

# The long shadow of Emmy Wellesz

with a translation of her 'Buddhist Art in Bactria and Gandhāra'

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Emilia Franciska Stross (1889-1987) had married Egon Josef Wellesz (1885-1974) in Vienna in August 1908. She was known as Emmy both informally and in documents such as the university records. As it was published in the summary article below, her dissertation exemplifies work being done in Josef Strzygowski's 'I. Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität Wien' during the time when Heinrich Glück (1889-1930) was active there. Since her life and career were intertwined with that of her husband, she also provides evidence of the influence of art historians on musicology in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Emmy Wellesz had been a favourite student of Eugenie Schwarzwald at the famous private girl's school founded and led by her, and was then enrolled at the university in the department led by Josef Strzygowski while also attending the teaching of Max Dvořák. She was employed as 'Assistentin' to Strzygowski and earned her doctorate with the aforementioned study and then herself taught at the Schwarzwaldschule. As is well known, her sometime fellow teachers there among others included Adolf Loos, Egon Friedell, Oskar Kokoschka and Arnold Schoenberg. When Schoenberg cancelled his classes there, Egon Wellesz is thought to have become his earliest private student. They were nonetheless not as close as others. Aside from their differences in style and attitude to voice, drama, orchestration and other elements, it might actually have been the very sociability of Egon Wellesz that to some degree alienated Arnold Schönberg. Even when the musical establishment in Vienna made it difficult to publish and perform his music, Wellesz was not able to blame them, and had a happy career teaching while composing his symphonies, oratorios and much else.

In the progress of her research, Emmy seems to have been impeded by a number of circumstantial factors. As it was then customary in those middle-class circles, she had married a close friend of her brother Walter, already known to the family (she believed to have been three years of age when they first met).<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Egon and Emmy Wellesz, ed. Franz Endler, *Egon Wellesz Leben und Werk*, Vienna Hamburg: Zsolnay, 1981, 226, 275-286. Further details are available in Michael Haas, 'Egon Wellesz (1885-1974) The Forgotten Modernist' at <http://forbiddenmusic.org> (accessed October 2018) including anecdotes, musical examples and photographs of the couple with grandchildren and celebrating what would become their final anniversary. Also Sally Crawford, Katherina Ulmschneider and Jaś Elsner ed., *Ark of Civilization: Refugee Scholars and Oxford University, 1930-1945*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017, *passim*.

groom graduated from the university *summa cum laude* in 1908, and under the guidance of Guido Adler studied and published early opera in preparation for the teaching position awarded him in 1913. In the university archive copies, he makes his appearance in a handwritten annotation to the Vienna university *Vorlesungs-Verzeichnis* for the *Winter Semester 1913-1914*, p. 57 as lecturing on the 'prehistory and further development of the opera'. The couple made their first trip together to Venice where, aside from recreation, being photographed on the lido, he was able to gather materials for his further studies of Venetian 18<sup>th</sup> century opera.

It was not until a few years after his marriage that Wellesz began to publish about new subjects involving the music of Byzantium and the same regions in later periods. This is what he is still today best known for, and the resulting scholarship might have saved his family at a critical moment. This shift of interest seems again to have been inspired by the art historical teaching at the university in Vienna. Indeed, he tells us that the subjects being taught at the department led by Josef Strzygowski began to fascinate him to such a degree that he claims to have spent more time there than in the department of musicology.<sup>2</sup> Positive proof is elusive, but his wife certainly played a part in this development. In his memoir, Wellesz himself says that 'Gustav Mahler's work (*Wirken*) had awakened my innate sense for dramatic forms of music. Max Dvořák's lectures on the art of the Austrian baroque had made the intellectual and spiritual aspects of this period so vivid to me that I was driven to continuing back in time until choosing *Cavalli and the Style of Venetian Opera 1640-1660* as the topic for my *Habilitation* as lecturer at the university of Vienna.'<sup>3</sup>

Aside from raising their two daughters Magdalena (1909-2006) and Elisabeth (1912-1995), Emmy was drawn into an active social life that invites a small and perhaps confusing digression. Egon Wellesz has always been celebrated among those with an interest in 20<sup>th</sup> century music.<sup>4</sup> With an increase of performances, concert-goers in Vienna and elsewhere have also recently become more familiar with his compositions. At the time though, contemporary composers only found a more receptive audience outside of Vienna, mostly in Germany, and this led to a busy schedule attending rehearsals and concerts.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesz (note 1) 90-91.

<sup>3</sup> Our primary source for biographical detail is the memoir left unfinished by Egon and continued by Emmy Wellesz, ed. Franz Endler, *Egon Wellesz Leben und Werk*, Vienna Hamburg: Zsolnay, 1981, his musical and musicological bibliography, 86. In the concluding half, she unfortunately conceived the book as an autobiography of her husband and gives only little information about herself and their daughters.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Schollum, *Egon Wellesz Eine Studie*, Österreichische Komponisten des 20. Jahrhunderts, vol. 2, Vienna: Österreichische Musikzeitschrift, 1963 with an oeuvre list and bibliography of his musicological publications to that date, 70-77. Also *Egon Wellesz*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch, *Studien zur Wertungsforschung* 17, Vienna Graz: Universal Edition, 1986, recording a symposium held in Graz in 1982.

Soon after marrying, they sang together in the choir when Gustav Mahler performed his final compositions before leaving Vienna, and they were apparently among the few permitted to attend Mahler's rehearsals – an association that kept them in touch with other figures including Bruno Walter. (It was Bruno Walter who by a fortunate coincidence a generation later was conducting the music of Wellesz and his friend Ernst Krenek in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam on March 13, 1938. Its popular reception led to another performance at the Doelen in Rotterdam three days later, and after the 'annexation' of Austria caused much disarray at the time and thereafter, Harry Colles was able to secure his entry to England with a commission to collaborate on *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Egon Wellesz even succeeded in later bringing his collection of books from Vienna to Oxford.) Their friendship with Alma Mahler née Schindler also kept them in touch with Franz Werfel, Walter Gropius and other figures working in other fields. Writing later in her life, Emmy tells us that Carl Moll was a particular friend at the time, and that she had rapport with him in his efforts to introduce Impressionism and other trends to the Viennese public. Karl Kraus seems to have been too caustic for their tastes and personal associations.

