

Zoroastrianism among the Kushans

Frantz Grenet

Official religious expressions under Kaniška's predecessors

Between c. 145 and 70 BCE the Greek possessions in the eastern Iranian- (or partly Iranian)-speaking countries: Sogdiana, Bactria, Arachosia, Kapisa, were gradually overrun by various nomadic peoples “who had set from the territories beyond the Iaxartes (Syr-darya)” (Strabo XI.8.2).¹ Ancient authors have transmitted lists of these peoples which they all designate as “Scythians”, i.e. in principle speaking “Saka” languages belonging to the eastern branch of the Iranian languages, like those of the indigenous populations they subdued. Strabo mentions the “Asii, Pasiani, Tokharians and Sacaraucae”, Pompeius Trogus (*Prologus* of *Book XLI*) the “*Sacaraucae (text: Saraucae) and Asiani”, to whom he subsequently adds the Tokharians. The great number of nomadic cemeteries in *kurgans*, some of which occupied whole sectors of the Sogdian and Bactrian foothills during several centuries, bears witness to the significant demographic impact of these invasions, but their archaeological study has provided little undisputable evidence as to their attribution to such and such people, and as to the respective cultural background of the latter.

We know from Chinese sources that some Sakas (chin. *Sai*, anc. Chin. **sak*) were expelled from Semirechie (the regions south of the Balkhach lake) by the advancing Yuezhi (on which see below), and that their king “moved a considerable distance to the south”. It is tempting to relate this scanty textual evidence to two remarkable epigraphic discoveries, namely undeciphered inscriptions in a Runic script: one specimen was on a silver cup found in the royal *kurgan* of Issyk in Semirechie, dating from the third or second century BCE, and the second one on a silver ingot melted and inscribed, no doubt by some administrative authority, during the first nomadic occupation of the Greek city of Ai Khanum in eastern Bactria (about 145 BCE).² Do these unique documents bear witness of a rudimentary Saka bureaucracy migrating southwards together with its king? As for the Sacaraucae, their name undoubtedly contains the element “Saka”, but the material found in graves attributed to them by the archaeologists relate them rather

¹ See Rapin 2001: 75-92; Rapin 2007: 47-72.

² Rapin 2007: 49-50 with fig. 8 b.

to the Uralian and Pontic regions, so they might be a different people than the eastern “royal” Sakas mentioned by the Chinese. In 78-77 BCE the Sacaraucae, still active at that time on the borders of the Parthian empire, intervened in royal affairs by imposing on the throne their *protégé* Sinatruces, presumably a former Arsacid hostage. Then, according to Justin, they “disappeared” from the stage - apparently they migrated south of the Hindukush, then to northwest India, where the first Indo-Scythian rulers appear at that time.

In Bactria the hegemony then passed to the Asii / Asiiani (possibly the same people as the Pasiani, split into two by a scribal mistake).³ From the first century CE onwards they are present in the Aral-Caspian region, amalgamated with the Alans. The name “As” survives today with that of Ossetes, a plural form. Some archaeologists incline to recognize them as the first bearers of the “polychromic style” attested on jewels found in immensely rich princely tombs stretching from the Altai (the “Siberian collection” of Peter the Great) and subsequently to Bactria (Tillia-tepe) and the Don (Kobiakovo), therefore documenting a main east-west migration with offshoots to the south.⁴ The elaborate iconography displayed by the ornaments found in presumably “Asiani” graves at Tillia-tepe to the west of Bactra, which can be dated to c. 40-50 CE⁵, displays a complex mixture of motifs belonging to the Scythian past (the ancestral river-god),⁶ mixed with Hellenistic elements often reinterpreted (Aphrodite, Athena, Dionysus and Ariadne). Few images, if any, eventually lend themselves to comparisons with the Zoroastrian pantheon: a goddess holding two fishes head down might refer to Anāhitā, or to her Scythian equivalent Api, embodying the descent of the waters.⁷ But the funerary ritual in itself is traditionally Scythian - the ruler was buried in the centre, surrounded by six wives who has most likely been killed in order to follow him in the other world. Local chieftains named Sapadbizes, Arseiles and Pulages, whose coinage circulated in western Bactria and who possibly belonged to the same line as the deceased in the Tillia-tepe graves, show on the reverse a lion topped by a moon crescent, with the legend “Nanaia”:⁸ this is the first direct evidence of the adoption in Bactria of this originally Mesopotamian goddess presumably syncretized with the Iranian Anāhitā.

The Tokharians were destined for the most brilliant future, as they were eventually to give their name to Bactria (“Tokharistan”, now attested by a Bactrian inscription from

³ This solution is accepted by Rapin 2001: 82; but the name Pasiani, emended *Parsiani, has also been understood as that of a particular peoples, ancestors (at least as far as the name is concerned) of the Pashtuns: Bailey 1945.

⁴ The Asiiani cannot be identified with the Kushan clan, as Trogus’ information about the Parthian empire dries up after 10 BCE and the rise of the Kushans dates from the 20’s CE at the earliest.

⁵ See in particular Schiltz 2007; Francfort 2011.

⁶ Schiltz 2007: Catalogue No 61.

⁷ Id. no. 137. There is indeed a Sasanian image of Anāhitā holding two fishes, on a stone relief: Shenkar 2014: 75 and fig. 25.

⁸ Ghose 2006: esp. 98 and fig. 3; Grenet 2012: 4-6.

137 CE).⁹ The most likely explanation is that they had then been for a long time the dominant people in this country, and that they had produced the Kushan dynasty which ruled in Bactria continuously from the first to the early third century and one century longer in their northern India conquests. According to Chinese sources the Kushans were originally a clan from the Yuezhi people, hence the identification Tokharians-Yuezhi, widely accepted among modern scholars despite the absence of any demonstrable connection between both names. When in the beginning of the first century CE they eventually emerged as a distinct political power in eastern Bactria, they had already a long and complex history behind them. The fact that, according to Chinese sources, the Yuezhi originated from Kansu, on the northwest border of China, and that the name “Tokharian” was subsequently applied to the non-Iranian (though Indo-European) language of Turfan and Kucha, led many scholars to assume that the Yuezhi originally spoke this language rather than a Saka (i.e. Scythian one). But attempts at recognizing traces of it in the Kushan aristocratic onomastics have not proved convincing: more probably the words which form the basis of this hypothesis also belong to the Saka stock.¹⁰ The installation of the Yuezhi to the north of the Oxus, in the valleys of southeast Sogdiana and east Bactria where they had moved through Ferghana, is first attested by the Chinese envoy Zhang Qian in 128/7 BCE.¹¹ Shortly afterwards they launched far-off forays to the west, as the Parthian king Artabanus I is reported to have perished at the hand of the “Tocharians”. Subsequently, it seems, they ceased to occupy central stage in Bactria: their kings temporarily disappeared to be replaced by five *yabghus*, and according to Justin (as we have seen) they passed under the domination of the Asiani. Nevertheless the various *yabghus* kept contact with their homeland in Kansu, where envoys sent to the Chinese court are recorded in the first century BCE.

The rise to power of the Tokharians / Yuezhi begins with the ruler Hēraos, who issued beautiful tetradrachms showing his ethnically realistic portrait and, on the reverse, again his own image as a rider-archer crowned by a flying Nike (a motif copied from coins of the contemporary or partly contemporary Indo-Parthian “king of kings” Gondophares, 31/2 – 57/8 CE).¹² In the first issues the legend is in correct Greek (“the *tyrannountos* Hēraos the Kushan”, with the hapax *tyrannountos* aiming at translating the genuine title *yabghu*). This process of hellenization obviously went side by side with the adoption of Bactrian, the local Iranian language noted in the Greek alphabet (this language shift was to be imitated by all subsequent invaders of Bactria until the Arab conquest). In the case of the Kushans it is first used in the royal inscription of the Dasht-e Nawur, dated in a year which plausibly corresponds to 105/6 CE; in 128 (the second year of

⁹ Sims-Williams, “A new Bactrian inscription from the time of Kanishka” (in this volume).

¹⁰ Sims-Williams 2002: 236-240. According to him the suffix *-ēšk* found in the names of several Kushan kings (Kaniška, Huviška, Vāsiška) is probably a specific Saka development from the OIr hypocoristic **iča-k(k)a-*.

¹¹ Grenet 2006.

¹² According to the system proposed in Falk 2012, which will be followed here. Cribb’s identification of Hēraos with the Kujula Kadphises (Cribb 1993) has not gained wide acceptance.

Kaniška) Bactrian replaced Greek entirely in all official uses. In the Rabatak inscription (on which see below) Bactrian is designated by the name “Aryan”, which might suggest a particular ideological value attached to this linguistic choice. A plausible, though not indisputable, indication that the Kushans had kept their own, probably Saka language, for some time side by side with Bactrian, is its presence in the Dasht-e Nawur, together with the Bactrian and Indian versions, of one in the so-called “unknown script”, some other specimens of which are known in Bactria and which is an enriched variant of the Saka runic script attested in the third-second centuries BCE.¹³

Hēraos had remained a regional ruler. His successor Kujula Kadphises (c. 50 till c. 90 CE) is mentioned both in Chinese chronicles and (anonymously) in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* as the creator of the Kushan empire, having eliminated other rulers in Bactria and fought the successors of Gondophares in Gandhara and Panjab.¹⁴ The coins he issued there follow previous local types, some introduced by the Greeks (Nike, Zeus), others by the Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians (in particular the rider king already favoured by Hēraos). One type shows a Greek warrior, an inherited power symbol. Two types could eventually be interpreted as betraying personal religious sympathies. One, struck in Kapisa (the Kabul region), carries on the obverse several royal titles in the Kharoṣṭhī script, including *dhramaṭhida* “steadfast in the Law” later known as both a Shivaite and Buddhist title; on the coins it goes together with an image of Heracles, which under subsequent reigns was to become one of the components of the Śiva image. Another type, struck in Gandhara, includes the variant title *sacadhramaṭhida* “steadfast in the True Law”. Outspoken Shivaism or proto-Shivaism was to reappear under Kujula’s grandson Vima Kadphises, before being included in the mainstream of the predominantly Zoroastrian Kushan pantheon.

The first display of devotion to an Iranian god can fact be detected under a successor of Kujula whom we know only by his titles: *basileus basileōn sōtēr megas* (and their Indian equivalents) “the King of Kings, the Saviour, the Great”. According to some he was a military usurper who for some time interrupted the Kushan dynastic succession;¹⁵

¹³ Fussman 1974.

¹⁴ From this point onwards the proposed historical reconstruction is based chiefly upon the following contributions (supplementing and correcting each other as new documents were discovered): Cribb in Sims-Williams & Cribb 1996; Bopearachchi 2008; Falk 2012 (updating his earlier contributions on this subject). The pinpoint of the absolute chronology is the dating of the Kushan (or Kaniška I) era, the matter of a protracted debate which has hampered Kushan studies since their beginning. The date of 127/8 CE proposed by Falk is now widely accepted. Besides the convincing Indian textual evidence on which it is based, it appears to be the only solution compatible with an already established series of facts: a) the first Sasanian conquest of Bactria occurred under Ardašir I (224-240 CE); b) according to numismatic evidence the last Kushan king who held Bactria was Vāsudeva I (or maybe, briefly, his immediate successor Kanishka II); c) the last recorded date of Vāsudeva I is the year 98 of the Kushan era, i.e., according to the system followed here, 225/6 CE; d) according to the *Weishu* an embassy from a Kushan king Vāsudeva (*Po-t’iao*) arrived in China in 230 CE.

¹⁵ Bopearachchi 2008.

according to others is identical with Vima Taktu, son and immediate successor of Kujula, named in the Dasht-e Nawur inscriptions.¹⁶ His coins are found on a vast area from Mathura to northern Bactria and even beyond. He dedicated the already mentioned Dasht-e Nawur inscription but never went as far as showing his own face, which was replaced either by a conventional Greek helmeted portrait, or by a youthful rayed Apollo obviously copied from Greek statues and holding an arrow (as on Arsacid coins) or an *añkuša* (elephant goad). Taking into account the fact that under Kaniška the rayed Apollo will be titled “Mithra” in Bactrian, it appears very probable that he had this significance already for Sōtēr Megas. It is also not improbable that the choice of his titles had Mithraic overtones, the replacement of the king’s name by a title reminiscent of his favourite god going together with the replacement of his portrait by the god’s face.¹⁷

After Sōtēr Megas came Vima Kadphises (c. 110-127 CE), who on splendid gold issues made a point to call himself “son of King Vima Taktu the Kushan”.¹⁸ The obverse legend is still in Greek, but with the added letter *β* transcribing -š- (this addition had already been used in the Bactrian version of the Dasht-e Nawur inscriptions). The king’s portrait, either in profile or seated cross-legged, proclaims his ethnic origin demonstrated by the characteristic face, the long hair and beard, the steppe costume with heavy caftan and felt boots, in complete break with the Hellenistic tradition which Sōtēr Megas had still followed. The religious affiliation is undoubtedly and exclusively Shivaite – a return to the apparent beliefs of Kujula, Vima Kadphises’ grandfather. In Indian legends on the reverse of coins the king assumes the titles *sarvaloga-iśvara mahiśvara* “(devotee of) the Lord of the World, the Great Lord”, epithets characteristic of Śiva¹⁹ (the question remains debated among Indologists whether the god at this stage was already called “Śiva”, rather than “Rudra” or simply “Īśvara, Maheśvara”). On the king’s portraits flames rise from his shoulders, a symbol which, in this ideological environment, is surely to be interpreted as Indian, namely a reference to the *tejas*, the fiery energy (though it was later borrowed in various Zoroastrian contexts to express the idea of *khvarenah*). The Shivaite titles accompany the image of the god. On the first issues the latter appears still very close to the Heracles of Kujula’s issues, then it receives an India *dhoṭī* and additional attributes which in the subsequent development of Hindu art will appear as canonical for Śiva: always the trident and the flask, sometimes the multiple heads, the ithyphallic character, the bull. The hair arranged in vertical lines, also found on some Indian images of Śiva, has been interpreted as a fiery cone alluding to Rudra’s association with Agni,²⁰ but it is perhaps simpler to recognize it as the typical head-dress of the Brahmins and holy men generally.

