The transmission of Dionysiac imagery to Gandhāran Buddhist art

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Gandhāran 'Atlas' figure in schist; c. second century AD. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, inv. M.71.73.136 (Photo: LACMA Public Domain image.)

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Introductory remarks

Within the corpus of Gandhāran sculpture, there are several relief panels depicting so-called Dionysiac or Bacchanalian scenes.[1] These show scenes of banqueting, men and women fraternizing, amorous couples, music performances, and wine-making. Such images were undoubtedly influenced both iconographically and stylistically by Greek and Roman art.

In this paper, I shall address this Gandhāran Dionysiac imagery and attempt to clarify how such a non-Buddhist imagery was transmitted from the Roman Empire to Gandhāra. First, I shall explain typical Dionysiac images in Gandhāran relief panels; second, I shall survey their depiction in Greek and Roman art; and third, I shall make a comparison of the two corpora, with the purpose of clarifying some peculiar aspects of Gandhāran Dionysiac imagery. Finally, I shall attempt to answer two questions raised by Peter Stewart in his paper in the present volume: how artistic ideas were transmitted, and whether this occurred through the movement of objects or of people.

Dionysiac or Bacchanalian images from Gandhāra

In this section I will enumerate and briefly survey five relief panels depicting Dionysos and his followers, the so-called *thiasos* (Figures 1-5). For simplicity I use the name 'Dionysos' provisionally in describing the Gandhāran examples for, as we shall see, the Graeco-Roman tradition was transformed selectively in its new Buddhist context.

Figure 1. To the viewer's right on this relief panel a banquet scene is represented, probably celebrating the marriage of Dionysos and Ariadne. Dionysos has a cantharus cup in his right hand and is seated with his bride Ariadne on his knee. Her right hand is placed on the god's shoulder. He is surrounded by two women, probably maenads, each holding a wine-cup or plate. A man is standing behind him. To the viewer's left, a man shoulders a leather wine skin while another man scoops up the wine from that bag in both hands. Both wear an

Figure 1. Gandhāran banquet scene. H. 29.2 cm, c. second to third century AD. Tokyo National Museum, inv. TC-740. (Photo: after Tokyo National Museum et al. 2003: fig. 129.)

[1] I express my deepest gratitude to Dr Peter Stewart for having kindly invited me to the workshop, 'The Global Connections of Gandhāran Art', Oxford, 18th-19th March 2019.

Figure 2. Gandhāran banquet scene. H. 19.2 cm, c. second to third century AD. Tokyo National Museum, inv. TC-705. (Photo: Integrated Collections Database of the National Museums, Japan <https://colbase.nich.go.jp>.)

exomis, the Greek costume for lower-class males. Behind his back stands a woman, probably a maenad. All the men depicted on this relief panel are bearded and all wear Greek- or Roman-style costume. Unfortunately, all the heads of Dionysos as well as the standing men and women (or maenads) are not original, having broken away and been subsequently restored. During the process of restoration, Dionysos was mistakenly bearded, since his face must have been youthful and without a beard when he married Ariadne.[2]

Figure 2. On this relief panel, all the figures are depicted dancing or playing music at a banquet. To the viewer's left, a drunken Dionysos or Silenus is supported on both sides by a bearded man (likely not a satyr) and a woman (supposedly a maenad). 'Dionysos' is bearded and has a tendril of grape-vine tied around his head. To the viewer's right, a female, probably a maenad, is playing a woodwind instrument and a male figure wearing Indian costume is dancing and beating a drum. A grape-vine is featured on both sides of this relief panel, symbolizing Dionysos.

Figure 3. Set between a pair of leonine feet is an example of a Dionysiac scene that is both typical and remarkable. It is composed of two pairs of couples facing one another (Ingholt 1957: 157, fig. 398). The shape of this panel, designated by W. Zwalf as a 'stair panel' modified by a narrow inward curve, is unique and reminds us of the *siṃhāsana* (lion-throne) of the seated Buddha and bodhisattva (Zwalf 1996: vol. 1, 299). To the viewer's left, a maenad wearing a shawl and a crossed marriage-belt (*cestus*) is sitting with a bald and bearded man, probably Silenus. He wears a wreath of vine leaves around his head and is offering to his female partner a drink of wine from a shallow bowl. To his left, a beardless and bare-chested young man is also sitting with the other maenad who is touching his shoulder with her right hand. This young man is supposedly Dionysos but I am not of the firm conviction that this identification is accurate owing to the fact that the face of the man is broken.

