The Geography of Gandhāran Art

Proceedings of the Second International Workshop of the Gandhāra Connections Project, University of Oxford, 22nd-23rd March, 2018

Edited by
Wannaporn Rienjang
Peter Stewart

ARCHAEOPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY

This book is available direct from Archaeopress or from our website www.archaeopress.com

Contents

Acknowledgements

Editors' note

Orthography

The editors have aimed for broad, but not dogmatic, consistency in orthography and use of diacritics, as well as some other conventions, throughout this book. We have endeavoured to apply a reasonable compromise between widely varying practices, embracing inconsistency where appropriate.

Provenance

The Classical Art Research Centre does not normally publish previously unpublished ancient artefacts which have no recorded provenance and have become known since 1970. We seek to avoid adding value and legitimacy to objects whose origins have not been properly documented. We have chosen to make an exception in the case of the heart-shaped lamp reported to have been found in Malakand District, which Stefan Baums interprets in his paper on the basis of a photograph and information provided to him. There are two reasons for this exception. Firstly, the challenges posed by the loss of provenance information are an explicit focus of the paper, which demonstrates how epigraphic evidence may be used to try and mitigate the problem and partially to re-contextualize unprovenanced objects. Secondly, the historical value of the inscription on this object makes it imperative that it should become available to scholarly discussion.

Contributors

Stefan Baums is lead researcher of the Buddhist Manuscripts from Gandhāra project at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and teaches Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit language and literature at the University of Munich. His research focuses on the edition of early Buddhist manuscripts and inscriptions, and on the linguistic description of Gāndhārī. His recent publications include a new corpus and translation of Gandhāran relic inscriptions, and the ongoing Dictionary of Gāndhārī.

Pia Brancaccio is a member of the Art and Art History Department at Drexel University, Philadelphia. She teaches courses widely across Asian art. Her research focuses on Buddhist art from South Asia. Her work has addressed various aspects of art and multiculturalism in the ancient world. She is co-editor, with Kurt Behrendt, of *Gandharan Buddhism: Archaeology, Art and Text* (2006).

Muhammad Ashraf Khan is Director of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, and Chief Editor of the *Journal of Asian Civilizations.* He was formerly Director of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, and former Deputy Director of Taxila Museum. He has conducted extensive excavations and preservation of the Buddhist sites in Taxila, particularly Bādalpur monastery complex and Jinnan Wali Dheri monastery. He is a co-author of *A Catalogue of the Gandhara Stone Sculptures in the Taxila Museum* (2005).

Zarawar Khan is an Assistant Professor of Archaeology at the University of Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, of Pakistan. He has participated in excavations at Chitral, Hund, and Sampur Dheri, Baja Swabi under the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His area of specialization is Buddhist Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Gandhāra. He has published research papers dealing with different aspects of Gandhāran art.

Muhammad Habibullah Khan Khattak is former Director of Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and Museums, and former Director (Heritage), Ministry of Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage, Pakistan. He is currently Chief Editor of the journal *Frontier Archaeology*. His most recent excavation and conservation project includes the Buddhist site of Takht-i-Bāhī. He is also involved in a research collaboration between Leicester University and Hazara University on the origin of the Kalash people (Black Kafirs) of Chitral.

Abdul Ghafoor Lone He has carried out excavations at Jinnan Wali Dheri, Badla Pur Taxila, Harappa and Ban Faquirna-Islamabad. His main research interests includes Gandhāran art and history. He is currently working on the documentation of antiquities of the Department of Archaeology and Museums. He is also a co-author of *A Catalogue of the Gandhara Stone Sculptures in the Taxila Museum* (2005), *Taxila, Home of Stucco Art* (2005) and *Gandhara: History, Antiquity, Art and Personalities* (2004).

Satoshi Naiki is Assistant Professor at the Center for Cultural Heritage Studies, Kyoto University. His research focuses on the artistic traditions and carving techniques of Gandhāran sculptures, particularly those from the sites of Thareli and Ranigat in the Peshawar valley. His publications include *Gandhāran Sculptures and Buddhism* (2016), which is based on his PhD dissertation at Kyoto University.

Jason Neelis is Associate Professor and Chair at the Department of Religion and Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University. His areas of expertise cover South Asian religions, history, literature and languages, Buddhist transmission across Asia, and Gandhāran manuscripts, epigraphy, and archaeology. He is currently directing a project on the Upper Indus petroglyphs and inscriptions in northern Pakistan, and has been working on projects involving avadānas in the first century AD Gāndhārī manuscripts and the Buddhist rebirth narratives in the literary and visual cultures of Gandhāra.
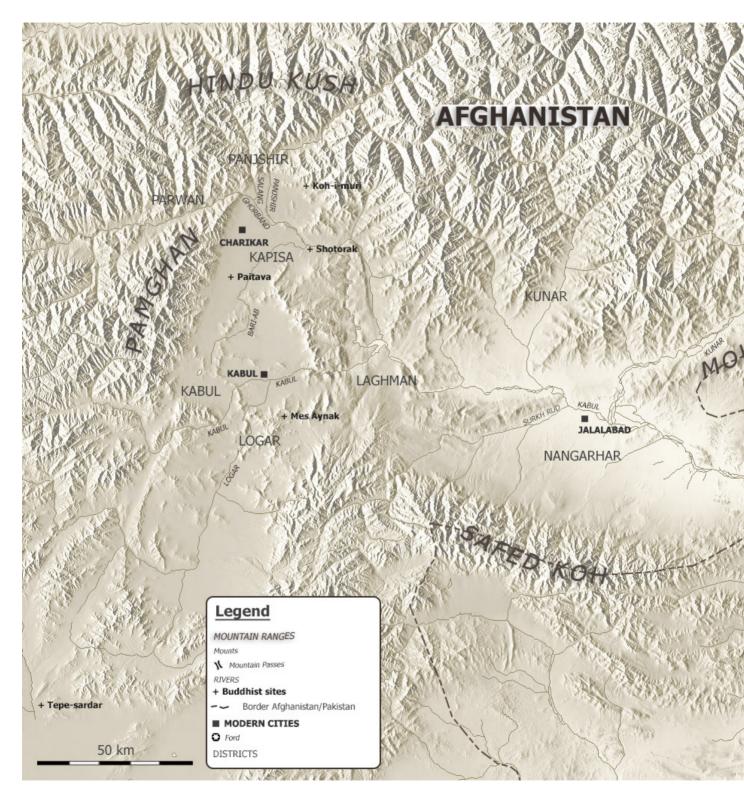
Luca M. Olivieri is director of the ISMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan. He has been working in Swat for more than thirty years. His main long-lasting project is the ongoing excavations at the urban site of Bazira/Barikot. His principal interests include excavation and heritage management methodologies. In 2017 he was awarded with the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz* of Pakistan for his three decades of archaeological work in Swat.

