

BĪR-KOṬ-GHWAṆDAI INTERIM REPORTS, XI
ACT-FIELD SCHOOL PROJECT REPORTS AND MEMOIRS
SPECIAL VOLUME 7

VAJIRASTHĀNA

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BARIKOT HILLTOP (SWAT, PAKISTAN)

Volume 1



Luca M. Olivieri
In collaboration with Elisa Iori, Michele Minardi and Marco Pinelli

Foreword by Abdul Samad

Edited by Alice Casalini

"SAVE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF BAZIRA" PROJECT



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Presentation by Adriano V. Rossi

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English revision by Klara-Maeve O'Reilly

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ISMEO



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

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Contributions by

Nala Arcuri, Balage Balogh, Alessandra Bagnera, Marco Baldi, Stefan Baums, Pierfrancesco Callieri, Alice Casalini, Natalia Cecchini, Fabio Colombo, Omar Coloru, Rita Dal Martello, Anna Filigenzi, Susanna Forlivesi, Agnese Fusaro, Hong Li, Emanuele Lant, Naghmeh Mahzounzadeh, Cristiano Moscatelli, Nasir Muhmood, Roberto Micheli, Michela Prota, Mubariz A. Rabbani, Kaiser Rahman, Roberto Sabelli†, Giuseppe Salemi, Matteo Sesana, Ehsan Shavarebi, Ingo Strauch, and Massimo Vidale

Drawings by Alice Casalini and Francesco Martore†

Archaeological maps and sections by Michele Minardi

Topography by Kashif Essa (EssaNoor)

Videos by Kashif Iqbal and Umbrella Brands

“SAVE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF BAZIRA” PROJECT



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“Save the archaeological site of Bazira” is a project of ALIPH (International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas), ISMEO International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies, and Directorate-General of Archaeology and Museums, Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (DOAM KP).

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BKG Interim Report Va = *Ceramics from the excavations in the historic settlement at Bīr-koṭ-ghwanḍai (Barikot) Swat, Pakistan (1984-1992)* / by Pierfrancesco Callieri and Luca M. Olivieri. ACT Field School Reports and Memoirs, Special Volume, 2.1-2. ISMEO/Alma mater University of Bologna. Sang-e-Meel Publications: Lahore, 2020.

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BKG Interim Reports, VI – *Terracotta figurines from the excavations in the historic settlement at Bīr-koṭ-ghwanḍai (Barikot) Swat, Pakistan (1977-2019)* / by Gennaro Altiero and Giuseppina Esposito. Ed. by Roberta Gooni. ACT Field School Reports and Memoirs. ISMEO/University of Naples, L'Orientale. Special Volume, 3, Sang-e-Meel Publications: Lahore, 2025.

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PRESENTATION

Adriano V. Rossi

President of ISMEO – International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies

I am particularly pleased to introduce *Vajirasthāna. Archaeology of the Barikot Hilltop (Swat, Pakistan)*, a collective effort due to the ISMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat. It reports about the recent discoveries and restorations by one of the oldest of the Italian missions still in operation among those established by Prof. Giuseppe Tucci and ISMEO in the 1950s, and it is being conducted since some years now in collaboration with the University of Venice Ca' Foscari.

The work in the field was in fact started in 1956 following the first visit to the Swat by Prof. Tucci during the previous year; and since then the mission has seen some of the leading Italian scholars in the field, such as Domenico Faccenna, Pierfrancesco Callieri, and Luca Maria Olivieri, take turns in its direction. We can undoubtedly say that it represents one of the most prestigious legacies to the Italian archaeology in Asia.

The present book, edited by Professor Olivieri and his collaborators, takes its title from the toponym Vajirasthāna, occurring in a Śāradā inscription found at Barikot and transferred to the Lahore Museum in 1898; it has been identified since many years with Barikot/Bazira, a pivotal site in the area and primary center of archaeological research. The book focuses its attention on the recent three-year period 2022-2024, during which the mission found the fundamental support of The International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage (ALIPH) Foundation through the project "Saving the archaeological site of Bazira". The project provided for the restoration of the structures in the Barikot area, allowing the conservation of the monumental artificial terraces of the acropolis, the valorization of the ancient religious and military monuments, and the creation of a buffer zone around the acropolis for the safeguard of the historical site.

As can be clearly seen from this publication, the implementation of the specific ALIPH/ISMEO project and, more generally, the work of the ISMEO/Ca' Foscari Mission, have benefited from a well-balanced international scientific network under the direction of Professor Olivieri, made up of expert scholars and younger researchers and students of an excellent level. This made it possible to carry out accurate research inspired by the criteria of

multidisciplinarity that are essential for modern archaeology, combining the excavation data with the detailed study of the construction methods and materials of artistic and artisan work, also through the contribution of archaeometry.

All this symbolizes one of the cornerstones of ISMEO's mission, which since its foundation has undertaken protocols and agreements for joint research projects with Italian, Pakistani and foreign universities, academies and cultural institutions, as well as with international organizations in the areas of its institutional activities. In this sense, the ALIPH/ISMEO Project has also further highlighted a peculiar aspect of the Archaeological Mission in Swat, which has been continuously promoting training projects for Pakistani, Italian and international students, with excellent results.

In the framework of the ALIPH/ISMEO project, another aspect very much felt by the contemporary scientific community is highlighted: that of the communication of research achievements, which must not be limited to a small circle of specialists, but must find innovative languages that allow its dissemination within a wider audience. Although the book itself represents a valuable and irreplaceable tool for dissemination, it is now appropriate to also turn to those tools that modern technologies make available. In this sense, I am pleased to underline how the project in question has been able to exploit this potential, too: in particular, an efficient Pakistani company has implemented detailed 3D reconstructions, which represent an important scientific and cognitive tool at the same time; and the production of documentaries, visible through links contained in the book and which refer to specific ISMEO platforms.

A decisive role in the most recent phases of the Mission has certainly been played by the ALIPH Foundation; I would like to thank Director Valery Freland and his collaborators for a consolidated and fruitful relationship, a collaboration which outside Pakistan has led to the important restoration of ancient vestiges at the UNESCO Heritage Site of Hatra. A grateful mention must be made of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Italian Embassy in Islamabad for the essential logistical and economic support continuously provided to the Mission.

Finally, special thanks must be addressed to the Directorate General of Archaeology and Museums and the Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, without whose contribution and generosity no activity in the Swat valley would be possible.

FOREWORD

Abdul Samad

Director-General Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan)

The story of *Vajirasthāna*, a name synonymous with both mystique and historical intrigue, has been the object of extensive discussion, claim, and reclaim for centuries. However, much of the scholarship surrounding it has been based on literary evidence and has thus frequently been (re-)interpreted and revised. Only in recent decades, through the tireless work of Italian and Pakistani archaeological teams in Swat, has tangible evidence begun to shed light on this enigmatic place, offering a more comprehensive understanding of its significance. Among these efforts, the Italian Archaeological Mission's work in Swat over the past seventy years stands as a monumental achievement—one that has significantly advanced our knowledge of the region and its role in the broader history of Buddhism.

The roots of the Italian archaeological mission in Swat trace back to the pioneering scholar, Giuseppe Tucci, who initially had studied the origins of Tibetan Buddhism. Tucci's journey led him, almost serendipitously, to Swat, a region that, unbeknownst to many, held crucial connections to the early spread of Buddhism, especially the Vajrayāna school. His work laid the foundation for what became a legacy of cross-cultural collaboration between Italy and Pakistan, a partnership that has flourished through the generations.

Over the years, this collaboration has evolved into a vibrant, international endeavour, with scholars from the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, France, China, Korea, USA, Japan, and beyond regularly contributing to the ongoing excavation and research. What began as a focused study on Tibetan Buddhism now spans multiple fields, from archaeology to religious studies, and has enriched our understanding of the cultural and historical tapestry of Swat.

