

ELITE WOMEN IN HELLENISTIC HISTORY, HISTORIOGRAPHY, AND RECEPTION



WOMEN OF THE PAST

VOLUME 2

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Elite Women in Hellenistic History, Historiography, and Reception

Edited by

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Abbreviations

AD	<i>Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia</i> , ed. and trans. A. Sachs and H. Hunger, 7 vols (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988–2014).
ADAB	<i>Aramaic Documents from Ancient Bactria</i> , ed. and trans. J. Naveh and S. Shaked (London: Khalili Collections, 2012).
Ael., VH.	<i>Historical Miscellany</i> , ed. and trans. N. G. Wilson, Loeb Classical Library, 486 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
Anth. Pal.	<i>The Greek Anthology</i> , ed. and trans. W. R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library, 67, 68, 84, 85, 86, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916–1918).
Apoll. Rhod.	Apollonius Rhodius, <i>Argonautica</i> , ed. and trans. W. H. Race, Loeb Classical Library, 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
Apollod., Ep.	Apollodorus of Athens, <i>Epitome</i> , ed. and trans. J. G. Frazer, Loeb Classical Library, 122 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).
App., Syr.	Appian, <i>Syrian Wars</i> , ed. and trans. B. McGing, Loeb Classical Library, 4 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).
Arr., Anab.	Arrian of Nicomedia, <i>Anabasis of Alexander</i> , ed. and trans. P. A. Brunt, Loeb Classical Library, 236, 269, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976–1983).
Arr., Ind.	Arrian of Nicomedia, <i>Indica</i> , ed. and trans. P. A. Brunt, Loeb Classical Library, 269 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).
Arr., Succ.	Arrian of Nicomedia, <i>Events after the Death of Alexander</i> , in <i>Photius: The Bibliotheca</i> , trans. N. G. Wilson (London: Duckworth, 1994).
Ath.	Athenaeus of Naucratis, <i>The Learned Banqueters</i> , ed. and trans. S. D. Olson, Loeb Classical Library, 204, 208, 224, 235, 274, 327, 345, 519, 8 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007–2012).
BCHP	<i>Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period</i> , ed. and trans. R. J. Van der Spek, I. L. Finkel, R. Pirngruber, and K. Stevens (Atlanta: Writings of the Ancient World, forthcoming).
BE	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i> (Paris).
BM	<i>Bibliotheca Mesopotamica</i> (Malibu: Undena).

- BMC *Ion.* *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: Ionia*, ed. R. S. Poole (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1892).
- BMC *Ptol.* *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: The Ptolemies, Kings of Egypt*, ed. R. S. Poole (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1883).
- BNJ *Brill's New Jacoby* (Leiden: Brill).
- Catull. Catullus, *Poems*, ed. and trans. F. W. Cornish, Loeb Classical Library, 6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913).
- Curt. Quintus Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library, 268, 369, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946).
- Diod. Sic. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, ed. and trans. C. H. Oldfather and others, Loeb Classical Library, 279, 303, 340, 375, 377, 384, 389, 390, 399, 409, 422, 423, 12 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933–1967).
- Diog. Laert. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, ed. and trans. R. D. Hicks, Loeb Classical Library, 184, 185, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925).
- EncIr *Encyclopædia Iranica* (New York: University of Columbia).
- Eur., *Andr.* Euripides, *Andromache*, ed. and trans. D. Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library, 484 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
- Eur., *Hec.* Euripides, *Hecuba*, ed. and trans. D. Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library, 484 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
- Eur., *Tro.* Euripides, *Trojan Women*, ed. and trans. D. Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library, 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Euseb., *Chron.* Eusebius of Caesarea, *Chronicle*, ed. A. Schoene, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1866–1875).
- Eust., *Comm.* Eustathius of Thessalonica, *Commentary on Dionysius Periegetes*, ed. G. Bernhardt (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1828).
- Dionys. *Per.*
- FGrH *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby, 15 vols (Berlin, Leiden: Weidmann, Brill, 1923–1958).
- GGM *Geographi Graeci minores*, ed. C. Müller, 2 vols (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1855–1861).
- Hdt. Herodotus of Halicarnassus, *The Histories*, ed. and trans. A. D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library, 117–20, 4 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920–1925).
- Hist. Num.² *Historia numorum: A Manual of Greek Numismatics*, ed. B. V. Head, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911).
- Hom., *Il.* Homer, *Iliad*, ed. and trans. A. T. Murray and W. F. Wyatt, Loeb Classical Library, 170, 171, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924–1925).
- Hom., *Od.* Homer, *Odyssey*, ed. and trans. A. T. Murray and G. E. Dimock, Loeb Classical Library, 104, 105, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).

- Hyg., *Astr.* Gaius Julius Hyginus, *The Poeticon astronomicon*, trans. M. Livingston (Greenbrae: Allen Press, 1985).
- Hyg., *Fab* Gaius Julius Hyginus, *Fabulae*, ed. and trans. M. Grant, University of Kansas Publications in Humanistic Studies, 34 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960).
- IDidyma *Didyma*, II: *Die Inschriften*, ed. A. Rehm (Berlin: Mann, 1958).
- IKildara 'Die karische Inschrift von Kildara', ed. W. Blümel and I. J. Adiego, *Kadmos*, 32 (1993): 87–95.
- ILabraunda *Labraunda: Swedish Excavations and Researches*, III: *Greek Inscriptions*, ed. J. Crampa, 2 vols (Lund: Gleerup, 1969–1972).
- IMilet. *Inschriften von Milet*, ed. A. Rehm and others, 3 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997–2006).
- IPriene *Inschriften von Priene*, ed. F. Hiller von Gaertringen (Berlin: Reimer, 1906).
- ISmyrna *Die Inschriften von Smyrna*, ed. G. Petzl, *IK* 23, 24, 2 vols (Bonn: Habelt, 1982–1990).
- IEph. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, ed. H. Wankel and others, *IK* 11–17, 8 vols (Bonn: Habelt, 1979–1984).
- IG II² *Inscriptiones Graecae II et III: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores*, pts 1–3, ed. J. Kirchner, 2nd edn, 6 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1913–1940).
- IG IV² *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV: *Inscriptiones Argolidis*, ed. F. Hiller von Gaertringen, 2nd edn (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1929).
- IG VII *Inscriptiones Graecae*, VII: *Inscriptiones Megaridis, Oropiae, Boeotiae*, ed. W. Dittenberger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1892).
- IG XI, 4 *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XI: *Inscriptiones Deli*, fasc. 4, ed. P. Roussel (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1914).
- IG XII Suppl. *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XII: *Supplementum*, ed. F. Hiller von Gaertringen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1939).
- IIasos *Die Inschriften von Iasos*, ed. W. Blümel, *IK* 28, 2 vols (Bonn: Habelt, 1985).
- IK *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* (Bonn: Habelt).
- IMagnesia *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander*, ed. O. Kern (Berlin: Spemann, 1900).
- IvP *Die Inschriften von Pergamon*, ed. M. Fränkel, 2 vols (Berlin: Spemann, 1890–1895).
- Just., *Epit.* Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, trans. J. C. Yardley, American Philological Association Classical Resources Series, 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).
- McCabe, *Labraunda* *Labraunda Inscriptions: Texts and List*, ed. D. F. McCabe (Princeton: Institute for Advanced Study, 1991).
- Liv. Livy, *History of Rome*, ed. and trans. B. O. Foster and others, Loeb Classical Library, 114, 133, 172, 191, 233, 295, 301, 313, 332, 355,

