

**Hestia, a *Tabula Iliaca* and Poseidon's trident:
Symbols' adaptations of some Bactrian and Gandhāran divinities¹**

Angelo Andrea Di Castro

Monash University

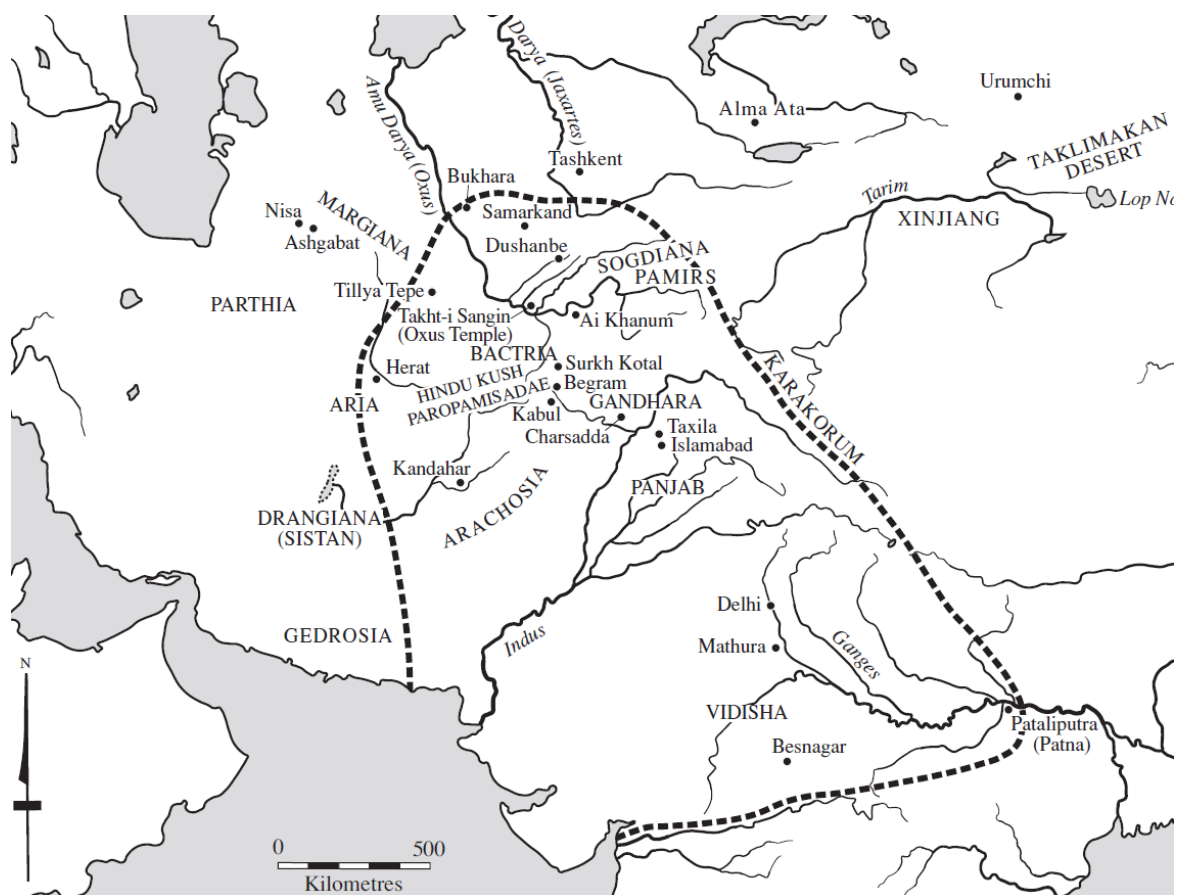
Hestia in the eastern lands

Following Alexander's conquest and the period of Seleucid consolidation the far eastern Hellenistic lands became gradually detached from the central authority in Syria, becoming eventually independent around the mid third century BCE. This political autonomy does not necessary mean that the cultural ties with the Mediterranean world were interrupted. The Macedonian colonies established by Alexander continued to thrive under the early Seleucids and even within a few generations the *Greekness* of these colonists was not watered down as the archaeological evidence from Ai Khanum can clearly show.²

From the inception of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom (3rd century BCE) down to the formation of the Kushan Empire (2nd century CE) the Classical culture went through phases of transformation and hybridisation encompassing language, script, religious imagery, and visual arts. The Bactrian and Gandhāran societies, being a frontier situation, were characterised by a sort of osmosis, due to cross-cultural exchanges that continued through to the late Hellenistic and early medieval period.

¹ These brief notes, presented in a slightly different format at the ASCS 33 conference, are additional reflections that originated from a research on goddesses in the eastern Hellenistic regions that is currently underway (see for instance Di Castro (2012); and Di Castro in press).

² For the resilience of the Greek culture in Bactria as well as in other Persian areas such as Susiana, see for instance Sherwin-White & Kuhrt (1993) 141-187, in part. 178-179.



