saw seven magnificent mountains all differing each from the other [. . .]. And the seventh mountain was in the midst of these, and it excelled them in height, resembling the seat of a throne: and fragrant trees encircled the throne. And

amongst them was a tree such as I had never yet smelt, neither was any amongst them nor were others like it: it had a fragrance beyond all fragrance, and its leaves and blooms and wood wither not for ever: and its fruit is beautiful, and its fruit resembles the dates of a palm. Then I said: "How beautiful is this tree, and fragrant, and its leaves are fair, and its blooms very delightful in appearance." Then answered Michael, one of the holy and honored angels who was with me, and was their leader. 25. And he said unto me: "Enoch, why dost thou ask me regarding the fragrance of the tree, and why dost thou wish to learn the truth." Then I answered him saying: "I wish to know about everything, but especially about this tree." And he answered saying: "This high mountain which thou hast seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, is His throne, where the Holy Great One, the Lord of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit, when He shall come down to visit the earth with goodness. And as for this fragrant tree no mortal is permitted to touch it till the great judgement, when He shall take vengeance on all and bring (everything) to its consummation for ever. It shall then be given to the righteous and holy. Its fruit shall be for food to the elect: it shall be transplanted to the holy place, to the temple of the Lord, the Eternal King.

Hence, by the end of Hellenistic times, the Tree of Life had already received an eschatological dimension, referring to the afterlife of the Righteous, those chosen by God (*Revelation* 22.1–2, 14, 19).⁹⁵

Geographically, the river and its trees must be in the extreme East, where *Genesis* located the Pishon/Phison, river of abundance surrounding Havilah, the land of gold, the resin bdellium, and onyx stone. Identified with the Ganges (Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* I, 39), this river anchors the terrestrial Garden of Eden in northern India throughout Judeo-Christian traditions (e.g. Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography* II, 81–82).⁹⁶ It is in this later context, when the Garden of Eden was located at the end of the inhabited world (marked also by Alexander's Altars), that Alexander the Great, protector of the Jews according to Hellenistic and Roman texts, having reached the end of his destiny, was imagined to be chosen by God. Right before his death, he attained the Tree's wisdom and therefore eternal life.

How to Represent the Garden of Eden: From Greco-Roman Dionysiac Nature and the Persian Paradeisos to the Zoroastrian Heaven

On the Lhasa bowl, the compositional scheme conveys the idea of the Garden of Eden, for the

two figures of Alexander immediately call to mind (and certainly already did to the public for which the vessel was intended) Adam and Eve near the Tree of Temptation, their nudity, and the snake. In fact, Alexander gathers the incense balls with a gesture quite similar to Eve picking the apple on late Roman paintings and golden glasses (fig. 27).⁹⁷ This positioning of a couple to either side of a tree and near a pool reappears on Zoroastrian representations of the Heaven,⁹⁸ such as on a silver plate in the Miho Museum (fig. 28): here the location in Paradise is established by the presence of a cock (the symbol of the psychopomp Srōsh) and musicians (the symbol of Paradise as "House of Song").⁹⁹

Thus, the composition on the Lhasa bowl is the result of several cultural assimilations, all of which can be traced across one millennium:

The Jewish Garden of Eden was assimilated with the Persian garden from the Second Temple period and the *Septuaginta* onwards.¹⁰⁰

The Tree of Life, a cosmic tree of the cyclical beginnings in various Near Eastern but also Indo-Iranian traditions, became a heliacal tree in the shape of the Greco-Roman *Peridexion* (according to the Greek *Physiologus*, §34). The different stages of flowering on our vase and the various positions of the snake beholding an imaginary shadow suggest the peculiarity of this tree, well adapted to the sanctuary of the Sun and the Moon.

The birds with beautiful plumage (with distant analogies on Sasanian silverware) recall the Greco-Roman myth of the phoenix, the fire-bird often located in India and associated with the Sun, the aromatics, and the ruler.¹⁰¹ Since Hellenistic times, it was occasionally recognized in Job 29:18, where the believer claims to die in his nest after a life as long as the one of the phoenix (*hol*). In the Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 108b, *hol* is identified with the *avarshina*, the bird taken into Noah's ark (implicitly in pairs) and blessed by him with eternal life for not requiring food. The immortality of the phoenix-*hol* has its origins in Eden according to the *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* 19, 5 (commenting Gn 3:6), in which the *hol* is the only bird that refused the fruit of knowledge offered by Eve, a gesture that is paralleled by the birds resisting the snake's attacks and remaining attached to the Tree of Life, as depicted on the Lhasa bowl (fig. 1d, no. 3).¹⁰² Moreover, in the present Indian setting, the Lhasa birds could also owe something to the *kalavinka*, the Paradise bird of India.

The Dionysiac cortege reflects the identification of Alexander as the New Dionysus in India.¹⁰³ As a direct descendent of Heracles, he would have found in the East a tree and a snake, like the ones his ancestor found in the Western Hesperides' garden, another paradise. From Hellenistic times onwards, Dionysus was generally regarded as a savior god, of resurrection both on earth and on water. In India, his *thiasos* was identified with local natural deities, yakshas and nagas.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the Indian characters of our vase perfectly fit the Greco-Indian Dionysiac landscape of living vegetation and waters (seen also on the Barmy cup, fig. 7).

In Hellenistic and Roman times, Alexander acquired the stature of a founder (*ktistes*), comparable with that of a prophet in the Jewish tradition. His historical adventures through Gedrosia (coastal Baluchistan, where he was able to find water after picking myrrh and dates according to Aristobulus, *BNJ* 139 F49a–b, quoted by Arrian, *Anabasis* VI, 22–26; cf. Strabo XV, 2, 5–7) and in India, at the end of his trip, where he became aware of his life ending (according to the *Romance*), incorporated elements from the myth of Moses (discovering the water in the desert, in the Nb 21.16–18) and Enoch.