¹⁶ Cribb in Sims-Williams & Cribb 1996.

¹⁷ Grenet 2001: 42 and fig. 13.

¹⁸ Bopparachchi 2008.

¹⁹ Fussman 1998: 593 fn. 55; differently Lo Muzio 1995/96: 163 (the king himself assumes Śiva’s epithets).

²⁰ Lo Muzio 1995/96: 162.

Kaniška and the affirmation of a Zoroastrian pantheon

During the reigns we have surveyed no such thing as a “Kushan Zoroastrianism” could be tracked, at least in continuity. Iranian gods comes to the fore shortly after the accession of Kaniška I, Vima Kadphises’s son and successor (127/8 – c. 150 CE); at the same time the Shivaism which had appeared so exclusive during the previous reign is not rejected, but various attempts are made to integrate it.

Kaniška was the most prestigious ruler of his dynasty but the expansion of the empire, during his reign as well as under his successors, appears to have been conducted mainly in the direction of India. Chinese sources report that an attempted campaign against Kucha failed in 90 CE, either under Kujula or Vima Taktu; later on the Kushans possibly exerted some political influence over Khotan and the kingdom of Shanshan, in the direction of the Yuezhis’ homeland. To the north, the frontier with Sogdiana (at that time held by the “Sarmato-Alan” confederation of the Kangju) was stabilized on the Hisar range, except maybe for temporary incursions. Zoroastrianism is attested in Sogdiana around the Greek period,²¹ and it certainly survived during the Kushan period, at least in some parts of the population, but it does not resurge in documented form before the fourth century CE.²² Even farther north, Chorasmia remained independent under its own dynasty, though an alliance with the Arsacids seems likely at some periods. Palace architecture and wall paintings show strong influences, successively from the Parthian empire and Kushan Bactria, while the Chorasmian era instituted (according to various calculations) between 10 and 50 CE, plausibly marks the end of a formal recognition of Arsacid overlordship. To the west, there is no indication that the Kushans were ever at war with the Arsacids, with whom they were bound to remain in good terms for the sake of commerce; they never captured Merv (the situation of Herat is not clear) and they are always qualified as “Arsacids” in later Armenian sources, a possible indication of alliance or even dynastic ties.²³

²¹ At the time of Alexander’s conquest Sisimithres, satrap of Nautaca (the area south of Shahr-i Sabz) had two sons from his own mother (Curtius Rufus VIII.2.19), an indication of the typical Zoroastrian practice of *xwēdōdah*. For recently discovered evidence of late Achaemenid sanctuaries which appear to have been devoted to the fire cult see now Rapiin 2015.

²² The only known Sogdian temple which is contemporary with the Kushans (or slightly later), at Erkurgan (ancient Xenippa-Nakhshapa) in southern Sogdiana, has not provided clear evidence hinting at Zoroastrianism in its early phases, though priests are depicted clad in white and the monument eventually became some kind of fire temple in the 6th c.: Suleimanov 2000: 88-111, 138-150.

²³ The inclusion of an Arsacid king in the “family group” associated with victory reliefs in the monument of Khalchayan (northern Bactria), probably dating from Hēraos or Kujula Kadphises, bears testimony of an alliance (for further elaboration see Grenet 2000). According to Moses Khorenats’i, *History of the Armenians*, 72 (Thomson 1978: 219), the Kushans at first refused to acknowledge the downfall of the Arsacids, and according to the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšēr*, 10.1 (Grenet 2003: 96-97) the sons of Artaban V took refuge with the “Kābulšāh”, i.e. the Kushan.

During Kaniška's reign we know several types of religious messages (there were presumably some others), delivered in various occasions and addressing different publics. They are not easy to reconcile with each other in order to reconstruct a coherent picture of "Kaniška's religion".

The message to be considered first, as it was issued on behalf of the king, is the stone inscription in Bactrian language from the temple of Rabatak in southern Bactria.²⁴ The inscription was discovered by chance in 1993, together with sculptured stone fragments, on a site 25 kilometres to the north-west of the famous temple built by Kaniška at Surkh Kotal. Contrary to the latter, Rabatak has not been excavated and its original features are obliterated by later rebuildings, but both consisted clearly of large fortified enclosures, each built at the top of a hill dominating a well-trodden valley to which they were linked by a monumental staircase on the slope²⁵ (in both the Rabatak and the Surkh Kotal inscriptions the temple is qualified both as a *bagolaggo*, "place of the gods" and as a *lizga* or *lizo* "fortress"). In both cases supply of water played an important part in the choice of the site, no doubt for practical as well as ritual purposes; the importance of water is enhanced in both inscriptions, the actual name of the Rabatak temple being probably to be read *Baghe-āb* "Water of the Gods".

This long inscription mentions several regnal years, the latest one apparently being "six", which would give a *terminus ante quem non* in 133/4 CE. It commemorates first the conquest of "all India" (in fact, of cities in the Gangetic plain), achieved during the first regnal year (an obvious reminiscence of Darius I having crushed all the rebellions in his first year), then the building and dedication of the temple on behalf of the king by high dignitaries who are named. The temple is said to contain images of Kaniška's three direct ancestors and predecessors (Kujula Kadphises, Vima Taktu, Vima Kadphises),²⁶ and of himself: as in the Surkh Kotal temple, and also at Mat in Mathura, another royal foundation, the royal statues are commemorative and not in themselves an object of worship (despite the enduring theory of the Kushan dynastic cult).²⁷ In the Rabatak

²⁴ Sims-Williams & Cribb 1996; Sims-Williams 1998; Sims-Williams 2008.

²⁵ Bernard, Jarrige & Besenval 2002: 1417-1421.

²⁶ Though Hēraos may have been Kujula's father, his absence in the list is normal as he never was king (Bactrian *šao*, Greek *basileus*) but only *yabghu* (Greek *tyrannountos*).

²⁷ For a critical examination see Verardi 1983. The Kushan royal title "son of the god(s) / son of the lord(s)", Bactr. *bagopouro*, Indian *devaputra*, are no more real proof of a claim to divine filiation as *theopatōr* on some Arsacid coins, probably corresponding to a genuine Parthian word **bagpuhr*. It can just as well allude to the legitimate royal filiation, eventually to the divine election (cf. Fussman 1998: 588: "Kaniška considèrait avoir obtenu la royauté par la faveur des dieux. D'une certaine façon, il pouvait donc se dire leur fils, et c'est ainsi qu'il faut interpréter les termes *devaputra/bagopouro*. Mais, bien que Kaniška porte parfois le titre de *bago*, rien ne laisse supposer (...) qu'il ait prétendu être un dieu et qu'il se soit fait adorer comme tel. S'il était dieu, c'est peut-être à la façon des roitelets indiens à qui on s'adressait en les appelant *deva* (...). Ce sont des prétentions qui ne correspondent pas tout à fait à la conception occidentale de l'apothéose.") The title *bago èznogo* given to Vima Taktu in the Dasht-e Nawur inscription and to Kaniška at Rabatak can be interpreted in various ways: "the god worthy of worship" (Sims-Williams), but "the lord worthy of worship" as well. It is no more proof of a divinization *stricto sensu* than were

inscription gods, clearly distinguished from deceased kings, are mentioned in two contexts. In the opening sentence, the king “has obtained kingship from Nana and from all the gods” and has “inaugurated the year one as the gods pleased”. Below, a list is given: “to make in this place the temple (...) for these gods who have come hither into the presence of the glorious Umma, *that (is), the above-mentioned Nana and the above-mentioned Umma, Aurmuzd, Muzhduwan, Sroshard, Narasa (and) Mihir. And he gave orders to make images of the same, (namely) of these gods who are inscribed hereupon”.

This list is quite puzzling, as it corresponds only very partly to the “official pantheon” shown on Kaniška’s coins, to which we shall come soon. Only three deities are found in both: Nana, Muzhduwan and Mihir (Mithra), to whom one should add Aurmuzd (Ahura Mazdā) depicted on very rare coins of Huviška, Kaniška’s successor. The first place in the hierarchy is occupied by Nana / Nanaia, who is actually the only deity previously mentioned in Bactrian coinage (on coins of Sapadbizes and his successors). Her name, and her lion and moon symbols depicted on Sapadbizes’ coins, ultimately come from Mesopotamia, where she had taken over the functions of Ishtar in the neo-Babylonian period, and from where she was probably introduced in Central Asia during the Achaemenian or Seleucid period. Whether or not she was partly or fully identified with the Avestan Anāhitā, especially in Eastern Iran where the latter never appears under her own name until the Sasanian period, is a disputed question. Obviously she was conceived as the main bestower of royal power, hence the name *Nanašao* given to her on some coins of Kaniška and Huviška.²⁸

She is followed in the list by “the glorious / radiant (*ofarro* < probably *hu-farnah*-) Umma (*Omma*), but, according to the formula “these gods (...) who have come hither into the presence of the glorious Umma”, she plays the part of the hostess. A goddess *Ommo* is known on a unique coin of Huviška, where she replaces Nana as a companion of Wēš-Šiva, thus apparently repeating the close association Nana-Umma witnessed at Rabatak. In the Shivaite context she is most probably identified with the Indian Umā, but this does not account for the double *-mm-* which is most easily explained as due to assimilation from **-b-m-*. The conflation Umma-Umā was probably secondary and due to the phonetic similarity, the original name being Umma < Av. *upəma-* “highest”,²⁹ the epithet of a great female deity we have hardly any clue to identify. No Avestan goddess carries it. One could venture to suggest some clan goddess of the Kushans, inherited from their Scythian past. Among the Scythian goddesses known to us through Herodotus, two might hold this claim: Artimpasa, identified with Aphrodite Urania (hence the epithet *upəma-*?),³⁰ and Tabiti, identified with Hestia (hence the fiery epithet

the offerings made in Babylonian temples to the statue of the deceased Darius, who had called himself “a mortal” (*martiya-*) in his inscriptions. For a different point of view see Shenkar 2014: 58.

²⁸ Recent contributions on Nana: Grenet & Marshak 1998; Potts 2001; Ghose 2006.

²⁹ So Sims-Williams in Sims-Williams & Cribb 19xx: 84.

³⁰ The name Artimpasa probably contains as its first element *ṛtim*, i.e. *aṣi-* in the accusative. Fussman supposes that in the Rabatak inscription Umma stands for Ardwakhš, the Bactrian form

hu-farnah?), whom kings called “the Scythian queen”,³¹ i.e. presumably the mistress of the king’s hearth fire (which would explain her role as hostess in Rabatak?). It would be unrealistic to go further in speculation.

From this point onwards, all the gods listed are male, all but one coming from the Avestan pantheon with Aurmuzd (*Aoromozdo*, Ahura Mazda) taking precedence. But this Zoroastrian enumeration is immediately interrupted by Muzhduwan (*Mozdooano*). We would know nothing on this god if he was not depicted on rare gold coins of Kaniška, where he appears as a sort of mirror image of the Kushan king (his face and headdress are similar), riding a two-headed horse and holding a trident. His name as been convincingly explained as Bactrian and meaning “gracious, bounteous”.³² A variant of the same epithet, but in the feminine (**miždušī-*), designated a goddess on two Elamite tablets from Persepolis. In the latter context it could have been a cult-epithet of “the Good Aši”, but it does not seem possible to detect any Avestan god behind the strange appearance of Muzhduwan. Like later on Umma-Umā, he was perhaps an inherited Scythian god eventually drawn into the Shivaite circle.³³ Some details of his iconography have Shivaite overtones (the trident, the two-headed horse possibly alluding to the god’s ambivalent nature); moreover *mīdhvās*, the Vedic equivalent of the epithet *muzhduwan*, is rather specifically applied to Rudra, an early form of Śiva.³⁴ All matters considered, Muzhduwan’s short carrier could tentatively be explained as an attempt to integrate in some way the Śiva cult Kaniška had inherited from his father. This variant was not continued, and already under Kaniška Śiva was more successfully syncretized with Vayu, a high Zoroastrian god.

The three last gods in the Rabatak list are definitely Zoroastrian: Sroshard (Srōš, Av. *sraošō ašiīō*), Narasa (Nēryōsang, Av. *nairiīō.sahhō*), Mihir (Mithra, Av. *miθra-*). Mithra and Srōš are very frequently associated in the Younger Avesta, especially in the *Mihr Yašt*, while Nēryōsang’s direct association is rather with Srōš, in their common function of deities of prayer. At some stage an interlinear addition was written in smaller characters, starting at the end of the name Sroshard: “who in Indian is called Mahāsenā and is called Viśākha”. Both these gods belong to the Shivaite circle and reappear in Huviška’s coinage. Given the place where the addition starts, it might refer to Nēryōsang

of the goddess Aši, much attested subsequently (Fussman 1998: 592). In the commemorative reliefs of the pavilion at Khalchayan the victorious princes are accompanied by a goddess standing in a chariot, tentatively identified with Aši who rides a chariot or whose statue stands in a chariot (see lastly Mode 2013, whose reconstructions of the battle scenes are however questionable). Though three goddesses are depicted in the reliefs (this chariotter goddess, Nike and Athena), there is no compelling reason to identify the monument as a temple.