Map of the Kuṣāṇa Empire (from Di Castro 2005)

An inscription discovered in recent times, from Kulyab (modern Tajikistan), in northern Bactria on the right side of the Oxus (Amu Darya), about 100 km north of Ai Khanum, shows how by the late third - early second century BCE the traditional Greek customs and practices were still in vogue in these remote areas. The inscription (Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004: 333-356) in honour of the ruling king Euthydemus, and his son Demetrius was dedicated to Hestia :

“Heliodotos dedicated this fragrant altar for Hestia, venerable goddess, illustrious amongst all, in the grove of Zeus, with beautiful trees; he made libations and

sacrifices so that the greatest of all kings Euthydemos, as well as his son, the glorious, victorious and remarkable Demetrius, be preserved of all pains, with the help of the Fortune with divine thoughts.”

The Greek text is:

Τόνδε σοι βωμὸν θυώδη, πρέσβα κυδίστη θεῶν
 Ἑστία, Διος κ(α)τ' ἄλσος καλλίδενδρον ἔκτισεν
 καὶ κλυταῖς ἤσκησε λειβαῖς ἐμπύροις Ἡλιόδοτος,
 4 ὄφρα τὸμ πάντων μέγιστον Εὐθύδημον βασιλέων
 τοῦ τε παῖδα καλλίνικον ἐκπρεπῆ Δημήτριον
 πρευμενῆς σώιζης ἀκηδεῖ(ς) σὺν Τύχαι θεόφρον[ι].

Rougemont 's translation:

L' autel parfumé que voici, c'est pour toi, déesse vénérable, illustre entre toutes, Hestia, que, dans le bois sacré de Zeus, plein de beaux arbres, il l' a construit et honoré de libations et de sacrifices éclatants, Héliodotos, afin que le plus grande de toutes les rois, Euthydémos, ainsi que son fils – glorieux vainqueur –, le remarquable Démétrios, dans ta bonté tu les preserves de toute peine, avec l'aide de la Fortune aux divines pensées.

(Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004 : 333).

Hestia embodies the sacredness of the hearth's fire at home; in the *Homeric Hymn* (XXIX) she receives the first offering victim in every sacrifice, is also the first to be invoked at the opening of banquets and the last as well (Burkert 1985: 61, 170, 335; Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004: 341-345). Because Hestia in the traditional Greek world is connected to the domestic and to the civic rituals of the *prytany*, it is possible to infer that the donor of the inscription, Heliodotos, was holding a public function, and – as Bernard (Bernard, Pinault &

Rougemont 2004: 352) has suggested – that he was in all probability one of the governors of northern Bactria. Since all sacrifices had to be preceded by the ritual invocation of Hestia it would not be surprising then to find an inscription where a high ranking officer like Heliodotos, who had to take care of the civic rituals – like many other Greek magistrates – is invoking this goddess for the protection, health and success of his king. The inscription also indicates that it was created during the lifetime of Euthydemos – probably after the Indian campaigns of his son Demetrius – around the late 3rd - early 2nd century BCE (Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004: 348-349).

Bernard's clarifying analysis of the sacrificial context should be considered as words of good counsel against falling in the temptation of tracing a direct line between the cult of Hestia, Tyche and the cult of the sacred fire of the Persians (Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004: 343-344). Obviously the interpretation of Hestia as sacred fire of the hearth tout-court with the sacred fire of the Zoroastrian tradition can be a controversial argument.³ Nevertheless Xenophon (*Cyr.* I. 6.1; VII. 5.57) refers to Hestia and Zeus as the gods invoked by the Persian king, and again – after the victory over Croesus and the conquest of Sardis – he tells that Hestia is the first divinity to whom a sacrifice is offered. Before Xenophon, Herodotus (IV. 59, 68) already mentioned Hestia, identified as the Scythian goddess *Tabiti*. Herodotus specifies that the Scythians took most solemn oaths in front of, or in the name of the king's hearth. Furthermore Herodotus (IV. 127) narrates that the Scythian king Idanthyrsus – who was fighting the Persians – pronounced the following words: “I acknowledge no masters but Zeus from whom I sprang, and Hestia the Scythian queen.” Looking at Herodotus' and Xenophon's incidental references to Hestia it is not difficult to recognize that these are good examples of *interpretatio graeca*, where local Iranian and

³ For the Zoroastrian religion during the Hellenistic period, see Boyce & Grenet (1991).

Scythian divinities are called with the names of (not necessarily corresponding) Greek deities.

Another inscription regarding the cult of Hestia comes from a “less sacred” context of the royal palace of Parthian Nisa. The inscription in this case is a simple label with just the name of the goddess, incised on one of the ivory rhytons discovered during the early excavations conducted in the middle of the 20th century by Russian archaeologists.⁴ The name “Hestia” is undoubtedly indicating the connection of the divinity with the celebration of royal banquets, as observed by Bernard who considers this in a purely Greek context (1991: 33-34; Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004: 345).