In particular, the past decade has seen a surge of new archaeological findings in Swat, particularly from Barikot. Many of these directly correspond to the ancient Buddhist literature—revealing the deep historical layers of this once-thriving cultural hub. One of the most significant discoveries is the identification of Barikot with a site frequently mentioned in Tibetan literature as the ancient *Vajirasthāna*. Having said this, the importance of Barikot extends beyond its association with Vajrayāna Buddhism; it was a centre of vibrant multiculturalism, serving as a crossroads for various dynasties, belief systems, and cultural influences. The layers of history evident in Barikot's archaeological remains reveal a rich tapestry of ancient civilizations that have long since faded but whose stories continue to resonate in the present.

Yet among the many remarkable discoveries, one inscription found at Barikot is particularly noteworthy. This inscription, now housed in the Lahore Museum, is one of the key pieces of evidence that affirms Barikot's role as the ancient *Vajirasthāna*, a place revered in Tibetan Buddhist literature as the birthplace of Vajrayāna Buddhism. Together with the recent excavations and conservation efforts on the Barikot hilltop, the inscription has provided invaluable insights into the region's spiritual and cultural significance.

This book, then, represents a significant step forward in the scholarly understanding of *Vajirasthāna*. It carefully and thoughtfully combines archaeological evidence with literary sources, offering a nuanced exploration of this ancient city and its profound influence on the development of Buddhism, particularly Vajrayāna Buddhism. By drawing on the rich history of archaeological research in Swat and the ever-growing body of discoveries, this work seeks to resolve the ambiguities and misconceptions that have surrounded the history of *Vajirasthāna*.

The Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, along with the Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, takes immense pride in its ongoing collaboration with the Italian Archaeological Mission. This partnership stands as a testament to the enduring bonds between two countries, as well as the broader international community of scholars dedicated to uncovering and preserving the ancient history of Swat and Pakistan. It is our hope that this collaboration will continue to thrive, as future generations of researchers and archaeologists join hands in the quest to explore the hidden treasures of Swat—an area rich in historical, cultural, and spiritual heritage that has shaped the course of human civilisation for millennia.

May this book serve as both a record of our collective achievements thus far and a beacon guiding future discoveries, ensuring that the ancient history of *Vajirasthāna* is not forgotten but celebrated, shared, and understood by all.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Alice Casalini

Editing such a prominent volume, both in terms of significance and sheer size, is both an honour and a great responsibility. The many contributions in this book are from a group of scholars, friends and colleagues, at different stages in their academic career – we have both seasoned academics with years of experience under their belt, and young scholars who are at the very start of their (hopefully long and successful) career, and everything in between. My editing interventions have strived to bring all contributions together in a cohesive whole that would do justice not only to the laborious work of our team and to that of our predecessors – who laid the solid foundation for the success of such work at the Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat – but also to the great monument of Bazira-*Vajirasthāna*.

...

The volume includes several contributions by the same author(s), and several intertextual references occur. To avoid cumbersome and confusing repetitions, we have decided to assign a number to each contribution by the same author, which is reported in superscript, according to the following scheme (here presented in alphabetical order):

Arcuri, Prota¹ = *Structural Overlaps in BKG 24* in TERRACE W.

Arcuri, Prota² = *Macrophase 8b: Zoomorphic Spouts* in TERRACOTTA AND CERAMICS.

Casalini¹ = *The Architecture of Temple 6: Excavated Materials and Reconstruction* in RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE: TEMPLE 6.

Casalini² = *Macrophase 8b: The Three Hares Roundel* in THE BARIKOT HILLTOP IN 10 OBJECTS.

Filigenzi¹ = *Śāhi Marble Sculptures* in SCULPTURES.

Filigenzi² = *Late Buddhist Rock Sculptures* in SCULPTURES.

Iori¹ = *Hindu Śāhi Settlements and the Fortified Limes* in CIVIL AND MILITARY ARCHITECTURE.

Iori² = *Macrophase 8b: A Hindu-Śāhi Portrait* in THE BARIKOT HILLTOP IN 10 OBJECTS.

Iori³ = THE VAJIRASTHĀNA HILLTOP: ICONIC ASPIRATIONS AND OVERLAPPING RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

Minardi, Prota¹ = *Trench BKG 24.1* in TERRACE W.

Minardi, Prota² = *The Islamic Graveyard Outside the Terrace W (BKG 24.1)* in TERRACE W.

Moscatelli¹ = *Gandhāran Stone Sculptures* in SCULPTURES.

Moscatelli² = *Macrophase 5: An enigmatic Mahāparinirvāṇa* in THE BARIKOT HILLTOP IN 10 OBJECTS.

Olivieri¹ = THE CITY OF VAJRA.

Olivieri² = ARCHAEOLOGICAL OUTLINES.

Olivieri³ = THE SURVEY (1992–1993).

Olivieri⁴ = *Methodology* in THE CONSERVATION PROJECT “SAVING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF BAZIRA” (2022–2024).

Olivieri⁵ = *The Monumental Terraces and the Central Fortress* in CIVIL AND MILITARY ARCHITECTURE.

Olivieri⁶ = *Trench BKG 6: The Śāhi Temple on Terrace E* in RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE: TEMPLE 6.

Olivieri^{6.1} = The quarry sources of *kañjur* [Addendum 1 to Olivieri⁶]

Olivieri^{6.2} = Decorated sandstone cornices from Macro-phases 8a–b [Addendum 1 to Casalini¹]

Olivieri⁷ = *Macrophase 9a: A Sphero-Conical Vessel* in THE BARIKOT HILLTOP IN 10 OBJECTS.

Rabbani¹ = *Common Pottery* in TERRACOTTA AND CERAMICS.

Rabbani² = BEADS AND ORNAMENTS.

The names of authors and other contributors are abbreviated to the first letters of their name/middle name/surname (e.g., LMO = Luca Maria Olivieri; MP = Marco Pinelli, etc.) in the chapter THE CONSERVATION PROJECT “SAVING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF BAZIRA” (2022–2024), as this section includes several in-text references to the many people who have worked on the conservation and excavation of the hilltop. This style of abbreviation is also used whenever an author intervenes with a brief text within the larger text by another or others and in the captions. The full name is used for non-contributors in the image captions.

Individual contributions, at the APA level 1 and 2 (i.e. the headings both in small caps and italics in the table of contents), have their own numbering of footnotes and figures.

In the body of the text, the following typographic rules are followed to signal the different nature of every element: structures, such as walls, drains, etc. are within square brackets: e.g., [200]; layers are within round brackets: e.g., (150); cuts, pits, razed surfaces (negative stratigraphic units) are within angle brackets: e.g., (320); finally, cup-marks and similar features are written within curly brackets: e.g., {5}. Structures that are underlined within squared brackets refer to those surveyed in the 1990s (i.e., Olivieri³ THE SURVEY) [23]). This is done to graphically separate the structures surveyed at the time from those excavated and documented in later excavation campaigns.

A parenthesis system is also used for epigraphic translations: [] mark uncertain readings, () lost material, and < > material omitted by the author.

We have chosen to keep the terminology given to structures and areas used in the fieldwork documentation. For example, we refer to Terrace E (emphasis on ‘E’) rather than E Terrace (emphasis on ‘terrace’), Terrace W rather than W Terrace. Words indicating architectural and/or archaeological features (e.g., terrace, trench, bastion) are capitalised

when followed by their specific designation (e.g., Terrace E, Trench 6.3, Bastion H). Walls and other common structural units are left in lowercase.

Cardinal directions are usually shortened and capitalised (e.g., N, S, E, W) in surveys, technical reports and stratigraphic studies for the sake of readability (namely, THE SURVEY (1992–1993); THE CONSERVATION PROJECT ...; *The Monumental Terraces and the Central Fortress*; *The Fortress on the Hilltop [Trenches BKG 14 and 15]*; *The Architecture of Temple 6* ...; TERRACE W). Directions are spelled out in all other contributions, especially when they are part of known phrases (e.g., the northwestern regions).