The Islamic tradition added Khizr, companion of Moses in the Qur'an, of Alexander in the *Shāhnāma*, and of Elijah (Ilyās) in Nizāmi. Instead of Alexander, Khizr alone or with Ilyās is depicted beside a fish pond that represents the Fountain of Life.¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, at Samarkand the legend attached to the Shah-i Zinda sanctuary describes three figures enthroned near an underground, ever-rejuvenating spring: they are explicitly identified as Qutham ibn 'Abbās (a cousin of the Prophet), Khizr, and Ilyās.¹⁰⁶ The legend is multi-stratified, and one may wonder whether Alexander was not one of the prototypes of Qutham.

The Laxity of Late Antique Jewish Aniconism

A possible objection to the idea of a Jewish commissioner for the Lhasa bowl is the Jewish ban on human depiction and nudity (Ex. 20:4–5, Dt. 5:8). Already in 1991, Pierre Prigent collected an important series of Jewish representations of paradisiac scenes and explained this violation of the law, tolerated in the Talmud, by the eschatological di-

mension of these images after the destruction of the Temple.¹⁰⁷ Nudity is not an insurmountable taboo: even outside Paradise, in the best-known example of Jewish monumental representations in "Parthian art" *lato sensu*, namely the paintings in the Dura Europos' synagogue (240s), there are human figures everywhere, and nudity in one case (Pharaoh's daughter and the baby Moses in the Nile). Moreover, the Roman sculptural repertoire includes a round marble slab showing King David dancing nude, according to II Samuel 6.13–23. Its curious composition (partly comparable with that of some paleochristian tables and plates¹⁰⁸) has raised doubts about its authenticity, but no definitive proof has been provided so far (fig. 29).¹⁰⁹

Nonetheless, if our interpretation is accepted, the Lhasa bowl is not only the earliest representation of Alexander in Paradise but also the only Jewish image of Alexander as a Righteous. The recently discovered "Elephant mosaic" in the Synagogue at Huqoq (Galilea), dating from c. 400, shows a Greek king trying to perform a sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple; initially identified by some as Alexander, he is in fact the Seleucid Antiochus IV.¹¹⁰

Jews in Hephthalite Central Asia

In the 4th century the Jewish community in Merv was visited by a religious elder from Babylon.¹¹¹ Direct archaeological evidence has been found here in a 5th–6th century cemetery with ossuaries bearing Aramaic inscriptions; offerings of miniature crucibles have led to the supposition that some of these people were involved in metalwork.¹¹² Altogether, Jews were certainly numerous and influential in the Hephthalite Empire, as shown by the contemporary folk etymology *Nephthalitai* (one of the "lost tribes") for *Hephthalitai* (Agathias IV, 27, 4), and by the presence in the early Islamic period of well-established communities in Merv, Herat, Ghor, Maymana, and Balkh.¹¹³

During Hephthalite times, perhaps more than before, India was reached by Central Asian traders.¹¹⁴ There are some indications that these traders included Jews. A few inscriptions in Square Hebrew on the Upper Indus have been tentatively attributed to the 9th century,¹¹⁵ but Shaul Shaked (personal communication) sees no objection to an earlier date, although perhaps not as early as the adjoining Sogdian and Bactrian inscriptions

from the 5th–6th centuries. The script is especially close to the inscriptions of Tang-i Azao in the central Hindukush, dated from 752/753, and to two Judeo-Persian letters from the Khotan region in c. 800, whose vocabulary shows Sogdian features.¹¹⁶ The earliest textual testimony of the presence of Jewish traders in Southern India is Ibn Khurdādhbih's notice about the Rādhāniyya merchants in the 9th century, one of whose trading routes linked the Indian coast with China through Central Asia. Bīrūnī mentions that "in the past" only a few merchants, particularly Jews, were admitted to Kashmir.¹¹⁷

In which language was the *Alexander Romance* accessible to 5th–6th centuries Jews in Bactria, and more generally to Central Asians peoples? The Jewish elites knew Aramaic, and the Talmud passage is in Babylonian Aramaic. Syriac was mainly used by the Nestorian church, but some Jews probably understood this cognate language, at least orally. For everyday use, Jews spoke local Middle Iranian languages. The question of a (now lost) Pahlavi version underlying the Syriac version and part of Ferdowsi's sources on Alexander is disputed.¹¹⁸ Michael Shenkar has recently demonstrated that at Panjikent a painted cycle from the 740s illustrates the *Farāmarznāme*, an epic drawing much on its narrative material from the *Alexander Romance*, thus making it even more probable that stories from the *Romance* itself circulated in the Sogdian language.¹¹⁹

Final Remarks

Sometime in the late 5th or 6th century, in the Hephthalite Empire or a successor state, a dignitary or a rich merchant, most probably a Jew imbued with Hellenic culture through the filter of other languages, felt it appropriate to evoke the fabled Indian countries while expressing his attachment to the memory of Alexander, protector of his religion and his people. Here it is appropriate to mention again the Chilek bowl (fig. 4) on which the portrait of a Hephthalite ruler is set in the middle of ladies of a markedly Indian type, obviously in order to manifest the appropriation of these countries; we have indeed noticed close stylistic similarities with our object, especially the design of the *chlamys* and scarves. One can wonder whether the Jews in Bactria did not associate themselves with this "propaganda," using

the theme of "their" Alexander taking possession of the treasures of India in order to show him as a forerunner of the Hephthalite conquerors.

