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Taxila

Indian City and a Stronghold of Hellenism

(concerning two recent books)¹

KLAUS KARTTUNEN

The city known as Taxila by the Greeks, and Takṣaśilā (Sanskrit) or Takkasilā (Middle Indo-Aryan) by the Indians, was and still is a famous place. In ancient Indian (especially Buddhist) literature it is known as a famous seat of learning, where religion and philosophy, literature and grammar, medicine, the art of war and many other subjects were taught by famous teachers.² In Classical literature it is known as a local capital which had been visited by Alexander and has preserved Hellenistic traditions ever since. Archaeology has shown that Philostratus' description of Taxila as a Hellenized city (Vita Ap. 2. 20ff.) is indeed not too far from truth. Although not a Greek city itself, Taxila is beside Ai Khanum and Charsadda one of the most important monuments of a Hellenistic presence in the far east. Some years ago two books were published about it by Pakistani

¹ Taxila and the Western World, Lahore 1984, by Saifur Rahman Dar, the director of Taxila Museum, and The Historic City of Taxila, Paris – Tokyo 1986, by Ahmad Hassan Dani, the veteran scholar of Pakistani archaeology. These two, as well as Marshall's Taxila. An illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations carried at Taxila 1-3, Cambridge 1951 (repr. New Delhi 1975), and my own India in Early Greek literature (Studia Orientalia 65), Helsinki 1989, will be referred to merely by name of author and page(s). My thanks are due to Mr. M. Shackleton, Lic.Ph., who has again had the trouble of correcting my English.

² See Karttunen 62, and B.C. Law, Taxilā as a Seat of Learning in the Pāli Literature, JASB N.S. 12 (1916) 17ff.

archaeologists,³ and it is these books that provide the starting point for the present survey. At the same time, it is my intention to consider the position and importance of Hellenism in Taxila. This means that my discussion does not always fully consider other viewpoints. In the two above-mentioned books and in many others it is often strongly emphasized that Taxila was above all an Indian city, and as a whole the Western and Northern (Iranian, Greek, Near Eastern and Central Asian) elements were more or less peripheral. I still feel that my viewpoint is not without value.

Taxila is situated in Pakistan on the outskirts of present-day Islamabad by the little river of Tamra. Today, even the modern town is once again known by its ancient name, although it was wholly forgotten for many centuries. Here, however, we are not interested in the industrial centre of Taxila, but in its ancient ruins.

The archaeological history of Taxila is nearly as old as Indian archaeology. The French and Italian officers who were serving in Ranjit Singh's army visited the neighbouring site of Manikyala and brought the first real knowledge of the archaeological richness of the region and especially of its Indo-Greek and Buddhist antiquities.⁴ For a while it was supposed that Manikyala was the ancient city of Taxila itself, but the real site lies about 34 miles northwest.⁵ The first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814-93), was on the spot during the season 1863-64 and succeeded in identifying the ruins as ancient Taxila.⁶ He continued his work at Taxila 1872-73 and 1878-79. The classical work on Taxila was done by Sir John Marshall (1876-1958), who came to India fresh from excavations in Greece (Athens) in 1902 and was, in his own words, "filled with enthusiasm for anything Greek". This – "a bit of Greece itself" – he thought he had found in Taxila on his first preliminary visit there.⁷ Later

³ By Saifur Rahman Dar and Ahmad Hassan Dani, see note 1.

⁴ G. Ventura (?-1858) and A. Court (1793-?), see Court in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1834) 556-562 & 5 (1836) 468-482, and Prinsep *ibid.* 3, 313-320 & 436-456. A short summary is found in Dilip K. Chakrabarti, *A History of Indian Archaeology from the Beginning to 1947*, New Delhi 1988, 37f.

⁵ Unfortunately, the old issues of *JASB* and Cunningham's reports on Taxila (1871, 1875 and 1880) are not presently available for my use and I cannot check if some of the early archaeologists (read treasure-hunters) actually visited Taxila and its ruins.

⁶ See e.g. Chakrabarti, *op. cit.*, 66ff., and Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, London 1871 (repr. Varanasi & Delhi 1979), 88ff.