During the academic summer breaks in their earlier years, Wellesz worked on his own musical compositions in the *Sommerfrische* at Altaussee where the couple were anything but alone, and among the very few people successful in cultivating an enduring friendship with Hugo von Hofmannsthal who also spent leisure time there. This struck Emmy as the most important point to make in her conclusions to the memoir. Wellesz became the only composer aside from Richard Strauss for whom Hofmannsthal was willing to write an opera libretto, *Die Bacchantinnen* based on Euripides and composed 1929-1930. Hofmannsthal's widow later became a neighbour of the Wellesz family in Oxford during the time when the son-in-law Heinrich Zimmer taught Indian culture at Balliol College, in some sense then also a colleague of Emmy.

In a time when the composers were often cantankerous, developed in separate directions and conflicts arose between them, Wellesz seems to have maintained pleasant and productive relations with nearly all. Aside from the baroque scholars all around Europe and his mentor Guido Adler, he remained a friend of Paul Hindemith, Béla Bartók, Anton Webern, Alban Berg and very many others, while also being invited by the government to represent Austria to King Faruk in Egypt in January 1932. In evoking their association with the musicologist Viktor Zuckerkandl, Emmy records that he and her husband shared the quality of 'not tending to zealotry'.<sup>5</sup> They later visited him in the United States. At the Cafe Landtmann Wellesz also regularly met academic friends with a great variety of political sympathies who managed to continue their association without friction.<sup>6</sup> These included 'Harry' Gomperz, the later professor of philosophy and son of the

<sup>5</sup> Wellesz (note 1) 'ebensowenig zu Zelotentum neigte', 205.

<sup>6</sup> Wellesz (note 1) 229-230.

previous professor of ancient philosophy, another friend of the *Journal of Art Historiography*.<sup>7</sup> When his father was unable to find a business assistant and required the service of his son for two years, we read that the young Egon feared he would have difficulty ‘keeping up his friendships’, but lets us know that he actually succeeded not only in that but also in making more. Emmy and Egon Wellesz were not strangers to the famous salons in the house of Bertha Zuckerkandl-Szepts, and seem to have had associations nearly as widely flung though slightly different than hers.<sup>8</sup> When the military and medical officials around 1916 disagreed about the relative sanity of Josef Matthias Hauer, Wellesz was called on to arbitrate, and it was then he who introduced Hauer to Schönberg.<sup>9</sup> Wellesz’s own distinct profile as a composer has been captured well by Robert Schollum.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of his commitments and intense activities, Egon Wellesz nonetheless recorded that he followed his wife’s interests and attended the art-historical lectures to the degree that his teaching schedule permitted it.<sup>11</sup> It was in 1917 that Wellesz believed to have ‘discovered the key to Byzantine musical notation’.<sup>12</sup> The *Persian Ballet* Opus 30 is dated 1920, and *Aufgaben und Probleme auf dem Gebiete der byzantinischen und orientalischen Kirchenmusik* appeared as ‘Liturgiegeschichtliche Forschungen, 6’ in 1923. In 1922 he began his correspondence with Henry Tillyard at the university in Cardiff, who had independently reached similar conclusions. In Vienna, both husband and wife were also influenced by the local ‘Society for Asian Art and Culture’, founded and led by Melanie Stiassny (1876-1960), a classmate of Emmy at the university and possibly also earlier.<sup>13</sup>

Of all 20<sup>th</sup> century prison camps, the academic level of informal lectures and artistic performances at Camp Hutchinson on the Isle of Man might even have rivalled Theresienstadt. Already there and later, Egon Wellesz would be best known for his work in Byzantine music. As co-inmates of Arthur Koestler, Kurt Schwitters and numerous other well known figures, Wellesz was apparently so sincere in his conversion to Roman Catholicism that even when it would have spared the tribulations of internment, the couple never mentioned their Jewish ancestry, and to the end of their lives declared their monarchist sympathies to have been the impulse for leaving Austria. On the basis of his previous associations, including the first Oxford honorary doctorate awarded to an Austrian composer since Haydn, figures

<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Gomperz, ‘On Some of the Psychological Conditions of Naturalistic Art’, (‘Über einige psychologische Voraussetzungen der naturalistischen Kunst’,) *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 5, December 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Bertha Zuckerkandl, *Österreich intim: Erinnerungen 1892-1942*, ed. Reinhard Federmann, Berlin: Propyläen, 1970 is only a threadbare record of her “telephone diary” and unfortunately records neither Egon nor Emmy.

<sup>9</sup> Wellesz (note 1) 92-93.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Schollum (note 4).

<sup>11</sup> Wellesz (note 1), 86, 186.

<sup>12</sup> Wellesz (note 1) 185.

<sup>13</sup> Wellesz (note 1) 231.

no less illustrious than Edward Dent and Harry Colles were ultimately able to create a teaching position at Oxford for Egon Wellesz, where he would spend the rest of his life at Lincoln College and 51 Woodstock Road as a feted Byzantine musicologist. In spite of his fame as historian, it is clear from his unfinished memoir that he primarily wished to be remembered as a composer. His profoundest desire to teach again in Vienna seems to have been consistently thwarted by Erich Schenk, and Egon Wellesz died at Oxford in 1974, buried in the Zentralfriedhof in Vienna (Gruppe 32 c No. 38) beside his wife who lived to be 98 (and is not mentioned on the headstone).