The endpoint of the import trade of Indian goods is shown by one of the many figures of the recently discovered wood panels in the palace of Kafir-kala (Rēwdād) near Samarkand, dating from the first half of the 6th century and therefore contemporary or nearly contemporary with our bowl: a kneeling worshipper of the high Sogdian goddess Nana is pouring into the perfume holder a dozen balls of frankincense he has taken from a flask he carries in his other hand (fig. 30).¹²⁰

Notes

1. We thank Makiko Tsumura, Chief curator in the Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo, who provided us with the photos and the reproduction rights, granted in agreement with the private owner who exposes it in the Museum. Caroline Riberaigua and Ronan Moreau (Collège de France, Bibliothèque de l'Institut d'études indiennes) offered precious advice on Indian aspects, Sibyl Searle (Ashmolean Museum) and Richard Blurton (British Museum) further data about the bowl's history. Samra Azarnouche provided useful information and translations of passages from the *Shāhnāma*, Muriel Debié helped with the Syriac sources, Mark Geller and Eyal Nahum with the Hebrew and Aramaic texts, Anis Mkacher with the Arabic scripts, Ching Chao-jung with the Chinese translations. Laurianne Sève-Martinez put at our disposal her unpublished manuscript and photos of the terracotta heads inspired by Alexander and discovered in Afrasiab; Pascale Ballet provided useful feedback and bibliography for the typological identification. Michael Shenkar and Annick Fenet sent us bibliographical references unavailable during the COVID lockdown, François Ory helped with the illustration, Libby Grenet and Judith Lerner with the English editing. A complementary study, focusing on the literary traditions and on Alexander's figure in transcultural context, will be published in French, in the *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres*, 2021:1.

2. Denwood 1973; Marshak 1986: 37, fig. 17; Marshak 2017: 79, fig. 17. We use the term "Bactrian bowls" (in relation to the supposed main region of fabrication of the bowls) following B. I. Marshak and the term "Bactria" for the coherence of the text, although the term "Tokharistan" is now attested from the 2nd century (see Sims-Williams 2015). The situation of Marshak's publications is quite complex. In 1969, Marshak first published the Chilek bowl, found in 1961 during regular excavations near Samarkand, together

with the comparisons available at the time (Marshak and Krikis 1969). In 1982, he presented his doctoral thesis *Istoriia vostochnoi toreutiki III-Xiii vv. i problema kul'turnoi preemstvennosti* [History of Eastern Toreutics between the IIIrd and the XIIIth Centuries and Problems of Cultural Continuity]. In 1986, a German edition appeared, with updates but also some cuts. The original Russian text was eventually published in 2017, eleven years after Marshak's death, thanks to Valerii Nikonorov with a foreword by Frantz Grenet. The sections and images that Marshak had left out in the German edition were reintroduced, but the changes were not incorporated. Consequently, it is advisable to use both editions side by side.

3. Baratte 2016: 281–82, fig. 10.
4. Marshak 1982 published 2017, see esp. 72–81; Marshak 1986, see esp. 29–39.
5. Denwood 1973: 126.
6. Grenet 2002: 211–12, pls. 5–6.
7. Marshak 1990: 298–99.
8. Marshak in Watt et al. 2004: 148, no. 58.
9. Marshak 1986: 35–39, 247–51.
10. Baratte 1996.
11. For the heavier usual standards of Iran, Bactria-Sogdiana, and Gandhara, see Sims-Williams in Dan et al. 2018: 234.
12. Baratte 1984; Harper and Meyers 1981: 147–50.
13. Dan et al. 2018.
14. *AHE*: 258–61.
15. Marshak 1986: 29–39. The objects kept in Russian museums are illustrated in the posthumous publication of Marshak's Russian book (2017), except for the Kvatspileevo bowl (S–36), the “bowl with four female heads,” (S–73) and the Bashkiria jug.
16. Some of Weitzman's identifications have since been questioned but with no agreement on possible alternatives. See e.g. Bernard 1979: 134; Bernard 1990; Baratte 2016: 273–80.
17. We are grateful to Judith Lerner for her observations on this vase.
18. Dalton 1964: 55–57, no. 202.
19. Forthcoming study.
20. Marshak and Anazawa 1989; Marshak in Watt et al. 2004: 256–57, no. 157; different views on the subject matter in Bernard 1990 and Baratte 2016: 266–68.
21. *AHE*: 338–44, no. 94.
22. Marshak in Watt et al. 2004: 47–55, 154–55, nos. 63–64.
23. *AHE*: no. 93.
24. Marshak in Watt et al. 2004: 150, no. 60.
25. Marshak in Watt et al. 2004: 184–85; Baratte 2016.
26. Marshak in Watt et al. 2004: 47–55, 149, no. 59 and fig. 39, after *Indian and Southeast Asia Art*, sale Catalogue, New York: Christie's March 27, 2003: 79, lot 78. The only example of female heads, coupled with two other men, separated by acanthus leaves, can be

seen on a cup discovered in a tomb of the Northern Wei dynasty in Yihe-Nur, Mongolia (Yongzhi et al. 2016: 51). Since the figures have exclusive Greco-Roman features, its place of manufacture should be discussed separately.

27. Marshak 1986: 39; Marshak 2017: 81.
28. A plate from Liakhsh (Tajikistan), morphologically similar to this group but decorated only by a central medallion on the inner surface, shows a woman with even more Indian features (nude except for a belt with pendants), holding a vine scroll on both sides while dancing: *Oxus*: no. 49; Marshak 2017: fig. 181.
29. Mairs 2014; cf. Francfort 2020.
30. Forthcoming study.
31. Nenna 1998.
32. Moorman 2000: no. 133, pp. 110–11; Cole 2019.
33. Stewart 1993; Mullen 2019.
34. Wootton 2002; Palagia 2000; Palagia 2012.
35. Bernard 2012.
36. Wille 2010.
37. Mittag 1999; Dahmen 2007.
38. See e.g. Bieber 1964; Hoff 2009; Queyrel 2020: 20–24.
39. Meshkeris 1977: 78–83, pls. X–XII, XXIII. The identification of the prototype as Alexander was first proposed by Veselovskii 1917: 59–68, and was generally accepted in Soviet publications. We thank Laurianne Sève-Martinez for having put at our disposal her photographs and study in preparation of the terracottas from Afrasiab, Pascale Ballet for her expertise on Hellenistic parallels, and Andrei Omel'chenko for the photographs of the Hermitage specimens here reproduced.
40. Tissot 2006: 284 below; cf. Hoff 2013: 86, fig. 5; Hiebert and Cambon 2011: 208, fig. 115.
41. Syriac *Alexander Romance*, translation Budge 1889: 115 (Alexander builds the city and the temple to the goddess Nana, instituting her confederal festival, an addition that could particularly appeal to a Sogdian audience); Ibn Hawqal, *Kitab surat al-ard* II, p. 474 (Alexander builds the inner city wall, an information which, if extended to the Seleucid period, is archaeologically true). In the Islamic period, Alexander was also locally remembered as the founder of Merv, Balkh, and Termez, all cities that had been part of the Hephthalite Empire. In the Pahlavi treatise *Shahrestānīhā ī Ērānshahr* (§ 2–5) compiled in the Abbasid period, Kay Kāwus is the founder of Samarkand; it is in Samarkand that Alexander destroys the *Avesta* engraved on golden plaques. This reflects the altogether negative image of Alexander conveyed by Zoroastrian literature, conflicting with the positive or ambivalent image dominant in other Iranian sources, including Ferdowsi, and probably kept in local traditions, especially in Samarkand.
42. Harper 1971.
43. The COVID-19 crisis prevented us from visiting Tokyo, but thanks to the high quality of the photographs offered by the Museum, we hardly expect direct