Inscription on Nisa Rhyton 76 (detail from Bernard 1991: pl. XVI)

It is common to find representations of the goddess Hestia, together with other Olympic divinities, on the decorative edges of a number of rhytons from Nisa. A recent work by Pappalardo (2008) has reassessed previous studies on some iconographical features of the ivory artefacts from this early Parthian palace. Hestia is generally represented as a youthful figure standing between Hermes and Poseidon, wearing a *chiton* tied above the waist, usually with the left arm covered by the *himation* and bent with the hand on the side. For Pappalardo (2008: 69, and fig. 11) the identification of a figure on the rhyton 27/34 – depicted in a similar fashion to other representations of Hestia, but in this case holding a brazier – should be regarded as not suitable for the reason that during the previous restoration two pieces pertinent to different rhytons were assembled together creating in this way a “composite”

⁴ For a general overview about the rhytons from Nisa, see Masson & Pugachengoava (1982).

figure that, although might make sense for a kind of “symbolical” compatibility, it is not generally acceptable any longer.

Some iconographical evidence can be taken into account in order to further discuss that controversial aspect of similarity (or perhaps borrowing?) that was indicated as untenable by Bernard. Clearly since Hestia is not just the goddess of domestic hearths, but of civic hearths as well, and as such she represents the *prytany* and may also symbolise the civic community. It is this poliadic value embedded in Hestia, connected with the intrinsic sacredness of the fire that will be considered in comparing some iconographic elements related to various “city” goddesses – as most of scholars have labelled of these divinities displayed on a number of monetary emissions.

It is significant in this regard to look at some coins of the Indo-Scythian kings, who conquered territories previously ruled by Greek sovereigns around the second half the 1st century BCE.⁵ Figures of goddesses, depicted *à la grecque* with a long draped *chiton* and holding a portable brazier (a receptacle with flames), are associated to other symbolical elements in the coinage of Maues, Azes I, Azilises: a palm, a wheel and at times also a mural or towered crown.⁶ A correct interpretation of the portable brazier (also defined as lamp) held by the goddess was originally offered by Whitehead (1914: 132, note 1) who compared this symbolical attribute with an analogous object associated to the god Pharro,⁷ personification

⁵ Indo-Scythian coins have been thoroughly studied since the late 19th century. A comprehensive catalogue was published by Mitchiner (1975-1976). More recently Senior (2001) published an updated corpus of Indo-Scythian numismatics also reassessing various preceding studies.

⁶ See various examples, for instance in Mitchiner (1975-1976) types 720, 722, 734; Errington et al. (1992) cat. no. 29; Senior (2001) types 22, 23, 24, 39, 40.1, 52, 56, 82; Bopearachchi, Landes & Sachs (2003) cat. no. 119.

⁷ On Pharro as personification of the Royal Glory (*Khvareno*, *xʷarəṇō*, *ʿXʷarəṇah*) see Gnoli (1999) with extensive references; despite being a bit outdated Calmayer (1979) still has valid ideas. On Kuṣāṇa coinage see Göbl (1984).

of the Royal Glory and Fortune (*Khvareno*, *x^varənō*, ‘*X^varənah*’), the mystical power that embodies and legitimates the Persian kings – on some coins the Kuṣāṇa king Huviṣka.⁸

After having briefly taken into account these various aspects relevant to royal protection, investiture, sacredness of fire, victory and communal celebration of wealth and fortune, one can consider how the Indo-Scythian imagery relies on the Classical background and collates iconographies, symbols and values reinterpreting them in order to give shape to notions proper to their ancestral Central Asian (Iranian / nomadic) background. In doing so it appears that these populations are operating a process of *interpretatio scythica* analogous in some respects, although complementary, to that already observed by Herodotus and Xenophon.

A *Tabula Iliaca* with Achilles and Penthesilea

During a visit at the Metropolitan Museum of New York in 1998 my attention was caught by an interesting Gandhāran palette.⁹ Part of the exergue of this artefact is fragmentary. This is the section where the “cosmetics” were believed to be placed. The palette’s figuration is described as “mythical scene”, although a proper identification of this scene can be advanced without complexity. There are five figures populating this scene, enclosed by a floral frame with lotus petals. In the centre of the dish, Achilles is wearing the *exomis* and boots, while Penthesilea is wearing a *chiton* and a *peplos*. Achilles is depicted holding Penthesilea in his

⁸This iconographic similarity was again considered by Rosenfield (1967: 96, 128, 198-199, pls. IX.177-179, XIV.273), and more recently by Bopearachchi & Sachs (Bopearachchi, Landes & Sachs 2003, 141). On the coins of Huviṣka with Pharro, see also Göbl (1984) types 69, 74.