³¹ Herodotus IV.127, response of the Scythian king Idanthyrsus to Darius; [For an alternative hypothesis on the etymology of Umma see however N. Sims-Williams, The name of the Kushan goddess Ομμᾶ. Morano, E., E. Provasi & A.V. Rossi (eds.), *Professor Gherardo Gnoli Memorial Volume*. Napoli-Roma (L’Orientale – IsMEO), forthcoming 2015.].

³² Sims-Williams 1997.

³³ This idea is elaborated by Carter 2006.

³⁴ Wright 1997.

as well as to Srōš, but the latter is more likely as, contrary to Nēryōsang, he shares a warlike character with Mahāsenā and Viśākha, and with Mahāsenā the important attribute of the cock (see below). One can wonder at the purpose of this gloss. Once again, Shivaism appears as an omnipresent accompaniment of Kushan Zoroastrianism.

Finally, according to which principle were these gods particularly selected among “all the gods”? Contrary to those depicted on coins, their importance lay not in the fact that they were considered representative of the religion of the population, nor even of the Bactrian population, but in their particular link with Kaniška, manifested in the help he received at his accession and during his first year, i.e. the year he submitted India. The inclusion of two putative clan gods, Umma and Muzhduwan (the latter taking over the Śiva cult of Kaniška’s father), could be understood in this perspective. Nana’s precedence is clearly due to her traditional role as bestower of royal power. Mithra, Srōš and Nēryōsang seem to be included as a specific group (leaving, in their turn, precedence to Ahura Mazdā), because of their active role in fighting enemies, in this case Indians, possibly also, for the last two ones, in the fulfilment of prayers. The fact that in total seven deities were selected is perhaps not accidental, considering the existence of other heptads (the Ameša Spentas, the planets) in the Iranian context.

Another kind of official religious message was expressed through the coinage (Fig. 1).³⁵ First among the rulers of his dynasty, and right from the beginning of his reign, Kaniška chose (or let chose) for the reverse of his coins a calculated selection of several deities. Those depicted on the gold coins form a system of five, which on the accession emission appear as Greek images identified with their Greek names. On the subsequent emissions the images remain the same, but the names are now given in Bactrian, like the royal titles on the obverse legend. All but one being taken from the Avestan stock, none being borrowed from the Parthian language (the same remark applies to all Iranian gods subsequently attested).³⁶ The gods of the first emission are: *Nanaia* (depicted as Artemis holding a staff ending with a lion protome, an attribute fitting to both Artemis and the Mesopotamian Nanaia); *Hēlios* (youthful, as the solar god on Sōtēr Megas’ coins); *Salēnē* (a replica of the former, also male, with the moon crescent replacing the rays); *Hēphaistos*; *Anemos* (a running god with wings and outstretched scarf, modelled on the Greek Boreas).³⁷ In the subsequent gold issues *Nanaia* is renamed either *Nana* (the

³⁵ The reader is, once and for all, referred to Göbl 1984: 40-46 (list of deities), 164-172 (tables of all iconographic types, with reference to the illustrated series tables). Subsequent discoveries or corrected readings will be mentioned when necessary. New types or better specimens are reproduced in Tanabe 1992: 31-35, 93, 131-140. Most of the Zoroastrian deities were already identified in a pioneer article by Stein 1887, despite sometimes inaccurate etymologies. The results of modern etymological research are set out in H. Humbach 1966-67, I: 43-49; Sims-Williams 2011 (the present account has also benefited from updated information kindly provided by this author). Still extremely valuable commentaries on the various deities can be found in Rosenfield 1967. More recently: Grenet 2010; Shenkar 2014 (whose approach is sometimes more “fragmentising” than mine).

³⁶ For a discarded case (Šaurēwar) see below, fn. 54.

³⁷ Tanabe 1990.



Ardvakhš



Āthš



Luhrāsp



Mā



Mahāsenā



Manābaq



Mihir



Nana



Nana and Wēš



Uralghn



Wēš



Wēš with bull

Fig. 1: A selection of deities on gold coins of Kanīška and Huviška (the names are given according to the reconstructed Bactrian form) (Courtesy O. Bopearachchi)

proper Bactrian equivalent of Aramaic-Greek *Nanaia* or *Nanašao* “Nana the Queen (literally “the King”)”; *Hēlios* becomes *Miuro*, *Miuro* (later also *Miuro*, *Mirro*, *Meiro*), i.e. Mihir (< Av. *miθra-*); *Salēnē* becomes *Mao*, i.e. Mā (< Av. *māh-*), *Hēphaistos* becomes *Athšo*, i.e. Āthš (< OIr **āθrō*, genitive of **āθr-*, “(day) of Fire”). From that stage and in all subsequent Kushan issues the wind god is attested only in the bronze coinage, where he is named *Oado*, i.e. Wād (< Av. *vāta-*). Perhaps gold coins with this name have still to be discovered, but another explanation is at hand: in a transitional issue (obverse in Greek, reverse in Bactrian) known from a unique specimen, the Śiva type revived from Vima Kadphises’ coinage is accompanied by the legend *Oēšo*, i.e. Wēš (< Av. *vaiiuš*, nominative of *vaiiu-*), which I shall discuss soon.³⁸ This seems to suggest that from now onwards Wād has moved one step down in the hierarchy and has been replaced in the pentad by the other great Iranian atmospheric god.

As for the first, Greek-labelled stage, two facts demonstrate that the underlying structure is in fact Iranian: firstly, *Salēnē* is depicted as male, contrary to Greek Salene / Selene but in conformity with the grammatical gender of Iranian Māh; secondly, *Anemos* is in Greek the common word for “wind” but not a divine name (the various wind gods all have specific names). This pentad had obviously a great symbolic value as it occupied the most prestigious coin series, the images of which were strictly controlled by the political power; but, taking over only two gods (Nana and Mihir) from the Rabatak heptad, its overall significance was clearly different. The most convincing explanation so far proposed is that Kaniška addressed a level of Iranian religiosity which was familiar to the laity, i.e. deities directly linked to the natural elements.³⁹ The closest analogy is offered by the list given in Herodotus I.131: “(The Persians) sacrifice to Zeus, calling the entire vault of heaven Zeus. And they sacrifice to the sun and the moon and the earth and fire and water and the winds”. In the coin series the sun is represented by Helios/Mithra, the moon by Selene/Mā, fire by Hephaistos/Āthš, the winds by Anemos/Wād. There is a slight discrepancy concerning earth and water as they are brought together under the protection of Nanaia/Nana (the two attributes she holds in her hands, a stag with a lion protome and a vase, plausibly allude to them respectively). A more serious difference with Herodotus’ list is the absence of the highest god, Zeus/Ahura Mazdā, all the more surprising as the Rabatak inscription duly names Aurmuzd at the head of all specifically Zoroastrian gods, and implies that he too received an “image” for which there is no real alternative to a statue copied or adapted from Zeus; but Ahura Mazdā’s inconspicuousness is indeed a recurrent phenomenon in the subsequent variants of the Kushan official pantheon we are going to examine. The “naturalistic” character of the remaining selection of gods is, it has been noted, consistent with the opening invocations

³⁸ Information on this coin from Joe Cribb. On Wēš generally see Humbach 1975. Despite occasional expressions of scepticism (e.g. Lo Muzio 1995/96: 165-6), the etymology is beyond doubt, considering the Sogdian full form Wēšparkar < *vaiiuš uparō.kairiō*.

³⁹ See in particular Tanabe 1995. Other views on the structure of Kaniška’s pantheon in Fussman 1998: 588-594.

in the Yasna (Y.1.16),⁴⁰ as well as with the *Niyāyeš* (to Sun, Moon, Fire and Water) which still today structures the daily routine of Zoroastrian devotional life.⁴¹

In the continuation of Kaniška's reign this basic pantheon was partly modified and supplemented. The main change, as we have seen, is Wēš (*Oēšo*) in Śiva's garb completely replacing Wād on gold emissions. The development of the Śiva image initiated under Vima Kadphises is further enriched by the new convention of the four arms: the attributes now include the *vajra* (thunderbolt) and a goat or antelope, all explainable by various associations proper to the Indian Śiva, while the flask pouring water downward probably alludes to this ritual in the Indian investiture ceremony (*rājasūya*), a counterpart to the Iranian gesture of bestowing the untied diadem executed by some other gods.⁴² Contrary to what had been the case under Kujula and Vima, the god is never anymore identified by any Indian name or title, but only as Wēš, i.e. Vayu, the ancient Iranian god of the atmosphere, to whom the Yašt 15 nominally dedicated to Rāman is in fact entirely devoted. His function is akin but not identical to that of Wād, the god he replaces on coins, who was specifically the god of wind (though the distinction has not always been recognized by modern scholars, influenced by the Vedic Vāyu who in fact fulfills this very function). Apparently this was Kaniška's second attempt to come to terms with the Shivaite devotion inherited from his father, and, contrary to Muzhduwan, Wēš-Śiva was to last long in Bactria and neighbouring Sogdiana, in fact until the Islamic conquest. The choice of Vayu to "naturalize" Śiva was functionally an obvious one: both were high gods, linked to high places (atmosphere, mountain tops), both had a violent and ambivalent aspect (in Pahlavi literature there is both a "Good Way" and a "Bad Way"). To which extent the concept of Iranian Vayu eventually influenced the development of Indian Śiva, on whom no specific literature antedates the Gupta period, remains a matter of discussion for Indologists.

The gods' types on the gold coinage were carefully distributed among the four *officinae* which in each of the two mints shared between them the task of issuing coins, therefore besides their religious value they had a labelling function. On Kaniška's later issues Nana is occasionally replaced by another goddess, *Ardoxšo*, i.e. Ard-wakhš (< OIr *rtiš wahwī*, "Good Aši", nominative form), depicted as a Greek Tyche with a cornucopia which is consistent with her primary function as goddess of Fortune and Abundance. This change, no more than the change of Wād to Wēš, did not affect the fivefold naturalistic structure of the chosen pantheon, as the iconography chosen for Aši clearly associate her with the products of the earth. The same can be said with the occasional replacement of Āthš by *Farro*, i.e. Farr (< OIr *farnah-*, Av. *x^varənah-*), as the Khvarenah has a direct association with Fire,⁴³ and actually one of its types under the

⁴⁰ De Jong 1997: 96-103, esp. 102.

⁴¹ Cf. Boyce 1996: 18.

⁴² On the evolution of the type see Lo Muzio 1995/96; Cribb 1997; Boppearachchi 2008.

⁴³ See e.g. Yt. 10.127: "the strong blazing Fire which (is) the strong Kavyan Fortune (*kauuaēm x^varənō*) (the question whether or not the association Khvarenah / Light, Fire, is original, is beyond the concern of this paper).

following reign will show him holding a fire bowl. Under Kaniška, however, Farr's only characteristic attribute is his winged cap, which shows his filiation from Greek Hermes. In his case again the assimilation is functional (through the common association with prosperity), but it was probably helped by Hermes' wings which could call to mind Khvarenah's metamorphosis as a hawk (Yt. 19.34-38).

Different in its intention was the introduction of additional deities on very episodic issues of gold coins. They do not fit into the overall structure and these issues were probably motivated by particular circumstances, e.g., possibly, gratitude for help received, or the dedication of a temple. The appearance of Buddha (*Boddo*), Buddha Šākyamuni (*Sakamano Boudo*) and Buddha Maitreya (*Mētrago Boudo*), never repeated subsequently, has sometimes been explained this way.⁴⁴ Other gods exceptionally attested are Muzhduwan (whose image I have already discussed), *Orlagno*, i.e. Urlaghn (< Av. *vərəθraγna-*), modelled, like Muzhduwan, on the Kushan king, but standing and with his tiara surmounted by an eagle (one of Verethraghna's manifestations in his *Yašt*), *Lrooaspo*, i.e. Lruwāsp (< Av. *druuāspā-*), protectress of horses, for which no Greek image was available except the Dioscuri holding their horse, which led to the radical step of a sex change.⁴⁵ Moreover the bearded face is again analogous with the king's, a feature which brings together these three gods apparently sharing a military function. Was their choice a reflection of Kaniška's bellicose politics at the end of his reign, echoed by later Buddhist chronicles according to which he was assassinated by his own generals during a hazardous expedition in the North?⁴⁶

Among gods seldom represented, the most intriguing is *Manaobago*, i.e. Manābagh. He is the first Ameša Spenta attested in the Kushan pantheon, Av. *vohu.manah-*, the first one in the hierarchy, though here the ending is modified and he receives the qualification *baga* – "god" applied specifically to no other deity on Kushan coins. The iconographic type is complex to the extreme.⁴⁷ The god is enthroned (again a unique case) and wears a Greek helmet of the "Beotian" type, inherited from the Greco-Bactrian king Eucratides and many of his successors including the first Kushans in conventional representations, and also found in some divine images (at Tillia-tepe, and on some reverses of Kujula). The god has four arms – an audacious convention for the chief Ameša Spenta, for in Zoroastrianism physical abnormality is considered Ahrimanic. Each arm holds a specific attribute: two are Indian, the *cakra* (wheel) and the plough, borrowed from the

⁴⁴ The great *stūpa* in Peshawar, attributed to a "King Kaniška" by local tradition, actually appears to have been entirely rebuilt in a period corresponding to Kaniška I (Kuwayama 1997).