Figure 4. This relief panel depicts two pairs of male and female figures holding a banquet under a grape-vine symbolizing Dionysos. A bearded male figure wearing a topknot together with a female figure

[2] Cf. the marriage of Dionysos and Ariadne on the bronze gilt krater from Derveni, *c.* 330 BC, Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki.

Figure 3. Gandhāran Dionysiac scene. H. 24 cm, c. second to third century AD. Lahore Museum, inv. 1914. (Photo: after Tokyo National Museum et al. 2002: fig. 17.)

supports a *cantharus* cup. The male figure is attempting to make her drink the wine. On the left of them, another bearded man wearing a turban is holding a tendril of vine in his left hand and in his right a cup probably filled with wine. Next to him stands a female figure. She has a jug in her right hand and appears to be talking to him.

Figure 4. Gandhāran banquet scene. H. 40.5 cm, c. second to third century AD. Tokyo National Museum, inv. Tc-626. (Photo: author.)

Figure 5. In the central zone of this vertical relief panel, five medallions formed by two symmetrical intertwining vines are depicted. Tendrils, leaves and grapes grow out from the branches of the vine-scroll, forming these medallions' enclosing images. In the top medallion we can see a seated man drinking wine from a rhyton held in his right hand. Pictured in the next medallion below is an amorous couple, whose iconographic importance resides in that the male figure is touching the female's breast. In the third medallion from the top, a man can be observed carrying a basket of grapes on his back. This male figure holds a bunch of grapes, checking whether it is appropriate to harvest the grapes or not. The medallion below this encloses a male figure with a child on his shoulders trampling grapes in order to extract juice from them. In the lowest medallion an archer is shown. This archer aims an arrow at some wild animal that is not depicted.

Figure 5. Gandhāran Dionysiac relief with peopled vine-scroll. H. 124 cm, c. second to third century AD. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Charles Amos Cummings Fund 39.36. (Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

According to these five examples of Gandhāran Dionysiac imagery, the *dramatis personae* are Dionysos, Silenus, Pan, a maenad, a lion or panther, and vine that is symbolic of Dionysos.[3] These characters are engaged in making and drinking wine, playing music, dancing, and love-making or fraternizing. Most figures are more or less borrowed from or modelled after Dionysos and his *thiasos*; but some male figures do not belong to the *thiasos.* Most participants wear Greek or Roman costume. These motifs seem to lack sacred as well as divine significance and rather stress sensual pleasures. What is more, it must be emphasized that the god Dionysos himself appears but rarely in Gandhāran Dionysiac scenes. And even where Dionysos is depicted, it is not as a cultic object but simply as one character in the drama. Generally speaking, Gandhāran Dionysiac scenes are indifferent to the profound religious significance or distinguishing traits of the Dionysiac cult and his mysterious rituals.

Dionysiac or Bacchanalian imagery in Greek and Roman art

Dionysiac imagery in Greek and Roman art is precisely classified in the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (LIMC 1986: vol. 1, 420-423, 541-542).[4] This repository has collated many figurative motifs pertaining to Dionysos/Bacchus. For the purposes of this paper I shall simply draw attention to some of the most frequent relevant themes in imagery that portrays Dionysiac myth, cult, and ritual. Specific examples will be compared briefly in the next section.

[3] In addition to these examples, there are two reliefs in a Japanese private collection depicting Dionysos and *thiasos*. Their provenances are unknown. One of them represents a fraternizing couple under an Indian arch, the other features wine making, fraternizing, drinking wine scenes. Cf. Tokyo National Museum et al. 2003: fig. 131; Tanabe 2006: fig. 78.

[4] Many of the images and basic information from LIMC are also available on the Digital LIMC Database <weblimc.org>.

Figure 6. Table support with Dionysos and Satyr, c. 170-180 AD. Athens, National Archaeological Museum (Photo: author, by permission).

1. The independent statue or image of Dionysos and his thiasos

The naked and youthful Dionysos is frequently represented as an independent figure, for example in Roman imperial sculpture. A typical scheme shows the god standing, holding the staff known as the *thyrsos* in his left hand, with a wine jug held in the right. A wreath of ivy and grapes adorns his long hair. A characteristic example of this type is preserved in the Palazzo Altemps in Rome – a second-century work found on the Gianicolo Hill (Museo Nazionale Romano, inv. 60920; Paribeni 1932: no. 271).