⁹The fiche from the photographic/card catalogue that I visited in that occasion says: “L.1993.51.11 - Dish with a mythological scene - Schist w: 4 3/4 in. Lent by The Kronos Collections. Ancient Gandhara Region. Sculpture-Stone. 1st century B.C. Pakistani”. This class of artefacts is also known as “toilet tray”. On Gandhāran palettes see Francfort (1979); Boardman in Errington et al. (1992) 152-158; Behrendt (2007) 8-12. A photographic reproduction of the Gandhāran *Tabula Iliaca* with Achilles and Penthesilea is also accessible at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:StonePaletteMythologicalScene.jpg> – last accessed on 15/12/2011. Other photographic reproductions of Gandhāran palettes are available on the Internet at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_palette - last accessed on 15/12/2011.

arms, falling in love after having fatally wounded her. The romanticised death of the Amazons' queen, who is staring at the Achaeans' hero, reflects a composition that was popular in the Classical world. One of the most popular examples of this subject can be illustrated by the well known sarcophagus of the Battle of Amazons in the Octagonal court of the Museo Pio Clementino at the Vatican. The main figures of this sarcophagus, datable around the 3rd century CE might derive from a renowned sculptural group (Achilles and Penthesilea group).¹⁰

In the Gandhāran “toilet tray” there are other figures surrounding the couple of mythical warriors; on the left of Penthesilea there is a figure of a river god with loincloth holding a cornucopia with his left hand. Similar river divinities are represented on two reliefs, at the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of New York (Ingholt 1957: fig. IV 2; Bussagli 1984: 176; Errington et al. 1992: cat. no. 129; Behrendt 2007: fig. 26). Both reliefs display a row of six river gods holding rudders and wearing boots and only a loincloth, looking like acanthus leaves which may also bring to mind fins or seaweed (Boardman in Errington et al. 1992: 126). As for the cornucopia, it is worth noting that another river god from Taxila is represented reclined next to a fragmentary animal (a lion?) and holding a cornucopia on his right hand (Ingholt 1957: 156, pl. 392; Bussagli 1984: 13). This iconography reflects classical models symbolising the divine personifications of important rivers such as the Nile, the Tiber, etc. The river god on the Gandhāran palette therefore may well represent the “wondrous” Scamander, as defined by Hesiod (*Theog.* 331-337), the river god of Troy (also named Xanthos), who runs outside the walls of the city and participates in

¹⁰ For the “Achilles and Penthesilea Group” (not very dissimilar from the “Pasquino Group”) see for instance Kossatz-Deissmann (1981) [LIMC I]: 161-171, pls. 133.746, 134.767; Berger (1994) [LIMC VII]: 296-305, pls. 237.54 b-c2, 238.54 c5-c7, 239.54 c8. We are also informed by Pausanias (V. 11.6) that in the temple of Zeus at Olympia there was painting representing the death of Penthesilea. Similarly the Macedonian shield from Tomb II at Vergina represents Achilles and Penthesilea; see Borza & Palagia (2007) 113-117. Andronicos (1984) 137, fig. 93) seemed more cautious regarding the identification of the central figures as an Amazonomachy.

the fighting against Achilles (Hom. *Iliad* XXI. 1-26, 214-327). Most significantly the god Scamander was the ancestor of the Trojan royal house being the father, by the nymph Idaia, of Teucros (Apoll. III. 12.1). In addition to this, the river god Scamander was commonly represented with a cornucopia in classical contexts (Gallina 1966: 87). On the other side of the group there is a goddess dressed with classical garments with *chiton* and *peplos* and a mural crown, holding a spear with her right hand, and a shield in her left. Rather than indicating the presence of Athena, the protecting goddess of Achilles, this figure may represent the personification of the city of Troy, in front of which the episode had occurred. The third figure that is overhanging in the background with stretched arms is not easily identifiable for the lack of visible attributes; it may be a marginal figure, or a divinity of the air (similar figures with a cape or a shawl blown by the wind are interpreted as personifications of the wind or the night).



Gandhāran Palette (*Tabula Iliaca*) with Achilles and Penthesilea.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (photo Di Castro).

A renowned Gandhāran *Tabula Iliaca*,¹¹ from Mardan (Peshawar) represents in an original adaptation the story of the Trojan horse. The relief shows in the left, a female figure (Cassandra) within a door (Scaean gate) with upraised arms, in what looks like a desperate attitude. She is dressed in an Indian fashion, only from the waist down, with a *paridhāna* and with necklaces, bracelets and anklets. In the middle of the scene there is a tall male figure (Laocoon? Priam?) wearing *chlamys* and tunic, who with a spear in his hands is trying to prevent the entry of a relatively small wheeled horse into the city. The wheeled horse is pushed from the hind legs by a male figure, a fourth male figure whose face is damaged is behind the horse, while on the right end of the relief a fragmentary figure of an armed man can still be recognised. According to Foucher (1950: 411), this scene originally represented a Buddhist *jātaka* – one of the innumerable stories of Buddha’s past lives. In this case the Bodhisattva (the future Buddha to be) is defending the town –personified by the poliadic deity, Cassandra– from the attempts of the evil cousin Devadatta, the eternal rival of the Buddha. It is possible that the figure with the spear, the Bodhisattva, would either represent Laocoon opposing the Trojan horse, or Priam, the king of Troy, because of Buddha’s royal background, but also because in the *jātaka* narratives the Buddha is generally represented as the king of the ancient town of Kāśī (Varanasi). The figure within the city gate, Cassandra, was initially identified as a poliadic divinity by Hargreaves (1926: 125-126) and Foucher (1950: 410), who regarded the figure as wearing a *polos* or a mural crown; on the other hand, Allan (1946: 21) was convinced that the “city goddess/Cassandra” was wearing a sort of chignon, an Indian style hairdo, in line with the rest of her dress and ornaments.

