

II Archaeology and Anthropology in the Northern Areas

1 Introduction

Besides the pilgrims' accounts and Chinese historical records, another group of monuments turned out to be a major source of information about the historical development in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan, a region which until 2009 was called the "Northern Areas of Pakistan". These are the open air rock art galleries located directly on the routes between High Asia and the Lower Indus river plains and which, to some extent, coincide with the 751 kilometer-long Karakorum Highway, colloquially designated 'KKH'. The highway was opened in 1978 for the international traffic and finally completed in December 1979.¹ In this region we find one of the world's most extensive collections of ancient images and inscriptions carved into steep rock faces, on reefs and on boulders, which because of their special glossy surface of desert varnish are suited for artistic expression. There are parts of the Indus gorge and its side valleys, where there are no such rock surfaces – or only few – to which engravings or paintings could be applied. These rock art galleries are unique in their iconographic and cultural diversity and historical expressiveness. The Russian Vladim A. Ranov enthusiastically considered the newly discovered rock art province, "that nowhere in Asia was it formerly possible to identify such distinct and well-defined historical groupings of petroglyphs and to relate them to individual stages in the development of one of the routes in the Great Silk Road" – its 'tavern register', as Jettmar wittily described its wealth of imagery and epigraphic record. "Not a single other Asian region knows such a variety of subjects, or such a great number of rock engravings for that matter".² Regarding the earlier recording of Asian petroglyphs he stated, that the new rock art province will be better documented than those in the other regions of the Central Asian mountain belt. Due to its geographical variety the high mountain region never showed a monolithic historical unit or homogeneous civilization, but instead revealed a manifold differentiated historical cosmos with borders and far-reaching contacts which underwent constant metamorphosis. The exemplary importance of the rock art as a historical source is invaluable, because it together with the epigraphic records of the Kashmir bronzes and the famous Gilgit manuscripts represent the only available medium to reconstruct the historical and cultural development of the region, in particular the establishment of the dynasty of a local dynasty, the Palola Šāhi, which governed the kingdom of Bolōr from the fifth to the beginning of the 8th century AD. The epigraphic and iconographic records are a singular witness also to ethnographic, economic, social, religious and artistic issues that otherwise are nearly unknown. They offer also insight into the cross-cultural configuration

1 King 1989.

2 Ranov 1989, 39. On the distribution/absence of petroglyphs, see Allchin 1987, 139

of the different route networks, thus allowing us to see the exchange of concepts and visual forms that were channelled along these arterial roads.³ Assemblages of carvings such as those in Yasin clearly represent the southernmost expansion of a Central Asian cultural complex or an identical entity with local elements. On the other hand, the Northern Areas also evidenced the northernmost extension of new elements in the imagery originating from the southern lowlands. Yet, the regions around the lower part of the Upper Indus River valley, Kohistan and Diamer District, the valleys around Gilgit, and Baltistan reveal in their imagery in spite of corresponding motifs and themes a distinct local character and expression, which reflect the ethnic plurality, and diverse cultural and political developments in these regions. But, only a series of systematic excavations in sites could help us to refine the vague chronology still further.

Numerous pictures of strongly simplified animals and humans are found along the belt of the Indus, but also in higher concentrations on rocks around pastures in the higher mountains or along tracks in the side valleys. Apparently, they were produced by herdsmen and hunters; according to the different stages of repatination they can be considered as pertaining to a pastoral tradition, widespread throughout the mountain areas from Central Asia to the Caucasus. Neither the patina nor the simple execution of this kind of images enable sufficient anchoring points for an approximation to particular period. Peter Snoy, a member of the 'German Hindukush Expedition 1955–1956', saw during his ethnological studies in the Bagrot Valley near Gilgit, herdsmen producing images of ibexes still in the same primitive manner.⁴

The images are incised into the rocky slopes and boulders of granite in the Indus gorge, starting at the important river-crossing near Shatial, where the river enters the narrow gorges of Indus Kohistan up to Raikot Bridge, where the river bypasses the Nanga Parbat massif. An ancient path along the left steep bank of the Indus is marked by smaller groups of rock carvings, which mainly originate from post-Buddhist times. Larger accumulations with images of singular mastery and iconographic expression are concentrated around the Partab Bridge and Pari Das on the right bank and on the route leading from the Rondu Gorge to the Alam Bridge, at the junction of the rivers Gilgit and Indus, and farther along the Gilgit River and its side valleys of Ghizer, Yasin, Ishkoman and Hunza. Rock art assemblages are found along the Indus in the Rondu gorge as far as Baltistan, and farther to the east also along the Shyok River and in Kharmang to Ladakh and Western Tibet. Between Shatial and Raikot these carvings line a narrow belt the ancient main route along the right bank of the Indus River. This principal route, as described in detail in the Gazetteer of 1890, was also used by the British military force under the command of Sir George Scott Robertson, later British

3 + Here HH added the following annotation: "Comparable to the milestones along the Roman road system they are archetypal artefacts, a multi-faceted source for the historical routes of travel, toponymy, political history and history of religions." The notes were preceded by a quotation of Filigenzi 2015 with reference to the topographic distribution of the rock-sculptures of Swat.

4 Snoy 1975, 224 fig. 110.

Political Agent at the Gilgit Agency from 1894 to 1896, on his four-day march from the fort of Bunji through Gor and Ges to Thalpan in November 1892.⁵ During the campaign against the Chilas and Thoris with their allied Shinaki tribesmen, which ended in the capture and burning of the town in March 1893,⁶ his *sepoys* had to cross the Indus by raft, since a ferry only existed between Thalpan and Chilas. There by contrast in Medieval times a bridge existed to cross the “Golden River” from the “great city of Silathasa”, as mentioned in the itinerary of the Khotanese Saka from the 10th century.⁷ As in Chilas-Jayachand, important river crossings such as those at Shatial, Basha West, Thor, Hodar [Hodur], Gukona, at the important bridges for the Kashmir-Gilgit transport route at Partab Bridge and Alam at the confluence of Gilgit and Indus or Kuno Das at the confluence of Hunza and Gilgit rivers are marked by assemblages of rock carvings and inscriptions.⁸ Between Shatial and Chilas in the past there was a main route lined with rock carvings and inscriptions on the southern bank of the Indus.⁹

A particularly high concentration of rock carvings exists on a long stretch of ca. 100 kilometres between the mountain-barrier narrowing the Indus gorge west of Shatial and the Raikot Bridge. The centre of these rock art galleries is concentrated in the widened basin of Chilas and on the opposite terraces of Thalpan. There and around other settlements such as Hodar [Hodur] and Thor, at presumed monasteries and important river crossings, larger

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- 5 Gazetteer 1890, route 11 and index map. On Robertson’s campaign against the Chilas and their Shinaki allies mainly from Thor, Darel and Tangir, but also from Sazin, Jalkot and Palas, see the contemporaneous accounts: Robertson 1892, Durand 1899, 280–290, Curzon 2012, 236–239, India Intelligence Branch Division 1907, 31–37 and Bruce 1910, 198–211. Comprehensive: Dani 2001, 263–264, 267. In February 1893 “after a great rising of the Indus valley tribes” and the following besiege of Chilas which resulted in the final defeat of the Shinakis, Chilas was permanently occupied by the British (a garrison of 400 Imperial Kashmiri Service troops) and an assistant political agent was appointed there in the fort. During the burning of Chilas, the mosques were spared, to respect “the religious sentiments of the people” (Robertson 1892). The final occupation of this strategical position opened – in addition to the Kashmir-Gilgit road – a second and shorter connection with the lowlands, the Abbottabad-Chilas road through the uplands of Kaghan and across the Babusar Pass.
- 6 According to Biddulph 1880, 15, the community of Chilas embraces six valleys and “can furnish 1500 fighting men”. The town itself has 140 houses. Mulla Ata Muhammad 1876 in Gazetteer 1890, route no. 2, p. 4 and route no. 11, p. 39 mentions the number of 1200 houses with a fort. Curzon 2012, 240 refers to 800 houses in “the main village of Chilas”. The British fort was built by the 23rd Pioneers in 1894 [+ N.B.: Curzon 2012 is a new edition of earlier texts by Lord Curzon edited by D. Anjaria].
- 7 Bailey 1936, 262.
- 8 Deloche 1973 and 1984. Jettmar described the different traditional possibilities to cross the Indus by raft, “cradle bridge” rope-bridge or suspension bridge as noted by the Chinese monks Faxian (Beal 1869, 21) and Xuanzang (Beal 1884, I: 133) and girder bridge: Jettmar 1978.
- 9 + Also here HH wrote down some notes: “Shinaki republic of Chilas and Gor. Chilas Wazarat included also the villages around Astor.”

accumulations of carvings are found. Other concentrations of early prehistoric petroglyphs seem to mark hunter camps or communal meeting places for festivals of ritual procedures. Smaller clusters of petroglyphs, normally not of such elaborate execution, also occur along the ancient pathways in the side valleys of the Indus, such as Buto Gah and Thak Nala and in higher mountain basins. The more favourable environmental conditions along the river gorges of Indus Kohistan, an area with a higher degree of precipitation which favoured dense vegetation, prevented ancient peoples from producing petroglyphs. Their absence on the steep rocky slopes of the narrow gorges west of Shatial can be explained by the fact, that this part of the Indus Valley was not used as a main route to the southern plains.

There are also areas with rock paintings, such as in the rock shelters around the Kotah Valley in Swat.¹⁰ In the Northern Areas until now only few painted rock shelters have been recorded in the Khanbari Valley, at Gitile near Gorabad, near Barikot,¹¹ at Gurikot in Astor, and in Kharmang in Baltistan. Smaller sites of rupestrial art are found around Gilgit, such as Kuno Das, Barmas, Sakarkoi, Guwachi, and in Ishkoman. The so-called “Sacred Rocks” of Haldeikish near the village of Ganesh in the Hunza Valley, with their carvings showing ibexes, hunting scenes, and inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Sogdian, Bactrian, Tibetan and Chinese represent one of the most important epigraphical monuments in the western Karakorum.¹² It is also the northernmost site with such an assemblage of petroglyphs. The other important sites with concentrations of inscriptions are located around the Alam Bridge and at Shatial in Indus Kohistan, a district belonging to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the former North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Found at this important river crossing were approximately 600 inscriptions in Iranian besides 15 inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and 410 in Brāhmī. With more than 550 in Sogdian, nine in Bactrian and two in Middle Persian and Parthian respectively, they represent the most important Iranian epigraphical complex in the Northern Areas. Altogether more than 50,000 rock carvings and 5000 inscriptions are estimated to exist in this mountain region. Until 2009 ca. 288 archaeological sites including 151 rock carving assemblages had been surveyed. These sites comprise 6854 stones and rock faces with 44,387 petroglyphs enclosing 5259 inscriptions, and their number is increasing every year as a result of further exploration.

10 Olivieri – Vidale 2006. [+ Rock painting zones have been documented also outside Swat, for example in the Oghi District of Hazara Division in the Black Mountains (see Payr 2012) and Mt. Karamar in Swabi (Olivieri 2012)].

11 [+ Not to be confused with the ancient site of Barikot in Swat, or the later village of Barikot in the Kumrath valley (Panjikora, Dir), or modern Barikot on the Kunar River in Afghanistan. The long fortune of the toponym has been addressed in Callieri – Olivieri 2021, 357]. Rock painting zones have been documented also outside Swat, for example in the Oghi District of Hazara Division in the Black Mountains (see Payr 2012) and Mt. Karamar in Swabi (Olivieri 2012).

12 The rock carving site of Haldeikish was shown to Jettmar and Dani by Suleiman Shah in 1979 during their visit to Hunza: Dani 1985a.

A world-wide phenomenon in prehistoric art is designated as ‘cup-marks’ or ‘cupules’, hemispherical or conical percussions that appear on rock surfaces or on megaliths. They are arranged in rows or sometimes grouped to geometrical figures or complex networks with interconnecting grooves on mainly horizontal rock surfaces near carvings. The function of the intentionally made cupules has been attributed to symbolic procedures, but also associated with more utilitarian activities, such as game boards of travellers and shepherds. In the case of cupules inside painted rock-shelters, the cavities may have been used for grinding the pigment. This characteristic variation in rock art is found at many sites along the Upper Indus, but also in Swat in association with painted rock-shelters.¹³ They are found also in the Tanawal Area of Mansehra District, in Sindh and Balochistan.¹⁴ With regard to the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent, J.H. Rivett-Carnac in 1870 for the first time pointed out cup-marks in the Himalayas and Central India and their similarities with other cup-marked rock monuments of the world.¹⁵

In most regions of South Asia where there are suitable rocks, an indigenous tradition in rock art emerged already in the early period of hunter-gatherer, as in Balochistan, Sindh, Central Asia and in the high mountain regions of Pakistan. The hot and desert-like sandy environment in parts of the Upper Indus region produced the typical dark brown varnish-like coating, covering the surface of the rocks, which easily could be engraved with pointed stone instruments or metal chisels. The technique is based on the fact that percussion creates capillary fissures on the rock surface, making it appear lighter in colour at the point of application. This effect is most striking on rocks of the Upper Indus region, which through their dark-brown shiny surface virtually attracted early artists ever since the Stone Age to apply this technique. The ca. 1-mm thick desert varnish, also called rock varnish, occurs world-wide on rock surfaces in arid landscapes. It is “neither a weathering rind nor patina, but a unique subaerial sediment from an arid environment that is subject to continuing change”.¹⁶

The techniques usually employed to produce images and inscriptions in these rocks occur also in other rock art provinces in the world.¹⁷ Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar described these

13 Olivieri – Vidale 2004, 140–150, 164–170; Vidale – Olivieri 2005, 451–453; Olivieri 2006, 146–153; Olivieri 2015a, 92–93: The dating of the cup-marks might be attributed to a by far wider chronological range, than has been proposed between 6th–5th century BC and 1st–3rd century AD (ibid. 93). [+ On the cup marks in Sindh, see the most recent publications by Zufikar Ali Kalhoro (e.g. Kalhoro 2018)].

14 Tor Derai, Loralai District, Baluchistan: Qamar 1986, 175 Pl. 53b. – Sindh: Kalhoro 2013b; 2014b.

15 Rivett-Carnac 1877 and 1903. Kumaon Himalaya: Mathpal 1995, 66 fig. 56a–b.

16 The process which formed desert varnish is intensively discussed by Biedermann 1976, 143–144; Whalley 1983 and Garvie – Burt – Buseck 2008.

17 Dunbar 1941, 19–25. See also Engelmayer 1965, 59–60. In his study on rock-art of Lower Nubia J.H. Dunbar presented a list of ten techniques which could have been utilized [+ this sentence was originally in the main text].

different techniques applied for Indian rock engravings, with stone implements comprising ‘battering’ or hammering, or ‘bruising’ by a more cautious procedure of engraving lines formed by pecking, mere ‘grooving’, and ‘incising’ with sharp stones.¹⁸ For the production of a group of animal images the earliest artists used different techniques: After the draughtsman had bruised or incised the contour of the figure, he filled the interior body by hammering or abrading the patina and grinding the deepened surface. Metal chisels seem to have been used since the early first millennium BC, especially for the delicate Buddhist images and inscriptions. The most elaborate masterworks of the Buddhist period, the outstanding stereotyped images of Buddha and stupas as well as particularly the jātakas and episodes of Buddha’s life, must have produced by using stencils or tracings drawn out in Indian ink on paper, cloth or silk fabric. Their use for designing cave paintings is known from Turfan, where this kind of artist’s aid with pieces of tracings were found in the corridor near the “library” at Kocho.¹⁹

There are only very few places, where drawings were applied to the rock surface in mineral paint, such as in Khanbari Valley and Gor. Their isolated occurrence there has been explained by the lack of caves or rock-shelters in the region between Shatial and Raikot. In the mountains between Malakand and Swat painted shelters ²⁰ represent an artistic phenomenon, which complement the extraordinary devotional rock reliefs of late Buddhism.²¹

2 Early Archaeological and Historical Research in the Northern Areas

The magnificent Buddhist reliefs near the village of Manthal above Skardu [Table 34], the capital of Baltistan, and of Naupura in the Kar Gah (Kar Valley), around 7 km west of Gilgit, were known to the scientific world since the years 1836 and 1876 respectively. The huge granite rock of Manthal is located at the foot of a scree at the outlet of the Satpara Valley, which descends from the plateau formed by the picturesque Satpara Lake to the Skardu Plain to the south. The 6-meter high rock marks also one of the ancient main routes connecting Baltistan with Astor across the Deosai Plateau. The relief displays a sitting Buddha surrounded by a square array of twenty similarly depicted, seated Buddhas in earth-touching pose, forming a mandala (or *dkyil 'khor* as mentioned in the second Tibetan inscription). The accompanying Tibetan inscriptions were noticed by Godfrey T. Vigne, the first European to reach Baltistan in 1835, as early as 1836 and again during his second visit in 1838.²² In his *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo* he described the granite rock with “a sitting figure in relief of Siva or Mahadeo, and an inscription in the character known as the “old Buddhu stone [...] calling upon passers-by

18 Wakankar 1984. See also Jettmar 2002, 86–87.

19 Ruin K: Le Coq 1913, 8 pl. 45 e. Le Coq 1924a [+ ?], 7–8.

20 Olivieri 2015a.

21 Filigenzi 2015.

22 Vigne 1836, 1838 and 1844 vol. II, 261.

to pay their adoration, and to keep the little lamps alight in the niches cut in the stone". In two reports published in 1836 and 1838 he presented for the first time a facsimile of one of the four inscriptions "at the base of a mutilated image of Buddha", and after his second visit at the granite rock he reproduced a new copy with a translation by Alexander Csoma de Körös, the pioneer of Tibetan studies in Ladakh, who lived there between 1820 and 1830. Durand published a photo of the rock in 1899.

However, western learned society owes the first more detailed notion of this extraordinary monument to a most remarkable traveller, Lady Jane Ellen Duncan. She was born in 1848 in Glasgow and died in Naples in 1909 after becoming ill on board the steamer during her last travel from Bombay to Mombasa in East Africa, and from there to her home in England. She was "of Welsh descent, so that she inherited the Celtic enthusiasm and idealism combined with the industry and tenacity of purpose of the Lowland Scot". Her report *A Summer Ride through Western Tibet*, the first edition published in 1906, was praised as "one of the most delightful books of travel it has ever been our good fortune to come across".²³ During her first visit in Skardu in 1904 she recorded a careful description of the monument, the about 6-metre high Buddha at Sadpor (present-day Satpara). She also made new copies of the three Tibetan inscriptions, which are carved below the relief of the Buddha seated on a lotus, surrounded by twenty likewise enthroned smaller Buddhas, forming a square, and on each side of the square flanked by two colossal Bodhisattvas. After her return to London Lady Duncan submitted the copies of the inscriptions to scholars in London and Paris, but lastly she had to contact Francke in Ladakh, who immediately sent "a competent Tibetan from Khalatse to Sadpor" along the rough and arduous tracks through the river gorges and across the Chorbat La, to make new transcriptions for the following translations and commentaries.²⁴ She also noted the corresponding carving of a seated Buddha with a standing Bodhisattva on each side of him, but this part of the left end of the rock, there more than 3.50 m high and at a right angle of the front relief, is overgrown with lichen, so that this carving is not easily seen.