The god is frequently accompanied by a panther in images of this kind, and on occasion he is shown riding on the animal's back. A famous example is provided by the late fourth-century BC pebble mosaic from Pella (now in Pella Archaeological Museum; Siganidou & Lilimbaki-Akamati 2008: 64, fig. 45). Other creatures and Dionysiac companions may surround the otherwise isolated figure of the deity. For example, a sculpted table support of around the 170s AD in Athens shows a nude Dionysos holding a rhyton ending in a panther *protome*. Next to him, the goat-footed god Pan holds a stick or weapon known as a *lagobolon*. A young satyr climbs up a vine and plucks grapes with his right hand (Figure 6).

2. Myths of Dionysos

Specific mythological narratives centred on Dionysos are represented in many classical works of art, notably in the rich repertoire of figure-decorated pottery made in Athens and South Italy between the sixth and fourth centuries BC. The Dionysiac retinue is represented taking part in specific mythological scenes. For example, in the scene of the birth of Dionysos on a late fifth-century BC Apulian red-figure krater in Taranto, the infant Dionysos emerges from the right thigh of Zeus and is received by an attendant nymph. Olympian deities, the *thiasos*, Pan, and Silenus surround them (Taranto, Museo Nationale Archeologico, inv. IG. 8264; Dell'Aglio & Zingariello. 2015: 47; Stoye 2008: figs. 10-11).

A more unusual scene is represented on a famous Attic black-figure cup in Munich, made by Exekias around 530 BC. A bearded Dionysos wearing an ivy wreath sails his ship or boat. A vine is growing up the mast. Encircling his ship are seven swimming dolphins, probably denoting his encounter with Tyrrhenian (Etruscan) pirates, whom Dionysos transformed into dolphins. The theme of the scene is his bringing the gift of the vine and wine-making from Naxos to Athens, also included in the Hesiodic

Hymn to Dionysos, of uncertain date, but possibly originating as early as the Archaic Greek period, the sixth century BC (Zanker & Ewald 2012: 143, pl. 131; Boardman 2014: 8; Knauß 2017: 119).

3. Harvesting grapes, wine-making, and Dionysos in a vineyard

Let us now look at three sample representations of the god in connection to the vintage and wine-making.

Figure 7. Dionysos is depicted in a vineyard sitting on a cross-legged chair (*sella curulis*) while drinking wine from his distinctive high-handled cup, the cantharus, and tended to by satyrs harvesting grapes. The drinking Dionysos and wine-making satyrs are common themes in Greek vase-paintings but here the painter combines various elements, creating a lively pattern of baskets, twisting vines, and ripe and juicy grapes.

Figure 8. To the viewer's right a satyr is carrying a basket filled with grapes to be brought to the wine press. Another satyr stands in this basket set on two wine tubs. Behind them stands a bearded Dionysos, watching their wine making. The god has a *cantharus* in his left hand. Behind Dionysos, a satyr shoulders a basket filled with grapes.

Figure 7. Dionysos and satyrs harvesting grapes. Attic black-figure amphora, c. 540-530 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 63.952 (Henry Lillie Pierce Residuary Fund and Francis Bartlett Donation of 1900). (Photo: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

Figure 9. This beautifully curved sarcophagus is known as the Farnese Sarcophagus.[5] Satyrs and maenads grace its sides, the latter harvesting grapes while the former interrupt their work by flirtatiously pulling at their garments and exchanging amorous glances with them.

Figure 8. Dionysos and Satyrs making wine. Attic red-figure krater, 450-440 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum (Photo: author, by permission).

[5] P.R. Crowley has approached this sarcophagus from many angles. According to him the sarcophagus is evidently less interested in the mythological protagonists as it is in the supporting cast of the *thiasos* and Dionysos, who are conspicuously absent (Crowley 2018: 42).

Figure 9. Harvesting grapes. The Farnese Sarcophagus, AD 225. Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. (Photo: courtesy of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.)

Sarcophagi housed in the Capitoline Museum and the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki also adopt a similar Dionysiac vision of the grape harvest as its theme (Nielsen 2018: 34-35, 61). Bacchanalian revelry was a popular theme in ancient Roman sarcophagi reliefs.