⁴⁵ The Bactrian form of the name, and its masculine gender, were eventually transmitted to Pahlavi accounts of Zoroastrian history, as Kay Lohrāsp substituted to Aurvat-aspa, Kavi Vīštāspa's father. This change is probably to be attributed to the influence of Bactrian Magi, as suggested also by the story of Kay Lohrāsp retiring in the fire temple at Balkh after his abdication.

⁴⁶ In the Chinese version of the *Sampradāya-nidāna* (Lévi 1896: 482-483). In this legend Kaniška is suffocated under a blanket, which (should the story be authentic) might hint at a taboo against shedding the royal blood, alien to Zoroastrian conceptions but attested later with the Turks, Khazars and Mongols.

⁴⁷ An excellent specimen is illustrated in Tanabe 1992: no. 166 (reproduced here, Fig. 1).

Vishnuite gods Krishna and Balarāma respectively. The two other attributes, hold in the lower hands, are an untied and a tied ribbon-diadem. In addition, a crescent moon rises behind his shoulders. Some of the attributes appear in fact compatible with the functions of the Iranian Vohu Manah: he is protector of cattle and especially of the cow, hence the plough which might have helped his assimilation with Balarāma; the seed of the cow is filtrated in the moon whose god (Māh) is listed among Vohu Manah's "helpers", hence the crescent. In the Vendidad (Vd. 19.31-32) Vohu Manah sits on a golden throne" (*gātu-*) where he welcomes the souls coming to Paradise. The diadem untied and tied, as well as possibly the Greek helmet (see above our interpretations of this attribute in other contexts), casts the god as bestower of power, Khšathra. Some Gāthic passages have actually been adduced in order to support this idea (Y. 31.4, 6; Y. 46.10, 16),⁴⁸ though it must be admitted that in the Avesta Vohu Manah is no more specifically associated with Khšathra than the other Ameša Spentas. With all his artificial complexity, the creation of Manābagh appears as a carefully calculated imperial initiative, targeted at the Vaishnavites as Wēš was targeting at the Shivaïtes.

Gold coins, though the most prestigious, most probably were reserved for a very limited range of uses (state holding, transfers between various provinces, donations, rewards to individuals?). Few ordinary citizens had the opportunity of handling them. Contrary to them, bronze denominations circulated widely, with exactly the same types present in all regions from Bactria to Gandhara, Kashmir, Nepal, Bengal or Northern Deccan. Bronze coins of Kaniška reproduce the selection of "naturalistic gods" shown on gold, with here again Wēš alternating with Wād and Ardwhkš (in one case only) replacing Nana. None of the rare gods is figured, with one exception, Buddha (*Boddo*), with variant names not attested on gold: Buddha Šākyamuni (*Sakamano Boudo*), Buddha Maitreya (*Mētrago Boudo*). This only exception is all the more interesting as the propaganda intention is clear: the bronze coins showing Buddha, with on the obverse the image of the king putting incense on a small altar, exactly as he did for his own gods, were intended for the Buddhist populations of the newly conquered Indian territories, in particular, one may think, the merchant classes of Indian towns. Brahmanical populations had to content themselves with their familiar image of Śiva, whose written name was foreign to them.

Enrichment and reduction: coin types under Huviška and later rulers

Huviška, Kaniška's son and successor, had a long reign (c. 150 – c. 190 CE), the early part of which at least appears to have been affected with domestic troubles the nature of which we do not know. Such troubles, not necessarily the same ones, are alluded to in the great restoration inscription at Surkh Kotal, dated 158/9 CE, and apparently reflected in the temporary lack of control over the production of gold coins in one of the

⁴⁸ Rosenfield 1967: 80.

two imperial mints: legends become corrupted or placed on images they do not belong to. Order seems to have been restored in the latter part of the reign.

Nevertheless, Huviška's reign was marked by interesting developments in the monetary pantheon. The two main phenomena are, on the one hand, the complete abandonment of any reference to Buddha, and on the other hand an effort to show more of the Zoroastrian pantheon.

The basic pantheon, depicted on both regular gold issues and bronze issues, remains stable, with Arwakhš and Farr sometimes replacing Nana and Āthš. On the bronze coinage the only oddity is occasional addition of Heracles (*Ērakilo*, on whom see below). The type of Farr, always keeping the winged cap borrowed from Hermes, is now diversified and partly Iranized through various attributes held in hands:⁴⁹ one type remains decidedly Hermaic, with the caduceus; in some other variants the gold has flames rising from his shoulders and holds a bowl of fire, which calls to mind the description of the “Khvarenah of the Kavis” in the *Mihr Yašt* (Yt. 10.127); in one variant he grasps a sword, which associates him with the military function; and in one case he holds a purse, expressing his concern with material prosperity and, perhaps more precisely, with the class of traders (another link with Hermes). Nana's type is also enriched, though always in accordance to her association with wildlife: in some cases she keeps the animal-ended staff she held on Kaniška's coins, in other types she is shown as Artemis archer, in a last one she sits on a lion, a return to her Mesopotamian iconography,⁵⁰ which was also to resurge in Sogdiana and Chorasmia in the seventh and eighth centuries.

All rare types in gold which had appeared under Kaniška are kept, except for Buddha, Urlaghn and Muzhduwan (but continuing the no less strange Lruwāsp and Manābagh). An unmistakable tribute to Zoroastrian “orthodoxy” is the appearance, albeit extremely rare, of Ahura Mazdā, spelled differently than at Rabatak. On the only two coins where the name is given in full it reads *Ōromozdo*,⁵¹ on the other two it is abridged (or rather corrupted) to *Ōrom*. The type accompanied by a full legend, bearded, dressed in a long tunic and mantle, holds a spear or sceptre, and hands over a wreath; the headgear, if there was any, is off the field. The types with corrupted legend are quite similar, but the god holds nothing in his right hand and he has a *polos* on his head, which could indicate a filiation with Zeus-Bēlos of issues from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.⁵² Influence from the type of Sarapis (on which see below) is also a possibility. One more Ameša Spenta appears,⁵³

⁴⁹ Bussagli 1951; Gnoli 1996.

⁵⁰ With a change, however, as in Mesopotamia Ishtar-Nana stands on her lion while in Central Asia she sits on him, a possible influence of the iconography of Cybele (on which see Francfort 2012: 125-126).

⁵¹ Doubt has been cast on the authenticity of the *Ōromozdo* coins reported in Patna since 1952, of which only photographs are accessible. There are two (not one as usually assumed), from one obverse die and two different reverse dies. The *Ōrom* type also exists with the legend *Oaxšo* (on which see below), obviously misplaced.

⁵² Grenet 1992: 148 and pl. LIX: 3-4.

⁵³ Contrary to an often expressed opinion, *Ašaeixšo* (associated with a type of Mihir) cannot be interpreted as Aša Vahišta for several phonological reasons, mainly because one does not

Šaorēoro, i.e. Šaurēwar (< Av. *xšaθrahe vairiiehe*, genitive of *xšaθra.vairiia-*, primarily a day-name).⁵⁴ The image seems to have been copied from types of Ares in the eastern Roman coinage where Ares carries the *gorgoneion*, like Šaurēwar on one coin type, the function put forward being the patronage of warriors, not that of metals or metallic sky.

Three other deities from the Zoroastrian pantheon are introduced, all depicted as female: *Rišto*, *Oanindo*, *Teiro*. *Rišto*, i.e. Rišt (< Av. *aršti-*, variant of the more frequent *arštāt* in Y. 57.33)⁵⁵ is the goddess of Justice, to whom Yašt 18 is consecrated; the image chosen for her was Athena *promachos*, holding the spear and the *gorgoneion*. *Oanindo*, i.e. Wanind, “the Victorious”, can be etymologised as masculine (< Av. *vanant-*) as well as feminine (< Av. *vanaintī-*) (both forms would have a similar outcome in Bactrian). In the Avesta the deity is masculine, giving his name to *Yašt* 20 and hailed as a “star” identified as Vega in Pahlavi literature, but the image chosen for coins was Nike bestowing a wreath. Probably she was not conceived as different from the attested Avestan god, as obviously those who selected Greek images for Kushan coins did not always bother about gender. Another such example is offered by another astral deity: *Teiro*, i.e. Tīr (< OIr **tīra-* / **tīrī-*), usually identified as Tištrya and henceforth masculine, is (on a unique coin) associated with the Artemis archer type which is more often a variant of Nana. This image was in fact also appropriate for Tīr, even more so (except for the sex change) as Tīr/Tištrya is conceived as an archer (originally the twinkling of the star Sirius embodied by Tištrya is compared with the vibration of an arrow, see Yt. 8.6, 37).

Two other gods are Iranian but do not belong to the Zoroastrian pantheon. *Oaxšo*, i.e. Wakhš (< OIr **waxšu-*), i.e. the god of the Oxus, is depicted as a bearded man very close to the *Ōromozdo* type (produced by the same mint in the same issue); he holds a long sceptre (or perhaps Poseidon’s trident, but the top is off the field) and a fish, the last detail identifying him as a river god. The extreme rarity of this type, so far attested by a unique coin, is in marked contrast with all the evidence indicating the great popularity of this god, known from many personal names in Bactria, Sogdiana and Chorasmia, and worshipped in an imposing Hellenistic temple which was still active in Kushan times.⁵⁶ Focussing on a specific river the worship generally prescribed to all Waters (*ābān*, more

expect -š- in the equivalent of Av. *aša-* (it should be *-rd-* as in *Ardoxšo*) (information supplied by Nicholas Sims-Williams). This invalidates also the reconstruction **aša-yaxša-* “Aša the luminous” (Tremblay 2004: 120-121). The only way to account for *Ašaeixšo* is to suppose an inaccurate reproduction of the name *Ardoxšo*, combined with an image permutation (the reverse case is attested in the same mint and emission: *Mioro* with the image of Ardwakhš). See already Zeimal’ 1974.

⁵⁴ Sims-Williams (same information): the internal *-ē-* suggests that it derives from the a genitive; there is no reason to consider it as a loanword from Western Middle Iranian, *pace* Humbach 1966/67, I: 47.

⁵⁵ Grenet 1984: 258-262; Grenet 2012b.

⁵⁶ Grenet 1991: 173-181; Francfort 2012 (whose proposal, p. 130, to recognize the name of the goddess Ardwakhsh as a *dvandva* **ṛtiš-waxšu*, with the god Oxus supposedly assuming the female gender, instead of the clearly explainable *ṛtiš wawhī*, “Good Aši”, cannot be accepted); Abdullaev 2013. See below on the temple at Takht-i Sangin.

properly understood as “rivers”)⁵⁷ is a tendency fully accepted in Zoroastrianism at all periods. We find a more problematic case with the last Iranian god to be examined, *Iamšo*, i.e. Yamš (< **Yama-xšāwā* “Yama king”), also known from only one coin.⁵⁸ He is clad in armour and has a high tiara, not unlike Huviška himself on his coins (the profile is identical, too); he wears a sword and holds a spear, and on his right wrist a bird (most likely a hawk, to judge from its size) agitates its wings as if it is going to take flight. Yima/Yama is an essential figure in the Zoroastrian history of mankind, a primeval ruler over all creatures; but he is not a god, and contrary to some other heroes he is said to have died (only his *fravaši* is invoked, in his case against drought and hidden demons, Yt. 13.130). Moreover, the image on the coin seems to allude to the circumstances of his fall, when the *khvarenah* escaped from him “in the shape of a hoak” (Yt. 19.34-38). How to reconcile these facts with his obvious divine status, proved by his very inclusion in a series where all other figures are gods and by the existence of Bactrian theonyms formed on his name (Yamš-lād “given by Yamš”, Yamš-bandag “servant of Yamš”)⁵⁹ One answer proposed postulates here a survival from a pre-Zoroastrian stratum: Yima had been an Indo-Iranian king of the dead, and even before the *Iamšo* coin was discovered the supposition had been raised that he might have kept this function in some “non-canonical” expressions of the religion.⁶⁰ It must be admitted, however, that capturing Yima’s image at the very moment he is doomed to downfall and death, though possibly hinting at his resulting function as king of the underworld, does not seem very proper for a god who is supposed to be presented in a more positive context. There remains the possibility that here Yima’s hawk is just a symbol of his royal power.⁶¹

A small number of non-Iranian gods appear on Huviška’s coins. The most frequently depicted (on gold and bronze issues) is *Ērakilo*, Heracles, usually shown according to pure Greek standards, with his club and lion pelt. He is the only nude deity figured on Kushan coins (all the Greek gods which could have been shown nude are dressed). One could be tempted to relate his apparition with the disappearance of Urlaghñ, as Heracles and Verethraghna are regularly assimilated in the Iranian West, but this is not certain as their respective images do not share one single attribute which could have helped establishing a link; moreover, on most bronze issues Heracles appears to be

⁵⁷ Kellens 2002/03: 324-325.

⁵⁸ Grenet 1984: 253-258. The etymology proposed here has been supported by Sims-Williams 1997/98: 196-197. Differently Humbach 2004: 57 (<*yima xšaēta*-).