⁷ Marshall xv.

his opinion of Taxila became more objective. He conducted his excavations on Taxilan sites with some intervals between 1913 and 1936,⁸ and a monograph in three volumes gives a report of the results.⁹ In 1958 the Russian historian and Indologist Grigorij Fedorovič Il'jin (1914-1985) published a short summary of Marshall's results and historical researches on Taxila.¹⁰ In 1944 Marshall's illustrious successor as Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976), selected Taxila as the site of his famous school of archaeology, where a whole generation of Indian and Pakistani archaeologists was educated in modern methods like stratigraphy.¹¹ His excavations, however, were never published, although this was strictly against his own principles.¹² More recent excavations (mostly by Pakistani archaeologists) will be referred to in the following pages.

Actually there is not one but several different cities in the area which is referred to as Taxila, although we do not know whether all of them were actually known as Taxila. For Marshall, Taxila consisted of three successive towns, Achaemenian Bhir Mound, Hellenistic Sirkap and Kushan Sirsukh. Later excavations have corrected and considerably widened Taxila's chronology. The first remains of human habitation begin as early as the fourth millennium B.C., when there are remains of microlithic hunters and in the second half of the millennium also of early sedentary agriculturists with Neolithic tools.¹³ Village occupation continued during the Bronze Age period. Then, after vague beginnings in the late second millennium

⁸ Chakrabarti, *op. cit.* 132ff.

⁹ Mentioned in note 1. Frequently his older book is also quoted, *A Guide to Taxila*, Calcutta 1918 and three further editions, last 1960.

¹⁰ *Drevnej indijskij gorod Taksila*, Moscow 1958.

¹¹ Chakrabarti, *op. cit.* 176ff., and Wheeler, *My archaeological mission to India and Pakistan*, London 1976, 27ff.

¹² Some remarks are given in his *Flames over Persepolis*, London 1968, 102ff. (especially 114f.). For another Hellenistic site excavated by Wheeler in 1958, see his *Charsadda, a Metropolis of the North-West Frontier*, Oxford 1958 and *Flames* 95ff. As in Taxila, here too not one city, but several subsequent ones have been found. Thus the remains of Bala Hisar mound, excavated by Wheeler, seem to correspond to ancient Peucelaotis/Puṣkalāvātī visited by Alexander, while in the Shaikhan Deri mound (excavated by Dani 1963-64) are the remains of a Hellenistic city, and the eastern mounds (excavated by Marshall 1902-03) belong to the Kushan period.

¹³ Dani 18ff.

B.C., the first city arose on the mound Haṭhiāl, where its first remains were excavated only recently (in the 1980s) by British and Pakistani archaeologists. The excavations are still to a great extent unpublished and only meagre trifles are offered to the curiosity of scholars.¹⁴ On the other hand, Taxila's existence lingered on after the supposed White Hun devastation (the termination point for Marshall) until the Mughal period, when the area underwent a process of ruralization. It still seems that the most glorious period of Taxila is found within the three mounds excavated by Marshall.

The first town in Taxila was situated in the Haṭhiāl mound in the southwest corner of the Sirkap site. It marks the slow beginning of the so-called second urbanization period (the first being the Indus civilization), which lasted here from the late second millennium until the Achaemenian period. The question of the Achaemenian presence in Taxila is rather complicated. From Herodotus as well as from Old Persian royal inscriptions we know that ancient Gandhāra (O.P. *Ga(n)dāra*) was part of the empire, and was perhaps conquered by Cyrus himself. With a certain geographical recklessness many have supposed, that as an important early centre Taxila must have been the capital of the Indian dominions of the empire. Taxila, however, did not belong to Gandhāra proper, which had a more westerly location, and elsewhere I have tried to show how it is well possible that Taxila never belonged to the empire.¹⁵ It has been noted that the culture of the Haṭhiāl period "has a markedly local Gandharan [in the wider sense] flavour; while that of the subsequent Bhir mound period appears to indicate the arrival of a much more urbane and widely diffused Gangetic character."¹⁶

Taxila of the Achaemenian period, however, was apparently not in the Bhir Mound (as supposed by Marshall and others following him), but in Mound B of the Haṭhiāl site. It seems to have been a fortified town and some finds (figurines and ceramics) are related to those found in the corresponding layers at more western sites like Charsadda and Swat.¹⁷ This was probably the capital of King Pukkusāti

¹⁴ Allchin, Bridget & Allchin, Raymond, *The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan*, Cambridge 1982, 314f., and Dani 36ff. and 81.