examination of the object to change our interpretation, except perhaps for some details of the head of the "priest-drummer."

44. Harper and Meyers 1981: 172 and pl. 17.
45. Harper and Meyers 1981: pls. 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 25, 27.
46. Shenkar 2014a: figs. 175, 176, 178, 179.
47. Shenkar 2014a: fig. 181.
48. Marshak and Raspopova 1994: fig. 4.
49. Sokolovskii 2009: fig. 6.
50. Shenkar 2014a: figs. 171–74.
51. The Vereino bowl and the Bartym cup are comparable also for the vegetal decoration of their feet, which have some similarities to the living vine scrolls on the other cup said to come from Tibet, fig. 8.
52. Marshak 1971: tab. 46; Darkevich 1976: 39, no. 67, tab. 17.3–6; Marshak 2017: no. 53; cf. Trever and Lukonin 1987: 124.
53. Trever and Lukonin 1987: 118; nos. 37, 39.
54. The Sogdian word for frankincense is, however, *vōdh* (βwōd) which means simply "good smell." The Bactrian word is not yet attested.
55. Myrrh is also collected this way, but the myrrh tree does not grow in India.
56. Detienne 1972; Lecocq 2012.
57. McHugh 2012: 172, 193, 211.
58. *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*. BDK English Tripitaka 79, transl. Li Rongxi, 1996: 321.
59. Miquel 1973–1980, III: 423–24.
60. Schafer 1963: 38–39, 92–104; for the import of birds in the Islamic world, see Miquel 1973–1980, II: 105–15.
61. Schafer 1963: 103–4. Full accounts of these embassies were kindly translated for us by Dr. Ching Chao-jung.
62. Cf. also Denwood 1973: 124.
63. Marshak 2012: 111–16, figs. 56–57 for Panjikent specimens, 58–59 for parallels. The fluted amphora found in a 6th-century stratum has its handles attached lower than the ones on the bowl, but the top part was missing and was graphically reconstructed. Marshak, however, does not include the amphoras depicted on the bowl in the comparisons; but his 2012 book is in fact his "dissertation" thesis presented in 1965, while Denwood's article appeared in 1973.
64. Cambon 2004.
65. When seated, snake charmers use their feet and eyes movements, the flute having no real effect (except the enjoyment of the public) as snakes are deaf.
66. Duchesne-Guillemin 1993: figs. 14a, 18, 22b, 23.
67. Biconical drums are depicted at Panjikent in carnival scenes, but they are of a quite different type: longer, with the strings parallel and not crossed (Karamatov et al. 1987: 120 bottom right; Marshak and Raspopova 2001: figs. 78–83).
68. After Marcel-Dubois 1941: pl. IX.3.

69. See *Wikipedia*, s.v. Nambudiri, Dikshitar.

70. Al-Sabah Collection no. LNS 1329–1330 M, LNS 1404 M, LNS 1524 Ma–Mb; see *AHE*: 176–79, 199–201, 234–39, nos. 48–49, 64, 72.

71. This holds true also for the Liakhsh bowl (on which see above n. 28).

72. See Harper's entry in *Les Perses sassanides*, no. 37.

73. Hope and Whitehouse 2003; cf. Smythe 2008: no. 26. The only detailed publication of pre-Islamic glassware from Bactria and Sogdiana (Raspopova 2010) includes globular vases with foot and long neck but without handles.

74. Multiple drill holes are observed in the bottom of a Sasanian silver vase with a high neck decorated with a grape harvest scene; there is one hole in the bottom of two piriform glass vessels also from Iran (*Splendeur des Sassanides*, nos. 89 and 105 respectively).

75. *AHE*: 62–75, 106–9.

76. For the *Letter*, we follow the text of Boer (1973) and the English translation of Gunderson (1980). For the Greek text of the recension β, see Bergson 1965; for the augmented variant of the β in the manuscript L (*Leidensis Vulcanius* 93, from the 15th century), cf. Bergson 1965:193–204, van Thiel 1983, and the English translation of Stoneman 1991. A list of editions of the *Romance* in different languages is given in Stoneman 2008: 230–45.

77. Translation Budge 1889: 172–74. The attribution of the poem to Jacob of Serūgh (451–521) is now rejected, in favor of an anonymous Christian author working in 630 at the earliest.

78. Manteghi 2018: 122.

79. In what appears to be a still later addition preserved in the manuscript L, the cook keeps the water for an illegitimate daughter of Alexander he wants to seduce (II, 41, 3–6).

80. Alexander actually drinks inexhaustible water from a miraculous cup when in India, but this happens in the episode of his encounter with the king-magician Keyd (verses 437–49).

