# An Urban Approach to the Archaeology of Buddhism in Gandhara: The Case of Barikot (Swat, Pakistan)

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By moving beyond the walls of monumental religious architecture, this article adopts a city-lens approach to the investigation of lived Buddhism in the third century cities of northern Gandhara. Based on the evidence available for the city of Barikot (Swat, N Pakistan), the layered complexity of urban religiosity is approached here through a contextual analysis of the built-up environment and intra-site spatial distribution of religious artefacts. By focusing on the interaction of three distinct urban realms (household, inter-household, Buddhist *samgha*) in two specific urban spaces, domestic spaces and urban temples, an argument is made for both the existence of a multi-layered household religiosity with compartmentalised forms of religious communication as well as for the appropriation of urban forms of religious communication by the urban Buddhist communities.

**Keywords:** Gandharan cities; Barikot; lived ancient Buddhism; urban religion

## "Back to the City": An Urban Approach to the Archaeology of Buddhism

Over the last decades, our knowledge and understanding of Gandharan Buddhism has expanded in many aspects. We have arrived at a more nuanced and vivid vision of Buddhism, its practices,[1] narratives,[2] and literary traditions[3] thanks to several seminal works and wide-ranging projects.[4] However, we must admit that there is still a great absentee in Gandharan studies, namely, the city and the urban society that constructed, transformed, and used the Buddhist monuments in the first place. Although it has long agreed upon that the spread of Buddhism is closely linked to the process of urbanisation in South Asia,[5] the impact of this relation on transformations of Buddhist spaces and practices as well as the urban dimension of lived Buddhism remain considerably under-theorised and under-researched.

In Gandhara, the main challenge in tracing spaces and spatialities of Buddhism in the urban context derives from the objective lack of extensive sets of archaeological and textual data for cities. Also, as already highlighted by R. Coningham and B. Edwards,[6] the monumental Buddhist architecture attested in the countryside, mainly stupas and shrines, which has usually been taken to identify religious foci in cities during early excavations – like in Begram, Sirkap and Shaikhan-dheri – was potentially misleading the archaeological interpretation. The reassessment of the religious loci of the city of Sirkap carried out by Coningham and Edwards on the basis of the distribution of artefacts and,

on a much larger scale, the start of excavations at the urban centre of Barikot (Swat, N Pakistan) by P. Callieri in 1984 are pioneering works in this regard.

To date, Barikot is the urban centre providing us with the most insights into the urban society of ancient Gandhara, thanks to the extensive scientific excavations carried out by the ISMEO/Ca' Foscari University of Venice-Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (IAMP) over more than 30 years. In particular, the excavations carried out at the site from 2011 onwards under the direction of L.M. Olivieri have greatly increased our knowledge on the specific urban character of Buddhist architecture and practices in Gandhara. By now this seems to be the most promising place to start when asking, as I do in this article, questions about spaces and practices of lived religion in an urban setting.

In spatial and theoretical terms, this article proposes to shift the focus of archaeology of Buddhism from the countryside, where most of the Buddhist monuments are located, to the city-space, conceptualised not only as a physical condition but also as a specific socio-spatial setting able to produce and transform religious spaces and practices. The aim is twofold. On the one hand, in line with the field of religious studies that considers space as "condition, medium, and outcome of social relations" and focuses "on the impact of cities on religion, and on how the interaction with city-space changed religion",[7] this article intends to approach Buddhism as an urban religion, hence, to look at what comes from the engagement of religion with the social condition of city life, or

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urbanity.[8] On the other hand, by moving beyond the walls of monumental religious architecture and textual space, the shift to the urban environment intends to unveil how religion was practiced in everyday life.[9]

Because of the city-lens approach used in this analysis, the three main urban realms considered in this article as part of the city domain are: the household, the inter-household and, the Buddhist *saṃgha* (Figure 1).

Although the spaces and practices produced by these urban realms are certainly not limited to the physical setting of the city, the city-lens is here intentionally used to address religious changes set in motion by the interaction of these three overlapping urban realms within the city-space. Specifically, the following text evolves around three questions: How did Buddhism or religious practices in general come into play in the household social space and how were they spatialised? Which religious practices operated at the inter-household level? Finally, did the interaction between Buddhism and the city-space trigger religious changes in terms of architecture and media of communication?

Obviously in archaeology, spatial practices and (social, religious, political) dimensions of space represent "unknowns" to be gaged on the basis of material residues left behind by agents and visible in the archaeological record. The link between material culture and human behaviour is not unproblematic.[10] However, when making inferences about the spatial (and in our case religious) behaviours of agents, the contextual analysis of "fixed" and "unfixed" features still represents the first step of any archaeological interpretation.[11]

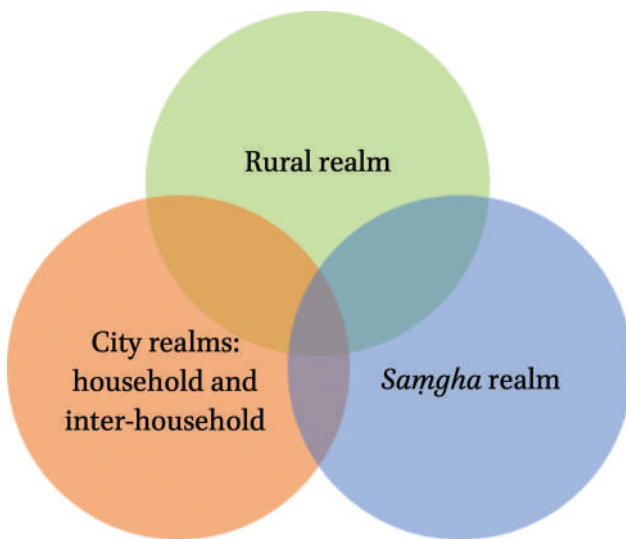Therefore, in order to unfold the spatial layers drawn by religious actions, two datasets will be considered in a contextual relation: (a) the analysis of the built environment and its "fixed" features (walls, niches, benches, platforms, etc.) that "codified and preserved" some of the relationships among members and their activities[12] and, (b) the intra-site spatial distribution of artefacts with plausible religious meaning.

After a brief presentation of the current state of the art on religious spaces in the city of Barikot, the first step will involve the reassessment of urban religious spaces and spatial practices. For this purpose, I will single out architectural layouts of communal and domestic ritual areas identified at Barikot in the recent years to find, by comparison, other areas within the city that might have been used for religious activities. The contextual analysis of the spatial distribution of artefacts and "fixed" features will help us to trace differences in the spatiality of religious behaviours within the archaeological record.

Building on these data, an argument is made for the existence of a multi-layered household religiosity with compartmentalised forms of religious communication and for the appropriation of urban forms of religious communication by urban Buddhist communities. The dataset contains the evidence documented at Barikot between 1990 and 2018 in relation to the third century stratigraphy and hitherto published in several reports as well as unpublished material (inventories and field diaries). I refer to these works for further details.

## Third Century Barikot and Its South-Western Periphery

At the beginning of the third century, the city of Barikot (ca. 1200 BCE – 430/440 CE in the lower plain), was one of the three main cities of middle Swat, organised – like the others – in lower city and upper "citadel". It covered an area of about 12 hectares, thus being smaller than the other cities of Swat, Butkara/Barama (ca. 90/100 ha) and Udegram, respectively, located at 20 km and 10 km upstream from Barikot (Figures 2 and 3). Although the main cities of the Gandharan region – Taxila (Sirkap) (ca. 90 ha), Pushkalavati (Shaikhandheri), and Purushapura (Peshawar) – were located in the southern plains along the main route connecting the Iranian plateau to India (*uttarāpatha*), Swat was fully embedded into the wider socio-economic network of the Kushana empire (mid-1st-mid/late 3rd century CE) and its movement of goods, technologies, ideas and people between India and the western regions. A great deal of the economic prosperity of the city of Barikot came from the intensive exploitation of natural and agricultural resources of the hinterland which was managed by the Buddhist monastic institutions based in the countryside.[13] Thanks to intense lay patronage activity, by the beginning of the third century, more than one