- 367, 381, 396, 404, 14 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919–1959).
- Lucian., *Macrob.* *Lucian of Samosata, Macrobii*, ed. and trans. A. M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library, 14 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913).
- Lys. *Lysias, Orations*, ed. and trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library, 244 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930).
- Mar. Par.* *Marmor Parium*, ed. F. Jacoby (Berlin: Weidmann, 1904).
- MDAI(A)* *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts: Athenische Abteilung* (Berlin: Von Zabern).
- Neh *Nehemiah*.
- Nep., Reg.* Cornelius Nepos, *On Kings*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library, 467 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929).
- Nep., Them.* Cornelius Nepos, *Themistocles*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library, 467 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929).
- OGIS* *Orientis Graeci inscriptiones selectae*, ed. W. Dittenberger, 2 vols (Leipzig: Olms, 1903–1905).
- Oros. Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, trans. A. T. Fear (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).
- P. Cair. Zen.* *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection*, ed. C. C. Edgar, 4 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1925–1931).
- P Gurob* *Greek Papyri from Gurob*, ed. J. G. Smyly (Dublin: Hodges, 1921).
- Paus. Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, ed. and trans. W. H. S. Jones, H. A. Omerod, and R. E. Wycherley, Loeb Classical Library, 93, 188, 272, 297, 298, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918–1935).
- PGM* *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, ed. K. Preisendanz, 2 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1931).
- PHI* Packard Humanities Institute.
- Phot. Photius, *The Bibliotheca*, trans. N. G. Wilson (London: Duckworth, 1994).
- Pindar, *Nem.* Pindar, *Nemean Odes*, ed. and trans. W. H. Race, Loeb Classical Library, 485 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
- Pindar, *Paeon* Pindar, *Paeans*, ed. and trans. W. H. Race, Loeb Classical Library, 485 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
- Plin., *Ep.* Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, ed. and trans. B. Radice, Loeb Classical Library, 55, 59, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969).
- Plin., *HN.* Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, ed. and trans. H. Rackham and others, Loeb Classical Library, 330, 352, 353, 370, 371, 392, 393, 394, 418, 419, 10 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938–1962).

Plut., <i>Alexander</i>	Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Life of Alexander</i> , ed. and trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 99 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).
Plut., <i>Cato Minor</i>	Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Life of Cato the Younger</i> , ed. and trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 100 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).
Plut., <i>Comp.</i> <i>Demetr. Ant.</i>	Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Comparison between Demetrius and Antony</i> , ed. and trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 101 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920).
Plut., <i>Demetrius</i>	Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Life of Demetrius</i> , ed. and trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 101 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920).
Plut., <i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Moralia</i> , ed. and trans. F. C. Babbitt and others, Loeb Classical Library, 197, 222, 245, 305, 306, 321, 337, 405, 406, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 470, 499, 16 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–2004).
Plut., <i>Pyrrhus</i>	Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Life of Pyrrhus</i> , ed. and trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 101 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920).
Plut.	<i>Themistocles</i> Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Life of Themistocles</i> , ed. and trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 47 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914).
Plut., <i>Theseus</i>	Plutarch of Chaeronea, <i>Life of Theseus</i> , ed. and trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 46 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914).
Pol.	Polybius of Megalopolis, <i>The Histories</i> , ed. and trans. W. R. Paton and others, Loeb Classical Library, 128, 137, 138, 159, 160, 161, 6 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010–2012).
Polyaenus, <i>Strat.</i>	Polyaenus, <i>Stratagems</i> , ed. and trans. P. Krentz and E. L. Wheeler, 2 vols (Chicago: Ares, 1994).
Porph.	Porphry.
Procl., <i>Chrestomathia</i>	Proclus Lycius, <i>Chrestomathia</i> , ed. F. Stein (Bonn: Georgi, 1907).
Ps.-Scymn.	Pseudo-Scymnus, <i>Periodos to Nicomedes</i> , ed. C. Müller in <i>GGM</i> (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1855).
Quint. Smyrn.	Quintus Smyrnaeus, <i>Posthomerica</i> , ed. and trans. N. Hopkinson, Loeb Classical Library, 19 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).
RE	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , 83 vols (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1894–1978).
SEG	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i> (Amsterdam, Leiden: Gieben, Brill).

Sen., <i>Ira</i>	Lucius Annaeus Seneca, <i>De Ira</i> , ed. and trans. J. W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library, 214 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).
Sen. <i>Clem.</i> ,	Lucius Annaeus Seneca, <i>De clementia</i> , ed. and trans. J. W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library, 214 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).
SNG v. <i>Aulock</i>	<i>Sylloge nummorum Graecorum: Deutschland, Sammlung Hans von Aulock</i> , ed. G. Kleiner and others, 18 vols (Berlin: Mann, 1957–1968).
Steph. Byz.	Stephanus of Byzantium, <i>Ethica</i> , ed. and trans. M. Billerbeck and A. Neumann-Hartmann, 5 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006–2017).
Str.	Strabo, <i>Geography</i> , ed. and trans. H. L. Jones, Loeb Classical Library, 49, 50, 182, 196, 211, 223, 241, 267, 8 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917–1932).
Syll. ³	<i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> , ed. W. Dittenberger, F. Hiller von Gaertringen, J. Kirchner, H. R. Pomtow, and E. Ziebarth, 4 vols, 3rd edn (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924).
TAM V	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris, v: Tituli Lydiae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti</i> , ed. P. Herrmann, 2 vols (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981–1989).
Theopomp.	Theopompus.
Thuc.	Thucydides of Athens, <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> , ed. and trans. C. F. Smith, Loeb Classical Library, 108, 109, 110, 169, 4 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919–1923).
Trogus, <i>Prol.</i>	Pompeius Trogus, <i>Prologues</i> , trans. J. C. Yardley, American Philological Association Classical Resources Series, 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).
Val. Max.	Valerius Maximus, <i>Memorable Doings and Sayings</i> , ed. and trans. D. R. S. Bailey, Loeb Classical Library, 492, 493, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
Xen., <i>Cyr.</i>	Xenophon of Athens, <i>Cyropaedia</i> , ed. and trans. W. Miller, Loeb Classical Library, 51, 52, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914).
Xen., <i>Oec.</i>	Xenophon of Athens, <i>Oeconomicus</i> , ed. and trans. E. C. Marchant, Loeb Classical Library, 168 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).



Introduction

The growing role of women exercising power — or at least having agency — is quite evident in descriptions of the political upheavals in the broad Greek-speaking world after Alexander, as compared with previous periods. At least, our sources echo those women more than ever before, although, of course, they always appear as secondary characters in the accounts of a history mainly starring men. Seemingly, those prominent women from the fourth century on were no longer the passive players in the internal and international sphere, as often found in myths or the stock — and half earnest — explanations for the causes of wars (e.g. Hdt., 1.1–5). In fact, during the last decades, Hellenistic queens and other royal women have finally been a research subject on their own. The archetypes and prejudices of the past have been progressively falling, but there is still much work to do. Thus, this book seeks to address the role of women in the political scene both as a historical phenomenon at large and as a historiographical or literary *topos*.

The volume attempts to tackle the question of whether this was a truly significant historical change, and if so, whether it stemmed from real political and structural developments that the societies of newly formed kingdoms underwent. The book also focuses on the historiographical tradition that began to take shape in the Hellenistic period — roughly from the Alexander era until the dominance of Rome in the Mediterranean —, but also beyond, both in time and space. This literary tradition included references to men and women of the new courts, allotting them roles, for example, that were known to exist till then in barbaric environs, like the Persian court. The Hellenistic tradition evolved over the years, and it is at the roots of our modern approaches to the women of that period, mixed with contemporary influences, biases, and commonplaces. The chapters in this book illustrate how the public image and agency of royal and elite women was shaped and displayed as well.