Against such an active social life with so many distractions, Emmy Wellesz Stross completed her dissertation, *Gandhāra im Rahmen vergleichender Kunstforschung* (Gandhara in the Comparative Context of the Arts, June 22, 1921, examination 985), studying the area where anthropomorphic Buddha imagery might have emerged.<sup>14</sup> Its publication was announced more than once, but it is not listed in the estate

<sup>14</sup> The list of her publications has been published in Dorothea Duda, 'Obituary: Emmy Wellesz', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 79, 1989, 339-342, Duda, "Nachtrag zu WZKM 79 (1989) Bibliographie von Emmy Wellesz (S. 340 f.)" *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 83, 1993, 247. The official report by the sponsor. "University Archive Vienna, Rigorosenakt No. 5121, Emilia Wellesz, geb. Stross" says: 'Mrs. Wellesz systematically pursues a question that has frequently arisen in the comparative study of the arts. This is the striking similarity in the shift from the symbolic to the narrative conception in the presentation of early Christian and Buddhist art. She begins with the geographical definition of Gandhāra with the chronology, comparing it with the early Christian representations close in time, but apparently separated by Iran. She has systematically and comparatively studied the relationship of Christian and Gandhāra images as I have often mentioned it in my own publications.

In spite the different types of stone being used, both reveal the same disengagement from the sculptural ground while both of them move from a symbolic to an historical narrative. Mrs. Wellesz surveys the analogous subject matter and then finds confirmations in religious studies of the same field. She finds that the non-natural treatment enters equally into both. Both Gandhāra and India contrast horizontal sequences with a curving linearity in their forms while the mode of Gandhāra also became that of late antiquity and Christian art. She also emphasizes the use of shade to evoke pictorial depth and the tendency to illustrate a given subject.

In her section about the chronological development, she ascertains that the examples from Gandhāra predate those from the Christian areas and that the Buddhism in Iran was the actual source of influence for these illustrations of the human form in motion. It is a shame that she does not yet include the most recent discoveries confirming this.

The author has a striking aptitude for clearly and convincingly presenting the most relevant aspects from an overwhelming amount of material. It is rare to find an important question treated so clearly and simply with no quibbling. This study completely fulfills the statutory requirements for Mrs. Wellesz to proceed to the oral examinations.

Josef Strzygowski

Vienna, 19 June, 1921'.

bequeathed to the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Musiksammlung, and we are left with only the summary article below.<sup>15</sup>

It was written in the department led by Josef Strzygowski, and although the studies produced there tend to be ignored, this thesis includes certain notable elements common to other studies of the time, such as some of those being written in the rival department then led by Julius Schlosser. It reveals tendencies for the choice of art historical research topics in Vienna during the interwar period.

Emmy Wellesz's level of scholarship should also not be in doubt. Bernard Berenson met Emmy in Vienna in the house of Count Khuen-Hederváry, a friend of one of Egon Wellesz's university students. The connoisseur inquired whom she had studied with, and scoffed that Strzygowski was the 'Atilla the Hun of the history of art', and that Max Dvořák 'could not distinguish the front from the back of a painting'. She admitted that Strzygowski was overly aggressive in his academic proposals and 'something of a tyrant' as an administrator, but could not countenance such an insult of Dvořák. She recalled that the memory of Dvořák 'was sacred to her husband and herself as well as to their host', but Berenson could not be convinced.<sup>16</sup> She records that the two of them were not able to generate more than very little interest in Berenson's books, and later in England were surprised to learn of his great reputation, and that a person such as Kenneth Clark should have been so impressed by him. Berenson did send them a kind letter of congratulations when Wellesz was appointed at Oxford.

With this busy schedule behind her, Emmy Wellesz completed her studies of early Islamic art and the cultural interaction in the regions between India to the east and the former edge of the Roman Empire to its west. We are reminded of Strzygowski's admission that his vision of studies on a global scale would continue to be hampered by the fact that no individual could master the relevant source languages well enough, and that the necessary publication of material evidence would never be perfected.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, the proposal being made in Emmy's thesis is one to explain a large lacuna in the artefacts as they were then known. Hellenistic influence in the Greco-Bactrian kingdom and later Bactria is difficult to trace in objects larger than coins, and yet the colossal Buddha statues of Bāmiyān, recently in the news, do require some historical explanation. Quite obviously, the Buddha was originally not shown in human form, and the Greek culture that arrived with Alexander the Great and along other less overt avenues provided an equally obvious example of

<sup>15</sup> Since it is not listed either separately or among her papers as catalogued in the Musiksammlung, Signatur F13 Wellesz 2785/1-2-GF Mus Mag.

<sup>16</sup> Wellesz (note 1) 225-226.

<sup>17</sup> 'Es ist ganz unmöglich, das er als Voraussetzung dafür alle Sprachen der in Betracht kommenden Gebiete kennt', Josef Strzygowski, *Die Krisis der Geisteswissenschaften*, Vienna: Schroll, 1923, p. 36, Strzygowski, 'Lecture Two: The History of Art,' *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 17, 2, December, 2017, 2, 'it is impossible for them to know all of the languages that might become relevant'.

anthropomorphic deities. The probable relation of the two was as compelling a question as the ethnic groups surrounding prehistoric Rome appeared to Guido Kaschnitz.

In tracing the architectural form of the cloister, Julius Schlosser demonstrated the continuity between pagan and Christian architecture over more than a millennium, and Otto Kurz analyzed the assimilation of European clocks in the Arab world. In spite of the many differences, Emmy Wellesz was also studying an immense cultural confrontation and shift not unlike 4<sup>th</sup> century sculpture presented itself to Alois Riegl, 15<sup>th</sup> century painting to Otto Pächt and sculpture around 1450 to Bruno Fürst. While the approach and the subjects differed very widely, we again find certain tendencies in framing questions and approaching materials that are common to a broad array of the Viennese art historical dissertations.