81. The text is also preserved in a manuscript, in *Biblioteca Estense a T* 2.20, earlier called Or. 58 (no. 39.14 in Bernheimer (1960) and in a manuscript in Damascus (now lost). The first scholars who drew attention to this text surviving in three manuscripts were A. Y. Harkavy, who studied the Damascus manuscript (Harkavy 1892), Israel Lévi, who published the text of the Modena manuscript (Lévi 1896), and Moses Gaster, who published a loose English paraphrase of the Bodleian manuscript with sections from the Modena manuscript (Gaster 1897). They disagreed about the representative character of this work: Harkavy and Lévi considered it marginal and late, a fantasy of an 11th–13th century author in southern Italy or Sicily.

On the contrary, Gaster took it as relevant to the Jewish image of Alexander and pre-dating the version of the

Alexander Romance incorporated in the *Yosippon* 10 (a Hebrew compendium of Jewish history now attributed to the first half of the 10th century: see Börner-Klein and Zuber 2010: 142–50). It does not seem that the discussion has advanced much since then (Kazis 1962: 33–35, Reich 1972, and Dönitz 2011: 29–30 remain not committed; Stone 2008: 235–36 underlines the difference with the three other Hebrew medieval *Romances*. Kłęczar 2019: 24, 29–30, 155, 160–63, writes that “Gaster’s theory might well be true. Still, at this particular stage of research, the question of the dating of this text must remain unsolved.” The interpretation proposed in the present article, if considered acceptable, would give weight to Gaster’s opinion.

82. Reich 1972: 80–85.

83. Cf. Peltonen 2019: 57–64; Amitay 2012; Kłęczar 2019 with bibliography.

84. The others, some of which have a markedly Jewish focus, are: the visit to Jerusalem; the dialogue with the Indian sages; the journey to the region of darkness; the Amazons; the ascent into the air; the descent into the sea; Alexander and King Kazia; Alexander and the bones of Jeremiah; Alexander and the throne of Solomon.

85. The prophetic character of Alexander was eventually elaborated by Nizāmī in his *Iqbāl-nāma*, the more mystical of the two poems of his *Iskandarnāma*. He mentions having used, among others, unspecified “Jewish sources” (Manteghi 2018: 79; cf. Casari 2011). The question of the contribution of Jewish traditions to Nizāmī’s version should be re-examined in the future.

86. Weitzmann 1979: no. 547; Toynbee and Painter 1986: 21–22, nos. 79–80.

87. “The Merchant and the Spirit” according to Marshak 2002: 63–64, but Semenov’s interpretation (Semenov 1996: 97–104) seems more convincing to us.

88. Marshak 2002: 133–37, fig. 86.

89. Among the representations of Alexander himself, two 8th-century textiles (from the Washington Textile Museum, inv. 11.18, and the Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. 1959.123) show a double victorious Alexander, striding in different directions, one on a white, and the other on a black horse: Shepherd 1971; Vidal-Naquet 1988.

90. Marshak 1986: 37; Marshak 2017: 79.

91. See e.g. Ameisenowa 1939.

92. Forthcoming study.

93. Cf. Leonhardt-Balzer 2020.

94. See Tigchelaar 1999 and Penner 2020.

95. Cf. Estes 2020.

96. See Scafi 2006.

97. Lutraan 2006: 149–50, C. 151, fig. 4, after Morey 1959: pl. VIII, no. 47. An interesting example of the automatism in recognizing the Paradise and the Tree of Knowledge surrounded by two characters is given by the sardonyx in the Cabinet des Médailles

(Bibliothèque Nationale de France, camée 27, online <http://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/ark:/12148/c33gbdm0c>): an ancient Roman gem illustrating Athena and Poseidon founding the city of Athens. In the 13th century, the two were interpreted as Adam and Eve around the Tree of Knowledge; an inscription quoting Gn. 3:6 was added. See Aghion and Hellmann 1988: 52–55, no. 6a.

98. Grenet 2013.

99. Hajime 2019: 114.

100. Bremmer 1999; Noort 1999.

101. Van den Broek 1972; Lecocq 2012.

102. Cf. Niehoff 1996; Lecocq 2014.

103. See e.g. Goukowsky 1981.

104. Coomaraswamy 1931; Peterson 2011–2012.

105. For example on a miniature from a manuscript of Nizāmī from Herat, at the end of the fifteenth century, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1937.24. Online <<https://asia.si.edu/object/F1937.24>>.

106. Grenet 2005.

107. Prigent 1991.

108. Cf. Roux 1973; Roux and Marcadé 1977.

109. Thomas 1970.

110. Britt and Boustani 2017; Balty 2018.

111. Zand 2000: 532.

112. Kelvan 1979, where the inscriptions were mistakenly identified as Hebrew; Grenet 1984: 187–93, 327.

113. For a theory (admittedly not much substantiated) according to which Jews had a pivotal role in the Bactrian glass production and the introduction of this technology in China, see Kurinsky 1991: 155–56, 280–92. For an overview of evidence (mainly archaeological) of Jewish communities in Iran and Central Asia, see Shenkar 2014b.

114. Grenet 1996; Yoshida 1996; la Vaissière 2005: 85–90.

115. Jettmar and Kwasman 1987.

116. Yoshida 2019.

117. Sachau 1910: 206.

118. The idea of a Pahlavi version underlying the Syriac version was for a long time accepted on the basis of Nöldeke 1890. The argument rests on the recognition, or non-recognition, of a Pahlavi intermediary between Greek and Syriac spellings of proper names. Among recent or relatively recent contributions, see in particular, *contra*: Ciancaglini 2001; Ciancaglini 2015; Hämeen-Anttila 2018: 45–51. *Pro*: van Bladel 2007; Manteghi 2018: 10–45. In India, Bhasa’s poem from 630 in praise of King Harshavardhana shows that stories from the *Romance* (in this case, Alexander forbidden to enter the kingdom of the Amazons) were known at that time, presumably in a Sanskrit version (Szalac 2012: 337).