Jessie Pons is Junior Professor in South Asian History of Religion, KHK Research Associate and Project Leader of Digitalization of Gandharan Artefacts (DiGA) at Centre for the Study of Religions (CERES) at Ruhr University Bochum. Her research focuses on Buddhist art with special attention to the representation of Buddhist narratives in Gandhāra, in oases of the Silk Road, and in the Indian Subcontinent. Her DiGA project aims to identify workshops producing Buddhist sculptures, the geographical and chronological logic of the school, and the history of Buddhism in Gandhāra.

Wannaporn Rienjang is Project Assistant of the Gandhāra Connections Project at the Classical Art Research Centre, Oxford. She completed her doctoral degree in Archaeology at the University of Cambridge on Buddhist relic cult in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Before starting her PhD, she worked as a research assistant for the Masson Project at the Department of Coins and Medals, the British Museum. Her research interests include the art and archaeology of Greater Gandhāra, Buddhist studies, and working technologies of stone containers and beads.

Peter Stewart is Director of the Classical Art Research Centre and Associate Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology at the University of Oxford. He has worked widely in the field of ancient sculpture. His publications include *Statues in Roman Society: Representation and Response* (2003) and *The Social History of Roman Art* (2008). Much of his research concerns the relationship between Gandhāran art and Roman sculpture.

Alexandra Vanleene is an independent scholar specializing in Gandhāran Buddhist art and archaeology. Her research focuses on the artistic tradition of Gandhāran sculptures in Afghanistan, particularly Haḍḍa, the geographic expansion of Gandhāran art, and the development of regional characteristics. She worked in Afghanistan for eight years with the French Archaeological Mission for the prospection and excavation of Bamiyan.

Map of the Greater Gandhāra

region (copyright: Jessie Pons).

Making places for Buddhism in Gandhāra: stories of previous births in image and text

Jason Neelis

Introduction

Gandhāran scribes and artists imagined places for Buddhism (Monius 2001) by emplacing narratives of the Buddha's past births in ritualized landscapes of Gandhāra and surrounding regions of the north-western borderlands. They used visual and written media to make Gandhāra a 'second holy land' (Foucher 1905, II: 416-7 'la seconde terre sainte').[1] While other South Asian Buddhist communities left traces of either literary production (in Pāli and Sanskrit texts redacted and transmitted in manuscripts belonging to later periods) or material culture of archaeological remains, images, coins, and inscriptions, scholars of 'Greater' Gandhāran Buddhism now have access to both types of sources from periods extending from the first century BC to third century AD (and later).[2] Only a relatively small selection of narratives drawn from a much broader tradition of oral storytelling has been preserved, and localizing past lives of the Buddha and previous Buddhas in the Northwest was not the only narrative strategy for translocating Buddhist sacred places outside of the 'greater Māghadhan' homeland of Śākyamuni (Shinohara 2003).

Artisans and scribes selected stories from separate repertoires of rebirth narrative genres and developed different techniques of localization (Neelis 2014). Two scribes composed over fifty terse summary stories labelled as Avadānas and Pūrvayogas as secondary texts in the British Library Gāndhārī manuscripts collection, with Avadānas focusing mostly on the present lives of characters with few 'karmic tales' about ripening of karma (*karmavipāka*), while Pūrvayogas explicitly connect previous-birth stories to the present lifetimes of Śākyamuni Buddha and to other figures who were his contemporary followers, such as Ānanda and Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya (Lenz 2003; 2010). Jātakas, a loosely defined term for birth stories often used interchangeably with Avadānas in Sanskrit and Pāli literature, have been identified in Gandhāran art by Foucher (1905, I: 270-285; 1919) and other art historians primarily on the basis of iconographic comparisons with other examples in Indian Buddhist art and the Pāli canonical compilation of 547 Jātakas.

In order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Avadāna, Pūrvayoga, and Jātaka narratives in extant Gandhāran literary and visual media, textualists and art historians have collaborated in an interdisciplinary effort to study the corpora of stories written in Gāndhārī manuscripts and depicted in Gandhāran images.[3] A global survey of birth stories identifiable in Gandhāran imagery by a team

---

[1] Alfred Foucher, called the 'grandfather of Gandhāra Studies' (Zwalf 1996: 74), theorized that Buddhism in Gandhāra was '... véritablement mêlé à la vie et comme enraciné au sol' (Foucher 1905: II, 416) before Faxian's arrival, so that by the fifth century AD, Gandhāra had become 'la seconde terre sainte du Bouddhisme indien' (Foucher 1905, II: 417). The theme of 'acclimatization of legends' introduced by Foucher (1901/1915: 28) is further elaborated by Lamotte (1958: 365-369; 1988: 332-337, n. 145). Fussman (1994a) discusses localization of narratives, including the Buddha's previous lives (1994a: 43ff.) in the context of the 'implantation' of Buddhism in Gandhāra. Neelis (2011: 253-256) discusses processes of 'domestication' whereby Buddhist relics and events in the previous and present lives of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were adopted to local settings in the north-western borderlands.

[2] As coined by Richard Salomon, 'Greater Gandhāra can be understood as a primarily linguistic rather than a political term, that is, as comprising the regions where Gāndhārī was the indigenous or adopted language' (2018: 11). The terminology of 'Greater Gandhāra' is useful for geographically extending the boundaries of Gandhāran art beyond the heartland of the Peshawar Basin, but philologists and art historians understand that the extent of materials with writing in the Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script and provenanced and unprovenanced images with distinctive characteristics of Gandhāran art overlap, but are not necessarily coterminous.

