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Aesthetic Refinement by Successive Incorporation of 'Extraneous' Features: Towards a Typological-Stylistic Sequence of Early Gandhāran Buddha Images in Stone, 1st–3rd Centuries

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Abstract: An unusual, idiosyncratic head of the Buddha from the Swāt Valley, belonging to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, forms the starting point of this preliminary enquiry into the typological and stylistic development of early Gandhāran Buddha images. While anthropomorphic depictions of the Buddha appear to have been rare during the first century CE, their number significantly increased during the reign of the Kushan ruler Kaniṣka I (c. 127–150 CE). It is plausible to assume that in Gandhāra, a distinctive and aesthetically appealing design of the Buddha image was striven for, which is suggested by the sculptural material known to us. This corpus, comprising all the hitherto published objects as well as those made accessible on the webpages of museums worldwide, including both single-figure images and narrative panels, has been evaluated for the present essay. Through a careful comparative study of the morphological features, centring on the head portion, arguably the most essential constituent of the Buddha's representation, the successive creation of innovative designs as well as their plausible chronological sequence are proposed here, with the latter, as far as possible, calibrated on the basis of images dated by inscriptions.

Keywords: Gandhāra, Swāt Valley, Early anthropomorphic Buddha image, Schist stelae, Typological method, Stylistic development, Innovative design, Kaniṣka I, Kushan (Kuṣāṇa).

Introduction

It is still largely unclear, when exactly, how, and certainly, why *specifically*, the initial creation and typological modification of the early Gandhāran anthropomorphic Buddha image unfolded, whereas the respective developments regarding the Mathurā school of art appear to present themselves as somewhat less elusive.[1] Many authors have discussed these overall questions in the past, often focussing on when, particularly: *whether in BCE or CE*, and where: *whether in Mathurā* (southeast) *or Gandhāra* (northwest), the Buddha could have first been conceived in this novel fashion. Although quite a consolidated political entity emerged under the Kushan ruler Kaniṣka I (also known as 'the Great'), furthering the flourishing of the arts, the beginnings of the Buddha image might, in fact, belong to the pre-Kushan period, in both sub-regions. Diverging assessments of the time of Kaniṣka I have made it necessary to convert some of the dates published by scholars who were active several decades ago.[2] The time gap of nearly 50 years between the date of 78/79 CE, the beginning of the Śaka era, and earlier, often assigned to Kaniṣka I as well, and the meanwhile widely accepted date of 127/28 CE (see Falk 2001; Cribb 2018) for his ascension to the throne had led to a number of uncertainties, tending to blur our picture of this crucial period for the development of visual art in durable materials in this overall region.

The application of absolute – or even relative – dates to the pieces of visual information we have been getting for more than 150 years, often without proper geographical provenances, is still too insufficient to draw a coherent picture with a fair degree of certainty.[3] Such an important aspect in the early development of Buddhism and its visual culture still deserves appropriate attention. Moreover, the creation of a Buddha image which must have been widely accepted within the Gandhāran communities has had quite an impact beyond their confines, as it did inform the respective design on the Mathurā side, from the second half of the second century onwards (i.e. during the time of the Kushan ruler Huviṣka),[4]

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and it is well-known that eastern Central Asian and various schools of East Asian art adapted Gandhāran models for themselves, opening up a vast field for supra-regional studies. With this overall situation in mind, I shall present a few observations that might be useful for a, hopefully, more extensive evaluation of typological and stylistic features in the future.[5]

It is generally accepted that the introduction of anthropomorphic Buddha and Bodhisattva images was quite a conscious step taken by the respective stakeholders, which must have been facilitated by a sea change in the attitude towards Buddhism, Buddhist practice, and its institutional establishments. The dissemination of a widely acclaimed image of the Buddha was likely promoted by early institutional representatives of Buddhist sects and, perhaps, political circles, or members of the elite. It is fascinating to observe that while in Gandhāra quite a few stylistically diverse forms were known (e.g. concerning sculptural art in stone vis-à-vis metalwork including coins, with the latter complex applying differently designed Buddha images), the Mathurā school of art presented a starkly contrasting picture: what we regard as the widely accepted early image of the Buddha, inscriptionally referred to as '*bodhisatva*', appeared surprisingly uniform for several decades.[6] Even though our knowledge of the respective early phases in Gandhāra, from about the second half of the first century through the second quarter of the third century, has been continuously augmented during the past decades,[7] the state of affairs regarding the material visualisation of the Buddha remains unsatisfying. On the basis of, mostly, previously published examples from Gandhāra as well as comparative material from regions further to the west, specifically, comprising the Roman empire and the cities of Palmyra (Syria) and Hatra (Iraq), both with a remarkable and characteristic artistic output, I shall attempt to give a brief outline of the topic and draw some preliminary conclusions.

Within Gandhāra, the Swāt Valley was certainly a focus of early attempts of pictorial representation of the Enlightened One, while the inspiration and production would have spread to other places that we know as major centres of Gandhāran Buddhist worship and art (like Taxila, and Takht-i-Bahi), during a developmental stage that may have followed quite soon. Several instances of a similar apparently early design have been reported from the Kapisa/Kabul region of Afghanistan, including Shotorak near Begram, which could possibly have been another centre for important early achievements in the field of sculptural art in stone.[8]

Just as in other early cultures with a flourishing high-quality output of works of art in durable materials, an important question is how such a literally breathtaking process of producing a huge spectrum of forms belonging to certain overall styles and their substyles could be comprehended and described. I wish to discuss a few carefully selected paradigmatic images to be investigated for their potential to have contributed to the development of a more aesthetically refined and thus, *more widely accepted* representation of the historical Buddha (and, gradually, of the other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas pertaining to the emerging Mahāyāna school of Buddhism). As the key object identified by me among the holdings of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, is reduced to the head of the Buddha (Fig. 3), overall, the facial features will be the guideline for my evaluation of the morphological traits encountered in this and other specimens. Possible sources of 'external inspiration' must have been particularly accessible to those based in Gandhāra, as their country was located closer to the regions producing Roman art, respectively, of the provincial style, and the statuary of the Parthian Empire (in particular, Hatra), than the eastern portion of the Kushan dominion, where the school of art at Mathurā had begun to develop even previously.[9]

Concerning the identification of 'extraneous' features in the Gandhāran sculptural corpus, an open-minded attitude has been called for by Warwick Ball (2016: 167) and others:

> "[I]t must be pointed out that the controversies over Graeco-Bactrian versus direct Roman versus Irano-Hellenistic origins for Gandharan art are not in conflict: *all* hypotheses must be substantially correct. None of these hypotheses can by themselves account for the unquestionably western

> character of the style. But the combination of *all* forces and influences is the only possible explanation for perhaps the most extraordinary syncretism in art history. To argue for one hypothesis over the others is to miss the point" [italics by W.B.].

This premise, which appears to receive substantial confirmation by the present survey, clearly paves the way for realising that the authority regarding the in- or exclusion of certain features had largely, or in fact, exclusively, lain in the hands of the locally-based artists, in conjunction with other stakeholders, regardless of the manner in which they had arrived at their specific decisions. The fact that the early Gandhārans had, already earlier, appreciated 'foreign', imported objects can be gathered from excavation finds. However, as far as we can see, there are relatively few art objects found in Gandhāra fashioned in coherent extraneous styles.[10] One may easily read this fact as more or less excluding the possibility of substantial activities of foreign artists on Gandhāran soil, which may well have been true for the initial phases. However, when a distinct 'classical turn' happened, presumably towards the end of the second century, or somewhat earlier, a completely fresh treatment of the anthropomorphic form was introduced, which might not have been possible to implement without employing previously trained sculptors being called from the outside (cf. below). Further, it appears likely to me, even essential, that design books containing a wide range of patterns pertaining to the coeval imperial Roman art, probably including long-established forms like classical Greek art, were readily available, a fact which would have facilitated a fast and thorough transformation of the *locally directed* development of new sculptural products, thus deeply impacting the Buddhist visual culture of Gandhāra, and beyond.[11]

The key object

The detached Buddha head forming the basis of this study was published by David Jongeward in 2019, as part of his scholarly catalogue of the Gandhāran holdings of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Fig. 3). He noticed the carved stone image's unusual features that had raised suspicions whether the object might indeed be of more recent origin. His minute description does not attempt to negate this problem, which had led to the fact that it was never exhibited, since it had been given to the museum in 1928: 'Certain features of this head, including the [rougher] stone type, might perceivably be taken as calling into question its authenticity. But it is accepted here that the head is genuine, primarily because of the circumstances of its acquisition in the early twentieth century, not a period notorious for the production of Gandhara fakes.' He continues by characterising the image as an 'amateurish' work. It is worthwhile citing Jongeward's (2019: 99, Cat. 67) precise wording: 'The long oval head and the hairstyle are features that markedly distinguish this image from the heads of the Buddha that follow [in the catalogue entries]. The hair is comprised of multi-strand curling locks which undulate into one another and gather in a tall, broad *ushnisha*, drawn in at the base and tied with a twisted, two-strand cord. The narrow forehead is framed by a straight hairline and a nearly flat, unbroken eyebrow line. The large eyes are open, deeply set with heavy lids and clearly incised circles and point for the iris and pupil. The prominent nose is pointed, with flared nostrils. The thick moustache is treated similarly to the hair with multi-strand curls. The mouth is small, with a narrow upper lip, curving onto the lower. The cheeks are somewhat hollowed, the chin pointed and jutting. The right ear is intact and the left ear broken at the top; neither possesses the characteristic extended elongation found in most Gandhara Buddha images. A faint incised circle on the forehead is an *urna* mark. Reported to have been excavated in the Swat Valley, this head is most likely from a full-figure image. […] Broken at the neck, the head has suffered facial damage at the lower [viewer's] right side. It has been cut cleanly to leave a flat back. Nothing remains of a former halo.' In order to assign it to a general time frame, Jongeward refers to three examples from Butkara I (Swāt) that compare quite well with the Ashmolean's head, though these do not share its specific idiosyncrasies.[12]

In the following, I shall treat the Ashmolean Museum's Buddha head (Fig. 3) as highly significant, exhibiting a singular design and

probably unique stylistic traits betraying a 'transitional' character. Its particular features are the somewhat disorderly – though carefully conceived – coiffure made up of interlocking hair strands, further, the detailed, idiosyncratic design of the large eyes, the extremely low forehead, the exceptionally long and protruding[13] nose with a narrow, but well-defined ridge, and an awkwardly pursed mouth. Further, the tragus lobe of the ear (bordering the cheeks) is unusually large and fleshy, while the ear conch appears to be somewhat roughly modelled. Thus, we are witnessing a strange juxtaposition of likely less evolved features, as the somewhat inelegant mouth and the simple shape of the ears, and more sophisticated traits, like the intricate detailing of the eyes and the – for the assumed relatively early date – unusually imaginative coiffure.