It is significant to compare the goddess depicted in the palette from the Metropolitan Museum with mural crown, spear and shield, and in all probability personifying Troy, with a

¹¹ For this relief, formerly part of the Wylie collection, see Hargreaves (1926); Allan (1946); Foucher (1950); Sadurska (1986); 814, no. 15; Boardman, in Errington et al. (1992) 131, cat. no. 133. On another fragmentary relief with a Trojan horse, see Khan (1990). On Indian variants of the story of the Trojan horse, see Roşu (1958).

female figure represented on a coin of the Saka ruler Azilises, defined by Whitehead (1914: 136, note 1) as “pantheistic”. The standing goddess is wearing a mural crown, and a *chiton* tied on the waist, on her right hand she carries a wreath with a ribbon and on her left a shield, a palm, and – according to Senior – a spear (Whitehead 1914: pl. XIII, 336; Mitchiner 1975-1976: type 780; Senior 2001: type 35.1D). Images of goddesses wearing a mural crown offering a wreath to a king are not uncommon representations on Parthian coinage, typically symbolising royal investiture; such as in case of the coins of Phraates III, Orodes I, Phraates IV, Orodes II, Artabanus III, Vologeses I, Vologeses II, Vologeses III, Pacorus II, Artabanus IV, Vologeses IV, Vologeses V and Vologeses VI.¹²

Referring to this “pantheistic” deity on the coins of Azilises, Frolich (2009: 66) proposes a parallel with Athena, on the base of the weapons, however this very image does not share many aspects in common with Athena; just the classical garment, the shield, and, if present, the spear. The fact that the deity is depicted with a mural crown is a clear indication to distinguish her from the warrior goddess Athena; furthermore the presence of the palm and the wreath with fillets also indicates an Iranian context dealing in particular with royal Parthian ideological values. Similarly when we turn our attention again to the figure with mural crown, shield and spear on the Gandhāran palette from the Metropolitan Museum, it should be kept in mind that the mural crown here is a symbol that should be interpreted as the marker of the poliadic deity representing Troy, rather than being interpreted as Achilles’ patron, Athena, in a very “atypical” manifestation with a mural crown.

¹² See for instance Wroth (1903) pls. XI, XIV, XIX, XXV, XXVIII, XXX, XXXI, XXXII, XXXIV, XXXV. In some exemplars the wreath is substituted by the palm of the Victory, nevertheless the royal investiture appears to be an invariable element.



Azilises coin with “pantheistic” goddess (from Whitehead 1914: pl. XIII.336)

Śiva or Poseidon?

Scholars have discussed a possible iconographical connection between the images of Śiva on Kuṣāṇa coins and the representations of Poseidon on Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian coins. In this instance it appears that the coins of the Kuṣāṇa king Huviṣka were imitating those of the Indo-Parthian Gonophores; the liaison being mainly through the symbolical attribute held by Śiva, the trident. The earliest datable representation of Poseidon in the eastern regions was made around the second quarter of the first half of the 1st century BCE on Anthimachus I coins (Bopearachchi 1991: 183, pls. 9-10; Cribb & Bopearachchi, in Errington et al. 1992: 85, cat. no. 85). On the reverse it displays a standing deity dressed in classical style with *himation*, holding a trident with his right hand and with his left a palm with fillets. The latter symbolical attribute can be an allusion to a naval victory (or a battle near a river).

The model of this standing deity with trident has been copied about two centuries later for the coins of the Parthian king Gondophares who was controlling the Hindukush regions around the middle of the 1st century CE.¹³ Eventually some of the numismatic emissions of

¹³ For the coinage of Gondophares, see Mitchiner (1975-1976) types 1112, 1116; Cribb & Bopearachchi, in Errington et al. (1992) 64, 85, cat. nos. 32-33, 87; Senior (2001) types 216, 217; Mac Dowall (2007) 255, fig. 9.72.

Kuṣāṇa rulers, Wima Kadphises and Huviṣka, present the god Śiva (Oesho) standing, with two arms, holding a trident,¹⁴ in a similar composition and style of the coins of Gondophares, and of its precedent of Antimachus.