[3] A collaborative research project with David Jongeward (Royal Ontario Museum) and Timothy Lenz (University of Washington)

of art historians found over 180 stone sculptures and paintings with fifteen recognizable stories (Figure 1).[4] Although the list is not yet final, this contribution to the proceedings of the 2018 Gandharan Connections workshop on 'The Geography of Gandhāran Art' is intended to share provisional results with the purpose of drawing scholarly attention to the significance of this relatively understudied visual and written repertoire of Buddhist narratives. While visual narratives of previous births are not as prominent in Gandhāran art as hagiographical episodes from the present lifetime of Śākyamuni Buddha, scribes and artisans purposefully appropriated different sets of Avadāna, Pūrvayoga and Jātaka stories to generate connections between multiple lives of the Buddha and the geography of Gandhāra.

Narratives of past births in Gandhāran visual culture

Approximately 130 images of the so-called Dīpaṅkara Jātaka depicting a meeting between the previous Buddha Dīpaṅkara and a young Brahmin named Megha (*Mahāvastu Dīpaṅkaravastu*), Sumati (*Divyāvadāna Dharmaruci Avadāna*), or Sumedha (Pāli *Nidānakathā*) dominate the visual repertoire of rebirth narratives in Gandhāran art. This episode of the Bodhisattva's encounter with Dīpaṅkara is not included in the Pāli Jātaka collection, so that the term 'Dīpaṅkara Jātaka' tends to be restricted to the conventions of Gandhāran art history. In Gandhāran

[4] The survey was supervised by David Jongeward in consultation with Jessie Pons and the assistance of collaborators in the UK, Pakistan, and India, including Wannaporn Kay Rienjang who worked with Susmita Basu Majumdar in November 2015 in India. Abdul Samad generously provided valuable access to collections of the Peshawar Museum and Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, during my research visit to Pakistan in May 2016. During the Gandhāra Connections workshop in March 2018, Zarawar Khan drew our attention to additional images in the SRO collection in Peshawar.

Figure 1. Table of Gandhāran works of art containing recognizable Buddhist birth stories. Based on detailed catalogue list compiled by David Jongeward and Jessie Pons (last updated in February 2019).

Dīpaṅkara (nos. 1-129)

No.	Provenance	Collection
Aghanistan		
1-6	Shotorak	Kabul Museum
7-8	Shotorak	Musée Guimet
9-10	Tapa-i-Kafariha	Kabul Museum
11	Khol Shams/ Tepe Narenj	Indian Museum
12	Mes Aynak	Kabul Museum
Swat		
13-16	Butkara I	Swat Museum
17-20	Butkara I	Rome MNAO
21	Butkara III	Univ. of Peshawar
22-23	Saidu Sharif	Rome MNAO
24	Katelai	Rome MNAO
25	Barikot	Swat Museum
26	Panr 1	Swat Museum
27	Nawagai	V & A Museum
28	Kani Sapar	Univ. of Peshawar
29	Matkani	Univ. of Peshawar
30	Charg Pati	Univ. of Peshawar
31	Bambolai	Dir Museum
32-33	Chatpat	Dir Museum
34	Nasafa	Dir Museum
35	Probably Swat Valley	Metropolitan Museum of Art
36-37	Probably Swat Valley	Silk Road Institute
Peshawar		
38-42	Loriyan Tangai	Indian Museum
43	Upper Nathu	Chandigarh Museum
44	Thareli	Kyoto Univ.
45-46	Thareli	DOAM Peshawar (SRO)
47	Sikri stūpa	Lahore Museum
48	Sikri	Lahore Museum
49	Sikri	Chandigarh Museum

50	Jamālgaṛhī	Indian Museum
51	Jamālgaṛhī	Peshawar Museum (?)
52	Takht-i-Bāhī (?)	Peshawar Museum
53	Takht-i-Bāhī	British Museum
54	Takht-i-Bāhī	Lost
55	Takht-i-Bāhī	unknown
56	Takht-i-Bāhī	Peshawar Museum
57-59	Sahr-i Bahlol	Peshawar Museum
60	Sahr-i Bahlol	unknown
61-62	Aziz Dheri	Univ. of Peshawar
63	Mekha Sanda	Kyoto Univ.
64-65	Mekha Sanda	DOAM Peshawar (SRO)
66	Shahbazgarhi	Peshawar Museum
67	Ranigat	Storage, Taxila (?)
68	Kalawan	Taxila Museum
69	Charsada (Bala Hisar)	Chandigarh Museum
70	Tordher, Swabi	Peshawar Museum
71	Mian Khan	Indian Museum

Uncertain provenance

72-76	Lahore Museum
77-81	Chandigarh Museum
82-84	Peshawar Museum
85-88	Peshawar DOAM (SRO)
89-90	Indian Museum
91	CSMVS Mumbai
92	Mathura Museum 18.1543
93	Lucknow Museum G 252
94-97	British Museum
98-99	Rome MNAO photo archives
100-5	Berlin MAA
106-7	V& A Museum
108	Ashmolean Museum
109	Scotland National Museum
110	Musée Guimet
111	Art Institute of Chicago Museum
112	Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
113	Miho Museum

114	Matsuoka Museum
115	Glenbow Museum
116	Willard Clark Collection
117	Lewis Shaw collection
118	Private collection, U.S.
119	Private collection, Europe
120-7	Private Collection, Japan
128-9	Warburg Institute

Śyāma jātaka (nos. 130-140)

130	Jamālgaṛhī	British Museum
131	Takht-i-Bāhī	Peshawar Museum
132	Aziz Dheri	DOAM Peshawar
133	Taxila - Dharmarājikā	Taxila Museum
134	Swat Valley - Gumbat	V & A Museum
135	Mian Khan	Unknown
136	Thareli	DOAM Peshawar (SRO)
137	Possibly Swat Valley - Marghazar	Jimmy Bastian Pinto collection (Brazil)
138	Unknown	Naprstkovo Museum, Prague
139	Haḍḍa wall painting (fragment)	Ryukoku Museum
140	Unknown	Japan private collection

Viśvantara/Sudaṣṇa (nos. 141-152)