### Emmy Wellesz, 'Buddhist Art in Bactria and Gandhāra'<sup>18</sup>

Historians are today most interested in the centuries immediately preceding or following the beginning of our time reckoning. Very consequential developments occurred then within a comparatively short space of time: after having been limited to a very distinct space, ancient art and culture pushed far beyond their original borders into foreign areas, but were not able to preserve their original character. They assumed alien elements, and the transformation had an effect as far back as their native region. The most disparate cultures interpenetrated one another. Borders fell and we can universally discern the same sense of groping toward new values: after having seemed eternal, the old forms were broken.

The most obvious incident to have set this process into motion were the campaigns of Alexander the Great when European conquerors reached the Indus Valley for the first time, and also in an unprecedented way planted Greek mercenaries in ancient Persia and India. Much of what occurred then was no more than episodic. The contact with the west had only a very slight effect in India, but in neighbouring areas, in Iran, the Bactrian mercenary state arose after the collapse of the Persian empire as the furthest outpost of Greek culture, a Greek culture between the Indian and Parthian empires, between the Buddhist and Mazda regions and naturally developed increasingly away from its origins. If it were possible to trace this development without any interruptions – ancient culture could after all put up only a weak defence in this foreign area – we would see an abbreviated version of

<sup>18</sup> [Originally published as 'Buddhistische Kunst in Baktrien und Gandhāra', Josef Strykowski ed., *Kunde, Wesen, Entwicklung: Eine Einführung: Beiträge zur vergleichenden Kunstforschung* herausgegeben vom Kunsthistorischen Institut der Universität Wien (Lehrkanzel Strykowski), Heft 2, Vienna: Holzhausen, 1922, 137-151.]

the same pageant that also occurred in the west, Greek culture expiring in the embrace of the east.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, there is no such uninterrupted preservation of evidence. Quite to the contrary, we can for now only trace the fate of Bactrian-Hellenistic art in a very few monuments, from very few sources, and can only hope that further excavations provide greater enlightenment.

I would like to pose the question here whether the current state of research might not already provide aspects capable of shedding light on the matter and proceed as follows: I will first adduce a series of facts that can reveal certain things (*Kunde*) about Bactrian art, but are far too sparse to allow us to recognize its character (*Wesen*). I will avail myself of a model by referring to an artistic tradition whose intimate relation to that of Bactria is as we shall see, beyond all doubt. I will consider the works of this tradition according to their conditions of production, appearance and meaning, and then use the results to show the role that the Buddhist art of Bactria might have played within the overall development.

I will need to refer to my longer, complete research entitled *Gandhāra* in comparative art studies, where I have thoroughly discussed much that can only be mentioned here in a cursory way. We are also not able to presently include the photographic illustrations that would adequately serve in just a few examples to give a certain impression of the relation of *Gandhāra* art to that of ancient India on the one hand and to Early Christianity on the other.

#### I. Account of the Artefacts (*Kunde*)\*

In the period concerning us, from the invasions of Alexander until approximately AD 400, Bactria was a typical transitional region. As Ritter has stated it, this was the great crossroad for central Asia.<sup>20</sup> Isidor of Charax has given us a description of the military road along the northern edge of Iran which established a connection to Mesopotamia and Syria with its most important stations at Batné near Edessa and at Palmyra.<sup>21</sup> The 'great royal road' led eastward through Bāmiyān, Kabul and the Khyber Pass along the Khyber valley further toward Pundjab.<sup>22</sup> The famous silk road branched away from Balkh to host the traffic between China and the west along the Oxus toward Pamir and then through the Tarim basin.

Alexander's army proceeded along the royal road toward India bringing the Hellenistic culture with it which drove deep roots not there but in Bactria. This can be seen from the fact that already Alexander and then his followers also founded a

<sup>19</sup> Josef Strzygowski, 'Hellas in Oriens Umarmung', Munich, *Beilage der Allgemeinen Zeitung*, no. 40 and 41, February 18 and 19, 1902, 113-117, 325.

<sup>20</sup> Carl Ritter, *Die Stupa's (Topes) oder die architectonischen Denkmäler der Indo-baktrischen Königsstrasse und die Colosse von Bamiyan*, Berlin: Nicolai, 1838, 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> Isidor: Karl Müller ed., *Geographi Graeci Minores*, vol. 1, Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1882, 244-256. Location: Paul Vidal de la Blache, 'Les voies de commerce dans la Géographie de Ptolemé', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 4<sup>th</sup> ser., 329.

<sup>22</sup> C Ritter (note 20) 19-69.

large number of cities there with twenty thousand foot soldiers and three thousand cavalymen from the Macedonian army registering for the colonies in the year 323 alone.<sup>23</sup> Deodotos, the first independent ruler to have seized Bactria away from Syria, still claimed descent from Hercules.

Then again from an early date, Indian influences penetrated Bactria through the Hindu Kush, with Buddhist elements said to have been sent that way under Asoka, and when Bactrian rulers victoriously entered the Indus regions, the culture of the conquered people had an emphatic effect on the victors.

European written sources for these developments consist primarily of Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Epitome historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi*, Strabo *Geography* and Quintus Curtius Rufus, *De Rebus gestis Alexandri Magni*. Aside from these we have among others Diodorus Siculus, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* and Plutarch, *Republicae Gerendae*. From the Indian side there are the Asoka edicts and a Buddhist work, *The Questions of King Milinda*.<sup>24</sup>

Our knowledge of the following period derived primarily from the Chinese annals and the reports of Buddhist pilgrims from China who were travelling to the region of origin of their religion.<sup>25</sup>

They tell of how the actual region of Bactria, but then also the areas dependent upon it beyond the Hindu Kush, were conquered by the central Asian nomadic Yüeh-chih, and testify to the tremendous dissemination of Buddhism in these lands and the existence of countless monasteries and sanctuaries. They also tell of the increasingly bleak decline of that religion and ultimately the destruction of the land by the incursions of white Huns.