Stylistic choices for the images in each contribution have been left within the remit of individual authors. This accounts for slight discrepancies in the formatting of some graphic signs (e.g., N arrow, scale, etc.). These have been edited only for consistency in relation to the internal structure of each author's contribution. Figures and tables are capitalized in the text whenever they refer to images and illustrations from the present volume and are left in lowercase whenever they refer to images, plates and tables from other works. A special case is that of TABLE 1, TABLE 2 and TABLE 3 in Olivieri², which are in small caps in the whole text, as they refer to macrophases and chronological data that are valid for all contributions. Plates relative to this text are always formatted in small caps; all others are in lowercase.

All images are property of the Italian Archaeological Mission/ISMEO, unless otherwise noted in the captions. Objects in the inventory are marked by the label of the site (BKG = Barikot), followed by their individual number.

Catalogue entries the last part of the volume (MATERIAL CULTURE) follow the format:

Inv. No. – Fig./Figs

Location/museum.

Stratigraphy; year of discovery (if needed)

Material; Dimensions

Conditions, Joints and special marks (if present)

Bibliography, if available.

This information is followed by a brief comment on each object. In the catalogue, all measures are in centimetres, unless otherwise noted. Generally, measurements are expressed in metres when we are discussing buildings and/or areas of space, and in centimetres when we are dealing with individual objects. The catalogue of coins by E. Shavarebi follows criteria and format that are specific to numismatics. They are explained by the author in the contribution.

The following abbreviations are used throughout the text. Bibliographic abbreviations are listed at the beginning of the section REFERENCES.

a.s.l.	above the [mean] sea level
av.	average
cf.	see
cm	centimetre(s)
d.	diameter

Dept.	Department
DG	Director General
DOAM	Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
DoAM	Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan
dp.	depth
DR	Departmental Representative
DSAAM	Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e l'Africa Mediterranea [Department of Asian and North African Studies]
Fig., Figs	figure, figures
fn	footnote(s)
Govt.	Government
h.	height
ha	hectares
KP	Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
l.	length
max.	maximum
m	metre(s)
N, S, E, W	north, south, east, west
pers. comm.	personal communication
Pl., Pls	plate, plates
ref./refs	reference, references
sqm	square metre(s)
SRO	Sub-Regional Office (DOAM KP)
t.	thickness
tr.	translated/translation
w.	width

II

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE

A great part of the Fortress structures described above belong to Period 2a-b (= Macrophase 8a-b), i.e., to the Śāhi cultural phases. Such constructions, albeit superimposing a pre-existing monumental complex, were nonetheless the result of a strong military and political commitment supported by substantial financial investments. It is therefore important to briefly describe the historical and geopolitical context, as well as the potential functions of such majestic structures. The following text focuses on the latest of the Śāhi phases, those of the Hindu Śāhis, whose history and archaeology is better known.

The history of the Hindu Śāhi dynasty was not uneventful. According to the sources, from the rise of the Hindu Śāhis to power in the early ninth century to their fall, the history of the kingdom was characterised by abrupt successes, disastrous downfalls, changes of alliances, advances and retreats. Although they succeeded in taking over the strategic territory of the north-west, wresting it from the Turki Śāhi, their entire history would be shaped by relentless pressure from almost all directions. This political tension as part of a more general atmosphere of conflict on the Indo-Iranian frontier had a great impact on how the Hindu Śāhis organised their territory and their way of life. Their northern frontier, corresponding to the areas of Bajaur, Dir, Swat, Buner, and Malakand, featured a unique concentration of fortresses and isolated watchtowers located on hilltops or slopes. This evidence was already recognised and discussed by several scholars in the past (Rahman 1968-1969; Olivieri 1996b, 2003a; Khan et al. 2021; Khan 2017).⁹⁴ At the same time, the main urban centres of northern Gandhāra went through a process of castellation which involved religious buildings as well.

Defensive system: fortresses, forts and watchtowers

The defensive system set up by the Hindu Śāhis was spatially widespread, architecturally uniform, and carefully planned. It consisted of isolated watchtowers, small forts for military garrisons and proper fortresses located on hilltops or hill slopes along roads or passes connecting the valleys of northern Gandhāra with each other and with the neighbouring areas to the south and the west. This was an entirely new phenomenon, unprecedented in Gandhāra. The spatial distribution, density and scale of these structures point to a large financial investment whose aim was, most likely, to create a sort of bulwark protecting access to resources of the northern regions against the advance of the enemies (on agrarian wealth of the northern regions see Spengler et al. 2021; Iori 2023a; Olivieri 2025b). The Ghaznavids, for instance, are said to have raided Peshawar already in the last decade of the tenth century at the time of Mahmud of Ghazni's father, causing Jayapāla Deva to lose the territories west of the city (Rahman 1979: 138). Moreover, since the *Rājataranginī* shows the Śāhis, from Kamalū (first half of tenth century) onwards, as sort of powerful clients of the Kashmiri kings with whom they also entered into matrimonial ties, this chain of forts might be interpreted as a sort of advanced boundary line for the kingdom of Kashmir.

In the sources, mentions of Śāhi defensive forts appear on at least two occasions in reference to the conflict between Jayapāla Deva and the Ghaznavids. At the end of the tenth century, Mahmud of Ghazni's father is said to have captured some of the 'frontier forts' of the Śāhis, most probably located on the Afghan border. Indeed, as pointed out by Rahman (1979: 135, fn. 206), the *Majma' al-Ansāb* (DPB: 27) reports that 'Jayapāla wrote to Sabuktigīn demanding the restoration of the forts captured by the latter'. A second mention appears in Gardīzī, according to whom Mahmud of Ghazni, shortly after he acceded to the throne, marched towards the east in September 1000 and captured 'many forts' that Rahman (1979: 141 and fn. 239, 240) assumed were located on the way to the Indus. Considering this, it seems that the Hindu

⁹⁴ Taking into account the differentiation made by Olivieri between the tower houses, tentatively assigned to the Turk Śāhis, and watchtowers and forts, the total number of proper Hindu Śāhi structures is probably slightly lower compared to that reported by Ijaz Khan (2017), although several tower houses, such as those at the site of Qala in Dir, must have been reused in the later periods (Olivieri 2003a: 40 and fig. 41). Due to this chronological uncertainty, this Volume will not include the tower houses settlement systems.

Śāhis provided the western border and its access road with forts from at least the late tenth century. When the defensive system in northern Gandhāra was built is unknown from archaeological excavations. Scholars tend to associate them with the time when the Ghaznavids had conquered the valley of Peshawar, and the Śāhis retreated into the northern valley (Dani 1968–1969: 29–31; Rahman 1979: 305; Olivieri 1996b: 74–75). However, considering the late ninth century date of Temple 2 at Barikot (whose architectural features incidentally recall those of watchtowers), we can presume that the Śāhi military architecture was already well established by the end of the ninth century. This suggests the alternative hypothesis that the defensive system was set up at the beginning of the Hindu-Śāhi power to encircle the double-crop area of middle Swat (from Matta to Zalamkot) which probably was the main asset of the kingdom.

That the set-up of the Hindu Śāhi defensive system was part of a centralised project is suggested by the architectural homogeneity of these constructions which share building techniques, masonry, layout and architectural features. As pointed out by Olivieri (1996b, 2003a) these sites are characterised by similar elements: a) construction with exposed foundations resting directly on the rock; b) a fortification building system linked to a terraced construction layout and the use of defensive walls exploiting the morphology of the terrain, in the case of fortresses; c) the use of semicircular bastions or buttresses at the corner of structures and substructions, but also the use of semicircular buttresses as repeated elements on the façade of fortification-substruction; d) high watchtowers (c. 8–10 m), isolated or as part of a fort; e) architectural layouts based on a square module (usually c. 5–6 m) that can be repeated to form rectangular layouts.