119. Shenkar 2014.

120. Grenet 2020.

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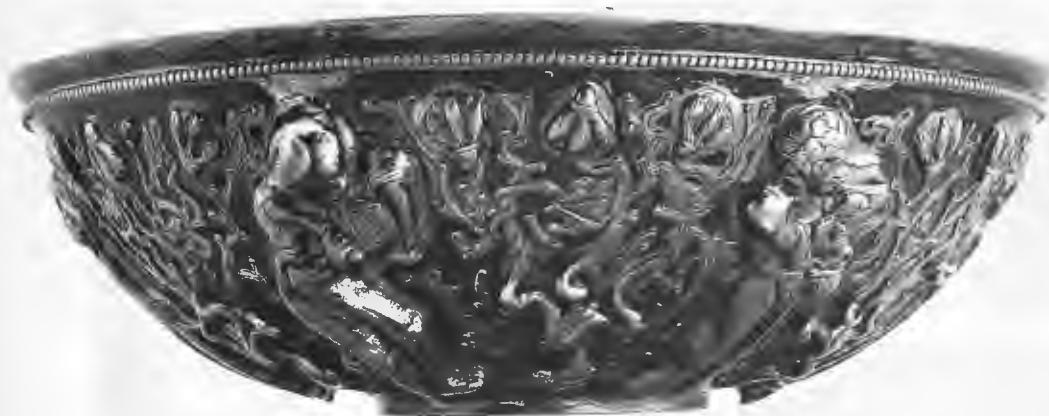
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Fig. 1a. Silver bowl from Lhasa, 21 x 6.5 cm, end of the 5th-6th century C.E. Private collection, exhibited in the Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo. Photograph courtesy of Makiko Tsumura. The fish pond on the bottom and the central scene, with Alexander drinking the Water of Life and harvesting the Tree of Life.



1.



2.



3.

Fig. 1b. Silver bowl from Lhasa, 21 x 6.5 cm, end of the 5th-6th century C.E. Private collection, exhibited in the Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo. Photographs courtesy of Makiko Tsumura. Lateral views with: 1. the priest-drummer and Alexander drinking the Water of Life; 2. Alexander drinking the Water of Life and Alexander harvesting the Tree of Life; 3. the repeated figure of Alexander drinking the Water of Life and the Indian amphora-bearer.

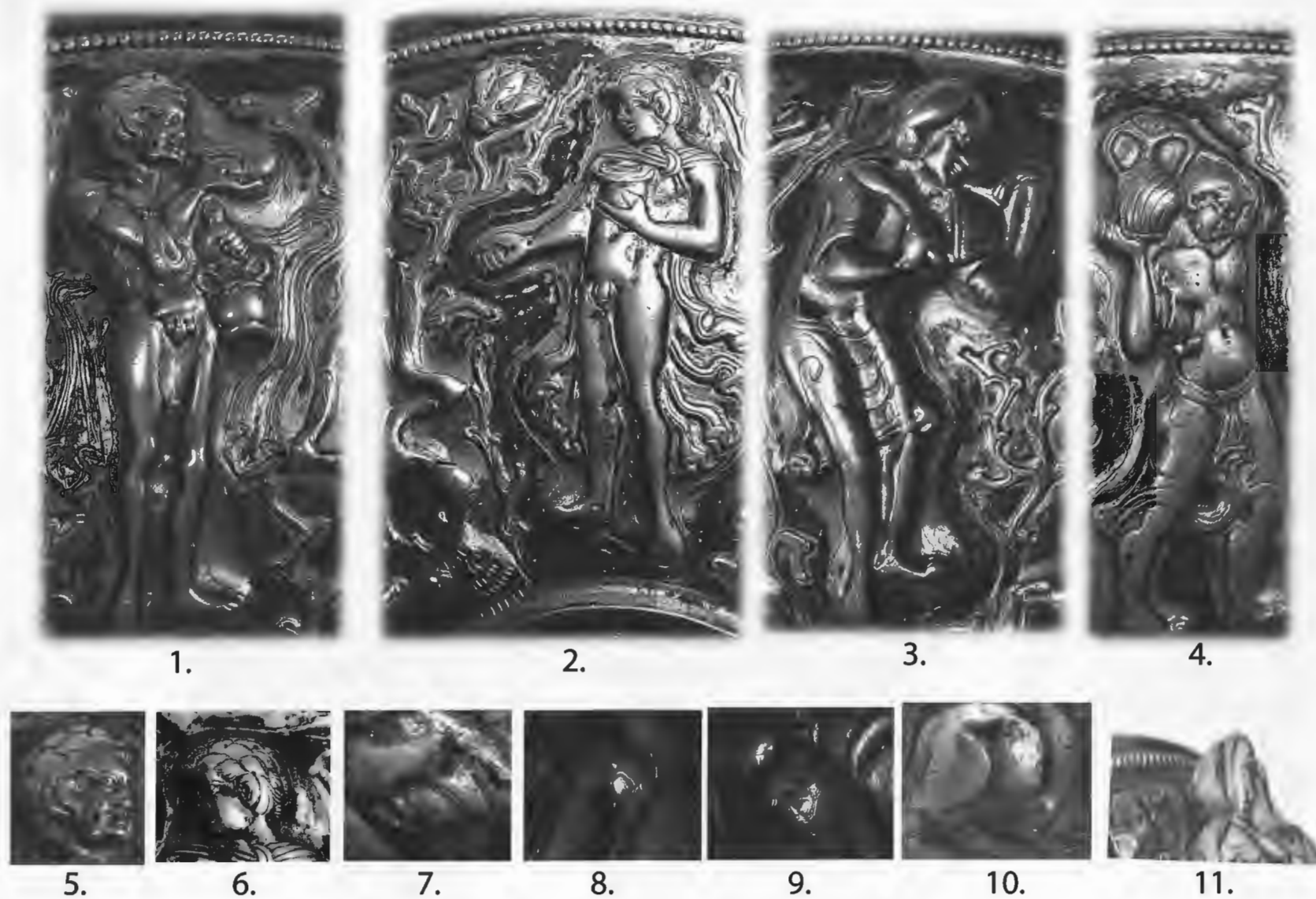


Fig. 1c. Silver bowl from Lhasa, 21 x 6.5 cm, end of the 5th-6th century C.E. Private collection, exhibited in the Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo. Photographs courtesy of Makiko Tsumura. The characters on the bowl: 1. Alexander drinking the Water of Life (repeated); 2. Alexander harvesting the Tree of Life; 3. the priest-drummer; 4. the



Fig. 1d. Silver bowl from Lhasa, 21 x 6.5 cm, end of the 5th-6th century C.E. Details related to the Tree of Life and the containers: 1-2. the Paradisiac birds; 3. the Tree of Life between the main two Alexander figures; 4-7. variations of Tree of Life; 8-9. bowl and aspersion of the repeated figure of Alexander drinking the Water of Life; 10. the amphora of the Indian bearer (repeated identically); 11. the hands of Alexander harvesting the incense. Private collection, exhibited in the Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo. Photographs courtesy of Makiko Tsumura.