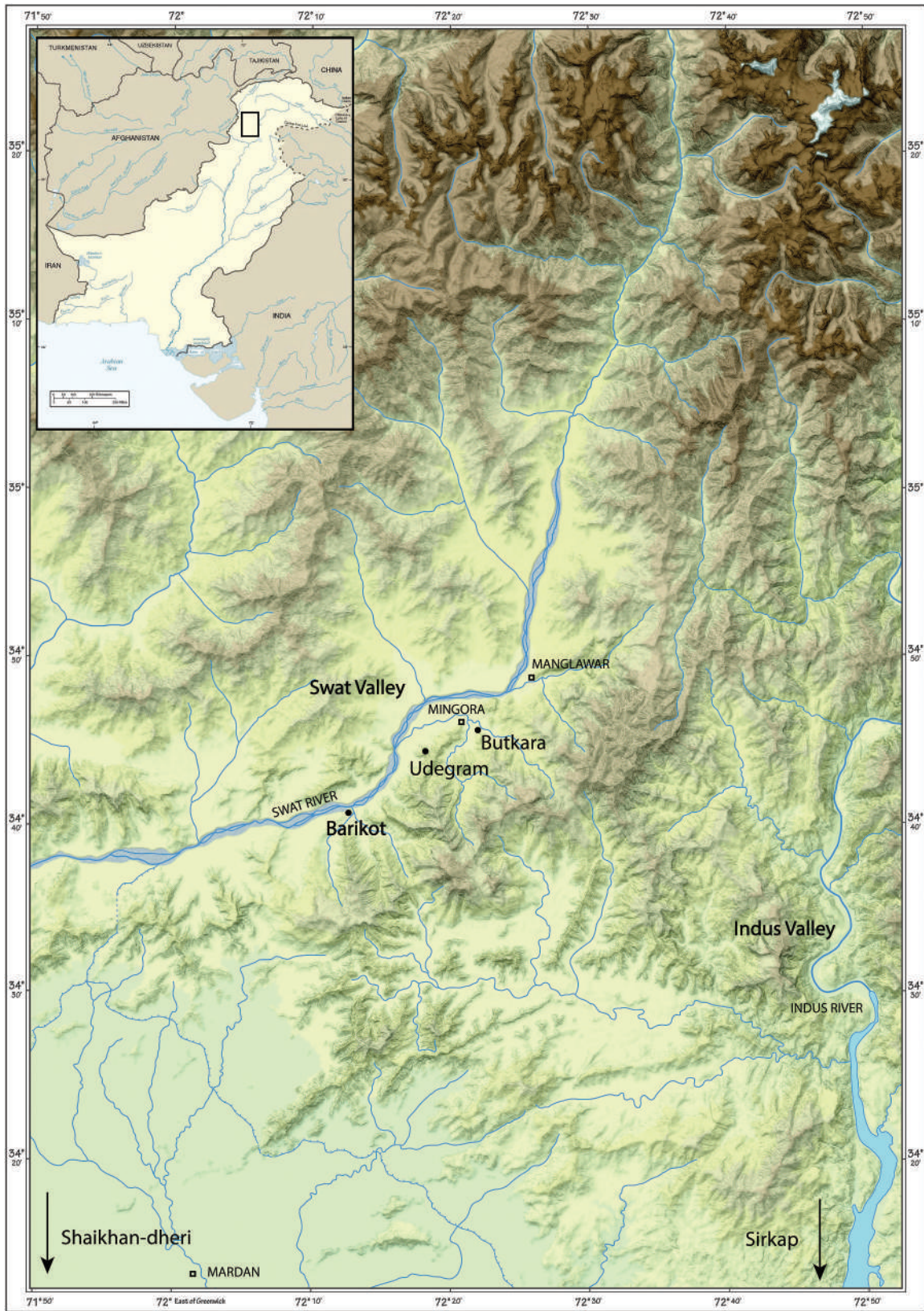Figure 1.   Scheme of the main socio-spatial realms in the urban system of Barikot.

*Figure 2.   Map of north-western Pakistan with indication of the three main ancient cities of lower Swat (Map by K. Friz and D. Nell, University of Vienna, Department of Geography and Regional Research/ISMEO; Alabamamaps.ua.edu).*
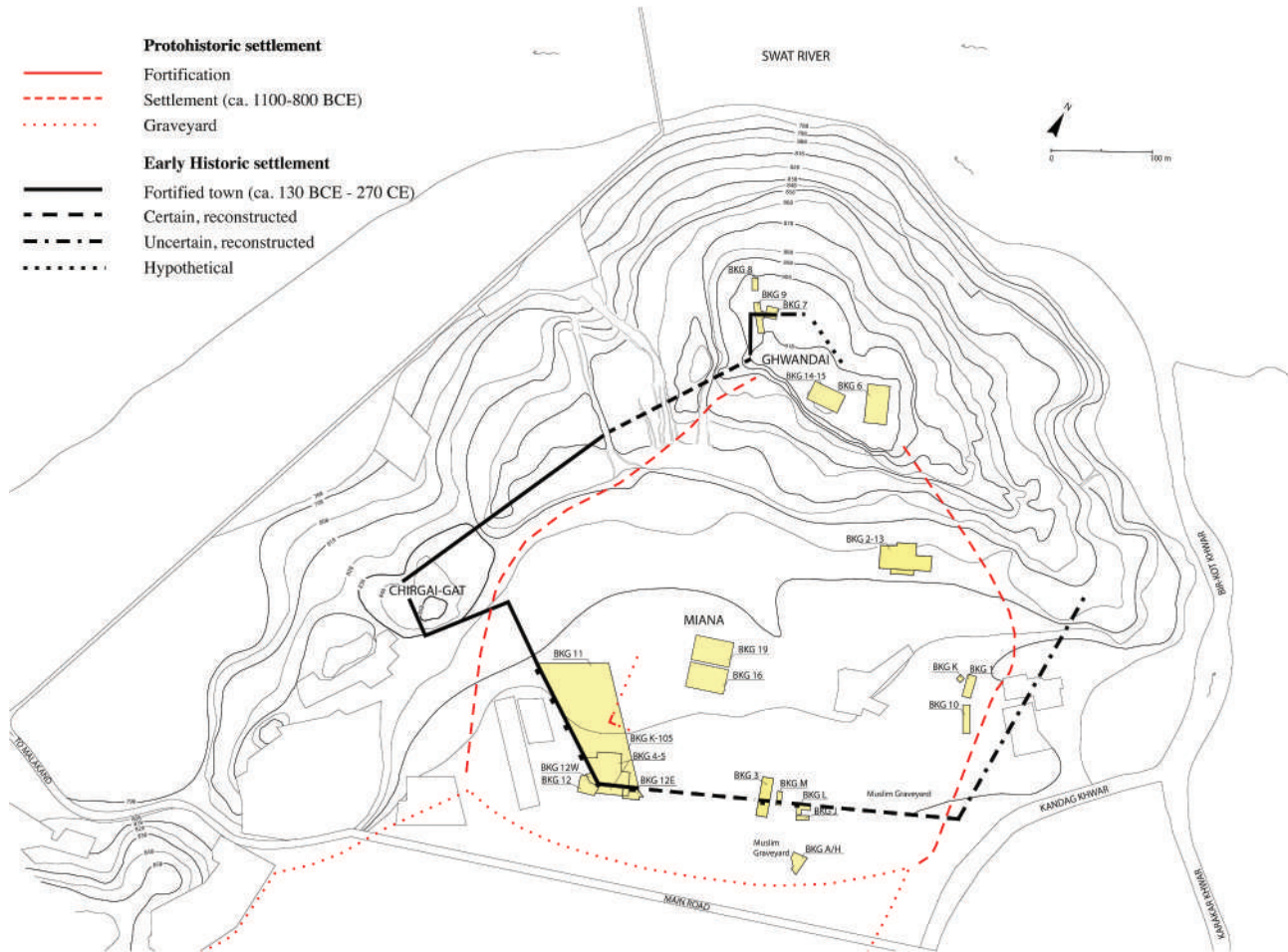
*Figure 3.    General map of the archaeological area of Barikot (Modified by the author after R. Sabelli, © ISMEO).*

hundred or so Buddhist foundations visually dominated the surroundings of Barikot, forming a network of urban pockets with religious and economic functions outside the city-space.