4. Procession and Triumph of Dionysos and Satyr

The procession of the god and his retinue was a frequent and enduring subject of Dionysiac imagery, whose tradition has been explored by Boardman (Boardman 2014). Two representative images from the Roman Imperial period are reproduced here as examples.

Figure 10. This extremely well-preserved Roman marble sarcophagus depicts Dionysos seated on a panther in the centre, but he is somewhat overshadowed by four large standing figures who represent the Four Seasons from left to right: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn. These figures are shown as sturdy youths. Around these five central figures other Bacchic figures and cultic objects are featured, all carved on a smaller scale. On the rounded ends of the sarcophagus are two other groups of large

Figure 10. Dionysos seated on a Panther with his thiasos, c. AD 260-270. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 55.11.5. (Photo: Museum, CC0 licence.)

Figure 11. The Triumph of Dionysos on the Pashley Sarcophagus, from Crete, c. 130s-140s AD. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. (Photo: Fitzwilliam Museum.)

figures, similarly intermingled with lesser ones. On the left end, Mother Earth is portrayed reclining on the ground, accompanied by a satyr and a youth bearing fruit. On the right end, a bearded male figure, probably to be identified with the personification of a river-god, reclines in front of two winged youths, perhaps representing two additional seasons. One of them is probably drinking wine.

Figure 11. The main frieze of this sarcophagus shows Dionysos returning from the East in triumph with his traditional entourage of satyrs and maenads. The god's chariot is drawn by centaurs. Pan dances ahead and an elephant leads their way. Silenus lurches drunkenly across the centre of the scene. On the small frieze above, satyrs and maenads recline on couches, drinking and demanding wine. These Dionysiac scenes are suitable subjects for the decoration of a sarcophagus because elements of the myth and worship of Dionysos are focused on rebirth.

Figure 12. Stone pilaster. Basilica, Leptis Magna. (Photo: Squarciapino 1974: tav. LXV-III 1-4.)

5. The peopled vine-scroll

Finally let us look at an example of the so-called peopled vine-scroll, extensively represented here by the Basilica in Leptis Magna (Figure 12).[6] On the bottom of this pilaster stands a krater ornamented with vine leaves and ivy. From its mouth two vines grow up and intertwine symmetrically to form seven medallions. In the first, lowest medallion on the krater, Dionysos rides a panther. In the next medallion a satyr holds a vine-leaf in his left hand. In the third medallion a dancing maenad is rendered. The fourth medallion shows Silenus wearing a tunic covered with wool or animal skin, bearing a stick in his left hand and raising his right. In the fifth medallion a maenad is depicted, but her head is broken away. In the sixth medallion Pan is represented with hind legs and wearing a cloth over the upper body. The last or top medallion is decorated with an Eros picking up grapes.

Among the corpus of Dionysiac imagery in Greek and Roman art, there are a great number and variety of motifs. Most of them are cultic objects clearly related to the adoration of Dionysos. Some of them are something like emblems indicative of Dionysiac mysteries; they tell us the birth and life stories of this god, presenting Dionysos as the deity of vines and wine. As a rule, Greek and Roman Dionysiac imagery is sacred and divine, showing a profound religious significance. Although small in number, there are, needless to say, secular and sensual images among the corpus of Greek and Roman Dionysiac imagery. But in general, the Greek and Roman Dionysiac imagery seems to be religious in motivation.

Comparison between Gandhāran art and Greek and Roman art

In this section I will compare the Dionysiac imagery depicted on Gandhāran sculpture with that of Greek and Roman art.

First, as we have seen, amongst the Greek and Roman repertory there are independent and free-standing sculptures of Dionysos (Figure 6) or of the god accompanied by a *thiasos*. However, the independent and freestanding image of Dionysos is not known among Gandhāran Buddhist sculptures to the best of my knowledge. Moreover, there is no Gandhāran Buddhist relief panel that either faithfully or apparently depicts the myth of Dionysos. Moreover, emblematic images illustrating Dionysiac Mysteries, such as those found on some Roman mosaics, are not known to Gandhāran Buddhist relief panels (Figure 13).[7] Taking this fact into account, we may tentatively conclude that it is highly unlikely that Gandhāran Buddhists under the rule of the Kushans embraced the cult of Dionysos. Faith in these gods was likely rare, and their cults likely non-existence, because no temple of Dionysos has ever been identified in Gandhāra or its environs. More concretely, it can be said that Gandhāran Buddhist sculpture has nothing to do with the cult of Dionysos or Bacchus.