Fig. 2. Silver bowl from Kustanai (Turgai, Kazakhstan), supposed to depict scenes from Euripides, 15.5 x 5.2 cm, 4th-5th century C.E. (?). Kept in the Hermitage Museum (S-62). Photo after Smirnov 1909: no. 284.



Fig. 3. Silver bowl probably found in the Perm region (Russia), 14.5 x 4.6 x 0.4 cm, 5th century C.E., from the former Stroganoff collection in the Hermitage Museum (S-75). Photos after Schulz 2019: fig. 1a; Staviskiy 1960; and Smirnov 1909: no. 67.



Fig. 4. Silver bowl from Chilek (near Samarkand), 19.7 x 6.5 cm, last third of the 5th century C.E. Kept in Samarkand, State Museum of History and Culture of Uzbekistan. Photograph courtesy of Rocco Rante.



Fig. 5. Silver dish, the al-Sabah Collection, inv. LNS 1372 M (*AHE* no. 72), 18.5 x 4.5 cm, inscribed in Brahmi in the 4th-5th century C.E. Photo courtesy of the al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait.



Fig. 6. Bowl from Vereino (Perm, Russia), 14 x 4.7 cm, 5th century C.E. (?). Kept in the Hermitage Museum (S-8). Photo courtesy of the Hermitage Museum.



Fig. 7. Silver stem cup from Bartym, 8.5 x 10 x 10 cm, 5th-6th century c.e.. Kept in the Moscow Historical Museum (GIM 83747 OK 14170). Photographs courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 8. Gilded silver bowl said to come from Tibet, 17.1 cm, 4th-5th century c.e. Sold in *Indian and Southeast Asia Art*, sale Catalogue, New York: Christie's March 27, 2003: 79, lot 78.



Fig. 9. Bronze statuette from Begram, room 13, 13.5 x 3.5 cm, 1st century B.C.E.–1st century C.E. Kept in the Kabul National Museum inv. 57–3–9; cf. Tissot 2006: 284 below. After Hiebert and Cambon 2011: 208, fig. 115.



Fig. 10. Bronze statuette of Alexander from Herculaneum, 48.5 cm, 1st century B.C.E.–1st century C.E., supposed to reproduce a model from the 4th century B.C.E. Kept in the Museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli, inv. 4996. Photograph courtesy of the Museum (cf. <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/objekt/13169>).



Fig. 11. Terracotta heads from the 5th–7th centuries Afrasiab, compared with Hellenistic portraits of youths [Vergina] and of Alexander the Great. Nos. 1–4 are in the State Museum of History and Culture of Uzbekistan, Samarkand; nos. 5–8, the Hermitage Museum. Photos nos. 1 and 4 courtesy of Laurianne Sève-Martinez, MAFOUZ-Sogdiane; no. 2 after Pugachenkova and Rempel' 1965: fig. 32; no. 3 after Pugachenkova and Rempel' 1961: 44; photos nos. 5–8. Courtesy of Andrej Omel'chenko (Hermitage).



Fig. 12. Ossuary from Khantepa near Shahr-i Sabz, baked clay, 41 x 28 x 20 cm, c. 7th century C.E. Photograph Frantz Grenet.

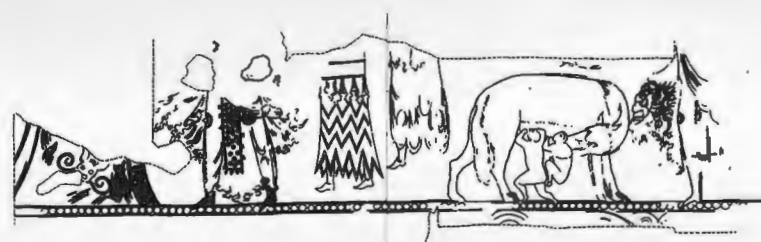


Fig. 14. Painting in the corridor of the palace of Shahrستان (Ustrushana), end of the 8th century C.E. After Sokolovskii 2009: fig. 6.



Fig. 13. Painting from Panjikent, Temple II, Northern chapel: worshippers (actors ?), 6th century C.E. After Marshak and Raspópova 1996: fig. 4.

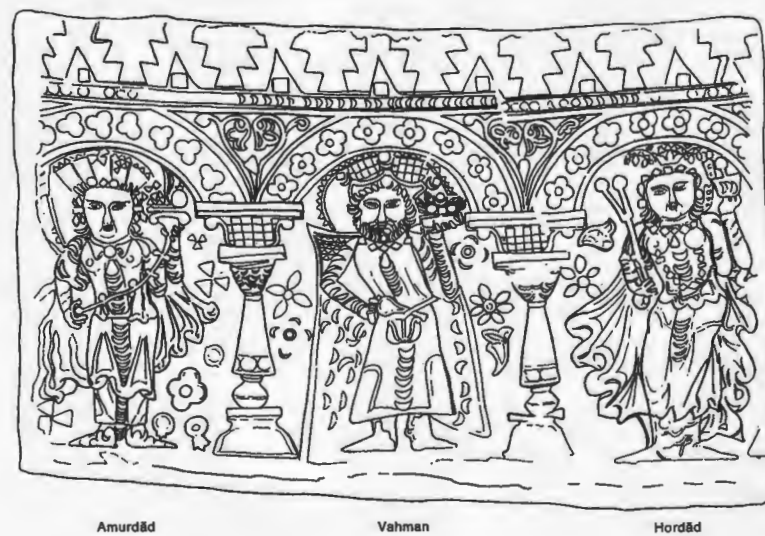


Fig. 15. Ossuary from Ishtikhan, baked clay, 49 x 29.5 x 25 cm, c. 7th century C.E. Kept in the Institute of Fine Arts, Tashkent. Document Frantz Grenet.