¹⁵ Karttunen 61f. Otherwise e.g. Dani 41ff.

¹⁶ Allchin & Allchin op. cit. 314f.

¹⁷ Dani 41.

of Takṣaśilā, mentioned in Buddhist sources as a contemporary of King Bimbisāra of Magadha and of the Buddha. Dani (and most scholars before him) locates him in the 6th century B.C., before the Achaemenian expansion, but, with the reduced chronology of the Buddha, he must clearly be a contemporary of the Achaemenids, perhaps a vassal king or even a satrap.¹⁸

The second city, known according to the place of excavations as Bhir Mound, was commonly dated to the late Achaemenian and early Hellenistic period.¹⁹ In this respect, Marshall's original chronology had to be revised, according to the new evidence excavated by Wheeler and Pakistani archaeologists.²⁰ Of the four strata of excavations, Bhir Mound IV and III seem to belong to the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., II and I to the 2nd and 1st. With the strong eastern connections seen in its finds this was probably the Takkasilā gloried as a famous centre of learning in Buddhist sources, and here ruled King Omphis or Taxiles, who became an important ally of Alexander. To Alexander and his men it gave the first taste of Indian society. Here lived the naked Gymnosophists, whose asceticism and wisdom (with its Cynic colour given by Onesicritus) were then admired by Westerners for two millennia. Here the Macedonians saw the self-immolation of Indian widows, another theme which long fascinated philosophically-minded Westerners. Probably the community of Gymnosophists with its leaders and teachers and also its differences of opinion represents one of those colleges mentioned in Buddhist sources. The historians of Alexander give a clear impression of Taxila being an important and flourishing metropolis.²¹ On the other hand, there is no mention of any architectural splendour, and correspondingly the excavators have not found remains of any monumental buildings.²² But it must be kept in mind that the town

¹⁸ Dani 41 and 43, Karttunen 61ff., on Buddhist chronology Karttunen 151f. and more fully H. Bechert, *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha – das älteste feststehende Datum der indischen Geschichte?*, *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse* 1986:4.

¹⁹ On Bhir Mound in general, see Marshall 87ff. and Dani 81ff.

²⁰ Dani 44.

²¹ Unlike other Indian princes Taxiles was conscious of political developments in Persia and sent his envoy to Alexander when the king was still a long way from India in Sogdiana (Diodorus 17, 86, 4).

²² Marshall 19f. Wheeler (Flames 103ff.) perhaps goes too far in his characterization of Taxila as a muddy village, which in Greek eyes must have seemed a slum.

area was never restricted to Bhir Mound proper, which is rather well known thanks to the extensive excavations of Marshall. Somewhere outside it must also lie the administrative quarters of the Maurya period, when Taxila was an important provincial capital with a royal viceroy ruling the Northwest.²³ The Mauryan presence is seen, for instance, in the Aramaic inscription of Aśoka and in the eastern connections seen in the material finds like ceramics.²⁴

The excavations Marshall carried out at Bhir Mound were extensive enough to give rather a good idea of the town. According to Dani, it grew without any general plan in the manner still often seen in South Asian towns and villages, in a square pattern, where houses surrounding a square generally belonged to people who had the same profession. The squares were connected by streets and lanes. In addition to shops, workshops and residential buildings, a shrine, an administration building and a market plaza were found.²⁵