To a visitor from the third century, the city of Barikot, accessible from south, would have appeared as located on a 4 m high terrace gently sloping N-S, towered over by the urban landmark, the Vajra hill surmounted by the Buddhist complex overlooking the lower city and the Swat river to the N.

A glimpse into the third century urban layout is provided by the south-western periphery of the city excavated in 1990–1992 and 2011–2018 (Figures 4 and 5), covering a surface of less than one hectare.[14] Located between the western stretch of the second century BCE city wall – now functioning as a sort of retaining wall – and the N-S street departing from the western secondary gate,[15] this sector of the city is organised into several units. Each is separated from the other by the street network – partially traced on the earlier (Indo-Greek) street system – and a series of open courts

(Figures 6 and 7).[16] The south-western sector, composed by clusters of residential units (e.g. see the clusters formed by Units I-G-H, D-E), is delimited to the West and South by Wall Street (or street 10) running along the inner side of the ancient city wall and, to the East, by the N-S main road giving access to the south-western neighbourhood(s). Other two W-E streets spatially organise the neighbourhood(s) by meeting other N-S streets/alleys in (at least) four open courts.

The third century marked a great change in the urban topography as some earlier residential units were (entirely or partially) transformed into Buddhist complexes with features that are not encountered in the complexes of the countryside. Consequently, the religious foci, previously limited to the mid- first century stupa of Unit I and its small chapels,[17] increased considerably.

Five units were identified as residential areas (Units G, H, E, D, C-J), three (Units I, K, B) as urban Buddhist complexes with annexed structures; while another urban Buddhist complex was found in Unit C-J, the largest residential zone.[18] The function

*Figure 4.   Aerial photo of the south-western sector, from South (F. Khalik, © ISMEO).*

of Unit F, facing the monumental building K to the west, is not completely clear, although a residential function is plausible.

These distinctive urban Buddhist complexes did not last more than one century. The political and economic crisis of the Kushano-Sasanian period (second half of the third century) along with two successive earthquakes in less than 50–70 years – the first occurred during the mid-third century and the second at the end of the third century – led to the progressive contraction of the city towards the foot of the hill. After the partial reconstruction following the first earthquake, this peripheral area of the city with its religious buildings was abandoned in the early fourth century CE.[19]

## The Urban Buddhist Temples

Although the material culture points to a differentiation of the ritual practices taking place at Buddhist temples,[20] all the temples uncovered at Barikot share a similar built environment consisting of a lower open (often paved) court connected through a flight of steps to a roofed platform marked by two or four wooden pillars. Each temple has a double visual and religious focus. One is placed in the lower open courtyard and takes the form of either an aedicula containing a small stupa in stucco or niches housing a small stele. The second focus of worship was placed on the platform, where a (now lost) object of worship was either permanently or temporarily displayed, as suggested by the evidence from Shaikhan-dheri (see below).

The complex that, because of its imposing nature, would have drawn the attention of the visitors as they entered the city would have been Temple K – accessible from the north through a large court provided with a water tank (Figure 6).[21] From the early third century, the core of Unit K, was transformed into a temple consisting of an open court and platform,
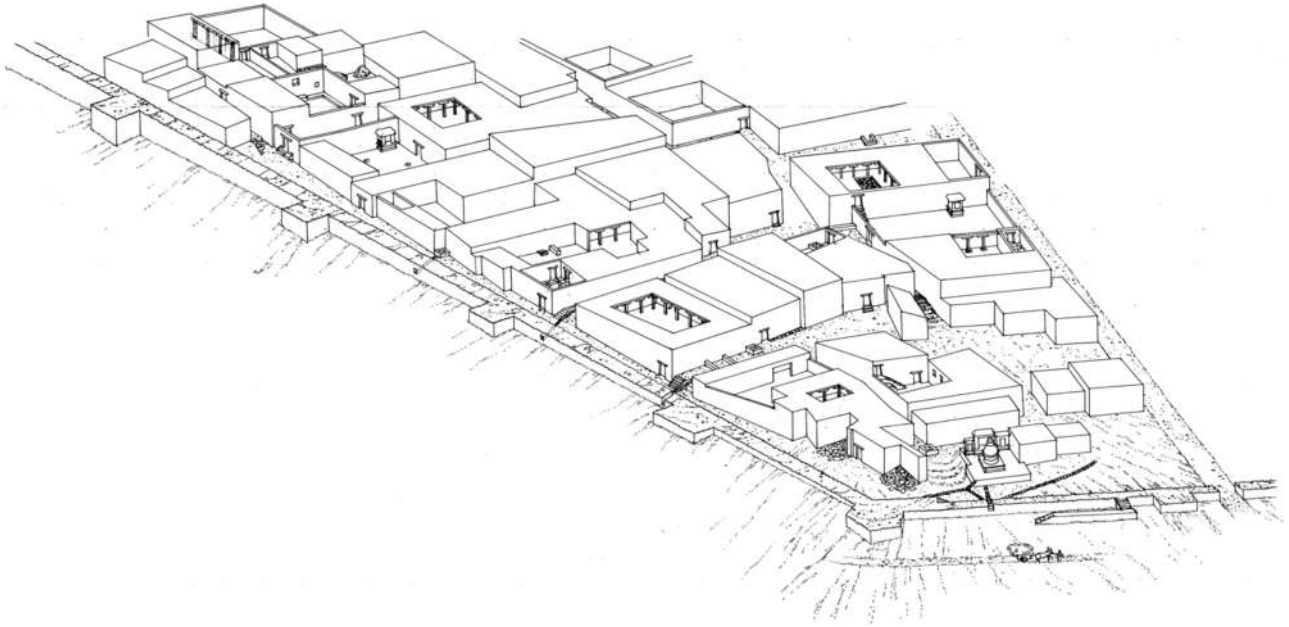
*Figure 5.  Axonometric restitution of the south-western sector of the city in the 3rd century (updated 2018, F. Martore, © ISMEO).*

connected to a series of small service rooms through a corridor at west (Figure 8).

In the NE corner of the court, there was a plastered shrine closed by two folding wooden leaves, originally containing an altar with a small stupa in stucco. The shrine was the focus of a series of offerings such as ancient coins, shell bangles, terracotta animal figurines, oil-lamps, arrowheads, parts of scale coats. The platform, consisting of two connected rooms, one after the other, was found empty except for a thick layer of baked clay suggesting the presence of a fire. A series of precious votive offerings (e.g. elephant's tusk, a rare glass bowl) and a set of luxury storage jars and serving vessels probably containing liquids and food consumed during rituals were instead found stored in one of the back rooms connected to the platform.[22] After the first earthquake occurred in the mid-third century, the access to platform and service rooms was closed and the ritual activities were limited to the open court where the shrine – partially destroyed by the collapse – continued to be the focus of offerings associated to a small stele of a Buddha placed against it.

Going northwards, the urban layout becomes more intricate and the boundaries between units less clear. It is here that two other Buddhist complexes were found.

**Temple C**, accessible from west, was part of the largest residential unit of the sector (Unit C-J). Since the temple was heavily looted in the past and only partially excavated, the knowledge of its plan is not fully clear and anyhow limited to the second half of the third century. In this phase, the layout seems to replicate the basic layout of Temple K: a large open courtyard provided with shallow water tanks, connected through steps to a platform with a cell connected to other small service rooms to the north.[23]

Located in Unit B, at the north-western extremity of the excavated area, **Twin Temples** were constructed on two former residential units at the beginning of the third century (Figure 9).[24]

The southern temple (Bs) had its main entrance in the south-east, through a paved corridor accessible from a staircase in Wall Street.

Like the other temples, it features an open (originally paved) court connected to a roofed platform, here consisting of a single open space. Unlike Temples K and C, Temple Bs has a courtyard furnished with benches along its three sides. In the south-western corner is a shallow water tank, while on the northern wall are three rectangular niches. Beneath the central niche is a rectangular altar in front of which a large stone "alms-bowl" was found. The central niche, after the re-organisation following the first earthquake, housed three steles of Buddha and an in-the-rounds small sculpture representing a kneeling male figure carrying a lamp. Several offerings were found on the altar (fragments of stupa model, rings, pins, bangles, part of a scale coat or armour). On the benches and on their associated floor-levels were found "structured deposits" of broken luxury vessels and shell bangles created by repetitive and formalized actions.