The Ashmolean Museum's records reveal that the intriguing head of the Buddha was offered to this institution, then referred to as *Indian Institute Museum*, by "Rev[erend] W E Carless" of Cheltenham, where it was accepted during a meeting held on 31 May, 1928.[14] Unfortunately, these particular circumstances and the few pieces of information involved do not provide us with a lead to be pursued any further. Among other questions it remains unclear, whether Reverend Carless himself might have stayed in India at some point in time.

Methodology – typological analysis of shapes[15]

The main trajectory of the present enquiry started off as a series of detailed observations on Gandhāran Buddha images, preferably 'early', as far as this could be ascertained, carried out, altogether, over the period of several decades.[16]

A specific typological approach, conceived in the 1880s and 1890s by the Swedish prehistorian Oscar Montelius, in order to establish developmental sequences of excavation finds pertaining to the Nordic Bronze age, has been a widely recognised method to understand variations in shapes occurring within particular categories of materials. Its conceptual background is based on the regular observation that the morphology of certain objects changes over time, generally taking 'small steps', as it were, and not 'big leaps'. (A popular more recent example would be the first train coaches conceived in the 19th century, clearly deriving their shapes from horse carriages, and thus, with the latter easily recognised as typological precursors.) Therefore, a sequence has to be constituted in which an object is juxtaposed by the most closely related analogues in a meaningful way. Since my studies in prehistoric archaeology, I have regarded this approach as a standard practice, which could be applied, for example, in art history as well. Although this method is probably still widespread, Sørensen (2015) has regretted a recent lack of methodological reflections on fundamental questions that its application raises. Such an evaluation that would ideally imply to 'sharpen the tool' and possibly adapt the typological method to the current requirements and new technologies has not yet been attempted, unfortunately.

In the following, I shall explain my observations as detailed as possible, because it cannot be taken for granted that all the readers would be familiar with the typological method. Along this path, I shall draw up a model potentially involving both, conceptually *successive* and, to some extent, as it seems unavoidable, *parallelly existing* forms of heads of the Buddha, with their respective characteristic features. The main points of the following typological analysis comprise: shape and design of the face, eyes, *ūrṇā* (natural circular forehead mark), nose, mouth, ears, chin, the form of the moustache, if applicable, and the structure of the coiffure (with the presence or absence of a ribbon wound around the topknot). Lesser attention will be devoted to the neck and the presence and shape of a halo, because both the latter features have been lost in several cases.

As the essential frame of enquiry in art history is constituted by questions of *design*, *subject*, *style* and *iconographic features*, it could be asked: where does the concept of a 'type' come in here? In fact, the latter will be used as an overarching category for the time being, under which the former will be subsumed, in order to arrive at a specific result, that is, aligning the objects in such a way that a plausible chronological succession emerges. During this process, their evaluation

will be made according to the suitability for the intended typological analysis. Deriving a typological sequence that, at the same time, is supposed to form a tentative chronology just by evaluating the head portions of Buddha images may appear quite ambitious to many – but let me first explain my proposed model.

Regarding Gandhāran sculpture, altogether, the presence of five chronological markers is certainly helpful,[17] and that's why I am suggesting the whole series to have unfolded between roughly 50 CE (cf. Olivieri 2022: 42) and c. 231/32, with the latter date suggested for the 'Year 5 Triad' by Rhi (2018: 45), reading the inscribed date as Kaniṣka I, equivalent to 127/28, plus 100 (applying the Kushan rule of the 'hundreds dropped' in inscribed dates), plus five.

The proposed typology – reflecting on shapes, regarding the present material

The Buddha heads contained in the landmark report by Domenico Faccenna and his team, on the excavations at Butkara I, Swāt Valley, recovered from the 'sacred area' (Faccenna 1962–64), demonstrate a remarkable range of variants, centring around an early type of representation, or embodiment, of the Buddha, in fact forming a typological cluster, in the majority quite distinct from the better known Gandhāran Buddha images of a somewhat later period. As far as I can see, no other site has provided such a wide spectrum of variations in the design of the head of the Buddha. While some of their internal differences may be due to certain temporal gaps, overall, these seem to point to a largely parallel creation, a fact which I am regarding as a sign of an 'experimental' stage in the visualisation of the Buddha. For the earliest stylistic idiom, the term 'stile disegnativo' – 'drawing style', was coined (cf. Faccenna *et al.* 2003: 298).

Beyond the evidence from Butkara, providing us with an extensive sculptural material, another rich *stūpa* site in the Swāt Valley, Saidu Sharif I, has been very instructive for displaying a coherent, already quite sophisticated early style.[18] However, for this specific visual idiom, Buddha images preserving their facial features are not extant any more, unfortunately. These two sites therefore demonstrate the existing difficulties in tracing the beginnings of the Buddha image in a region where these were likely first conceived, that is, the Swāt Valley.[19]

Drafting the suggested typological model

In the following, the specimens I have carefully selected for this purpose, intended to serve as paradigmatic 'case examples' for the time being, will be introduced one by one. Obviously, they mainly comprise Gandhāran works, while a few images from other cultural backgrounds have been interspersed for the *comparison of certain isolated features* that they exhibit. Only general chronological implications should be deduced from these analogues, apart from an estimated *terminus post quem* (that is, considering a slightly later date for the respective Gandhāran image), which should still be treated with care. The bracket of absolute dates we should reckon with for this sequence of exemplary cases is approximately 50 CE–232 CE, as pointed out above. Certainly, the runtime of a 'type' or other 'typological construct' is a crucial factor which cannot be explained well enough from within the system, particularly, when only comparatively few objects are included. Any chronological implications beyond the already known 'temporal anchors' provided by dated inscriptions must therefore remain problematic, arguably, with one notable exception to be discussed below.

1. An early, likely local, style in the Swāt Valley

The first case belongs to an unsophisticated style that I would like to characterise, in principle, as 'local' and 'incipient'. It contains stylistic elements also known from visual expressions that developed further to the west, i.e. in the Middle East and ancient Iran, and it was described as having emerged during Śaka-Parthian rule.[20] The stone panel illustrated here (Fig. 1) conforms to the style also known from Panr, Swāt, with the formal arrangement of figures and the peculiar manner in which they are rendered clearly recurring among the small number of examples known to us.[21] At the same time, these examples exhibit an intriguing range of smaller variations, concerning

the clothing, posture, and iconographic details. All these works do conform regarding an idiosyncratic style, characterised by a distinct 'drawing' element (i.e. the presence of patches structured by parallel, or largely parallel, lines). By this, I am trying to extend, at least for the moment, the aesthetically more evolved stylistic idiom termed thus, known from other sites in the Swāt Valley, to include the less sophisticated character and execution of the panels from Panr and related examples. A figure of the standing Buddhist female deity Hārītī from Skarah Dheri, an example which fits into this stylistic category as well, is inscriptionally dated to 116/17 CE, with small reservations regarding the question of the application of the Yona era.[22] In the case illustrated here (Fig. 1), the viewer's

Figure 1. Seated Buddha, meditating, with Brahmā (proper right) and Śakra/Indra (left), Swāt, c. first century CE, greenish schist, 45 x 44 cm, Swat Museum, Saidu Sharif (Pakistan), acc. no. 725. Photo by John C. Huntington, Courtesy of the John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Asian Art (USA).

attention shall be drawn to the highly specific coiffure of the seated Buddha, which may be referred to as U-shaped, on both sides of the central parting (together forming a 'double-U'), with a large topknot, basically filled by vertical lines indicating hair strands. Further, there is a large *ūrṇā* and a double-strand ribbon, parting off the topknot, with a small rosette appearing in the centre.

The overall design of the panels of this early style (or, actually, cluster of substyles) features a Buddha centrally seated on a pedestal, flanked by a standing worshipper on each side, generally, Brahmā (proper right side) and Śakra/Indra (proper left), as in this example. Additionally, two heavenly attendants are depicted further above, as smaller figures. The altogether four worshippers exhibit gestures of adoration towards the Buddha. He is seated with his legs tightly folded in the *vajraparyaṅka* posture, his hands in *dhyānamudrā*, though with thumbs up, forming a triangle with the horizontally placed palms. Other features comprise small but wide-open eyes, as in this case, generally with an internal detailing, a large nose (regarding the length of the bridge), and often, quite prominent ears, beside a thin, drooping moustache and a small chin. The halo behind the head of the Buddha, surrounded by stylised tree branches, lends the representation a solemn character. The artist had not been untrained, and he had performed his work neatly, with a love for detail.[23] However, the aesthetic expression is less refined.

2. Aesthetic advancement over the early local style

Quite strikingly, the Buddha's coiffure seen in Fig. 1 recurs, in a developed and aestheticised form, on a relief panel belonging to the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Fig. 2). As this particular image appears to be abraded throughout, not every detail can be easily discerned, unfortunately. The U-shaped portions on both sides of the central parting appear flatter, due to the more realistic perspectival depiction, and in the topknot, the hair strands, more naturalistically shown in this case, are seen diverging upwards from behind the central disc attached to the ribbon. All in all, the coiffure has been designed with great care, though basically adhering to the – typologically earlier – representation in Fig. 1. Between the two U-shaped portions, a central spandrel remains, for which the sculptor had to find a solution. Just at the hairline, in the centre, it seems as if there might have been some kind of mark or small protrusion. The hair strands in the 'spandrel' are running upwards, converging at the central disc. The *ūrṇā* is faintly incised below this feature, between the elegantly arching eyebrows. The face has a pleasing – round to oval – shape, with a relatively large, well-formed chin. The eyelids are already shown drooping to some extent, foreboding the later development. The eyes exhibit an internal detailing probably comprising two concentric circles plus a central cavity. Thus, they appear unusually intricate, but, as the detailing is not entirely clear, it seems futile trying to adduce any analogues from faraway Palmyra (cf. Fig. 6, where iris and pupil are both delineated by an incised circle, however, without a cavity in the centre).[24] As in the previous example, the pierced earlobes are quite short.

A further peculiarity of this seated Buddha with the upper part of the body fully covered by the monk's robe, unlike the first example (Fig. 1), is the possible presence of a shawl, like the ones usually seen with Bodhisattvas, worn over it. The abraded surface makes it difficult to confirm this feature, which would be surprising and quite certainly, unique. Further important characteristics are the undulating hem portions of the monk's robe hanging down below the palm of the proper right hand, held in *abhayamudrā*, as well as below the proper left hand clutching a fold of the garment, which was very probably a meaningful gesture at the time. (The undulating shape of the hem may well be an early trait.) His right hand shows the typical 'webbed' fingers, though there is no wheel symbol (another *lakṣaṇa*) depicted on the palm. The nimbus behind the head has a well-proportioned size and exhibits an incised design around its border evoking rays.

3. A stylistically unique head with transitional, innovative features

Viewing this particular head of the Buddha,

Figure 2. Seated Buddha showing 'Fear-not' gesture, grey schist, Gandhāra (possibly Swāt, according to Jongeward 2003: 59), c. first/second century, Carbonaceous Quartz-Muscovite-Chloritoid-Chlorite schist, 59.7 x 43.8 x 12 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, acc. no. 939.17.14. Photo © and Courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada.