Since the publication of Grace H. Macurdy's seminal work (*Hellenistic Queens*) in 1932, the historiographical approach to women from the Hellenistic period has deeply evolved. That work was undoubtedly a turning point, being the first ever publication exclusively focused on Hellenistic queens, but it still preserved some of the archetypical and misogynistic commonplaces that abounded in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historiography. Likewise, Macurdy's book had no immediate continuity and remained relatively isolated. The last decades have witnessed a remarkable growth in historiographical interest in Hellenistic women. Scholars like Sarah B. Pomeroy and Elizabeth D. Carney

increasingly acknowledged the importance of women in the Hellenistic period and, nowadays, it is quite a fertile discipline after all those years of neglect. While several papers have been published in prestigious journals, there is still a clear need for more all-encompassing books dealing with this topic. Certainly, there are some books focusing on certain main characters, such as Arsinoe I or Cleopatra VII, or even covering one of the prime Hellenistic kingdoms. Similarly, only some chapters on Hellenistic women have been hitherto written for more general companions. However, so far, there is no comprehensive companion that compares the women's experience throughout that age and those several kingdoms. Moreover, there are some fringe periods, short-lived kingdoms, and obscure individuals who have received poor historiographical coverage so far. This volume, therefore, represents a much-needed contribution because of its wide scope. Clearly, it is not a companion — which should be multivolume, including both royal and non-royal women, as we shall address below —, but its encompassing table of contents assures a very complete chronological and geographical panorama of the royal and elite women's experience in the Hellenistic period, and addresses also some of their precursors in Epirus and Persia. The papers are mostly focused on female royal figures, which makes it possible to draw insightful comparisons of this phenomenon in different contexts as well.

This volume represents the proceedings of a panel held at the Celtic Classics Conference of 2019 in Coimbra. A lot of things have changed in the world since then. Some colleagues who took part in our session have not been able to contribute to this book for different reasons. However, we are pretty sure that their presentations, comments, and contributions to the fruitful discussions we had there have somehow found their way into the rest of the papers. On the other hand, we are very happy to have added to this volume a paper from a colleague who was not there, Elizabeth Carney, the main voice on this topic. Given the different backgrounds of the contributors, this work presents an interdisciplinary perspective, by employing historical and archaeological sources. The panel began aiming to include all women, both elite and non-elite. However, only two presentations (out of twenty) dealt with non-royal women and, unfortunately, neither of them has found its way into these proceedings, which would have greatly benefitted from their inclusion. In any case, the significant imbalance between both spheres reveals that, although studies about Hellenistic royal women are on the rise, those about non-royal women are still marginal. Thus, we cannot really claim that this book is about the female experience throughout the Hellenistic period, but only about those belonging to the elite. Hopefully, this historiographical gap will eventually be covered, and we strongly encourage researchers to undertake this task.

The book opens with a much-needed reappraisal of Aeacid naming practices, which can be compared to the equivalents among the Argeads and the subsequent Hellenistic dynasties, by Elizabeth Carney. This paper highlights the importance of royal women in the establishment and perpetuation of the Aeacid dynastic image. The next chapter, written by Marco Ferrario, analyses another model

of kingship and aristocracy that ultimately shaped the Hellenistic system. By examining Persian rule over Bactria, the contributor takes a close look at the Iranian world and offers a lot of useful solutions to fully understand the balances of power that were necessary for the brand-new ruling class to establish their rule, especially through estates and marriage. Branko van Oppen contributes to this volume a chapter that dissects the marital relations of Lysimachus. Among the main Diadochi, he is probably the one who has received less attention because of the lack of dynastic continuity of his rule. This article explores both the role that marriages played in Lysimachus's diplomatic relationships, but also highlights how his wives took an active and assertive part in the royal power. Connubial and power relations are also at the centre of Altay Coşkun's chapter. In this case, the paper is focused on the figure of the Seleucid Laodice I. This well-documented contribution explores the meaning and extent of the title *basilissa* (or rather the lack of it) for the royal wife of Antiochus II, establishing an insightful comparison with other Hellenistic royal women and kingdoms. Precisely, the next article, by Maria Dolores Mirón, explores the concept of queenship in one of these Hellenistic kingdoms: the Attalid realm. The chapter explains the central and cohesive role that those royal women had in the monarchic idea and propaganda, but also through their own agency. Finally, our last paper, written by Ashwini Lakshminarayanan, shows the transmission of Hellenistic imagery, motifs, and royal notions in Gandharan art. The example of Queen Maya's dream represents a good case study for acknowledging the fertile and mutual dialogue between Indian and Graeco-Roman conceptions, showing how artists used Hellenistic approaches to aspects like female nudity or the narrative standards in combination with native and/or other techniques.

The challenge to break the silence of time on many women from the past is clearly a stand that every scholar must take in our days. The fight for equality, respect, and security for every woman in the world is a matter that affects all humankind. Our proud modern nations left behind slavery and other forms of control and submission, but women are still under threat every day, everywhere. *Elite Women in Hellenistic History, Historiography, and Reception* is a commitment to the need to view and review the past, to look for the understudied half of humankind: the women that history and historiography used to forget, rebuke, or slander. Indeed, three male scholars, as co-organizers of the initial panel and later co-editors of this volume, want to support the half of humankind who so often face insecurity, uncertain precarious economies, sexual violence, a violence that too many times become lethal, and a general contempt in our patriarchally built cultures, with a quest to the past and hope to the future.



The Editors, Sabadell-Mediona, April 2023



6. The Dream of Queen Māyā in Gandhāran Art*

Context

Gandhāran art depicting narrative, ornamental, and devotional scenes decorated Buddhist monuments between the first and fourth centuries AD in ancient Gandhara, which broadly corresponds to present-day north-west Pakistan and north-east Afghanistan. The Gandhāran artistic repertoire included Greek, Roman, Indian, and Central Asian motifs that were transregionally shared and locally adapted along the trade networks often referred to as the Early Silk Roads.

Gandhāran reliefs and statues made in local schist and stucco plaster decorated monuments such as *stūpas* (hemispherical mound-like receptacles of relics) and image shrines within the region. Donative inscriptions in Gāndhārī (a north-western Middle Indo-Aryan language) reveal how these monuments were funded by affluent local donors. Notably, members of the local Apracarāja and the Oḍirāja kingdoms, in the Bajaur and Swāt Valleys respectively, made donations and contributed to the development of Buddhism in the region during the early first century BC.¹

By the first centuries AD, under the Kuṣāṇas, Gandhāra, parts of Bactria — located between the mountains of the Hindu Kush and the Amu Darya in Afghanistan —, and central India belonged to a single unified political power that supported economic and cultural contacts between the Mediterranean, Central

* This chapter is a part of my completed PhD thesis (Sapienza Università di Roma) and expands on the discussion from my forthcoming monograph titled *Gender in Gandhāran Art: Representations and Interactions in the Buddhist Context (1st – 4th Centuries CE)*. I am extremely grateful to the editors of this conference, the audience, and the anonymous reviewer for their comments in improving my contribution. Many thanks also to Prof. Marco Galli and Dr Laura Giuliano for their support during this research. All mistakes are my own.

¹ For an overview of the two kingdoms and their donative practices, see Lakshminarayanan 2023.

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Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. The Kuṣāṇas, alongside the local Apraca and Oḍi potentates, were important players in the political and economic networks of the region.