Lady Duncan described also the ancient dam of the Satpara Lake with its double sluice-gate regulating the outlet of the "Sadpor" rivulet. According to local information, the upper gate was originally decorated with two small Buddha figures, which had been removed by a Gurkha regiment when it left Skardu years before her visit. She was also told by locals that the barrage and the sluice-gates were built by the last Buddhist Raja of Skardu, who according

23 Her memoir is shortly described in Duncan 1906.

24 Durand 1900, 128 with fig.; Duncan 1906, 297–303 with frontispiece. The Tibetan inscriptions "from not later than 1000 A.D." with the new translation of Francke were included (Duncan 1906, 300–302). See also De Filippi 1924, 66–68, Francke 1926, II 186, Biasutti – Dainelli 1925, 74–75 pl. 14. The inscriptions no. I–IV have been recently transcribed and translated by Schuh 2013. A photo of the Buddha rock from 1956 is published in: Gattinger 1961, 19 fig. 3.

to Hashmatullah Khan²⁵ could be identified as the Maqpon Bokha.²⁶ He ruled, according to his record, between 1490 to 1515 and is said to have established Skardu, thus being the real founder of the state of Baltistan. The story whether the damming of the Satpara Stream was his work “will probably remain obscure for ever”. The damming of the Satpara Stream was assigned by Hashmatullah Khan to ‘Alī Sher Khān Anchan, the great king of Skardu (1595–1633). It was built of “large stones and hard lime mortar and had three openings for drawing water”. As “a magnificent feat of engineering, this dam stands to this day as a tribute to the effort and industry of this great ruler”, but later “it has fallen in disrepair”.²⁷ Obviously according to the vague historical sources and the poor architectural description, the hydrology works at Satpara seem to have been constructed in Buddhist times and enlarged and connected with the irrigation system in Skardu in a later period, perhaps under the rule of ‘Alī Sher Khān.²⁸ He founded several settlements and built fortresses on main routes, such as in Kharmang leading into the Skardu plain, for the protection of his kingdom. The large fort Chensa Nala, the snow leopard’s place, above Lake Satpara had to close the access of the route traversing the Deosai Plain to Skardu. Alī Sher’s Ladakhi queen Mandok Gyalmo is praised with having erected Mandok Fort below Kharpochea Fort at Skardu and to have secured its water-supply by planning the water channel with an aqueduct built of huge cyclopean stones.²⁹ The legendary Raja of the Maqpon Dynasty, who founded several settlements and built fortresses for the protection of his kingdom, among others, in Kharmang, was famous for his victorious conquests of Ladakh and Dardistan. Therefore the title *anchan* i.e. Azam, “The Great”, was bestowed upon him.³⁰ His name is glorified also because he established friendly diplomatic

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- 25 Al Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah Khan, *Mukhtasar Tarikh-i-Jammu riyasat hai maftuvah Maharaja Gulab Singh Bahadur wali Jammu wa Kashmir waqsaya Tibet* (A short history of Jammu and Kashmir and other conquered states and of the area of Tibet), part IV and VI, was first published in Urdu at Lucknow 1939 [Reprinted under the title *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, Lahore 1969]. It is the most important source about the history of Baltistan; see the translated version by A. Nayyar: Hashmatullah Khan 1987 [1939]. He served as governor, *wazir-i-wazarat*, of Ladakh and Baltistan for the Dogra government of Jammu-Kashmir, first in Gilgit and later in Leh. He wrote his narration in Lucknow after his research in Baltistan, including the *Shahgharnama*, a chronicle in Persian from the court of Imam Quli Khan of Shigar from ca. 1700. Dani 2001, 167, concerning the history of Gilgit notes, that this part “is very brief and faulty”, based “on his old incomplete notes” without any later review.
- 26 Duncan 1906, 306. After Hashmatullah Khan 1987 [1939], 9–10 Bokha shifted his residence from Shikri to Fort Kharpochea, towering above his new capital Skardu. See also Dani 2001, 218.
- 27 Hashmatullah Khan 1987 [1939], 19.
- 28 See also Emerson 1984, 105 footnote 18.
- 29 A short description of the Kharpochu Fort and the construction of the water channel with the aqueduct of 2½ m length by the queen Gul Mandok is given by Dani 1989, 118–120.
- 30 Duncan 1906, 303–307. Francke 1926, II 186–187. The date for ‘Alī Sher Khān Anchan’s reign as maintained by Hashmatullah 1987 [1939] 1987, 19 and Dani 2001, 221 is historically not reliably tenable. The accession to the throne is dated to 1591 and the year of his death is indicated for 1622/23; see also Schuh 2011, 410–413.

relations to the ruler of Gilgit, on the one hand, and to the great Moghul's court in Delhi, on the other hand, after emperor Akbar had conquered Kashmir in 1589, and he was thus able to repulse an invasion of emperor Jahangir's army. The relief of the eight-foot-high, standing Buddha at Naupura – also known by its ancient Sanskrit name Yagini Pitho – below the site of a Buddhist monastery displaying “four Chogtens (*mChod-rten*) close together in a line” was first described in detail by John Biddulph in 1876.³¹ But it was mentioned even earlier by Muhammad Siyar, a chronicler at the Chitrali court, in his *Sha-nama*, which was completed in ca. 1812.³² In this epic poem about a hunting party which was performed by Guri Tham, the ruler of Gilgit, for Muhtaram Shah II, the ruler of Drasan in Upper Chitral, a “terrifying and wonderful statue”, a “picture of a giant”, which “is the same as the idol of Bamiyan”, was shown to the Shaheen Shah in a valley near Gilgit. The relief in local traditions was regarded as a giant female demon banned into the rock by a holy person or as a giantess called Yāthini,³³ the sister of the cannibal king of Gilgit, the fabulous Śirī Badāt, a descendent of evil spirits or giants. According to this local legend his residence was in a castle near Naupur, from where his rule extended as far as Astor and Chitral. Ghulam Muhammad conveys another variant of this legend. Yāthini, being a man-eater, “was in the habit of killing and devouring half as many of the men as happened to pass by (the rock), leaving the other half unmolested. The princess continued this practise [...] until a certain Danyal named Soglio [...] devised a successful plan of murdering her in order to save his beloved countrymen”. There are different versions about this either demonised or as supernatural being, idolized tyrant, who according to Hashmatullah Khan's chronicle lived as the last indigenous Buddhist ruler in Gilgit from 1080–1120, obviously a fictitious date.³⁴ The rather soft modelling of the figure's body suggested also an interpretation that the figure should represent the daughter of Buddha.³⁵

31 Naupura-Buddha: Biddulph 1880, 108–112 with fig. page 108–109. The relief is mentioned by March 1876, 129, Tanner 1881, 23, Knight 1893, 89, and Durand 1894, 593. A photo of the Buddha-rock is published by Gerard – Holdich – Wahab – Alcock 1897, 33. See also Shastri 1939, 4 pl. 1429, referring to the “old Sanskrit name of the place *Yoginipitho*”.

32 This information is indebted to A. Cacopardo. See also Holzwarth 1998, 318–314 and 2006, 180.

33 Ghulam Muhammad 1907, 106. “The stone figure of Yāthini”, the giantess and sister of Śirī Badāt, the man-eater is also mentioned by Haughton 1913, 165–166, 178–188. Versions of the local legend are reported by Leitner 1893, 9–16, Lorimer 1939, 272 and Trevelyan 1987, 83: The female demon used to prey on men; “one day she pounced on a holy man, who turned her into stone – hence the Buddha”. See also Grierson 1905.

34 Stellrecht [Müller-Stellrecht] 1980, 112–118. Dani 2001, 169. Mock 1998 interpreted the legend of the Cannibal King, who with help of his daughter was overthrown by Azur Jamšer, a descendant of the Shigar dynasty, as “a local version of a widely known South Asian tale”, derived from the jāataka Brahmadata. The legend could be explained “as an allegory of the change from Buddhism/Hinduism to Islam”. See also Schomberg 1935, 249–250. Willson 1999, 262–267 published an original Burushaski text with an English translation of the story of the evil king of Gilgit Śirī Badāt and his daughter Nuri Bano, told by Khisrau Khan in 1988.

35 Jettmar 1981a, 310.

The rupestrian art galleries along the Upper Indus by contrast were neglected by Western archaeological research for nearly another century. The graduate of the École Militaire de Saint Cyr, the Sikh general Claude Court mentions in his historical topography of Swat and the surrounding areas, “the region of Tchêlas, situated on the eastern bank of the Indus”, which by his informants of the 1830ties “is said to be highly remarkable for the number of ruined towns”.³⁶ The ruins could represent the *koṭ*, fortified towns, which are found in the Indus Valley, such as Patelo Kot (Kino Kot) above Hodar [Hodur], at Thor or in the Darel and Tangir valleys. One of the British colonial officers, who contributed to the knowledge of the Northern Areas, Lieutenant Colonel John Biddulph (1840–1921), who was appointed as Officer on Special Duty in the British Gilgit Agency between 1877 to 1881 to the Wazir-i-Wazarat in Gilgit, contributed for the first time deeper comprehensive insight in the geography and ethnography of the region. In his famous *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh* of 1880 he mentions – in addition to “remains of Buddhist Chortens” – (i.e. stupa, caitya) in the Sai and Gilgit valleys, “a number of ancient rock inscriptions” along the river “between Gor and Seo”.³⁷ He pointed out a ‘circular stone sepulchral mound’ at Chashi, ‘situated on the tongue of land formed by the junction of the rivers near Gupis’, which nowadays is called Seleharan [Table 10.2]. The circle represents the most outstanding and at that time well-preserved example of a large group of megalithic stone circles in Yasin and Ishkoman, which after local tradition were “the work of giants in old days” and were not found elsewhere in Dardistan.³⁸ In his book he gives original observations of the geography, anthropology and local traditions – “habits and customs” – of the high mountain region on the basis of the material that he had collected during his travels in many of the main valleys in the so-called Eastern Hindukush. Including the research on the geology and geography by Frederick Drew, who served as a geologist in the service of the

36 Court 1839, 313.

37 Biddulph 1880, 15 noted these inscriptions “at intervals (on) the whole way from Gor to Seo”. – Colonel John Biddulph, born on 25 July 1840, educated at Westminster School and by a private tutor in Bonn 1855–1871, joined the 5th Bengal Cavalry in 1858, served through the Oudh Campaign of 1858, and received the Mutiny Medal. He served 1872–1877 as Aide-de-Camp to the Viceroy of India, Lord Northbrook, and was on special duty as Member of the Mission to Yärkand, the Pamir and Wakhān in 1873–1874 and again deputed as Officer on Special Duty at Gilgit from 1877 to 1881 “for protecting trade and watching political events”. In 1882 he was acting Agent to the Governor General and between that year and 1895, when he retired from the Political Department. He was Political Agent or Resident in areas including Quetta, Barōda and Gwāliyār and on deputation in 1885–1886 as a Boundary Settlement Officer. Biddulph died at Grey Court, Ham Common, on 31 December, 1921, in his 82nd year (India Office Records: History of Services, Home, Departments, 1895; India Office, 1921). Biddulph’s career as British colonial officer and his contribution to the geographical and anthropological knowledge of Dardistan is acknowledged by K. Gratzl in the preface to the 1971 edition of Biddulph 1880. Captain Biddulph’s political role in Chitral and Gilgit is described by Dani 2001, 258, 267–269, 280–281, and 312–313 with a list of the 26 British officers posted between 1877 to 1947 at the Gilgit Agency.

38 Biddulph 1880, 57–58. Mentioned by Longstaff 1920–1921, 159.

Mahārāja of Kashmir between 1862 and 1872 to search for mineral resources, and by Robert Shaw, British Commissioner in Ladakh, Biddulph's studies contributed conclusively to the state of knowledge about Dardistan in the last quarter of the 19th century. After his travels in Kashgar in 1873 together with Sir D. Forsyth, Biddulph visited one year later Sirikol and Wakhan, and in the years from 1876 to 1878 he travelled to Gilgit, Hunza, Yasin and Chitral. His studies were also devoted to the collection of linguistic materials. Together with the studies by Leitner in the same regions of the Hindukush, the materials collected by Biddulph can be regarded as the beginning of the systematic recording of the vocabulary and grammar of the Dardic and Kafir languages, especially of Boorishki, i.e. Burushaski, spoken in Hunza, Nagar, and Yasin. It was earlier called Khajuna by Leitner, the most singular language of all, which "stands by itself and cannot be classed with any other Dard language".³⁹ The other main Dardic languages, spoken in the area, are Shina, the Gilgit dialect, and Khowar, called 'Arnyiah' by Leitner, which is spread from Chitral to Yasin.

Brigadier-General George K. Cockerill, who was commissioned in 1892–1893 to reconnoiter the different main routes with its byways around Hunza and Nagar, reported during his march from the Shimshal Valley from Dut to the Karun Pass about "an inscription written in Persian on the cliff, a couplet from Saadi, cursing the difficulties of the road".⁴⁰ Lt. Col. Algernon G. A. Durand, who was appointed as first Political Agent in the newly established Gilgit Agency for a second time (1889–1893), complained about "the paucity of remains of archaeological interest"⁴¹ and noticed only "figures of animals, generally markhor and ibex", also without realizing their scientific importance. He mentioned that "Buddhism has left his mark" around Gilgit, the Buddha relief at Naupura, a stone "pedestal of a statue with the socket holes for the feet", but no "sculptured inscriptions throughout the whole region. We have searched far and wide, but not one solitary inscription has been found except for one in Chitral, which was copied by Colonel W. Lockhart's party".⁴²

The linguist and traveller Karl Eugen Ujfalvy von Mezo Kovest (1842–1904), was the descendant of an old Hungarian aristocratic family. During one of his three scientific journeys to Central Asia between 1876–1882 on behalf of the Oriental Academy in the College of Versailles, he also traversed in 1881 the Western Himalayas. During all of his notable travels he was accompanied by his wife Marie née Bourbon. They published rock carvings and inscriptions from Kharmang near the traditional lower road along the Indus in East Baltistan

39 Biddulph 1880, 155–156 with appendix.

40 Cockerill 1922, 103.

41 Durand 1899, 57–58. Durand's political activities in the Northern Areas are described by Dani 2001, 259–269, 274–290.

42 Durand 1894, 693. The Sanskrit inscriptions of Charrun and Pakhturidinini in Mastuj of Upper Chitral were noticed during Stein's exploration travel in 1906 (Stein 1912, I 44). The stone pedestal is still preserved in the former residence of the British Political Agent in Gilgit, now the Biddulph House with its public library. [+ HH here added this reference: Stein 1912, 44].

and mentioned similar representations from Gilgit and even Chitral.⁴³ Rock carvings such as images of stupas (chorten) and inscriptions were observed during their work in Baltistan by members of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, who ran a station at Shigar. A Tibetan inscription “mentioning a royal archer” was found near Roñ-mdo (Rondu) by Reverend F. Gustafson of this mission.⁴⁴ Even earlier in 1852 Thomas Thomson reported from Skardu of “ruins, showing large blocks of well-hewn stone, fragments of marble fountains, and some solid walls supporting terraces which appear at one time to have been gardens, alone remain to show the former magnificence of the place”.⁴⁵ The structures have been explained as remains of a “Mughal Garden”, which was connected with the irrigation system maintained by the ancient Satpara hydraulic works. Their installations could have been realized by Raja Ali Sher Khan’s queen, Mindoq-Gyalmo, a Ladakhi princess and daughter of Gyalpo Jamiang Namgyal, whom he had married after the conquest of Ladakh and an agreement between both rulers. Hashmatullah Khan assigned to this queen the construction of a separate palace called ‘Mindoq-qar’, outside the fort Khar-po-chea, and of a later famed garden called ‘Halo-Bagh’, which was irrigated by means of this channel.⁴⁶

The first scientific study of rock carvings and inscriptions in this mountain range goes back to the German tibetologist August Hermann Francke (1870–1930), since 1896 a member of the Moravian mission of the Herrenhut brothers in Leh and Khalatse. But it was his predecessor at the mission, the doctor Karl Marx who referred for the first time in 1890 to rock carvings in Ladakh.⁴⁷ Ever since 1902 Francke published his archaeological and epigraphical studies about Ladakh and Baltistan, also pointing out the Buddhist representations in Chilas.⁴⁸ His

43 Ujfalvy 1884, 247, 248, 269 fig. XVIII–XIX and Ujfalvy-Bourdon 1887, 333–334 with fig. See also Schuh 2011, 106 fig. 101–102. Adair 1899, 22, on his way from Kashmir to Baltistan noted on rocks in the Dras Valley of West Ladakh “rude figures of ibex with colossal horns, quaint-looking figures, and rough inscriptions”.

44 Neve 1900, 41. The inscription of Rondu is found on a large boulder at the northern side of the road near Basho, ca. 10 km downstream of the Ayoub Bridge near Kachura, mentioned in Francke’s Collection of Tibetan Inscriptions under no. 9 (Francke 1926, 144).

45 Thomson 1852, 218. See also Emerson 1984, 105 footnote 18, and Dani 2001, 28, 217.

46 Hashmatullah Khan 1979 [1939], 14, 18.

47 Marx 1897.

48 The Herrenhut mission, founded in 1722/1727 by the Saxonian Count Zinzendorf, established in 1884 a branch in Leh. Francke worked as a missionary from 1896–1899 in Leh, from 1899–1906 in Khalatse, and from 1906 in Kyelang. As an official archaeological representative of the British-Indian government in 1909/1910 he undertook an exploration journey to the western border of Tibet, which resulted in the edition of his ‘Antiquities of Indian Tibet’ I, 1914 and II, 1926 Calcutta). After his return to Europe, he was sent again to India on 18 May 1914. After his journey through Russia and Chinese Turkestan, he crossed the Karakorum Pass, where he met members of the Italian De Filippi expedition at Suget-Karaul; there he was informed about the outbreak of war. From Leh he was able to make research trips as far as Kargil and after his arrival in Srinagar he was sent to Rawalpindi, where he stayed in war captivity until he returned in 1916 to his hometown

readings of the three Tibetan inscriptions in the Buddhist relief at Manthal near Skardu were published in 1906 by Lady Duncan,⁴⁹ without referring to the earlier copies by Vigne. During her above mentioned legendary “summer ride” of 1904, which started from Leh to Khalatse and from there down to the Upper Indus River and entering the Hanu Nalah, she noted “many carvings of hunting scenes”.⁵⁰ She passed the wild gorge of Hanu Nalah, a tributary of the Indus, and across the Chorbat La (5090 m) she came along the Shyok River to Khapalu with “its wonderful range of needle peaks touched with snow”, for her a reminiscence of Arcadia. There, the son of the Raja Nazir Ali Khan showed her the carved Buddha rock at Sadpor near Skardu, which then was unknown both to her and to Francke, who had asked her to look out for Buddhist remains in Baltistan. In her brilliant descriptions of the different landscapes, their inhabitants with their local customs Lady Duncan also referred to the decorated vernacular architecture of the mosques, which resemble those in Kashmir. On her ride from Khaplu to Skardu she observed also rocks with roughly carved ibexes, hunting scenes, hand prints, a chorten, as well as modern Tibetan inscriptions in the Shyok Valley between the villages of Kunes, Kuru and Kiris.⁵¹

Maulana Ghulam Muhammad, who served as chief clerk during Colonel John Biddulph’s service as officer on special duty in the Political Office of the British Gilgit Agency (1877–1881), became the first witness to refer to rock carvings in a wider area. In his book of 1905, *Festivals and Folklore of Gilgit*, he described the assemblage of Buddhist and other engravings near the “Botugah Nullah” at Chilas “where there stand some boatmen’s huts”, now known as Chilas I (Jayachand) in the east of the Buto Gah.⁵² Other groups of petroglyphs below this place and on the river bank downstream, perhaps Chilas II, show goats, markhors, deer and

Gnadenberg in Silesia (Francke 1921). For his biography see: Walravens – Taube 1992. His most important publications about rock carvings in Ladakh: Francke 1902a, 1903, 1906a, 1907. Rock carvings at Dongga: Francke 1914 vol. I, 104–105 pl. 44. Rock carvings from a castle near Khalatse attributed to the Dards: Francke 1906b. Buddhist carvings with a Kharoṣṭhī inscription possibly mentioning Vima Kadphises (287 AD) from Khalatse are mentioned by Francke 1907a, 592–597 pl. II. 1907b, 1907c, 148 pl. II,2. Enriquez 1915, 175; Biasutti – Dainelli 1925, pl. 16, 2 and 19. Paul 1986, 27–28 pl. 1. Domkhar: Francke 1925, 369 pl. II,1. Karakorum cave, north of Leh: de Terra 1931, 47–48 pl. 7.

49 Duncan 1906, 300–302 mentions a local Buddhist Balti ruler ‘Lag-chen Mahābāhu’, “dating from not later than 1000 A.D”. Francke 1926, vol. II, 281.

50 Duncan 1906, 176–225 with drawings of carved wood panels of the mosques, p. 219, 221 and 248.

51 Duncan 1906, 272–274 with figures. See also Desio 1985. For rock carvings from Kunes near Kiris along the Shyok River: Afridi 1988, 23–25.

52 Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 110–111 published from Chilas Bridge (Jayachand) a sketch of a still visible stupa image on stone 39: MANP 6, 58 no. 39:1. See also Snoy 1975, 223–224 figs 108–110. Gazetteer 1909, 107 – perhaps referring to Ghulam Muhammad – mentions also remains of ancient stone buildings and Buddhist carvings, which suggest that Gilgit was once the seat of a Buddhist or Hindu dynasty [+ Here HH is quoted verbatim: note that the citation cannot be found throughout Gazetteer 1909 (N. B.: Chilas Bridge = Chilas Brücke, Chilas-Jayachand)].

also representations of axes, or “temples with men”, goats, horses, cows and also inscriptions. He also had knowledge of similar engravings from the Bagrot Valley between the villages of Sanikar and Bulchi. Further, he referred to two pictures of Buddha in the Sai Valley at Barmas near Damot, the one carved on a stone, and the other – a painting of Buddha sitting among his disciples. This scene recalls the famous legend of Buddha’s First Sermon in the animal park at Benares, which is one of the most elaborate masterpieces of Thalpan’s rock art. It seems that Ghulam Muhammad’s account of this painting can neither be authentic nor does it go back to first-hand knowledge. All these carvings and inscriptions in the tradition of the Chilasis and the Bagrot people are said to have been made by the fairies, who frequently visited their lands. In the local tradition the rock art, as in other Central Asian regions, is integrated into the magic-symbolic sphere, as described by Ghulam Muhammad: “The tradition is that in ancient times the land was frequently visited by fairies who used to make these inscriptions, as in the opinion of the Chilasis it is beyond man’s power to produce such inscriptions. It is also affirmed that these fairies were seen in those days by all men, but nowadays they are visible to no one except the Mullah by dint of his miracles. The Bagrot people say that the carvings were inscribed by the fairies on the night of ‘Shino Bazono’; and on the same night the fairies frequently used to rub away the figures from one stone and to engrave the same on another”.⁵³ As the figures of ibex and markhor scratched on the rocks are attributed to the fairies, also other ancient monuments are attached with distinct legends.⁵⁴

In the following of the expedition by the Duke of Abruzzi to the Baltoro glacier and the Karakorum in 1909, the Italian geographer Filippo De Filippi inaugurated a new chapter in the exploration of the Northern Areas, particularly of Baltistan. The Italian expedition to the Himalaya, Karakorum and Eastern Turkestan in 1913 and 1914 after Vigne’s three visits between 1835 and 1838 gave a more detailed geographical and geological description of the Skardu basin.⁵⁵ They recorded the Skardu fortress with its mosque, ancient wooden mosques at Shigar and Khaplu, and the ancient dike of Lake Satpara, which was described by Lady Duncan as a Buddhist dam construction. They noted also the megalithic defence walls, which block the route coming from the Deosai Plateau, running down to the centre of the Satpara Lake. The defence walls belong to a fortress on the mountain ridge. Of importance was the visit to the already known Buddhist relief of Manthal and the discovery of another, meanwhile lost Buddha carving (on a 2 m high and 3 m broad boulder) near the village of Olting, which flank the route from Skardu to Deosai Plateau at the mouth of Lake Satpara were recorded.⁵⁶

53 Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 110–111. About the magic power of carvings in Wakhan, see Gratzl 1978, 313–314.