141	Jamālgaṛhī	British Museum
142-3	Sahr-i Bahlol	Peshawar Museum
144	Thareli	Taxila Museum
145-6	Shotorak	Kabul Museum
147	Haḍḍa wall painting (fragment)	Ryukoku Museum

148	unknown	British Museum
149	unknown	Boston M. Fine Arts
150	Marghazar (?)	Jimmy Bastian Pinto
151-2	unknown	Private collection, Pakistan

Śibi's gift of flesh (nos. 152-156)

153	Mardan district	British Museum
154	unknown	Peshawar Museum (Karachi loan)
155	unknown	Private collection, Peshawar
156	Haḍḍa wall painting	Ryukoku Museum

Śibi's gift of eyes (no. 157)

157	Chakhil-i Ghoundi (Haḍḍa)	Musée Guimet

Eka-/Ṛṣyaśṛṅga jātaka (nos. 158-161)

158	Koi Tangi	Indian Museum
159-160	Private collection, Japan	
161	Private collection, Pakistan	

Maitrakanyaka jātaka (nos. 162-166)

162	Jamālgaṛhī	British Museum 1880.41
163	Sahr-i Bahlol	a. Peshawar Museum 03068
		b. Peshawar Museum 03703
		c. d. Peshawar Museum 03069, 03067
164	Sahr-i Bahlol	Peshawar Museum 02714
165	unknown	Peshawar Museum 02715
166	unknown	Private collection, Japan

Candrakinnara jātaka (nos. 167-168)

167	Jamālgaṛhī	British Museum 1880.39
168	Loriyan Tangai	Indian Museum 5130/ A23243

Vyāghrī jātaka (nos. 169-171)

169	Shotorak	Kabul Museum
170	unknown	Chandigarh 1658
171	unknown	Private collection, Portugal

Ruru jātaka (nos. 172-173)

172	unknown	MNAO Rome 18965
173	unknown	MAA Berlin I60

Hasti/Naga [Indasamānagotta jātaka] (nos. 174-175)

174	Thareli	DOAM Peshawar
175	Hashtnagar	Peshawar Museum 00914 (on loan to Hund Museum)

Candraprabha (nos. 176-177)

176	Marghazar?	Jimmy Bastian Pinto collection, Brazil
177	Jamālgaṛhī	Indian Museum G 60

Amarādevī in Mahoṣadha jātaka ? (no. 178)

178	Sahr-i Bahlol	Peshawar Museum 02716

Ṣaḍḍanta jātaka (nos. 179-180)

179	Karamar	Lahore Museum 1156
180	unknown	Private collection, Japan

Naḷapāna jātaka

181	unknown	Rome MNAO archives 1129

Śaśa jātaka

182	unknown	Private collection, Japan

art, this episode commonly prefaces the events of Śākyamuni's present birth as Siddhārtha, making its position in the iconographic programme of Gandhāran stūpas extraordinary. Since the Bodhisattva makes an aspirational vow (*praṇidhāna*) to be reborn as one who seeks to attain Buddhahood and Dīpaṅkara gives a prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) of his future birth, the extended lifestory of Śākyamuni Buddha essentially begins with this encounter. While other Gandhāran jātakas are typically featured in small panels on architectural

elements such as stair risers leading up to the *stūpa*, the meeting with Dīpaṅkara is often (but not always) integrated into the present lifestory of Śākyamuni. Depending on how narrative elements in 'false gables' are counted, the Dīpaṅkara episode is among the five most widely depicted narratives in Gandhāran art along with Śākyamuni's birth, departure from Kapilavastu, and Parinirvāṇa, easily exceeding representations of Śākyamuni's awakening under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya, first teaching in the deer park at Sarnath, and other pivotal events in Śākyamuni's hagiography.[5] Despite numerous depictions of this episode in the visual corpus of Gandhāran rebirth narratives, the encounter with Dīpaṅkara is not summarized in extant Avadānas or Pūrvayogas in the British Library collection. However, Dīpaṅkara (Divakara) is listed first in a list of the characteristics of fifteen previous Buddhas in a Gāndhārī version of the *Bahubudhaka-sutra* in a scroll in the US Library of Congress (Salomon 2018: 265-93), which Vincent Tournier (2017: 129ff.) identifies as the earliest version of Bahubuddhaka-sūtras incorporated into the *Mahāvastu* and other Buddhist texts. Thus, the genealogy of previous Buddhas essentially begins with Dīpaṅkara, whose meeting with the Bodhisattva was localized in ancient Nagarāhāra (modern Nangarhar in eastern Afghanistan), where there was also a shrine for the relic of the Buddha's begging bowl, according to the accounts of Chinese visitors beginning with Faxian in the early fifth century.[6] By associating this place with Dīpaṅkara, the first in the lineage of the previous Buddhas, and the encounter with the Bodhisattva who aspires and is predicted to be reborn as Śākyamuni, Gandhāran Buddhists stake a strong claim that the extended life-story of the Buddha of the present age begins in their own land.

A version of the Viśvantara (Pāli Vessantara) story is the only 'Jātaka' identified in Gandhāran art which is also tersely summarized as the story of Sudaṣṇa in a set of Gāndhārī Pūrvayogas (Lenz 2003: 157-65; Salomon 2018: 240-45). Visual narrative sequences with a dozen images of the Viśvantara /Sudaṣṇa story in stair-risers from Jamālgarhī (in the British Museum), Sahrī-Bahlol (in the Peshawar Museum), and other sites place this story a distant second after the Dīpaṅkara episode in Gandhāran art. It is not at all surprising that this is the only previous-birth story identifiable in Gandhāran imagery which is also preserved in summary form in extant summaries of Pūrvayogas or Avadānas in the British Library collection, since this narrative is so generally widespread in South and South-East Asian art and literature and is a special case as the last human birth of the Bodhisattva before his rebirth as Siddhārtha in the Pāli Jātaka collection (Appleton and Shaw 2015: II, 507-639). The protagonist's name in the Gāndhārī version, Sudaṣṇa, does not correspond with Sanskrit Viśvantara or Pāli Vessantara, but aligns more closely with Sogdian and other Central Asian versions, as well as with early Chinese transcriptions (Lenz 2003: 158-9), perhaps adding to growing support for the 'Gāndhārī hypothesis' that the most likely source for early Chinese translations of Buddhist texts were Gāndhārī versions rather than Sanskrit, Pāli, or other Middle Indic languages. According to Xuanzang, events connected with this narrative were commemorated at shrines around Pa-lu-sha in the Peshawar basin also visited by Song Yun a century earlier.[7] Between the visits of Faxian and Xuanzang, embedding of this widespread rebirth narrative probably aided in the consolidation of Buddhist sacred geography in Gandhāra, which overlaps with the growth of monasteries and shrines in the Peshawar basin. The localization of famous episodes in this narrative attracted local devotees and long-distance pilgrims. Étienne Lamotte ruefully dismissed this process of generating

---

[5] According to Pons (2011: Appendix 2, 57) the illustration of the Dīpaṅkara Jātaka is the third most widely depicted narrative in Gandhāran art.