Unfortunately, no more than a very few monuments survive from that once so prosperous Bactrian culture. These are primarily coins that have been recovered in great numbers, particularly in the Kabul and the Indus valleys presumably belonging to this Bactrian context since they memorialize Greek and Kuşan princes. In purely objective terms, they reveal the hybrid nature of the culture producing them since they include the Iranian and ancient eastern pantheon native to Bactria alongside Hellenistic and Indian elements and Greek and Indian script. Buddha appeared for the first time on the coins minted under Kaņiṣka who ruled at the end

<sup>23</sup> Ernst Herzfeld, 'Khorasan: Denkmalgeographische Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Islam in Iran', *Der Islam*, 11, 1, 1921, 112.

<sup>24</sup> Asoka Edicts: M Émile Sénart, *Les inscriptions de Piyadasi*, Memoires concernant l'Asie orientale: Inde, Asie central, Extrême-Orient, vol. 1, Paris: Leroux, 1913, 68. Milinda: Thomas W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, Sacred Books of the East 35-36, Oxford: Clarendon, 1890-1894.

<sup>25</sup> I-Tsing, transl. Edouard Chavannes, *Les Religieux éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les pays d'Occident*, Paris, 1894, Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1885. Dr. Otto Franke, *Beiträge aus chinesischen Quellen zur Kenntnis der Türkvölker und Skythen Zentralasiens*, Berlin: Reimer, 1904.

of the first century AD.<sup>26</sup> Originally, during the time of the Greco-Bactrian princes, the Hellenistic factor predominated the artistic conception.<sup>27</sup> One of the best Hellenistic portrait busts depicts King Euthydemus of Bactria. Later on, natural detail continually receded with a flat and schematic treatment and a strong tendency to geometrisation.

We must leave it with these few very general observations since it would be the subject for a separate study to characterize these curious products, to compare them with Parthian, Indian and Scythian coins and in particular determine the changes occasioned by the various shifting from one dynasty to another. It would also require significant preparatory work to reach a decisive judgment on objects of decorative arts that, considering the excellent quality of the coinage, are certain to have been pivotally important in these areas. Because of the location where they were discovered and their strong Hellenistic qualities, the examples number 21, 22, 35, drawings number 47, 3 and 56 in Smirnov, *Argenterie orientale* are today taken to be examples of a Greco-Bactrian style.<sup>28</sup>

The earliest travel accounts by Wilford, Court and Alexander Burnes refer to monasteries in caves along the road between Balkh and Bāmiyān.<sup>29</sup> They describe large grottoes cut into the cliffs with a distinctly Buddhist character of stucco and painted decorations. The Nauvihâr at Balkh is today recognized as a Buddhist-Hellenistic monument, and M. A. Stein has discovered another example on the Choh-i-Chwadja in Śīstan, also including remains of stucco and paintings.<sup>30</sup> The colossal Buddha statues of Bāmiyān have unfortunately not been properly photographed but by their unmistakable history are definitely Buddhist.<sup>31</sup>

These lead us along the same development already indicated by the coins since, as we have seen, Bāmiyān lies at the transitional point between the Hindu Kush and the Kabul valley and finally gives us access to an artistic area with

<sup>26</sup> Percy Gardner, ed. Reginald Stuart Poole, *Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum: Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, London: British Museum, 1886, plate XXXII.

<sup>27</sup> Maxime Collignon, *Geschichte der griechischen Plastik*, Strasbourg; Trubner, 1898, vol. 2, 648, fig. 316.

<sup>28</sup> Jakov Ivanovich Smirnov, *Vostochnoe serebro - Argenterie orientale*, St. Petersburg: Imperatorskoi arkheologicheskoi kommissi, 1909.

<sup>29</sup> Francis Wilford, "On Mount Caucasus," *Asiatic Researches or Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal for Inquiring into the History, the Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences and Literature of Asia*, London, vol. 6, essay XII, 1801, 455-539 esp. 463-473. M. le Générale Court, 'Conjectures on the March of Alexander', *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, no. 55, essay IV, July 1836, p. 387-395 ['Conjectures sur les marches d'Alexandre dans la Bactrie', *Journal Asiatique*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 4, Octobre 1837, 359-396], and Alexander Burnes, summary reported: *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, vol. 14, Paris, September 1834, 264-266.

<sup>30</sup> Nauvihâr, Ernst Herzfeld, (note 23) *Der Islam*, 11, 146. Aurel Stein, 'Expedition in Central Asia', *The Geographical Journal*, 47, 5, May 1916, 358-364; Josef Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, vol. 1, Vienna: Schroll, 1918, 364, fig. 402, from M Carré, 'Une ville morte de la Perse orientale', *L'Illustration*, 1908, 434, already reproduced the exterior.

<sup>31</sup> Ritter (note 20) 43-63.

countless monuments, what we call the art of Gandhāra, named after the ancient province of Gandhāra, the lower valley of the Kabul River, ancient Koppen or Kupha, from the Kau River to the Indus, and from Safit-Kuh and the Kohat-Toi River to Kohistān, Chitral and the Hindu Kush.

In spite of a large secondary literature, neither the dates of origin nor the decisive sources of this art have been reliably determined. Since the ancient western element cannot be overlooked, it was originally assumed that it must be directly related to the campaigns of Alexander the Great or the advance of the Greco-Bactrian rulers. Curtius spoke of a new page in the history of Greek art.<sup>32</sup> It was later recognized that the Gandhāra art is more probably connected to the art of late imperial Rome and early Christianity than to the Hellenistic period. Its date of efflorescence was then moved from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the fifth, even the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the eighth century AD.<sup>33</sup> Careful study of the sparsely preserved documentation has led Émile Sénart to date it between the first and the fifth century AD, and this agrees with the current state of research with most other scholars concurring.<sup>34</sup> The documentation consists primarily of individual dedicatory inscriptions carved in stone, found close to the statues, the famous reliquary casket from Peshawar [Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, paperback ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974, fig. 73], inscribed 'Agesilaos supervisor of works at Kanishkas Vihara in the Sangharama of Mahasena', made in a distinct Gandhāra style, as well as the reports we have already mentioned from Chinese pilgrims and Kanishka coins showing the Gandhāra type of Buddha – to judge from the available illustrations of poor quality.<sup>35</sup> In addition to this, the *stupa* of Amarāvati has a decisive Gandhāra influence and according to the Andhra inscriptions cannot have been built later than the second century AD.<sup>36</sup>

From everything we have said about Bactria and Gandhāra we come away with the impression that Bactria had a highly developed Buddhist art building on the Hellenistic traditions interfused with the local Iranian and eastern elements. However, very few and sparse remains have survived of this art. By contrast to this, we know a good number of monuments from the neighbouring and politically dependent province of Gandhāra. I shall now briefly survey the character and

<sup>32</sup> Ernst Curtius, 'Die griechische Kunst in Indien', *Archäologische Zeitung*, 33, 1876, 90-95.