Through a threshold opened at the northern side of the platform, this southern temple was connected to
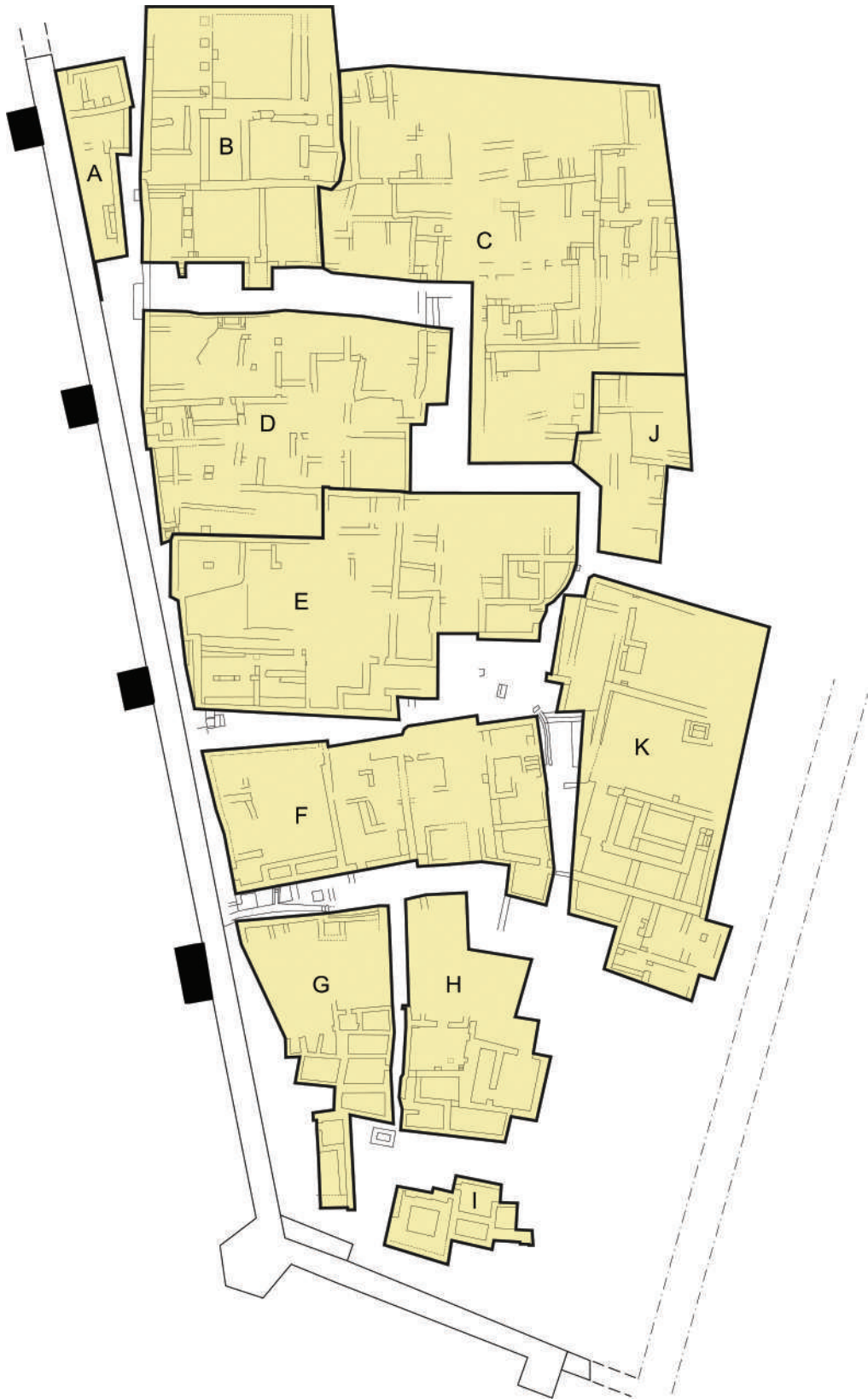
*Figure 6.    Plan of the south-western sector with indication of the units (after I. Marati and F. Genchi, © ISMEO).*

*Figure 7. Plan of the south-western sector with indication of the street network (after I. Marati and F. Genchi, © ISMEO).*
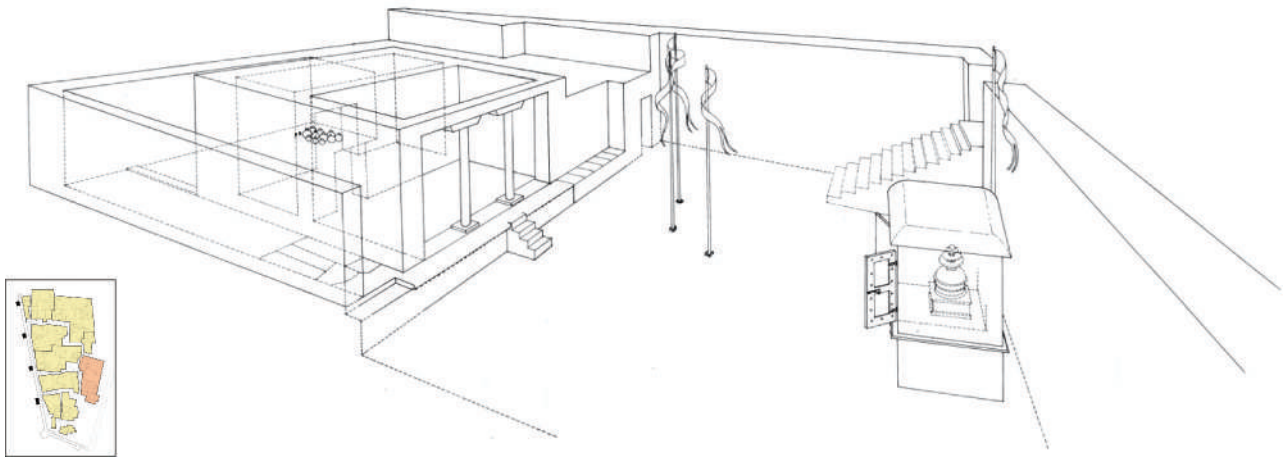
*Figure 8.    Axonometric restitution of Temple K (F. Martore, © ISMEO).*
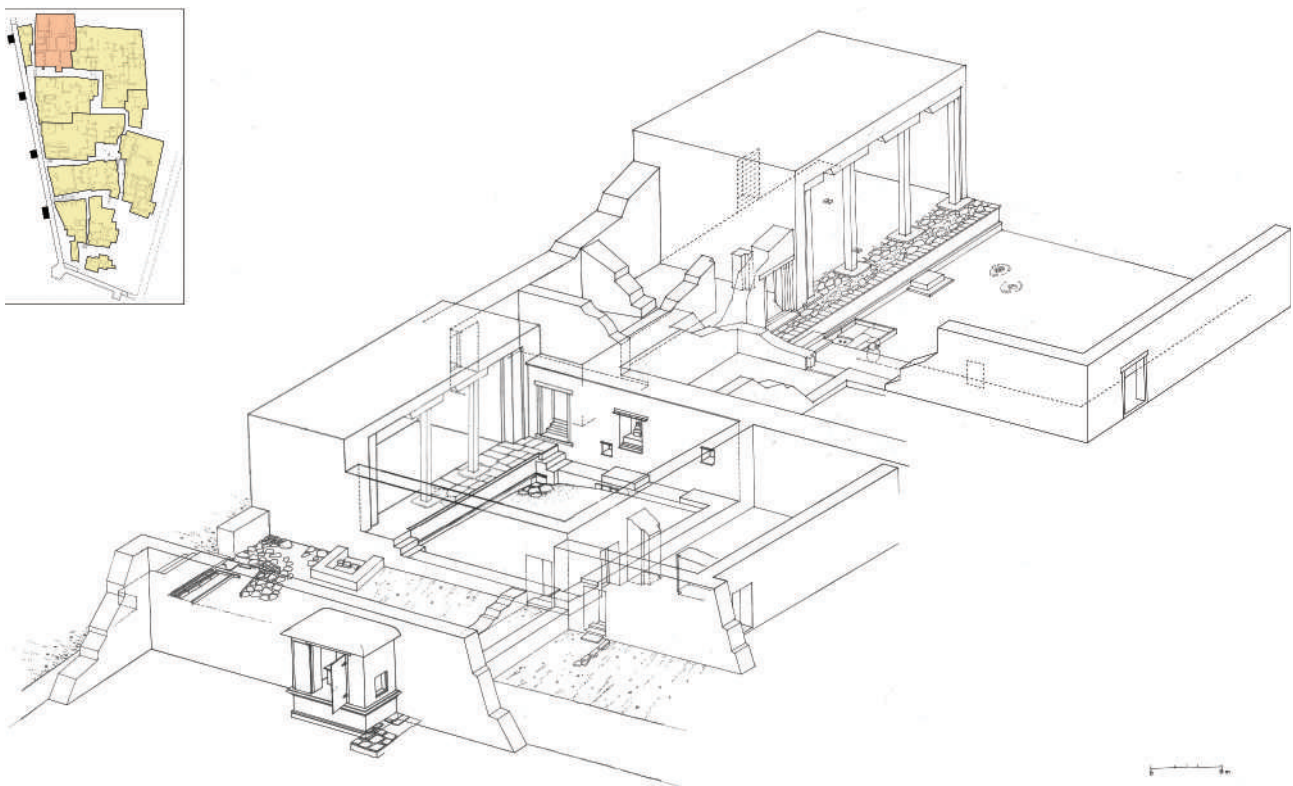