[6] Deeg (2005: 247-54) provides a German translation of Faxian's account with commentary on the localization of the meeting with Dīpaṅkara Buddha (§15) and references to further Indian and Chinese textual sources. He points out that Faxian's account emphasizes the gift of lotus flowers rather than the spreading of the hair by the prostrating Bodhisattva, which is the most recognizable iconographic feature of Gandhāran depictions of the episode. Li (2002: 173) provides an English translations of the passage in Faxian (T51, number 2085). Li (1996: 66) gives an English translation of the relevant passage in the account of Xuanzang (T51, number 2087, Fascicle II, 878c). Shinohara (2003) focuses on the localization of the 'contact relic' of Śākyamuni's bowl.

[7] Song Yun's account is translated by Beal (1884: xcvii-xcix, 111-13) and Chavannes (1903: 413ff.); Beal (1884: 111-13) and Li (1996: 79 [T51, number 2087, Fascicle II, 881b]) translate Xuanzang's account. Foucher (1901/1915: 33-38) discussed the omission of these sites from the account of Faxian, although it was visited by Song Yun and relied on Alexander Cunningham's identification of Pa-lu-sha with modern Shahbazgarhi. Elizabeth Errington (1993) proposes to identify this location with Sahrī-Bahlol (the provenance of many Gandhāran sculptures very close to Takht-i Bāhī).

sacred geography by writing: 'Gandhāra was the only one to play the game - somewhat puerile, but profitable to the places of pilgrimage - of the acclimatization of the legends' (1988: 335 [1958: 367]). Nevertheless, the efforts of Gandhāran Buddhists to map the sacralized topography of their own region as the home for many of the Buddha's previous births obviously succeeded.

The survey results confirm that the Śyāma Jātaka is relatively well represented in Gandhāran art, with over ten identifiable depictions. Multiple pieces belong to narrative sequences from Jamālgarhī, Taxila-Dharmarājikā, and recent excavations at Aziz Dheri. The story of Śyāma, the son of blind ascetic parents who was mortally wounded by a king while hunting but revived by Indra, is one of the longer Pāli Jātakas in the Mahānipāta (Appleton and Shaw 2015: I, 117-144). Narrative elements of the Śyāma Jātaka story overlap with Daśaratha's accidental killing of a young ascetic in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Raghuvaṃśa*, but in Buddhist versions the king is not cursed by the ascetic parents or by Śyāma, but instead Śyāma's virtues of loving-kindness, forbearance, and filial piety are extolled by his parents, who call upon the gods to revive him. Although there is no extant Gāndhārī Avadāna or Pūrvayoga of the Śyāma story, based on iconographical analysis Dieter Schlingloff (1987: 70) argues that the content of Gandhāran reliefs is more closely connected to a version in the *Mulasarvāstivādin Vinaya* than to those transmitted in the Pāli Jātaka or Buddhist Sanskrit Jātakas and Avadānas in the *Mahāvastu*, *Jātakamālā*, or the *Bodhisattvāvadāna-Kalpalatā*. According to Xuanzang's account, there was:

> ... a stūpa built at the spot where Śyāmaka Bodhisattva (formerly transcribed as Shanmo Bodhisattva) gathered fruits to offer to his blind parents in fulfilment of his filial duty and met the king who was hunting and who accidentally hit him with a poisoned arrow. His mind of sincerity moved Indra, who dressed his wound with medicine, and his virtuous deed inspired the gods, who restored him to life very soon (Li 1996: 78).

Foucher (1901/1915: 46; 1905: 279-83, fig. 143) proposed to identify this *stūpa* with archaeological remains located at Periaṇo Ḍheri north of Chārsada on an important route between the Gandhāran capitol of Puṣkalāvatī and the Swat valley.

The jātaka of Ekaśṛṅga ('one-horn/unicorn')/Ṛśyaśṛṅga ('deer-horn'), the offspring of a female antelope which accidentally consumed the semen of an ascetic living in a forest hermitage in the mountains, is also depicted in Gandhāran imagery and localized by Xuanzang in the mountain passes between the Peshawar basin and the Swat valley (Foucher 1919: 20-23). While this visual narrative is not as widely depicted in Gandhāran art as the stories of Dīpaṅkara's encounter, Viśvantara, or Śyāma, interesting images from Koï Tangi (in the Indian Museum) and in private collections, as well as a seal (Falk 2008; 2013) demonstrate transmission of various motifs in the story. There is not an extant Gāndhārī version of the story, but accounts and references in Sanskrit, Pāli, Chinese, Tibetan, Tocharian, and even an early Christian bestiary have been the subject of extensive literary studies (Lüders 1940; Schlingloff 1973; 1987). The motif of the boy with one horn suckling from his antelope mother which appears in Gandhāran images is included in the version of this narrative in the *Mahāvastu*, while other versions elaborate upon the seduction of the young ascetic by either a courtesan or king's daughter, which is depicted in Buddhist art at Bharhut and Mathura. According to Xuanzang, this story of the 'Ṛṣi Unicorn' was localized to the north-west of where episodes connected with the Viśvantara previous-birth narrative were believed to have taken place:

> On the south side of the mountain there was a monastery, in which lived a few monks who studied Mahāyāna teachings. The stūpa beside it was built by King Aśoka at the place where the ṛṣi Unicorn once lived. This ṛṣi was ensnared by a lustful woman and lost his supernatural powers. The lustful woman then rode on his shoulders and returned to the city (Li 1996: 79).