(Fig. 3), published first in 2019 and referred to above, had indeed functioned like an eye-opener to me. Although its idiosyncratic features, at first glance, might indicate an 'amateurish' work (Jongeward 2019: 59), the singular treatment of the eyes and the coiffure and, similarly, the peculiar shapes of the nose, mouth, and ears seem to suggest that the sculptor had in fact embarked on creating an innovative design, by partly emulating forms of extraneous, likely foreign, styles, and partly, just giving a kind of 'twist' to patterns already familiar to him. The reason for the somewhat less attractive result might lie in the sculptor's trying out new shapes, which, bluntly combined, do not form a coherent whole yet. The artist might indeed not have been well-trained in stonecarving, or, at least, not in the stylistic idiom that he wished to achieve. Nevertheless, this unusual head of the Buddha appears to be paving the way for aesthetically more convincing creations. If it had not been possible to adduce any examples exhibiting traits based on this specimen while being typologically more developed, my observations would have had to remain futile. However, there are a few instances, dicussed below, suggesting that the seemingly feeble attempt by the sculptor of this unique, yet awkward, head belonging to the Ashmolean Museum could well have been pioneering the design of early Buddha images.[25]

The two main points supporting my argument are: (1) the treatment of the hair clearly deviates from the parallel lines seen in the 'drawing' style, and it is likely inspired by the careful delineation of hair strands, generally shown somewhat disorderly arranged for males, in ancient Greece, Rome (e.g. Fig. 5),[26] and Palmyra (e.g. Fig. 6)[27], with the Roman example also standing for a similar treatment of the eyes, though in a bronze sculpture, inlaid with silver in this case; the highly characteristic way of several prominently depicted hair strands undulating upwards, while fanning out, from the bottom of the topknot, is the most important innovation here, which can be

Figure 3. Head of the Buddha (two views), Swāt, c. (close to mid-?) second century, dark grey schist, 28 x 18 x 13 cm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (UK), acc. no. EAOS.2. Photos © and Courtesy of The Picture Library, Ashmolean Museum.

recognised in many further developed specimens (cf. Figs. 16-18); (2) the eyes have been depicted with extreme care, and they are exceptional in a Buddha image, particularly, with this peculiar kind of less assured rendering being indicative of an incipient, or formative, stage of an emerging type. Apart from the large protruding iris with a sharply recessed engraved pupil, a single incised line running parallel to the inner contour of the respective lid appears on both upper and lower eyelids, in such a rare manner that only rather few cases can be identified in the sculptural material from Swāt (cf. Figs. 9, 10, conforming to this feature in principle).[28] Exactly the same specific design is perhaps seen only in one case, that is, on the relief of a young male devotee from Butkara I, where the design of the eyes is executed in a convincing, self-assured, manner (Fig. 4).[29] Searching for external parallels has yielded the result that an additional line on the upper eyelid can be recognised on at least two statues from Hatra, making it appear plausible that this feature had originally belonged to the Hatrene portrait tradition.[30] Therefore, one among the possible conclusions about the sculptor of our 'key object' is that he indeed had some kind of Hatrene background.

At Palmyra, on the other hand, there are quite a number of instances of relatively similar eye shapes (however, different than the specifics just discussed), though attempts at identifying significantly related cases in which we would hope to find other matching traits, has so far remained unsuccessful.[31]

Figure 4. Young devotee (detail), Butkara I, Swāt (excavation by IsMEO, 1956–62), c. second century, greenish schist, 61 x 26 x 10 cm, Museo delle Civiltà, Rome (Italy), inv. no. B2881. © Museo delle Civiltà.

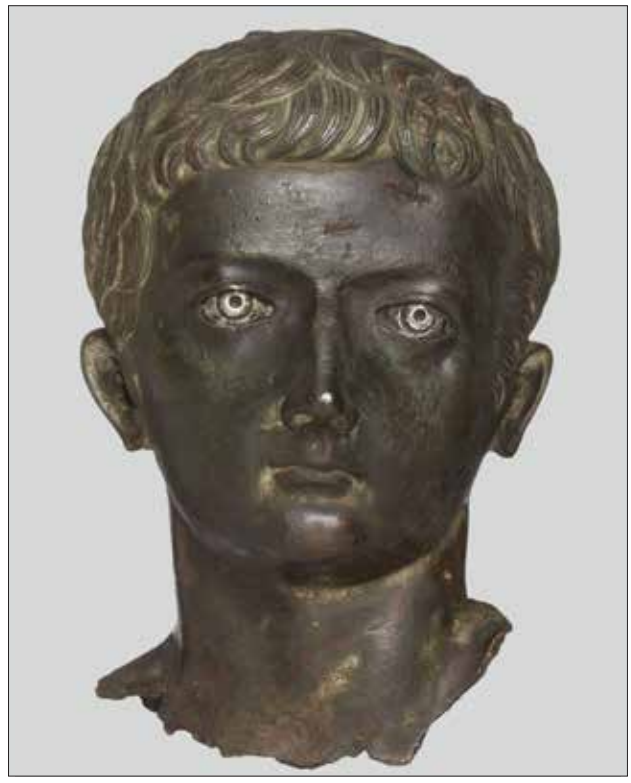

Figure 5. Roman Emperor Tiberius (r. 14–37), cast bronze with silver inlays, height 17.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (UK), acc. no. A. 584-1910. Photo Courtesy of the V&A Museum (Public Domain).

Figure 6. Female funerary portrait (detail), Palmyra, c. mid-second century, limestone, 53.3 x 35.6 x 15.2 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (USA), acc. no. M.76.174.249. Photo Courtesy of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Public Domain).

4. A consolidated, somewhat stylised form, beyond the 'drawing' idiom

This seated Buddha stele kept in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Fig. 7) presents an early, aesthetically 'consolidated' treatment of forms that adds a few variations to what we have seen before. On closer inspection, it shares quite a few traits with the image in Fig. 2. Intriguingly, two U-shaped portions are still seen on both sides of the centre parting, though these are much smaller now and appear to be merging with other lateral strands in a more natural way. Still, they clearly refer back to the less developed specimen in Fig. 1. The topknot is beautifully, and rather uniquely, conceived as a kind of lotus blossom, with the superimposed petals skilfully shaped by hair strands. The top view, thankfully illustrated by Juhyung Rhi (2005: 192, fig. 18), reveals a circular hole at the apex. The tie seen around the topknot consists of twisted threads and in this resembles the 'key object' in Fig. 3. The Buddha's face is rather round in shape and among the facial features, apart from the longish moustache and neatly carved nose, mouth, and ears, the eyes are particularly remarkable. The eyelids already appear as closed to a higher degree, while their most significant trait is the presence of one extra line each on the upper and lower lid. This feature can be readily compared with the specimen of the Ashmolean Museum discussed above (Fig. 3), although the stylistic execution of the image clearly differs.

5. Tendency towards a 'naturalistic' rendering

This attractive relief panel shows a Buddha seated (Fig. 8) on a simple throne that is conceived as a decorated pedestal, as in Figures 1 and 2. It comes from an unknown location in Afghanistan, likely the Kapisa/Kabul area, with its provenance linked to the expeditions by the well-known researcher Joseph Hackin and his team, undertaken in the 1920s and 1930s, and now housed at Museum Rietberg, Zürich. This is an excellent example of the presence of specimens with an 'early' set of features from the territory of Afghanistan,[32] and it has been chosen in order to illustrate the parallel early typological development in another sub-region within Gandhāra.

The Buddha is seated as usual, quite like the image just discussed (Fig. 7), while the major differences, among many minor ones, are the relatively simple coiffure and the proprtionally correct size of the proper right hand. (For the coiffure, one may also like to compare the following item in Fig. 9.) In principle, the subject would have conformed to the scene so typical for the early style (Fig. 1), with the two lateral figures broken off here (Fig. 8). One hand on the viewer's right remains, probably belonging to Śakra. (The clearly triadic design is obviously the dominating factor, and in some of these panels, the lateral attendants are rather designed as the merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika.) The narrow eyes of the Buddha are not stylised in any way, with slightly drooping eyelids and the interior of the eye faintly

Figure 7. Seated Buddha showing 'Fear-not' gesture, Gandhāra, c. second century, grey schist, height 54 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (USA), acc no. 39.732. Photo Courtesy of the MFA.

incised. The face appears squarish. All hair strands run strictly vertical, forming straight lines below but showing soft curves above, in the topknot. As in some of the previous and following examples, the cord wound around the latter has a circular central element. The ears are, strangely, shown at different heights, and with the earlobes still short. The small plain nimbus behind the head is framed by beautifully natural lavish foliage. Especially, the drapery of the monk's robe and the right hand of the Buddha are approaching a naturalistic treatment.

Similar early depictions from Afghanistan include a Buddha's head with the coiffure and other features much like in our Fig. 11, however, from Butkara (Meunié 1942: fig. 81), and the well-known panel showing the Kāśyapa ascetics and a donor couple in Parthian attire venerating the Buddha (Meunié 1942: fig. 62 = Tissot 2006: K.p. Sho. 820.26–27), both examples being from Shotorak near Begram. Finally, an attractive Buddha image quite like the present one (Fig. 8), slightly more naturalistically rendered, reportedly from the nearby site of Karratcha, belongs to the Museé Guimet, Paris (Cambon 1996: fig. 19).

6. One among several forms from Butkara I – (1) obese type

The following two heads of the Buddha are variants selected from the vast excavated materials from Butkara I (Fig. 9, 10). Here, the somewhat obese face has appeared characteristic to me. It has some interesting traits reminiscent of the style of the 'Master of Saidu Sharif' (Callieri and Filigenzi 2002: *passim*), like the smallish, slightly almond-shaped eyes, wherein the iris partially disappears behind the upper lid. Both in the shaping of the eyes and probably, the mouth, there are a few convergences with the Ashmolean Museum's 'curious' object (Fig. 3), while the nose looks completely different here. The eyes in this example exhibit only the extra line on the upper lid, which is not much drooping. The separate line on the lower lid seems to have been converted to a – more natural – small fold below the eye. The hairline above the low forehead softly curves down a little bit towards the centre, in this following the continuous ridge constituting the eyebrows on both sides. The hair strands in the 'obese' variant are slightly wavy, but in general, run vertically, forming a broad cylindrical topknot. The ribbon around the latter consists of two broad bands, and the presence of a central element, now lost, is likely.

Interestingly, beside the somewhat obese variant of Buddha representation, which has a parallel in a seated figure, also from Butkara I (Faccenna 1962-64: pl. 223 = Faccenna 2001: pl. 103a), an unusually lean variant with similar stylistic features is known from the same site, in at least three instances (Faccenna 1962-64: pls. 228, 544; Khan 2015: 18–19, Cat. 2.1.1). The latter example belongs to Butkara III and comes with the undulating hem portions of the robe which I tend to regard as distinctly early.