It is difficult to define clearly Taxila's position between east and west. As has already been mentioned, the archaeological material (e.g. pottery) refers mostly to the east. For the period before Alexander, Achaemenian antiquities are rare, but they are also rare in some more western sites (e.g. in Afghanistan), which were certainly parts of the empire, and in Taxila the levels properly belonging to the Achaemenian period are still unexcavated. On the other hand, there are good grounds to suppose that Taxila had an important place as an intermediary between India and Iran.²⁶ For such a role, a situation as an independent or semi-independent principality (as that found by Alexander) behind the borders of the empire would suit very well. We may also notice a fragment from Aristobulus describing some peculiar customs in Taxila, in which a clear mixture of Indian (widow-burning) and Iranian (leaving the dead to vultures) elements is seen.²⁷ There is, further, some evidence of a sun-cult in Taxila, which was probably a western element.²⁸

²³ Dani 50ff. According to Dani (47f.) the Taxila visited by Alexander is probably still unexcavated.

²⁴ Northern Black-Polished Ware dug up by S.M. Sharif 1966. Marshall erroneously called some similar finds Greek black ware (Dani 48).

²⁵ Dani 83ff.

²⁶ Such a role has been suggested for Taxila e.g. in introducing writing and coinage in India, see Karttunen 29ff. and 60ff. (with further references).

²⁷ Aristobulus F 42, discussed in Karttunen 223ff.

²⁸ Karttunen 219ff.

In the period after Alexander Taxila became a part of the strong Maurya empire and thus under stronger Indian influence. Still, it must be supposed that it preserved its position as an intermediary between east and west. There is an Aśokan inscription in Taxila, but it is written in the Aramaic language. The decline of the Mauryas again meant stronger western ties for Taxila, which became part of the Indo-Greek empire sometime in the early second century B.C. At that time, old Bhir Mound was still flourishing, but soon a new centre arose beside it.

Sirkap is an Indo-Greek city with Hellenistic town plan, fortifications, temples, architectural elements and material finds.²⁹ Dani's cautious summary shows how extremely complicated the political history of the period is – in most cases it relies solely on numismatic evidence – and there is no need to go into details now.³⁰ But in its material remains Sirkap can tell us a great deal about the Indo-Greek period. In its early phase it was contemporary with the Bhir Mound town, which seems to have been an Indian town, while the Greeks and other Hellenized people lived in Sirkap. Even in the Bhir Mound, western finds become more numerous in levels II and I,³¹ and Sirkap finds tell of a strong western influence, which can also be seen in other sites of the period in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This picture did not change when the Indo-Greeks were displaced by Scythian and Parthian dynasties. Especially the latter were known for their philhellenism here as well as in the West, and it was during the Parthian period when both Apollonius of Tyana and the apostle Thomas supposedly visited the place.³²

In the beginning of the Christian era, about 20-30 A.D., there was an earthquake which destroyed much of Taxila, and most of its buildings are either built or repaired after it. At the same time, international trade gained new impetus when the *pax Romana* put an end to the endless wars between the Hellenistic kingdoms

²⁹ On Sirkap in general, see Marshall 112ff. and Dani 88ff.; on Hellenistic elements Dar 29ff. and Dani 156ff.

³⁰ Among the many Indo-Greek kings Menander (whom Dani considers as a possible founder of Sirkap, as he seems to be the earliest Indo-Greek king whose coins are numerous in this site) and Agathocles and Pantaleon (who minted coins in local Taxilan style and with legends only in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī) seem to have been most closely connected with Taxila (Dani 62ff.).

³¹ For instance, pieces of jewellery, imported coins and new types of pottery are cited in this connection. See Dani 153ff.

³² Dani 66ff. To be exact, it is not said that the apostle visited Taxila, but the Parthian king he met, Gondophares, also ruled Taxila.

in the West (this was also the period when the maritime trade between Roman Egypt and India began to flourish). Correspondingly, the Hellenistic and Hellenizing finds, imports and local products as well, are more numerous in Parthian (and subsequent Kushan) levels than ever before.³³ Only in this period the decorative plates called toilet trays, with scenes varying from purely Western (like Apollo disrobing Daphne) to local ones, were introduced.³⁴ The local bead industry has very ancient traditions,³⁵ but now we also find numerous new types both of Western and of local character, made of glass, shell, semi-precious stones etc.³⁶ With pottery the Western element is represented by such finds as unguent flasks, inkpots and bell-shaped amphoras. Objects of metal (copper and iron), bone and ivory,³⁷ gold and jewellery can also be cited.