<sup>33</sup> V. Smith, 'Greco-Roman Influence on the Civilization of Ancient India', *JAS*, 58, 1889. J Fergusson, 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture', 72-83, 169-184.

<sup>34</sup> Émile Sénart, 'Notes d'Épigraphie indienne', *Journal Asiatique*, 8<sup>th</sup> ser., 15, Feb-March, 1890, 139-163, accepted by Alfred Foucher, *L'Art Gréco-Bouddhique du Gandhāra: Étude sur les origines de l'influence classique dans l'art bouddhique de l'Inde de l'Extrême-Orient*, Paris: Leroux 1905-1922; J Burgess, *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Inscription: *Journal of the RAS*, 1900.

<sup>36</sup> James Burgess, *The Buddhist Stupas of Amarāvati and Jaggayapeṭa in the Krishna District*, London: Trübner, 1887.

qualities (*Wesen*) of that art in order to pose the question of whether it might not be possible to extrapolate conclusions about the lost art of Bactria.<sup>37</sup>

## II. Character

Blue slate was the material commonly used by the Gandhāra sculptors, but they also worked almost equally in a painted and gilded stucco otherwise uncommon in India and pointing to Bactria and central Asia as a source. Their technique was high relief.

In its subject matter, Gandhāra art is quite distinct from earlier India. The religious stones of Sāñchi and Barhût seem to reflect pious prayers and poems directed to the Perfect One and hovering around that person who nonetheless remains invisible. The tree beneath which he found enlightenment, the miraculous trace of his steps, the wheel of the law he set into motion for the good of the world are all the symbolic images with the faithful crowding around them while he also works miracles in the narratives of the legends without ever personally appearing. This evoked a transcendental atmosphere where the artist created a boundlessly varying wealth of figures of gods and human beings, animals and plants with such a freedom as to appear to have emanated from the imagination of an individual while in fact embodying the piety of an entire population.

Things are very different in the art concerning us here. While the art of Barhût and Sāñchi could be described as mystic, that of Gandhāra is dogmatic. In the former we sense that the populace stands behind the artist whose entire creativity is anchored among them, the latter conveys a feeling of the artist following a power desiring what it recognizes as the truth to be depicted as clearly as possible and replace poetry with history.

Just as the early Christian bishop Nilus wanted the lateral walls of a basilica to be decorated with images from the Bible to teach the illiterate, the Buddhist priest of the Gandhāra period seems to have viewed art as a means for disseminating doctrine. This led to the opulent wealth of ancient Indian art being restrained and reduced to sober clarity, the solidification of the symbol into a figure, Buddha who had previously been the invisible centre of all actions became the main protagonist of a narrative with image after image of his biographical legend.

This sort of a depiction can also not be rooted in the traditions of antiquity that seem to have taken objective clarity as the top priority. The closest analogies are to be found on late Roman triumphal columns, in Christian art, in the running narratives on sarcophagi, pictorial scrolls, mosaics and ivory carvings.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Greater detail can be found in the forthcoming book, Emmy Wellesz, *Gandhāra im Rahmen vergleichender Kunstforschung*, Arbeiten des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Wien (Lehrkanzel Strzygowski) 25.

<sup>38</sup> Josef Strzygowski, *Ursprung der christlichen Kirchenkunst*, Leipzig: Hinrich, 1920, 143 [English as *Origin of Christian Church Art*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1923]. It is not possible here to discuss any of the many correspondences of details to be found between these sculptures and Christian art. See among many others, Emmy Wellesz (announced publication note 37),

As it influenced later Buddhist art as far as the remotest spots in China and Japan, the earliest images of Buddha appear in Gandhāra. The remarkable characteristics distinguishing him from all other mortals, *lakshanas*, are laid out in the ancient Indian legend of the highest being, Mahāpuruṣa, the Urna flake between the brows, the long and pendulous ear lobes, the shape of the skull and so forth.<sup>39</sup> Yet the facial type, the coiffure, and the enveloping, sculpturally independent clothing are alien.

This must be an influence from ancient art, but it is an antiquity alienated from itself with everything becoming rigidly schematic with none of the intimate intuition of vivacity conforming to Greek art, but also everywhere present in India, especially where nature is deformed for the sake of the highest possible expressive values. Similar phenomena, as we have already mentioned on the later Greco-Bactrian coins, did not appear in Europe until the fourth century, in the Arch of Constantine and Christian art, but also apparent in the few surviving monuments of Parthian art.<sup>40</sup> The nimbus which never occurred in earlier India also elicits comparison to Christian art. It appeared in Hellenistic art since the time of Alexander the Great as an attribute of celestial gods, but here it is an alien element presumably adapted from Persia, land of the cult of light.<sup>41</sup>

Ornament is transformed in an unnatural way, made more geometrical – as much with the acanthus taken from antiquity as the lotus tendril native to India. The grapevine motif, presumably from Iran, usually occurs together with knotted circles. This form of schematizing which we cannot now dwell on in detail also occurs in the west in the Christian period where Strzygowski explains it as an influence from eastern Arian art where it was originally remote from any sort of naturalism. In Gandhāra on the other hand, we sometimes find a form of naturalism unlike antiquity or India but also occurring in early Christian as well as late Hellenistic art.