According to Foucher (1901/1915: 45-6), this monastery and *stūpa* may be located near Shahkot Pass between Peshawar basin and Swat valley. Perhaps artisan storytellers and their patrons drew upon a 'logic of locality'

by linking jātakas with ascetic characters to hilltop shrines on mountainous passageways between Peshawar plains and Swat valley (Foucher's 'septentrionale' monasteries). Their selective appropriation of previous-birth stories probably helped to consolidate a ritualized topography as Buddhist institutional presence expanded from the Peshawar basin to the range of hills surrounding Gandhāra with interregional linkages to Swat (Neelis 2011: 235-9).

Other previous-birth narratives of bodily self-sacrifice (*dehadāna*) are depicted in Gandhāran visual culture and emplaced in the sacralized landscape of the north-western frontiers. King Śibi's bodily offerings of a piece of his own flesh to save a pigeon (*kapota*) from a hawk is depicted in Gandhāran sculptures, Upper Indus petroglyphs at Shatial and Thalpan (Fussman 1994b; Fussman & König 1997: 178-9; Bandini-König 2003: 118-122, pl. XXIIb; Thewalt 1983: 625-8), and a rare painting from Haḍḍa (Zin 2013: fig. 3), while the gift of his eyes can be identified in a stucco relief on stair-risers at Chakhil-i Ghoundi in Haḍḍa. Fifth and sixth century accounts of Faxian and Song Yun link the story of King Śibi's flesh offering to the region between Swat and Gandhāra (Beal 1884: cvi-cvii; Deeg 2005: 120-1, 226-8; Li 2002: 169-70).[8] In the sixth and seventh century, Song Yun and Xuanzang tie the jātaka of King Śibi's gift of his eyes to a blind Brahmin to *stūpas* near the Gandhāran capital of Puṣkalāvatī (Beal 1884: ciii, 110; Deeg 2005: 123, 228-9; Li 1996: 78). The Vyāghrī Jātaka, in which a Bodhisattva (an ascetic in Āryaśūra's *Jātakamāla*; a prince in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra*) sacrifices himself to feed a hungry tigress and her cubs, is only found in a few fragments of Gandhāran sculptures (including the pedestal of a Dīpaṅkara Jātaka image from Shotorak in eastern Afghanistan) and in a petroglyph at Chilas Bridge (Bandini-König 2003: 118-122; Thewalt 1983). Based on the itineraries of Faxian and Song Yun (Beal 1884: xcii, xcvi-xcvii; Chavannes 1903: 411-2; Deeg 2005: 230-1; Li 2002: 170), various localizations in the Swat valley and at Manikyala Stūpa to the east of modern Islamabad have been proposed (Foucher 1901/1915: 25, n. 3; Zwalf 1996: 55). The Avadāna of Candraprabha's head offering localized in Taxila in Faxian's account (Li 2002: 170) may also be identified in Gandhāran art, although the interpretation of other scenes with decapitated heads have previously been interpreted as the Amarādevī episode of the Mahoṣadha Jātaka story cycle. As Max Deeg (2005: 121-2) observes that Chinese accounts of 'Four Great Stūpas' associated with the two jātakas of King Śibi's gifts of his flesh and eyes, the Vyāghrī Jātaka, and the Avadāna of Candraprabha's head offering reflect an effort to transpose a parallel sacred geography to the four great events of Śākyamuni Buddha's birth, awakening, first teaching, and parinirvāṇa in the Buddhist heartland of northern India.

These were not the only places where these jātakas were localized, and there are other rebirth narratives reported to have been localized in Gandhāra, Swat, Taxila, and neighbouring areas of the north-western borderlands by Chinese pilgrims which are apparently not included in the repertoire of Gandhāran art.[9] Seven jātakas identified in the visual culture of Gandhāra are not known to have been localized in north-western geographical settings, according to Chinese accounts:

Maitrakanyaka
Candrakinnara
Ruru
Hastin/Nāga (Pāli: Indasamānagotta)
Naḷapāna (*Mahāvastu*: Vānara)
Ṣaḍdanta
Śaśa (uncertain)

---

[8] Foucher (1901/1915: 25, n. 3) refers to the following localizations proposed by Aurel Stein: Śibi's gift of flesh at Girarai; Śibi's gift of eyes at Puṣkalāvatī. Deeg points out that the phonetic correspondence of Chinese Suheduo with Sanskrit Suvastu is problematic.
[9] Lamotte 1958: 356-7/1988: 334-5 and Zwalf 1996: 54-55 refer to the following stories reported by Xuanzang, which are not attested in Gandhāran art although they are localized in the Northwest: Kṣāntivādin in Maṅgalapura (Mingora) in Swat, Sarvada or Sarvaṃdada further to the south, a young Brahmin falls from a tree to learn a Dharma verse near Mt. Ilam in Swat, Dharmatrāta/Dharmarakta transcribes texts with his own ink as blood at Gumbatai in Buner, King Maitribala feeds five yakṣas at Rohitaka, and the story of a Bodhisattva Nāga near Bamiyan.

Among these seven without attested geographical associations in 'Greater Gandhāra', with the exception of four narrative sequences of the Maitrakanyaka Jātaka, the others do not seem to have been widely represented, with only one or two images each. Five of the seven are narratives about previous births as animals (deer, monkey, six-tusked elephant, and perhaps rabbit) or involve an animal as the main figure (a young elephant which destroys an ascetic's hut in the Hastin/Nāga jātaka). Patterns of localization and geographical emplacement of previous-birth stories belonging to the Gandhāran visual repertoire and attested in Chinese visitors' accounts raise more questions about selection and domestication of Avadānas and Pūrvayogas in Gāndhārī manuscripts.