The defensive system consists of different kinds of sites: isolated watchtowers with a square or rectangular plan featuring semicircular buttresses (e.g., watchtower of Cherat and Parrai), forts, very often including watchtowers too, and proper fortresses (Fig. 1).

The northernmost evidence of a Hindu Śāhi site has been recognised in the fortress of Sure Tangai, located on the right side of the Swat River in the proximity of the city of Matta in upper Swat (Stein 1930; Tucci 1958; Olivieri 1996b). Sure Tangai, from whose top it is possible to see the entire valley, controls the access from and to the northern mountain passes of upper Swat. The site consists of a large defensive structure with a retaining function that is still visible for a length of c. 60 m (Figs 2–4). In the central part of the fortification semicircular bastions (d. c. 1.50 m) are preserved at c. 6 m from each other. Two larger bastions, now almost destroyed, were documented at the extremities of the fortification. In the central part of the fortification wall is a corridor with an ogival vault, explored in 1995 up to 20 m (Olivieri 1996b). Within the fortification, water supply was ensured by the presence of a spring (Stein 1930: 54) and a circular well in stone masonry (d. c. 2.50; dp. max. 11.30 m), which is still in use. Along the slope the remains of several structures are visible. Some of them were provided with angular semicircular buttresses, which were part of a terraced fortress. The structures are built directly on the bedrock and the area does not seem to have any earlier occupation. There is a large quantity of surface pottery mostly belonging to storage vessels of common ware.

According to the information locally collected by Olivieri (pers. comm.), large structures ascribable to this period were also visible further south in the wide and fertile area of Damghar. However, they must have been destroyed in the last few years since no traces of these structures were visible on the surface in 2018.

Continuing along the right bank of the river towards the south, another fortress is located along the slope of the hill at the back of Dadahara. It aimed at protecting the Suralai pass which leads to the internal road connecting to the areas of Nimogram and Talash in lower Dir, as well as the road running along the Swat River. The site, known as Bar Tangai (Olivieri 1996b, 2003a: 42–44), features a fortification which partially shows the circular buttresses and the main gate. Inside are a series of dwelling units consisting of small quadrangular rooms, some with angular semicircular buttresses, a second line of fortification and a central rectangular fort with large bastions on the top. Immediately to the north is another Śāhi fort known as Bataghar Tangai.

To the south, distributed on the hilltops of the Parrai range, along the riverside road facing the area of Barikot (on the opposite side of the Swat), there is a system of several isolated watchtowers at Parrai, Nagwa, Brakai (Fig. 5).

On the other side of the river, lie the three main centres of Swat, Butkara-Barama, Udegram and Barikot (from north to south), whose history of occupation goes back to the protohistoric times. Here stand the fortresses of Udegram (Gullini 1962) and Barikot. A smaller fortress, possibly dating to the Hindu Śāhi period, is located at Kala Tir in the valley of the Saidu River.⁹⁵ At Amlukdara, on the way to the sacred Mount Ilam – where Śāhi structures were also recorded in the past (Khattak 1997: 53; Olivieri 1996b: 65) – a Hindu Śāhi complex was recently documented by a Pakistani team (Samad et al. 2021) a few meters east of the main Buddhist stupa, at that time visible only in its upper part. This Hindu Śāhi complex was only partially exposed. It consists of three distinct units of square rooms (c. 5 m) with semicircular buttresses divided by corridors about 2.50 m wide. Several supporting structures were built in a second moment against the western side of the complex (Figs 6-7).

A settled area was located at Zalamkot along the so-called Hati-dara Road passing through the Shahkot pass, connecting Swat to Malakand. On the Malakand side of the Shahkot pass, around the ancient city Palai, a square fort with semicircular bastions was documented. A well-preserved watchtower (h. max c. 9 m), first noticed by Foucher in 1896 (Foucher 1901: fig. 27; cf. Olivieri 2003a: fig. 48), at the Cherat pass, controlled access to Swat from Malakand (Fig. 8).

During previous investigations, Hindu Śāhi structures were documented in Buner (Faccenna, Tusa 1986; Khattak 1997; Rehman, Khattak, Rehman 1996; Samad, Khan 2016; Stein 1898) at the sites of Bampokha, Nansar, Kingargalai and Girrai. Five other sites, some with watchtowers, were recently documented in the areas of Torwarsak (Khan et al. 2021: fig. 9). These fortifications of Buner and Palai (to which we can add those documented by Caddy and later by Olivieri on the Malakand/Dargai ridge) can be considered the more external, southern side of the Hindu Śāhi defensive salient of the region.

Continuing southward, along the right bank of the Swat River, opposite side to Thana and Dheri Alladand, the fort of Kamal-kal-china guarded the road along the river and the fortress of Damkot (see below), constructed on the top of the so-called Churchill Picket or Damkot Hill. Two roads departed from there, one following the river to the Swat gorges and the other ascending and splitting into two roads, one leading to the Talash Valley in lower Dir and from there to upper Dir and Bajaur, and the other one continuing up to the inner valley leading back to Dadahara and Damghar via Asbanr.

Following the riverside route up to the gorges, the major concentration of Hindu Śāhi structures is at the end of the Mayar Valley. Before reaching this settled area, we find the forts with watchtowers of Naigram and Kamala on a hilltop, the latter with a rectangular plan and angular semicircular buttresses (Fig. 9). Olivieri (2003a: 45) reported watchtowers at Mane-tangai and all along the ancient road up to the point where the Swat Valley narrows, and the gorges start. There are the two settled areas of Tauda-china and Kalungai, facing each other and located on the opposite sides of the river in correspondence with a ford guarded by the fort of Qala. Both in Kalungai (Fig. 10) and Tauda-china (Fig. 11), Hindu Śāhi watchtowers and forts coexist with tower houses forming villages which dominate the fertile valley and secure a mountain track that connects the mountain range of Malakand to lower Dir, further north.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ A system of not-better-defined fortification was described by Tucci (1958: 287) and reported by Faccenna in the archaeological map of the Saidu and Jambil valleys (Faccenna 1980-1981: pl. XXIX) as running along the Shararai range.

⁹⁶ Although the Malakand area is not treated in detail here, it is worth mentioning the large fortification on the Malakand pass indicated as 'Buddhist defences' by Deane (1896, Appendix B; cf. Dani 1968-1969: 5-6) and now occupied by the Pakistani army. The defensive system spreads along the ridge and is provided with what seem to be large semicircular bastions. The large defence occupied a position that allowed them to overlook both sides of the ridge, Swat and Peshawar plains.

If we follow the other route departing from Damkot, i.e., moving up to the north from Damkot, we enter the area of lower Dir, where Rahman (1968-1969: 104-105) surveyed several sites: the Śāhi fort at Katkala and other 'outposts' documented on the western side of Talash, as the one at Kala-dheri, protecting the pass leading to Asban in the north-east.⁹⁷ While we move westwards towards the ford of Saddo leading to Bajaur, we have documentation of one large Hindu Śāhi fortress, that is the site of Gumbatuna (see below). Further west, in Bajaur, two sites have been identified as Hindu Śāhi forts (Ali, Rahman 2005: 69-71). Bajaur connects Dir with the Kunar Valley in Afghanistan: there, several fortifications ascribable to the Śāhi period were documented in the past (Fischer 1969). These fortifications of Kunar can be considered the more external, western side of the Hindu Śāhi defensive salient of the region.

Fortresses with Brahmanical Temples

Among the most important Hindu Śāhi centres of Swat are Sure Tangai (described above), Damkot (Rahman 1968-1969), Gumbatuna (Rahman 1979: 279-281), Udegram (Gullini 1962), Barikot (Callieri et al. 1992, Olivieri 2003a), and Zalamkot.