⁵⁹ Buddha or Heracles are not to be distinguished from others in this respect: in the eyes of the authorities which selected them for coin issues they were probably considered as gods, worshipped as such by many subjects of the king, no matter with which particular theological niceties. Doubts expressed on the divine status of Yamš (e.g. Gnoli 1989: 919-927) do not bear examination, in view of the theophoric names which have now come to light in Bactrian documents.

⁶⁰ These testimonies include even the Sasanian religious establishment, as in Kerdīr’s vision it has been proposed to recognize Yima as the third “prince”, guardian of the pit of Hell (Skjaervø 1983: 298). On a possible influence of the concept of Yamš on post-Kushan Vaiśravaṇa, who in Sogdian painting appears as guardian of the Zoroastrian Hell, see Grenet 1995/96: 277-297.

⁶¹ For some more speculation on this matter see Grenet 2012b.

syncretized rather with Krishna (he has the characteristic swaying of the hips, and in one case the club is replaced by the long Indian bow). Another Greco-Roman god is *Sarapo*, Sarapis, rarely attested. His inclusion was probably more than a tribute to the immense prestige of Alexandria, of which the Kushan kings were certainly aware; it might suggest the presence (in the Indus harbours, or even farther north?) of migrant trading colonies.⁶² Finally, there are three Hindu deities (as already said, Buddha does not reappear): *Maāsena* (Mahāsenā), *Skando-Komaro* (Skanda-Kumāra), *Bizago* (Viśākha). In one case Mahāsenā appears alone, in another one in a group with the others. All belong to Śiva's circle, being often considered as his sons. At Rabatak both Mahāsenā and Viśākha are considered equivalents of Srōš, and this might be the reason why they were admitted in Huviška's monetary pantheon (was the interlinear gloss at Rabatak added during his reign?). Such is almost certainly the intention when Mahāsenā appears alone, as he is dressed like a Kushan and the cock surmounting his banner is a shared attribute of Mahāsenā and Srōš, though with different meanings (with Mahāsenā it symbolizes the solar energy and the agitation of young warriors, with Srōš the morning call to prayer).

The accession of Huviška's son Vāsudeva I (c. 190 – c. 230 CE) initiated an immediate and radical change in the monetary iconography: all gods disappear except Wēš. Under his successors (conventionally called the "Little Kushans", as they were expelled from Bactria by the Sasanid conquest and confined to Kapisa, Gandhara and Panjab),⁶³ Ardwakhš is also figured, the distribution between both gods aiming apparently only at identifying mints and issues. From that moment onwards these choices tell us nothing about the kings' personal religious sympathies. Probably they inclined rather to the Bhāgavata sect, as shown by the recurring name Vāsudeva (i.e. Krishna), new in the dynasty and carried by Vāsudeva I, then Vāsiška "little Vāsudeva" named after his grandfather Vāsudeva I, then Vāsudeva II with whom the line ended during the first third of the fourth century CE; this name alternates only with Kaniška (Kaniška

⁶² The hoard at Begram (Kapisi, one of the Kushan capitals), possibly a royal treasury rather than a merchant's store, contained many objects imported from Antioch and Alexandria, including a statuette of Heracles-Sarapis. Direct political contacts between the Kushans and the Roman empire are difficult to ascertain, as some eastern "embassies" mentioned by Roman writers were probably no more than groups of traders. In one case, namely the envoys sent by "the kings of the Bactrians" to Hadrian who received them in Northern Syria in 129 CE (*Hist. Aug. Hād.* 21.14), the information has the ring of truth, for the episode occurred shortly after Kaniška's accession and victories in India (Birley 1997: 225). There is no reason either to put in doubt the mention by Dio Chrysostomus (*Discourse* 32: 40) of "Bactrians, Scythians (i.e. *Indo-Scythians*) and a few Indians" in the Alexandria theatre during the 60s, i.e. under Kujula's reign.

⁶³ The unique recorded political contact between Kushans and Armenians occurred during Ardašir I's attack on Bactria, when a king called in Armenian Vehsachan (plausibly the name Vāsudeva adapted in order to mean "well-advised") sent for help: Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, 72 (transl. Thomson 1978: 219). The Sasanian victories over the Kushans were celebrated by a relief carved under Shāpūr I (240-272) at a short distance from Surkh Kotal: Grenet, Lee, Martinez & Ory 2007: 243-267, see 258-260 for a tentative chronology.

II, Kaniška III). This assumption can be confirmed only for Vāsudeva I, of whom a unique gold coin, probably from an accession issue, carries a four-armed image of the god Vāsudeva, duly named (*Bazodēo*) and entirely canonic, contrary to the syncretistic Manābagh with whom he shares only the attribute of the wheel.⁶⁴

“Kushan Zoroastrianism” put in perspective

Even under Huviška when prolixity was at its peak, the list of Zoroastrian gods depicted and named remained selective: altogether seventeen are attested (or eighteen if Nana was recognized as standing for Anāhitā), out of a total of twenty-seven calendar gods, or thirty gods worshipped at the *Āfrīnagān* ceremonies. As several gods are attested so far only by one coin, the list will probably expand a little in the future, but certainly not to the total. Some lacunae, if they were to be confirmed, can find plausible explanations. The remarkable absence of several goddesses linked with fertility (Spenta Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt, Ameretāt, while Druwāspa was masculinized!) suggests that their functions were absorbed by Nana on the one hand, Ardwalkhš on the other hand, and probably also Wakhš for the specific function of a river deity normally fulfilled by Anāhitā. A Manichaean missionary text pertaining to Mani’s lifetime, a few decades after the Sasanian conquest of Bactria, mentions Bag Ardwalkhš (*bg’rdw’xš*) “the god(dess) Ardwalkhš” as “frontier-guard” of the Kushan country,⁶⁵ which confirms her local pre-eminence; eventually, at least in Sogdiana from the sixth century onwards, she will in her turn be eclipsed by Nana. Other unattested gods belong more to the sphere of individual eschatology – the Daēna, the Fravašis, Aša -, and therefore may have not been deemed very suitable for state propaganda (all of them will appear later in Sogdian art, which is private). On the contrary gods with a military function, or at least iconographically assimilated to Greek military gods, are over-represented.

Taken as a whole, the selection does not seem to betray much influence of the Zoroastrian calendar. Three deities excluded from it (the reason why their respective Yašt were either re-dedicated to calendar gods or reduced to almost nothing) are shown on coins: Wēš, Lruwāsp and Wanind. The uppermost stratum of the pantheon, which structures the calendar (the first day of each week being dedicated to Ahura Mazdā and the first week to the Ameša Spentas), is poorly represented. Though the Zoroastrian

⁶⁴ Tanabe 1992: no. 197.

⁶⁵ Accepted (with some caution) by Sundermann 1987: 72 (see also the Addendum in the 2001 reprint: 425). The form *bg’rdw’xš* instead of the expected *bg’rdwxš* indicates an influence of *w’xš* “spirit”. On a victory gold coin issued, presumably in the last decade of the 3rd century CE, by the Kushano-Sasanian king Pērōz I who had pushed beyond Shāpūr I’s eastern frontier on the Khayber Pass, Ardwalkhš presents him with the Kushan tiara (Göbl 1984: 35, no. 555; 164, type “Ardoxšo 6”; for the attribution and probable date see Grenet, Lee, Martinez & Ory 2007: 259-260 with fn. 16). This would be perfectly consistent with her function of frontier-guard of the Kushan country.

calendar had been used by the Achaemenian administration in Bactra,⁶⁶ and surely remained known to priests (hence the names *Āthsh* and *Šaurēwar* coming from day-names), the calendar used on Kushan royal inscriptions is the Babylonian Seleucid calendar. The Zoroastrian calendar is directly re-attested only in chancery documents from the post-Kushan period with the full list of day-names named after Avestan gods, while the month names continue to include some of Babylonian origin and only a few gods: “the Ahura”, Mithra, and the Hellenistic Demeter (or more exactly one of her festivals: *Dēmatrigān* “(month) containing the festival of Demeter”).

Viewed in the general perspective of religious diversity in the Kushan empire, the choices made by the emperors create a biased impression: a coexistence of the Zoroastrian pantheon (supplemented with some Iranian local gods) and Hinduism (chiefly Shivaism, secondarily Vishnuism), with several attempts at creating divine figures acceptable to both communities. Taken alone, the coinage would lead us to think that Buddhism was a very limited and episodic phenomenon, a picture which we know was very far from the truth even in the Iranian-speaking parts of the empire where Buddhism had gained a solid foothold already in the first century CE. In fact, if we chose to consider the evidence of all manifestations of plastic arts apart from coins, the impression is diametrically reversed: the proportion of non-Buddhist works appears negligible. One can attempt to account for this contrast by addressing sociological factors: “It seems likely that there was also a level of cultivated taste apart from the Kushan nobility, a level of the standard patron of the Buddhist church – merchants, bankers, caravaners, minor officials. These were persons who had a more prolonged and intimate awareness of the Hellenic tastes of the Indo-Greek and Indo-Parthian princes than did the Kushans (...). The Kushan nobility, on the other hand, seems to have modelled its dress and beliefs on those of the Parthian court”.⁶⁷ One could perhaps add that, as far as alliances were concerned, the Kushan power was more interested in addressing the Indian military class (which one can presume to have predominantly followed Hindu cults, especially Shivaism) than the unarmed urban populations with which Buddhism was more at home. Even reformulated in this way this is, of course, a simplified view, as we know that some members of the Kushan high aristocracy showed Buddhist preferences: a striking example is Nukunzuk, the margrave who carried out the restoration of the certainly non-Buddhist Surkh Kotal temple (see below), who qualifies himself with typical Buddhist epithets (“beneficent, compassionate, pure-minded towards all living beings”) in the inscription commemorating his action.⁶⁸ In the Indian territories ethnically Kushan donors are numerous, identified by their costumes (in the reliefs) or by their names

⁶⁶ Naveh & Shaked 2012: 35-36.

⁶⁷ Rosenfield 1967: 73.

⁶⁸ Sims-Williams 2008: 65. These epithets were hitherto assumed to belong to King Huviška. The unique alleged case of a deliberate syncretism between Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, the name *Boddo mozdo* written next to a flaming Buddha in a Buddhist cave at Kara-tepe, is illusory as *mozdo* is rather to be interpreted as *mužd* “bounty” (as in Muzhduwan) rather than as *Mazdā* (Sims-Williams 2010).

(in inscriptions). Later Buddhist chronicles portray the Kushan kings as committed protectors of the faith, especially Kaniška, while Zoroastrian works do not preserve one single mention of them: this distortion can in part be explained by the huge productivity of Buddhist literature, compared with the scantiness of Zoroastrian church history, which moreover was collected in the West, under the Sasanians who had put an end to Kushan rule in Iranian territories. In Buddhist literature the image of the Kushans also benefited from the contrast with the persecuting dynasties which followed.

Despite the great ingenuity displayed at borrowing, adapting or creating physical types for most deities of the Zoroastrian pantheon, one can seriously doubt that all these images existed in private houses or even in temple. In certain cases (Mihir, Mā, Āthš, Farr, Šaurēwar, even Wēš and Manābagh under Huviška) they appear to lack physical substance, sharing the same skeletal, “Barbie doll”,⁶⁹ body scheme, liable to be variously specified by added attributes. Other images may have been copied from Roman coins or intaglios rather than from statues existing in the country. When real cult statues in Hellenistic style are reproduced later on on Kushano-Sasanian coins, they look quite different.⁷⁰ Very few of these types are actually attested in other media: Śiva (never strictly identical with the type selected for Wēš), Wād, Ardwakhš, Farr reinterpreted in a Buddhist context as, respectively, the Indian wind-god Vāyu and the great tutelary couple formed by Hārītī (protectress of children) and Pāncika-Kubera (guardian of riches and of monasteries);⁷¹ both are also frequently attested on seals. The enthroned Manābagh appears on an uninscribed seal where he is shown giving investiture to a kneeling king; he exhibits the same features as on coins, except for the *cakra* replaced by a small Nike holding a wreath.⁷² Nana on her lion is seldom represented in India, and before the end of the Kushan period she merges with Durgā who keeps this attribute;⁷³ also, the image of Mihir eventually became one of the components of the Hindu Suryā, though the latter is most often depicted as a charioteer, contrary to Mihir.⁷⁴ Sogdian art of the sixth-eighth centuries CE, where an effort was made to create a type for as many gods as possible, shows little continuity with the solutions which had been adopted for the Kushan coinage.

Terracotta figures are the main surviving testimonies of popular devotion. In Kushan Bactria the types are never identical nor even analogous with those on coins, except

⁶⁹ As aptly qualified in Zeimal’ 1997.

⁷⁰ *burzāwand yazad* “the god who possesses the heights”, i.e. Wēš figured as Zeus enthroned (Cribb 1997: 63); “Anāhid the Lady” as Artemis enthroned (Grenet & Marshak 1998: 8 with fig. 4).

⁷¹ Rosenfield 1967: 72: “The Iranian gods are (...) rarely found elsewhere in the arts of the empire, because Buddhism was the only organized religion there to produce cult imagery in large numbers. Thus, when these Iranian deities appear in the sculpture of the Kushanshahr, it is often in the form in which they had been integrated into the Buddhist faith”.

⁷² Mukherjee 1969: 95-97 and pl. IX: 32.

⁷³ Ghose 2006.