The primary focus of Gandhāran art was the Buddha Śākyamuni's biography. Episodes from his conception to his *mahāparinirvāṇa* (the great liberation) were depicted in a linear narrative mode that could be 'read' by the devotees during rituals such as the *pradakṣiṇa* (ritual circumambulation of a *stūpa*).² Within the corpus of Gandhāran art, the reliefs commonly interpreted as representing the dream of Māyā form the early part of the Buddha's biography and elaborate on the miraculous conception of Prince Siddhārtha, the future Buddha Śākyamuni. The protagonist of these narratives is Māyā (also sometimes known as Māhāmāyā and Māyādevī), the wife of King Śuddhodana and the chief queen of the Śākya clan. In the literary and visual narratives, the core elements of the story and Māyā's role within it are largely the same.³ In these narratives related to her dream, she sees a white elephant that strikes her right side with its trunk. The next morning, she shares her dream with her husband, King Śuddhodana who requests the dream be interpreted by the learned royal chaplain Asita. The chaplain interprets the dream as signs and predicts that Māyā will give birth to a son with the power to be a universal ruler (*cakravartin*) and if he chooses to, renounce the material world to become a Buddha.⁴ After the conception, Māyā features prominently in the visual and textual narratives as she gives birth to Prince Siddhārtha miraculously

2 The stories could start even before the events related to the conception. In the story of the Dīpaṃkara Buddha, the bodhisattva receives the solemn vow to become the future Buddha Śākyamuni (Matsumura 2011; Neelis 2019).

3 The dream episode is narrated in several texts such as in Sanskrit: *Buddhacarita*, *Lalitavistara*, *Mahāvastu*; in Pali: *Mahāpadāna sūta* of the Dīgha Nikāya preserved in the *Mahāvādānasūtra*, *Acchhariyabbhutaḍḍhammasutta* of the *Majjimanikāya*; and in Chinese: *Xiuxing-benqi-jing* 修行本起經 (*Sūtra of the Practice and Original Rise*, *Taishō Tripiṭaka* from now onwards T. based on Takakusu and others 1924–1934, T. 184), *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* 太子瑞應本起經 (*Auspicious Beginnings of the Prince Scripture*, T. 185), *Fo benxing jijing* 佛本行集經 (*Collected Lives of the Buddha*, T. 190). In our context, the most important text is the *Xiuxing-benqi-jing* (T. 184) by Zhu Dali and Kang Mengxiang and dated between AD 194 and 210 (Durt 2008, 122; Radich 2015, 123). The text is said to have been brought to China from Kapilavastu to render it authentic, but the language of the text shows that it was of middle-Indian origin, likely from north-western India (Zürcher 2007, 333 n. 99). The text describes the preparation undertaken by the queen before the conception of the Śākya prince. She had a bath, anointed herself with fragrant oils, and dressed in new clothes. The elaborate preparation ended with her going directly to bed. During her sleep, she dreamt of something hovering in the air, emitting light, and riding an elephant. The version of the story where the Bodhisattva rode on an elephant rather than manifesting as the elephant itself was identified as Version B by Deeg (2010, 108). The texts that state that the Bodhisattva transformed himself into an elephant are classified as Version A. Version A is identified in Indic texts, while Version B is only present in the earliest strata of texts related to the Buddha's biography (T. 184, T. 185). Version B in Chinese translations was a result of the mistranslation of Central Asian Middle-Indic texts, namely Gāndhāri; see Deeg 2010, 114.

4 Conception of righteous kings/heroes through dream is a common element in both Brahminical and Buddhist narratives. However, in the story of the Buddha, the traditional Brahminical style prediction is transformed by suggesting that the resulting son will become a renouncer (Young 1999, 21–24).

through her right side while standing up in the Lumbini gardens. However, after the successful birth, she passes away due to some mysterious reason.

The focus of my contribution is on the representation of Māyā during the dream/conception. The reliefs depicting the dream conception of Siddhārtha by Māyā in Gandhāran art were previously studied by Klaus Fischer. Fischer's study sought to compare the visual representation of the story with Buddhist texts to understand the differences between the two. Such a comparison led Fischer to suggest that the representation of Māyā in Gandhāran art had some erotic significance as she was sometimes depicted semi-nude.⁵ Fischer used Indian canonical texts to underline the Māyā's spiritual purity and suggested that the Gandhāran artists introduced 'Graeco-Roman artistic conventions' to create an erotic atmosphere that deviated from literary sources.

My aim in this chapter is to move beyond Fischer's study by using the reliefs as a primary source of Gandhāran Buddhist narratives. In doing so, I propose a blueprint for studying Gandhāran reliefs, taking into consideration the composition of the Gandhāran visual narrative. Thus, in the first part of this contribution, I propose a visual structure to study the constellation of motifs used in Gandhāran reliefs to communicate a story. Since this is very much a work in progress, the structure is an attempt to establish a standard tool for analysing Gandhāran reliefs. The second part of this chapter applies the visual structure to reliefs depicting the dream of Queen Māyā. The results of this analysis are presented in the third part which shows that a single model or way of transmission of motifs from West to East cannot be identified within the available data. By using the same structure as a key tool, the final part outlines the iconographic similarities between the mural painting of the dream of Māyā in Kizil and stone reliefs depicting the same scene. This comparison between the eastern Buddhist trading sites and Gandhāra further clarifies the dynamic process of interaction between cultures along the so-called Early Silk Roads.

Structural Analysis

A large number of Gandhāran reliefs survive today, however, the corpus is plagued by the issues of chronology, provenance, and artistic development. Due to haphazard excavations and isolated studies, the early scholarship on Gandhāran visual culture has largely concentrated on identifying the origins of motifs and reading visual material through ancient texts. This has slowly begun to change in recent decades in which traditional art historical methods are continuously being revisited to shed light on the role of Gandhāran art within Buddhist sites and their relationship to the viewer. Following this trend, this part of my contribution puts forward but one way to look at Gandhāran reliefs based on the visual

⁵ According to Fischer, the chastity and moral superiority ascribed to Māyā by the textual sources cannot be completely reconciled with the 'eroticised visual depiction' (Fischer 1984, 251).

structure.⁶ I am fully aware that the proposed structural analysis, stemming from my reflections on parsing Gandhāran stone reliefs for studying gender, may only shed incomplete light. This contribution is thus an invitation to other scholars to discuss the merits and demerits of an analysis based on the visual narrative structure and move the needle forward on fulfilling a *desideratum* in the study of Gandhāran art.

My proposal is largely constructed upon the strong foundation laid down by previous scholars who put forth innovative ways to study Gandhāran art. A standard tool to describe motifs depicted on Gandhāran reliefs was provided by Domenico Faccenna based on his excavations in the Swāt Valley. Grounded on reliefs from Butkara I and Saidu Sharif I, the *Repertorio terminologico per la schedatura delle sculture dell'arte gandharica* provides a non-comprehensive list of terms for describing figures and objects depicted in Gandhāran art.⁷ The work is valuable in establishing a controlled vocabulary for describing art and setting a global standard.⁸

The need to analyse Gandhāran reliefs based on some semblance of a structure was first proposed by Martina Stoye. She proposed a visual formula for Gandhāran reliefs based on two parts: the iconographic nucleus and the picture periphery. According to Stoye, the nucleus can be defined as a 'basic and compulsory constellation to the depiction'.⁹ It comprises the core figures necessary to convey the message and is indispensable for the visual narration. The periphery is the optional set of motifs introduced by the artists that may or may not impact the narration of the story. Less important than the core, the periphery motifs and figures could be abandoned depending on the availability of space, materiality, and style, and were not entirely necessary for communicating a message. Despite assigning a formulaic understanding of the visual, Stoye's work emphasized reading the visual narrative based on texts. However, my contribution seeks to enlarge Stoye's proposal for dividing the visual narrative into interrelated elements while simultaneously moving away from the traditional analysis of images based on Buddhist texts. It aims to provide a nuanced approach to Gandhāran art by giving prominence to its visual aspects and internal visual correlations.