Narratives of past and present births in Gāndhārī literary culture

Publications of recently-discovered Gāndhārī manuscript collections over the last two decades provide insights into an early period of regional literary production in Gandhāra between the first century BC and third century AD. Among the texts written on birch-bark scrolls of the British Library collection, original compositions of terse Avadāna and Pūrvayoga narrative summaries written as secondary texts by two specialist scribal storytellers deviate from the 'standard avadāna package' (Lenz 2010) of other Buddhist literary compilations of rebirth narratives, and seem to belong to an early formative stage in the development of these genres. References to local and regional toponyms, such as Taxila and Puṣkalāvati, as well as personal names, titles, and ethnonyms of historically attested figures from first century Gandhāra reflect emplacement of these stories in the hybrid cultural milieu of the borderland environment (Neelis 2008; 2011: 253-5). Avadānas and pūrvayoga narratives localized in north-western geographical, political, settings belong to what might be considered a 'homegrown strand' of storytelling, which is definitely more distinctive to these narrative genres than other types of extant Gāndhārī literature. On the other hand, stories about well-known characters from the time of Śākyamuni Buddha or Aśoka imported or 'transplanted' from the Māghadhan Buddhist heartland tend to be more likely identifiable with other Buddhist literary versions of the narratives. In innovating and adapting Avadānas, Pūrvayogas, and other narratives to the distinctive Gandhāran cultural milieu, scribes and artisans had to resolve tensions between localization and maintaining fidelity to recognizable versions of the stories. Hagiographic stories of Śākyamuni's present birth were certainly more widespread in Gandhāran visual and literary cultures, but translocating the events of his own lifetime outside of his homeland in ancient Magadha and Kosala was difficult due to chronological and geographical constraints. Koichi Shinohara (2003: 90ff.) identifies three narrative strategies for constructing Buddhist sacred places outside of the hagiographic homeland of Śākyamuni:

1. Linking previous Buddhas and past lives of the Buddha, as in some Gandhāran jātakas, including the encounter with the previous Buddha Dīpaṅkara, to particular locations;
2. Worshipping at shrines for moveable objects used by the Buddha, such as the 'contact relic' (*paribhogika dhātu*) of his begging bowl (Shinohara's specific focus);
3. Converting local autochthonous Nāga and Yakṣa deities whose stories are embedded in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* (Lamotte 1958: 752-3 / 1988: 679, n. 67; Przyluski 1914).[10]

While this contribution to the Gandhāran Connections workshop on the Geography of Gandhāran Art has focused on the first of these strategies, the scope for examining the connection between other types of Gandhāran visual and literary narratives and the populating of the landscape with stories that connect the 'Second Holy Land' to the hagiographic homeland of the present lifetime of Śākyamuni Buddha can be broadened.

---

[10] The expansion of sacred geography to include sites of the Buddha's apocryphal Dharma conquest of the Northwest with Vajrapāṇi is very well attested in the accounts of Chinese visitors to shrines in Gandhāra and Uḍḍiyāna (Swat).

Provisional concluding points

A comprehensive publication of results of collaborative research between Gandhāran art historians and Gāndhārī textualists will elaborate upon the provisional findings presented at the Gandhāra Connections workshop on the Geography of Gandhāran Art in March 2018. The presentation at the workshop was intended to bring renewed attention to the significance of Buddhist rebirth narratives in Gandhāran Buddhist images and texts. In addition to expanding the corpus by proposing new identifications of jātakas not previously known in Gandhāran art, such as the Naḷapāna and Indasamānagotta (*hastin/nāga* story of the young elephant who destroys the ascetic's hut),[11] the research reveals diverging patterns of selection and localization of rebirth narratives in visual and literary media. Among more than 180 images of around fifteen jātakas depicted in Gandhāran art, only the ubiquitous Viśvantara (Pāli Vessantara) Jātaka is summarized as the story of Sudaṣṇa in a series of Pūrvayogas which belong to the corpus of 58 Avadānas and Pūrvayogas in the British Library collection of Gāndhārī manuscripts. Artisans and scribes employed various techniques to 'domesticate' narratives in local and regional Gandhāran contexts.[12]

The focus on emplacement of stories in the sacralized geography of Greater Gandhāra is a useful lens for examining the significance of Buddhist birth stories for regional practices and pan-Buddhist pilgrimages attested in Chinese travel records. However, by taking another look at the localization or 'acclimatization' of legends in written and visual media, I am not arguing that narrative locativization is necessarily the only or most important interpretive framework.[13] The aim of this very brief and provisional contribution to the proceedings of the workshop is merely to suggest that asking questions about where narrative episodes were believed to have taken place opens up other interesting questions about why these particular rebirth stories were selectively appropriated for representation and elaboration by artisans and scribes, how they may have circulated in storytelling networks, and what Gandhāran Buddhists did to enact and perform their own stories.

References

Appleton N. and Shaw S. trans. 2015. *The Ten Great Birth Stories of the Buddha: The Mahānipāta of the Jātakatthavaṇṇanā.* 2 vols. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

Bandini-König D. 2003. *Die Felsbildstation Thalpan.* Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 6. Mainz: P. von Zabern.

Beal S. trans. 1884. *Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World.* London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner.

Chavannes É. 1903. Voyage de Song Yun dans l'Udyana et le Gandhara (518-522 p.C). *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 3: 379-440.

Deeg M. 2005. *Das Gaoseng-Faxian-Zhuan als religionsgeschichtliche Quelle: der älteste Bericht eines chinesischen buddhistischen Pilgermönchs über seine Reise nach Indien mit Übersetzung des Textes.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Errington E. 1993. In search of Pa-lu-sha, a city of the central Gandhara plain. *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 7: 55-66.

---

[11] Identifications by David Jongeward in consultation with Jessie Pons and Monika Zin are not discussed here, but will be elaborated upon in a catalogue publication. Other identifications proposed by Nakao Odani (2008) will be discussed in that publication.

[12] The concept of literary domestication defined by Todd Lewis as 'the dialectical process by which a religious tradition is adapted to a region's or ethnic group's socio-economic and cultural life' (2015: 233) for application to Newar Buddhist Avadānas and Jātakas in the Kathmandu Valley does not entail a pejorative sense of compromising narrative integrity by obscuring an original meaning or true location of episodes in the Buddha's past and present lives.

[13] Locativizing tendencies in the history of religions elucidated by Jonathan Z. Smith (1978; 1987; 2004) have been criticized by Ronald Grimes (1999).