⁷⁴ Gail 1978.

for Athena and the nude Heracles;⁷⁵ they might or might not have been worshipped as Rišt and Urlaghn. One very popular type of a seated female goddess holding a flower (?) can be traced back to Parthian-Syrian sculpture, probably via moulds imported from the Parthian empire, while another (holding a pomegranate) was developed from a Hellenistic image of a seated goddess; on some specimens her headdress is topped by a moon crescent also found on coin images of Nana, but in the absence of the lion, either as a seat nor as an ornament, this identification remains hypothetical.⁷⁶ A statuette of another type had been reworked after moulding in order to look specifically like Ardvaḥš on coins, but this is a unique case.⁷⁷ A goddess holding a mirror, though never shown on coins, is depicted by terracottas found not only in Bactria but also in Margiana and Chorasmia, which indicates her pan-East Iranian character. She has been tentatively interpreted as still another type of Ardvaḥš, because of Aši's partial functional analogy with Aphrodite (who also holds a mirror).⁷⁸ In reality this iconographic type is inherited from the Scythian background, where a goddess holding a mirror sometimes appears in investiture scenes, and this Scythian goddess has been identified rather as Tabiti.⁷⁹

Temples and shrines

No fire temple dating from the Kushan period has been discovered. Only two documents bear witness or possible witness to the cult of fire being conducted in Zoroastrian fashion.

A set of Bactrian wool hangings found in a royal grave at Noin-Uila (Mongolia) appear to date from the pre-imperial or early imperial period of the Kushan dynasty. It shows a battle scene and a sacrificial scene. On the later a ruler with Yuezhi features and another character, probably a priest, are pouring libations over a stepped fire altar with flames rising up. The ruler is followed by attendants, one of whom brings a saddled horse, apparently to be sacrificed. Although the "priest" has no *padām* (mouth cover) nor white dress all these details are compatible with a Zoroastrian interpretation, which however is not compulsory.⁸⁰

The second document is a painting on cotton which depicts king Huviška enthroned, with on his sides courtiers belonging to the three State orders (Fig. 2):⁸¹ to his left, a warrior representing the military estate, and a dish-bearer who is most probably the palace

⁷⁵ See e.g. Abdullaev 2004: 32-34 with figs. 12-13.

⁷⁶ Ilyasov & Mkrtychev 1991/92; Abdullaev 2003.

⁷⁷ Ilyasov & Mkrtychev 1991/92: 119 and pl. X.

⁷⁸ So Grenet 1987, about post-Kushan paintings showing the "goddess with a mirror" syncretized with Athena, i.e. Rišt?

⁷⁹ Grenet 2012a: 18-19 and fig. 16. On a variant the Scythian "investiture goddess" holds a rhyton instead, which also reappears on some figures of a Bactrian goddess with typical Yuezhi facial features. Could this "ethnic" goddess be the Umma of the Kushans?

⁸⁰ Polosmak 2010 (see also the link <http://kolyvanski.livejournal.com/35095>). The high-stemmed libation vessel held by the ruler is here misinterpreted as a mushroom (fly agaric) supposedly used to produce the *haoma*.

⁸¹ Marshak & Grenet 2006.

intendant or the chief tax collector, therefore representing the economic functions; to his right, two characters the heads of which are only partially preserved, showing their hair combed back. The only one whose face is visible has his hair tightened in a net, and over his mouth very probably a *padām*. Both carry long staffs ending with a sphere and crescent ornament. They come out of a crenelated building depicted schematically, not unlike the temple shown earlier on coins of the *Fratarakas* of Persis. In this context they are most probably priests who are going to solemnize a service to the Fire. As for the scene as a whole, the central part of which is missing, is it tentatively reconstructed as the investiture of the crown prince by means of a bow and quiver handed over by the king. Besides the priests and temple, the religious element is represented by a *putto* flying over the king's head and bringing an untied diadem, a Hellenistic motive probably interpreted as the Khvarenah.

The most famous non-Buddhist temple dating from the Kushan period was built by Kaniška at the site now known at Surkh Kotal in Southern Bactria (Fig. 3).⁸² Contrary to Rabatak the ancient place name is not specified in the inscription, which only mentions the *bagolaggo* “temple”, lit. “place of the gods” (this generic name has actually survived as the proper name of the neighbouring town Baghlān).⁸³ Excavated from 1951 to 1963, it was first interpreted as a temple to the dynastic Fire because its cella has a central brick podium faced with stone and set between four columns, which called to mind the plan of the Sasanian fire-temples. This interpretation is now abandoned. There were actually fire-chambers (one, possibly two) next to the cella, inside the temple wall, but these small buildings were erected when the cella was no more functioning, after the Sasanian conquest. In the cella itself the only ashes which have been found were accumulated when the temple caught on fire and were not the result of any cult activity. The square podium (sides 4,70 m, h. 90 cm) was probably surmounted by a stone pedestal decorated by a frieze some dispersed elements of which have been discovered; in its turn it could have carried a cult statue. Nothing in the architecture hints positively at a Zoroastrian ritual, though nothing really excludes it (a sacred fire does not necessarily require a permanent building). The whole building is strictly oriented towards the East, with the cella opening in this direction. The monumental dedicatory (SK 1) inscription has been found in a fragmentary state but the word “year” is legible. The longest inscription (SK 4, found in three copies) commemorates a restoration carried out in 158/9 CE under Huviška, by the margrave Nukunzuk who some twenty-five years earlier, in a more junior position, had already taken part to the foundation of the Rabatak temple.⁸⁴ Though far from providing satisfactory information about the nature of the cult, it gives some

⁸² Schlumberger, Le Berre & Fussman 1983.

⁸³ See Huyse 2003 for a comparison between the Bactrian *bagolaggo*, its Indian semantic counterpart the *devakula* (attested at Mat near Mathura), and the Armenian image temples (all royal foundations, with images of several gods and, in the first two categories, statues of royal patrons).

⁸⁴ Lazard, Grenet & de Lamberterie 1984: 226-7 for the edition and translation of SK 4; see also Sims-Williams' re-edition in the present volume.

important details: the source inside the fortress dried out and, because of troubles caused by “enemies” it was not possible to fetch water from outside; consequently “the gods turned away from their seat” (probably to be understood: they did not anymore respond to the sacrifices),⁸⁵ and “they” (i.e.: their statues) had to be carried to a place of safety, the acropolis of the town Lraf (i.e. Drapsaka / Drapsa mentioned in Alexander’s campaigns),



Fig. 2: Huviška investing his successor, with two priests on the left. Painting on cotton (document F. Grenet).

while the fortress was abandoned. Some time after, Nukunzuk “inspected”⁸⁶ the site and ordered to build a well and its attachments, so that “the gods would not anymore turn away from their seat”. These formulae do not allow us to decide for sure whether the reason for the interruption of the cult had been religious (the lack of pure ritual water) or merely practical (a consequence of the fortress becoming inhabitable). A stone well has actually been discovered in the excavations, just at the foot of the monumental staircase built on the slope of the hill; though the actual structure dates from a far later period, it might have replaced Nukunzuk’s well on the same spot.

The opening sentence of the restoration inscription reads as follows: *eido ma lizo mo*

⁸⁵ Differently Sims-Williams (2012: 78b): “were displaced from (their) seat”.

⁸⁶ Not “drew a furrow [of purification]” (thus in the translation, but corrected on p. 232).

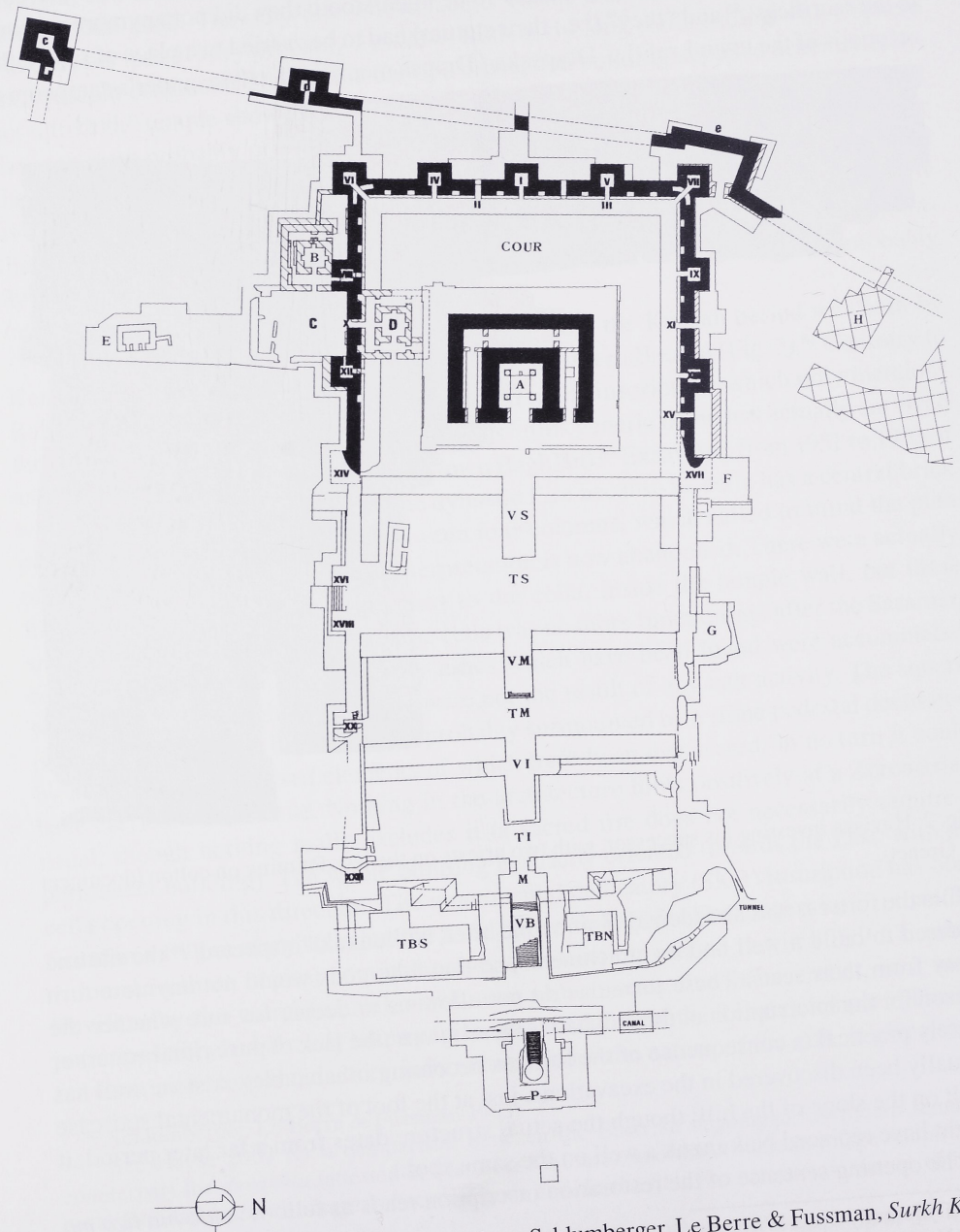


Fig. 3: Surkh Kotal, plan of the sanctuary (from Schlumberger, Le Berre & Fussman, *Surkh Kotal en Bactriane*, pl. III). B and D: fire-chambers.

kanēsko oanindo bagolaggo, sīdo i bago šao kanēški namobargo kirdo “This fortress is the temple of Victorious Kaniška (or: the Kaniška temple of Wanind), which has received the name of the Lord King Kaniška”. Nothing survives of the postulated cult statue in the cella, but the frieze which probably decorated its pedestal contained three images of Śiva, either with his bull or with his consort Pārvatī. If indeed the temple was dedicated specifically to Wanind, then she was “inviting” other deities (the same way as Umma did at Rabatak), two of them being Śiva and Umā (i.e., in their Bactrian versions, Wēš and Umma or Wēš and Nana). A badly eroded stele which originally stood under the portico in the temple courtyard, opposite the aisle containing statues of Kushan kings, shows an enthroned Kushan king with long hair, tiara and flames rising from his shoulders, facing a smaller figure which could be a Nike, i.e. Wanind.⁸⁷ The restoration inscription, however, always mentions “the gods”, without specification, but now we have an inscription commemorating Nukunzuk offering Kaniška’s Indian spoils to a temple of Wēš,⁸⁸ the possibility can be contemplated that this temple was indeed Surkh Kotal (it cannot be Rabatak where the main deities are Umma and Nana and where Wēš is not named in the list). One cannot even totally exclude that Surkh Kotal was specifically consecrated to the Shivaite component of Kaniška’s pantheon with no other Zoroastrian element than the Iranian re-naming of Shiva.

Archaeological excavations at Rabatak are still just a hope for the future. Two other imposing Bactrian temples, built during the Greek period, are known to have functioned under the Kushans, but in both cases the picture is blurred by chronological uncertainties. On the northern bank of the Oxus, at the site now known as Takht-i Sangin and called Oxēiana in Ptolemy, the temple dedicated to this river-god (Wakhš) continued to be lavishly endowed, as appears from offerings dating from this period. A dedicatory inscription to the god, in Greek, dating probably from the early imperial period (middle or second half of the first century AD), emanates from a high administrator carrying the title *molrpalrēs* where the first element is clearly Bactr. *molr* “seal”, and whose father Nemiskos seems to have a typical Kushan name with the final element *-ēšk*.⁸⁹ It is now held as having been in service until at least the fourth century CE, later than previously believed. We do not know whether or not in the Kushan period the cult statue was similar to the image reproduced on Huviška’s coin. The doubts which had arisen after the first publications, especially concerning the period when the two chambers flanking the entrance began to be occupied by ever-burning fires, have not been appeased by subsequent ones, and it is to be feared that some decisive archaeological facts are beyond recovery.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ So Schlumberger in Schlumberger, Le Berre & Fussman, I: 122-123; II: pl. 65 (and Fussman’s comments, I: 152). Less convincingly Verardi 1983: 272-275 (the king in front of a fire-holder).