54 Haughton 1913, 206.

55 De Filippi 1932, 37–99. For photos of De Filippi’s expedition to Central Asia in 1909 and 1913–1914, see: Mancini 2002 [+ pp. 204–251] and Cassi – Santini – Zan 2012. Anastasio 2008 and 2009.

56 De Filippi [Filippi De] 1924, 65 with photo. Biasutti – Dainelli 1925, 74–75 pl. 14 and 15, 1. Dainelli 1925.

3 The Gilgit Manuscripts

The discovery of the famous “Gilgit Manuscripts”, found by local cowherds in 1931 “under the vault of a stupa” at the Buddhist site situated above the Kar Gah, near the village Naupura ca. 15 km in the west of Gilgit, is a mark-stone for the understanding of the Buddhist spirituality and history of the Northern Areas. Sir M. Aurel Stein, who shortly afterwards in June 1931 came to Gilgit, as the first European announced the discovery of the manuscript in *The Statesman* of 24th July 1931: “Boys watching flocks above Naupur village, about two miles west of Gilgit Cantonment, are said to have cleared a piece of timber sticking out on the top of a small stone-covered mound. Further digging laid bare a circular chamber within the ruins of a Buddhist stūpa filled with hundreds of small votive *stupas* and relief plaques, common in Central Asia and Tibet”. The ancient manuscripts were found “closely packed in a wooden box” together with charms like *dharanis*, votive stupas, clay tablets and other objects. Joseph Hackin, who visited Gilgit on 22nd July 1931, also described the place where the manuscripts were found.⁵⁷ The stupa-shaped structure was a quadrangular building with two superimposed storeys. The east side of the ground floor had a length of 6.60 metres, the upper one of 6.00 metres. The interior was described as a round chamber with the “re-ains” (remains) of a central pillar in the centre which supported the wooden ceiling. In 1938 villagers again dug inside the upper chamber where they found another wooden ceiling. After they had removed the beams of the floor they had access to a second chamber, where they found bundles of manuscripts. The contradictory history of the four manuscripts’ discovery handed down by several reports has been discussed by Jettmar.⁵⁸

It took seven years until the archaeologist Pandit Madhusudan Kaul Shastri from Srinagar was given permission by the State of Jammu and Kashmir to set out for Gilgit and to start an official excavation in Naupura. He had requested this after receiving the news about the manuscripts. The troublesome journey between Srinagar to Gilgit at a distance of 228 miles should take his party 14 days’ time, between August 5 and 18, 1938. By agreement with the Political Agent of Gilgit, Major I. W. Galbraith, Shastri’s team after the survey of the mountain ridge undertook a brief excavation of six days at Mound C, “a stone edifice of three storeys and roundish in form”, from August 20 to 26. In addition to this main excavation, the mounds A, B and D were also examined, which delivered a series of clay, metal and stone objects.⁵⁹ Towered over by a chain of hillocks was a line of altogether four ruined monuments A–D, rising on the edge of a plateau which steeply slopes down to the Shuko Gah. Jettmar noted above the village Naupura four ruined monuments situated in a line, some of them stupas of

57 Stein 1931, 863–865. Hackin’s report is mentioned by Lèvi 1932, 24–25. A variant of the discovery story is reported by Trevelyan 1987, 83–85, who stayed as a boy with his family between 1929–1931 in Gilgit. His father Walter’s turn of duty there as a military adviser ended in 1933.

58 Jettmar 1981 a, b and 1990c. See also the critical review in Hinüber 1979, 329–337.

59 Shastri 1939, 8–9 pl. 1434, 1440. A systematic publication of the small finds is still required.

the Buddhist monastery.⁶⁰ The so-called stupa “appeared to be a stone edifice of three storeys and roundish in form, twenty-two feet in height with mud plaster inside and sloping externally up to the top. Its circumference measured internally fifty feet. To strengthen the wall of the edifice and to support the roof on the top, woodwork was used”.⁶¹ Apparently in the lower chamber with its floor covered by rubble, now called Mound C, another four manuscripts and fragments of a few more texts were discovered. These manuscripts written on birch bark and palm leaves were not illuminated, but three sets of wooden covers showing paintings on the inside belonged to them. The sensational findings by order of Maharaja Hari Singh were brought into the custody of the then newly established Shri Pratap Singh Museum at Srinagar. Later they were transferred to the Central Asia Museum of the Institute for Central Asia Studies at the University of Kashmir in Srinagar and again assembled at the Museum.⁶²

60 Shastri 1939, Dutt 1939–1959, Ganhar – Ganhar 1956, 206–210. The story of the discoveries by locals in 1931 and 1938, reported in different versions, and Kaul Shastri’s excavation in 1938 are discussed by Jettmar 1979a, 1990c, 305–308, 2002, 157–173 and Hinüber 1979, who as the first European epigraphist studied the four manuscripts in Srinagar in 1976 and 1978. See also Mukherjee 1987. The manuscripts of 1931, found “in five small boxes, all placed in a big box”, were apparently not all sent to Srinagar, according Mukherjee 1987, 24–26 footnote 2 and 14. The manuscripts which were found by locals in 1931 and 1938 “remained in in the house of the Wazir-i-Wazarat posted in Gilgit and were finally taken to Bunji, which after 1947 were handed over to the Government of Pakistan, Jettmar 1990c, 307. Tucci 1977, 59–60 bought in Rawalpindi another bulky part of the text *Saṅghabhedavastu* and *Śayanāsanavastu* and handed it over to the Archaeological Museum of Karachi. [+ Published by E. Conze (1974), and R. Gnoli (1977–1978, Id. 1978). On the discovery and acquisition process of the Karachi MS, see Olivieri 2023a]. A bundle of birch-bark manuscripts was found by “a local bee hunter” in Naupura around 1996, which is said to be kept in the Kurita collection (Matsuda 2000, 106–107). Other fragments of the Gilgit manuscripts, which had been found by local looters instigated by Pathan dealers since 1994 in the Buddhist site of Naupura, were sold to the Martin Schøyen collection in Oslo and repatriated in 1995 to Pakistan (see St. Lundén in his article “Skriftsamleren” in *Culture without Context* 16, Spring 2005. There a photo of the ongoing “Looting at Gilgit” is also portrayed). Numerous clay objects such as miniature stupas and inscribed tablets were found in the ruins: such objects, acquired in 1958 and published by Fussman 1978, 5–7 pl. 11, and now kept in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna [+ now *Weltmuseum Wien*] may originate from this site. For other inscribed tablets and stupa models from Naupura, see: Dani – Nazir Khan 1998.

61 Shastri 1939, 2–3.

62 The corpus of the Gilgit manuscripts consist of three sets, the first found by shepherds in 1931, the second with four manuscripts discovered during the excavations in 1938, which were transferred to Srinagar. Dar 2006, 223 mentions an earlier discovery of a Gilgit manuscript in 1906 containing a version of the *prajñāpāramitā* text, one of the famous sutras of the Mahāyāna School. The floods by the Jhelum River in September 2014 “have reportedly caused extensive damages to the 6th century birch-wood Gilgit manuscript housed in the Shri Pratap Singh Museum” (*Pamir Times* September 10, 2014). The smaller third set acquired by Giuseppe Tucci in 1956 from a dealer in Rawalpindi is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Karachi. [+ see Olivieri 2023a]. The loss of the museum’s treasures [Shri Pratap Singh Museum] has been explained as a result of “institutional

Due to the somewhat contradictory story of the manuscripts' discovery, there existed rumours about bronze figurines having been found as well in the "hollow stūpa", which went into the collection of the Maharaja of Kashmir.⁶³ After his abdication from the throne in 1948 and his retirement in Bombay "a group of bronzes appeared on the art market", which took its course into American private collections.⁶⁴ Candidates for such so-called Kashmiri or Gilgit bronzes are the two famous Gautama Buddha figures, dedicated in the year 714 by the treasurer Saṃkaraseṇa with his consort the princess Devaśrī and by Nandivikramādityanandī, the Palola Śāhi king ruling in Palola/Balūr. The latter was the ninth ruler in the list of the Palola Dynasty, according to Oskar von Hinüber.⁶⁵ The bronze in the Rockefeller collection shows between two stupas a crowned and bejewelled Buddha in the lotus seat; the other bronze in the Norton Simson collection presents the bejewelled and crowned Buddha in the yogic posture on a lion throne.⁶⁶

Of the Gilgit manuscripts' Manuscript no. 1 consists of 54 palm leaves, 6 × 25 cm in size, with five lines of writing in black ink on each side. Manuscript no. 2 is of birch-bark; the leaves are about 7.5 × 30 cm in size with nine lines of writing on each leaf. According to Shastri they "were all found under two wooden covers each having the papier-mache work on the outer side of the covers. The leaves were held together by a record lace or string passing through a hole punched in the middle of each and wound round the whole set."⁶⁷ Two of these covers (MsC 1 and MsC 2) were published for the first time by P. Banerjee in 1968.

The manuscripts unveiled not only the high standard of Buddhist spirituality in this mountainous region, but also with the 10 colophons helped to establish for the first time a list of three rulers: Vajrādityanandī (presumably 585–605), Vikramādityanandī (presumably 605–625), and Surendravikramādityanandī (presumably 625–644/655). They belonged to a local dynasty, the Palola Śāhis, which governed the kingdom of Bolōr from the fifth to the beginning of the 8th century AD and represent in chronological order number three to five in the king's list, according to Oskar von Hinüber. They also occur as donors in some of these manuscripts. An early report of 1931 by Sylvain Lévi about one colophon, and the succeeding editorial work of mainly Nalinkasha Dutt since 1932 provided insight into the relevance of the

failure", since ironically the manuscripts had been shifted in 1947 to the National Archives at New Delhi to protect them from tribal raiders, and after their return to Srinagar again during the Indo-Pakistani wars of 1956 and 1971 they were flown to Delhi to preserve them from air-raids.

63 Jettmar 1990b, 805–807; 1990c, 307; 2002, 169–170, 185–186.

64 Pal 1975, 108–109. See also Jettmar 1981a, 316–317, who suggests the 'Pritzker Buddha' as one possible candidate.

65 Hinüber 2004, 96–97, 99.

66 Rockefeller Buddha, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Pal 1975, 106–107 no. 30. Paul 1986, 219–243. Fussman 1993, 43–47 pl. 31. Hinüber 2004, 39–40 no. 15, fig. 6. – Norton Simson Buddha ('Pritzker Buddha'), Los Angeles, County Museum of Art: Pal 1975, 108–109 no. 31; 1977, 53 no. 26. Paul 1986, 202–219, pl. 86. Fussman 1993, 39–43, pl. 30. Hinüber 2004, 38–39 no. 14, fig. 5.

67 Shastri 1939, 5.

manuscripts for the religion and history in this region. In the introduction to the first volume of the complete edition of the Gilgit Manuscripts, Dutt for the first time drew the attention to the existence to an until then unknown dynasty, the Palola Śāhi.⁶⁸ In his “Report on the Gilgit Excavations” Shastri enlarged the knowledge of this dynasty in his mention of another ruler noted in a tiny fragment of the magic text ‘Mahāmāyūri’.⁶⁹ The colophons of the Gilgit manuscripts, magic texts and the royal inscription of Hatun, which was copied by Captain A. W. Redpath in 1941, rendering the name of yet another king, for the first time shed some light on the historical unawareness of the Northern Areas. Von Hinüber presented a new edition of the epigraphical materials, which also included the hitherto unedited colophons I, III and X, thus improving earlier readings.⁷⁰

Together with the manuscripts a longer series of archaeological objects such as bronze rings, stone beads, amulets, a golden coin, and clay miniature stupas, *t’sa t’sas*, sealings, “95 sun dried bricks”, wooden pots and other artefacts were registered in the museum, which according to Shastri’s report originated from his excavation.⁷¹ Deborah Klimburg-Salter was able to view some of the objects in Srinagar in 1967. She published a few examples: the sun-dried bricks, perhaps *t’sa t’sas*, showing an “overall pattern of stupas, *mchod rtens* – a seated Buddha with two standing Bodhisattvas on either side”, stupa-shaped *t’sa t’sas* of the “Descent of Heaven” type, and clay sealings containing the *gāthā* of the Chain of Causation in various states of disrepair and incompleteness.

Summarizing the archaeological data of the six-day excavation of 1938, Gérard Fussman interpreted the structure as a stone tower with a wooden framework, which “might have been both the chapel and lodgings of an *ācārya*, performing protective rituals”.⁷² As a result of ongoing illicit diggings the site of the monastery now looks like a battlefield – yet another example of the destruction and irreversible loss of the former rich ancient heritage of the Northern Areas.

The painted book covers depicting Bodhisattvas are not only among the most elaborate portable Buddhist paintings of South Asia, but are also the oldest of the Kashmiri-style to have survived there and therefore are of particular importance for the Buddhist art history. The only available comparative paintings are known from Central Asia and Afghanistan. Since the publication of the three manuscript covers by P. Banerjee and Pratapaditya Pal

68 Lévi 1932, Dutt 1932, 1933, 1936, 1939–1959. 9. [+ On the colophons of the Gilgit manuscripts, see Hinüber 1980].

69 + Shastri 1939.

70 Hinüber 1979, 1980, 1985, 59–61.

71 Shastri 1939, 8–9 pl. 1434, 1440. Klimburg-Salter 1992, 397–398 fig. 47, 3–6. Taddei 1970. See also the stupa-shaped *t’sa t’sas* and clay sealings from Gilgit, now in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna [+ now *Weltmuseum Wien*]: Fussman 1978, 5–7 pl. 2. They have been compared with similar *t’sa t’sas* from Afghanistan to Tibet: Taddei 1970.

72 Fussman 2004.

their stylistic analysis and final dating is owed to Klimburg-Salter.⁷³ Two of the book covers (MsC 1 and 2) on the basis of comparison with murals or portable paintings, sculptures as well as rock images from Chilas-Thalpan have been dated to the 7th–8th centuries. The third pair of the elaborately carved and painted cover (MsC 3) on the contrary can be traced to the Tibetan artistic tradition and has been attributed to the 8th–9th century. The manuscripts may have been produced in a monastery near an assumed residence at Gilgit or in Baltistan,⁷⁴ but it is more likely that they could have been written by a traditional manufacture in Kashmir by order of the Palola Śāhi court.

On 27 August Shastri also made a trial excavation in the stupa of Hanzal [Map] in the Gilgit Valley, but his short undertaking seems to have delivered no visible results. The ruins had been noticed by earlier travellers and considered as a much later frontier tower, like those also found in other valleys.⁷⁵

A decade later, in 1941, Captain Redpath, Assistant Political Agent in Gilgit, directed the Anglo-Hungarian explorer Sir Marc Aurel Stein – his eminent role in the historical investigation of the Northern Areas will be described below – to the Sanskrit inscription of Hatun, 5 km north of the mouth of the Ishkoman River into the Gilgit River. The discovery there of a royal inscription proved to be another important source about the Palola Śāhi Dynasty, as it designates the name of a king, his majesty, *paṭoladeva śāhi śrī Nava-Surendrādityanandī*, descendant of the Bhagadatta family.⁷⁶ He is the fifth sovereign of this śā, and his name is repeatedly testified by manuscripts and inscriptions on Kashmir bronzes. In addition, the text also conveys a vague idea of the political situation in this part of Little Palūr, the region around Gilgit including Punial. The inscription of seven lines in Proto-Śāradā script, engraved in the eastern face of an almost cubic boulder, reports the construction of a ca. 16 km long irrigation

73 One of the covers which are painted inside is depicted by Shastri 1939, 7 pl. 1436. MsC 1 and 2: Banerjee 1968 and 1992, 141–147 pl. 62–66. Together with MsC1/2 also MsC 3 was published by Pal – Meech-Pekarik 1988, 41–44 pls 1–3. For an analysis of the three painted covers, see: Klimburg-Salter (ed.) 1982, 88 fig. 30–33; 1990, 1991a/b, 1992, 1993.

74 Jettmar 1985b, 141.

75 Hanzal Mound': Shastri 1939, 4 pl. 1426. A photo of the stupa is published by Gerard – Holdich – Wahab – Alcock 1897, 33: "The construction of the masonry does not, however, altogether bear out the theory of Buddhist construction, and Colonel R. A. Wahab considers that it is a frontier tower of ordinary fashion which has in the process of dissolution assumed the appearance of a dilapidated stupa". The stupa is mentioned earlier by March 1876, 130 (Hunzil) [+ no ref.] and Stein 1907, 19.

76 Measurements of the boulder: 4.06 m wide, 3.65 m high, 4.00 m deep [+ a side note by HH reads: "to be checked"]. Its historical importance was first realized by Lévi 1932 and Stein 1944, 5–13 with a map of the site. The first reading of the inscription is indebted to Chakravarti 1953–1954, followed by a comprehensive study by Fussman 1993, 4–19 and final comparative interpretation of the text by O. von Hinüber (2004, 48–52 no. 22). For photos of the Hatun Rock, see: Hallier 1991, fig. 5 and Tsuchiya 1999, 358–359 fig. 6–7. See also the earlier varying discussions by Dani 2001, 34–35, 46, 151 and Jettmar 2002, 122, 125–126, 158–159. The rock was blasted by the owner of the field in 2011.

channel by the most prominent civil servant *Makaraṣimgha* on December 19, 671 AD, and also the foundation of a place named after him – *Makarapura*, or New-Makara-Town. Makaraṣimgha, probably a Burusho, belonged to the *Kāñcudīya* clan, which in accordance with the name Kanjut, the name later known to be Hunza,⁷⁷ could indicate his origin from this region. The text mentions also the place name of Gilgit – *Giligittā* – by naming its “chef de l’armée à Gilgit” (*Giligittā-Sarāṃgha*). *Hātūna* in *Haṇesāra-viṣayā* (district) clearly refers to the present-day village of Hatun itself, situated in Punial. Therefore, the identification of Haṇesāra with the Ishkoman Valley, whose ancient name was Hansora, would be comprehensible, and the affiliation of the region with the territory of the dynasty is evident.

Another important source about this dynasty, also known from Chinese sources of the T’ang Dynasty and Indian tradition, was revealed by the first occurrence of the so-called “Kashmir (Gilgit) bronzes”, which bear dedicatory inscriptions, some offering chronological data.⁷⁸ They were created to serve a religious purpose, as they depict divinities and myths of Buddhism, Vaishnavism (?) and Shivaism (?). Some of the most outstanding / elaborate and complex metal sculptures (of exquisite technical finesse), such as the crowned Buddha Śākyamuni of the Rockefeller (no. 15) and Pritzker (no. 16) bronzes dating to ca. 715 AD (also with royal attendants) were commissioned by members of the royal family of (Gilgit).⁷⁹ During the 8th century, thanks to the patronage of the royal court in Gilgit, workshops of specialised sculptors arose. They reveal remarkable virtuosity. Although not as elaborate, an elegant image of the goddess Prajnaparamita (or Sarasvati) is stylistically associated with the two inscribed Kashmir bronzes. She is the earliest representation of this important Mahayana goddess in the Kashmiri tradition.

4 Marc Aurel Stein and the Scientific Exploration of the High Mountain Region

A new chapter in the history of exploration of the Northern Areas began with Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943), geographer, historical topographer and linguist, who saw himself as archaeological explorer.⁸⁰

77 Biddulph 1880, 26–27.

78 Vogel 1906. Barrett 1962. Pal 1975. Schroeder 1981. Schroeder 2001. Hinüber 2004.

79 Rockefeller Bronze, height 35 cm: Tathāgata Vairocana, 750–850 AD. The pedestal inscription reads “This is the pious gift of the devout *Śaṅkarasena*, the great Lord of the elephant brigade, and of the poor minded and pious princess *Devaśriyā*, made the second day of Vaiśākha in the year 3 or 8”. Schröder 1981, 22 with plate, 108–109, 118 fig. 16 B [+ a side notes left by HH reads: “Patrons included ministers, merchants, and monks”].

80 A well-documented record of his life and work is indebted to Jeannette Mirsky, occasionally disclosing accurate knowledge of the local geography (Mirsky 1977). See also the short obituary notes by Oldham 1944. [+ On Stein, see Olivieri 2015b, Olivieri 2015c].