*Figure 9.    Axonometric restitution of the two temples in Unit B (F. Martore, © ISMEO).*

a raised corridor that led to the larger northern temple. The corridor, probably used for service connection, was to the east of two interconnected rooms, that during the Kushano-Sasanian phase were used as small stable (for 2/3 animals), and as a production and storage area of dairy products probably used for offerings, ritual poring or, most probably, as oil (*ghee*, clarified butter) for lamps, the most affordable offerings.[25]

The northern temple (Bn) magnifies the layout of the southern one: a large lower open court surrounded by low benches is connected through steps to a platform with a façade featuring four wooden pillars. Against the platform, in a central position, is a rough rectangular altar while a rectangular shallow water tank is located at the south-western corner. Next to the tank an almost complete condenser for distillation was

found, and three fireplaces and accumulated ashes were documented on the beaten clay floor of the court, not far from the altar.

The presence of niches, on the same fashion of the southern temple, is suggested by the recovery of a stele of Hariti found upside down in S-N orientation below the collapse of the northern wall caused by the second destructive earthquake at the end of the third century. Besides the service entrance connected to Temple Bs, the temple was accessible from the south-eastern corner through a corridor opens to a cluster of rooms to the south, where a *tanur* was built in the late third century.

The twin temples of Unit B stand out because of their complexity and because of the presence of benches typical of monastic refectory. This, according to C. Moscatelli would suggest that the two temples were actually part of a larger urban monastic area.[26]

### *Ritual Spaces in Residential Units: Shrine D*

The only household cultic place so far documented is located in residential **Unit D** adjacent to Unit E (Figures 10 and 11).[27] Here, a plastered shrine on a podium provided with rectangular niches on the lateral side was set against the northern wall of the household courtyard (28), which represented the core of the residential unit. A wooden two-winged door closed the small shrine housing a small altar on which a model of stupa in stucco, like in Temple K, or a small stele statue was probably placed. Besides this, several Buddhist schist sculptures of different formats and dimensions were recovered within the court. This eclectic collection is made of pieces originally decorating nearby Buddhist stupas and shrines, located within or outside the city, and are here reused in secondary deposition. Even if heterogeneous in form and dimension, Olivieri underlined that the corpus thematically focuses on the figure of the Buddha.[28] After the mid-third century earthquake, the walls and roof of the shrine were replaced by a light canopy supported by wooden poles and some of the sculptures were collected among the debris to be reused.

Another interesting feature comes from the corridor (35) giving access to the court and connecting it with Wall Street and with the southern part of the unit. In fact, this corridor, primarily used as production and storage area, as suggested by the numerous jars and rotary querns found in situ, also housed the stele of an unknown male deity with Centro-Asiatic/Iranian dress holding a goblet and a severed goat's head. This stele was found in proximity of a stone cist, probably fallen

from a niche above (Figure 12a). That, as we will see, is not a unique case.

### Comparisons with Other Urban Buildings: Layout and "Fixed" Features

Once we compare the layout of the urban religious buildings with the cluster I-G-H, excavated in 1990–1992, the presence of another coeval urban temple can be noted in Unit H. In fact, interestingly, both spatial organization and some of the "fixed" and "unfixed" features of complex 432–434 recall those of the twin temples in Unit B (Figure 13).[29]

Like the other urban temples inuring the third century, the complex 432–434 witnessed a series of significant rearrangements. Most significantly, a part of the open court (432) was paved and connected through a flight of steps (SE) to a newly built platform (434). On the eastern wall of the lower court are two niches: one (S) is ogival in shape, while the other (N) is decorated in the lower part by projecting schist slabs and false brackets as typical of plastered shrines or chapels.[30] The recovery, immediately below the latter, of iron staples, door-hinges, and nails (ISMEO BKG inventory 1990) like those found in front of the shrines in the Units K and D suggests two folding wooden leaves closed the niche. These features and findings underline that this niche was most probably a sort of small chapel containing a stele statue or a ritual object now lost. Other features in common with the urban temples described above are the presence of a rectangular structure placed against the platform at its centre, echoing the rough altar found in the Temple Bn, and the presence of a water tank set between the steps and the altar, connected to a drainage system. Further, another element of similarity with Temple Bn is the recovery within the courtyard of fragments of condensers for distillation, one bearing a Kushan royal stamp.

The platform, like in Temples B, is made of a single open space probably roofed as the others, although traces of pillars' bases were not found. A door at the south-east connected the platform to a small back room identified as a kitchen where the head of a Bodhisattva in stucco and several querns were found.

All in all, the distinctive features of complex 432–434 lead to the conclusion that Unit H must be interpreted as another case of residential unit transformed, at the beginning of the third century, into a Buddhist temple (**Temple H**) as shown in the hypothetical reconstruction in Figure 14.

The belonging of Temple H to a larger complex is suggested by the fact that the latter, whose main access was through a small corridor (SW) leading to lane 445 (see Figure 7), links, through steps (NE), to an unexplored sector where, if we imagine a layout specular to Unit G,
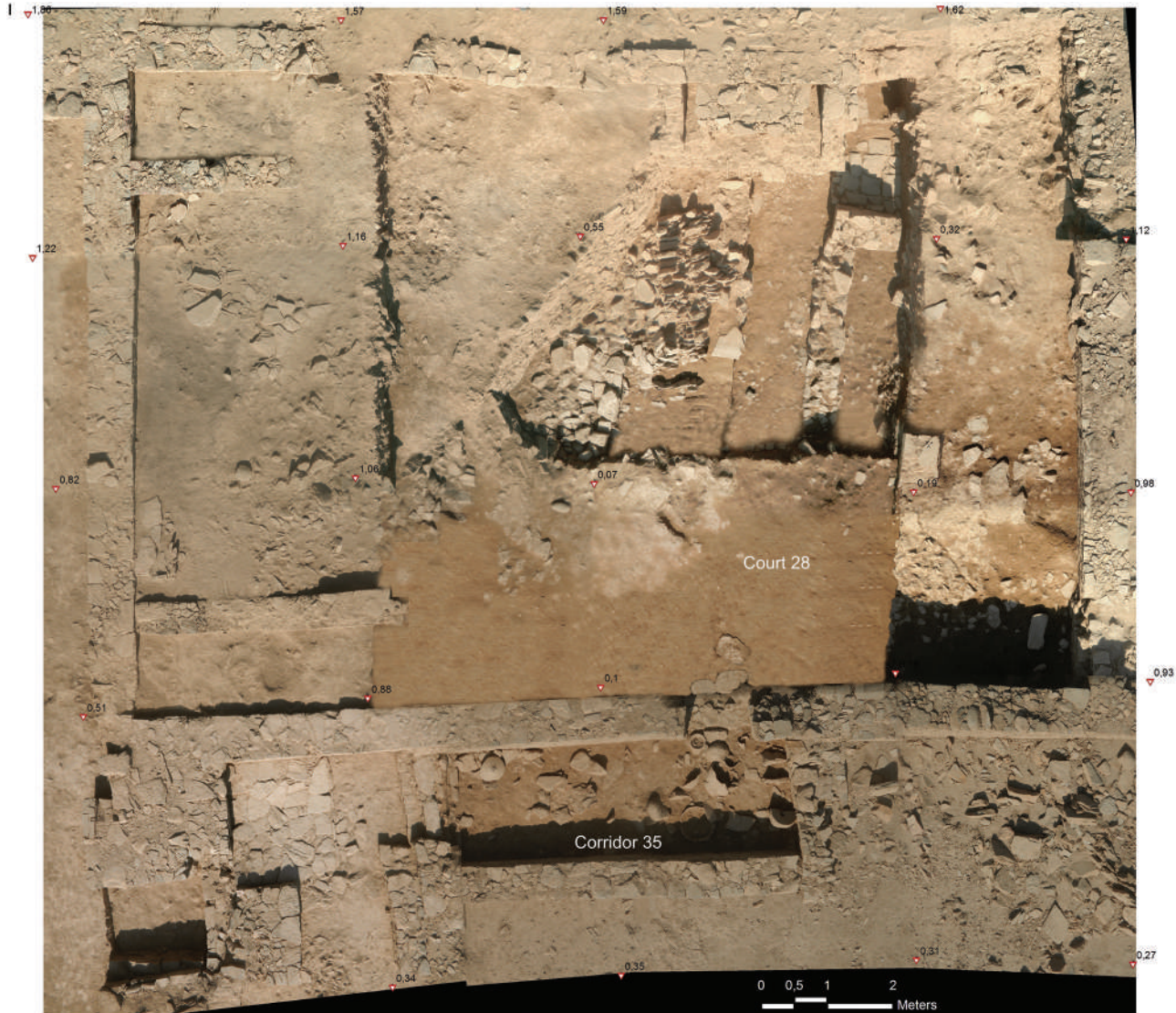
*Figure 10.    Aerial photo of Unit D (F. Genchi, © ISMEO).*