My own proposal is based on O'Donnell's analysis of narratives which derives from Barthes and Duisit.¹⁰ Using these studies, I suggest that the structure of the narrative in Gandhāran art can also be divided into different elements (Table 6.1). My proposal does not seek to understand how the visual narrative was composed by the ancient artists. It only provides a tool for examining how different visual narrative elements are represented and function together.

⁶ Dehejia 1990; Stoye 2008.

⁷ Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007.

⁸ Enlarging this vocabulary is one of the goals of the Digitization of Gandhāran Artefacts (DiGA) project completed at Ruhr Universität, Bochum. For more details on DiGA, see Pons 2019.

⁹ Stoye 2008, 3.

¹⁰ O'Donnell 2011, 72–87; Barthes and Duisit 1975.



Table 6.1. Structural elements of the narrative. (after O'Donnell 2011).

FUNCTION	DEFINITION
Nucleus	Essential action(s) and figure(s)
Catalyst	Actions, objects, and figures associated with the nucleus but not entirely essential
Informant	Informs the viewer of the spatial and temporal characteristics
Index	Refers to action, events, objects, and figures outside the setting of the narrative

The visual narrative in Gandhāran art can be divided into a formula comprising four elements. Firstly, the nucleus (N), akin to Stoye's 'iconographic nucleus' is the essential unit of the narrative and includes the main figure(s), object(s), and the decisive action(s) that results in interpreting the message. The nucleus of the Gandhāran narrative can often be the leading figure(s) whose identification is imperative to the interpretation of the relief. Without the nucleus, the narrative and its meaning cannot be securely established. The second element, the catalyst (C) is similar to Stoye's 'picture periphery' and adds to the information conveyed by the nucleus. The presence of the catalyst does not change the outcome of the event but amplifies or contributes to the action. The third element is the informant (IF) which plays an important role in communicating the temporal and spatial characteristics. It provides the time and place for the nucleus and the catalyst and aids in the progression of the story. The final element of the formula, the index (ID) refers to other scenes and actions outside the event depicted in the relief. It may refer to actions that are about to take place but have not been demonstrated on the reliefs, elements that signal the viewer to contemporary figures and objects, and/or events that take place before and after the depicted event.

Visual Structure and the Dream of Māyā

The visual structure comprising the aforementioned four elements can prove to be complex when applied to a specific relief and oblige some figures and objects to play more than one role. Without setting out the narrative, let us try to parse the reliefs depicting the dream/conception as a starting point to test the above-mentioned visual structure (Fig. 6.1).

Let us take for example the relief depicting the dream of Māyā found in Kalawan, Taxila. The central position and proportion occupied by the sleeping female figure suggests its importance to the narrative. She may be identified as part of the nucleus of the story. She interacts with the elephant in the nimbus above her, which forms the catalyst. It provides further information on the nucleus, the female figure. The two figures form part of the core of the narrative and can



Figure 6.1. Dream of Māyā from Kalawan measuring 40 cm in length. (National Museum, New Delhi / photo: Osmund Bopearachchi. Reproduced with permission).

be identified as Māyā (N) and the Bodhisattva-Elephant (C). The Bodhisattva appeared to the queen in a dream, and she conceived him miraculously without sexual intercourse. The lack of physical contact between the figures confirms the miraculous interaction between them.¹¹ The location of the scene is provided by the two arches and a segmental trapezoidal architrave with a saw-toothed cornice. The elaborate building and decorative furniture can be associated with the palace in which Māyā slept during the dream (IF). The lack of male figures, notably that of King Śuddhodana, could also be used to identify the room as part of the inner palace or the female quarters of the king.

Within the palace, two female guards stand under the arches and watch the sleeping queen. The female figures are commonly understood as *yavani* and related to Greek female guards recruited to guard the harem within the palace (*antepura*).¹² Their identification as the guardians of the *antepura* is based on

11 In literary sources, such miraculous conceptions were initiated by female characters, particularly queens, to ensure an heir to the kingdom. The women in textual narratives prepared themselves and demonstrated their purity in order to conceive a divine son. They reacted to the impotence of the king by praying for 'divine intervention' in the name of the public good; see Sahgal 2015, 3–26.

12 Armed female figures are also depicted in Faccenna 1962–1964, CDLII, CDLX; Bopearachchi 2020, 67; Peshawar Department of Archaeology and Museums, Peshawar, inv. nos S 97, S 102, S 111, and S 15 (from Zar Dheri); British Museum, London, inv. no. OA 1932.7–9.1; Peshawar Museum, Peshawar, inv. nos U(M20), PM. 02722 and 02723 (from Sahri-Bahlol); Indian Museum, Kolkata, inv. no. 65/A23259 (from Loriyan Tangai); Lahore Museum, Lahore, inv. no. 463/G 50 (likely from Takhal Bala or Takhal Payal; Errington 1987, 107); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv.

other visual representations of palaces amongst the Begram ivories which date between the end of the third century to the beginning of the fourth century AD.¹³ Begram, located in modern Afghanistan, was partly excavated by the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA) under the direction of J. Hackin in 1937 and 1939–1940. The site was likely built in the Graeco-Bactrian period and continued to be used in the Indo-Greek, Kushan, and Sassanian periods. The excavations revealed objects of Mediterranean origins such as bronze statues, plaster casts, and Chinese lacquerware attesting to the site's connection to both eastern and western trade routes. In rooms 10 and 13 of Site 2 in the 'New Royal City' of Begram, ivory and bone carvings depicting several different themes such as women, hunting, palatial scenes, etc. were discovered. The ivory plaques were hypothesized to be elements of furniture decorations in women's rooms based on their decorative motif and the few male figures depicted in them. On the ivory plaques depicting women within palaces, the representations of female guards also appear. For example, a plaque depicts two female figures standing under an arched *torana* (gateway). On the left, figures stand under a balustrade (?), and next to them, there is a standing female figure with her right leg crossed behind her left leg, her right knee extended outwards, and holding a long lance with an elongated stemmed tip.¹⁴ The representation of this armed female guard closely resembles the guards that surround Māyā during the dream conception. The numerous examples of such figures among the Begram ivories suggest that female guards were a part of the visual representation of women's quarters within the royal palace during the Kuṣāṇa period.

Returning to our relief from Kalawan, the armed female figures can be associated with palace guards. However, their role need not be limited to the palace. Rather than being human palace guards, they can also be understood as being divine guards. They may have been part of the divine entourage that accompanied the Bodhisattva in his elephant form and guarded the divine conception (ID).

In summary, the four components of the narrative structure can be found in these reliefs. Māyā is indispensable to the scene due to her role as the future mother of the Buddha Śākyamuni. The dream aspect is relegated to the descending Bodhisattva-Elephant in the nimbus. Even without this element, the dream can be successfully communicated to the viewer as the dream is a mental concept that need not play out, although some ambiguity seems to be implied in our

no. 1976.402; Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Yamanashi, inv. no. 100142; Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, inv. no. B64S5; Staatliche Museum zu Berlin, Berlin, inv. no. I. 63; Museo Civico Archeologico, Milan, inv. no. A 21700; Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai, acc. no. 3; Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet, Paris, inv. no. MA 3397; Taxila Museum, Taxila, acc. no. 12; Swat Museum, Mingora, inv. no. NG 339 (from Nimogram); Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Museum, Peshawar, SSAQ Museum no. BKIII 1985-1-116 (from Butkara III: Rahim Khan 2015, 25). Female guards also appear in Sanskrit texts and commonly protect the king's inner chambers (Penrose Jr 2016, 223–60).