Born of Jewish parents in Budapest and educated at the Kreuzschule in Dresden, following his studies in Vienna and Leipzig, he received his doctorate in Old Persian and Sanskrit at the University of Tübingen in 1883. Stein's devotion to Indian and Iranian studies brought him in 1884 to Oxford and London, where Sir Henry Rawlinson helped him to get an employment in India in 1888. As Principal of the Oriental College at Lahore he went to Kashmir to search for Sanskrit manuscripts. In 1889 he began the translation of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, a *Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, which was written by the 12th-century scholarly poet Kalhaṇa (1892, 1900). The oldest record of Kashmir history was edited by Stein in 1892 and published with a commentary at last in 1900. As a member of the Archaeological Survey of India and with the support of Lord Curzon's government, Stein started the series of his daring and adventuresome expeditions to Central Asia that led to his fame as one of the great archaeological explorers. He is designated as "the most prodigious combination of scholar, explorer, archaeologist and geographer of his generation".⁸¹ Early in his youth a triad gave him "the grand design for his life": The Macedonian world-conqueror Alexander was his hero, whose routes to the Indus he traced, followed by the Venetian trader Marco Polo of the fourteenth century, and the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang of the seventh century, whom he called his "patron saint". But also the traditional imagination that Hungarians are the descendants of the Huns may have been another explanation for his attraction to Central Asia. His three arduous expeditions into Chinese Central Asia in 1900–1901, 1906–1908 and 1913–1916, published in three voluminous books, *Ancient Khotan* (1907), *Serindia* (1921) and *Innermost Asia* (1928), proved him as a most distinguished archaeologist. During his first expedition in 1900–1901 to Chinese Turkestan, he set out from Bandipur in Kashmir, the starting point of the "Gilgit Transport Road". Traversing the passes Tragbal and Burzil led him into the Astor Valley, and after crossing the Indus River at Bunji [?] he reached Gilgit in 12 days. From there he marched through the Hunza Valley, "often over narrow rock ledges and by rough ladder-like galleries (*rafik*) along the faces of cliffs", up to the Kilik Pass, from where he arrived at Tashkurgan, the centre of the Sarikol District. During his journey to Hunza on the Nager side near the hamlet of Thol with its old fort [Map], he identified the then well preserved ruins of a stupa, which reminded him of "chortens of Sikkim and Ladakh".⁸² The stupa had a height of twenty feet and was built of unhewn stone slabs. The base was quadrangular, each side being 80 feet long. The next set-back storey was also quadrangular, the third storey was a smaller octagon, followed by a circular drum, and crowned by an apparently hemispherical dome.

The stupa was also observed by Count Ōtani Kōzui (1876–1948) during the Hongwanji Expedition of 1902–1903 on his way from Kashgar across the Mintaka Pass into the Hunza Valley.⁸³ Count Ōtani was the abbot of the influential Nishi Honganji Branch of the Buddhist

81 Lattimore – Lattimore 1973, 176.

82 The march started at Bandipur on May 31 and ended in Gilgit on June 11, 1901: Stein 1904, 750; 1907, 20. The stupa is also mentioned by Haughton 1913, 212–213, by Schomberg 1935, 101, and by Lorimer 1939, 65.

83 Otani 1906, 868. The photo of the stupa shows another view of the monument in the Hunza Valley.

sect *Jōdo shinshū*, the “Sect of the Pure Land”, in Kyoto. He organized three archaeological expeditions of learned monks from Nishi Honganji Temple in 1902, 1908/1909 and 1910 to search for the sect’s pretended past in Chinese Turkestan and Gansu. Since the Great Game was continuing with a new opponent, besides the British, Chinese and Tsarist Russians, Ōtani’s motives were suspected to be more than purely historical. In the Chinese view the somewhat mysterious Japanese Count belonged to the group of foreigners starting with the Russians J. A. Regel (1879) and Dimitrii A. Klements (1898), the Swedish geographer and cartographer Sven Hedin with his first expedition to Central Asia in 1893–1900, and during the first two decades of the 20th century followed by Stein, the Germans Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq with their four expeditions (between 1902–1914), the French sinologist Albert Pelliot and the American Langdon Warner, a group of foreigners who plundered the Buddhist past of Xinjiang in a series of robberies.⁸⁴ It is therefore absolutely comprehensible when the Chinese viewed “the so-called scholars” after their archaeological activities, especially of Stein, “as shameless adventurers who robbed them of their history”.⁸⁵

Stein had heard also from British officers about other “ruined mounds” near Gilgit, at “Hanzil (Henzal) and Jutial”, which in the succeeding years were identified also as stupas. His second Central Asian expedition took place in 1906–1908, which was described as a competition to Lou-Lan in rivalry with French and German museum missions in order to exploit the painted ‘Caves of the Thousand Buddhas’ in Chinese Turkestan. On his travels starting from Peshawar, Stein crossed through Swat and Chitral.⁸⁶ There, on his way along the road on the left bank of the Mastuj River and its upper branch Yarkhun between Chitral and Mastuj, he documented engravings of two stupas and inscriptions on two large granite boulders. The first carving is situated at Pakhtorinidini opposite the hamlet Jomshili on the right bank of the river, and the other near Charrun upwards from Reshun, which had been found earlier in 1899. The drawings showed “in accurate detail the identical architectural proportions which I had again and again observed in the ruined Stupas of Kashgar and Khotan”. The accompanying Brāhmī inscriptions near both images “gave the name of Rāja Jaīvavarman as that of the donor, and may be approximately ascribed to the fifth century A.D.”. Instead of following the traditional route along the Yarkhun to Wakhan across the Baroghil Saddle, Stein decided first to ascend the glacier-crowned range which flanks the Darkot Pass to the west. This pass

84 During the second Japanese expedition of 1908/1909 the monk-archaeologists Tachibana Zuicho (1890–1968) and Eizaburo Nomuro, both also officers of the Imperial army, were suspected by the British and the Russians of being secret intelligence agents ‘along the Silk Road’: Hopkirk 1980, 190–197, 202–206, 232–234. The only eighteen-year old team leader Tachibana discovered on his trip the famous 4th century Li Bo manuscript near Loulan. He organized also the third Otani expedition of 1910, which began excavations near Turfan. The course of events during this expedition is summarized by Galambos 2008. [+ On Sven Hedin’s expeditions, see Hedin 1922a, 1922b].

85 Hopkirk 1980, 2.

86 Stein 1912, 42, 44–45; 1921, 37 and following pages, fig. 5–6. For a new photo, see: Hallier 1991, 4 fig. 3.

is famous for the memorable crossing by the daring Korean general Kao Hsien-chih and his Chinese troops in 747 AD on their successful campaign against the Tibetan dominated Little Palur, undertaken from the Oxus through Yasin as far as Gilgit.⁸⁷

For his third expedition to Chinese Turkestan (1913–1916) with its beginning at the end of July 1913 Stein chose a direct route from Srinagar in Kashmir “through the deep-cut gorges of Kishanganga and its tributaries to the snowy passes of Barai and Fasat and then down to Chilas”.⁸⁸ From there he was carried downstream on a raft made of six bullock skins steered by a crew of four *soniwals*, the goldwashers, along the Indus to reach the first destiny, the village of Hodar at the mouth of the Hodar Nala. Near the village of Hodar he identified on a detached rocky ridge the ruins of the ancient hillfort ‘Kino Kot’, the Black Fort, and on its southern slope he also noted on a rock “incised marks” representing the “ancient Indian emblem Pādūkās”, “pairs of sacred footprints” and ‘chakras’, the Buddhist Wheel of Law.⁸⁹ After ascending the narrow Hodar Valley and traversing the Unutai Pass into the Khanbari Valley, he was the first European to set foot on the unexplored tribal territory of the independent Dard republic of Darel and Tangir. Its ruler, Raja Pakhtun Wali, had granted him permission to visit the normally closed region on the condition that no official of the Gilgit Agency would accompany him. In the vicinity of the walled township of Manikyal in the fertile Darel Valley he surveyed ruins of pre-Buddhist, heavily fortified hill settlements, known as *kots* (forts), built on rocky ridges. Near *Bojo-kot* his “rapid” digging “brought to light unmistakable relics of a Buddhist burial-ground in the form of cinerary urns, metal ornaments”.⁹⁰ He was also the first to describe the designs of the fine wood-carvings in houses, mosques and graveyards. The decorative motifs he traced from Graeco-Buddhist art, as known in Gandhara.⁹¹ At Poguch (Phugush) in the lower Darel Valley he even claimed to have identified “the most likely site” of the Buddhist sanctuary To-li or Ta-li-lo, whose miraculous colossal wooden image representing Maitreya was praised by the Chinese pilgrims Faxian (Fa-hsien) and Xu-anzang (Hsüantang).⁹² It was Jettmar, who during his first visits to Darel was not convinced of this localization.⁹³ For Stein the tomb of Shahakhel Baba (Shah Khel), an Islamic saint,

87 Stein 1912, 52–62.

88 Stein 1916, 97–109; 1928, 1–53; 1942, 49.

89 Stein 1928, 13, fig. 5. His ‘rock-markings’ is the first reference to the rock-carving site of [Hodar] Hodur-Halalosh. Kino Kot (Patelo Kot) and the rock-carving site were finally surveyed by the PGAM in 1989–1990 and 1997–1998 (MANP 3, 1999). On a rocky spur at Nar in the Hodar Valley, at a distance of 2.5 km from the main site, Stein noted the ruins of another small fort, the Dar Kot (see MANP 3, 1999, 102).

90 Stein 1928, 24–25, 29.

91 Stein 1928, 25–26 fig. 23–24, 28–30.

92 Stein 1916, 105; 1928, 30–31 fig. 30; 1942, 54. The wooden mosque of Phugush and the *ziyarat* of Shah Khel, the Muslim missionary from Karor in Swat who became a *shahid*, were again documented by Dani 1989, 106–107 fig. 21 and pl. VIII, 48 c, 49–50.

93 Jettmar 1975, 200.

which attracted pilgrims from distant parts of the Gilgit chains of the Hindukush as well as from Swat and Upper Indus, attested the continuity of local worship since Buddhist times. After passing the Gayal Gah, a tributary of the Darel River, he crossed the rugged spur that divides the Darel and Tangir valleys by the Shardai Pass into Tangir. From there Stein's team moved northward across the watershed range between Indus and Gilgit rivers by the Hershat Pass to make their way down the Batres Gah to the steep Gilgit Valley as far as near Gupis (a track which could have been used also by Chinese pilgrims). He travelled farther by crossing the bridge across the Gilgit River to the north into the Yasin Valley, where he noticed at the outlet of the Nasbar Gol the ruins of a stupa.⁹⁴ Among the debris he collected "eight clay seals", *ts'a ts'as*, showing the impression in low relief of a stupa "with four tier-base on row of roundels" and around it the "Buddhist formula *ye dharmaprabhavāḥ*, in Nāgari characters of the late type common in Tibet". Like in other Buddhist shrines these clay seals formed part of a destroyed votive deposit up to the Darkot Pass, which he remembered from his second expedition to Central Asia. The *ts'a ts'as*, on which commonly sacred formulae are inscribed and one or more stupas or various divinities are depicted, are deposited in the foundations of a stupa or of a Tibetan *chörten*.⁹⁵

At the access to the glacier pass of Darkot that leads to the Baroghil Pass, the route connecting the Gilgit Basin through Yasin with the Wakhan corridor, Stein's attention was drawn to the deeply engraved carving of a 1-m high "cross- or cruciform-shaped" stupa *mrchod-rten* and a Tibetan inscription on a boulder, which lies along the trail about 45 minutes below the edge of the Darkot glacier at an altitude of approximately 4000 m. The inscription, translated by Francke, includes the name of the donor named *Lirnidor*, who apparently originated from Khotan. Francke referred also to corresponding "cross-type" stupas in Ladakh.⁹⁶ In view of the resemblance of the parts below the dome to a Christian cross, he termed this type "cross-shaped stupa. This pathway had once been traversed by the victorious Chinese force of 10,000 men under the "protector of the four garrisons" Kao Hsien-chih during his daring campaign of 747 AD through Yasin to the kingdom Po-lü, i.e. Gilgit, occupied until then by the Tibetans.

94 Stein 1928, 43. He noted also "eight clay seals", *ts'a-ts'as*, showing the impression in low relief of a stupa "with four tier-base on row of roundels". On the Gupis track, which could have been used also by Chinese pilgrims, see Stein 1928, 41.

95 The function of *ts'a ts'as* is described by Tucci 1973, 114–118 figs 98–108.

96 Visit on August 29, 1913: Stein 1928, 45–47, 1050–1051 fig. 46. The Tibetan inscription was translated and discussed by Francke, 'A Tibetan Inscription on the Darkot Pass', in: Stein 1928, appendix L, 1050–1051. Denwood 2007, 49–50 fig. 4 (photo of the Darkot rock) proposes the dates "when this route was in Tibetan hands between 745 and 747" or alternatively "between 820 and the 850s". John Mock revisited the site in 1994 and offers a new translation of the inscription (Mock 2013). [+ H. Falk recently proposed a new reconstruction of the itinerary of Faxian et al. emphasising the importance of the Darkot pass = Falk 2023].

In 1926 a short tour led him on Alexander's track to the Indus through Swat, the ancient kingdom of Uḍḍiyāna, where he identified many sites with Buddhist connotation and particularly the rock Aornos, which was conquered by the Macedonian king.⁹⁷

After his return from a travel to Chinese Turkestan to Gilgit in 1931, Stein studied a collection of jewellery found on a plateau called Dasht-i-Taus on the right bank of the Yasin River.⁹⁸ The site displays "a large ruined circumvallation". The finds of delicately decorated rings with seal stones, pendants and beads of gold and silver might be attributed to the 2nd – 3rd century AD and originate from Xinjiang. A bronze figure of a seated Buddha on a lotus throne, also associated with the same findspot, on the contrary, belongs to a group of similar examples from the "Swat valley" dating "between the late 6th and the end of the 6th century".

The territory of Indus Kohistan (*Aba Sind Kohistan*), the rugged mountain region bordered by Swat in the west and the British reigned Hazara District in the east, had been at that time inaccessible for European explorers. The lower part of the Upper Indus, "compressed into an exceedingly narrow course, passes through a continuous succession of very difficult gorges flanked on either side by the precipitous faces of high mountain spurs".⁹⁹ The topographical situation and extremely arduous routes along the river with the byway across the Shandur Pass to Swat convinced Stein that he had found in the Indus ravine the "route of the hanging chains" followed by early Buddhist pilgrims on their way from Ta-li-lo (Darel) to the kingdom Uḍḍiyāna, i.e. Swat. After the Wali of Swat had annexed also the tribal areas east of the Indus into his dominion in 1939, for the first time Stein – at the age of seventy-nine – had the opportunity to follow the imaginable footsteps of the Chinese pilgrims. The three-month expedition lasted from October 1941 to January 1942. During his travel from Swat to the head of the Kana Valley, across the Chundakai Pass down to the side valley of Duber, the team gained entrance to the Kandia Valley by traversing the Bisao Pass. In the centre of the valley at Karang and Richa he again noticed traditional mosques with wood-carving decoration, which reminded him of designs derived from Graeco-Buddhist art. After descending into the Kandia Valley to the deep-cut gorges of the Indus River, he followed the track downstream as far as Besham, "which remained difficult enough and quite impracticable for any laden animal".¹⁰⁰ The track on the opposite left side of the River "clings in places to bare rock walls along narrow ledges, with tree trunks serving as ladders to connect them". The description by Faxian of this "difficult, precipitous and dangerous route, the side of the mountain being like a stone wall ten thousand feet in height" persuaded Stein "to have here one more proof how much reliance can be placed on the topographical sense and power of observation of those old Chinese travellers on whose records the historical geography of India so largely depends". Stein even pointed to a place of an old river-crossing between Besham and the mouth of Ghoraband River, where the Indus flows in a narrow rock-lined bed. Here could have hung

97 Stein 1929 [+ on this see Coloru – Olivieri 2019].

98 Stein 1932a. Jettmar 1993b, 94.

99 Stein 1942, 49.

100 Stein 1942, 54.

the rope bridge, the “Suspended Crossing / Hanging Passage”, on which Faxian and his pious fellows crossed the torrent.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, the pilgrim’s description could be applicable for many other parts of routes along the Upper Indus and its side valleys, such as Karumbar or Hunza. From Besham Stein’s team returned across the Karorai Pass to Saidu in Swat.

Astonishingly, during all these journeys through the Northern Areas between 1900 and 1931 and at last in 1939, no inscriptions or petroglyphs apart from the Tibetan carving at Darkot were observed by Stein. Even though the rock art galleries around Chilas and Thalpan must have been known to colonial officers of the British Gilgit Agency since 1893, when Chilas was brought under its control by a military operation, no information about them ever appeared in publications. It was Redpath, then Assistant Political Agent in Gilgit, who informed Stein in autumn 1941 about the inscription in Proto-Śāradā engraved on a large rock at Hatun in Punial, the by far longest Sanskrit inscription in the Northern Areas. Redpath himself was not able to visit the site. The request of Sir George Cunningham, governor of the Northwest Frontier Province, to start a reconnaissance tour at the border of Kohistan, east of the Indus, offered him also the chance to investigate a reference on the occurrence of rock-carvings.

When Stein was about to set out from Peshawar for his expedition into Indus Kohistan in autumn of the year 1941, G.H. Emerson of the Indian Civil Service brought the existence of inscriptions and pictures below Chilas to his notice. The exact location of them was given to Stein at least in July 1942 by Captain C.D. Murphy, Assistant Political Agent in Chilas, when they met at Naran in the Kaghan Valley. With his own words Stein explained the real reason that drew him to that forbidding area: “A report of numerous rock engravings along the banks of the Indus of which I had not heard before; (it) was a welcome compensation for having to forego entry into tribal territory and also for the physical discomfort of visiting the hot Indus valley this season. Apart from its summer heat, Chilas is notorious for the plague of its fierce local (Indus sand) flies which love to suck the blood of newcomers. On descending from Thor, I too did not escape their attacks. The journey up the absolutely bare bank of the Indus to Chilas village, some 24 miles, is dreaded owing to the heat. There was satisfaction in my being able to determine by paleographic evidence that all these inscriptions, never studied or published before, are older than 6th – 7th century AD. There is good reason to hope that both together will throw interesting light on the spread of Buddhism into the Hindukush as vouched by that old Chinese pilgrim, Fa-hsien”.¹⁰²

The pioneering scientific study of rock carvings (Stein used the term “bruising”) and inscriptions from the Upper Indus valley around Gilgit and Chilas is owed to this grand

101 Stein 1942, 56: The river bed there near the village Kunshai is about 75 m wide, at the river crossing at Shatial around 93 m, at Hodar 180 m, at Chilas-Thalpan 102 m, and at Shing Nala only 68 m. Jettmar 1987a followed Stein’s consideration that the “Suspended Crossing” was identical with the Indus gorges in Kohistan, but described the extreme difficulties of travelling on the old footpath between Shatial at the way out of the Darel Valley and down the Pattan River.

102 Letter to Mrs. Helen Mary Allen, September 18, 1942.

archaeological explorer, whose observations of 1942 were published posthumously.¹⁰³ In August 1942, during his journey from Kohistan to Chilas through Thor, where the colonial rest house Dak Bangla is still preserved, he received also information about two bronze vessels, which had come to light in 1940, around 24 km north of Chatorkhand, in a place called Adrach of Garm Chashma, southwest of Imit in the Karumbar Valley.¹⁰⁴ In the bronze cauldron and rhyton, showing a centaur holding the figure of an ibex, he saw evidence for the influence of Hellenistic art on local craftsmanship. And, at last, during the same journey along the left side of the Indus at the end of August 1942 he came across artistically executed stupa carvings and Brāhmī inscriptions “below the hamlet of Maruski down to Thore-gah” and at the mouth of the Gichi Valley. Then he gave the first comprehensive descriptions of “a considerable number of Buddhist rock-inscriptions and pictures” that he had observed below the village of Chilas, in the Buto Gah and above the ferry-place across the Indus; now the site is called Chilas I (Jayachand or Chilas Bridge).¹⁰⁵ For the famous scene showing Bodhisattvas with stupas, a vase of plenty, and inscriptions in Brāhmī [Table 20.1], he quite exactly proposed a date “as earlier than the 7th century A.D.” One group with a large stupa, three Bodhisattvas and five lines of a Brāhmī inscription was destroyed during the highway construction prior to 1978. Near the riverbed he identified also the huge scene showing the *vyāghri* (Mahāsattva) or *Tigress jātaka*, “the well-known legend of Buddha in a former birth (i.e. before his enlightenment or *bodhi*) as Prince Mahasattva sacrificing his body to a famished tigress in order to save her starving cubs”. The legend of Buddha’s “body-offering”, according to accounts of Chinese pilgrims such as Xuanzang (Hsüantsang) in his description of Siṃhapura, was placed in Gandhara, and there on Mount Banj in the Mahāban hills in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Stein believed to have located this exact site at a place with ruins of a Buddhist sanctuary.¹⁰⁶ Further, he also found a larger Proto-Śāradā inscription topped by the elaborate carving of a stupa on a huge boulder, now located in the village, but without recognizing its historical importance. It names *Vajrasūra*, perhaps one of the local Dard rulers of Chilas during the first

103 Stein 1944, 16–23 pl. IV–V described five groups of Buddhist rock carvings at Chilas Bridge (Jayachand). Group 1 with a stupa, three Bodhisattvas on lotus-seats, and five lines of a Brāhmī inscription fell victim to the highway construction prior to 1978 (Stein 1944, 19 pl. IVa). See Hinüber 1989b, 83 inscription no. 78 and MANP 6, 2003, 43–44 no. 30:B (*Tigress jātaka*); 98–100 no. 84, pl. XVa/b. with reproductions of Stein’s photos pl. IVa. – During earlier visits Stein 1907, 19–20 and 1928, 23 noted ruins of stupas at Jutial above Gilgit, at Henzal (“Hanzil” after Stein) on the way to Punial, 20.4 km from Gilgit, at Thol in the Hunza Valley, and in Yasin.