7. One among several forms from Butkara I – (2) idiosyncratic type

Among the almost infinitely varying designs of early Buddha heads at Butkara is a somewhat peculiar one. The only suggestion for a possible explanation, which will be resumed below, with another case example, is the carefully stated hypothesis that there might indeed be an underlying portrait character, in some sense or the other. In this case, the face is markedly oblong, the eyes have been devoted somewhat less care, though they are neatly shaped, the eyebrows form larger arches, the lips are unusually fleshy, the moustache has quite a different shape, and the coiffure, although reminiscent of the previous example, in the topknot shows the tendency of 'fanning out' of the hair strands that was particularly observed in Fig. 2, though carried out differently in that example. The most prominent feature, actually, in principle, violating the ascetic requirements of a Buddha image (cf. below), is the large disc forming the centre of the two-strand ribbon, *or even diadem*, parting off the topknot.

Figure 8. Seated Buddha showing 'Fear-not' gesture, Gandhāra/Afghanistan (expedition led by Joseph Hackin, then Director of Musée Guimet, Paris), c. second century, grey schist, 22.5 x 15 x 6 cm, Museum Rietberg, Zürich (Switzerland), inv. no. CNX 98 (permanent loan by Werner Coninx Foundation). © Museum Rietberg, Zürich. Photo: Rainer Wolfsberger.

Figure 9. Head of the Buddha, Butkara I, Swāt (excavation by IsMEO, 1956–62), c. second century, greenish schist, 21 x 12 cm, Museo delle Civiltà, Rome (Italy), inv. no. B4323. © Museo delle Civiltà.

Figure 10. Head of the Buddha, Butkara I, Swāt (excavation by IsMEO, 1956–62), c. second century, greenish schist, 27.5 x 15 cm, Museo delle Civiltà, Rome (Italy), inv. no. B2615. © Museo delle Civiltà.

8. One among several forms from Butkara I – (3) 'naturalistic' type

Here, we have an aesthetically convincing example (Fig. 11) that demonstrates the developed style, referred to as 'naturalistic' by the Italian researchers (e.g. Callieri and Filigenzi 2002: 177, Cat. 93). It is of pleasing proportions and exhibits softly flowing contours and a supple rendering of the skin and flesh throughout.[33] The shape of the eyes, in principle, preceded by the eye design of the 'key object' (Fig. 3), has likewise developed a 'natural feel' with its deeply-cut eyelids, already shown drooping to quite a high degree. Thus, the 'meditative' expression of practically all succeeding Buddha images, with many of them sharing basically the same coiffure, appears to be foreshadowed. The incised strands of the moustache as well as the outer ear still resemble the 'key object' (Fig. 3), however. An important innovation can be discerned in the 'pointed' shape of the hairline, with all the hair strands apparently, though unnaturally, emerging from its centre. This kind of 'fanning out' is echoed by the lower portion of the topknot, which, in the following, will become an important and lasting trait of the Buddha's coiffure in the developing 'Graeco-Romanised' style of Gandhāra, although the topknot will appear much flatter, at this stage, if not earlier, perhaps, representing a cranial excrescence of the Buddha, the *uṣṇīṣa*, one of his 32 special marks (*lakṣaṇa*), for which early textual records are not known.[34] The cord or ribbon at the bottom of the topknot appears particularly massive here and rather resembles a diadem with a central eight-petalled rosette,[35] evolving from the previously seen shapes of this component, however.

The *ūrṇā* may have been faintly incised, or

painted, which might also apply to the preceding examples, whereas a related specimen from the same site has a slightly raised *ūrṇā* made up of three concentric circles, with a tiny hole in the centre (Faccenna 1962-64: pl. 114b), demonstrating its importance.

9. A detached example of the evolved 'naturalistic' image

Not that much constituting an individual 'type', but a charming variant of the previous case example, this is a strangely 'cut-off' fragment of the head of a Buddha, kept at Museum Rietberg, Switzerland (Fig. 12). It might be regarded as a portable kind of template used by sculptors, a hypothesis which will have to remain unproven for the time being. However, an aspect of spatial mobility comes in when noticing that a related specimen in Shotorak, Afghanistan (Meunié 1942: fig. 81)[36] shares the unusual single sharp ridge forming the bridge of the nose, while the particular detailing of the eyes is similarly close, so that its origin, hitherto presumed to be the Swāt Valley, may alternatively have to be looked for in the ancient Kapisa/Kabul region.

Just to briefly recapitulate the features of the 'naturalistic' type, while pointing out the minor differences seen in the present example: in the latter, the face appears oval in shape and the chin is well-formed; the hairline curves only slightly, on both sides of its centre point, which does not form a downward spike, however; the 'fanning out' of hair strands on both levels can be recognised here as well, though carried out somewhat differently, with the circular plaque being framed by the fanning-out strands. As an

Figure 11. Head of the Buddha (restored condition), Butkara I, Swāt (excavation by IsMEO, 1956–62), c. second century, greenish schist, 22 x 25.5 x 6 cm, Museo delle Civiltà, Rome (Italy), inv. no. B3120. © Museo delle Civiltà.

Figure 12. Head of the Buddha, Gandhāra (Kapisa or Swāt region?), c. second century, grey schist, height 14.5 cm, Museum Rietberg, Zurich (Switzerland), acc. no. RVI 7 (gift of René Jaquerod). © Museum Rietberg, Zurich. Photo: Rainer Wolfsberger.

example introduced for comparison, I would like to point out a golden diadem worn by a female musician from one of the important murals from a Roman villa at Boscoreale, admittedly, of an earlier period, i.e. 50–40 BCE, preserved by the materials erupting from Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE (Fig. 13). The contours of the coiffure, though consisting mostly of spiral curls, faintly resemble the Buddha's hairdo. Certainly, I would not wish to push back the date of introduction of the Buddha image that much, as we have no evidence of it, but such a detail appearing in a completely different context could have reached Gandhāra by way of design books. (With an actual object for a similar comparison discussed in note 35, this would be another option, with the underlying link that both 'diadems' referred to are made according to the Mediterranean style of the time.) Indeed, this point may provide quite some food for discussion, because postulating a precious ornament for an early Buddha representation would generally be avoided.

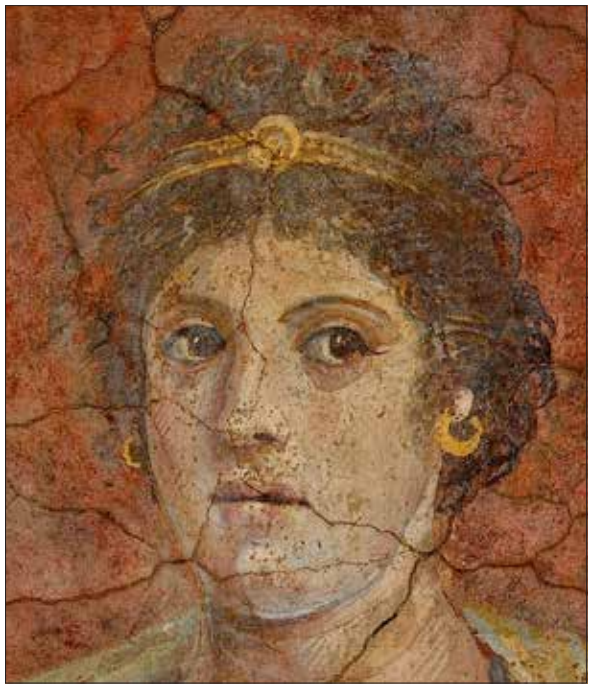

Figure 13. Female musician wearing golden diadem with a central disc-shaped element (detail), Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor, Room H, Boscoreale near Naples (Italy), c. 50-40 BCE, fresco, 186.7 x 186.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (USA), acc. no. 03.14.5. Photo Courtesy of MMA (Public Domain).

10. 'Naturalistic' design, possibly, with some kind of individualising tendency

Not very dissimilar to the latter evidence, here is a fascinating case (Fig. 14) of a possibly 'extraneous' inspiration of a slightly different, characteristic, design of a Buddha's head which differs starkly from its assumed source. It is quite baffling that two extremely similar heads of the Buddha had found their way into the then *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* (Royal Museum of Ethnology), Berlin (Fig. 14, and a specimen preserving the major part of the body[37]). The head, selected as a case example, conforms well to the identifiers of early specimens: the upper lids are only slightly drooping and the interior of the eyes possesses a faintly incised detailing; the form of the moustache falls within the range of shapes we have seen before, and the topknot, although not very large, does not violate the previously noted requirements for this portion, particularly because the tie is present, although *the snail-shell curls are clearly exceptional*. (In this regard, it is significant to note that its counterpart exhibits only slightly curved hair strands in the topknot portion as well, in this resembling several of the earlier case examples.) Special features of the item under discussion and its counterpart are the elegant contours of the eyes involving a slightly incurving shape at the outer corners, a pursed mouth (with this feature recalling the example in Fig. 3), and a horizontal wrinkle on the high forehead. A small raised circular mark forms the *ūrṇā*. The strands of straight hair below the topknot are naturalistically designed, curving upwards only in the patches from where the hair has been drawn into the topknot.

A significant observation is the 'conceptual' similarity that this head of the Buddha shares with a meanwhile destroyed sculpture from Hatra, likely portraying Naṣrū, a Hatrene ruler, whose regency is assigned to c. 128–138 (Fig. 15).[38] The sculpture in question comprised of his full body, standing and holding the image of an eagle, the symbol of Hatra, placed on a socle, likely, during its ceremonial instalment in order to protect the city from inroads, in his role as the Chief Priest. Certainly, there are many differences, like the completely unrelated physiognomy of both male faces, the full beard of Naṣrū, his enormous kind

of 'topknot', etc. However, we are looking at another serious male face, with a few wrinkles underscoring his determination, and the huge mass of tied-up hair, consisting of similar snail-shell curls in the Hatrene image, is notably held together by a broad ribbon forming a large, likely 'protective', bow tie, its ends fluttering upwards in an auspicious manner. Thus, the conceptual topic, 'a man of exalted position made up for ritual', and a few conforming visual markers coalesce in this rare analogue, so that it might indeed serve as a kind of chronological marker for the case example from Gandhāra (Fig. 14), with a likely predecessorship of the Hatrene image. The specific knot, in Naṣrū's case, forming part of a bow tie, finds an interesting analogue in a bronze head of the Buddha from Khotan, Xinjiang, conforming to the same 'early' characteristics,[39] where a so-called 'square knot' is seen at the centre of the two-strand cord wound around the topknot. Eight cup-shaped impressions, seven arranged around a central one, placed in a slightly lower position, still on the hair portion, appear to strengthen the impression that apotropaic visual devices had been deemed a necessary equipment of early Buddha images. All of these must have originally been applied in order to prevent any unwelcome intervention by negative influences, or, at least, have catered to the expectations of people having such a mindset, who might have served as audience, or stakeholders.

Figure 14. Head of the Buddha, Gandhāra, c. second century (probably, 140s), grey schist, 28 x 15.7 x 13 cm, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin (Germany), inv. no. I 114. Photo Courtesy of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum), SMB.