Second, as regards the motifs of harvesting grapes and wine-making, there are a great deal of examples in Greek and Roman Art. Greek vases are occasionally decorated with Dionysos seated and satyrs harvesting grapes or making wine (Figures 8 and 9). As we have seen, maenads, satyrs, and erotes are quite regularly represented on Roman sarcophagi, as is Dionysos himself (Figures 9 to 11). In contrast, Gandhāran relief panels are not decorated with maenads or satyrs in the context of grape-harvesting and wine-making, but in the company of some unidentifiable local, male figures.[8] Even in wine-drinking scenes, reliefs show men wearing in Indian attire (Figures 2 and 4). One good example is to be found in the collection of the Musée Guimet in Paris (*Arts Asiatiques* 55 [2000], 139, fig. 4), on which a male figure is found stamping on grapes in a tub (Figure 14). He carries a child on his shoulder, which adds to his

6 On the term, 'peopled vine-scroll', see Toynbee & Ward-Perkins 1950: 1-2; Rowland 1956: 353, n. 1.
7 Horn (1972) has made a comprehensive survey of the mosaic in the collection of the Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne. He investigated various depictions on the mosaic and clarified the symbolic significance of Dionysos mysteries.
8 However, a man who looks like Silenus is depicted to the left of a grape-stamping scene in Lahore: Falk 2009: fig. 1.

Figure 13. Mosaic from a Roman house at Cologne, third century AD. Cologne, Römisch-Germanisches Museum. (Photo: author.)

Figure 14. Gandhāran wine-making scene. Paris, Musée Guimet Museum, inv. MA 6354. (Photo: courtesy of Katsumi Tanabe, by permission).

weight to quicken the trampling process. To the viewer's right, a scene of filtration of grape-juice is illustrated. But this active male figure is not a satyr. The process of making wine in Gandhāran relief panels is borrowed from a Roman iconographic type, including trampling a tub, but curiously Dionysos is never represented.

Third, the procession scene is quite often depicted in the Greek and Roman art (Figures 10 and 11). However, as far as Gandhāran relief panels are concerned, no such procession or Triumph scenes of Dionysos have been attested thus far.

It was in the era of the Roman Empire that the so-called peopled vine-scroll was created. As we have seen, this consists of medallions formed by two symmetrical intertwining vines, with one or two figures depicted within each. The conspicuous difference between the Roman peopled vine-scroll and that of Gandhāran Dionysiac relief panels lies in their figural imagery. In the former, both Dionysos and *thiasos* are depicted (Figure 12), whereas in the latter only *thiasos*-like, but probably local, figures are identifiable. Taking this into account, J. Boardman notes that the subject matter of Gandhāran Dionysiac relief panels is generally misunderstood, at least in terms of identifying the identities of Greek divinities and associated behaviours, but the origins are nonetheless quite unmistakable (Boardman 2014: 45-47).

Furthermore, Gandharān Dionysiac relief panels do not emphasise any mythological aspects or significance relatable to Dionysos. Rather they prefer to highlight drinking and drunken scenes of fraternization, illustrative of the happy, joyful life of the Dionysiac paradise. This means that Gandhāran relief panels retain only one function of Dionysos, namely, as the god of wine. Therefore, it can be said that only certain motifs of Greek and Roman Dionysiac imagery were intentionally selected and hence accepted by Gandhāran Buddhists, having in all likelihood undergone a process of reinterpretation in the context of Gandhāran Buddhism. The purpose of this kind of active selection by Gandhāran Buddhists seems to have been to concretely visualize sensual pleasures to be obtained in the Buddhist after-life, as I already proposed in my previous paper read at the Conference of the South Asian Archaeology and Art 2018. Thus, the repertory of Dionysiac imagery transmitted to Gandhāra was apparently limited and those motifs related to the cult, myth, and ritual of Dionysos were neither transmitted nor adopted by the Buddhists of the region.

How were the artistic ideas of Dionysiac imagery transmitted to Gandhāra? Through movement of objects or people?