Most of these centres have a long urban history. However, the Hindu Śāhi period marked a striking shift in their settlement pattern that must have been coeval to the set-up of defensive systems, if not slightly earlier. All these sites, which already went through a process of demographic drop and urban crisis in the previous centuries, were transformed into castle cities or fortresses, defended by imposing defensive structures characterised by semicircular buttresses at the corners and isolated watchtowers. Inside the fortification, rather small and dense inhabited areas developed with a terraced layout on hill slopes. A citadel usually stood on the hilltop, often referred to as 'palace' (e.g., Gumbatuna) or 'castle' (e.g., Udegram) by scholars.

The most impressive Hindu Śāhi fortress is certainly Udegram. The site was protected by a vast defensive system with isolated bastions including the inhabited area and a large part of the mountain of Udegram with its spring. Stein's description of the fortified area (1930: 35-38) was later corroborated by Olivieri and other researchers of the Italian Archaeological Mission. The upper limit of the fortification, continuous wall lines with projecting towers, is located on the southern ridge of the Udegram mountain, which divides the latter from the Saidu Valley, from where the fortified lines are visible. From the ridge, two lines of fortification descend towards the Swat Valley. They are marked by broken lines of masonry and watchtowers which gather around two avant-corps: the first, further back and at a lower position, defends the spring; the second, more advanced and at a higher position, takes the form of a citadel (this is the 'castle' excavated by Gullini 1962). The latter, accessible by a stairway, was constructed on top of an artificial terrace with semicircular bastions at the corner and along the façade (Fig. 12).

Other Śāhi fortification structures are documented further down the valley and enclose the area of the later Ghaznavid mosque (Bagnera 2015). Discontinuous and partial evidence of the Śāhi period was documented by Scerrato on the slope of the mountain below the citadel (Bagnera 2015). Here a monumental rectangular structure with semicircular buttresses (Fig. 13) and other related structures were found in correspondence with the later Ghaznavid mosque. This must have been built on the site of an earlier Brahmanical temple, which was in turn constructed on top of a Buddhist sanctuary (Bagnera 2015: figs 35-37, pls XIII-XV). The presence of a Brahmanical temple is suggested by the reuse of two decorative elements in the Ghaznavid period: an *āmalaka* stone, found in situ and reused as a base for the wooden support of the roof in the mosque's prayer hall (Bagnera 2015: 40, figs 40-43); a marble panel with a full-blown lotus and leaf scroll bearing an Arabic inscription on the backside referring to a second building phase of the mosque. The panel has been identified as a decorative element of the ceiling of a Brahmanical temple based on comparison with Kashmiri architecture (e.g., Kak 1933: pl. LXVI; Hardy 2019) and dated to the eighth to ninth century (Khan 1985).

⁹⁷ Many of these 'outposts,' if one follows the given description, look more like tower-houses.

Indeed, the presence of a Brahmanical temple inside these sorts of castle cities appears as a recurrent feature of the Śāhi urban landscapes.⁹⁸ Brahmanical temples were documented at Barikot (Olivieri⁶; Casalini¹, both in this volume), at Zalamkot (Olivieri⁶, this volume; Olivieri et al. 2006: 120), at Gumbatuna in the valley of Talash in Dir and, most probably, also at Damkot (Olivieri⁶, this volume). Gumbatuna, in particular, seems to have preserved until recently the most outstanding evidence of the association between fortified sites and temples.

Indeed, the now-lost temple of Gumbat (see Olivieri⁶; Casalini¹, both in this volume; Stein 1921; Meister 2010; Olivieri 2023a: 270–271) was most likely located uphill inside the fortified precinct of Gumbatuna, despite previous suggestions of alternative locations. This is evidenced by a combination of data: a) by the description left by A. Stein (1921: 67–69) who clearly describes Gumbatuna while climbing a steep hill to reach the temple; b) by the recovery on site of a large *āmalaka* stone now on display at the Chakdara Museum (Khan 2018: pl. 1; cf. Casalini¹, below), and c) by the presence of several decorated architectural elements in greyish sandstone (see Olivieri^{6,2}) associated with a Brahmanical temple and reused both in the modern retaining wall of the steep road that nowadays leads to the archaeological site (Figs 14–15), and in several graves of the 19th-century cemetery and annexed mosque of the small village of Ziarat, at the foot of the hill (Khan 2018; e.g., Figs 16–17). Blocks decorated with two upright volutes and a central leaf that match the bases of the pilasters decorating the podium of the Zalamkot temple are especially interesting (Fig. 18).

The citadel of Gumbatuna (also called ‘Stargo-manai’) bears typical Hindu Śāhi architectural features (Figs 19–20) with terraced structures supporting clusters of six to seven rooms on the sides of courtyards. An inscription on white marble written in the early form of Śāradā dated to the eighth/ninth century CE was found here (Rahman 1979: 229, 339, pl. VI). It is now preserved at the Chakdara museum. This was also the place where trial trenches were excavated by Rahman (ibid.: 280–281). Trial trench C2 excavated at the foot of the citadel yielded the hand of a marble image and fragments of marble bowls (ibid.: 281) at c. 30 cm above the platform which Rahman interpreted as the podium of a stupa or a temple.⁹⁹

The platform (c. 0.70 m height), revealed at about 2.7 m from the surface, is described as showing ‘exactly the same pilasters and mouldings as those of the lower tier of the stupa at Damkot’, which is now interpreted as a Brahmanical temple (Olivieri⁶, this volume).¹⁰⁰ Gumbatuna might have been the place of more than one temple.

Damkot is another important Hindu Śāhi fortress featuring an imposing fortification provided with rectangular towers and semicircular bastions. The fortification runs on the crest of the hill and then descends towards the river in an irregular, sometimes zigzagging, manner (Rahman 1968–1969: fig. 8). At the so-called Middle Peak, the main area of investigation, a long history of occupation came to light. However, due to water erosion, fallen rocks and debris, the area was heavily disturbed, and the chronological sequence is difficult to reassess. In any case, this was certainly the most important area of the fortress where a religious building, whatever its affiliation, was also constructed. While I refer to Olivieri⁶ (this volume) for the description of the platform, it is worth mentioning that a marble hand was retrieved on the steps of the Damkot ‘stupa’ (Rahman 1968–1969: 138). The reservoir here documented might be connected to religious activities as well.

Another large settlement was located at Zalamkot in the Shahkot pass along the Hati-lar, where a large quantity of ruins, pottery, and a large defensive circuit that also include a spring are still visible on the surface (Fig. 21). The presence of an ancient city, mirroring Palai on the other side of the pass, is more than likely. The historical relevance of Zalamkot

⁹⁸ Another Brahmanical temple was reported by Deane in 1896 at Manyar, close to Tindo-dag (or Hindudag; Filigenzi 2010: 413).

⁹⁹ The use of marble in Turk Śāhi phases is usually associated with Hindu sculptures (Kuwayama 1976), however, the use of this material for Buddhist images cannot be completely excluded (Stadtner 1999).

¹⁰⁰

is also confirmed by the recovery of a bilingual inscription mentioning the foundation of a mosque in a city called Jayapāl(a)nagar as recently argued by Shavarebi and Strauch (2022).

The most outstanding feature of the site is the podium of a Brahmanical temple (Olivieri et al. 2006: 119–120; Meister 2020; Olivieri⁶, this volume; Figs 22), firstly documented by Foucher (1901) and then interpreted either as a military outpost or the podium of a stupa (Farooq Swati et al. 2002). The podium of the temple (c. 13 × 21 m), still well-preserved until a decade ago, has been heavily damaged by looters. Its façade is decorated by false pillars with a base bearing the volutes-leaf motif also documented in Dir (Fig. 23). Above the capital is a modillion ending with two volutes decorated with a row of pearls or indentations (Fig. 24) and row of brackets (for comparisons see Meister 2020: 5). Among several architectural pieces spread all around the podium are: a worn *gana* (Meister 2020: fig. 11; Fig. 25); several fragment of cornice with false-brackets; one piece with a *candraśālā* sided by columns (Fig. 26) originally decorating the superstructure of the temple like in the buildings of the Salt Range (e.g., Kafir Kot, Meister 2010: figs 13–14; Bilot, figs 22–23, Mari-Indus, figs 26–27 ff).