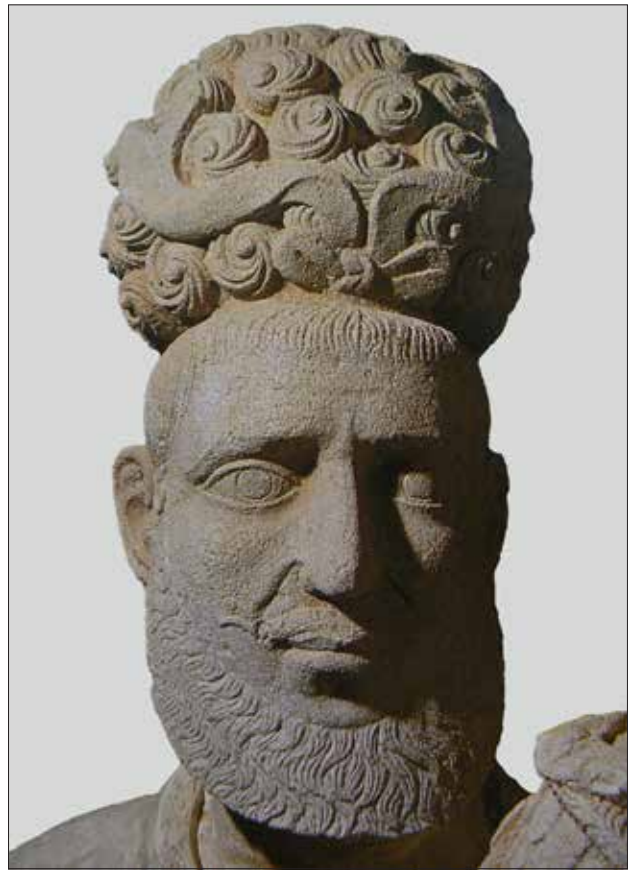

Figure 15. Naṣrū, ruler of Hatra (Parthian Empire), holding the statue of an eagle (detail), Hatra, Eastern city gate, c. 128–138, limestone, height 186 cm, until 2015, Archaeological Museum, Mossul (Iraq). Photo after Stierlin 1987, pl. 181.

This thought appears to link up with another reflection, on a possibly underlying portrait character, of the present case example that quite substantially differs from other relatively early effigies of the Buddha. In view of the two extremely similar examples existing, by chance, in the same public collection (meanwhile, institutionally, belonging to the *Museum für Asiatische Kunst*/ Asian Art Museum, Berlin), with nothing known about their original site, I can only conclude that there is some probability that the two of them were indeed created to resemble someone of a high spiritual or political status living at the time. Any further proof cannot be expected, however, and we are bound to consider the incredibly large, highly varying sculptural material from Butkara, among which, likewise, 'portraits' or something approaching such a concept might be assumed. This material likely extends into about the same time period, possibly somewhere close to the mid-second century.

11. Transitional form with markedly wide eyes

The intriguing type of wide-eyed and moustached Buddha images was aptly identified and described by Juhyung Rhi (2005: figs. 4–9, 13–14; 2008: figs. 1–4). The head of the best-known example, occurring in a full-figure image kept in the Peshawar Museum, is reproduced here (Fig. 16). In this transitional type we may recognise a further development from the rare type just discussed (Fig. 14), which is clearly combined with an advanced mastery over anthropomorphic forms, on the side of the sculptor. With this development, we are finally entering the sphere of the truly 'Graeco-Romanised' sculptural art of Gandhāra. The presumably protective knot seen here, at the bottom of the meanwhile flattened topknot, forms a connection with the previous case example. The hair strands of the topknot look somewhat disorderly, though they are extremely skilfully rendered, in this way confirming that the quality of a depiction is truly proven in cases of less symmetry and predictability – and this is obviously something specifically appreciated in the coeval Roman art and its predecessors. A very similar – but again, individual – treatment occurs in the following example, shown in Fig. 17.

There is a scope of comparing the widely opened eyes in the example under survey with their large and conspicuously open counterparts that are particularly present in some Palmyrene funerary reliefs, and that more often during an earlier phase, until c. 150 CE, but occasionally, perhaps, slightly later. That's why, again, the observable similarities are not compelling enough to make an argument for some kind of 'chronological pointer', unfortunately (e.g. Ingholt 1954: fig. 2, dated 123 CE [= Parlasca 1985: pl. 151]; Soper 1951: pl. 32B; Raja 2017: 324, fig. 2). What is rather betrayed, though, is the unusual shape of what seems to be the pupil, but in reality conforms to the crescent-like reflection, the 'eye star', seen on coeval ancient Roman sculpture.

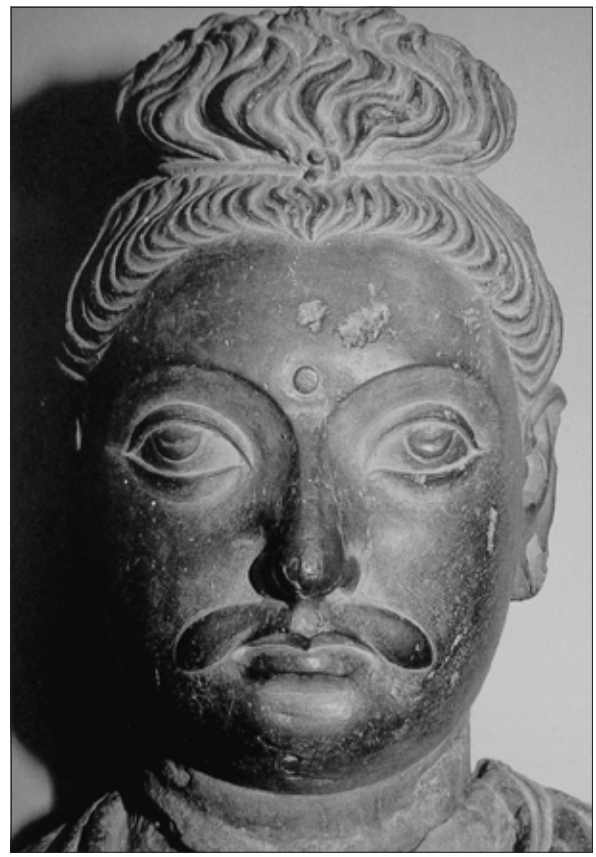

Figure 16. Standing Buddha (detail), Gandhāra, c. second century (probably, second half), grey schist, 170 x 56 x 26 cm, Peshawar Museum (Pakistan), inv. no. PM-2856. Photo after Rhi 2005, fig. 5.

12. Transitional form with nearly 'levelled' moustache

The second to last case example (Fig. 17) belongs to a stylistic phenomenon that is intrinsically a transitional one, because the moustache that had been constantly present so far, only varying in its shape and, at times, its internal structure, is finally getting discarded. The noteworthy feature of this type of image are the outlines of the moustache still remaining, though its surface has been smoothened, so that the hair structure is lost. What used to be the moustache appears to be nearly levelled. This is a really remarkable way of treating a formerly indispensable feature, still retaining its characteristic form, if only faintly visible any more.[40] Another peculiar feature is the absence of the ribbon, though its effect of neatly binding the topknot is clearly present, and even the round central 'ornament' clearly remains (cf. Zwalf 1996, Vol. 1: 79–80, Cat. 2). This may be regarded as another gradual departure from the earlier convention of inevitably depicting some kind of tie around the topknot. Likewise a remarkable trait is the downward spike in the centre of the hairline, already referred to in the description of the 'naturalistic' head from Butkara I illustrated in Fig. 11.

Figure 17. Standing Buddha (detail), Takht-i-Bahi, c. second century (probably, latter half), grey schist, 92 x 30.2 x 16.1 cm, British Museum, London (UK), acc. no. 1899,0715.1. Photo adapted from Zwalf 1996, Vol. 2, p. 9, Pl. 2.

13. Peculiar, likely transitional, style with a reduced philtrum

Among the many examples of an unnaturally reduced philtrum (see also below), a previously published image coming from the important site of Takht-i-Bahi (Fig. 18) has been selected. The insufficiently sized philtrum often comes with an extra large chin, as in this specimen. Beside a few other examples, where the nose as well has been depicted unproportionately small and which were perhaps fashioned by a less skilled person (a possible hypothesis would be a local, *less well-trained* master supervising high-qualified non-local[?] sculptors, which is why the former would have been entitled to carve the essential portions of the face, though in fact adding substandard work),[41] some of these are highly sophisticated, as the specimen in Fig. 18 that belongs to the Chandigarh Museum in India. A marvellous example is kept in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, its characteristic profile exhibiting just a tiny philtrum, revealing that it was attempted, in principle, to emulate shapes originating in a period which had, at that time, passed roughly 500 years before (cf. Jongeward 2003: Cat. 2–3).

In this last example, the coiffure as well has evolved into the kind of shape that will remain typical during the phase ahead, in the third century, from which a large number of standing, and some seated, Buddha images are known. There certainly remain a few variants regarding the hairdo, differing in this respect, but the majority possesses the flattened 'topknot' (or cranial excrescence, covered by hair) and a basically tripartite shape of undulating hair strands arising

from the centre of the hairline as well as at the bottom of the topknot, that is, on both levels of the coiffure, fanning out like branches.

The body of this image (Fig. 18) is a simple but charming rendering of the Buddha engaged in deep meditation, with his hands resting in the lap (*dhyānamudrā*). These are bare, i.e. not covered by the robe, unlike those of the four extant similar images shown aligned on the socle. In spite of the seemingly simple design, this is a high-quality work aptly revealing some typical details like the drapery betraying that the Buddha had thrown the proper right portion of his robe (or *saṃghāṭī*) over his right shoulder, with his right hand.

The eyes – a highly significant component

The treatment of the eyes, and, in some cases, their unfinished state,[42] shows a number of general similarities, if not, perhaps, specific ones, connecting Palmyra with Gandhāra. Hatra as well, where less source material has survived, however, belongs to the same *koiné* of visual representation, to be generally subsumed under (Late) 'Hellenistic' styles. The highly detailed and much varied shapes may ultimately prove some underlying closer relations when studied properly. The basically similar features at times extend to Roman sculpture (e.g. Fittschen 2006), by which the Western Asian visual idioms were informed to varying degrees. Palmyra's matchless art of the – most often, funerary – portrait, examples of which are scattered throughout worldwide collections, has recently received much of the deserved attention.[43] The topic of the concept and application of the idea of a 'portrait' has likewise been studied more in depth, in recent years.[44] In any of the concerned regions, a larger-scale typological evaluation of the eyes has not yet been undertaken, however.[45]

When considering the eye shapes occurring in the sculptural material under discussion, which contribute significantly to the 'communication' between the viewer and the viewed (which would, most often, have been regarded as an 'embodied being', at the time of its creation), immaterial levels of ritualised perception and behaviour move into the picture. In c. first-century Palmyrene reliefs, it is significant to find the eyes shown extremely large and, to our modern taste, completely overemphasised (e.g. Freyberger 2021: figs. 1–4, with fig. 1 showing a similar iris and pupil as our Fig. 6, around which the outer portions of the eye are magnified). By approaching visual concepts closer to Roman and Hellenistic modes of depiction, the oversizing of the eyes went out of practice, though it appears to have lingered on in some specimens.

