

Sir John Marshall — The Buddhist art of Gandhara.

Memoirs of the Department of Archaeology in Pakistan, Volume 1.
Cambridge, 1960, pp. i-xviii and 1-118, and plates 111.

In his last study the late Sir John Marshall, the great excavator of Taxila, finally came out with his opinion on the chronology and evolution of the "Early" phase of the Gandhara art—the "Early" phase being limited to a discussion of the stone sculptures together with a few stucco heads found at Taxila. The readers will, no doubt, be sorry to read through the book as the excavator has based his conclusions more on style criticism than on the evidence of stratigraphy. The argument of style is not above doubt. "Hellenism" still prejudices the discussion of Sir John, and he adheres to his old classification of "Early" Gandhara and "Indo-Afghan" schools. Nay, he has created one more — "a small local school at Taxila" (pp. 24-25) on the basis of two sandstone sculptures (Figs. 27 and 28). The latter is even taken to be that of *Bodhisattva*, dating "from" a time when the canonical types of the Buddha and Bodhisattva had not yet been fixed". The first was found at Sirkap, but without taking into account its archaeological context Sir John relegates both of them to one school and one period. There is no doubt that their style is entirely different, but how far one can rely on the sole evidence of the curly hair for dating them to the Saka-Parthian period, as Sir John has done? Similarly the appearance of the Buddha in the -panel representation (Fig. 53) can be easily understood to have developed from the panels illustrated in plates 40-47, but here the Buddha is depicted in fully developed canonical form. Therefore the Buddha figure must have evolved before he was represented in this panel. It is strange that nothing is said in the book on the Buddha appearing in the Kanishka relic casket. Though the book is a welcome addition from the pen of an expert, it leaves much to be desired particularly on the main problem of the Gandhara art in the light of the recent discussion, which have not been taken into account at all.

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