a large open courtyard might have been located. Indeed, the relevance of Unit H in the neighbourhood is suggested by its proximity to the only paved court (115) and street (106) (see Figure 7) of the sector, giving access to Temple K. At any rate, the identification of Temple H increases the number of residential areas transformed into temples to three, and the total number of urban temples in an area of less than one hectare to five.

Regarding domestic cultic areas, an intriguing analogy emerges once one compares the spatial organization of courtyard D with that of residential Units G and E. In fact, in the courtyard of both residential units there are traces of rough rectangular structures built against the N wall in approximately the same position as the shrine in residential unit D (Figure 6). Unfortunately, the northern side of Unit G's courtyard

was investigated only up to the fourth century stratigraphy and the floor related to this rectangular structure remains unexplored. The excavation in the courtyard of Unit E, where the structure is badly preserved, did not reveal finds with a possible religious meaning (Figure 15). Although very scarcely documented, this structural evidence may indicate that a court housing a more or less elaborated aedicula was a common feature in third century residential units as were niches containing stele statues (see below).

### "Unfixed" Features: Patterns of Spatial Behaviour

Archaeologists working on abandonment phases in domestic areas have rightly pointed out that the
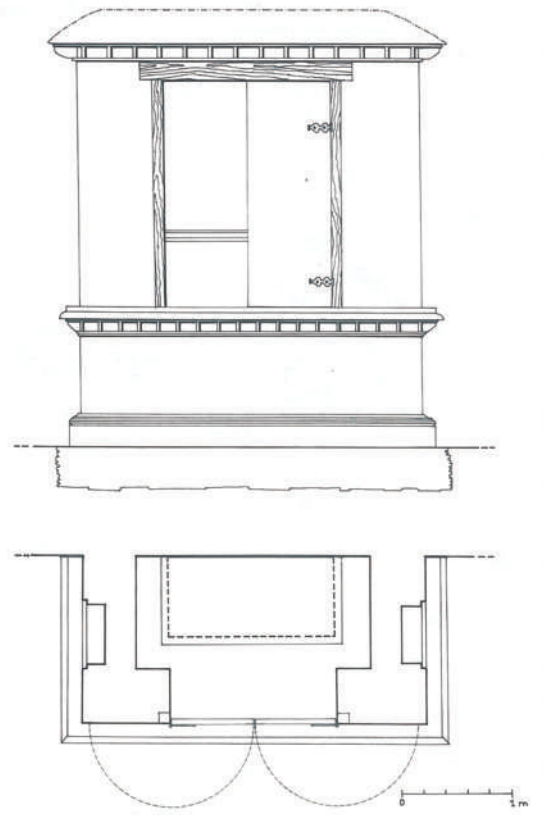
*Figure 11.    Photo and hypothetical reconstruction of the shrine in Unit D (L.M. Olivieri/F. Martore, © ISMEO).*

distribution of artefacts in these contexts offers only a fuzzy picture of the original household activities since the pattern of finds should be interpreted as the result of "abandonment behaviour", hence, as what was selectively left behind by inhabitants during the process of departure. For this reason, "fixed" features are usually considered more reliable sources of information for understanding everyday ritual practice.[31] Although the argument is sound and grounded, Barikot offers a slightly different picture. The two successive earthquakes that shook the city around the mid and late third century CE – causing the collapse of walls and accumulation of debris sometimes only partially removed – have in fact partially "sealed" the stratigraphy immediately preceding the dramatic event. Although valuable materials, like some of the Buddhist reliefs in Unit D's courtyard, were sometimes retrieved from the debris for reuse, the distribution of artefacts ("unfixed" features) for these later phases can be considered quite representative of the original situation with the exception of some areas, like Unit H, less affected by the earthquakes. In the light of this, a cross-referenced spatial distribution of artefacts with a possible (permanent or temporary) religious function

at the living quarters can provide a partially representative picture of the context preceding the abandonment of this sector of the city.

Drawing on the spatial distributions of individual categories of objects from Barikot, a cross-referenced intra-site spatial analysis is graphically synthesised in Figure 16. It highlights possible overlapping patterns in the distribution of different categories of objects and possible variations in frequency and distribution of artefacts between household and inter-household religious spaces. While the general results are integrated in the discussion in the final paragraph, below I briefly report on the most significant patterns emerging from the studies carried out on specific materials by some of my colleagues.

### Terracotta Figurines[32]

The study on the terracotta figurines suggested that the distribution of female and animal figurines, recurrent artefacts at Barikot, follows two distinct patterns (Figure 17). Terracotta female figurines are large-scale

*Figure 12.    a. stele from Unit D; b. stele from Unit G; c. stele from Unit E (not to scale, © ISMEO).*

artefacts associated to traditional commoner beliefs and practices since protohistory. Usually single molded, female
terracotta figurines are movable not self-supported objects that needed to be fixed, hanged, or leaned against a support or held in hand. Although their function is still unclear, it can be said that unlike animal figurines they were normally not used as offerings in urban ritual contexts. In fact, throughout the whole stratigraphy of the site covering about seven centuries, these short-lived objects were almost always found (intentionally?) broken in discharge areas within and outside the city wall in co-association with artefacts (like pestles and saddle quern) and deposits attributable to working or cooking activity. The only three examples found in situ were recovered in kitchen areas or in proximity of fireplaces. The sample coming from third century stratigraphy confirms the pattern attested in previous periods, although a decrease in number is attested after the first earthquake.

A different picture emerged from the spatial distribution of animal figurines that appear to be particularly connected to cultic areas (Temple K, H, Bn only one specimen). However, instead of the common zebu spread throughout the site, elephants, horses and lions have been found in ritual contexts – a range of animals that, as Alterio suggested, may recall values connected to regality and male sphere (horses-riders). Interestingly, the

horse figurines show a significant attention in the representation of the harness by reproducing in great detail two types of saddles also known from Gandharan art. This sudden care for detail becomes relevant when we consider that these figurines were offered to altars in Temple K (and less in B) together with artefacts connected to military activities, such as arrowheads, parts of coat or amour scales, not to mention the sword and helmet plates found in the so-called "house of Naradakha" at Shaikhan-dheri (see below). Perhaps, it may be suggested that these offerings, mostly dated to the Kushano-Sasanian period, were connected to a segment of the population linked to military activity, in a period that must have been quite turbulent from an economic and political point of view.