In 2021, other pieces were noted during a visit in the village located at the foot of the hill. Two of these are of particular interest. One, reused as a step in one house, is an elaborated architectural piece (c. 40 × 20 × 25 cm), whose decoration directly recalls Kashmir architecture (Figs 27–30). It depicts the upper part of an aedicula/section of a temple: a trefoil arch within a double pointed roof, housing another smaller trefoil arch; false beams supporting the roof are also visible. Sinuous volutes flank these elements. They commonly decorated temples in the Salt Range, like Kafir Kot, Mari-Indus, Bilot (see Meister 2010). This architectural element reproducing an aedicula/section of a temple might have originally decorated the entrance wall of the cella. For example, similar motifs had been placed at the entrance of the Avantiswami Temple (Malla 1996: fig. 23) or at the left entrance wall of the Śankaragaurīśvara temple, Patan, late ninth century (Siudmak 2013: pl. 217); the configuration reminds us of the multistorey *aediculae* decorating door jambs in Gandhāran monuments. The other element from the temple is an unpolished circular slab (d. 65 cm) now used as a washbowl for guests (Fig. 31). The circular element has a slightly concave surface with a central channel ending with a projection feature in correspondence of which the object has a lipped edge. This object strongly recalls a *yonī* with a *yonī-mukha* originally accompanying a *linga*. Many other pieces in the area likely come from the temple (Fig. 32).¹⁰¹

The fortified urban model developed during the Hindu Śāhi domination was a new phenomenon connected to a phase of political instability. However, considering the available evidence for fortresses in northern Gandhāra, it appears evident that besides providing security to people living within or in the surroundings of the fortress, the fortifications protected two other crucial resources: waters and gods.

These major fortresses were distributed within an area secured by the defensive system described above. In a recurring pattern, roadways (Fig. 33) are bracketed by twin fortresses/forts, one at the entrance and the other at the exit of the road, with watchtowers along the outposts (e.g., Cherat). For instance, this is the case of Palai and Zalamkot, located at the beginning and the end of the Shahkot pass and of Bar Tangai and Kala-dheri located at the extremities of the inner road connecting the middle Swat to Talash, and Bajaur. The lower number of fortified sites along the Swat riversides, where we find watchtowers (e.g., Parrai, Nagwa, Brakai) could be explained by the fact that mountain roads were viable for most of the year, while in the summer, the water level of the Swat River must have made the roads along the river, particularly the one along the right bank, difficult to cross (yellow lines in Fig. 33).

¹⁰¹ The Temple at Zalamkot is a risk of disappearing due to continued looting activities. It would deserve dedicated excavation and conservation like those conducted at Barikot.

[Fig. 1 – Map of northern Gandhāra showing the distribution of Hindu Śāhi sites (base map Google Earth). 1, Sure Tangai; 2, Damghar, 3, Qala Tir; 4, Udegram; 5, Manyar; 6, Amlukdara; 7, Barikot; 8, Bar Tangai; 9, Parrai; 10, Zalamkot; 11, Palai; 12, Cherat; 13, Torwarsak; 14, Girrai; 15, Bampokha; 16, Nansar; 17, Kingargai; 18, Kashmir Smast; 19, Damkot; 20, Kamal-khan-china; 21, Kala-dheri; 22, Katkala; 23, Gumbatuna; 24, Mane-tangai; 25, Kamala; 26, Tauda-china; 27, Qala; 28, Kalungai; 29, Doda.]

Fig. 2 – Sure Tangai. The area of the Swat Valley protected by the fortress.

Fig. 3 – Sure Tangai. Defensive wall with semicircular bastions

Fig. 4 – Sure Tangai.

Fig. 5 – The watchtower of Parrai

Fig. 6 – Amlukdara.: general view of the Hindu Śāhi complex from NW

Fig. 7 – Amlukdara: details of the western side.

Fig. 8 – Watchtower at the Cherat pass

Fig. 9– Kamala: general view of the fort

Fig. 10– Kalungai

Fig. 11 – Tauda-china

Fig. 12 – Udegram: view of the E side of the ‘Castle’

Fig. 13 – Udegram: view of the N side of the terraced wall later occupied by the courtyard of the Ghaznavid Mosque of the citadel

Fig. 14 – Gumbatuna: decorated architectural element reused in the retaining wall of the road leading to the archaeological site.

Fig. 15 – Gumbatuna: decorated architectural element reused in the retaining wall of the road leading to the archaeological site

Fig. 16 – Ziarat graveyard: architectural elements reused in a grave: *āmalaka* from the decoration of the suprastructure of a Hindu temple is visible on the top, below is another architectural piece decorated with volutes.

Fig. 17– Ziarat graveyard: decorated architectural element (upside-down) bearing two *candraśālās* with rosetta sided by volutes

Fig. 18 – Ziarat graveyard: decorated architectural elements from the bases of pilaster bearing a leaf with two lateral volutes (cf. Zalamkot).

Fig. 19 – Gumbatuna: citadel

Fig. 20 – Gumbatuna: terraced system of the citadel

Fig. 21 – Zalamkot area: structures on the way to the temple

Fig. 22 – View of the ruins of the Zalamkot temple

Fig. 23 – Zalamkot: the podium decorated with pilasters. On the bottom left, close up of the base of the pilaster (cf. Fig. 18)

Fig. 24 – Zalamkot: the upper part of the false pilaster

Fig. 25 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element with a *gaṇa* between columns

Fig. 26 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element with a *candraśālā* sided by columns

Fig. 27 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element reused as step (front)

Fig. 28 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element in Fig. 26: Left side, with tenon for halving joint

Fig. 29 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element in Fig. 26: Right side, with tenon for halving joint.

Fig. 30 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element in Fig. 26: Top side.

Fig. 31 – Zalamkot: circular element with projecting feature

Fig. 32 – Zalamkot: exagonal pillar with flat back and tenon reused in a retaining wall in the village

Fig. 33 – Map of northern Gandhāra showing the main routes (base map Google Earth)