Its formal treatment can also not be seen as a simple synthesis of elements from India and Greece. The strictly frontal enthroned Buddha usually takes up the centre of the image with the ancillary figures to either side in rows or scaled one above the last to produce symmetrical or parallel linear patterns giving an impression of great monotony. A strict regularity takes the place of the overflowing richness and free rhythms of Indian art and uniform similarity replaces the harmonic balance of antiquity. Since frontality is important in the conception of the

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Albert Metzger, revised by Léon de Milloué, *Les Quatre Évangiles: Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire des origines orientales du Christianisme*, Paris: Leroux, 1906; Rudolf Seydel, *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinem Verhältnis zur Buddha-Sage und Buddha-Lehre*, Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1882.

<sup>39</sup> Berthold Laufer ed. and transl., *Das Citralakṣhaṇa nach dem tibetischen Tanjur*, Dokumente der indischen Kunst, no. 1, Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1913.

<sup>40</sup> Ernst Herzfeld, *Am Thor von Asien: Felsdenkmale aus Irans Heidenzeit*, Berlin: Reimer, 1920.

<sup>41</sup> Albert Grünwedel, *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Berlin: de Gruyter, 1920, 83.

human form and spatial recession is expressed by scaling figures one above the other, an emphasis of the surface predominates.

Such an emphasis on the surface and a schematic conception also arose in Europe during the later imperial period and culminated in the mosaics with their ceremonial symmetrical compositions and even gold ground replacing any spatial background.

In its use of light and shade, Gandhāra art vacillates between the two extremes of a tonal modelling and the 'dark depth' so typical of early Christian art, although it does however also occur in ancient India (at Sāñchi). We have already mentioned the colour and gilding.

Antiquity and India were also not the two poles of Gandhāra art when it came to content. According to an Indian saying, 'an artist making an image of Buddha must retire into solitude, must contemplate and themselves become a Yoga before they can take up the sacred work'. Hiuan-Tsang reports that an artist on the way to Dyana was able to transport himself into Tusita heaven where he was able to see Maitreya the future Buddha.<sup>42</sup> We can understand that legends of that kind could arise when standing before the great works of Buddhist art in India, in the presence of the Buddha of Sarnath or that of Borobudur. All animate ardency and tensile force of a pure will available to Buddhists flows together in such a work of art like the light into a lens, and the artist could not find such an image in nature but only in the spirit consumed by the divine idea.

In Gandhāra, such a self sanctification on the part of a sculptor could never have been conceived – because the image of the Buddha was born here not from a creative act but rather in dependence on foreign art forms, an image that other less experienced nations in the previous centuries had not dared to approach. They did indeed depict the great Yogi, the calm, quiet one lost in meditation, but he is shown with the artistic means of a tradition imbued with the spirit of instruction and representation.

The same process can also be seen in the west. Ancient culture was not geared toward objects but was distinctly sensual in its perception. The human form became a symbol to them, divinity revealed in the shapes of earthly beauty, and this happy state did not end until the advancing influence from the east.<sup>43</sup> Hellenic idealism and its marvellous relation between the artist and nature was altered to make the artist an instrument of worldly powers, forcing a view of the world through their eyes, illustrating facts related to those powers and doing them in such a way as to reinforce them. This is how running biographical narratives of rulers as well as pompous representation entered Hellenistic art. Christian art had originally remained within the sphere of symbolic representation, intercession, but also soon turned to physical subject matter (*in das Fahrwasser des Gegenständlichen*) with the

<sup>42</sup> Samuel Beal, *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1914, 66.

<sup>43</sup> Strzygowski, 'Hellas in des Orients Umarmung' (note 19).

continuing narrational techniques used to teach and the pomp to make the Saviour and Virgin Mary comparable to secular rulers.<sup>44</sup>

### III. Development

I believe that such a brief delineation of its character reveals much the same as the sources, that Gandhāra art relates intimately to that of Bactria and through this gathering place with the entirety of Asian art. Aside from the influence of India which naturally appears in more varying degrees than we have been able to show, the elements from antiquity also present themselves in an altered form only seen in the west in monuments from a later period. This suggests that we must posit an intermediary zone extending its influence in both directions. Such an assumption is confirmed on the one hand by the fact that the characteristics present in Gandhāra and later western art, but not in ancient India or antiquity are precisely those Strzygowski has shown to be the Asian elements of early Christian art, both Iranian and Semitic, and also that, as numismatics shows, they were native to Bactria and we can expect similar factors to have generated a result similar to what occurred in the west. The difference is that in the west antiquity was the native element being permeated by those from the east, while in the east the native traditions deeply transformed Hellenistic art after having been completely displaced by it for a certain length of time.

Another fact seems to suggest that Bactria was the source from which the Gandhāra art went forth. In the last few decades a greater harvest of art works has been discovered in Chinese Turkestan than in Gandhāra. An entire group of them are Buddhist monuments. They are undoubtedly related to the art of Gandhāra and have for this reason been interpreted as influenced by it.<sup>45</sup> This influence has recently been placed in doubt, and it strikes me as successfully demonstrated that this close relationship must have been to Bactria.<sup>46</sup> According to an as yet unpublished lecture by Le Coq, the most recent excavations he led at Tumşuq near Maralbaşı have unearthed work in an exclusively Gandhāra style dated to the turn of the first century, the time when Yüeh-chih led his army against Kaşgar, Yarkend

<sup>44</sup> Strzygowski, *Ursprung der christlichen Kirchenkunst* (note 38), 190.

<sup>45</sup> Albert Grünwedel, *Alt-Kutscha: Archäologische und religionsgeschichtliche Forschungen an Tempera-Gemälden aus buddhistischen Höhlen der ersten acht Jahrhunderte nach Christi Geburt*, Berlin: Elsner, 1920; *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan: Berlicht über archäologische Arbeiten von 1906 bis 1907 bei Kuča, Qaraşar und in der Oase Turfan*, Berlin: Reimer, 1912, Aurel Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1907, Artur Wachsberger, *Stilkritische Studien zur Kunst Chinesisch Turkistans, II. Die Wandmalerei*, Sonderveröffentlichung der Ostasiatischen Zeitschrift 2, Osterheld, 1914.