104 Stein 1944, 14–16 pl. IIIa. Around Imit two rock carving sites at Dokh and Majaver have been recorded: Tsuchiya 1998b, 58–59.

105 Stein 1944, 16–24 pl. IIIb (Brāhmī inscription “above the goldwasher’s huts of Thore gah”) and pl. IVa (= Chilas Bridge, no. 84:2–5, see: MANP 6, 2003, 98–99), pl. IVb (= Chilas Bridge, no. 64: C, 64: 12–19 1,2, see: MANP 6, 2003, 79, 81–84) and pl. Vb (= Chilas Bridge, no. 64:1–2, see: MANP 6, 2003, 79–80).

106 Beal 1885, I: 145–146. Stein 1905, 38–45.

half of the 8th century AD.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, the earlier publication of Buddhist images from Chilas by Ghulam Mohammed seems to have been unknown to Stein. And he obviously did not take notice of the vast concentrations of rock carvings at Thalpan across the river, even though he emphasized the importance of the “much frequented ferrying-place, which many people proceeding from Chilas to the Trans-Indus valleys of Hōdar [Hodur] and Kinērgāh [Kiner Gah] and beyond them to Darēl and Gilgit or vice versa must ordinarily pass, might perhaps be considered as an explanation of such an accumulation of votive gifts”.

5 Anthropological Research Between 1955 and 1979

The most persistent impetus for systematic research in the different fields of archaeology, ethnography, epigraphy, and history on the basis of a thorough documentation of archaeological monuments was given by the ethnologist Karl Adam Jettmar.¹⁰⁸ He had joined the Second German Hindukush Expedition (the First Hindukush Expedition of 1935 was sent to Afghan Nuristan and Chitral)¹⁰⁹ under the lead of the ethnologist Adolf Friedrich of the University of Mainz in 1955 and 1956.¹¹⁰ This research journey together with the indologist Georg Buddruss and the ethnologist Peter Snoy, then still a student at Friedrich's institute, led from Gilgit to Chilas and from there on horseback in four days along the Indus River, first of all into the once independent “valley republics” of Darel and Tangir, belonging to Yaghistan, the “land of rebellion and freedom”, which in 1952 had been just included in the administered part of the Gilgit Agency. The objective of their research was dedicated to ethnological explorations and linguistic studies on the Tangir dialect of Shina and the until then unknown Dardic Kanyawali, which was spoken in a linguistic enclave in the Tangir Valley. Jettmar's study of the lavishly decorated mosques and graves of Darel Valley since the ongoing destructions are of great importance. He modified Stein's hypothesis about elements of Late Antiquity originating from Gandhara in the wooden architectural decoration in this part of Dardistan. Contrary to Stein, he saw two different stylistic tendencies: an older local symbolic world, which is connected to that of Nuristan, and the Late Antique tradition as is obvious in motifs known from Gandharan, Iranian and ancient Indian art. In this part of

107 Stein 1944, 21 pl. Va (=Chilas Bridge, no. 36). Dani 1983a, 82–84 no. 63–65, and 1985, 230–232 pl. 4b. Some of Dani's doubtful readings are corrected in Hinüber 1989a, 61–62 no. 62a and MANP 6, 2003, 51–56 [+ The last quote in this paragraph is from Stein 1944, 22].

108 + Karl A. Jettmar (Vienna, 8 August 1918 – 28 March 2002): see Anonymous 2010.

109 + See Scheibe, ed. 1937.

110 Jettmar 1960a, 1980b; 1996a, 81; 2002, 45–79, 80–109. The study of Kanyawali is published in Buddruss 1959 and Jettmar-Thewalt 1987. The aims of this expedition have been described by Buddruss – Snoy 2006 [2008]. For a bibliography of Karl Jettmar, see: Johannsen 2002, Kossack 2003, Hauptmann 2006, Stellrecht 2006. Assemblages of rock carvings in Hunza and Yasin are noted by Desio 1985.

Dardistan the traditional village communities were still intact, and their ideas connected with the belief that the ibex and markhor were considered as sacred beings reminded him of Siberian beliefs. Jettmar described the now almost defunct *wesh* (dividing) system, an egalitarian system of the periodical re-allotment of land, which was introduced by Pakhtun tribes from Swat to Indus Kohistan during 16th century and survived in Darel and Tangir until the 1930s.¹¹¹

On their ride on horseback from Chilas to Harban in 1958, Jettmar noted for the first time carved images of stupas at Thor. At Harban the group crossed the Indus River to the northern bank by a ferry boat to a place with ruins from British colonial times still recall this important crossing point. Along the old path he saw also bruising on the opposite bank east of the mouth of the Darel River.¹¹² During this journey to Tangir and Darel he had not even the “faintest idea that I was riding on the tracks of Sir Aurel Stein”.¹¹³ From the apparently missing rock carvings on the northern track leading from the mouth of the Darel River to Tangir on the other side, he came to the conclusion that the northern bank was not the main route during the Buddhist past. This impression has been altered since the discovery of a long line of petroglyphs between Issel Das opposite of Harban and the Darel Valley. Later he also visited Baltistan, where he observed still active shamans in the Brokpa villages situated south of Skardu in the upper valleys descending from the Deosai Plateau. He stressed similarities in their cults with those of Eastern Siberia.¹¹⁴ The ‘brog-pa’ group, which in Tibetan has the general connotation of “highland herdsman”, according to tradition immigrated before the arrival of the Islam to this area, i.e. 300 years before, from Astor and Chilas. Jettmar’s study of the “highlanders”, who still today speak Shina, was stimulated by the lively accounts of this Dardic tribe given by Drew, Shaw and Biddulph.¹¹⁵ In a Brokpa village he noted also a fragmentary Balti version of the Central Asian Kesar Saga, which was earlier reported in Hunza by Lorimer and brought in connection with the hero’s legend as known in Ladakh.¹¹⁶

With this expedition the ‘ethnographic period of research’, as Jettmar always emphasized, started in the northern high mountains of Pakistan. His intense historical interests became apparent when he again noticed rock carvings of partly Buddhist contents, such as stupas

111 For comprehensive information about the *wesh* system, see: Jettmar 2002, 57–60, 68–70. See also: Staley 1969, 235–236, who refers to the studies of Barth 1956, 32, in Kandia and neighbouring communities of Indus Kohistan, and of Jettmar 1960a, 134 and 1961a, 85–86.

112 Jettmar 1991b, 251 [+ Jettmar 1996b].

113 Jettmar 1996[a], 86.

114 + HH left here a side note: “eher Bezug zu Tangir-Darel?”.

115 Drew 1875, 433, Shaw 1878, Biddulph 1880, 46–54. Jettmar 2002, 38–39. See Shaw 1878; Buddhist and Muslim, four casts like in Chilas Clark 1977, 338.

116 Jettmar visited Baltistan in September 1955: Jettmar 1977[a], 1990; see also Jettmar 1979c. About the Kesar Saga in Hunza, see Lorimer 1931 and in Ladakh, see Francke 1905. Sagaster 1984 recorded during his visits in 1980 and 1981 in Baltistan several versions of the Kesar Saga. [+ In the manuscript of the References HH also quoted Jettmar 1990a; see also Jettmar 1996b].

of the terraced type and the later Tibetan cruciform type and Brāhmī inscriptions, present between Gol and Skardu in Baltistan.¹¹⁷ The research group had worked in Gilgit, Bagrot, Tangir-Darel, Hunza and Baltistan. Snoy accompanied Friedrich also to Chitral. The Second German Hindukush Expedition was overshadowed by the untimely and tragic death of Adolf Friedrich in Rawalpindi, who had overexerted himself under the hardships of winter-time between 1955 and 1956 in the Kalash valleys of Chitral. This first venture into these still inadequately explored tribal areas initiated the ambitious fields of research by the next generation of cultural anthropologists, geographers, linguists, and lastly archaeologists, too.

A corresponding short ethnographic survey was undertaken in Indus Kohistan (known as Aba Sind Kohistan by the Swatis), a blank area on the cultural and linguistic map of South Asia, by the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth in the summer of 1954. Barth collected information about the economy and sociology and provided initial insight into the two Kohistani dialect groups occupying an area of the western tributaries and the west bank of the Indus River between Besham and Tangir and the communities Jalkot and Palas on the east bank of the River. His sometimes contradictory records about the subsistence economy, the distribution of the different ethnic groups and languages in the Kohistan were corrected by Jettmar.¹¹⁸

An invitation of the Austrian Himalaya Society enabled Jettmar to return to the high mountain region in 1958 as a member of the Austrian Haramosh Expedition. Mount Haramosh in Baltistan (7497) was conquered under the leadership of Heinrich Roiss, who died during his attempt to master Mount Dhaulagiri in the next year. As the third scientific member of the expedition, organized by the geographer Konrad Wiche and the zoologist Eduard Piffl of Vienna University, Jettmar was able to visit again Gilgit and the Gilgit Valley as far as Gupis, and then the valleys of Darel, Tangir, and also of Gor, from where he returned to Gilgit.¹¹⁹ His reconnaissance of the Haramosh Valley east of Gilgit yielded within the still living spiritual world of a pagan past the veneration of a local protective goddess called Murkum, similar to other valley gods, such as Saiyabān in the Sai Valley, Taiban in Gor, Naron in Chilas and Halabān in Darel.¹²⁰ Northeast of Gilgit, on the road to Hunza, he discovered the boulder with an inscription of five lines in Sanskrit in the village of Danyor, near the confluence of the rivers Hunza and Gilgit. Next to the inscribed rock of Hatun it is the second important historical

117 Jettmar 1959a, 110; 1977, 284 and 1990b, 808–809 fig. 8. Buddruss – Snoy 2006 [2008].

118 Barth 1956 was able to travel for only two weeks through those valleys of Kohistan in the west of the Indus River, which were then controlled by the Wali of Swat. His records therefore convey an incomplete view of the subsistence and economy, the so-called ‘*wesh*’-system, the ethnic groups and their languages and Kohistani dialects, see: Jettmar 1983b and 2002, 68–70.

119 A report of Jettmar’s “Ethnological research in Baltistan 1958” was published in Jettmar 1961a. A report on observations on the geography and economy of the region is owed to Wiche 1958.

120 See his reports on ethnological researches in Dardistan, where he was accompanied by his interpreter Rhaban Hassan, the head constable of the Gilgit police: Jettmar 1958; 1959a; 1959b; 1960b; 1961a; 1965; 1980a, 35–39; 2002, 5–6, 198.

inscription that refers to the Palola Śāhi Dynasty without naming it. It was engraved by the high archivist Narendra in the name of the local overlord Jayamaṅgalavikramādityanandī. It forms a decree dating from 19 February 687 AD.¹²¹ The mentioned overlord (*paramēśvara śrī*), known also from inscriptions on Kashmir bronzes, was successor to Navasurendrādityanandī, the fifth ruler of the Palola Śāhi Dynasty, engraved in the royal inscription of Hatun.

During this field research campaign, Snoy observed in 1955 the assemblages of petroglyphs showing ibexes and hunting scenes between the villages Sinakar and Bulchi in the Bagrot Valley of the Gilgit District, which had been earlier noted by Ghulam Muhammad. Above all Snoy discovered the vast rock carving clusters with numerous inscriptions near Sassi, a village at the exit of the Rondu gorge, on the right side of the Indus and before its junction with the Gilgit River.¹²² At this site, which extends in the narrow valley of the Indus from its exit of the Rondu gorge to its junction with the Gilgit River near the Alam Bridge, Jettmar for the first time in 1958 and again in 1973 noticed images in the style of Scythian and Achaemenid art and Buddhist inscriptions. He designated this huge and next to Haldeikish, Chilas-Thalpan and Shatial indeed singular concentration of rock carvings along the ancient routes leading from Baltistan to the important ancient river crossing into the Indus Valley near the modern Alam Bridge not only as an important halting station for caravans, but also as a “bridge sanctuary”.¹²³ The river crossing apparently served as a control post on the roads from Skardu or Astor and the route systems traversing the Karakorum and Hindukush passes to the Tarim Basin.

Jettmar stimulated the indologist Gérard Fussman to examine the inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī and one inscription in Tibetan. Fussman was able to start his investigations there in 1976, which led to the first publication of Indian inscriptions of the until 1979 still unexplored rock art province between Shatial and Hunza-Haldeikish.¹²⁴ The earlier inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī from the time of the Kuṣāṇa Empire are concentrated on the rocks of assemblage A–B along the ancient track above the Gilgit River. One inscription of two lines, perhaps written in proto-Burushaski, was read as ‘*Daradaraya merekhisu dhadasu urmu ragasaṃpiioja bhajru satradu*’, mentioning the “king of the Dardes”. Two of the inscriptions in Brahmi, the

121 The complete publication of the inscription is owed to Hinüber 2004, 52–57 no. 23, who corrected earlier datings to ca. 730/731 by Jettmar 2002, 159. For epigraphical evidence of both overlords, see Hinüber 2004, 89–95. For earlier interpretations, see: Fussman 1978, 4. Jettmar 1980c [+ ?], 186; 2002, 126, 138, 159; Dani 1995, 77; 2001, 151.

122 Snoy 1975, 224–225 figs 111–118.

123 Jettmar 1975, 314 fig. 8. Fussman 1978, 11 pl. XI, 17. Jettmar 1979, 920 fig. 3 and 2002, 96 fig. 9. These assemblages of graffiti were discovered in 1955 by P. Snoy, member of the German Hindukush expedition 1955/56 (Snoy 1975, 224–225 figs 111–118). The drawings of two animals, found by Jettmar in 1958, were brought in connection with the Achaemenid style for the first time by Fussman 1978, 23. A critical review of his readings of the Brāhmī inscriptions is owed to Humbach 1980b.

124 Fussman 1978, 8–64 pl. 1, 3–32. Jettmar 2002, 101–102, 117. For the Palola Śāhi inscriptions see Hinüber 2004, nos 27a–b.

majority of which are found in the clusters E–F, name persons under the ethnic designation ‘*palolaj(o)*’ referring to a tribe or territory such as Bolor, normally equated with Baltistan, reigned by the dynasty of the Palola Şahi. The exact location of the enigmatic mountains of Bolor, the country Po-lu-lo as described for the first time by Xuanzang, and since Marco Polo’s mention sought by different British travellers, still belongs to one of those mysterious lands like Atlantis or Eldorado. Referring to the former discussion Curzon demonstrated, “that Bolor, or Bilaur, was the name applied throughout the Middle Ages to the elongated belt of mountain country south of the main range of the Hindu Kush, including the valleys of Kafiristan, Upper Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit, and Hunza-Nagar” or “having even a wider application”.¹²⁵ If we follow suggestions that Bolor is a mishearing of ‘bala’ meaning ‘upper, i.e. the higher regions of any valley or tract, then it apparently was not circumscribing a real geographical region, but was only a descriptive term.¹²⁶ Some other graffiti with historical reference mention a ‘Raja of Guda’ in Kashmir, and a Yavaraja, a hereditary prince.

Jettmar also added an important group of metal artefacts to the still modest assemblage of archaeological materials in Gilgit-Baltistan by publishing a Late Bronze Age hoard of bronze implements said to have been found in 1956 near the *kot* (fortress) of Manikhal in Darel. Consisting of seven axes of the types with shaft-hole and trunnion, and a bronze bowl of later date, this “hoard” may not represent one single complex, yet Jettmar rightly dated one “flat trunnion celt” to the late 2nd millennium BC.¹²⁷ This axe type has parallels in Iran; it belongs to a common weapon form of more symmetrical shaped contour with trunnions (*Ärmchenbeil*), which is widespread in Western Asia.¹²⁸

During these expeditions and travels in the subsequent years in 1964 (Gilgit and Punial), 1971 (Gilgit, Gupis, Yasin, Chitral, Baltistan), 1973 (Chitral, Gilgit, Astor, Rondu), 1975 and 1978 clusters of rock carvings were noted. The most successful outcome of Jettmar’s research travels was the discovery of a group of 10 boulders with petroglyphs, mainly of Buddhist origin, found on a plateau called Godomut (Ghotōmut) at Höl near Gakuch in Punial. Two of the boulders showed simple images of ibexes, but the others disclosed *mChod-rten*, the Tibetan type of stupa, accompanied by Tibetan standard donor inscriptions, which obviously

125 Curzon 1896, 247 summarizing the different localizations of Bolor by Yule, Elphinstone, Cunningham and Raverty.

126 Keay 1996, 129 referring to the localizations given by Gardiner to Forsyth, and by Youngusband to Pearse. The different evidence of Bolor is summarized by Dani 2001, 39–43.

127 Archaeological Museum of Karachi: Jettmar 1961b, 1967a, 75 fig. 21. Mughal 1985, 215–216 fig. 1–7, 10–15. Tusa 1985, 179–180 postulates for the “trunnion axe” a date to the 1st millennium BC. Dani 2001, 112, 421.

128 A trunnion axe of the same type from Shalozan, Kurram Valley in Sulaiman Range (Peshawar Museum) was published in Coggin Brown 1917, see: Wheeler 1968, 115 fig. 25, 2 and Allchin – Allchin 1968, 152 fig. 31, 6.8, who suggested Caucasian or Iranian contacts on the basis of the equivalent type at Shalozan (Type III after Maxwell-Hyslop 1953); see also: Dani 2001, 427, photos 63 no. 4 and Dar 2006, 130 fig. 34a. For the trunnion axe (*Ärmchenbeil*) in Anatolia and from other parts in Western Asia, see: Erkanal 1977, 3–12 (especially type V).

represent Bon-po Tantras. The author of the inscription of stone 2 is *dPal 'Dus sGra*, the *blon* (councillor) of the *Brsha khri ris*, who was in charge of the dominion of Brusha. The original arrangement of the stones above the mouth of the Ishkoman into the Gilgit River and opposite the site of Hatun was unfortunately not documented during Jettmar's first visits on September 15, 1964 and again in 1971 to describe this place as a Tibetan sanctuary of a community practising the bon-pos religion. Two other carved stones were found when the boulders were collected by the sub-regional department of archaeology prior to 1988 and transported to Gilgit. The images of nine *mChod-rten* were described and the seven inscriptions translated by Klaus Sagaster.¹²⁹ On eight boulders the "cross-shaped" and terraced form of the stupa resembles the same type as known from Baltistan and Ladakh and as depicted on a boulder at the approach to Darkot Pass, which was interpreted by Stein as a testimony of Tibetan occupation in Little Palur.¹³⁰ Obviously, both monuments seem to manifest the westernmost expansion of Tibetan supremacy in the region south of the Karakorum Range (or the control of the Yasin and Ishkoman routes after they had conquered the Wakhan between 730 and 733). After the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan (Great Palur) between 690 and 704 Tibetan forces tried to invade the plain of Gilgit, Bruža (Little Palur), between 720 and 722. According to Denwood the Gakuch inscriptions were produced "perhaps between 720 and 753, perhaps between 755 and 815, or between 820 and the 850s".¹³¹ Jettmar's field work in Dardistan and Baltistan between 1955 and 1973 was directed first of all at the historical interpretation of ancient beliefs and customs. These far-reaching studies finally¹³² resulted not only in his first monography on the *Religions of the Hindukush* (1986), but also culminated in the discovery of a widely unknown rock art province. In 1973, when Jettmar travelled with Max Klimburg again along the old still unmetalled Indus Valley track in this formerly forbidden land and revisited the striking concentration of petroglyphs in different styles between Sazin in Kohistan and Chilas at Harban, Minar Gah and Thor on the left bank of the river,¹³³ he realized the significance of the clusters of rock carvings in tribal territory, which at that time was mostly inaccessible. The discovery near Thor of the first bruising of a crouching beast of prey with its limbs ending in rings, actually representing the Eurasian animal style, turned out to

129 Jettmar 1975, 298 fig. 5. Jettmar – Sagaster 1993. With the exception of two boulders stored in the Taxila Museum (photo in: Halim – Baig 1995, 8 together with other carved boulders from Chilas), the other carvings (one stone seems to have been lost) are kept since 1988 in Gilgit: in the Department of Archaeology & Museums at Gilgit, the Biddulph Library (stone 6), and in the private house of the late Ali Ahmad Jan of Nagir (stone 2 and 7).