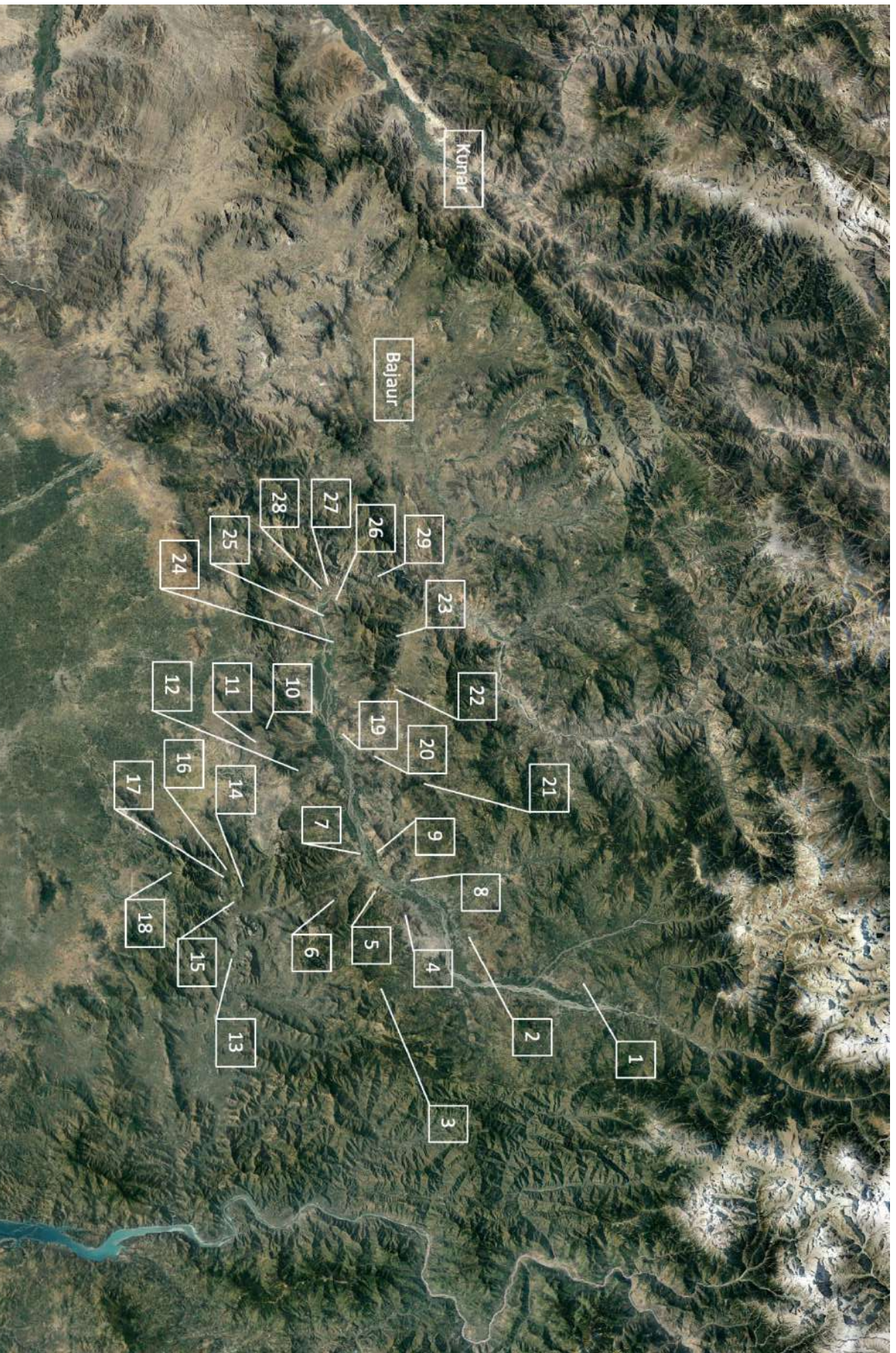


Fig. 1 – Map of northern Gandhāra showing the distribution of Hindu Śāhi sites (base map Google Earth). 1, Sure Tangai; 2, Damghar; 3, Qala Tīr; 4, Udegram; 5, Manyar; 6, Anlukdara; 7, Barikor; 8, Bar Tangai; 9, Parrai; 10, Zalankor; 11, Palai; 12, Cherat; 13, Torwarsak; 14, Girrai; 15, Bampokha; 16, Nansar; 17, Kingargai; 18, Kashmir Smast; 19, Damkor; 20, Kamal-khan-china; 21, Kala-dheri; 22, Gumbaruna; 24, Mane-tangai; 25, Kamala; 26, Tauda-china; 27, Qala; 28, Kalungai; 29, Doda.

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Abbreviations

Arr. *Anab.* = Arrian, Ἀλεξάνδρου Ἀνάβασις

Curt. = Q. Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri, libri qui supersunt*

SAA = *South Asian Archaeology Conference*

SAAA = *South Asian Archaeology and Art Conference*

* * *

* * *

ARA = *Archaeological Research in Asia*

AION = *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli*

AUON = *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*

AMIT = *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan*

BAVA = *Beiträge zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie*

EA = *Eurasia Antiqua. Zeitschrift für Archäologie Eurasiens*

EI = *Epigraphia Indica*

EMSCAT = *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines*

EW = *East and West*

JA = *Journal Asiatique*

JIABS = *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*

JAC = *Journal of Asian Civilizations*

JRAS = *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*

ONS = *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*

RET = *Revue d'Études Tibétaines*

SAS = *South Asian Studies*

ACT = Archaeology Community Tourism - Field School Project

ACT RepMem = ACT Reports and Memoirs

ANP = Antiquities of Northern Pakistan: Reports and Studies

ANU = Australian National University Press

ICCROM = International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

IGNA = Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts

IsMEO RepMem = IsMEO Reports and Memoirs

IsIAO RepMem = IsIAO Reports and Memoirs

KNAW = Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen

MANP = Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans

MASI = Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India

MDAFA = Mémoires de la délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan

ÖAW = Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Verlag)

SOAS = School of Oriental and African Studies

SOR = Serie Orientale Roma

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Volume 2



Luca M. Olivieri
In collaboration with Elisa Iori, Michele Minardi and Marco Pinelli

Foreword by Abdul Samad

Edited by Alice Casalini

“SAVE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF BAZIRA” PROJECT



International alliance
for the protection
of heritage
in conflict areas



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English revision by Klara-Maeve O'Reilly

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II.1.3 - HINDU ŚĀHI SETTLEMENTS AND THE FORTIFIED LIMES (E. Iori)