¹³ Morris 2017, 79.

¹⁴ Auboyer 1954, 61.

sources. The guards, the elaborate clothing, and the architectural setting confirm the physical location of the events. Even if we take the female guards to be divine beings, they play the dual role of connecting the events that are not part of this relief, such as the Bodhisattva's descent from his divine abode in the Tuṣita heaven to Śuddhodana's Palace.

It is important to note that the interpretation of the scene relies on the knowledge possessed by the viewer. Regardless of how well we divide the elements in the narrative into different categories, the interpretative capacity of the ancient viewer may still escape us. We are often inclined to read these images through our knowledge of texts. The literary sources, however fragmentary, cannot form a singular source of information for images as the strong oral tradition, which we know existed in the Indic north and north-west, is lost to us. Furthermore, the approach to images as illustrations of texts also ignores the depiction as a narrative in its own right. The snapshot depicted in art is meant to evoke a broader, more complicated narrative, and some elements were sacrificed by the artists in the light of material and spatial constraints.

Furthermore, the structure depends on each iteration of the narrative and need not be the same in different regional workshops. At the local level, variations occur at different levels, namely in how the figures are presented and by the addition (or removal) of objects and figures which further clarify the message. For example, in the majority of reliefs, Māyā is depicted on her left with her left hand under her head and her right hand casually placed at her hips. However, a handful of reliefs depict her in other positions such as with her back to the viewer,¹⁵ with one buttock revealed,¹⁶ holding a wreath in her left hand,¹⁷ her upper body raised,¹⁸ and her face turned upwards (Fig. 6.2).¹⁹ Some reliefs also depict an open-flame lamp that clarifies the temporal setting of the events, the night.²⁰ The lamp and elaborate clothing of the queen along with the wreath may suggest the ritual nature of the conception.

At the macro level, the narrative structure of the reliefs may be switched depending on the message. Gandhāran reliefs give prominence to Māyā, as she was exalted for the growth of the Śākya lineage and for being the future Buddha Śākyamuni's mother. In other schools of Buddhist art, the centrality of Māyā is not always maintained. From Bhārhut, a *vedika* (railing pillar) currently preserved in the Indian Museum, Kolkata depicts the conception.²¹ On this pillar, the Bodhisattva-Elephant is larger than the figure of Māyā. Two female attendants sit on the ground and fan the sleeping queen on the bed. The representation of

15 Peshawar Museum, Peshawar, inv. no. PM_027723, from Sahri Bahlol.

16 Fischer 1984.

17 Nishikawa 1994, pl. 3, no. 120.

18 Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, inv. no. B6455.

19 Indian Museum, Kolkata, inv. no. 3677/A23248, from Mardan, Peshawar.

20 Sivaramamurti 1955; Quagliotti 2009.

21 Zin 2015, 187, fig. 6.



Figure 6.2. Dream of Māyā from Nimogram measuring 28 cm in height. (Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet, Paris / photo: author).

Māyā's body follows Indian artistic conventions, with large swelling breasts and wide hips. She wears a pleated *paridhāna* (lower garment), tied around her waist, and an elaborate girdle. The perspective and the depth are also different compared to the Gandhāran scene. At Bhārhut, Māyā is sleeping on her back, flattened towards the couch, and is viewed from above.

Another depiction of the conception can also be found at the eastern gate of *stūpa* 1 at Sanchi.²² The position of Māyā is once again different as she lies on her right side and her left side is revealed to the Bodhisattva-Elephant. The latter is depicted at her feet rather than her midriff. Māyā's left hand is placed on her body and her right hand cradles her head. Her left knee is also slightly bent, and her right leg is stretched out to the end of the bed. She has large breasts, wide hips, and a swelling stomach. No trace of her garments is visible, but she wears a decorative girdle, bracelets, and anklets. By comparison, in Gandhāran art, the drapery is pleated around Māyā's waist, slightly slid down, and terminates around her ankles. The Bodhisattva-Elephant is also depicted within a nimbus to signify the bright light emanating from the divine being. In the reliefs from Sanchi and Bhārhut, these motifs are not part of the visual narration of this episode.

Development of the Repertoire

Besides the structure, the reliefs depicting Māyā's dream can also be used to understand how motifs were transformed and adapted within the Gandhāran repertoire. Take, for example, the nucleus of the narrative episode, Māyā, who is represented similarly in a variety of reliefs with some minor differences. The representation of this narrative was likely based on local interpretation of the story which resulted in the differences, but individual motifs such as drapery and

²² Zin 2015, 187, fig. 7.

Māyā's body on the vast majority of Gandhāran reliefs are comparable to figures circulating within the Eurasian networks.

According to Monika Zin, the sleeping iconography of Māyā in the reliefs from Amaravātī dating around AD 70 was based on Roman works of Ariadne's discovery by Dionysus.²³ The works can be related to the story of how Ariadne was discovered by Dionysus after Theseus, the Athenian hero, abandons her on the island of Naxos.²⁴ She fell asleep on the shores and was found by the entourage of Dionysus. This moment of discovery was often depicted in art and is also associated with the so-called 'sleeping Ariadne' figures currently in the Museo Pio-Clementino (Vatican) and the Museo Archaeologico Nazionale (Florence). The two marble figures, interpreted as Ariadne, are Roman copies of lost Hellenistic works, but essentially preserve Roman artistic preferences.²⁵ These two Ariadne figures appear fully clothed with their left breast revealed. Their upper body is slightly inclined forward, and their legs are crossed and tangled within the pleated garments. Zin associated the posture of Māyā with the Ariadne figure from the Vatican and suggested that portable images of the sleeping female figure may have been carried through trade networks and influenced the art of Amaravātī.²⁶

The only depiction of the discovery of Ariadne by Dionysus within the sub-continent was found on an emblemata disk and is part of a private collection. Based on the iconographic features, it has been tentatively dated to the mid- to late second century BC and presumed to have been made in the Graeco-Bactrian or the Indo-Greek period (Fig. 6.3).²⁷ Ariadne, sleeping on the rocky shores of Naxos, is depicted on the lower portion of the disk. She lies on the ground with her back to the viewer, and her head slightly turned to the right. Her hands are awkwardly placed on either side of her head. The drapery around her lower body is fanned on the ground, and the U-shaped frame of the 'dropped down' drapery exposes her buttocks. Above her, Dionysus stands in heroic nudity, Thracian boots, and a himation draped around his shoulder. He is accompanied by two female maenads. Two more male figures stand on either side of Ariadne. One of them is the semi-nude satyr Silenus with wavy hair and a long beard. Old Silenus has already registered Ariadne's presence and his gesture, right hand

23 Zin 2015, 186–99.

24 Diod. Sic., v.51; Plut., *Theseus*, xx; Catull., 64.

25 McNally 1985, 170–77.

26 Zin 2015, 196.

27 A detailed catalogue of the Hellenistic artefacts from this collection was published by Martha L. Carter and Prudence Oliver in the 2015 work *Arts of the Hellenised East: Precious Metalwork and Gems of the Pre-Islamic Era*. These artefacts do not come from secure archaeological contexts and were acquired privately from dealers. This date was based on the similarity between the rocky shore in the plaque and a 'stone palette' from Gandhāra in the MET (Carter and Harper 2015, 32). It should be noted that the 'palette' does not come from a known excavated context, and any comparative dating using stone palettes, in general, is problematic. The authenticity of this unprovenanced object was verified by Pieter Meyers through rigorous metallurgical analyses.