<sup>46</sup> Franz Altheim, 'Chinesisch Turkestan und Gandhāra', unpublished manuscript.

and Chotan, and when Buddhism was also introduced to those areas.<sup>47</sup> The striking dependence of later work on Sassanian art has never been doubted and points to the fact that there was a traditional artistic connection to the west, something also suggested by our knowledge of the artists in Turkestan. This is an area where the artists are recorded as having names that were mostly Persian and also a few Syrian.<sup>48</sup> There is only a single isolated reference to an artist with an Indian name.<sup>49</sup>

We must imagine the process as having occurred approximately as follows. Bactria was originally governed by a Satrap of the Persian empire, a Hellenistic art entered together with Alexander the Great and merged with indigenous Iranian and traditional eastern elements (*alt-orientalisch-machtsemitisch*). The Hellenistic element was strengthened during the rule of Greek princes, and even after the fall of the Seleucids, the connections persisted to Greek and later also to Roman art. It is true that Hellenistic art reached as far as India with the conquest of the Indus valley, but influence from India also found its way through the Hindu Kush to the Iranian border regions while the arrival of Yüeh-chih also brought the art of the nomadic nations.

It is surprising how quickly the foreign culture was assimilated. In Gandhāra the proof lies in the fact that Kaniška already became a guardian of Buddhism and patron of a religious form of art that strikes us as easily combining with the ancient, the Persian-Iranian and Indian aspects in the art of Bactria and Gandhāra, and also appearing in the early art of Chinese Turkestan. It is undeniable that there were constantly new western influences, particularly since the south western monsoons were rediscovered during the period of Augustus, but they do not seem to become an essential element of this art.

In explaining the striking similarities to early Christian art, it is also not necessary to propose a dissemination of Christian or late Roman models in Gandhāra although that would be chronologically conceivable.<sup>50</sup> Both are flowers from the same branch and both came about from an intersection of European and Asian artistic properties.

Is it still possible that the one side unilaterally influenced the other? This is an opinion constantly being proposed in the light of certain detailed correspondences.

We have a far more detailed knowledge of the religious syncretism with its mélange of ancient, Mazda, Egyptian, near-eastern and Indian elements around the beginning of our time-reckoning than we do of the arts of the time. We know that in its northern form of the Mahayāna as canonized by Kaniška, Buddhism assimilated

<sup>47</sup> Albert von Le Coq 'Die vierte deutsche Turfan-Expedition', *Turán: A Turáni Társaság folyóirata – Turan: Zeitschrift für osteuropäische, vorder- und innerasiatische Studien Anzeiger der ungarischen orientalischen Kulturzentrale (Turanische Gesellschaft)*, vol. 3, Budapest, 1918, p. 23.

<sup>48</sup> Grünwedel, *Alt-Kutscha* (note 45) I, 10, I, 11, II, 31; Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*, (note 45) 153

<sup>49</sup> Grünwedel, *Alt-Kutscha* (note 45) I, 12.

<sup>50</sup> Vincent Arthur Smith, 'The Greco-Roman Influence on the Civilization of Ancient India'.

foreign influences.<sup>51</sup> However indirectly, a Buddhist spirit also contributed to the emergence of Christianity.<sup>52</sup>

During the final decades of the first century BC, the Buddhist mission in Persia had made such progress that Alexander Polyhistor referred quite specifically to an efflorescence of Buddhism in those areas while Buddhism also reached Syria and Egypt along with the commercial caravans, and the library of Alexandria included a particular devotion to Indian studies following the geographer Eratosthenes under Ptolemy Euergetes, beginning in 246. The monastic organization of the Essenes probably reflects a Buddhist influence.<sup>53</sup> The relations to India remained intact during the Christian period. In our context, the most interesting fact might be that Bardesanes, the famous poet of hymns, hailing from Edessa, wrote a book about India around 182 AD.<sup>54</sup> It is among the most reliable sources about Buddhist monastic living. Edessa in particular had a very close relationship to India, and Strzygowski has shown that Edessa was quite influential in the development of Christian didactic artistic subject matter.<sup>55</sup>

We know that Buddhism had a well developed Hellenistic canon, documented at least for the end of the first century, but that it presumably originated earlier. It is widely apparent in Gandhāra and Chinese Turkestan, but we believe that its source could have been in Bactria along the route of the Buddhist westward mission. Does the conclusion not suggest itself that the transfer of individual artistic types might have taken place there also?<sup>56</sup>

Our knowledge of Christian art is based on that produced on Roman soil. We have only slowly and tentatively pursued its traces in the east. 'This has led Byzantium, the large Hellenistic cities, Armenia and Iran into the group of historical entities that require our consideration'.<sup>57</sup> If we take one step further we arrive in Bactria which we presume to have been the place of origin and transition for Buddhist-Hellenistic art.

Evidence from the history of religions shows that we can draw that conclusion. This brings Bactria to the centre of attention for art historians.

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<sup>51</sup> Hermann Kayserling, *Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen*, Darmstadt: Reichel, 1920, 578.

<sup>52</sup> See our note 38.

<sup>53</sup> Arthur Drews, *Die Christusmythe*, Jena: Diederichs, 1910, 71.

<sup>54</sup> Osmond de Beauvoir Priaux, 'On the Indian Embassies to Rome from the Reign of Claudius to the Reign of Justinian', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, [19, 1862, 274-298] 20, 1863, 269-312.

<sup>55</sup> Strzygowski, *Urprung der christlichen Kirchenkunst* (note 38), 181.

<sup>56</sup> Wellesz [announced publication note 37].

<sup>57</sup> Strzygowski, *Urprung der christlichen Kirchenkunst* (note 38), 160.



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