Everybody admits that Dionysiac images depicted on Gandharān relief panels must have been derived from either Greek (Hellenistic) or Roman Imperial art. However, there remains the controversial matter among art historians of whether these Greek and Roman characteristics of Gandhāran sculpture reflect a Greek tradition resulting ultimately from Alexander's conquests – if they are the product of subsequent cultural contacts with later traditions of the Hellenistic East – or if they are due to the immigration of contemporary artists from the Roman Empire (see the contributions of Stoye and Stewart in the present volume). This problem has been elaborated in previous studies. Alfred Foucher maintained that the Indo-Greeks emigrating from the Graeco-Bactria to Gandhāra played an important role in transmitting Greek artistic ideas and techniques to Gandhāra (Foucher 1917: 111-137).[9] Foucher also suggested that the person who harmonized two traditions, between Greek and Indian, in Gandhāran art was an artist by his Greek father and a Buddhist by his Indian mother (Foucher 1922: 467). According to John Marshall

[9] A pair of gold clasps representing Dionysos and Ariadne on a monster and Pan lifting a rhyton were found at Tillya Tepe in Bactria. Behind Ariadne is a hovering Nike holding a wreath above the head of the couple (Hiebert & Cambon 2011: 286-287, pl. 216). Dionysiac motifs were found in Bactria but the depiction of these motifs is not the same as those from Gandhāra. Therefore, Greek craftsmen might have come to Gandhāra from Bactria but sculptors in Gandhāra intentionally selected Dionysiac imagery and they created their own Dionysiac imagery.

the Parthians not only had vast numbers of Asiatic Greeks within the borders of their own Empire, but were able to enjoy at least in times of peace both commercial and cultural contacts with the Graeco-Roman world. Therefore, he thought that the Parthians carried out the renaissance of the Hellenistic tradition in Gandhāran art (Marshall 1960: 26-32). More recently, John Boardman, Elizabeth Errington, Joe Cribb, and Ladislav Stančo have also emphasized the Greek influence on Gandharan relief panels.[10] On the other hand, Hugo Buchthal, Benjamin Rowland, Mortimer Wheeler and others attributed the western elements in Gandhāran art to the influence of Rome.[11]

There is indeed the possibility that the transmission of such imagery is to be attributed to the movement of people, that is to say, artisans and craftsmen. It is demonstrable that there were Greeks living in Gandhāra and environs. According to Richard Salmon, many inscriptions of the Kushan period are found on objects donated to Buddhist monasteries, particularly on reliquaries. In many donative inscriptions we find donors with distinctly non-Indic names, usually of Greek or Iranian origin (Salomon 2018: 40-42). Apart from the names of the Indo-Greek kings, we have a few Greek names in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions inscribed on a relic casket, a seal, and a silver vessel, which were found in Gandhāra. For example, Theüdora in Gāndhārī = Theodoros in Greek (cf. Thaudama in Gāndhārī = Theodamas, Theiodamos, Theodemos in Greek) (Konow 1929: 4, 6; Falk 2001: 308; 2002: 53, in Barrate 2002), as well as Demetria (i.e .Demetrios) and the likely mixed Graeco-Indic name, Helaüta (i.e. the Greek *Helios* with Sanskrit *-gupta*). We can therefore presume that some Buddhists with Greek and Iranian names donated relief panels with Dionysiac imagery to Buddhist temples. Contrastingly, we have no concrete evidence that attests to a Greek sculptor or craftsman involved in artistic activity in the region. But this is in harmony with the absence of Greek Dionysiac mythological scenes among Gandhāran Dionysiac relief panels. Such typical Dionysiac themes as the Birth of Dionysos, Dionysos sailing, Dionysos turning pirates into dolphins, Dionysos' discovery of the sleeping Ariadne, and the Triumph of Dionysos, have not been found in Gandhāran Buddhist art as of yet.