130 Stein 1928, 46–47. A new description of the Darkot boulder is presented in Mock 2013.

131 Denwood 2007, 50. [+ Here HH added this side note: "Nils Martin's re-examination of the inscriptions does not support this early dating in regard to their palaeography or orthography". The source of this quote is Martin 2017: 201].

132 Jettmar 1975.

133 These "historically important clusters of petroglyphs" were known to Jettmar since 1955: Jettmar 1979a, 920; 1980c, 186; 1991, 1–2. This travel along the KKH is described in Klimburg 2008.

be even further archaeological evidence for the presence of northern nomads in the Indus Valley, after the discovery of two bronze vessels at Imit in Ishkoman by Stein. The view of the “grand old archaeological explorer” that the Scytho-Siberian animal style did not intrude into this region could no longer be maintained, since B. A. Litvinskij had referred to Saka invasions into the mountain areas.¹³⁴ The identification of the drawing, showing a crouching predator with its legs ending in circles after Jettmar’s own words, was the “crucial experience” that the study of rock-art in this region “would be most rewarding” as a primary historical source.¹³⁵ He thereupon developed a conception for an integrated archaeological exploration of these petroglyphs, which he submitted for the first time to the Association of South Asian Archaeologists during their meeting in Naples in 1977, with the title “Archaeology before Excavation”.¹³⁶ But with the start of the Karakorum Highway construction as a Pak-Chinese enterprise in 1975, plans to revisit these sites had to be postponed.

During the period of restricted access to the Northern Areas Jettmar was at least able to make further inquiries regarding local versions of the famous Central Asian Kesar Saga in Baltistan, which he had traced for the first time in 1955 in a Brokpa village in the uppermost valley accessing the Deosai plains.¹³⁷ A group of rocks there called Phontaku was said to be the birthplace of the hero. The member of his team, A. Nayyar, noted in Rondu a version of the epic, which was handed down there in the former principedom. He recorded another version at Kuru, a village near the former small principality of Kiris in Shyok Valley. The Tibetologist Klaus Sagaster was stimulated by this discovery and recorded the epic of king Kesar (Gesar, Kiser), who had conquered Baltistan, as well as other folk tales of legendary kings in the villages Rgyayul and Astana near Skardu, around Shigar and in Eastern Baltistan. His studies on different versions of the Kesar epic, which was also popular in Hunza and in Ladakh, was an important step in unveiling a treasure of Balti oral traditions, which meanwhile has vanished from the memories of the population. Contrary to the ancient folk songs – Balti *rgyang-khlu* – and the epical songs – Balti *zdrung-khlu* – these stories lack any historical elements.¹³⁸

134 Litvinskij 1963 and 1964. [+ In connection with the topic ‘nomads and central Asia’, the reader may also find interesting Spengler et al. 2021, with refs].

135 Jettmar was not able to find the animal carving again during his journey with Dani in 1979, yet he did rediscover the image in 1983: Jettmar 1975, 305–307 fig. 6 (west of Thor). Jettmar 1979a, 921–922 fig. 4 (near Thor), Jettmar 1996[a], 87. In 1981 he identified another drawing of an ibex as representative of the animal style at Minar Gah: Jettmar 1982a, 4–5; 1983a, 162 fig. 8; 1984b, 76–77 fig. 2; 1991, 1 fig. 4.

136 Jettmar 1979a. A concept for the exploration of the rock art galleries was presented for the first time during the “Fourth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists” in Naples in 1977: Jettmar 1979a. See also Jettmar 2002, 87–88.

137 Between 28 August and 3 September 1978, he visited Rondu, Skardu and Kiris together with A. Nayyar and D. Buddenberg, and following earlier researches about the Kesar epic by Francke 1902b he later in September and October continued his studies in Ladakh: Jettmar 1977[a], 1979c, 1990a, 1996b.

138 Sagaster visited Baltistan in 1980, 1981 and 1983: Sagaster 1981, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989. See also Söhnen 1984, 1985. About the Kesar Saga in Ladakh, see: Francke 1902b, 1905–1941.

6 The Project 'Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway' of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1979–2013

The decision to start the projected systematic exploration of the rock art galleries had to wait for foreigners until the final opening of the new Indus Valley Road, the Karakorum Highway (henceforth: KKH), in 1978.¹³⁹ When Jettmar returned to Pakistan in 1979 on the recommendation of the Ministry of Culture, he was able to persuade Ahmad Hasan Dani from the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad to join as experienced archaeologist and competent epigraphist to coordinate the work of the Pakistani team in a joint Pak-German collaboration.¹⁴⁰ During an initial investigation trip some of the rock art sites along the Karakorum Highway, also called the China-Pakistan Friendship Highway, were noted. In Chilas near the river crossing to Thalpan along the terrace called Jayachand the team “was struck” by the elaborate Buddhist carvings and inscriptions, earlier noticed by Ghulam Muhammad and Stein. From Gilgit they again visited the rock with the famous Proto-Śāradā inscription of Danyor before they reached Karimabad – within the “lost kingdom in the Himalayas” – for the first time. There, in the Hunza Valley near Ganesh, the unknown site of Haldeikish, i.e. in Burushaski “the hunting place of the male ibexes”, was shown to them by Sulaiman Shah, a member of the Ruby Mining Project of Hunza on October 11.¹⁴¹ The numerous carvings of the ibex and “Buddhist” testimonies inspired Dani to coin the name “Sacred Rock(s) of Hunza” for this group of four rocks bordering the deep gorge of the river in the east. The four rock outcroppings near a ford across the Hunza River, which is now crossed by a bridge for the Karakorum Highway, are covered with 1712 carvings, the majority showing simple drawings of mounting goats, hunting scenes, and few images of historical importance. These ibex drawings that predominate the rock faces as seen from the ancient track and the modern highway indicate the function of the area as resting places for hunting parties and for ceremonies connected with the ibex game, known as *thuma saling* in the local tradition. A legend refers to a ritual in which a male ibex drawn on the rock would cause human pregnancy.¹⁴²

139 Hamid 1979, 159, 173. Kreutzmann 2009.

140 The “Pak-German Study Group” started its journey on October 6, 1979 from Islamabad to Gilgit (Jettmar 1980b, 156; 1982a, 5–6). In Chilas Jettmar and Dani noticed on October 8, 1979, the assemblage of Buddhist carvings on the terrace of Jayachand (Chilas I), discovered by Ghulam Muhammad. Shatial was visited by Jettmar after his return to Chilas on October 25 and again on November 9, 1979. The team returned to Islamabad on November 24.

141 Jettmar and Dani travelled from Gilgit to Hunza on October 11, 1979. Jettmar 1980b, 161–163 and 1980c, 186–191. Dani 1985a and 1995, 84–101. The site Haldeikish is also referred to as the place of the ibexes of the cannibal king Shri Badat, according to local tradition the last Buddhist ruler of Gilgit. A systematic survey and topographical documentation which enlarged the number of petroglyphs was undertaken there by the PGAM. Jason Neelis visited in 1995–1996 the site and clarified several initial readings by Dani (Neelis 2000, 2006, 2011).

142 Dani 1985a, 7.

The Sacred Rocks are significantly highlighted by the great number of 133 inscriptions: 65 – Kharoṣṭhī, 60 – Brāhmī, 4 – Sogdian, 2 – Bactrian, 1 – Chinese, 1 Tibetan. It is striking that this important epigraphic monument was not noticed earlier by foreign travellers. This fact can be explained by the position of the old road, prior to the construction of the KKH, which leads from Karimabad to the Kilik or Kunjerab passes between Altit to Pasu above the western bank of the Indus River, just opposite Haldeikish.¹⁴³ The singular epigraphic monument has been severely affected by the new alignment of the KKH since 2010.

The known monumental Buddha reliefs of Naupura and Manthal were enriched in 1979 by a singular monument, a large boulder of steep pyramidal form with a triangular base which shows carved Buddha images on three of four sides. The monolith came to light during work in a field near the village of Bubur in Punial.¹⁴⁴ Jettmar paid the land owner a reward in order to prevent the imminent blasting of the pagan work of art. On the order of prince Ali Ahmad Jan, then chief of the Gilgit police (SSP), the boulder was finally transported from Bubur to Gilgit. Only after the large boulder was split into two halves, could the transport without further mutilations be organized before 1983. The more representative half was fixed to the outer wall of the prince's private residence at Gilgit, and the other part was placed in the garden behind the house. Because of a still non-existent museum at Gilgit, the centre of Gilgit-Baltistan, this singular monument is still kept on private grounds.¹⁴⁵ Jettmar interpreted the figures on two faces of the boulder as the standing Śākyamuni, whose style and clothing resembles the monumental Buddha on the Naupura relief. Two smaller reliefs on the level of the feet of one standing Buddha depict a sitting Mañjuśrī. In the figure on the third face he saw the seated Padmapāṇi wearing a three-pointed crown.¹⁴⁶ Jettmar recognized in the standing figures with their large broad faces obvious resemblances to the stone *balbals*, human-shaped stone figures which were erected at memorial complexes and kurgans of ancient Turkic tribes in the 6th to 13th centuries AD in Central Asia, the Altai and in Mongolia. The stone figures represent enemies who the deceased Göktürk hero had slain during his life. They were described for the first time by the Franciscan William of Rubruck in 1253. Distinct from the *balbal*, are life-size anthropomorphic figures in granite which express the ancestor cult of the ancient Göktürks. According to Jettmar the Bubur reliefs belong to the end of the Buddhist period in the Northern Areas, a horizon which is characterized by the “Saka Itinerary” drawn up during the second half of the 10th century. Therefore he suggested a date in the 10–11th century. Baubura with its four monasteries, as Bubur is called in the “Itinerary”, and Little Palūr were then occupied by Turkic invaders.

143 In 1925 the Dutch Karakorum-Expedition followed this route: Visser 1926, 78–79 with map.

144 Jettmar 1984a, 214–215 plate III–IV; 1993b, 95; 1995, 47–49 fig. 1–4; 2002, 106, 134–135, 200–201 fig. 27, 1–3 suggests a date in 10–11th century.

145 + See on that Hakal 2015, and especially Hakal 2022 (for the present location and conditions of the Bubur reliefs A, B, and C).

146 + The image shows close resemblance with the bodhisattva of Jare (C 107) in Swat (Filigenzi 2015: 218–219, fig. 108).

These discoveries made since his first visit of the Northern Areas were the initiative to establish the "Pak-German Study Group for Anthropological Research in the Northern Areas". "To encourage research on various aspects of the Cultural and Natural factors and features" in the Northern Areas, the Ministry of Culture initiated in 1979 a separate archaeological mission to the Upper Indus region to get an idea of the importance of the petroglyphs along the Karakorum Highway.¹⁴⁷ This scientific approach resulted in establishing the Sub-regional Office of the Department of Archaeology & Museums in Gilgit in September 1981. This institution should develop into a valuable partner for the Pak-German Study Group and support its field research for years ahead.

During a first official field campaign in 1980, which was organized on behalf of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) at Bonn and in cooperation with Dani, director of the Centre for the Study of the Civilizations of Central Asia at the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, with Uxi Mufti, the executive director of Lok Virsa, National Institute of Folk Heritage Islamabad, and with Mian Said Qamar as representative of the Department of Archaeology & Museums in Karachi, the site of Haldeikish, "the place of male ibexes" (*haldén* is the Burushaski word for male ibex), near Ganesh in the Hunza Valley was documented. The photographic documentation of the rock carvings and inscriptions was organized by Thewalt.¹⁴⁸ A first reading and edition of the inscriptions is indebted to Dani. The conspicuous diversity of the inscriptions is evidence for the role of the site as a resting place for travellers along the transregional network of routes between Central and South Asia. The site represents not only a way-station between the route leading from Xinjiang across the passes Kilis and Mintaka to Gilgit, but also provides access to a track to the Nager Valley and farther across the Hispar Glacier to Baltistan. The historical importance, especially of the Chinese inscription consisting of twelve characters, which should awake great attention by sinologists, was first recognized by K. Sagaster. It records that "Wei-long, envoy of Great Wei (is) now dispatched to Mi-mi" [Table 30.1]. Mi-mi, a Central Asian state known as Mây-murgh from classical Arabic sources and from annals of the Great Wei Dynasty (386–556 AD), is located not far from Kand Country, present-day Samarkand in the north of the middle Syr Darya in Central Asia.

After other ethnographic studies in Astor and in Gor Jettmar returned to Chilas, where he first became aware of the extraordinary wealth and diversity of the rock art galleries around

147 The members of the mission were Syed M. Ashfaq and M. Rafique Mughal: Ashfaq 2005.

148 Jettmar undertook his exploration journey between July 23 and October 8, 1980 (Jettmar 1981c, 307). There a simultaneous photogrammetric recording of the monument by V. Thewalt had also been started, but without the necessary topographical survey. A first comprehensive publication of the "Sacred Rock" with a reading of its inscriptions is indebted to Dani 1985a, who also gave a description of the local topography (see Dani 1995, 84–101 and Dar 2006, 186–188). The Chinese inscription was translated and commented by Yong 1986 [repr. 1989]. Höllmann 1993 gave an altered reading ("Wei Long, envoy of Great Wei, now dispatched to Mimi"), which revealed not "something concrete new" after Deeg 2005, 101–102 footnote 455. The localization of Mi Country has been discussed by Sverchkov 2009, too.

Chilas and the zone downstream along the Indus River to Thor, and at last to the westernmost site Shatial, situated in the district of Indus Kohistan in the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), formerly North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).¹⁴⁹ During the reconnaissance trip of the previous year along the new Karakorum Highway, for the first time he had entered on October 25, 1979, near the village of Shatial into the large accumulation of rock carvings, which extends on both sides of the access to the bridge leading into the two valleys, Tangir on the west and Darel on the east. With gratitude he recalled to Mohammad Ismail Khan, the Deputy Commissioner of the Diamer District in Chilas, who gave the decisive reference to this site with one of the most magnificent monuments of Buddhist art: it consisted of a *triptychon* with a monumental stupa of Central Asian type in the centre, flanked by the representation of the well-known *Śibi Jātaka* on the left side and of a smaller pagoda-like stupa on the right [Table 22.1]. Jettmar saw in the singular delicate drawing the work created by an artist who was familiar with Chinese art of the Wei or early T'ang period. Even though this monument, near an ancient fort securing the river crossing to the Darel Valley, was visible also from the old Indus Valley road, it seems to have been disregarded by earlier travellers. Nicholas Sims-Williams, who had joined the team in September 1985, noticed the large cluster of at least 610 Middle Iranian inscriptions, which “belong to the fourth to sixth centuries A.D.”, suggesting that the site was a Sogdian emporium and the place of a sacred shrine. The site of Shatial Bridge with the ruins of the Shatial Fort was surveyed more closely by Thewalt in 1987.¹⁵⁰

During his first journey on a short track on the northern bank of the Indus into the valleys of Darel and Tangir in 1955, Jettmar had observed only few traces of rock carvings, even though the ancient track is lined by numerous carvings. Therefore, he doubted that there would be the same zones with petroglyphs on the opposite bank of the river. The discovery of the rock carving clusters in Thalpan, just on the opposite side of Chilas-Yayachand, an important river crossing, and of other sites on the northern bank, such as Hodar [Hodur] and Thor North at the end of this field campaign, opened at last a wide outlook for future research. The decision not to start “a systematic documentation, step by step”, as would have been normal in an archaeological survey project of this dimension, was influenced by the experience of the increasing damage to the rock carvings on the rock faces and boulders, caused by the need for building materials for the construction of new houses, bridges and roads. For this reason, the survey of “the areas bordering the highway had and still have priority”. Another reason to concentrate the research of the rock art galleries along the highway was the plan in the 1980ies to build a dam at Basha “transforming the Indus valley into a lake, which would mean the inundation of most of the historically importance of petroglyphs”.¹⁵¹

149 Jettmar returned to Chilas on October 9, 1979. During these investigations of the sites there he was accompanied by the retired Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ismail Khan, who also gave the decisive reference to Shatial. He visited the site on October 25 and again on November 9, 1979. Jettmar 1980a, 15–16; 1991b; 1993c, 53–54.

150 Jettmar 1991b, 252; 2002, 113 [+ see also Zahir et al. 2022].

151 Jettmar 1989c, XXVIII–XXIX.

During this first field season of the Pak-German Study Group also anthropological and linguistic studies were carried out: the ethnologist Irmtraud Müller-Stellrecht in Hunza, Adam Nayyar, doctoral candidate of Jettmar, in Astor, the linguists Georg Buddruss in Gilgit, and Klaus Sagaster and Renate Söhnen-Thieme in Baltistan. In the same year the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan, which has been active in Swat since 1955, undertook a survey of ancient sites and of the traditional wooden architecture in the Darel Valley.¹⁵² Ruins of ancient fortified towns (so-called *kots*) at Gayal, Phugush, Ghomal and Manikyal had been noted by Stein. The main aim of the Italian mission was to search for Ta-li-lo, which had been described by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang in his travelogue as the “the capital of U-chang-na”,¹⁵³ i.e. Uḍḍiyāna now equated with Swat. At Soni Kot near Gumari the Mission seemed to confirm Tucci’s expectations in revealing a sacred area with the remains of a stupa on a square base and rectangular rooms on two sides.¹⁵⁴ The fragment of a Buddhist cult-bronze from this site was delivered by Jettmar to the Department of Archaeology and Museums in Karachi.¹⁵⁵ Unfortunately the results of the survey have not been finally published.¹⁵⁶ In the ancient cemetery on a hillock at Manikyal Payin, just near the old city, graves could be investigated. One such examined burial revealed a “big globular urn containing burnt bones and ashes and covered by a flat stone lid”.¹⁵⁷ The burial pit also contained some other small pots with red surface. One of them, a bowl-on-stand, is paralleled in the grave pottery of the once called “Gandhara Grave Culture”.¹⁵⁸

In the northern part of the Darel Plain, at Toki Kot above the Hychot River, ruins of another Buddhist site, probably a monastery, were observed. But, as noted above, the localization of Ta-li-lo in Darel is clearly refuted by Faxian’s travelogue. The journey from Ta-li-lo to his destination Uḍḍiyāna required 15 days, and on his way the traveller had to cross the river

152 Faccenna 1980. Tusa 1985. In 1999 M. Nasim Khan visited the Darel Valley and published artifacts found in an Iron Age cemetery near the village of Muzot in Samigal Payan. He also mentions two rock carving sites at Lal Kot and Kuera Khan Das above Samigal showing images of ibexes and hunting scenes, but no Buddhist motifs: Nasim Khan 1999–2000.

153 Beal 1884, I 134. “The old seat of the government of Uḍḍiyāna”, after Watters 1904–1905, I 239.

154 Tusa 1985, 183 fig. 6

155 Jettmar 1995, 38–39; 2002, 192. The rock art assemblages of Thalpan were discovered by Jettmar 1980b, 183, when he crossed the newly constructed Chilas-Thalpan bridge on November 6, 1979.

156 + Recently two shards inscribed in Kharoṣṭhī, found in Darel at Urali-chuck, were published (Callieri – Olivieri 2020: 297–299). The bronze axes (*Ärmchenbeil*-like) collected by S. Tusa, have been recently re-documented, inventoried and handed over to the Swat Museum in Saidu Sharif.

157 The decorated burial urn is depicted by Dani 1983a, 60–62 no. 41, who summarized the archaeological results of the Italian survey, see also: Dani 2001, 112.

158 Vidale – Micheli – Olivieri 2011. [+ Here the footnote was reconstructed, as there was a gap in the manuscript. HH knew that Dani’s definition “Gandhara Grave Culture” was obsolete. Now preferred for Swat and neighbouring areas is “Swat [or Dir] Protohistoric Graves”. See *Science* Sept. 2019 (Narasinham et al. 2019; see also Micheli and Vidale 2015, but especially Vidale – Micheli – Olivieri eds 2015). The chronology of the Swat graveyards is now clearly defined between 1200 and 800 BCE].

Indus. So, when the first known Chinese pilgrim set out for Swat, why should he take the by far troublesome route back to the Indus gorge and from there again via Kohistan to the Swat Valley? As pointed out above, the Buddhist sanctuary Ta-li-lo may be more convincingly situated around the religious and political centre of Chilas-Thalpan.

As a result of the appreciable economic development, which initiated also a change in the social life in Gilgit-Baltistan, the traditional wooden mosques [Tables 37.1–2], which represent all the wealth of local building traditions and ancient artistic heritage in this region, are going to be replaced by modern buildings. An urgent survey of these monuments in Indus Kohistan and the Northern Areas, which do not seem to date further back than the mid 18th century, was started also as a part of the anthropological research conducted by the Pak-German team between 1980 and 1985, and later in cooperation with the Italian team, too.¹⁵⁹ During his research of 1955 and 1958 in the valleys of Darel and Tangir, Jettmar studied the settlement system and the vernacular architecture with its rich traditional wood carving, especially on religious architecture.¹⁶⁰ He referred also to decorations on traditional houses and fortified towers with their door frames, lintels and pillars with their capitals. Like Stein he saw in the villages, which due to the rivalry between the valleys display the typical farmsteads called *kot* equipped with defence towers, and also Buddhist motifs in the decoration of wooden frames of windows and doors and grave enclosures.¹⁶¹ Symbolic motifs reveal different local styles, such as the “Kohistani Style” in the Indus Valley or that in the Swat Valley with influences of Mughal architecture or in the western Himalayas of Kashmiri art.