### Shell Bangles[33]

In his study of conch-shell bangles from the third and early fourth century Barikot, R. Micheli describes these artefacts as long-distance exotic goods most probably manufactured in northern India, which started to be in vogue in Barikot from the beginning of the third century. At Barikot, during the Kushana and Kushano-Sasanian periods, marine shell, as raw material, experienced a popularity that it never had before or after and, as

*Figure 13.    Photo of complex 432–434 from north-west (after Callieri et al. 1992, pls X.2, XI.1).*
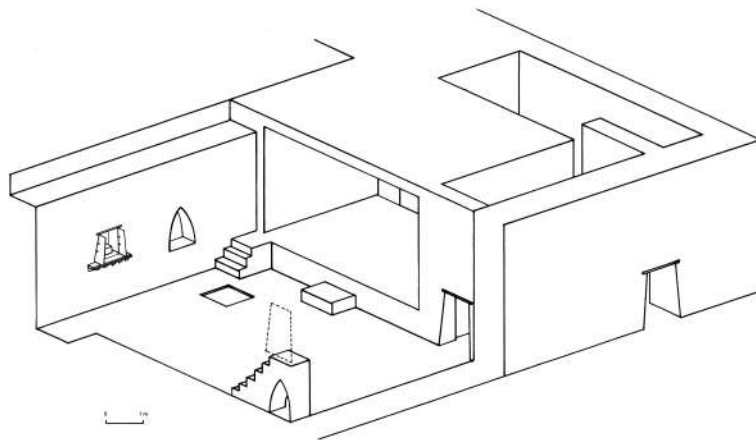


*Figure 14.    Axonometric restitution of the Temple H (E. Iori, © ISMEO).*

argued by M. Rabbani in his study on beads from Barikot, this raw material, was clearly charged with socio-economic and symbolic-ideological value.[34] Regarding the spatial analysis of shell bangles, Micheli noted that these artefacts are not homogeneously distributed across the site, rather they cluster in courts of urban temples K and Bs and in the court of residential Unit D in proximity of the domestic shrine. More specifically, these artefacts form structured deposits and seem to have been intentionally broken and used as offerings in front of shrine or stele. Used in ancient South Asia as a typical female personal ornament, shell bangles, as highlighted by Micheli, are still used in some traditional groups and castes of the

*Figure 15.    Aerial photo of Unit E (F. Genchi, © ISMEO).*

domestic cultic area
urban temples
kitchen
workshop

∘   querns, mortar
●   rotary quern
♦   Female Terracotta figurines
♦   Zoomorphic Terracotta  fig.
●   Oil-lamp
▴ ▴  Shell-bangles
✳   Arrow-head and armor
■   Stele statue

*Figure 16.    Spatial distribution of artefacts (E. Iori, © ISMEO).*

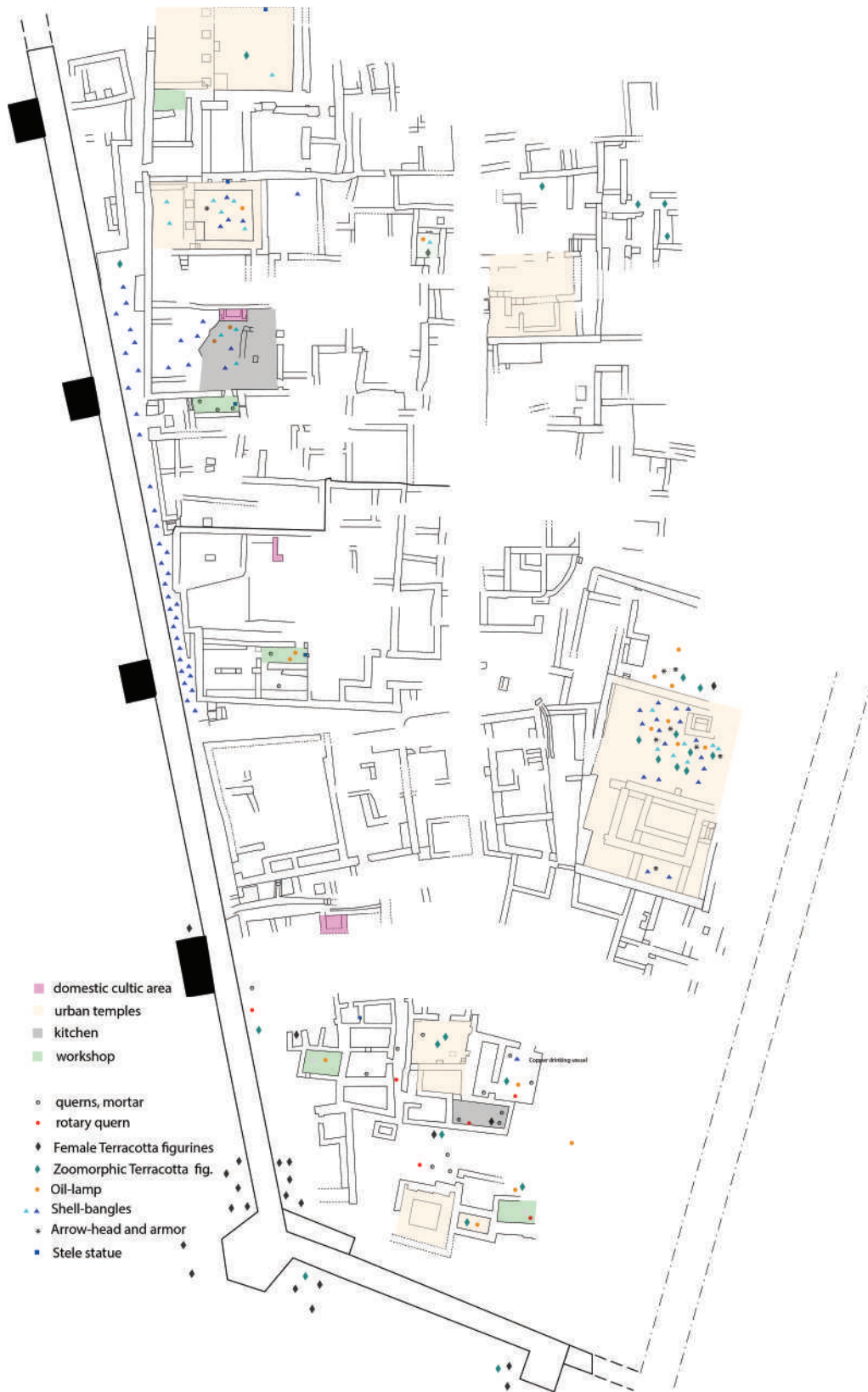*Figure 17.    Terracotta figurines. Left: female figurines from the 3rd century stratigraphy; right: horse figurines, from mid-first century stratigraphy (top) and from Temple K (© ISMEO).*

subcontinent as marker of female married status and their intentional breakage can mark their widowhood. Although their meaning in Barikot context is still not clear, a connection to the female sphere is most likely.

### Small Stele Statues[35]

The presence of a rectangular structure or shrine at the north-eastern corner of the courtyard (see above) is not the only "fixed" feature shared by residential units. In fact, in each of the explored residential areas (Units G, E and D) a niche housing a small stele statue (h. ca. 14 cm) was located in a small room outside the main household religious place, the courtyard. The niches were located either in the short side of corridors used as kitchen and storage room (Units D, E) or in small rooms connected to the open court (Unit G). The subjects depicted are either local deities or Bodhisattva.

As already mentioned above, a small stele statue representing a local male deity, holding a cup and a severed goat's head was found in the corridor that gives access to the court with the shrine of Unit D. A sort of female counterpart of this character may come from Unit G,

where a small stele statue representing a seated female deity holding a flower (?) and a severed goat's head, was found in a small room (461) connected to the courtyard, exactly below the small rectangular niche where it was originally set (Figure 13b).[36] This type of deities are not a novelty in the area as several examples were already discussed by M. Taddei.[37] None of them, however, had provenance, and the excavation at Barikot finally gives them a context.