Fig. 16. Silver cup with gilding discovered in a hoard in Tomyz' (Lytka, Kirov, Russia), 10.5 x 6.7 cm, 8th century C.E. (?). Kept in the Hermitage. Drawing after Marshak 2017: fig. 53 (cf. <https://eurasiansilver.com/portfolio1335/>).



Fig. 17. Silver plate from Vereino (Perm, Russia; then in the Stroganoff collection), 17.6 cm, 7th century C.E. (?). Kept in the Hermitage S-7. After Trever and Lukonin no. 37, tab. 108 (cf. <https://eurasiansilver.com/portfolio617/>).



Fig. 18. *Boswellia serrata*: the tree in Udaipur (Rajasthan, India) photographed on the 6 October 2014 by Ori Fragman-Sapir (<http://www.plantsoftheworldonline.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:127067-1>); the flowers (<https://flipper.diff.org/app/items/info6943>); the incense (<https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/boswellia-serrata-11763242173.html>).



Fig. 19. Fragmentary clay amphora recomposed from four sherds, from Panjikent, complex V/2, 10.2 x 18.2 x 0.8-1 cm, 6th century C.E., with two possibilities of reconstruction according to Marshak 2012: 293, fig. 57.



Fig. 20. Glass amphoriskos with irregular ribs, 14.6 cm H, 7.9 x 7.5 x 4.1 cm Diam, 3rd century C.E.. Kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Inv. 81.10.172, Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1881. Photograph courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 21. Part of a Roman painting from the Villa Doria Pamphili on the Janiculate Hill in Rome, 21.5 x 65 cm, c. 50 C.E. Now kept in the British Museum 1873,0208.1. Photograph courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 22. Limestone relief from the Chakhil-i-Ghoundi stupa in Hadda (Gandhara), 2nd-3rd century C.E. Kept in the Musée Guimet, MG 17191. After Cambon 2004: fig. 94.



Fig. 23. Relief from the Bharhut stupa (central India), 1st century B.C.E. After Marcel-Dubois 1941: pl. IX:3.



Fig. 24. Pale green glass bottle from Ismant el-Kharab (Dakhleh oasis, Egypt. Exc. inv. no. 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/6), 27.6 x 14.1 cm (max. diam.), 4th century C.E. After Smythe 2008: no. 26.



Fig. 25. The Riha silver paten with gilding and niello, diam. 35 cm., 565–578 c.e., discovered near Antioch. Kept in the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Byzantine Collection, BZ.1924.5. After Weitzmann 1979: no. 547.

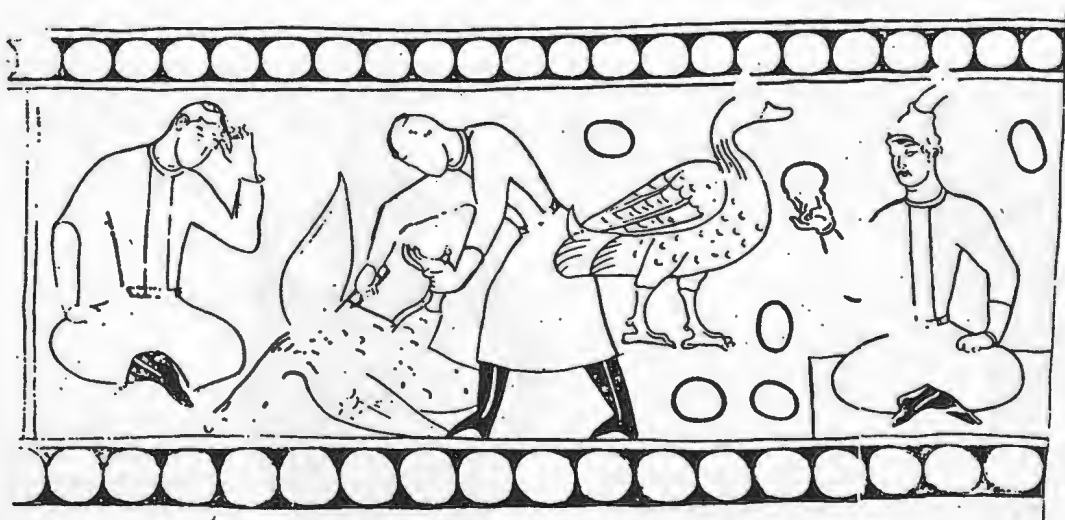


Fig. 26. Painting from Panjikent, Room 1/XXI, "The Goose (Duck) with the Golden Eggs," first quarter of the 8th century c.e. After Marshak 2002: fig. 86.



Fig. 27. Fragment of a gold-glass bowl with Latin inscription DIG [. . .]AS [. . .]MICORUM PIE [. . .], 3rd-4th century C.E. (?). Kept in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana inv. 231. After Lutraan 2006: fig. 4.



Fig. 28. Silver dish with gilding, 21.7 x 21.6 x 4.7 cm, Eastern/Iranian, 4th-6th century C.E. Kept in the Miho Museum. Photo courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 29. Circular marble plate, 70 cm x 2-2.5 cm, with an archaistic representation of King David according to 2 Samuel 6.13-23, supposed to have been made in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 2nd-3rd century C.E.. Emerged in Ascona in 1962, now kept in the private



Fig. 30. Fragment of wooden panel from Kafir-kala (Rēwdād) near Samarkand, 6th century C.E.. Kept in Samarkand, Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. Photograph Frantz Grenet.