Falk H. 2008. Two New Buddhist Kharoṣṭhī Seals from Gandhāra. *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 12: 19-24 [Reprint in *Hariśyenalekhapañcāśikā: Fifty selected papers on Indian Epigraphy and Chronology*, ed. Britta Schneider and Ingo Strauch. Bremen: Hempen, 2013, 160-165].

Foucher A. 1901/1915. Notes sur la géographie ancienne du Gandhâra. *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 1: 322-369. Translated by Harold Hargreaves, 1915. *Notes on the Ancient Geography of Gandhāra: A commentary on a chapter of Hiuan Tsang.* Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India [reprint, Lahore: Frontier Post Historical Reprint Series].

Foucher A. 1905-1951. *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhâra; étude sur les origines de l'influence classique dans l'art bouddhique de l'Inde et de l'Extrême-Orient.* 3 vols. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.

Foucher A. 1919. Les représentations de Jâtaka dans l'art bouddhiques. *Mémoires concernant l'Asie Orientale* 3: 1-52.

Fussman G. 1994a. *Upāya-kauśalya*: L'implantation du bouddhisme au Gandhāra. Pages 17-51 in F. Fumimasa and G. Fussman (eds) *Bouddhisme et cultures locales: Quelques cas de réciproques adaptations.* Etudes thématiques 2. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient [Reprint in *Choix d'articles*, ed. Denise Matringe, Éric Ollivier and Isabelle Szelagowski. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2014, 335-370].

Fussman G. 1994b. Une peinture sur pierre: Le triptyque au stūpa de Shatial. Pages 1-55 in Gérard Fussman and Karl Jettmar (eds) *Antiquities of Northern Pakistan*, vol. 3. Mainz: P. von Zabern.

Fussman G. and König D. 1997. *Die Felsbildstation Shatial.* Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 2. Mainz: P. von Zabern.

Grimes R. 1999. Jonathan Z. Smith's Theory of Ritual Space. *Religion* 29: 261-273.

Lamotte E. 1958/1988. *Histoire du bouddhisme indien: des origins à l'ére Śaka.* Bibliothèque du Muséon, 43. Louvain: Universite de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste. Translated by Sara Webb-Boin, 1988. *History of Indian Buddhism: From the origins to the Śaka era.* Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain, Institut orientaliste.

Lenz T. 2003. *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada and a Collection of Previous-birth Stories: British Library Kharoṣṭhī fragments 16 + 25.* Gandhāran Buddhist Texts 3. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Lenz T. 2010. *Gandhāran Avadānas: British Library Kharoṣṭhī fragments 1-3 and 21 and supplementary fragments A-C.* Gandhāran Buddhist Texts 6. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Lewis T. 2015. Avadānas and Jātakas in the Newar Tradition of the Kathmandu Valley: Ritual Performances of Mahāyāna Buddhist Narratives. *Religion Compass* 9/8: 233-253.

Li R. trans. 1996. *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions.* Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research.

Li R. 2002. Journey of the Eminent Monk Faxian. Pages 157-214 in *Lives of Great Monks and Nuns.* Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.

Lüders H. 1940. Die Sage von Ṛṣyaśṛṅga. Pages 1-47 in H. Lüders *Philologica Indica.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Monius A. 2001. *Imagining a Place for Buddhism: Literary Culture and Religious Community in Tamil-Speaking South India.* Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press.

Neelis J. 2008. Historical and Geographical Contexts for Avadānas in Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts. Pages 151-167 in R. Gombrich and C. A. Scherrer-Schaub (eds) *Buddhist Studies.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Neelis J. 2011. *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia.* Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Neelis J. 2014. Literary and Visual Narratives in Gandhāran Buddhist Manuscripts and Material Cultures: Localization of Jātakas, Avadānas and Previous-Birth Stories. Pages 252-264 in B. Fleming and R. Mann (eds) *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object.* London; New York: Routledge.

Odani N. 2008. *Jātakas* Represented in Gandhāra Art. Pages 297-304 in E. Raven (ed.) *South Asian Archaeology 1999: Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists.* Gröningen: Egbert Forsten.

Pons J. 2011. *Inventaire et étude systématique des sites et des sculptures bouddhiques du Gandhāra: ateliers, centres de production.* Paris: Université Paris-Sorbonne PhD Dissertation.

Przyluski J. 1914. Le nord-ouest de l'Inde dans le Vinaya des Mūla-Sarvāstivāda et lest textes apparentes. *Journal Asiatique* 11/4: 493-568.

Salomon R. 2018. *The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra: An Introduction with Selected Translations.* Somerville, MA: Wisdom.

Schlingloff D. 1973. The Unicorn, Origins and Migration of an Indian Legend. Pages 294-307 in F.M. Müller, *German Scholars on India.* Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, vol. 1: 294-307 [reprint in *Studies in the Ajanta paintings: Identifications and interpretations.* Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1987, 157-166].

Schlingloff D. 1987. The Development of the Śyāma Jātaka. Pages 64-72 in D. Schlingloff, *Studies in the Ajanta paintings: Identifications and interpretations.* Delhi: Ajanta Publications.

Shinohara K. 2003. The Story of the Buddha's Begging Bowl: Imagining Biography and Sacred Places. Pages 68-107 in P. Granoff and K. Shinohara (eds) *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Smith J.Z. 1978. *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions.* Leiden: Brill.

Smith J.Z . 1987. *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual.* Chicago / London: University of Chicago.

Smith J.Z. 2004. *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religions.* Chicago / London: University of Chicago.

Thewalt V. 1983. Jātaka-Darstellungen bei Chilas und Shatial am Indus. Pages 622-634 in P. Snoy (ed.) *Ethnologie und Geschichte: Festschrift für Karl Jettmar*, ed.. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner.

Tournier V. 2017. *La formation du Mahāvastu et la mise en place des conceptions relatives à la carrière du bodhisattva.* Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.

Zin M. 2013. Buddhist Narrative Depictions in Āndhra, Gandhāra and Kucha – Similarities and Differences that Favour a Theory about a 'Lost Gandhāran School of Paintings'. Pages 35-66 in A. Miyaji (ed.) *Buddhism and Art in Gandhāra and Kucha.* Kyoto: Ryukoku Museum.

Zwalf W. 1996. *A Catalogue of the Gandhāra Sculpture in the British Museum.* 2 vols. London: British Museum.