Mac Dowall (2007: 240) refers to Poseidon's nature connected to storms and earthquakes, and to possible victories granted by this god on rivers and oceans. There are other coins, issued by Maues and Azes I, which have been defined puzzling by Mac Dowall (2007: 253).¹⁵ These are displaying a god holding various symbolical attributes, like thunderbolt, trident and palm, and with a foot on a small figure (a river deity?). One would reasonably question whether these images represent Poseidon or Zeus, as the two Olympic gods often share the trident as well as the thunderbolt; however, the river connection in these cases seems quite evident perhaps, as these coins are indicating a naval victory on a river, or simply a minor river god. Significantly, in this regard, Mac Dowall (2007: 253) also quotes Banerjee's reflections about a possible association of these coins with Śiva trampling over the dwarf Apasmāra symbolising ignorance (Banerjee 1985: 121).

The model of these 'puzzling' Indo-Scythian coins is probably the same of the bronze statuette of Poseidon from Brahmapuri (Kolhapur, Mahāraṣṭra, India), a smaller replica of a famous bronze of Lysippos (De Puma 1991: 82-85, figs. 5.1-3). The god bending forward with a foot on a rock might indicate his suzerainty over a sector of the cosmos, or a particular region, a river, etc. I agree with Fröhlich (2009: 62) when she offers a 'vague' and 'blurred' solution for the question about the morphing process from Poseidon to Śiva.¹⁶ In considering the transitional and eclectic situation of the Indo-Scythian period, where the god Poseidon is no longer the same Olympian divinity of the Greco-Bactrian rulers, and Śiva is not yet the

¹⁴ See for instance Rosenfield (1967) 92-93, pls. VIII.156, II.22, 24, 25; Göbl (1984) types 16.4, 760; Sachs Bopearachchi, Landes & Sachs (2003) 179, cat. no. 153.

¹⁵ For these coins see for instance Mitchiner (1975-1976) types 704, 717, 718, 721, 731, 740; Senior (2001) types 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 77.

¹⁶ For an interesting argument about vagueness in a conceptual framework, see van Demter (2010).

powerful god worshiped under the Kuṣāṇa rule; however, I believe that one can move a bit forward providing other questions as well. These questions should be addressed more in terms of why and how the Kuṣāṇa kings have associated the trident of Poseidon to the images of Śiva (Oesho)? Cribb and Bopearachchi are assuming that the deity on Gondophares' coins is already representing the Indian god Śiva rather than the Classical Poseidon, however they do not posit any proposal in order to explain this symbolical appropriation, but the iconographical similarity (Errington et al. 1992: 87-88).

In this regard the trident can be a good feature to analyse;¹⁷ it is a symbolical allusion to the natural phenomena that characterises Poseidon's qualities. It is with the trident that Poseidon shakes the earth, although he also opens the earth with the trident in order to let water springs gush out, and this because Poseidon is the ultimate source for water. Although the energy of the horse, an animal strictly related to Poseidon, can be tamed by the humans (bridles) with the help of Athena, and the ocean can also be crossed with a ship by the assistance of this ingenious goddess, Poseidon is to be conceived also as the embodiment of primordial natural forces such as storms and earthquakes that are unconquerable and unpredictable, all forces that possess an unfathomable energy (Burkert 1985: 138-139).

In a parallel way we know that Śiva is using the trident to create water springs. Later Sanskrit sources from Kashmir narrate how the earth was split open to let the river Vitastā emerge from underground.¹⁸ Even though Poseidon has more connections with the horse, it could be significant here to look also at Poseidon's association with the bull. He can in fact be called *Taureos*, 'Bull-Poseidon' (Burkert 1985: 138), because of the number of mythological narratives and for the celebration of solemn sacrifices, where the most beautiful

¹⁷ The trident was already depicted on its own on Demetrios I's coinage, see for instance Bopearachchi (1991) 167, pl. 5; the trident alone also appears on some Kuṣāṇa coins of Wima, see for instance Rosenfield (1967) pls. II.28, VIII.157.

¹⁸ See for instance Sanderson (2004) 279.

bulls are offered. What is conspicuous is the fact that Hesychius of Alexandria under the entry “*Gandaros*” says “Γάνδαρος : ὁ ταυροκράτης παρ’ Ἰνδοῖς” (*Gandaros: o taurokrates par Indois*) – *taurokrates* might be “lord of the bull” and as such *Gandharos* – the god of Gandhāra – has been interpreted as Śiva.¹⁹ In line with these observations there is a last consideration regarding the obverse of a controversial gold coin of the city of Puṣkalāvātī / Peukelaitis, showing a bull and a bilingual inscription in Greek, “TAYROC” (*Tauros*), and in Kharoṣṭhī “*Uṣabhe*”, bull (Sanskrit *vṛṣabha*). On the obverse there is the image of the city goddess with the Kharoṣṭhī inscription “*Pakhalavadi deveda*” (the goddess of Puṣkalāvātī), generally considered to be related to a Śaivite context because of this association with the bull (the animal being Śiva’s vehicle, as well as one of this god’s symbolical references). Originally this coin was known only from a unique specimen of the British Museum, with a fragmentary inscription that was read as “Amba the goddess of Puṣkalāvātī”. It is possible now to have a better reading of the full name of the goddess because a new and better preserved example has been recently published (Senior & Babar 1998: 13).²⁰ The correct reading of the epithet of the goddess of Puṣkalāvātī is then “*drupasaya*”, meaning Invincible. This title is not in contrast with the Śaivite context that was already envisaged for the goddess, for “*drupasaya*” can be an allusion to the warrior goddess Durgā, that in the Kuṣāṇa period is generally represented as riding a lion and armed with a trident as well.²¹