Olivieri (2022: 159–161) touches on several pieces of evidence for what he calls 'ceremony of the eyes', likely practised from an early phase of Gandhāran Buddhist art, which should be equivalent to the ritual of the 'opening of the eyes' (Sanskrit, *netronmīlana*) that is essential for ritually – i.e. properly, and safely – installing cult images even in contemporary 'Hindu' practice. Whether any such ceremonial steps would have accompanied the completion of funerary representations, for example, at Palmyra, is not known. The elaborate carving of this portion of an image indicates the overriding importance of the eyes as a virtual 'access' to a sculpture, much as to a living being. Why this kind of 'open gaze' of the Buddha was given up at some point in the development of Gandhāran art (cf. Fig. 18) remains unclear. This shift likely had to do with a change in the overall concept of such a depiction, which was no longer expected to visibly 'behold' the devotee.

Proposed scheme of a five-fold stylistic succession

Summing up the relevant observations made during the preliminary discussion and introduction of the selected case examples, the following major stylistic categories for the early design of the head of the Buddha have been identified. These are, in principle, fluid, and may chronologically overlap in some cases, to some extent. They are intended as a yet hypothetic chronological sequence, within the bracket of c. 50 CE through c. 232 CE, as indicated above.

I

A local style in Swāt involving portions exhibiting a large number of parallel lines, prominently

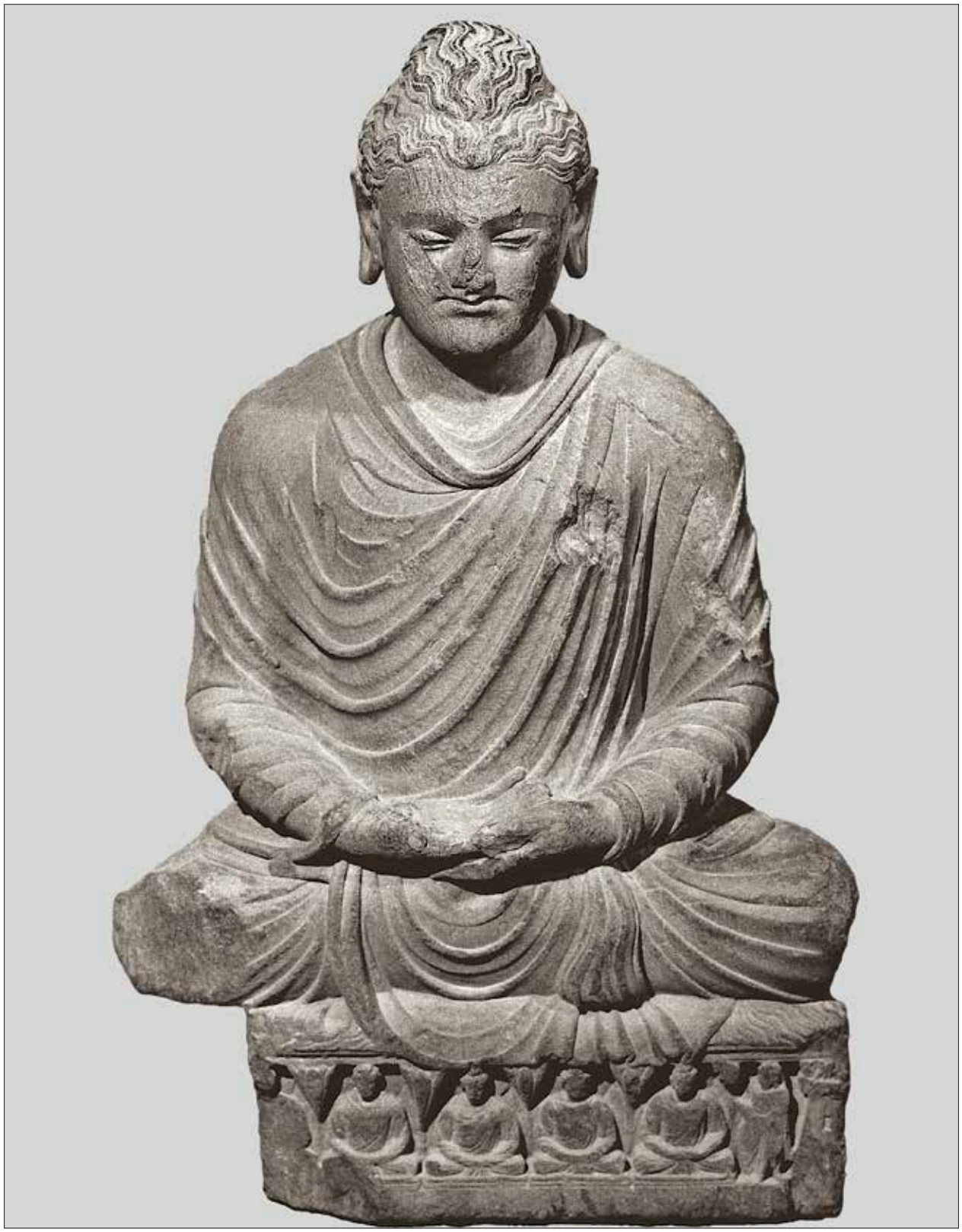

Figure 18. Seated Buddha meditating, Takht-i-Bahi, c. late second or early third century, grey schist, 61 x 39 cm, Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh (India), acc. no. 2371, Photo by John C. Huntington, Courtesy of the John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Asian Art (USA).

employed to indicate clothes and hair (Fig. 1). There is a possibility of this style starting somewhat before 50 CE, and, in principle, some kind of Śaka-Parthian background cannot be ruled out, although it seems difficult to adduce any compelling comparanda, or otherwise prove such an assumption. Characteristic early shapes of the Buddha's face include relatively wide eyes and a moustache, while a ribbon or cord is wound around the large topknot. The face, hairdo, and other visual elements of the recurring overall design are represented in an idiosyncratic manner. Slightly more evolved designs, as in Figs. 2 and 7, might be counted along with this earliest stylistic expression, as transitional forms.

II

A style, or stylistic cluster of substyles, exhibiting certain morphological idiosyncrasies, like an obese (Fig. 9) or elongated face (Fig. 10), or trying out a slightly different shape of the eyes, together with another facial expression, in fact approaching a smile.[46] This stylistic tendency, which could be termed 'innovative' or 'experimental' style, though it may still retain elements of the 'drawing' style, incorporates certain new features, some of which were adhered to, or further adapted, during the following conceptual and stylistic developments. A moderate degree of selective external inspiration can be observed in the key object (Fig. 3), which does not yet appear aesthetically refined, however. The range of designs existing in this stylistic group is absolutely intriguing.

III

An early, aesthetically quite accomplished style, still without an overriding inclusion of 'extraneous' elements, which was termed 'naturalistic' by Domenico Faccenna (Fig. 11). Here also, the few early characteristics, i.e. a moustache, as well as a tie or other device (diadem?) parting off the 'topknot', continue, while the eyelids have become heavier, as it were. The head of the Buddha is somewhat roundish, and the topknot still appears to be rather large. A peculiar example with a hypothetic underlying portrait character (Fig. 14) might date to the late first half of the second century, because of the formally similar portrait of the Parthian ruler Naṣrū (Fig. 15).

IV

An aesthetically advanced style retaining traces of the moustache (Fig. 17), which gradually gets absorbed into a peculiar 'thick upper lip' and/or a slightly swollen philtrum.[47] The latter feature looks quite attractive, in spite of its peculiar origin as a kind of abraded moustache. In the former case, wide eyes may be present (Fig. 16) for which more or less close parallels may be adduced from Palmyra (see above), though these are not helpful in narrowing down a specific time bracket. With all necessary caution, a date somewhere in the late(?) second half of the second century may be suggested for this stylistic phenomenon. From this stage onwards, at the latest, there is a huge advancement in the artistic skills reflected in all kinds of sculptural products in stone.

V

A style consciously adding certain – real or alleged – 'classical Greek' elements, specifically, an extremely peculiar reduction, sometimes factually, omission, of the portion between nose and mouth, i.e. the philtrum (Fig. 18). Although this meant a distinct deviation from the portrayal of more natural anthropomorphic traits and only selectively reflected features of early classical Greek artworks of the fifth–fourth centuries BCE,[48] *thus revealing a pseudo-classical Greek character*, and by this, its more imitatory, 'classicist', aspect,[49] most of the images created in this manner do look quite elegant, and they may be termed 'idealising' in their overall expression (e.g. Fig. 18).[50] At this stage, the internal detailing of the eyes clearly ceases, which could be either owed to referencing classical Greek art, where this feature is very rare, or be due to the fact that the pronouncedly drooping eyelids introduced at this stage would not have gone well with it.

The 'idealising' style just outlined, according to my still hypothetic concept of typological development, would have given way to a more balanced, locally nurtured and sustained idiom of morphological expression, in all respects drawing

from the *best of both worlds, east and west*, as it were, and reaching its apex in artistic flavour, spiritual embodiment, and richness in narrative concepts and contents. It has to be kept in mind, however, that, because I cannot insist on a strict succession of the proposed developmental stages, there could have been a certain chronological overlap, as it may be similarly assumed for some of the 'micro-developments' presented for some of the thirteen case examples.

In order to intersperse a word of caution, let me point out that Roman art in its turn consciously referred back to classical Greek art, and that 'classicising features' might as well have been instigated though this path.[51] However, it is the peculiarity of the *extremely reduced philtrum* which appears to suggest that a separate impetus regarding foreign classical art forms had in fact originated in Gandhāra itself, because a strange lapse, or aberration, like the reduction or near-omission of the philtrum, for which a good number of examples are available,[52] is unlikely to have happened within the ambit of Roman art (i.e. presupposing existing ties, or supervision of some kind). Thus, this somewhat unanticipated developmental succession should rather be taken as an indication of a fully self-dependent school, or schools, of Gandhāran art. It shall be left to future studies to hopefully throw more light on the overall processes. One could as well consider a version that involves a spatially diverse stylistic development within Gandhāra. However, my rather random observations seem to make it appear likely that the early set of features of the head of the Buddha, including open eyes (i.e. without eyelids shut to a significant degree), the typical moustache, a relatively large 'topknot' with a tying device, at the most, only slightly elongated earlobes, and a yet less wide-ranging pool of depicted narratives, may have informed the earliest stratum at the major long-lived Buddhist sites in Gandhāra.[53]

Regarding assigning tentative dates to the stylistic phenomena of the 'thick upper lip' and the 'reduced philtrum' (cf. Fig. 18), the first few decades of the third century is suggesting itself as a plausible time bracket. This is based on the likely dates for the inscribed images at Mamane Dheri, of 215/16,[54] and the 'Year 5 Triad', very possibly dating to 231/32.[55] In both cases, a 'reduced philtrum' appears to be combined with the 'thick upper lip', which I am reading as a faint remnant of the previously obligatory moustache.[56]

Practically in every individual Gandhāran image, at least slight, skilful variations can be observed, which indicates a high degree of creativity throughout, including the ability to conceive variations and incorporate innovative elements, from the very beginning, on the side of the artist. Most of these variations are quite unlikely to have been commissioned by a preceptor or an individual client, because they do generally concern the artist's repertoire.[57] Critical audiences, however, might well have discussed these works of art among themselves, which could have led to a certain feedback being conveyed to the workshops. In turn, these would have felt an impetus to produce still more varied, sophisticated and refined products.