The city of Sirkap shows a mixture of Western (Greek and Iranian), Eastern (Indian) and local (Gandharan in a wider sense) elements both in its architecture and in material finds. City-planning is Western: regular straight streets running north to south and cutting at right angles by cross streets, houses arranged in regular block system – all this closely follows the Hippodamian pattern. But the houses themselves with rooms arranged round a central open courtyard follow the oriental pattern common both in local and in Indian tradition. In architectural detail we find again Western influence like capitals and bases of Ionian and Corinthian order. In Buddhist shrines these are combined with elements of Indian Buddhist architecture like Stūpa and Torāṇa gate.³⁸

³³ Curiously, the northern trade, illustrated so well in material finds in sites like Taxila and Begram, is very poorly attested by numismatic finds. See Paula J. Turner, *Roman Coins from India*, Royal Numismatic Society, Special Publication No. 22 / Institute of Archaeology, Occasional Publication No. 12, London 1989, 13f. and 17f., and Dar 143ff.

³⁴ Dani 159f. and pl. 46-49, Dar 97ff. See further H.P. Francfort, *Les palettes du Gandhara*, Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan 23, Paris 1979.

³⁵ For instance, etched carnelian beads already made in the bronze age were still common. See B. Allchin, *The Agate and Carnelian Industry of Western India and Pakistan*, Lohuizen-de Leeuw (ed.), *South Asian Archaeology 1975*, Leiden 1979, 91-105.

³⁶ Marshall 729ff., Dani 96.

³⁷ For instance, a beautifully carved comb, Dani 162f.

³⁸ The frequency of Buddhist remains in Sirkap is not against its Hellenistic character. Epigraphic evidence (many Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions) shows that a great part of the population was in any case local Prākṛit speaking people, and the Greeks themselves as well as more or less Hellenized Iranians living in the east often adopted Buddhism.

A special importance is to be given to the stucco heads found in post-earthquake levels in Sirkap (e.g. in the Apsidal temple) and also in various surrounding Buddhist sites. Their artistic inspiration is clearly west-oriented, although they represent Buddhist figures. Dani sees in them the direct origin of the famous Gandhāra art, which somewhat later combined Hellenistic or Hellenizing artistic motifs with Buddhist ideas.³⁹ The Buddhist sites of Kushan and post-Kushan periods in Taxila abound in this art, which was then flourishing in all Northwest India and had a counterpart in the similar Graeco-Bactrian art further in the Northwest (e.g. in Surkh Kotal and Termez). With Buddhism Gandhāra art was carried to the north and northeast and thus brought Hellenistic inspiration to Central Asian art. To a smaller degree it left some traces in the art of India proper, too.⁴⁰

Sirkap was extensively excavated by Marshall, although much remains in the wide area for future archaeologists, too, and therefore it is rather well known. The excavated area contains many streets, houses, shops and workhouses.⁴¹ The Greek temple of Philostratus (V. Ap. 2, 20) has not been found,⁴² but there are several splendid Buddhist shrines in Sirkap. The Apsidal temple with a Stūpa (Block D) follows more or less the pattern of Indian Caitya.⁴³ Block F contains the so-called Double-Headed Eagle Stūpa Shrine, a splendid example of mixed architecture with Corinthian capitals and Indian arches. In the construction, stones from older buildings were used, among them the marble piece containing the Aramaic inscription of Aśoka.⁴⁴ There is further Marshall's so-called palace (Block K),⁴⁵ and another complex building on the Mahal site. This, too, was identified by Marshall as a palace, but according to Dani it might have been a school or university.⁴⁶

³⁹ Dani 101 and 165, further Marshall 513ff., Dar 90f.

⁴⁰ See for instance H. Goetz, *Studies in the History of Religion and Art of Classical and Medieval India*, Schriftenreihe des Südasien-Instituts der Universität Heidelberg 16, Wiesbaden 1974, 3ff. (this article was originally published in 1959, and is somewhat antiquated with respect to the importance given in it to Roman influence).