Concluding remarks

¹⁹ On “*Gandaros*” see Charpentier (1923). Tucci (1963) 159-160 following Hesychius and looking at other Indian sources considers that Śiva is called Gandhāra.

²⁰ For a good reproduction of the new exemplar of the Puṣkalāvātī coin, see Bopearachchi, Landes & Sachs (2003) 143, cat. no. 126; for the older specimen of the British Museum, among the number of publication, suffice here to refer to Gardner (1886) 162, pl. XXIX.15; and Banerjea (1985) 111-112, 257, pl. IX.8,9.

²¹ See for instance Srinivasan (1997) 282- 304, pls. 20.1, 20.2, 20.9; Di Castro (in press) *passim*, notes 14-16.

From a symbolical level it can be argued that the process of appropriation follows particular dynamics in which the original meaning of the religious imagery is transformed and adapted to suit differing ideologies of new hegemonic sections of the society; e.g. the notion of fire symbolism from the hearth of Hestia to the Royal Fortune of Iranian populations (Scythians, Persians, Parthians, Kuṣāṇas). When on the other hand the transformation of the imagery from Poseidon to Śiva, is observed, then it is perhaps that aspect of untamed and unfathomable destructive force, that sort of “dark side” of Poseidon, that one should also consider in order to understand more similarities and possible ramifications with the Indian Śiva the “god of destruction”.

On the stylistic level – which has clear conceptual implications – one can note how a peculiar phenomenon of exchange might occur; when some eastern divine figures were represented it seems that the artist conferred a “western garment”, like in the case of the heroic stance of the Śiva/Poseidon. Conversely, in the case of the personification of Troy on the *Tabula Iliaca* from the Metropolitan Museum’s palette, for instance the armed goddess with mural crown, although “composite”, maintains overall a Classical tone, whereas the representation of Cassandra – from the more famous *Tabula Iliaca* of the Wylie collection – has integrated various eastern elements such as the Indian garment and jewels.

These brief examples may illustrate some aspects of the process of adaptation of religious symbolism connected to the ideology of the ruling elites. It appears that hegemonic groups were not resisting to adopt local elements intermingled with those originally introduced by them; rather, the concern seems to be in displaying a message of divine legitimacy granting control over the land, together with a condition of wealth and fortune associated to the territories, as well as to the individuals’ wellbeing .

References

- Allan, J. (1946) 'A Tabula Iliaca from Gandhara', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 66: 21-23.
- Andronicos, M. (1989) *Vergina. The Royal Tombs*. Athens: Ekdotike Athenon.
- Banerjea, J.N. (1985) [1st ed. 1956] *The Development of Hindu Iconography*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Behrendt, K.A. (2007) *The Art of Gandhara in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Berger, E. (1994) 'Penthesilea', in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* [LIMC], Vol. VII, Zurich & München: Artemis Verlag, 296-305.
- Bernard P. (1991) 'Les rhytons de Nisa: à quoi, à qui ont-ils servi?', in Bernard, P. & Grenet, F. (eds), *Histoire et cultes de l'Asie centrale préislamique*, Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherches Scientifique, 31-38.
- Bernard, P., Pinault, G.-J. & Rougemont, G. (2004) 'Deux nouvelles inscriptions grecques de l'Asie centrale', *Journal des Savants* 2: 227-356.
- Bopearachchi, O. (1991) *Monnaies gréco-bactriennes et indo-grecque. Catalogue raisonné*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
- Bopearachchi, O., Landes, C. & Sachs, C. (eds) (2003) *De l'Indus à l'Oxus. Archéologie de l'Asie Centrale*. Lattes: Association Imago, Musée de Lattes.
- Borza, E. & Palagia, O. (2007) 'The Chronology of the Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina', *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 122: 81-126.
- Boyce, M. & Grenet, F. (1991) *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. 3, *Under Macedonian and Roman Rules*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bussagli, M. (1984) *L' arte del Gandhāra*. Torino: UTET.
- Calmayer, P. (1979) 'Fortuna, Tyche, KHVARNAH', *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Institute* 94: 347-365.
- Charpentier, J. (1923) Zu den indischen Glossen bei Hesychios, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung*, 45: 92-93.
- De Puma, R.D. (1991) 'The Roman Bronzes from Kolhapur', in De Puma, R.D. & Begley, V. (eds), *Rome and India. The Ancient Sea Trade*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 82-112.
- Di Castro, A.A. (in press) 'Goat heads and goddesses in Swat, Gandhāra and Kashmir: notes on religious imageries', in Di Castro, A.A. & Templeman, D. (eds), *Asian Horizons:*