In short, I do opine that during the formation of the 'Graeco-Romanised' style (my own variant expression) for which Gandhāra has become renowned (cf. Falser 2015), certain selected 'extraneous' elements – either more or less genuinely 'foreign', or imitations in the form of 'pseudo'-creations, were successively introduced and customised, in order to augment the artists' repertoires, with the purpose of aesthetically enhancing the early image of the Buddha, while striving for an effigy of ideal beauty and high ritual efficacy. Gandhāra, being geographically closer to the regions further to the west that had been providing a virtually infinite scope for inspiration, was the natural candidate for generating such an outlook. This process may well have happened under the conditions of a certain kind of competition with the Mathurā school. The latter clearly adopted such an approach for the Buddha image from about the latter half of the second century onwards, when the 'Kapardin Buddha' type gradually went out of fashion, significantly, by emulating and appropriating Gandhāran features. I consider it likely that the active search for new, potentially more 'aesthetically successful' visual elements to be incorporated in the design of Buddha (and Bodhisattva) images, regardless

from which sources these were being adapted, seen much more in Gandhāra than in Mathurā during the period under survey, has ultimately facilitated such highly evolved creations as the iconic Gupta-style Buddha image of Sarnath, with its unsurpassed sublime expression.

Future Directions

While it cannot be denied that the corpus of Gandhāran stone sculptures, largely dispersed throughout museums and private collections worldwide, is, and will be, providing by far the largest reservoir of informational data on the morphology of Gandhāran art, it has to be conceded that well-stratified or otherwise datable specimens retrieved during excavations will have to remain an important focus. Moreover, several 3D-digitisation projects devoted to Gandhāran art that are underway presently will hopefully provide some testing methods regarding the proposed model of stylistic succession in Gandhāran art. As a desirable precondition, a sufficiently large number of images may be included, allowing for the recognition of significant clusters sharing morphological properties, thus structuring the obtained databases, virtually starting to 'unmute' the sculptural corpus.

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Notes

1. The main reason for the better evaluability of the Mathurā side is the higher number of inscribed, and more often dated, Buddha images, from the time of Kaniṣka I onwards (cf. Härtel 1985), with a few precursors that do not differ fundamentally, generally assigned to the first century CE (Quintanilla 2007, cf. note 9). While a much greater variability in the visual representation of the Buddha prevails in Gandhāra, and these specimens are overwhelmingly uninscribed and undated, the respective images produced by the Mathurā school of sculpture of the kind just referred to are surprisingly uniform, suggesting some kind of 'image policy' involved. On the supposed origin of the Buddha image, cf. DeCaroli 2015: 12–24.
2. The premise of Kaniṣka I ruling from 78/79 CE (inception of the Śaka era) was a widespread assessment among scholars in the previous century, including Herbert Härtel, founding Director of the former Museum of Indian Art, Berlin, housing quite a substantial Gandhāra collection (Schneider 2018: 213–224), who specialised in the art of Mathurā during the pre-Kushan and Kushan period (cf. Härtel 1985).
3. See the recent series of conference proceedings of the Gandhara Connections project, edited by Wannaporn Rienjang and Peter Stewart (2018, etc.). This is not to disregard the achievements of this important research initiative. It is the unimaginably high number of widely scattered Gandhāran remains and their lost contexts, which indeed form the major reason for the still 'expandable' state of research in this field.
4. Sharma 1995: 176–183. Like Herbert Härtel (cf. note 2), this author had based his absolute chronology on Kaniṣka I ruling from 78/79 CE (Śaka era), while working with inscriptionally attested dates.

5. The PhD thesis by H. C. Ackermann (published in 1975) proposes a chronological-stylistic order for Gandhāran narrative reliefs established through a comparative study with ancient Roman material, which turned out problematic, mainly due to the exceeding intricacy of the topic.

6. See Härtel 1985, arguably still the best compilation of the evidence, though meanwhile, in parts, inevitably, outdated.

7. Regarding widely accessible publications, the Italian archaeological research mission (IsMEO, or 'ISMEO', literally, 'Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East'; formerly, IsIAO) has been particularly active in excavating and preparing reports, cf. Olivieri 2022, with further references. For the chronological framework based on dated inscriptions, see note 17.

8. In a recent article, I have postulated that certain motifs, both iconographic and 'decorative', were transmitted to the heartland of Gandhāra from the Roman Empire via Palmyra and, very probably, through the Kapisa/Kabul region (Wessels-Mevissen 2022: 44–47).

9. Quintanilla 2007: *passim*. Probably, the most significant, and earliest, example of an early Buddha representation, is the 'Īsāpur Railing: *Lokapālas* offer Alms Bowls to the Buddha', which she assigns to c. 20 CE (Quintanilla 2007: 199–205; fig. 262).

10. On several imported stone objects at Bir-Kot-Ghwandai, see Taddei 2004. For the period directly preceding the time frame under study, recent excavation results have significantly augmented our knowledge, and this, likewise for the Swāt region (see Coloru, Iori, and Olivieri 2021).

11. One should not lose sight of 'visual culture' as a complex phenomenon, along the lines of the recent encyclopaedia entry by Revire (2022).

12. Jongeward refers to Faccenna 1962–64: pls. 114b, 116 (= Fig. 11 in the present article), and 239a, b. The resemblance is significant, though I am assuming a predecessorship of the Ashmolean Museum's Buddha head, in principle, for these four specimens, particularly, for the two former ones.

13. This feature is revealed by a side view kindly provided to me by a staff member.

14. In the respective *Minutes of the Curators of the Indian Institute*, the object was described as a 'Graeco-Buddhist head, which had been excavated some years ago by an Indian regiment in the Swat Valley' (information kindly made available to me by Andrew Topsfield, previous longtime Curator and Keeper of Eastern Art at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford).

15. A notable typological approach to the present material has been made by Professor Juhyung Rhi (2008). Mine is a fresh attempt, while pointing out where I am drawing on Rhi's earlier considerations and results.

16. Being trained on the basis of the Gandhāran collections of the then Museum of Indian Art – *Museum für Indische Kunst*, Berlin (since 2006, forming part of the holdings of the Asian Art Museum – *Museum für Asiatische Kunst*, Berlin), during the early 1980ies, I have been taught, by Prof. Herbert Härtel (cf. note 2), that particularly early Gandhāran heads of the Buddha do exhibit a moustache, relatively wide-open eyes, and that some kind of tie is wound around their 'topknot'. These observations had instigated my curiosity considerably, so that I have never ceased to look into the topic of – potentially – chronologically relevant traits in this particular field.

17. In Gandhāran art, only five rather well-confirmed dates have been obtained from inscribed sculptures, through scholarly discussion, as the readings and certain other preconditions had to be clarified. The earliest one does not concern a

Buddha image, as do the four others, but it is instructive as it represents a variant of the 'drawing' style: (1) an image of the goddess Hārītī from Skarah Dheri: 116/17; for the remaining four cases, cf. Rhi 2018: 36, (2) Loriyan Tangai, pedestal of a standing headless Buddha: 143/44; (3) Hashtnagar, headless Buddha: 209/10; (4) Mamane Dheri, seated Buddha in a narrative context: 215/16; (5) 'Year 5 Buddha Triad', previously prefixed with "(de) Marteau" or "Brussels": 231/32 (dates provided by gandhari.org, with bibliographies).

18. See Faccenna 2001 and 2007; Callieri and Filigenzi 2002; Olivieri 2022.

19. Just to be clear about it: the Swāt Valley seems a good candidate for the probable inception of Buddhist art in Gandhāra, which should, however, until further confirmation, not be read in a way that it must have been the only such centre. Another question may be concerning the present discussion: the hypothetical typological-stylistic sequence proposed here is not designed only for the Swāt Valley, apart from its starting point, and it is assumed that the development sketched here has actually unfolded in more or less the whole of Gandhāra.

20. Huntington 1985: 120–122. As a further option, Palmyrene specimens have been used for comparison with Gandhāran art, e.g. Soper 1951: pls. 31B, 32B; Filigenzi 2006: 22–23, figs. 2–4; Wessels-Mevissen 2022: 45, fig. 8. For recent studies on Eastern Mediterranean (= Western Asian, or Middle Eastern) portraits, see Invernizzi 2017 (Parthian, including Hatrene art), and Freyberger 2021 (examples from both Hatrene and Palmyrene art).

21. For further examples of the typical Buddha panels in an evolving early style in Swāt, with features of the 'drawing' style, see van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1981: 380, 382–388, 390, 397–399 (with illustrations); Callieri and Filigenzi 2002: 175, Cat. 86 and 87 (= van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1981: 384); cf. the earlier excavation report by Faccenna 1962–64 (prepared by Taddei): pls. 206–228, pointed out by the same author, in Faccenna *et al.* 2003: 301; cf. a relief from Kharkai, in Errington 2022: 28, fig. 24, R18/R32. A much damaged relief published by Ackermann 1975: pl. 82b, reportedly from Swāt, conforms to the 'drawing' style as well.

22. See gandhari.org, CKI 133, with further references; original location: Spinvari, Peshawar District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

23. As an intriguing and plausible thought, Kiilerich (1988: 143) has suggested the existence of an earlier art tradition of woodcarving. The style and certain depicted subjects could later have been taken over by sculptural panels in stone. In this case, the original date and shape of the Buddha image (provided that it had existed in this material) might forever evade further enquiry.

24. Cf. also Freyberger 2021: figs. 1–4, with the same reservation. The huge Palmyrene material might offer some better analogues. However, close-up high-res photographs or 3D scans would be required for comparison.

25. I am well aware that this is quite a positivist interpretation of the specimen. I hope that it will be permitted to literally place the magnifying glass on this particular spot, in order to make a strong case for recognising potential chronologically relevant features and thus, ultimately, establishing a relative sequence in time.

26. This instructive bronze head, most likely portraying the Roman emperor Tiberius (r. 14–37 CE), demonstrates the typical treatment of hair strands in Roman art. For men, these were very often arranged in a way that we would consider 'unkempt', which could well have expressed the ideal of an independent, strong character, whose hair, in a kind of *pars pro toto* reading, would likewise be unruly. Apart from the narrow nose and mouth comparing to some extent with

the 'key object' in Fig. 3, this charming portrait demonstrates that iris and pupil may be formed similarly (to the latter) in a bronze, by applying silver inlays.

27. Two extended curls are framing the face of this typically second-century female funerary portrait from Palmyra, showing a similar internal hair structure indicated by lines. Among the wide range of variants of eye shapes (including their inner detailing) in Palmyrene art, this specimen follows a frequent type, with both iris and pupil raised, separated by an incised concentric line. Simply indented pupils also occur in Palmyrene art.