With the introduction of Islam the structure of the villages underwent changes, and only few places have preserved the ancient organisation form. Sazin in the northeastern corner of Indus Kohistan at the extreme western end of the Great Himalayas was such an example, which during the visit of Jettmar and Nayyar in 1982 formed the object of an intended systematic survey of this village fortress (*kot* or *koṭ*). The research work there had to be postponed until 1987 when the architect Peter Alford Andrews could carry out his exemplary study for about six months, which represents until now a singular village documentation in Northern Pakistan.¹⁶² Sazin in the short side-valley on the left bank of the Indus was at that

159 A project to document religious architecture and related wood-carvings in Dir, Swat and Indus Kohistan was carried out by the Islamic team of the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan (IsIAO) between 1968–1986, but there is unfortunately no final publication available: Scerrato 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985. Noci 2006. An IsIAO Ethnographic Project was started in 2006 under I. E. Scerrato to survey vernacular architecture in Baltistan: Scerrato [E.I.] 2011. Noci 2006, 271–273. Between 1962–1967 Uwe Topper studied decorated grave enclosures in Kohistan: Topper 2000. For a comprehensive study of the wooden style in the Northern Areas, see Dani 1989, Klimburg 1997 and 2005. See also the survey of the fortified village of Sazin in Kohistan by Peter Alford Andrews in 1987. [+ published in Andrews – Jettmar 2000].

160 Jettmar 1959a and Jettmar, in: Andrews – Jettmar 2000, 1–9, 109–121.

161 For Gandharan ornaments in the vernacular architecture, see: Schmitt 1971.

162 Andrews – Jettmar 2000. For a review of this monographic study, see Frembgen 2003. An urgent demand to research and preserve the cultural heritage in Indus Kohistan is stated by Jettmar 1985c.

time still an intact village of farmsteads with the characteristic fortified clusters of houses and their watch-towers, which reminded Jettmar of Castel Gandolfo in Italy, and so he called it “a segmentary republic” – an autonomous political unit and tribal territory. In contrast to the somewhat superficial study of religious architecture in this area by Dani, there now exists a mapping and description of the mosque in Sazin *kot*. The exemplary survey included the study of the traditional architecture, social organization of the inhabitants in the three casts – Shin, Yeshkun and Kamin, and also of the economy, various crafts and material culture.

In 1981 the same Pak-German team started the systematic survey of petroglyphs in the Upper Indus Valley itself, around Chilas and in Thalpan within the Diamer District, where Jettmar had found in his own words: a “fairy-land of rock carvings”, connected with “a sort of proto-Karakorum Highway” in 1979 and 1980.¹⁶³ Thus, the designation “visitor’s book of the Silk Road” came into existence. With these paraphrases he obviously referred to the earlier explanation of the engravings by Ghulam Muhammad: “the tradition is that in ancient times the land was frequently visited by fairies, who used to make these descriptions, as in the opinion of the Chilasis it is beyond man’s power to produce such inscriptions”.¹⁶⁴ Jettmar also concluded that in addition to the political and religious centre around Chilas and Thalpan, local Buddhist sanctuaries existed also near the confluences of the Indus with its tributaries from the side-valleys where rural communities could emerge from cultivable land. This is the case for sites at Gichi, Hodar [Hodur], Thor and Minar Gah.

A first popular introduction to the new-found rock carving province along the Karakorum Highway was published in 1981 by Dani as a guide to the main sites for the general public. It was followed by two editions in 1983 and the last enlarged version with the title “Human Records on Karakorum Highway” in 1995.¹⁶⁵

In his masterly monographic study *Chilas. The City of Nanga Parvat (Dyamar)*, already in 1983 Dani summarized the results of the first three field campaigns in the Diamer District, thus presenting conspicuous insight in the manifold rock art galleries around Chilas and

Jürgen Wasim Frembgen between 1989 and 1997 undertook ethnological studies in Indus Kohistan, especially in the Harban Valley, see: Frembgen 1999, 2008, 2013a, and 2013b. For woodworking in Kohistan, see: Frembgen 1999, 86–90 fig. 3–5. [+ Of this author, see the recent Frembgen 2022].

163 The members of the team were A. H. Dani, V. Thewalt, T. Haubenreisser, T. Schmitt, who started anthropological studies about Goharabad (T. Schmitt, *Gor – Eine Talschaft am Indus*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Heidelberg, 1990). A photogrammetric survey of the altar rock at Thalpan and a niche-structure at Chilas II was started by H.-J. Przibylla (Bonn), and the photo-documentation was carried out by J. Poncar (Cologne). During this campaign the carvings depicting the *jātaka* of *Ṛṣipañcaka*, which was partly covered by sand, and of the Śibi *Jātaka* were discovered (Thewalt 1983, 623–626 and Dani 1983c, 94–95).

164 Ghulam Muhammad 1905, 110.

165 Dani 1995. The earlier editions, which are not quoted here, are: *Karakorum Highway unfolds the Romance of the Past*, Barqsons Printers, Islamabad 1979, and *Guide to Karakorum Highway*, Lok Virsa Islamabad 1983.

Thalpan.¹⁶⁶ This work conveyed also a first step towards reconstructing the chronology of the cultural and historical development in this region with its heyday during the Buddhist era, which can be separated into two main phases. The first stage covers a period from the 1st century BC to the close of the Kuṣāṇa (ca. 40–360 AD).¹⁶⁷ realm and is associated with inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and characterized by a distinct expression of early Buddhist art. The second phase dating from the 5th to the 8th century is associated with inscriptions in Brāhmī, apparently derived from Gupta Brāhmī and exposing an individual form of Buddhist art. Dani emphasized the singularity of these discoveries: “The later Buddhist art of Chilas has preserved for us the late Buddhistic art trends that are not known today from Gandhara. This Buddhist art of Chilas presents us the great Buddhist art treasures of Pakistan belonging to 5th–8th centuries AD. It contains the new Buddhist tendencies and developments that were preferred in this region”. In his interpretations of the inscriptions Dani presented also insecure identifications of names with far-reaching historical connotations in some inscriptions, “which has been refused altogether: no kings, no conquest, not even a sanctuary”.¹⁶⁸ Neither the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares (ca. 32–60 AD), nor the first Indo-Scythian ‘Great King of Kings’ Maues (ca. 65–75 BC), or the Great Kuṣāṇa (ca. 40–360 AD) are actually documented on the rocks along the Upper Indus.¹⁶⁹ The readings have meanwhile been corrected and altered by the systematic editions of all inscriptions.

For two actual royal inscriptions of considerable historical importance in Chilas, Dani and von Hinüber each offered interpretations that are not too discrepant.¹⁷⁰ The Proto-Śāradā inscription at Chilas Bridge 36:25, which was found by Stein in 1942, mentions Vajraśūra, apparently one of the local Dard rulers of Chilas during the first half of the 8th century AD. Another rock from Chilas-Terrace (Soniwal Payin) reveals inscriptions of king Vaiśravaasena, the second oldest great king of the Dards known by name. The earliest group of prehistoric carvings was assigned by Dani to a period of Mesolithic hunters from ca. 5000 to 3000 BC,

166 Dani 1983a. Included in his study are the large site of Ziyarat and part of Khomar Das on the right side of the Indus, opposite Chilas. A few references are also made to Hodar, Minar Gah, and Shatial. In an earlier article, he had for the first time described prehistoric rock carvings from Chilas, Dani 1982.

167 + The chronological bracket includes also the Kushano-Sasanian phase.

168 Jettmar 1989c, XXXII; 19971, 56.

169 Dani 1983a, 62, 64, 98–99, 102, 110 nos 78 and 85 connects the apparently occurrence of the name Moga Raja (Maues) at Chilas II with the name of the king with his full royal titles *Maharaya* and *Mahamita* on a copper plate inscription at Taxila (for the reading after Sten Konow: Dani 1986, 66–67, see also Dani 1985b; 2001, 127). For the so-called Gondophares Rock at Chilas I at the outlet of the Butoh Gah, see: Dani 1983a, 64 no. 46; 1995, 59; 2001, 127).

170 Dani 1983a, 72–77 no. 56–57 and 1985b: inscription I of Vajraśūra and II of Vaiśravaasena are again edited with corrections in Hinüber 1989a, 57–60 no. 59a and 61 no. 62a. See also MANP 6, 2003, 54 no. 36:25 (i.e. line 1 of the inscription 36: 35–44). For a historical interpretation, see also: Jettmar 1989c, XXXVI–XXXIX. [+ See also Hinüber 1985; the revised edition of Dani 2001 is Dani 2007].

and the latest group to the period of the Battle-Axe people occurring during the 8th century AD. Dani took part in the field surveys of the Pak-German mission only during the first three years, followed by shorter visits until 1985 in the Northern Areas.

As a result of his studies in the field and on the basis of his historical researches Dani gave in 1989 the first comprehensive overview of Gilgit-Baltistan's history from prehistorical to modern times [republished in 2001], with the title *History of the Northern Areas of Pakistan (Upto 2000 AD)*. The need for such a compendium of the mountain region's history is testified by two revised editions, printed in 2001 and 2007. As a part of the ethnological research in the Northern Areas, in 1983 and 1984 Dani undertook personally a first comprehensive survey of Islamic architectural monuments in Indus Kohistan, the Chilas District including the valleys of Darel and Tangir, in Gilgit, Nagir and Hunza. The survey of monuments in Baltistan was undertaken in cooperation with the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan conducted by Umberto Scerrato.¹⁷¹ Dani's pioneering comprehensive study *Islamic Architecture – The Wooden Style of Northern Pakistan*, which was published in 1989, presents not only an exhaustive survey of mosques, *ziyarat*s, and decorated grave coffins of the visited region, but emphasizes for the first time the differences between the characteristic wooden styles of the western part, as seen in Indus Kohistan, Swat, Dir and Chitral, and in the eastern part, as described on the basis of the rich architectural pattern of Gilgit, Hunza and particularly of Baltistan with its raja palaces, mosques and tombs, the *ziyarat*s, *khanqah*s and *astanas* (mausolea), a pattern that is mainly derived from Kashmiri craftsmanship.¹⁷²

A first international conference on Karakorum culture was organized by Dani in September 1983 at Gilgit with the aim to draw the attention of the scientific world "on the importance of the Karakorum Highway not only for human research in this part of the world, but also to understand its historical importance as a possible route from China and Central Asia to Taxila and Gandhara and to the other parts of the subcontinent".¹⁷³ The meeting presented a first insight into different aspects of the archaeology, ethnography and the different local languages on the basis of the new discoveries made in the widely unexplored regions of the Northern Areas during the first three campaigns of the Pak-German Study Group.

A first synopsis of the results of the research by the Pak-German Study Group between 1979 and 1984 on the rock carvings along the Karakorum Highway was presented to the public by a series of exhibitions, the first at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Cologne in 1985, followed by other exhibitions in 1991 at Lok Virsa in Islamabad, and in 1992 at the National Museum of Pakistan in Karachi. For this occasion, a special exhibition catalogue was edited by Jettmar and Thewalt.¹⁷⁴ In addition to the monographs written by Dani, until today this catalogue offers the only overall presentation of the stylistic development of the rock art in the Upper Indus Valley and the attempt of its historical classification. The two

171 + See Noci 2006.

172 Dani 1989.

173 A summary of the conference is published in *JAC* 8/2, 1985, 237–254.

174 Jettmar – Thewalt 1987; Jettmar 1992a; Jettmar – Hauptmann 1992.

editions published in German and English contributed significantly to bringing the rich imagery of the Pakistani high mountain region closer to the scientific community as well. It is noticeable that even in monographs about rock art of the Old World, the rock art province of the Upper Indus has largely not been taken into account. An overview of the more recent results of the PGAM was mediated by exhibitions at Islamabad in 1997 and 2009, and during the exhibition “Gandhara – The Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan” at the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn and at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin in 2008–2009.¹⁷⁵

During this period of the project there had been no clear conception as to how this immense and diverse material could be systematically documented and published. Jettmar gave a first preliminary report of his discoveries in 1980 followed by studies on chronologically or stylistically differentiated groups of rock carvings. [At that time it was clear that] the inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Chinese, Tibetan and Middle Iranian should be published by the responsible linguistic members of the team in terms of separate catalogues.¹⁷⁶ An initial problem for this project to regain the history of the mountain region was the denial by the Pakistani authorities to include the right of necessary excavations in the official research licence. During the following decades of exploration this disadvantage would be a decisive obstacle to bringing the archaeological and iconographical materials in a chronological sequence and to discerning the changing economic developments and social organizations since early prehistory.

Sites on the northern bank of the Indus such as Khalat Das and Thor North were shown to Jettmar already in 1979, but a preliminary recording of images and inscriptions was started there in 1984 and 1985 by Thewalt, and in 1987 by von Hinüber, before the large accumulation of rock carvings and of a small settlement was finally documented by the PGAM in 1996.¹⁷⁷ In September 1985 Sims-Williams joined the expedition to prepare the systematic edition of 610 inscriptions in Middle-Iranian languages, of which two are in Parthian, two in Middle Persian, ca. 10 in Bactrian and the rest in Sogdian, which partly

175 The exhibition “The Indus – Cradle and Crossroads of Civilizations” of 1997 was also shown in Lahore: Bandini[-König] – Bemann – Hauptmann 1997. A small catalogue was also published by the National Art Gallery in Islamabad for the exhibition “Talking Rocks along the KKH, Northern Pakistan. For the exhibitions in Bonn and Berlin in 2008/2009, see: Hauptmann 2008.

176 Jettmar 1980b,c. A first summarizing edition of the different inscriptions documented by the PGAM were started in the form of a catalogue by G. Fussman (Kharoṣṭhī), O. von Hinüber (Brāhmī), supplemented by L. Sander (1989), H. Humbach (1980a, 1985) and later N. Sims-Williams (1986, 1989a, 1989b, 1992) (Middle Iranian scripts), Chinese (Ma Yong and Th. O. Höllmann), and K. Sagaster (Tibetan) in the series ANP 1 and 2, correcting earlier readings and translations by Dani 1983a.

177 A few inscriptions were published by Sander 1989, 119–126. M. Nasim Khan recorded the site of Khalat Das, 15 km in the west of Hodar bridge, during his surveys in 1992 and 1993. His unpublished dissertation (Nasim Khan 1995) also includes the site of Helor Das, located between Hodar [Hodur] and Thor North (Nasim Khan 1994).

had been published earlier by Helmut Humbach on the basis of photographs.¹⁷⁸ The short inscriptions resemble the Sogdian graffiti in Ladakh, not only through their being inscribed on patinated boulders along a southern artery of the Silk Route from the Eastern Turkestan oases, but also in consisting almost entirely of personal names, often with the addition of a patronymic.¹⁷⁹ The material provides for the first time a corpus of Sogdian names "large enough to be regarded as a typical cross-section of names used by males of a particular social group".¹⁸⁰ Similar to Shatial, the campsite of Tangtse in Ladakh had been an important meeting place for Buddhist monks and Sogdian merchants with Tibetans during the 9th century in a much later phase than along the Upper Indus in Kohistan, where most of the Sogdian inscriptions date from the 3rd to 6th century. The discovery of the rock carving site with 565 Middle Iranian inscriptions, i.e. more than 90 % of all scripts of this type, near Shatial in 1979 turned out to be of singular importance for tracing the inclusion of the Upper Indus valley in the network of Sogdian merchants. From the trading centres in Eastern Turkestan a southern branch of the Silk Route traversed the Kilik Pass into the Hunza Valley and continued farther downstream along the Indus course, as attested by Sogdian inscriptions from Haldeikish in Hunza in the north, to Gukona, Chilas, Thor North, Oshibat and Bazeri Das as far as Shatial. The site had served for the Sogdian merchants not only as an emporium and sanctuary, but also as a bridgehead to the northwestern route leading through the Darel Valley across the Hindukush and through the Pamir or via Tokharistan and finally reaching Sogdia. This strategic position became obvious in 1987 by the discovery of a dominating stronghold on the southern bank of the Indus, now called Shatial Fort, which secured the river crossing leading to the Darel Valley and the access to the route leading to Chilas.¹⁸¹

In 1984 and 1985 the investigations of the Pak-German Study Group included also Baltistan, where 500 feet above the town of Shigar adjacent to Ghzwa-pa Mohallah a Buddhist hill settlement called *Skua Lung Gompa* or *Bodi Shagran* with its ruins of a monastery and five stupas was discovered. There is no other site in Baltistan with such a comparable rich cluster of 627 carvings on 147 boulders, with 45 stupa images and four representations of monks, including 72 inscriptions in Brāhmī and Tibetan. A singular metrical Brāhmī inscription was

178 Jettmar 1991b; 2002, 110–115. Sims-Williams 1986, 1989a, 1989b, 1992 and 2000. About one-third of the Sogdian inscriptions (no. 1–137) had been earlier published by Humbach 1980a and 1985. His readings were based solely on photographs. The majority of the Middle Iranian inscriptions, based on direct autopsy of the rocks as well on photographs, are separately edited in two volumes of the series *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* (Sims-Williams 1989 and 1992).

179 Sims-Williams 1993 and Vohra 1994.

180 + No direct references for the quote.

181 A first examination of the ruins was undertaken by Thewalt, who explained them as stupas based on quadrangular fundaments. Jettmar 1991b, 252; 2002, 113. A final documentation of Shatial Fort was accomplished by the PGAM in 1990, see: Bemann – Hauptmann 1993, 321 fig. 5, pl. 21,5.

written on behalf of a pious Buddhist lord of a district, which most likely is identical with Shigar.¹⁸²

At sites called Gol on the road leading from Skardu to the Humayun Bridge in the Indus Valley, at a place near the confluence of Shyok and Indus, just across the Humayun Bridge, and at Balghar Foqnaqh opposite Fartaq between Yugo and Khaplu, rock carving clusters were recorded in 1988, showing “terraced stupas” of the so-called “cubistic style”. They belong to a period of the Bolorian state before the 8th century, with unusual symbolic and floral decoration and drawings of the later ‘cruciform type’, reminiscent of Tibetan prototypes.¹⁸³ The team also had knowledge of other petroglyph accumulations in Baltistan, from the easternmost part of Rondu at Bacho, around the picturesque Lake Kachura to the Shyok River and Kharmang. A Brāhmī inscription from Shahi Mardan near the village of Kachura even mentions a new monastery (*saṃghārāma*), which was visited by the monk Saṃgharakṣita.¹⁸⁴ But there is neither epigraphic nor archaeological evidence to assume the capital of Great Palur, P’u-sa-lao or Ho-sa-lao in the area of Kachura,¹⁸⁵ which was captured in the year 753 by the third Chinese advance against Great P’ô-lü under Feng Ch’ang-ch’ing.

When earlier in 1982 a great number of fragmented miniature clay stupas and *ts’a ts’a*, inscribed clay seals which served as votive offerings, were said to be found at a hillock called Khalang Ranga, pasture-land in Balti, “downward about three kilometers of Skardu Bazar” near the radio station of Baltistan, Dani and Jettmar assumed the existence of stupas around Skardu. However, a visit to the place, where “a few rooms of a Buddhist monastery” had

182 The site was discovered in 1984 by Syed M. Abbas Qazmi, who informed Adam Nayyar, then scientific director of Lok Virsa, the National Institute of Folk Heritage in Islamabad. Jettmar with his team recorded ca. 25 inscriptions at this hillock in September 1984. Again in 1985 he together with D. Faccenna and M. Taddei of the Italian Archaeological Mission visited the place to discuss a possible excavation project there: Jettmar 1987c, 38–42; 1989b, 184–187 fig. 72; 1989e, 204–207; 1990b, 803–808 fig. 2–7; 1992a, pl. 34–36; 2002, 184–187 (1989c, 205–207 fig. 122–123). For the metrical Brāhmī inscription, see Hinüber 1989a, 66–68. For photos of some of the rock carvings, see: Schuh 2011, 531–538. The site was systematically surveyed by the PGAM between 1998 and 2000. A C14 sample from a robber’s ditch dug into the room of an architectural structure on the plateau is dated between 350 and 550 AD.

183 The rock carving site of Gol was noticed by Jettmar during his first visit in Baltistan in 1955. The prominent rock of Balghar Foqnaqh with the striking stupa images and swastika motif and the rock carving site of Yugo was visited by him together with M. Arif for the first time in 1988: Jettmar 1989b, 184–185 fig. 72; 1990b, 808 figs 8–9. For the rock of Balghar Foqnaqh, see also: Arif 1992, pl. 3. For a list of archaeological sites, see Arif 2000. The sites since their discovery and subsequent visits were finally documented by the PGAM in 2009. [+ In general, with reference to the actual architecture of stupas, the reader should first consider Fussman – Murad – Ollivier 2008, and Faccenna – Spagnesi 2014].

184 Hinüber 1989b, 74, no. 68a. In 2007 ruins of a monastery have been located by PGAM above the village Ghazi Abad above the Kachura Lake close to a place called Kar Fong with a huge rock bearing Buddhist carving.