Figure 6.3. Emblema depicting the discovery of Ariadne by Dionysus measuring 14.6 × 12.3 cm and weighing 138 g. (National Museum of Qatar / drawing: author).

raised, communicates it to the young god. To the left, a satyr with goat-like long ears and wearing an animal skin lower garment plays a syrinx.

The plaque does not preserve the posture of Ariadne that was popular in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The modification of the position of her arms and the presentation of her body suggests that this plaque may have been produced in the Indo-Greek period based on local interpretations of Hellenistic models. For example, her drapery is carefully arranged ‘dropped’ down to reveal her nude body. These aspects are evident on the Gandhāran reliefs depicting the dream of Māyā, where her seemingly nude upper body is carefully revealed by the arrangement of her garments. Her drapery frames her upper body and is slightly ‘dropped’ down over her right flank to indicate the final destination of the Bodhisattva-Elephant.

I have discussed the ‘dropped’ drapery motif elsewhere in detail.²⁸ Since it is beyond the scope of the present analysis, I wish to bring attention to a context in which this drapery arrangement occurs and can be associated with marriage, conception, and divine intervention.

The so-called Graces plate, likely from Bactria, communicates aspects related to female modesty, marriage, and conception using the ‘dropped’ drapery motif. This silver plate comes from a private collection and its provenance and archaeological context remain unknown. The plate is supposed to have been made around the second half of the third century AD in Bactria or Gandhāra.²⁹ It

²⁸ Lakshminarayanan 2024.

²⁹ For the conclusions of the technical analysis, see Dan, Grenet, and Sims-Williams 2014, 244.

depicts the nuptials of a young woman before and during her wedding night in a symbolic manner.³⁰ The artistic conventions used in this plate were widely related to wedding ceremonies. Due to the combination of motifs and actions depicted, the plate was likely made for a multicultural audience appealing to both Hellenistic and local Indo-Iranian audiences who may have understood the wedding symbolism. On the main section of the plate, a female figure wearing a *stephanos* (crown) and *nymphis* (sandals) associated with brides can be seen seated within a luxurious gynaecium. In the lower register, the wedding night of the same bride is symbolized. The scene depicts the *anakalypsis* (drawing aside the veil) ceremony using the Ariadne-Dionysus mythical discovery. The bride is depicted as a fully conscious woman with her upper body revealed and her lower body partially covered by a 'dropped' drapery. This type of drapery was associated with mythical images of brides, who ideally show their readiness for sexual intercourse that led to successful conception. If we compare this type of drapery with the dream scenes in Gandhāra, it is possible to suggest that the portrayal of Māyā with the 'dropped' drapery follows similar established conventions for depicting female figures during conception.

Besides the drapery, the posture of Māyā's body also preserves some resemblance to images of reclining female figures in Hellenistic art. The body of Māyā with a slightly elevated upper body resembles the image of the sleeping bride on the 'Graces' plate. However, this posture was also popular in other forms of artistic production in the Hellenistic period. Reclining female figurines in terracotta were part of an important group of *Kleinkunst* that was widely distributed, easily transported, and locally adapted within the eastern Hellenistic and Parthian kingdoms. The popularity of the reclining female wearing wreathed crowns and covered by 'dropped' drapery in terracotta statuettes of the Seleucid and Parthian kingdoms are attested by the wide distribution of these artefacts in Babylonia, Seleucia, and Uruk.³¹ The presence of both Hellenistic and local traditions created a new artistic language which is reflected in these figurines.³² Within this broad range of figurines, not all of them recline the same way. However, a majority of them recline on their left side with their head commonly turned to the right. One of the terracotta figurines from Seleucia on Tigris depicts a female figure in this position (Fig. 6.4). The drapery on the figure's lower body is slid around the lower waist

³⁰ Dan, Grenet, and Sims-Williams 2014, fig. 2.

³¹ For the relationship between Parthia and Gandhāra, see Goldman 1978. For the Seleucid-Parthian reclining female figures, see Langin-Hooper 2020, 222. In Classical Greek art, reclining figures were commonly male figures. The presence of a female figure in Babylonia may have been a concession to local norms; see Langin-Hooper 2016, 70. Examples of figurines from Babylonia can be found in van Ingen 1939, pls XLIII, XLIV, XLV. At Seleucia on the Tigris, over eleven thousand terracotta figurines with a rich repertoire of both local and Hellenistic traditions were found in excavations. Out of them, 717 artefacts represent anthropomorphic figurines and 17 per cent of them were reclining females; see Menegazzi 2016, 97; Langin-Hooper 2020, 245.

³² The so-called 'Hellenistic Ladies' heads in Barikot further strengthen this connection. Cf. Coloru, Iori, and Olivieri 2021, 118.



Figure 6.4. Seleucia on the Tigris, semi-nude reclining woman measuring 8.4 cm in height, terracotta. (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan/drawing: author).

and the upper body is slightly elevated. In its current state, the figure's left hand, which supports her upper body, is missing, and her right hand lies on her thigh. She has a soft curving waist and wide hips with her legs slightly crossed within the mantle tangled around her ankles. The posture of the body, its shape, the drapery, and its arrangement are comparable to the Gandhāran depictions of Māyā. The manner in which the female figurine and Māyā recline or sleep, the distribution of their weight, soft curves, wreathed heads, and 'dropped' drapery suggest similar local preferences for depicting female figures.

The connection between the 'dropped' drapery and reclining figures can also be confirmed by an object, belonging to a group often referred to as 'toilet trays,' from the Saidu Sharif area.³³ Toilet trays are chronologically attributed to the period between the second century BC and the second century AD, i.e. during the period of the Indo-Greek, the Indo-Parthian, and the early Kuṣāṇa rule in Gandhāra.³⁴ These objects, whose function is not entirely clear, are positioned by scholars as emblematic of the impact of multicultural groups in Gandhāra and the region's access to the Eurasian artistic repertoires. They are often seen as a missing link between the Western motifs in Gandhāran art in the first century AD and the Hellenistic presence in the region during the second century BC.³⁵ The toilet tray

33 Faccenna 1962–1964, pl. CDLVI.

34 A review of these objects can be found in Falk 2010; Galli 2011; Pons 2011; Boardman 2015, 142–53; Francfort 2016; Lo Muzio 2018; Kim 2019.

35 Although many studies have used the 'toilet trays' to fill the artistic vacuum, more recently Bopearachchi 2021 used it to study the transmission of the sun god imagery.



from the Saidu Sharif area depicts a banqueting scene with a male figure reclining on a bed and holding a cup. Two female attendants stand on either side of the bed. Similar to Māyā in the dream reliefs, the male figure on the palette lies on his left side with his left arm supporting his upper body. A 'dropped' drapery creates a U-shaped frame around his hip and covers his lower body. The elements such as the posture, drapery and bed are reminiscent of the composition of the dream reliefs.

The similarities between different types of reclining figures and their context suggest that the representation Māyā's reclining body in Gandhāran art may have been a result of a dynamic process in which small objects played a significant role. Moreover, when we compare the different images of the dream conception in Central and South Asia, our visual evidence reveals that interregional connections may have also played a role in transmitting and transforming motifs, which is the focus of the following analysis.