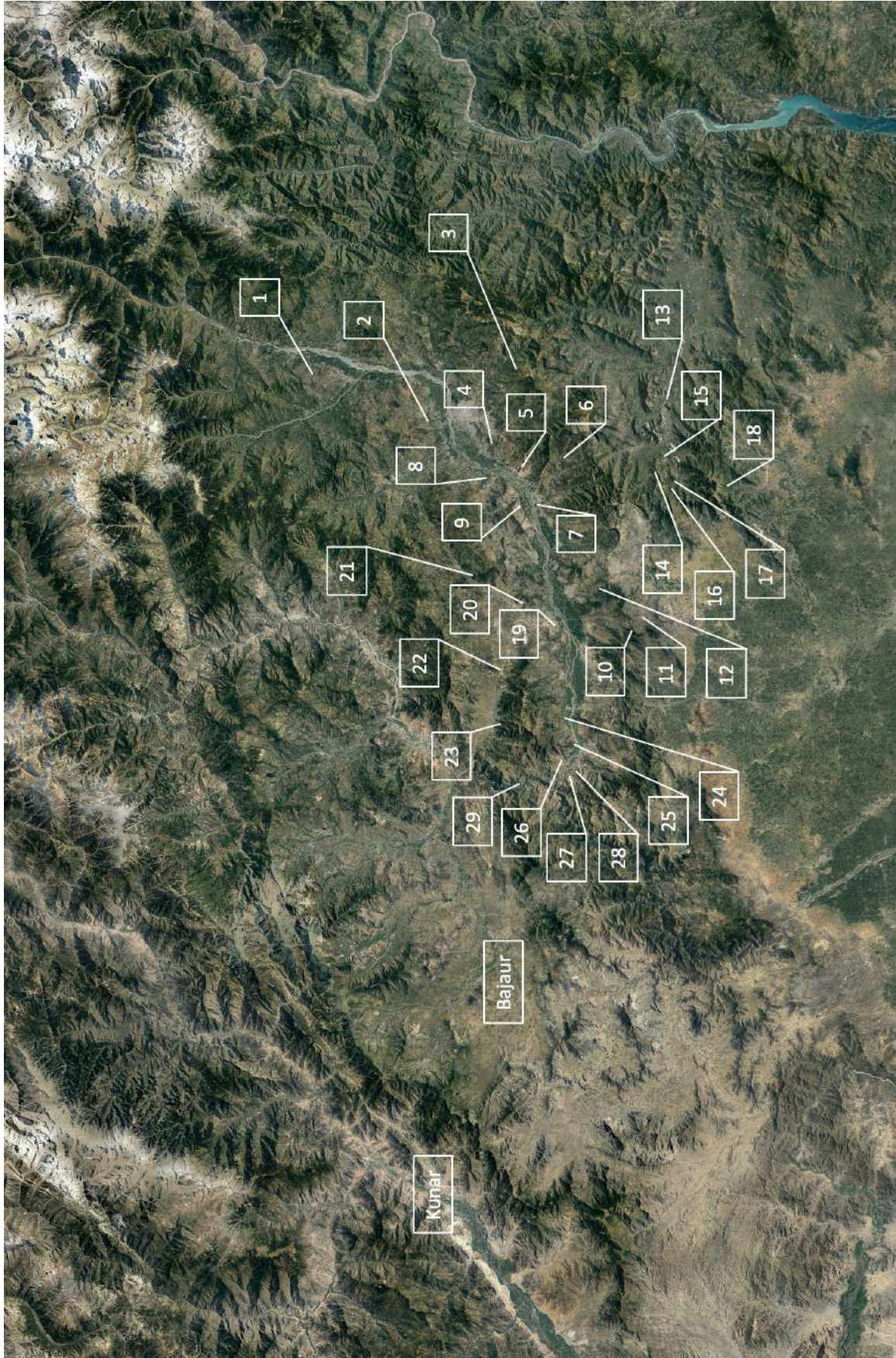


Fig. 1 – Map of northern Gandhāra showing the distribution of Hindu Śāhi sites (base map Google Earth). 1, Sure Tangai; 2, Damghar; 3, Qala Tir; 4, Udegram; 5, Manyar; 6, Amluk-dara; 7, Barikot; 8, Bar Tangai; 9, Parrai; 10, Zalamkot; 11, Palai; 12, Cherat; 13, Torwarsak; 14, Girrai; 15, Bampokha; 16, Nansar; 17, Kingargai; 18, Kashmir Smast; 19, Damkot; 20, Kamal-khan-china; 21, Kala-dheri; 22, Katkala; 23, Gumbatuna; 24, Mane-tangai; 25, Kamala; 26, Tauda-china; 27, Qala; 28, Kalungai; 29, Doda.



Fig. 2 – Sure Tangai. The area of the Swat Valley protected by the fortress.



Fig. 4 – Sure Tangai.



Fig. 3 – Sure Tangai. Defensive wall with semicircular bastions



Fig. 5 – The watchtower of Parrai



Fig. 6 – Amluk-dara.: general view of the Hindu Śāhi complex from NW



Fig. 7 – Amluk-dara: details of the western side.



Fig. 8 – Watchtower at the Cherat pass



Fig. 9– Kamala: general view of the fort



Fig. 10– Kalungai



Fig. 11 – Tauda-china



Fig. 12 – Udegram: view of the E side of the ‘Castle’



Fig. 13 – Udegram: view of the N side of the terraced wall later occupied by the courtyard of the Ghaznavid Mosque of the citadel



Fig. 14 – Gumbatuna: decorated architectural element reused in the retaining wall of the road leading to the archaeological site.



Fig. 15 – Gumbatuna: decorated architectural element reused in the retaining wall of the road leading to the archaeological site



Fig. 16 – Ziarat graveyard: architectural elements reused in a grave: āmalaka from the decoration of the suprastructure of a Hindu temple is visible on the top, below is another architectural piece decorated with volutes.



Fig. 17– Ziarat graveyard: decorated architectural element (upside-down) bearing two candraśālās with rosetta sided by volutes



Fig. 18 – Ziarat graveyard: decorated architectural elements from the bases of pilaster bearing a leaf with two lateral volutes (cf. Zalamkot).



Fig. 19 – Gumbatuna: citadel



Fig. 20 – Gumbatuna: terraced system of the citadel



Fig. 21 – Zalamkot area: structures on the way to the temple



Fig. 22 – View of the ruins of the Zalamkot temple



Fig. 23 – Zalamkot: the podium decorated with pilasters. On the bottom left, close up of the base of the pilaster (cf. Fig. 18)



Fig. 24 – Zalamkot: the upper part of the false pilaster



Fig. 25 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element with a *gāṇa* between columns



Fig. 27 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element reused as step (front)



Fig. 26 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element with a *candraśālā* sided by columns



Fig. 28 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element in Fig. 26: Left side, with tenon for halving joint



Fig. 29 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element in Fig. 26: Right side, with tenon for halving joint.



Fig. 30 – Zalamkot: decorated architectural element in Fig. 26: Top side.



Fig. 31 – Zalamkot: circular element with projecting feature



Fig. 32 – Zalamkot: exagonal pillar with flat back and tenon reused in a retaining wall in the village

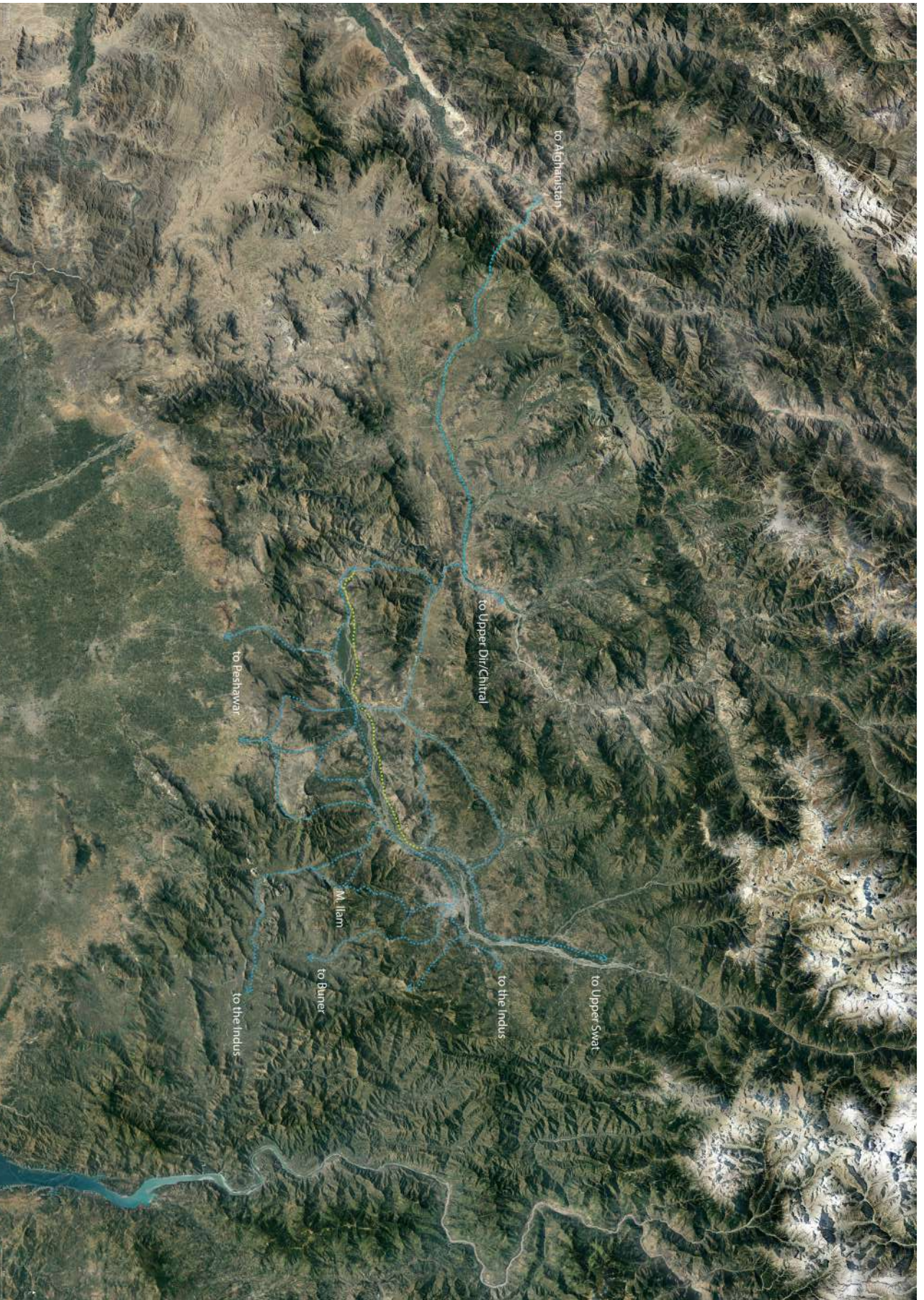


Fig. 33 – Map of northern Gandhāra showing the main routes (base map Google Earth)