185 Tucci 1977, 84. Jettmar 2002, 129–130 saw his identification with Katsura as “realistic”.

been reported, yielded no proof for such a sacral building".¹⁸⁶ A dating of the clay seals to the "Bolorian Kingdom" of the 7th – 8th century was possible through the script of the Brahmi inscriptions containing a Buddhist creed and comparisons of the stamped impression of the stupa with carved types from the late Buddhist period in the Diamer District or Kashmir.

The need for an urgent exploration of the historical heritage in Baltistan was at last demanded by Jettmar after these discoveries, which were enriched by two other monuments. An until then unknown relief depicting a Buddha triad was found in 1982 in the south of the village of Lamsah (Mohallah), just above the Shigar River,¹⁸⁷ marking the ascent from the Shigar Plain across the pathway leading to the plain of Skardu. And it was again Syed Muhammad Abbas Qazmi, who in 1987 acquired a long and flat slab with two lines of a Tibetan inscription referring to the "rebuilding" of a stupa. The stone was reused as a bridge for crossing the "Gangoopi Channel" near Skardu, which is said to have been constructed at the beginning of the 17th century.¹⁸⁸

In 1988 a group of Buddhist rock carvings was discovered above the important Indus River crossing, Partab Bridge, the first bridge constructed by the British.¹⁸⁹ During the same journey the valleys of Gilgit River with its subsidiaries Ghizer and Yasin were visited and several rock art sites recorded.¹⁹⁰ Between Gupis and Pingal Jettmar observed five assemblages of petroglyphs mainly on promontories above the Ghizer River. The images display animals and hunting scenes of the "timeless art of hunters and herdsmen",¹⁹¹ but no explicit Buddhist motifs. Solar rosettes and battle axes along the Upper Indus as noted at a place called Thangai represent the post-Buddhist period. The large rock carving sites of Murkha and near Noh Village on both sides of the Yasin River with multi-figured compositions of game, hunting

186 The inscribed clay seals with their stamped impression representing three types were published by Mian Said Qamar: see Qamar 1990 (see also Qamar 1985). Jettmar 1989b and 2002. The hillock near the radio station at Skardu was visited by Dani and Hauptmann in 1982.

187 The boulder with the relief was recorded by Dani and Hauptmann in 1982 (see Jettmar 1990b, 810 fig. 10) and finally documented by the PGAM in 2007. The Tourism Department of Gilgit-Baltistan in 2010 secured the rock with an enclosure wall, but deepened the ancient surface of the pathway so that the relief is hardly discernible for visitors. The rock is 5.70 m high and 6.00 m wide.

188 The inscription was found by Syed M. Abbas Qazmi in March 1987 on the Gangoopi Channel "which was constructed by Mendoq-rGualmo (Gul Khatoon), the Mughal queen of Ali Sher Khan Anchan around 1600–1610". The slab is now kept on his private estate at Skardu. A translation of the Tibetan inscription is owed to Roland Bielmeier. See Jettmar 1989b, 187.

189 Jettmar 1995.

190 Jettmar 1989b, 187–190. The huge prehistoric rock art site of Murkha on the left side of Yasin River was noted by M. Arif in 1988. Ardito Desio recorded rock carving sites along the Ghizer River (Thangai, Shamran, Pingal, see Desio 1985, 237–240 pl. 3–7), in Yasin Valley between Gupis and Yasin (Desio 1985, 240–242 pl. 8–10), and in Hunza (Desio 1985, 242–245 pl. 11–16). The depicted huge hunting scenes from Yasin Valley mainly refer to a non-Buddhist population in this region.

191 + No direct references for the quote.

scenes, sometimes with the hunter himself, present an iconography which is totally different from the imagery in Diامر District. Relations to the Pamir rock art prompted Jettmar to speak of a “Pamir-Gilgit Complex”.¹⁹² This assignment is yet another argument for including the whole rock imagery of the Northern Areas in a much broader complex of rock art covering an area from the Upper Indus in the south, through mountainous semi-desert and steppe regions of Central Asia and as far as South Siberia in the north. During all periods the images reflect interrelations which transferred new ideas, religious beliefs and political influences between the different rock carving provinces.

Jettmar did not view the megalithic “stone-circles” as graves, one of which near the village Chachi at the confluence of Yasin and Ghizer had been mentioned as a “sepulchral mound” by Biddulph in 1880 and was described by Tom George Longstaff, in view of its perfect circle of megaliths as “miniature Stonehenge”.¹⁹³ Such stone circles are widespread over a large territory from Yasin to Ishkoman. Jettmar’s report could be confirmed during later observations that in the gravel filling of the stone circles (4 to 5 m in diameter and up to 1 m high), which had been dismantled by villagers of Yasin, large bones of apparently cows, sheep or goats were found, but no remains of any human burials or grave-goods.¹⁹⁴ He connected these monuments with platforms known as *thalis*, used as memorials for living persons, who were allowed to sit on a raised platform receiving praise and congratulations from the community. Before the ceremony, the relatives and followers had to build the platform during what we may call a “feast of merit”. Many animals were slaughtered and eaten during such practices, the bones were mixed with the earth and gravel”.

Since 1984 the project was incorporated as a research unit in the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, with the aim of processing the previously collected material, to supplement it by further expeditions of the “Pak-German Archaeological Mission to the Northern Areas of Pakistan” (PGAM), and to publish the rock carving sites successively and systematically.¹⁹⁵ In 1989 the directorship of the research project was passed over to Harald Hauptmann. With the generous support of the Department of Archaeology & Museums in Karachi, whose headquarter was transferred in 2005 to Islamabad, the project could be established as an example of international and interdisciplinary co-operation with scholars from England, France and Pakistan. Studies on different subjects such as geomorphology, zoology or the traditional vernacular architecture and especially epigraphical researches are

192 The site of Murkha was discovered by M. Arif: Jettmar 1989a, 190; 1993a, VII–VIII. Ulrich Hallier is owed a first presentation of this remarkable rock carving accumulation: Hallier 1991 and Hallier – Hallier 2010.

193 Biddulph 1880, 57–58. Longstaff 1920–1921, 159.

194 Jettmar 1967a, 75 fig. 19; 1989b, 187–188. See also Jettmar 1975, 229–230, 235.

195 Bandini-König – Bemann – Hauptmann 1997. Final publications in the series H. Hauptmann (ed.), Materials for the Archaeology of the Northern Regions of Pakistan (Mainz) (= MANP). See also Nasim Khan 2000.

included.¹⁹⁶ Important progress in the knowledge of the until then obscure history of the Trans-Himalayan belt was achieved in 1989 again by Dani, then the Nestor of archaeology and ancient history in Pakistan, with his condense reconstruction of the *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan (Upto 2000 AD)*. This work, as already stated, was again published in a revised edition in 2001 and followed by two reprints, based on his own studies from 1979 to 1985 as a member of the Pak-German Team of Anthropological Research. With this publication Dani showed that the Northern Areas, which culturally and historically had been connected with Chitral until its partition by the British in 1895, no longer could be seen as “an appendix to Kashmir”, but had “its own independent historical development”.

Another focus of the field work was the topographical survey of the most important ancient sites and routes in the Upper Indus valley. With the help of exact mapping by the team of the Institute for Geodesy at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), the former University of Karlsruhe (TH), the distribution of the stylistic and local variations of the rupestrian art in these regions becomes obvious. When interpreted in connection with the rich epigraphical material, different spheres of power and political influence become more evident. Moreover, the recording of archaeological remains, such as the ancient routes, river crossings, resting places, forts, settlements, sanctuaries and cemeteries will shed further light on the still very little known cultural history of this region connecting Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistani lowlands along a side branch of the “Silk Road”. These petroglyphs and inscriptions are far more than mere incidental graffiti, a “visitors’ day-book” or the “visitor’s book of the Silk Road” engraved by local farmers, hunters and shepherds, and by invaders, merchants, pilgrims or travelling monks, or even artists employed by the local political establishment. They provide information about the cultural and ethnic variety and changes of religions and local beliefs in this region from pre-Islamic times back into prehistory, even to the Early Holocene or Late Stone Age, i.e. the 9th – 8th millennium BC.

Rock images featuring stupas, Buddha with his adorants, Bodhisattvas, a few jātaka scenes and other compositions reveal a great variety of stylistic trends. The masterpieces indicate artists of exceptional elegance and sophistication, particularly around the sites of Chilas and Thalpan singular in this region.

The valleys of the upper Gilgit River and its subsidiaries Ishkoman, Ghizer and Yasin had been partly surveyed also by Jettmar in 1988. Even earlier in 1986 Ulrich Hallier gained first insight into the rich rock art galleries of the Yasin Valley, also of the extended site Murkha on the left bank of the Yasin River. During the PGAM survey of 2011 only 1087 rock images were recorded. The western bank in the south of Noh revealed more than 515 images. Contrary to the canon of the imagery in the Upper Indus region, the rock art of Yasin and Ghizer is characterized by wild game as the main topic of rock art, sometimes arranged with hunters using slings and in a later period “sophisticated reflex bows”, thus reflecting the world of

196 Currently published in: *Antiquities of Northern Pakistan. Reports and Studies* 1, 1989–5, 2004 (= ANP). The fortified village of Sazin in Indus Kohistan was surveyed by Peter Alford Andrews in 1987 and published in ANP 4.

a society, whose survival was dependent upon hunting. They display a great variety of mainly prehistoric hunting scenes in a characteristic expressive style, which resembles the imagery of the Central Asian rock art connected with tribes living in the Pamir.¹⁹⁷ A panel from the Yasin Valley shows images of the *rubab*, a musical instrument played by Sufis during their religious ceremonies.¹⁹⁸ This particular rock carving represents a singular and early testimony of a mystical Islamic tradition, which was probably introduced by Muslim missionaries along the main connection between the Pamirs and Gilgit during or after the 16th century.

In 1991 Haruko Tsuchiya of the Sophia University Kamakura initiated a project to trace the ancient route that Faxian (Fa Hsien), a Chinese pilgrim of the (Eastern) Dong Jin Dynasty, one of the kingdoms of the Six Dynasties Period 399–415 AD, followed in the high-mountain region on his travel from Chang'an to Tashqurgan to Gandhara and North India. During the series of her field research, especially in the valleys of the Gilgit River and its subsidiaries Ishkoman, Yasin and Ghizer as well as in the Singal Valley over the Batakhun and Pataro Pass to the Darel Valley, she reported a large number of rock carving sites, which partly had been surveyed earlier. But there obviously has been no systematic documentation of any rock carving site in the Ghizer District. In 2010 and 2011 a systematical survey of the large rock carving assemblages on both sides of the Yasin River has revealed more than 76 stones at Murkha and also stones with images of mainly prehistoric origin. The conspicuous absence of Buddhist testimonies in Yasin confirms the assumption that the northernmost valleys were not inhabited by a Buddhist population.¹⁹⁹

For the reconstruction of the Holocene history of climate, vegetation and the earliest human influence in the Northern Areas there exist far too few palynological investigations. A series of profiles are available from a swamp south of the Fairy Meadows (3300 m) in the Raikot Valley north of Nanga Parbat and from the Yasin Valley.²⁰⁰ They enable insight in the increase of precipitation in the early Holocene, which promoted the growth of pine forest. Since 5000 B.P. the lower summer monsoon precipitation led to the *Artemisia* steppe with some *Juniperus*-forests. But there are no clear indications for human influence in the early prehistoric periods to be discerned.

197 For the surveys of Jettmar and by the PGAM, see: Jettmar 1967a; 1989b, 187–190 pl. 26–28; 1993a, VII–VIII. Hallier 1991 and 2010. For critical remarks about Hallier's survey see: Jettmar 1993b, 97; 2001, 137–138.

198 The carving, discovered by Jettmar in 1988, shows almost no repatination and belongs to a post-Buddhist stratum of rock art. Jettmar 1989, 188–189 pl. 27; 1993b, 97; 2001, 106–107, 137 fig. 20.

199 [+ With reference to Yasin, in the previous sentence, after "Yasin confirms" HH left a side annotation: "Jettmar 2002, 138"]. Tsuchiya 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2006. For rock carvings: Tsuchiya 1998a, 127 fig. 4; 1998b, 60 pl. 4–8; 1999, 370–371 fig. 10; 2000, 897–900 fig. 7–10; 2006, 103. Rock art sites mainly showing ibexes and hunting scenes have been observed in other basins north of Gilgit such as in the Chapursan Valley, a tributary of the Hunza River (northern Karakorum): Iturrizaga 2008, 38 photo 46.

200 Schlütz 1999, 105–118.

7 Rock Art in Other Regions of Pakistan

Rock carving assemblages have been found in other regions along the middle course of the Indus River as well, where complexes of rock formations suitable for practising rock art were available. Cuthbert King, the Deputy Commissioner of Attok, first recorded in 1931 the existence of rock drawings on the west bank of the Indus River below the Attock Bridge. The same assemblages were revisited by D.H. Gordon, who published engravings from the three localities, Mandori and Gandab downstream from the Attock Bridge, and from Ghariala near the junction of the Haro River with the Indus.²⁰¹ At Mandori he noticed also two inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī. During the Yale-Cambridge Expedition of 1935 H. de Terra and T. T. Paterson again documented boulders with rock carvings along the Indus near Attok.²⁰² They show two stylistic assemblages: an earlier group with human and animal figures and a later prehistoric group showing elephants, Bactrian camels, a humped bull, and horsemen. Noteworthy are images showing a bullock cart and a solar disc.

Numerous rock engravings were found in the Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP or KPK), previously called the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP),²⁰³ A series of rock carving sites along the ancient route leading from Dir across the Lowari Pass via Chitral to the Broghal Pass and in the Chitral Valley were recorded by M. Nasim Khan during a survey of the Peshawar University. A typical larger site is located on the slopes of the Occhur Mountain at Jondhak near Chitral, comprising simple pictures of ibex, markhor, human figures, hunting scenes and horsemen.²⁰⁴ To an earlier prehistoric period belong a group of petroglyphs at the road leading from Mastuj Village to Baroghil Pass, showing foot- and handprints. A first reference to the existence of Buddhist rock images and Brāhmī inscriptions in Chitral is owed to Stein. Such carvings including the images of a stupa with a Brāhmī inscription were again recorded in 1988 by Nasim Khan on a boulder in the Charan Village and on another boulder in Torkoh Valley near the village of Rain. Both inscriptions denominate the name of the same king from the 4th–5th century AD: “A pious gift of the Raja Jivavarma”, showing the importance of this route through the Hindukush range into the Wakhan corridor. The concurrent style of writing of both inscriptions are evidently the work of one hand. A ten lines inscription in Śāradā dating to 8th to 10th century at last was found near Arandu on the bank of the Kunar River in Lower Chitral Valley.²⁰⁵

201 King 1940.

202 de Terra 1940, 206–207 figs 74–75, the carvings are also mentioned and dated to late Eneolithic by P. Teilhard de Chardin 1958, 214. Gordon 1960, 111–112.

203 Rehman 1997. Ashraf Khan. – Bahadur Khan – Azeem 1999–2000. Mohammadzai 2005; Mohammadzai – Khan 2011.

204 Nasim Khan 2002b.

205 The Brāhmī inscription of Kalandar-i-Bohtni at Torkoh in Mastuj sub-division of Chitral was discovered by M. Nawaz Khan in 1994 (Frontier Post 5.11.1994) and documented together with the (already known?) inscription from Charan during the Chitral-Survey of the Peshawar University in

The Swat Valley represents yet another important province of rock art. Giuseppe Tucci found in Gogdara of the same simple style in 1955–1956 (Tucci 1958), while a completely new rock art panorama was discovered in the same valley during the last years.²⁰⁶

Rock carvings of the same simple design are known from Hathiano Kandano at the foot of the Mura Hills in the Palai Valley, Malakand Agency.²⁰⁷ They depict images of bulls, dogs, many horses, scenes of galloping horses accompanied by a horseman, and human figures. The imagery reveals a lifestyle of advanced nomadism with horse-breeding.

An almost unknown rich rock-art province in the mountain region is between Sindh and Balochistan; it has been systematically surveyed since 2005 by Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro.²⁰⁸ Carvings from a long space of time from early prehistory to the Islamic period are engraved on rock faces, boulders, but also in rock shelters and caves [near Sehwan as well as] in the valleys of the Khirtar Mountain Range in Sindh.²⁰⁹ The Buddhist period is represented by a large number of images of stupas of three different types and inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī, which bear witness to the importance of the valleys, locally called *nains* (hill torrents), through the Khirtar Range as routes for traders and pilgrims leading from Sindh to Balochistan and beyond to Iran.²¹⁰ The graffiti reflect also the predominance of Buddhism in this region. The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, who travelled through the kingdom of Sin-tu before the Arab conquest noted “several hundred monasteries (*saṅghārāma*) occupied by about 10,000 priests”, who studied the Hīnayāna Buddhism, the Little Vehicle, the belief in more than one Buddha, according to the Sammitīya school.²¹¹ The rock carvings from the Seeta Valley, 80 km from the city of Lakarna, date over a long period of time as well, from the

1998: Nasim Khan 2002b, 180 (without photo). A carving of a stupa and an accompanying Brāhmī inscription with the name of its donor ‘Rāja Jāivavarman’ was found by Stein in 1899 near ‘Charrun’ and may therefore correspond to that of Charan: Stein 1912, 42, 44–45 and 1921, 37 fig. 5–6. See also: Hallier 1991, 4 fig.3. – For the inscription in Śāradā from Arandu, see: Nasim Khan 2002b, 180 fig. 5. The Brāhmī inscription of Barenis, 43 km north of Chitral and 1 km away from Rain, dated to the 9th century, is mentioned by Afzal Khan 1975, 12. Rock carving sites from Parwak in Chitral with simple images of animals, anthropomorphs and hunting scenes are reported by Khan 2013.

206 + Henceforth HH leaves some bibliographic information in the text. For example here: Tucci 1958. I thought it was correct to leave them as they are. They make clear the very last revision of the text done by HH. On the rock art of Swat, see Olivieri et al. 1996 (on Nokkono Ghwand etc.), Olivieri 1998 (on Gogdara I), Vidale – Olivieri 2002, Olivieri – Vidale 2004, Vidale – Olivieri 2005, Olivieri, Vidale et al. 2006, Olivieri 2015a. Amongst the Pakistani scholars who wrote on the Swat rock art, see the production by Badshah Sardar (2005, 2007, 2010).

207 Nazir Khan 1983.

208 + The same author has recently published new reports (e.g. Kalhoro 2018: on Sindh; Kalhoro 2021: on Balochistan).

209 Rock carvings at Dalh in Nain Naing in Sehwan tehsil, Sindh, were first mentioned by Majmuder 1935. Kalhoro 2009, 2011, 2013a. Abro 2011.

210 Kalhoro 2009, 102–103, 105–106; 2011, 309–310; 2013a.

211 Beal 1884, II 272.

Epi-Palaeolithic to the Islamic period, including Buddhist images of stupas.²¹² In Balochistan an assemblage of rock carvings and inscriptions was surveyed by the DoAM in 1984 on the hillock Tor-Derai in Loralai District.²¹³ Human figures and horses are depicted isolated or composed in scenes with horsemen, sometimes the warrior standing on a horse. Human figures are accompanied by Hinduistic symbols such as swastika and triśulā, the standard attribute of Lord Śiva. Together with inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī they might be attributable to the early first millennium AD. Carvings of horsemen yielding axes and swords, apparently involved in battle scenes, are found also in Punjab on rock faces of the Chiniot Hills. As in the other rock art provinces the images might belong to a much later period than the Bronze Age.²¹⁴ As in other regions of Pakistan there are also rock paintings in Sindh, at Lahaut in the Maher Valley, Gadap Tehsil of Karachi District. The assignment of the earliest paintings to the Mesolithic period is not secured by associated archaeological artifacts.²¹⁵

The dating of the petroglyphs is made possible by assessing different stages of the desert varnish,²¹⁶ by palimpsests, i.e. superimposed carvings thus revealing their chronological sequence, by analysing the technique of engraving and, last but not least, by stylistic comparisons with rock art provinces, where comparable images are archaeologically dated. Basing on the different patinations and weatherings, the geologist Helmut de Terra tried to discern four major groups in the rock pictures of Ladakh.²¹⁷ For the painted and carved rock art in India, attempts have been made to define different stylistic groups and to place them in a chronological system.²¹⁸ Some carvings of the Buddhist period are accompanied by inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Bactrian, Middle Persian, Parthian and Sogdian, presenting yet another source for historical information. There are 13 isolated inscriptions in Chinese,²¹⁹ also in Tibetan, mainly in Baltistan,²²⁰ and even one in Hebrew in Gichi. Many different themes, topics, and styles could be identified in these carvings, in which the range of the region's history is reflected. More than eight different main stages in the stylistic development can be distinguished, as summarized in the following paragraphs.

212 Kalhoro 2012 and 2014c.

213 Qamar 1986.

214 Mughal 1999.

215 Kalhoro 2014a.

216 The term 'desert varnish' (*Wüstenlack*) is defined in: Biedermann 1976, 143–144 and Garvie – Burt – Buseck 2008.

217 de Terra 1940, 48.

218 Brooks – Wakankar 1976.

219 Yong 1986 [repr. 1989]. Höllmann 1993 and 1996. For a newly found inscription, see: Chilas VI 16:131.

220 Chilas VI 16:56.61.71.