Transmission and Transformation

Moving eastwards, the practice of transforming and adapting available motifs alongside local visual innovations can be understood based on a cave wall painting of the dream of Māyā from Kizil. The painted caves located in the oasis of Kuča, situated along the northern branch of the ancient Silk Routes in the Tarim Basin (now in the Xinjiang province), were an important commercial and religious (Buddhist) site. I have already shown the relationship between Gandhāran reliefs from Swāt and Kuča cave paintings elsewhere, and I would like to take up this theme again in this chapter to underline the role of Gandhāra as not only an 'importer' of motifs but also as an 'exporter'.³⁶ It should be kept in mind that the haphazard state of the data may provide an illusion of a simple chain of transmission, but in this case, too, the interactions between the two regions were dynamic and were not always linear. Motifs and ideas were introduced, adapted, transformed, and became local in complicated processes that are not always captured by the extant data.

The kingdom of Kuča was located in the northern part of the Taklamakan Desert in the Tarim Basin in the southern foothills of the Tianshan Mountains in present-day Xinjiang, China. During the opening of the Early Silk Roads (c. 140 BC), the kingdom played an important role in facilitating long-distance trade and cultural interaction between the East and the West.³⁷ It was also a crucial player in the transmission of Buddhism from the Indian subcontinent to China, the Korean Peninsula, and Japan. The most famous Buddhist sites in the Tarim Basin are in Kizil comprising around three hundred caves, some of which were elaborately painted. The cave paintings are not entirely contemporary to

³⁶ Lakshminarayanan 2021.

³⁷ Zhou, Shen, and Zhang 2021, 236.

Gandhāran art, and the earliest paintings can be roughly dated around the third century AD.

Commercial and cultural routes existed between the Mediterranean regions and China via the Indian subcontinent in Antiquity. They were comprised of a complex system of roads, tracks, and canals that joined different settled communities, traders, and military posts. They should not be imagined as neat well-travelled highways connecting Rome to Chang'an, but as slow-moving caravan routes with traders and multiple intermediaries carrying varying quantities of goods.³⁸ To fully understand the scope of the trade between these regions would require a complete historical analysis of the Near East, Central Asia, India, and China, which is not possible here. Instead, I will provide a simplified overview of the relationships between the eastern Hellenistic and Parthian kingdoms with Gandhāra and the latter's to Kuča.

Before the establishment of the Early Silk Roads between Rome and Han China, trade between the Indic north-west and southern Mesopotamia already existed in the mid-third millennium BC via the Indus River Valley.³⁹ By the Hellenistic period, these pre-existing routes were enlarged, and new trading patterns were constructed. Hellenistic trade networks linked the eastern Hellenistic kingdoms, particularly the Near East, with Central and South Asia, and created a connected trading sphere.⁴⁰ Hellenistic kings founded new cities in their kingdoms and these urban settlements slowly became integrated into the trade routes. One such city was Ai-Khanoum in Bactria, which was strategically located at the confluence of two main rivers in Central Asia: the Kokcha and the Amu Darya (ancient Oxus). The city was founded along important caravan and trade routes in Central Asia, and provided access into the Iranian Plateau, to India via the Pamir-Hindu Kush, and to the Aral and the Black Sea regions. During the Kuṣāṇa reign, trade relations were maintained and accelerated due to the single unified political system and economic stability of the region.

The trade routes also allowed for the spread of religions, such as Buddhism through the movement of people and Buddhist material culture. The impact of religious interactions in this case can be studied based on Buddhist sites such as Kizil which were also located along trade routes. Let us take up the same example of the dream of Māyā to study the interactions between Kizil and Gandhāra. In Cave no. 110 at Kizil, the dream of Māyā is part of a series of paintings narrating the story of the Buddha Śākyamuni. The story begins with the dream and the painting follows the standardized elements present in Gandhāran art.⁴¹ Māyā is centrally within an ornate palace (N). The Bodhisattva-Elephant is located directly above her midriff (C). Māyā lies on her right side facing upwards, her right hand cradles her head, and her left hand lies on her knees. Her knees are folded



³⁸ Mair 2014, 3.

³⁹ Ray 2003, 84–90.

⁴⁰ Manning 2014, 8; 2020, 239.

⁴¹ For images of the paintings in this cave, see Yaldiz 1987, Abb. 45,1; Santoro 2003, 128, pl. 1.

and elevated by a cushion. Traces of her jewellery such as a long necklace, anklets, bracelets, and a headdress are visible. Due to the severely damaged condition, her drapery cannot be discerned. Beside her reclining figure are four females: two standing and two seated figures. The seated figures are both fast asleep on top of a cushion with their arms haphazardly placed in front of their bodies. The other two standing figures appear on either side of the bed and lean against the edge of the frame. All four figures are elaborately dressed and wear headdresses, necklaces, anklets, and draped garments. They are turned towards the sleeping queen and watch the scene. The actions of the figures reveal their different roles. The sleeping female figures at the foot of the bed represent human attendants who are also asleep as the dream unfolds. However, the standing and alert female figures were guardians rather than attendants.

The Kizil painting represents a mixture of motifs to depict the dream/conception story. By comparing the painting at Kizil with Gandhāran reliefs, several similarities and differences become evident. The differences in the depiction suggest the local adaptation of a well-known model. The position of Māyā, the Bodhisattva-Elephant, and the attendants closely resemble Gandhāran reliefs. The sleeping queen is given prominence rather than the Bodhisattva-Elephant. The standing female figures in the painting also resemble the Gandhāran female guards. On the one hand, the Gandhāran attendants hold a long spear or sword, but such weapons are absent in Kizil. The painting also deviates from the Gandhāra model as Māyā lies on her right side facing the viewer with her left side exposed to the elephant. This recalls the depictions at Bhārhut and Sanchi with the queen sleeping on her right side.

Conclusion

This chapter proposed an approach to Gandhāran reliefs based on the narrative structure. The structure can be divided into four elements: the nucleus, catalyst, informant, and index to present a concise narrative to the viewer and trigger an interpretation. This approach privileges the interaction between the artist-object-viewer rather than interpreting visual evidence through texts. When sources do not exist for a specific action or scene in Buddhist images, we tend to attribute the missing element to some lost version of texts. However, when we approach images as an equally important source of information on Buddhist narrative, we become attuned to how actions or figures can be artistic invention. As an example of this approach, this chapter used the representation of the dream/conception in Gandhāran art and subsequently highlighted the importance and representation of certain figures that may have otherwise remained unnoticed by a textual approach.

Representations of powerful female figures such as queens and princesses are elusive in Gandhāran art. This is because the central theme of Gandhāran imagery is the life of the Buddha and so the Buddha is the protagonist of most biographic

reliefs. However, even the Buddha seems to have been relegated to a secondary role in the reliefs depicting the dream/conception and subsequent birth. In these reliefs, the central position is accorded to Queen Māyā, the mother of Prince Siddhārtha, the future Buddha Śākyamuni. Her importance within the narrative can be understood by the fact that she is represented larger than the other accompanying figures including the infant Siddhārtha. During the conception, she reclines on the bed, either completely lying on her back or with her upper body elevated, as she experiences a mysterious dream. The Gandhāran artists envisioned the scene using popular motifs already circulating in the region. The motifs were not copied faithfully, but elements such as the drapery, bodily form, and wreathed headdresses from the Eurasian repertoires were deliberately used to convey the successful conception. The discussion on Queen Māyā's posture and drapery in this chapter showed how motifs travelled into and outside Gandhāra, and, at the same time, went through a dynamic process of transformation and adoption.



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