⁸⁸ Sims-Williams, “A new Bactrian inscription from the time of Kanishka” (in this volume).

⁸⁹ Rougemont 2012: 274-276, fig. 96bis 1, 2, 3.

⁹⁰ Bernard 1994. The final reports subsequently published concentrate on the reconstitution of the original Greek architectural phase, and the information concerning the two so-called *ātešgāh* is inadequately illustrated and sometimes contradictory (Litvinskii & Pichikian 2000: 97-113,

At Dil'berdzhin, an important town to the north of Bactra, the main temple conventionally known as the "Temple of the Dioscuri" was repeatedly enlarged, with in all phases stands for statues in the cella.⁹¹ A painting showing Śiva and Umā (Pārvatī) has been attributed to the Kushan period by the excavator, but stylistically it cannot date from before the fifth, maybe even the seventh century CE.⁹² A long Bactrian inscription also found in the cella, fragmentary and poorly legible, can be attributed to the Kushan period on palaeographical grounds; it appears to commemorate restoration works commissioned by a "lord" (*xoadēo*, same qualification as for Nukunzuk at Surkh Kotal), and it is not impossible that the first line contains the name Wēš, who in this case would be designated as the main deity worshipped in the temple.⁹³

Still at Dil'berdzhin, a small temple within the walled town, opposite the "Temple of the Dioscuri",⁹⁴ contained a bench for statues at the back of the cella. From the Kushan period the head of a goddess, modelled in clay and painted, has survived; the excavator identified her as Nana but there is no specific attribute. In a subsequent phase dating from the Kushano-Sasanian period a triad occupied the bench, with a bearded god in the middle quite similar to the syncretistic god *burzāwand yazd* "the god who possesses the heights" of Kushano-Sasanian coins (presumably a combination of Bactrian Wēš and Persian Ohrmazd), and two smaller statues of goddesses on his sides. Within the southern city gate stood a small shrine to Heracles, no doubt used by soldiers;⁹⁵ the earliest clay statue contained coins of one of the kings named Vāsudeva; the successor statue followed the type of Heracles-Krishna shown on coins of Huviška, so an assimilation with Uralagn, if it took place here, cannot be ascertained.

No other public temple is known. A Bactrian inscription on a silver dish contains a dedication to the "god Manā", suggesting that it was destined to a temple of Manābagh; it dates from 265/6 CE, already after the Sasanian conquest.⁹⁶

Apart from Dil'berdzhin, only two Kushan towns have been submitted to large excavations extending to dwelling quarters: Kampyr-tepe (a military settlement at a crossing post near Termez) and Dal'verzintepe (a more important town to the north, with aristocratic or merchant houses). No temple nor sanctuary has been found yet at

pl. 27; Litvinskij & Pičikjan 2002: 38-51, pl. 14).

⁹¹ Kruglikova 1986.

⁹² Already Taddei 1978: 288-289, fig. 5.58. There was much discussion subsequently about the chronology of the "Dioscuri temple", bringing about various solutions, but, as a whole, not leaving much of the remains to the Kushan phase: Fitzsimmons 1996; Lo Muzio 1999.

⁹³ Grenet in Lazard, Grenet & de Lamberterie 1984: 218-219.

⁹⁴ Kruglikova 1982: 161 with fig. 5, 168-171; Shenkar 2014: 156 and fig. 152.

⁹⁵ Kruglikova 1977: 422-424.

⁹⁶ Sims-Williams 2013. A set of painted terracottas from Bactria showing several deities, probably dating from the second half of the second century CE, has been published as a product of Zoroastrian-Shivaite syncretism (Carter 1997), but Tigran Mkrtchev (unpublished paper) has since demonstrated that the entire iconography can be explained within the iconographic conventions of Shivaism, though the image of Śiva Mahādeva could have been called Wēš in Bactria.

Kampyr-tepe, but at Dal'verzintepe the potters' quarter included a shrine,⁹⁷ within the cella a bench carrying two statuary groups, one showing a lady with a nude boy, the other a lady with a dressed girl. The latter lady could be a donor, but the other one, facing the entrance, is surely a goddess. She is probably to be identified with Ardwakhš-Hārīti, protectress of married women and children; as a painting in a neighbouring room shows the Great Departure of the Buddha,⁹⁸ the context seems Buddhist rather than Zoroastrian (two Buddhist sanctuaries have been excavated elsewhere in the town), though combined devotion is not excluded at this popular level of religiosity. Also at Dil'berdzhin, an opulent house appears to have received a private shrine in the first century CE; in the following century it included a clay statue of a lady, and a painting which has been interpreted as a priest holding over his head a child, or a puppet. In reality the subject as a whole is entirely taken from the Greek legend: Leda with the swan (formerly mistaken for Ardwakhš with the cornucopia), the birth of the Dioscuri, then Iphigenia (the Dioscuri's niece) being brought to the sacrifice by Agamemnon or Calchas.⁹⁹ Though providing a fascinating glimpse of a persistence of the Hellenistic literary heritage in Kushan Bactria, this group of rooms is difficult to interpret in religious terms, and maybe it was not a sanctuary at all.¹⁰⁰

Funerary practices

Throughout the Kushan period some people in Bactria continued to be buried like their nomad ancestors, in *kurgans*, catacombs or pits grouped in special zones. At the same time cemeteries are known near all the towns and villages which have been archaeologically explored.¹⁰¹ In all cases when burial was collective and in special buildings (called *naus* in the archaeological literature in Russian, according to the name the Arab conquerors gave to such buildings), it appears that the ritual continues that attested at Ai Khanum during the Greek period: corpses, deposited with a few ornaments and offerings, were left to decompose slowly on benches, without the aid of carnivores; then the bones were swept away in a corner, or gathered in some of the vaults of the mausoleum while the others became free to receive a new corpse. Contrary to what was observed at Ai Khanum the bones of the individuals were not stored in jars. This does not mean that artificial excarnation of corpses was unknown (when bones are not subsequently collected

⁹⁷ G.A. Pugachenkova in Pugachenkova & Rtveladze 1978: 116 fig. 81, 130-143, 214-215; Bernard 1980: 331-332.

⁹⁸ Pugachenkova in Pugachenkova & Rtveladze 1978: 217-218; reinterpretation by Kazim Abdullaev (unpublished paper communicated by the author).

⁹⁹ See Grenet 2015. The painting is illustrated in Pugachenkova & Rtveladze 1978: 81 figs. 53-55.

¹⁰⁰ The theory of "domestic fire sanctuaries", constructed by Soviet archaeologists using in particular the Dal'verzintepe material, was aptly refuted by Bernard 1980: 323-330.

¹⁰¹ Main references: Rtveladze in Pugachenkova & Rtveladze 1978: 97-114; Bernard 1980: 336-339; Litvinskii & Sedov 1983: 84-106; Grenet 1984: 95-106, 218-20, 327-328; Rtveladze 1987: 29-39 and pls. XIV-XXIII.

individually it is almost impossible to detect), but not one single alleged case alleged in archaeological literature bears examination.¹⁰² No *dakhma* has ever been found in Bactria (which again does not mean that they did not exist, as according to Vd. 7.49-52 old *dakhmas* have to be destroyed – altogether only one or two *dakhmas* are known in Sogdiana and one in Chorasmia).

The obviously dominant practice contrasted with the use of dogs attested at Bactra at the time of Alexander's conquest, as well as with the excarnation by carnivores attested in the following period in the more northern regions of Sogdiana and Chorasmia (albeit there too "natural" excarnation remains in use side by side, and the beginning of the Zoroastrian practice is not safely observed before the fifth century CE). All which can be said, for the point of view of the history of Zoroastrianism, is burial directly in the ground was avoided, except in nomadic or post-nomadic contexts, while laying the corpse on a bench was at least acceptable as technically not offending the sacred element of Earth and its goddess Spenta Ārmaiti.¹⁰³ More in line with Zoroastrian prescriptions (e.g. *Great Bundahišn* 30.4-5) appears the use of small fire stands, found either inside the tomb or in front of it, in order to scare off the demons.¹⁰⁴

References

Abdullaev, Kazim

2003 Nana in Bactrian art. *SRAA* 9: 15-38.

2004 New finds of pre-Kushan and early Kushan plastic art in Northern Bactria and the Khalchayan reliefs. *Parthica* 6: 27-46.

2013 Images d'un dieu-fleuve en Asie centrale: l'Oxus. *CRAIBL* 2013: 173-192.

¹⁰² Such attempts by Rtveladze in Pugachenkova, Rtveladze 1978: 97-114; Litvinskii & Sedov 1983 (*loc. cit.*); Rtveladze 1987. *Contra*: Bernard 1980: 336-339; Grenet 1984: 98, 100-101.

¹⁰³ Some Bactrian Buddhists may have followed the dominant custom instead of cremation (a Buddhist statuette was found in a *naus* at Tapa-i Shakh: Litvinskii & Sedov 1983: 51-2, 81, 150 no. 6; pl. XXVI:3).

¹⁰⁴ The most spectacular testimony is at Kampyr-tepe, where elegant ceramic burners (typologically descendant from the temple stone burners of the Greco-Bactrian period), containing burnt twigs and fruits of wild roses, were buried in a trench, together with vases, along a long row of empty chambers (Rtveladze 1987: 35-38 and pls. XXII-XXIII). The excavator considered the latter as *katas*, chambers where to keep corpses before carrying them to the *dakhma*, but as some human bones were found in the trench (a situation not expected with a *kata*) they should rather be regarded as burial chambers which had been cleaned and not reused, while the sacrificial deposits remained buried in the trench in front.

- Bailey, Harold
1945 *Asica. Transactions of the Philological Society* 1945: 1-3.
- Bernard, Paul
1980 Une nouvelle contribution soviétique à l'histoire des Kushans: la fouille de Dal'verzintépé (Ouzbékistan). *BEFEO* 68: 313-348.
1994 Le temple du dieu Oxus à Takht-i Sangin en Bactriane: temple du feu ou pas? *Studia Iranica* 23: 81-121.
- Bernard, Paul, Jean-François Jarrige & Roland Besenval
2002 Carnet de route en images d'un voyage sur les sites archéologiques de la Bactriane afghane. *CRAIBL* 2002: 1385-1428.
- Birley, Anthony
1997 *Hadrian. The restless emperor*. London/New York (Routledge).
- Bopearachchi, Osmund
2008 Les premiers souverains kouchans: chronologie et iconographie monétaire. *Journal des Savants* 2008: 3-56.
- Boyce, Mary
1996 On the orthodoxy of Sasanian Zoroastrianism. *BSOAS* 59: 11-28.
- Bussagli, Mario
1951 Royauté, guerre et fécondité. À propos d'une monnaie kušāna. *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 140: 129-154.
- Carter, Martha
1997 Preliminary note on four painted terracotta panels. Allchin, Raymond & Bridget Allchin (eds.), *South Asian Archaeology 1995*, vol. 2. New Delhi - Calcutta (USB): 573-588.
- Cribb, Joe
1993 The 'Heraus' coins: their attribution to the Kushan king Kujula Kadphises, c. AD 30-80. Price, Martin, Andrew Burnett & Roger Bland (eds.), *Essays in honour of Robert Carson and Kenneth Jenkins*. London (Spink): 107-134, pls. XXIII-XXVII.
1997 Shiva images on Kushan and Kushano-Sasanian coins. Tanabe, Katsumi, Joe Cribb & Helen Wang (eds.), *Studies in Silk Road Coins and Culture*. Kamakura: 11-66.
- de Jong, Albert
1997 *Traditions of the Magi. Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin literature*. Leiden - New York - Köln (Brill).
- Falk, Harry
2012 Ancient Indian eras: an overview. *BAI* 21 (2007 [2012]): 131-145.
- Fitzsimmons, Tom
1996 Chronological problems at the Temple of the Dioscuri, Dil'berdzin Tepe (North Afghanistan). *East and West* 46: 271-298

Francfort, Henri-Paul

- 2011 Tilya Tépa (Afghanistan). La sépulture d'un roi anonyme de la Bactriane du I^{er} siècle P.C. *Topoi* 17: 277-347.
- 2012 Ai Khanoum 'Temple with indented niches' and Takht-i Sangin 'Oxus temple' in historical cultural perspective: outline of an hypothesis about the cults. *Parthica* 14: 109-136.

Fussman, Gérard

- 1974 Documents épigraphiques kouchans [I]. *BEFEO* 61: 2-66, pls. I-XXVII.
- 1998 L'inscription de Rabatak et l'origine de l'ère Śaka. *Journal Asiatique* 286: 571-651.

Gail, Adalbert

- 1978 Der Sonnenkult im alten Indien – Eigengewächs oder Import? *ZDMG* 128: 333-348.

Ghose, Madhuvanti

- 2006 Nana: the 'original' goddess on the lion. *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 1: 97-112.

Gnoli, Gherardo

- 1989 On Kushan and Avestan Yima. De Meyer, L. & Erni Haerinck (eds.), *Archaeologia Iranica et Orientalis. Miscellanea in honorem Louis Vanden Berghe*. Gent: 919-927
- 1996 Note Kušāna: a proposito di una recente interpretazione di Pharro. *La Persia e l'Asia centrale da Alessandro al X secolo Roma* (Atti dei Convegni Lincei, 127): 685-702.