28. E.g. Faccenna 1962–64: pls. 143, 446–448, 451, 601a.

29. The figure was described as a 'male Central-asian' [*sic*], in the elaborate catalogue prepared by Maurizio Taddei soon after the excavation (Faccenna 1962–64: 50–51; pls. 184–185). Significantly, his eyebrows, hair, nose, mouth, and ears are shaped differently than in the partial analogue in Fig. 3.

30. The first case is a head of an old, full-bearded man having wrinkles and drooping eyelids, which clearly reveal the deeply carved extra line (Invernizzi 2017: 292, fig. 18, without an assigned date). The second comparandum is even more striking in that the lower lids exhibit such a line as well, though still carried out slightly different than in our case example (Fig. 3). The Hatrene full-body royal statue, likewise full-bearded, belongs to the Erbil Civilization Museum, Erbil (Autonomous Region of Kurdistan, Iraq) and has been identified as Sanaṭrūq I, who reigned ca. 140–176/77, see https://tinyurl.com/26cd7pks (accessed 1 March, 2023), photo by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin, FRCP (Glasg).

31. E.g. cf. Parlasca 1969–70: figs. 7 (p. 178) and 10 (p. 184), the latter dating to c. 125–150, fitting the date which I would roughly assume for the Gandhāran specimens, though the similarity of the comparanda is not sufficiently close to make a point. Unfortunately, the typology of the depiction of eyes in Palmyrene art, extremely rich in morphology, has not yet been investigated.

32. An export from the Swāt Valley to what is now eastern Afghanistan, or just another instance of a possibly closely related early art production, is a damaged relief panel at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, reportedly from Hadda (van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1981: 389, fig. 18; V&A, I.S. 70-1880 = Ackermann 1975: pl. 54).

33. A handsome analogue with a slightly different design is seen in Faccenna 1962–64: 131a, b, while the example in Fig. 11 is illustrated on pl. 116.

34. The crucial question when the Sanskrit term '*uṣṇīṣa*' – 'turban', or "anything wound around the head", shifted its meaning towards denoting an auspicious excrescence on the Buddha's head has been disputed. A significant contribution to this topic was made by Monika Zin (2003). Although it would probably open up another arena for discussion, the thought should be permitted whether the intentional cranial deformation likely practiced by members of the Kushan elite/royalty (to be ascertained, cf. Kurbanov 2010: 129–132) could originally have determined the choice of providing the early Buddha images with an at times massive 'topknot'. (The always implied 'royal aspect' of the Buddha is well-known.) Contrary to a widespread assumption, which I have been sharing so far, the latter could already be the expression of a 'deformed', or 'auspiciously innate', cranium.

35. Here is another tricky question exploring the very limits of the 'royal aspect' inherent in the Buddha. With his visual appearance clearly conforming to a largely unpropertied – though exalted – monk, there are a few hints that the tie parting off his 'topknot' (the latter being likewise questioned by me, in the previous

note) in early depictions might have had the either 'hidden', or openly displayed, character of a precious diadem. Just to briefly make a comparison with a golden ornament from the early Kushan site of Dalverzin Tepe (Uzbekistan), assigned to c. first century, which has been described as a pectoral: https://tinyurl.com/4x2ee2yz (accessed 1 March, 2023) (cf. Uzbekistan Exhibition Catalogue 2022: 69, no. 5, and fig. 44). The central element contains a carnelian intaglio showing the head of Herakles. Overall, the ornament shares some significant traits with the design encountered here, in our Fig. 11, including the petal-like decoration. Its presence at Dalverzin Tepe would suggest its conforming to the taste and prevailing fashion of the ruling elite of the Kushan people of the time. As far as I can see, the contradiction implied by the Buddha displaying a potentially precious object might not yet have been addressed. There is scope for assuming that some of the royal features of the Kushans themselves, like sporting precious jewellery and exhibiting a cranial deformation (to be ascertained, cf. Kurbanov 2010: 129–132), could have been transferred to the image of the Buddha, while rarely appearing compellingly explicit, however.

36. This example, such as others, from Shotorak, Afghanistan has been regarded as a possible import from Swāt by Filigenzi (2020: 208; for two well-preserved reliefs from Shotorak discussed in this connection, cf. Tissot 2006: K.p. Sho. 813.19 and K.p. Sho. 815.21). While the transport from the Swāt Valley to the Kapisa/Kabul region may well be an option, one could likewise consider a close contact between both early centres, with workshops existing in both localities, as the design and style of early Buddha images in the Kapisa/Kabul region appear to be somewhat distinct. Further research, if possible, involving material analysis, is desirable.

37. Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum), Berlin, acc. no. I 31, online database entry: https://id.smb.museum/object/840821 (accessed 1 March, 2023) (for a close-up of the head, cf. Rhi 2005: figs. 10–11), was donated in 1891, by James Broadwood Lyall, then Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, through the German diplomat Edmund von Heyking, then Consul General in Calcutta, while the Buddha head with differences almost exclusively apparent in the hair of the topknot (Fig. 14; for the online entry including more views, change the code no. of the above url to 1713311), was received only in 1907, when several objects were purchased from the Orientalist Mansel Longworth Dames.

38. Al-Salihi 1991. In 2015, the statue was destroyed in the archaeological museum at Mossul, Iraq, by ISIS militants.

39. Illustrated in Filigenzi 2020: 212, fig. 3 (Tokyo National Museum).

40. Probably the most striking example is presented by Rhi 2008: 50, pls. 13–14. Here, it appears as if the moustache has seamlessly merged with the skin on its upper side (which, I hope, is not just an effect of the lighting), while its lower portion leaves a slight ridge beside the Buddha's mouth. A question to be addressed is certainly whether the strangely 'vanishing' moustache could be reflecting a second thought that could have lead to a subsequent modification of the respective images.

41. E.g. Foucher 1922: 749, fig. 578 (an attractive Buddha head from Sahri Bahlol that belongs to the 'aesthetic spectrum' of this typological phenomenon); Spooner 1911: pl. 48; Asian Art Museum, Berlin, acc. no. I 441 (https://id.smb.museum/object/1892494); cf. Wessels-Mevissen 2022: 41 n.31, 42, fig. 5. The overall phenomenon of a 'miniaturised' nose, mouth, and philtrum in between, occurs more often on Bodhisattva images (e.g. Le Coq 1922: pl. 2) than on figures of

the Buddha (for this see, e.g. Asian Art Museum, Berlin, Takht-i-Bahi, acc. no. I 566, Grünwedel and Burgess 1901: 164, ill. 111. A similar case, a standing Bodhisattva (likely from the same site, according to my opinion) has been published by Ackermann 1975: pl. 50b.

42. There are examples for – in my view – unfinished eyes, both in Gandhāran and Palmyrene art, indicating that in both localities, the eyes were only carved after the completion of the other portions of a relief. For Gandhāran examples see: Faccenna 1962–64: pls. 61b, 241 (Butkara I); Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 13.96.28 (access online entry), where all five figures in a seated Buddha panel are yet lacking the detailing of the eyes. In Palmyra, unlike in Gandhāra, where a globular protruding portion remains, the upper lid is generally completed, cf. Ploug 1995: Cat. 106, 113, 114, 116, to mention just a few examples.

43. Recent efforts, including an ERC-funded project by Rubina Raja, Aarhus University (https://projects.au.dk/palmyraportrait), were initially accompanied by a major destruction of the site by ISIS militants in 2015, unfortunately.

44. E.g. Boschung 2021 (monograph); Parlasca 1985; Freyberger 2021; plus a large number of recent studies of Palmyrene portraits (cf. previous note), including Raja 2017.

45. E.g. in the catalogue of the Copenhagen collection by Ploug (1995: 27–28), only the outer shapes of the eyes are briefly analysed.

46. Faccenna 1962–64: pl. 239a, b. In these two Buddha heads from Butkara I, clearly resembling each other, a surprisingly 'informal' facial expression seems to prevail.

47. More precisely, the portion just above the upper lip, and on both sides, appears slightly more voluminous than usual. A clear illustration of such an instance is presented by Rhi (2018: 44, fig. 15; British Museum, no. 1947,0511.1 = Zwalf 1996: Cat. 1).

48. The tendency to shorten the philtrum occurs, in principle, in Archaic and Classical Greek art, as well as in some Hellenistic works of art, but it was clearly exaggerated in Gandhāra, and that, very likely, as a temporally confined phenomenon.

49. The term "classicism" for Gandhāran art has been used by Soper 1951, though somewhat differently than I am using it here. A well-known example of a classical Greek face profile is the stele with the so-called 'Pensive Athena' from the island of Paros, Greece, dating to c. 460 BCE: https://tinyurl.com/y8wu8hnk (accessed 1 March, 2023); cf. Zanker 1988: 198, figs. 152–153 (example of a Roman copy of a Greek model showing this feature, which, though a common practice, is probably not to be considered the main source of the Gandhāran feature of a reduced philtrum).

50. Only after obviously making the same observations and deciding to use 'idealising', I realised that Grünwedel and Burgess (1901: 166) had indeed called this stylistic phenomenon 'idealistic'. Having considered the latter term before, I now prefer to continue with 'idealising'. To quote their wording, first published by Grünwedel (1893: 126), and in the 1901 publication in English, underwritten by Burgess: "[T]his is very apparent in the Buddha types, that along with the idealistic tendency which is certainly the older, as it preserves the Greek types, is found a realistic [one would now prefer 'naturalistic'] and clearly more modern one. […] To the idealistic tendency belong Buddha-heads with youthful, Apollonic features, with gently smiling mouth, half-shut eyes with soft, full, fleshy parts, finely moulded nose, and sharply defined, luxuriant and elegantly arranged hair […]." Therefore, it was supposed that the 'realistic tendency' was a subsequent phenomenon, contrary to what we know

nowadays (Grünwedel and Burgess 1901: 168). As an example, the counterpart of our Fig. 14, the standing Buddha image, Asian Art Museum, Berlin, acc. no. I 31, is illustrated (*ibid*.: 169, ill. 17), cf. note 37.

51. E.g. Zanker (1988: 240–252), on the early Imperial period of Roman art, which experienced, among other related phenomena, a conscious reuse of Archaic and Classical Greek sculptures.

52. Cf. note 41. Both Buddha and Bodhisattva images have been chosen as examples.

53. Trying to ultimately prove this provisional statement reflecting my own – necessarily incomplete – observations would require substantial research. For an informative glimpse, containing such early evidence from Takht-i-Bahi, cf. Errington 2022: 27, fig. 23, R50 and 1–3.

54. For Mamane Dheri, see Rhi 2018: 35, figs. 1–2; for the date, cf. gandhari.org, CKI 161; original location: Mankiala (Manikyala), Rawalpindi Dist.

55. For the 'Year 5 Triad', of unknown provenance, presently on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, see Rhi 2018: 43–45, figs. 12–13; for the date, cf. gandhari.org, CKI 232, with further references.

56. For further examples of the thick upper lip, see Rhi 2018: figs. 15, 18.

57. This kind of constant variation, like the always at least slightly differing positions of the proper left arm, hand, and fingers in Buddha images, should be distinguished from the introduction of certain innovations, as seen in the appearance of lotus socles, at some point in time.

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