Similarly Latin names of craftsmen, that is transcriptions of a name originally written in Latin, virtually never appear in extant Gāndhārī inscriptions. Only one Kharoṣṭhī inscription, written on a fresco mural found from Mīrān in Central Asia, appears to mention such a figure; it reads: 1 *Titaṣa eṣā ghali*[12] 2. *hastakrica [bhaṃma]ka*[13] 3. *3 1000*. This inscription was accurately translated by M. L'Abbé Boyer: 'This is the fresco of Tita who received 3,000 bhaṃmaka (coins) (Boyer 1911: 417)'. Marc Aurel Stein alternatively translated it: 'This fresco is [the work] of Tita, who has received 3,000 Bhaṃmakas [for it]' (Stein 1921: 529-531). The most interesting word of this inscription is the western name Tita. This name is recognized as a transliteration of the Latin Titus.[14] Certainly it is no surprise that a painter who bore a Latin name was employed in Mīrān where Roman-style figures such as a putti or youthful genii shouldering a garland are depicted on walls. B. Rowland assumed that the Mīrān murals were produced

10 Errington and Cribb say that images such as Atlas, the triton, Eros shouldering a garland, Dionysos and his *thiasos,* shown in Gandhāran art were influenced by Greek art because the Greek homeland had been embraced by the Roman empire and the arts of the eastern Mediterranean area remained essentially Greek, even during Roman rule, and thus set the standards for the development of Roman art (Errington & Cribb 1992: 37). Stančo places emphasis on Greek influence from Bactria and agrees with the assumption that Dionysiac images must be the work of Greek artists who fled from Bactria to Gandhāra before Bactria was invaded by nomads or their successors (Stančo 2012: 86-87).

11 Buchthal, Wheeler, and Rowland compared Gandhāran art with Roman art in the light of several iconographic motifs. Buchthal said that the Roman achievement was accepted in Gandhāra in its entirety (Buchthal 1945; Wheeler 1949: 1954: 183-202; Rowland 1958).

12 Boyer translated *ghali* is *khaḍī* (Boyer 1911: 415). Molesworth's dictionary explains that this word signifies a species of steatites used to rub over the writing-board or to whitewash walls; it is also an unctuous and whitish stone, a sort of pipeclay (Molesworth 1857: 193; Turner 1966: 198). On this basis Boyer argued that the word means 'fresco'. Turner incidentally gives Sanskrit *khaṭikā* and Prakrit *khaḍī* in the sense of 'chalk'.

13 According to Boyer this word is Skt. *bharman*. This word means gold or money. It could denote coinage.

14 According to Stein, this name is a noun which could not be etymologically or phonetically explained as being indigenous to any Indian and Iranian language during the period covered by the ruined Mīrān temple (Stein 1921: 530).

in conjunction with an atelier of artists trained in the Mediterranean tradition, in this case under the direction of Tita (Rowland 1974: 33-36). Stefan Baums mentions that this is the only potential classical name among the Gāndhārī sources from Central Asia (Baums 2018: 43). It is not clear whether Tita is an immigrant from the Roman Empire or an indigenous man of Mīrān bearing a Latin name. Mario Bussagli suggested that Tita and the sculptor of reliefs depicting the Buddha accompanied by Vajrapāṇi from Mardan, Pakistan were one and the same person (Bussagli 1963: 21-23; Filigenzi 2006: 72). In any case, a painted frieze representing nude putti or youthful genii shouldering a garland was found in Mīrān with this Kharoṣṭhī inscription found on the lower part of the right fore-leg of a white elephant. The motif of Erotes shouldering a garland is a quite popular and a favourite theme in both Roman and Gandharān art. Therefore, the painter who made this mural at Mīrān must have known Roman iconographic motifs and in view of the Gāndhārī inscriptions, we can assume that Tita emigrated most probably from the Roman Empire or Roman East (West Asia) to Mīrān by way of the Gandhāra region.

As regards the route from the Roman Empire to Gandhāra and environs, according to the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea,* ships from the Roman Empire or Alexandria in Egypt lay at anchor at the ancient market port of Barbarikon, situated at the mouth of the Indus River, and freight was transported from Barbarikon to a metropolis in the headwaters of the Indus river, i.e. in Gandhāra (Schoff 1974: 37). Marshall maintained that many objects, such as silver wares, gold jewellery, engraved gems and others, were imported from the Mediterranean to Taxila (Marshall 1951a: 616-633, 675-676; Marshall 1951b: pl. 188-1, 2, 5, 191-96, 97, 98, 207-11). However, this assertion must be carefully scrutinized. David Whitehouse has stated that Taxila was an active participant in the exchange network that brought the products of Central and Eastern Asia to the Indian Ocean, whence they were shipped to Egypt, and that the Kushans' Barbarikon was the gateway to the Roman world (Whitehouse 1989: 95). Matthew Cobb states that Palmyrene merchants were trading via the Red Sea in the third century and that Roman trade in the Indian Ocean appears to reach a peak broadly in the latter half of the first century, after which time there appears to be a decline in volume (Cobb 2015: 373-374). As the treasures of Begram show, artefacts of the Roman Empire were carried to Greater Gandhāra through commerce along the Indus river and her tributaries. Several medallions were found at Begram, on one of which appears a drunken Dionysos and his *thiasos*.[15]