Göbl, Robert

- 1984 *System und Chronologie der Münzprägung des Kušānreiches*. Wien (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften).

Grenet, Frantz

- 1984 Notes sur le panthéon iranien des Kouchans. *Studia Iranica* 13: 253-262.
- 1987 L'Athéna de Dil'berdžin. Grenet, Frantz (ed.), *Cultes et monuments religieux dans l'Asie centrale préislamique*. Paris (Éditions du CNRS): 41-45, pls. XXIV-XXV.
- 1991 In Eastern Iran: the Greek kingdoms. Boyce, Mary & Frantz Grenet (eds.), *A History of Zoroastrianism, III: Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman rule*. Leiden (E.J. Brill): 152-193.
- 1992 Mithra au temple principal d'Aï Khanoum? Bernard, Paul & Frantz Grenet (eds.), *Histoire et cultes de l'Asie centrale préislamique. Sources écrites et documents archéologiques*. Paris (Éditions du CNRS): 147-151.
- 1995/96 Vaiśravaṇa in Sogdiana. About the origins of Bishamon-ten. *SRAA* 4: 277-297.
- 2000 Novaia gipoteza o datirovke rel'efov Khalchaiana. *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* 2000: 130-135.
- 2001 Mithra, dieu iranien: nouvelles données. *Topoi* 11: 35-58.

- 2003 *La geste d'Ardashir fils de Pâbag*. Die (Éditions À Die).
- 2006 Nouvelles données sur la localisation des cinq *yabghus* des Yuezhi. L'arrière plan politique de l'itinéraire des marchands de Maës Titianos. *Journal Asiatique* 294: 325-341.
- 2010 Iranian gods in Hindu garb: The Zoroastrian pantheon of the Bactrians and Sogdians, second-eighth centuries. *BAI* 20 (2006 [2010]): 87-99.
- 2012a The nomadic element in the Kushan empire (1st - 3rd century AD). *Journal of Central Eurasian Studies* 3: 1-22.
- 2012b Yima en Bactriane et en Sogdiane: nouveaux documents. Azarnouche, Samra & Céline Redard (eds.), *Yama / Yima: variations indo-iraniennes sur la geste mythique*. Paris (Collège de France): 83-94.
- 2015 Between written texts, oral performance and mural paintings: illustrated scrolls in pre-Islamic Central Asia. Rubanovich, J. & Shaul Shaked (eds.), *Orality and textuality in the Iranian world*. Leiden (Brill) (forthcoming).
- Grenet, Frantz, Jonathan Lee, Philippe Martinez & François Ory
- 2007 The Sasanian relief at Rag-i Bibi (Northern Afghanistan). Cribb, Joe & Georgina Herrmann (eds.), *After Alexander. Central Asia before Islam* (Proceedings of the British Academy, 133). Oxford: 243-267.
- Grenet, Frantz & Boris Marshak
- 1998 Le mythe de Nana dans l'art de la Sogdiane. *Arts Asiatiques* 53: 5-18.
- Humbach, Helmut
- 1966/67 *Baktrische Sprachdenkmäler*, 2 vols., Wiesbaden (Otto Harrassowitz).
- 1975 Vayu, Śiva und der Spiritus Vivens im ostiranischen Synkretismus. *Monumentum H.S. Nyberg I* (Acta Iranica, 4), Téhéran-Liège: 402-408.
- 2004 Yima/Jamšēd. Cereti, Caro G., Beniamino Melasecchi & Farrokh Vajifdar (eds.), *Varia Iranica* (Orientalia Romana, 7). Roma (Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente): 45-58.
- Huyse, Philip
- 2003 Überlegungen zum βαγολαγγο des Kaniška I. Cereti, Carlo G., Mauro Maggi & Elio Provasi (eds.), *Religious themes and texts of pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia*. Wiesbaden (Dr. Ludwig Reichert): 175-189.
- Ilyasov, Djangar Ya. & Tigran K. Mkrtychev
- 1991/92 Bactrian goddess from Dalverzin-tepe (attempts at typological analysis). *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 2: 107-127.
- Kellens, Jean
- 2002/03 Le problème avec Anāhitā. *Orientalia Suecana* 51-52: 317-326.
- Kruglikova, Irina T.
- 1977 Les fouilles de la mission archéologique soviéto-afghane sur le site gréco-kushan de Dilberdjīn en Bactriane (Afghanistan). *CRAIBL* 1977: 407-427.
- 1982 Dil'berdzhin – kushanskii gorod v Severnom Afganistane. Guliaev, V.I. (ed.), *Arkheologiia starogo i novogo sveta*. Moskva: 153-176.

- 1986 *Dil'berdzhin: khram Dioskurov*. Moskva (cf. review by Paul Bernard, *Abstracta Iranica* 10 (1987), no, 189).
- Kuwayama, Sh.
1997 *The main stūpa at Shāh-jī-kī Dherī. A chronological outlook*. Kyoto (Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University).
- Lazard, Gilbert, Frantz Grenet & Charles de Lamberterie
1984 Notes bactriennes. *Studia Iranica* 13: 199-232.
- Lévi, Silvain
1896 Notes sur les indo-scythes. *Journal Asiatique* 9^e série, 8: 444-483.
- Litvinskij, B.A. & I.R. Pichikian
2000 *Èllinisticheskii khram Oksa v Baktrii, I: Raskopki. Arkhitektura. Religioznaia zhizn'*, 2000.
- Litvinskij, B.A. & I.R. Pičikjan
2002 *Taxt-i Sangīn. Der Oxus-Tempel. Grabungsbefund, Stratigraphie und Architektur*. Mainz (Philip von Zabern).
- Litvinskiĭ, B.A. & A.V. Sedov
1983 *Tepai-shakh. Kul'tura i sviazi kushanskoi Baktrii*. Moskva (Nauka).
- Lo Muzio, Ciro
1995/96 OHPO: A sovereign god. *SRAA* 4: 161-174.
1999 The Dioscuri at Dilberdjīn (Northern Afghanistan): Reviewing their chronology and significance. *Studia Iranica* 28: 41-71.
- Marshak, Boris & Frantz Grenet
2006 Une peinture kouchane sur toile. *CRAIBL* 2006: 947-963.
- Mode, Markus
2013 Die Skulpturenfriese von Chalčajan. Neue Rekonstruktionsversuche zur Kunst der frühen Kuschan in Baktrien. Linström, Gunvor, Svend Hansen, Alfried Wiczorek & Michael Tellenbach (eds.), *Zwischen Ost und West. Neue Forschungen zum antiken Zentralasien*. Darmstadt (Philip von Zabern): 205-220.
- Mukherjee, B.N.
1969 *Nanā on lion*. Calcutta (The Asiatic Society).
- Naveh, Joseph & Shaul Shaked
2012 *Aramaic documents from Ancient Bactria (fourth century BCE)*. London (The Khalili Family Trust).
- Polosmak, Natalia
2010 My vypili Somu, my stali bessmertnymi. Novosibirsk (Nauka iz pervykh ruk 33): 50-59.
- Potts, Daniel T.
2001 Nana in Bactria. *SRAA* 7: 23-35.
- Pugachenkova, Galina & Éduar V. Rtveladze
1978 *Dal'verzintepe, kushanskii gorod na juge Uzbekistana*. Tashkent.

Rapin, Claude

- 2001 (with Mukhammadjon Isamidinov & Mutallib Khasanov) La tombe d'une princesse nomade à Koktepe près de Samarkand. *CRAIBL* 2001: 33-92.
- 2007 Nomads and the shaping of Central Asia: from the early Iron Age to the Kushan period. Cribb, Joe & Georgina Herrmann (eds.), *After Alexander. Central Asia before Islam (Proceedings of the British Academy, 133)*. Oxford: 29-72.
- 2015 Sanctuaires sogdiens et cultes avestiques de l'époque de Gava à l'époque hellénistique (Koktepe et Sangir-tepe). Henkelman, Wouter & Céline Redard (eds.), *La religion des Achéménides: confrontation des sources*. Paris (Persica) (forthcoming).

Rosenfield, John

- 1967 *The dynastic arts of the Kushans*. Berkeley – Los Angeles (University of California Press).

Rougemont, Georges

- 2012 *Inscriptions grecques d'Iran et d'Asie centrale* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, II.1). London.

Rtveladze, Édouard V.

- 1987 Les édifices funéraires de la Bactriane septentrionale et leur rapport au zoroastrisme. Grenet, Frantz (ed.), *Cultes et monuments religieux dans l'Asie centrale préislamique*. Paris (Éditions du CNRS): 29-39, pls. XIV-XXIII.

Schiltz, Véronique

- 2007a Tillia tepe, la "Colline de l'or", une nécropole nomade. Cambon, Pierre (ed.), *Afghanistan. Les trésors retrouvés. Collections du musée national de Kaboul*. Paris (Musée national des Arts asiatiques-Guimet): 68-79
- 2007b Tillia tepe, catalogue des œuvres exposées. Cambon, Pierre (ed.), *Afghanistan. Les trésors retrouvés. Collections du musée national de Kaboul*. Paris (Musée national des Arts asiatiques-Guimet): 270-283.

Schlumberger, Daniel, Marc Le Berre & Gérard Fussman

- 1983 *Surkh Kotal en Bactriane* (Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan, XXV), 2 vols. Paris.

Shenkar, Michael

- 2014 *Intangible spirits and graven images: The iconography of deities in the pre-Islamic Iranian World*. Leiden – Boston (Brill).

Sims-Williams, Nicholas

- 1997 A Bactrian god. *BSOAS* 60: 336-338.
- 1997/98 A Bactrian deed of manumission. *SRAA* 5: 191-211.
- 1998 Further notes on the Bactrian inscription of Rabatak, with an Appendix on the names of Kujula Kadphises and Vima Taktu in Chinese. Sims-Williams, Nicholas (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third European Conference*

- of Iranian studies. Part 1: Old and Middle Iranian Studies.* Wiesbaden (Dr. Ludwig Reichert): 79-92, pls. 9-12.
- 2002 Ancient Afghanistan and its invaders: linguistic evidence from the Bactrian documents and inscriptions. Sims-Williams, Nicholas (ed.), *Indo-Iranian languages and peoples* (Proceedings of the British Academy, 116). Oxford: 236-240.
- 2008 The Bactrian inscription of Rabatak: a new reading. *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 18 (2004 [2008]): 53-68.
- 2010 Buddha-Mazdā? *Dasturji Dr. Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza Birth Centenary Memorial Volume.* Udvada (Dastur Kayoji Mirza Institute): 271-278.
- 2011 Bactrian language. *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (updated online version).
- 2012 Bactrian historical inscriptions of the Kushan period. *The Silk Road* 10: 76-80.
- 2013 Some Bactrian inscriptions on silver vessels. *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 23 (2009 [2013]): 191-198.
- Sims-Williams, Nicholas & Joe Cribb
1995/96 A new Bactrian inscription of Kanishka the Great. *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 4: 75-142.
- Skjærvø, Prods O.
1983 'Kirdir's vision': translation and analysis. *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 16: 269-306.
- Stein, Mark Aurel
1887 Zoroastrian deities on Indo-Scythian coins. *Oriental and Babylonian Record* 1: 155-166 (also published in *Indian Antiquary* 17, 1888: 89-98).
- Suleimanov, Rostam Kh.
2000 *Drevnii Nakhshab.* Samarkand-Tashkent (izdatel'stvo "Fan").
- Sundermann, Werner
1987 Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranischen Manichäer III. *Altorientalische Forschungen* 14: 41-107 (reprinted in Werner Sundermann, *Manichaica Iranica* 1 (Serie Orientale Roma, 79). Roma (Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente): 357-426.
- Taddei, Maurizio
1978 The pre-Muslim period. Settlement, material culture, architecture and art. Allchin, F.R. & Norman Hammond (eds.), *The archaeology of Afghanistan from earliest times to the Timurid period.* London / New York / San Francisco (Academic Press): 255-299.
- Tanabe, Katsumi
1990 The Kushan representation of ANEMOS / OADO and its relevance to the Central Asian and Far Eastern Wind gods. *SRAA* 1: 51-80.
1992 *History of the coins of Silk Road* (Hirayama Collection). Tokyo (Kodansha).

- 1995 Earliest aspects of Kanīška I's religious ideology: a numismatic approach. Invernizzi, Antonio (ed.), *In the land of the Gryphons. Papers on Central Asian archaeology in antiquity*. Firenze (Le Lettere): 203-215.
- Thomson, Robert
- 1978 *Moses Khorenats'i. History of the Armenians*. Cambridge / London (Harvard University Press).
- Tremblay, Xavier
- 2004 La toponymie de la Sogdiane et le traitement de *xθ et *fθ en iranien. *Studia Iranica* 33: 113-149.
- Verardi, Giovanni
- 1983 The Kuṣāṇa emperors as Cakravartins. Dynastic art and cults in India and Central Asia: history of a theory, clarifications and refutations. *East and West* 33: 225-294.
- Wright, J.C.
- 1997 Bactrian Rudra. *BSOAS* 60: 339-343.
- Zeimal', Evgenii
- 1974 Sushchestvoval' li bog Ashaikhsh? *Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Ėrmitazha* 38: 53-59.
- 1997 Visha-Shiva in the Kushan pantheon. Allchin, F.R., & E. Errington (ed.), *Studies in Gandharan and Kushan Art: East-West Encounters at the Crossroads of Asia*. New Delhi: 245-266.