⁴¹ For a plan, see Marshall pl. 10 and Dani pl. 2 and 2628.

⁴² Block E' contains a possible sun temple, see Dani 103. Marshall 183 identified it as a Stūpa.

⁴³ Marshall 150ff., Dani 100f.

⁴⁴ Marshall 163ff., Dani 103f. and pl. 54, Dar 203ff.

⁴⁵ Marshall 171ff., Dani 106f. and pl. 27.

⁴⁶ Marshall 214ff., Dani 108ff.

Among the most interesting architectural remains of Taxila clearly belong its temples. There are two Hellenistic temples in the Jaṇḍiāl site northwest of Sirkap. It is not surprising, that there should be such temples in Taxila. In his *Vita Apollonii* (2, 24 & 20) Philostratus described in some detail two Taxilan temples as they were in the first century, one inside the city wall (in Sirkap), one outside it (like Jaṇḍiāl). For a long time nobody believed in his account, but then Marshall excavated the big temple in the eastern or C mound of the Jaṇḍiāl site and announced that the details of Philostratus' account of Taxila correspond remarkably well with his finds.⁴⁷ On the western D mound another Hellenistic temple was found, but it is in a very poor state of preservation and only foundations remain. Dar has studied these temples again and presented a new interpretation of them.⁴⁸

According to Dar, Marshall's hypothetical un-Hellenistic ziqqurat or tower of silence in Jaṇḍiāl C should be wholly dismissed. Instead, the temple is a purely Hellenistic, Ionian style temple, which was probably dedicated to some local form of a Greek god. For the date, Dar confirms Marshall's final opinion⁴⁹ that it dates from the second century B.C. As to the temple described by Philostratus, Dar does not accept its identification as Jaṇḍiāl C (nor D, either), and remarks that Jaṇḍiāl C seems to have collapsed in the earthquake in 20/30 A.D., while Apollonius' supposed visit took place only in 44 A.D. Instead, he points to the small temple with Ionic columns found by Cunningham at the nearby Mohrā Maliārān site.⁵⁰ In the end, it seems that it is not possible to say definitely which particular temple was meant by Philostratus, but still it seems that his *Vita Apollonii* contains authentic information about Taxila in the first century (not necessarily just 44 A.D.).

Sirsukh, the last urban centre of Taxila, belongs to the Kushan period.⁵¹ Again it is contemporaneous with earlier sites. The reason for its existence seems to be military. Taxila was no longer a capital, but it was still an important city, where vital functions like administration had to be protected against the ravages of time.

⁴⁷ On the Jaṇḍiāl temple, see Marshall 222ff., on Philostratus, 63f., 139f., 175f. and 227.

⁴⁸ Dar 43ff., also Dani 112ff.

⁴⁹ Given in a postscript, Marshall 229.

⁵⁰ Dar 57ff., on Jaṇḍiāl Dar 53ff. See also Karttunen 221f. and on Mohrā Maliārān also Marshall 9f. and Dani 114.

⁵¹ On Sirsukh in general, see Marshall 217ff. and Dani 111ff.

Therefore a new centre was built north of Sirkap and Jaṇḍiāl and provided with strong fortifications. Lingering remains of Hellenism are still met here as everywhere in Northwest India, and now they were carried even further to Central Asia.⁵² The city of Sirsukh, however, is only poorly excavated,⁵³ and the Kushan and post-Kushan period are better, though one-sidedly, illustrated in several Buddhist monastery sites of Taxila area.