It is likely that 'itinerant' Roman craftsmen and artisans could have followed the same route to Gandhāra (Rowland 1960: 8). The participation of Roman artisans is attested by an extremely realistic rendering of Herakles-Vajrapāṇi and of Tyche-Ardoxsho, both made of clay, which were excavated at Tape-Shotor in Haḍḍa (Boardman 2015: 188-189, figs. 122, 123). In addition, as Rowland mentioned, a Gandhāran peopled vine scroll (Figure 5) housed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts derived from the Roman peopled vine-scroll typical of the eastern Roman school. It is inconceivable that such a heavy and bulky relief panel was physically transported from the Roman Empire to Gandhāra; moreover, the object is made of Gandhāran schist, which would confirm its provenance beyond any doubt. Although we have only scanty evidence of Roman artisans, I am nevertheless certain that Roman artisans must have come to Gandhāra and transmitted both their techniques and Dionysiac images or motifs to the region.

There is also the possibility that the movement of objects can explain the presence of such imagery. A significant number of objects are known to have been exported from the Mediterranean area to the East, including Mesopotamia, Iran, Central Asia, India, China, and Mongolia (cf. Boardman 1994; 2015). These comprise mostly luxury pieces, such as silver vessels, and some depict Dionysiac images. All relevant pieces cannot be dealt with in this paper, however, some examples will suffice for reference.

[15] Hansen et al. 2009: 399-400, cat. nos. 330-334. Cat. no. 333 is a medallion depicting Dionysos and his *thiasos.*

A bronze head of Silenus was found at Begram, in addition to many plaster or gypsum casts of late Hellenistic metalwork. Several clay or terracotta moulds for plaster casts have been found in Gandhāra (Cambon and Jarrige 2010, fig. 221; Tanabe 2015: 63-64, figs. 1a, b, 7, 8,10-14, colour plate 4). Silver artefacts depicting Dionysiac themes were even found from as far afield as China and Mongolia, including for instance, a silver plate with Dionysos riding a panther, two stem cups with Dionysiac figures and a grapevine, and a medallion or phalera with a satyr attacking a maenad or goddess (Watt et al., 2004: 149, 184-185, figs. 59, 90; Sofukawa and Degawa 2005: fig. 95; Polosmak et al., 2011: 110-117, figs. 4. 40a, b; 4. 42). These finds were transported from west to east by overland and sea trade. The land route here denotes the so-called Silk Road through the Parthian Royal Road and the sea route traverses the Erythraean sea.[16]

Conclusion

Based on my investigation of Gandhāran Dionysiac imagery it is now possible to answer the question posed by Peter Stewart: how were the artistic ideas of Dionysiac imagery transmitted to Gandhāra? Through movement of objects or people? It is highly conceivable that both ideas and the repertory of figures associated with Dionysiac imagery were not only transmitted as components of Hellenistic and Roman luxury objects, but also through the immigration of Roman artisans to Gandhāra. However, with the present state of knowledge it is very difficult to decide which of the two played the more decisive role, objects or people. The most important fact to be gleaned is that the Gandhāran Dionysiac imagery is nothing but a limited adaptation of many Dionysiac themes, deliberately appropriated and exploited by Gandhāran sculptors, most likely including Roman craftsmen and their local apprentices, in order to visualize the themes with which Gandhāran Buddhists desired to embellish their monasteries, such as the Buddhist afterlife, the Buddha's life stories, and so forth. One recalls the proverb, 'necessity is the mother of invention', an expression duly applicable to this case concerning the Gandhāran absorption of Greek and Roman art.

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[16] Schoff proposed locations for the Parthian stations on a map and Young mentions that the Parthians played an important role on the Roman trade. Palmyrenes especially participated in the furthest stages of the trade with India, as well as in the caravan trade to the Gulf (Schoff 1914: 16, map; Young 2001: 136-148).

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