- Giuseppe Tucci's Buddhist, Indian, Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, Serie Orientale Roma Vol. CVI, Melbourne: Monash University Publishing.
- Di Castro, A.A. (2012) 'Aspects of the Indian Fortune', in I. Mabbett (ed.), *Prācyaprajñāpradīpa. Professor Dr Samaresh Bandyopadhyay Felicitation Volume*, North American Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies (NIOS), Kolkata: International Forum for Felicitating Professor Dr. Samresh Bandyopadhyay, 172-184.
- Di Castro, A.A. (2005) 'The Barbarisation of Bactria', in A.A. Di Castro & C.A. Hope, *Cultural Interaction in Afghanistan c 300 BCE to 300 CE*, Melbourne: Monash University Press, 1-18.
- Errington, E., Cribb, J. et al. (eds) (1992) *The Crossroads of Asia*. Cambridge: The Ancient India and Iran Trust.
- Foucher, A. (1950) 'Le Cheval de Troie au Gandhâra', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1950*. Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres [CRAI]: 407-412.
- Francfort, H.-P. (1979) *Les palettes du Gandhāra*, Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan, vol. 23, Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck.
- Frölich, C. (2009) 'A Study of some Deities in Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian Coinages', in Willis, M. (ed.), *Migration, Trade and Peoples, European Association of South Asian Archaeologists. Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress, London 2005*, London: The British Association for South Asian Studies, 60-72.
- Gallina, A. (1966) 'Scamander', in *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica Classica ed Orientale*, Vol. VII, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma: 87.
- Gnoli, G. (1999) 'Farr(ah)', in Yarshater, E. (ed.), *Encyclopædia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farrah> - last accessed on 5/6/2012.
- Göbl, R. (1984) *System und Chronologie der Münzprägung des Kušānreiches*, Wien: Verlag Der Osterreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften.
- Hargreaves, H. (1926) 'Two unidentified reliefs from Gandhara', *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1923-24 [ASIAR]*, Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 125-126.
- Ingholt, H. (1957) *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Khan, N.A. (1990) 'A New Relief from Gandhara Depicting the Trojan Horse', *East and West*, 40, 1-4:315-319.

- Kossatz-Deissmann, A. (1981) 'Achilleus', in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* [LIMC], Vol. I, Zurich & München: Artemis Verlag, 37-200.
- Mac Dowall, D.W. (2007) 'Coinage from Iran to Gandhāra', in Srinivasan, D.M. (ed.), *On the Cusp of an Era. Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, Leiden: Brill, 233-265.
- Sherwin-White, S.M. Kuhrt A. (1993) *From Samarkhand to Sardis: A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Masson, M.E., Pugachengava, G.A. (1982) [1st ed. 1959] *The Parthians Rhytons of Nisa*, Monografie di Mesopotamia (Introduction by A. Invernizzi). Firenze: Le Lettere.
- Mitchiner, M. (1975-1976) *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian coinage*, 9 vols. London: Hawkins Publications.
- Pappalardo, E. (2008) 'The Rhyton no. 52 from Old Nysa. An Interpretative Proposal', *Parthica. Incontri di Culture nel Mondo Antico* 10: 63-80.
- Roşu, A. (1958) 'The Trojan Horse in India: a Query', *Journal of the Asiatic Society – Letters* 24, 1: 19-27.
- Rosenfield, J.M. (1967) *The Dynastic Art of the Kushans*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sadurska, A. (1986) 'Equus Troianus', in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* [LIMC], Vol. III, Zurich & München: Artemis Verlag, 813-817.
- Sanderson, A. (2004) 'Religion and the State: Śaiva officiants in the Territory of the King's Brahmanical Chaplain', *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47: 229-300.
- Senior, R.C. & Babar, R. (1998) 'Ancient India: A New King and a New Deity', *Newsletter of the Oriental Numismatic Society* 157: 13.
- Senior, R.C. (2001) *Indo-Scythian Coins and History*, 4 Vols. Lancaster & London: Classical Numismatic Group.
- Srinivasan, D.M. (1997) *Many Heads, Arms and Eyes. Origin, Meaning and Form of Multiplicity in Indian Art*. Leiden: Brill.
- Tucci, G. (1963) 'Oriental Notes II. An Image of Devi Discovered in Swat and Some Connected Problems', *East and West* 14: 146-182.
- van Demter, K. (2010) *Not Exactly. In Praise of Vagueness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Whitehead, R.B. (1914) *Catalogue of the Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*, Vol. I, *Indo-Greek Coins*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Wroth, W. (1903) *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Parthia in the British Museum*, The

Trustees of the British Museum, London.