The most important Buddhist monastery and shrine of Taxila was without doubt the Dharmarājika, situated to the east of Bhir Mound, southeast of Sirkap. The ancient name is attested in an Indian silver scroll inscription found *in situ*. Xuanzang, the 6th century Chinese pilgrim, confirms that several Stūpas of Taxila were originally erected by Aśoka himself, and it might well be that he is the *dharmarāja* (pious king) who founded the Dharmarājika.⁵⁴ Another Aśokan foundation was the Kuṇāla Stūpa, connected with Kuṇāla, the blinded son of the king, and this might well be found in the remains of the Mohrā Morādu site. Present Islamic tradition still ascribes to the place the power of curing eye diseases.⁵⁵ Important Buddhist remains are also found in Kālwān (ancient name Chadaśilā inscriptionally attested) and Jauliān sites.⁵⁶ These Buddhist sites, too, with their monasteries, Stūpas and shrines, show the characteristic combination of Western

⁵² In addition to art (Gandhāra art with its descendants in Central Asia), numismatics offers an interesting case of the remaining Hellenistic inspiration. The coins of the various Indo-Greek dynasties were marked by their high artistic quality, and the same tradition was more or less followed by Kushans, although Indian and Iranian elements were more numerous in their coins (see e.g. R. Göbl, *System und Chronologie der Münzprägung des Kušanreiches*, Veröffentlichungen der Numismatischen Kommission, Sonderband, Wien 1984). Further, the Greek and Roman monetary terms were introduced and are found in many local languages, both ancient and modern: δραχμή in Middle Indo Aryan *drakhma*, *trakhma*, *damma*, in Late Sanskrit *dramma*, in Panjabi *damm*, in Hindi and Nepali *dām*; στατήρ in MIA *satera*, *sadera*, *šadera*, in Late Sanskrit *sadera* and in Uigur *satir*; μέδιμνος in MIA *milima* (Clauson, JRAS 1930, 203f.); *denarius* in Sanskrit *dīnāra*, *dīnnāra*, in Kashmiri *dyār* and in Khovar *drokhum*. See Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India* VIII:1, 1919, 3f.; Konow, AO 6 (1928) 255f.; Thomas, JRAS 1924, 671f. and 1926, 507; Töttössy, AAHu 25 (1977) 131f.

⁵³ Dani pl. 29 gives a plan of the excavated area.

⁵⁴ On Dharmarājika, see Marshall 230ff. and Dani 118ff. with pl. 31 and 57f.; on the inscription see also Dar 222f.

⁵⁵ Dani 116 and 140ff.

⁵⁶ On Kālwān Marshall 322ff. and Dani 133ff. (inscription quoted in Marshall 327 and Dar 223f.), on Jauliān Marshall 368ff. and Dani 144ff.

and Eastern architectural elements, and pieces of Gandhāra art are common. Although their original foundation might in some cases go back to the Mauryan period, all datable remains were built after the earthquake, or still later, often directly on the debris of older levels.

As my intention is to survey the importance of Hellenism in Taxila, the later history can be passed very briefly. After the downfall of the Great Kushans, Taxila was to some extent under Sassanian influence, but at the same time the rule of the so-called Lesser Kushans or more properly Kidāra Kushans (c. 340 – c. 450) brought new Indian elements, too. It was now that the Indian Brāhmī writing finally superseded the local Kharoṣṭhī. Coins and other antiquities also show that several sectarian Hindu deities like Viṣṇu, Śiva and Durgā entered Taxila in this period, when the great Gupta dynasty was ruling most of the Northern India.⁵⁷ The fifth century brought the White Huns to Taxila, but according to Dani, Marshall's hypothesis concerning the devastation they caused is based on very weak evidence; instead of being destroyers of monasteries, they seem to have been great patrons of religion.⁵⁸

In conclusion we may note that Taxila has an important place among the Hellenistic centres of the East, such as Begram, Hadda, Charsadda and Aī Khanum. Unlike some of them, Taxila was probably never a Greek polis in the proper meaning of the word, it was and remained in the first place an Indian town, where Buddhism was the main religion, and local Middle Indo-Aryan dialect the language of (at least) the majority of the population. But even so, it is important as it was no far-flung colony of foreign civilization, but a living place with deep roots in the local soil. As such it was able not only to adopt or copy the Western elements, but to absorb them into its own traditions, to give them new form and meaning, and to pass them on to others less capable of understanding the original. Therefore we are probably right to assign Taxila an essential role as transmitter of Hellenistic inspiration further to the east and north.

⁵⁷ Dani 73ff. and 152.

⁵⁸ Marshall 76f., Dani 75ff.