Also, a small stele representing Bodhisattva Maitreya was found in connection to a niche in the paved corridor (61) giving access to the main courtyard of Unit E (Figure 13c). Therefore, like in Unit D, the stele is placed at the threshold of the main court in a corridor used as storage and production area, as attested by several querns and storage jars found in both rooms.

Other small stele statues were found in correspondence of niches (Bs, Bn) and shrines (K) in the urban temples as already mentioned. Finally, it is likely that a small stele statue was also set in the ogival niche on room 21's northern wall in Unit B/C, where an oil-lamp and a shell bangle, the most common ritual offerings, were also found.

## Everyday Practices: Multi-Layered Household Religiosity

The spatial behaviour inferred from the contextual analysis of "fixed" features of the built environment and religious artefacts suggests the co-presence of at least three different forms of household ritual practices that do not appear to be interconnected. Rather, they are associated with different sectors of the residential unit, different temporalities and apparently different religious dimensions. Therefore, we could spatially conceptualise the household religiosity as made of three overlapping but distinct layers, each one drawn by different spatial actions in the form of rituals. I hereby indicate these overlapping ritual dimensions as traditional commoner practices, individual practices, and inter-household practices.

### Traditional Commoner Ritual Practices

A traditional commoner ritual practice is associated to "non-Buddhist" terracotta female figurines, a large-scale artefact used since protohistoric times probably as a sort of amulet or device for rituals (Figure 17). Despite stylistic changes, their use shows a certain continuity through the centuries. The fact that these short-lived objects are usually found in association with areas (kitchen, fireplace), artefacts (pestles and saddle quern) and deposits connected to working or cooking activity, according to Esposito,[38] may suggest that their ritual use was related to the working segment of the urban society. However, one may also suggest that these terracotta female figurines were used in the context of apotropaic rituals or rituals for the protection of the domestic space and daily or routine household working activities not necessarily related to tasks performed by women. More generally, female figurines could be seen as linked to rituals performed within the female domain, the household, and connected to household welfare perhaps also including the protection from infertility, disease and the protection of childhood, as suggested by G. Schopen in connection to "votive tanks".[39]

### Individual Ritual Practices

The small stele statues housed within niches in small rooms close to the courtyard relate to a more individual level or religiosity. Although both spatial context and depicted deities do not seem to be fixed, a general pattern can be identified.

The small stele statues permanently on display inside niches placed in service areas of the house, either corridor used as kitchen and storage room or small rooms, seem to function as protectors or guardians requiring ephemeral offerings (such as oil-lamps, garlands, incense) and probably simple daily prayers. The association of protective deities to kitchen areas is known in Buddhist context in ancient India, as witnessed by the Chinese pilgrim Yijing in seventh century Buddhist monasteries where "at meal-times those who serve in the kitchen offer light and incense and arrange all kinds of prepared food before the deity".[40] More generally, this is a feature shared with domestic cults in other cultures. For instance, in Roman context, the location of household shrines in kitchens, as exemplified in Pompeii, has been explained by practical reasons (such as, availability of fire for the burning of offerings or preparation of food offerings) but also by the necessity of a more individual level of communication that required small adjustments in this case, a niche in the wall, to sacralise the space.[41] Here, the flexibility in the location and selection of the deities to display in residential area is explained as a matter of religious background, affiliation or taste of the owner of the house.[42] In the case of Barikot, we can hypothesise a similar situation.

Further, it is worth noting that rather than the Buddha, compassionate Bodhisattvas and male or female deities recalling a bloody sacrifice and ritual drinking were selected by the inhabitants as a more ideal quotidian interlocutor in individual religious practices. The religious context of the unknown deities, as argued by A. Filigenzi,[43] should be connected to the open-air festivities involving the consumption of wine, goat sacrifice and dance, depicted on several Gandharan reliefs clustered in Swat, and pointing to a widespread local practice to be connected to the Dardic religious culture of Swat.

These deities connected to local religiosity took a new shape through the stylistic, iconographic and material medium of Gandharan art. On the body of the stupa the depiction of festivities related to the consumption of wine and bloody sacrifice remained spatially separated from the Buddhist narratives through the use of dividing architectural frames. In residential units, similarly, stele of local deities - recalling the same religious context as in the stupa - are maintained spatially separated from the main space of the household where Buddhist practices were conducted, the courtyard.

### Inter-Household Ritual Practices

The main household religious practices were centered at the elaborated shrine set in the open courtyard. The recipient of devotion and offerings, mostly consisting in lightening oil-lamps and in the breakage of shell bangles, was the Buddha himself as suggested by the

Buddha-focused sculptural corpus recovered in the court of Unit D and by the presence of a shrine.

The open court, not directly accessible from the street, was the intimate core of both the social and religious life of the household where shared practices to regulate and consolidate household and inter-household relations must have taken place. Large enough to accommodate gatherings of the household members and to receive external parties during particular social and religious occasions, the courtyard was the setting of both religious practices and domestic activities, as suggested by the presence of bathing facilities (e.g. Units G and D) and traces of cooking activities (e.g. Unit D), carried out by different members.

The presence of a double-winged door in the shrine of Unit D indicates that the sight of the sacred object contained in it was limited, at least in the period that preceded the first earthquake, to specific daily moments or specific occasions. Nevertheless, the shrine must have been permanently perceived as sacred, and its physicality must have influenced spatial behaviour within the court. Yet, it was only the opening of its door and the resulting ritual offerings that "activated" religious time and space of practice in the courtyard, otherwise used for other quotidian activities.

It may be conjectured that religious communication occurred during both regular rituals associated to Buddhist daily occasions, calendar, and to lifecycle events that marked social transitions of the household members, as the presence of female ornaments also suggests. As highlighted by Schopen,[44] besides processions and participation in meals offered by lay Buddhists at their house, what led monks to the city were the obligatory ritual services (*karaṇīya*) that they performed for lay-brothers and lay-sisters in the city in exchange for donations. These urban services[45] were provided during a variety of lifecycle events, such as births, marriages, deaths, or ceremonies marking the completion of domestic construction of any kind (e.g. sleeping rooms, stables).

"Hearing the Dharma" during these occasions seems to have been so important to force monks to break the rain retreat and so common to require a regularisation in the monastic codes. The fact that early *vinayas* of different monastic traditions (Mūlasarvāstivāda, Theravāda, Mahāsānghika) set up range of rules to regularise "monastic participation in domestic rituals" indicates how frequent and widespread these urban religious services were.[46] Yet, on the basis of the evidence from Barikot, we can argue that monks did not have to take the trouble of "commuting", as urban Buddhist experts must have resided in the city as well (see below).

"Hearing the Dharma" during lifecycle events might had the specific role to guide and legitimate social transition within the household and ultimately to maintain the household's social order or equilibrium. Moreover, it is likely that these occurrences, so important to theoretically

led monks break the rain retreat, were also part of a household social strategy. Indeed, it is reasonable to imagine these rituals rather as inter-household events accessible to members from other family circles and, as a good opportunity for the householder to display a beautiful shrine and a private collection of Buddhist sculptures, its pious devotion and the social prestige to host a member from the Buddhist institution. Indeed, enhancing and upholding social status and prestige through religion was based not only on the sponsoring of religious monuments, processions and festivals. But, on a smaller scale, this was also based on a system of urban religious services connected to the everyday life.

Another Gandharan city where a similar situation was in place is probably Sirkap, the Saka-Parthian and Kushan city of the main centre of Taxila. Here, on the ground of the co-occurrence of artefacts with possible religious function (stele of local deities, reused sculptural material, toilet trays, etc.), Coningham and Edwards[47] identified possible loci for religious communication in houses 2C, 1C', 3B, 1E and E'. Unfortunately, from the documentation available is very difficult to reconstruct the layout of these residential units and to draw parallels with Barikot neighbourhoods. However, from the reassessment carried out by the two scholars, it is evident that also in Sirkap people performed religious activities beyond the wall of Buddhist monuments.

To conclude, by using different media of religious communication, such as an elaborated Buddhist shrine in the courtyard, small stele statues in kitchen or service rooms, and traditional terracotta female figurines in working areas, through everyday religious practices the inhabitants of Barikot opened up temporary situations of religious communication compartmentalised in terms of temporalities and rhythms, religious dimensions and physical spaces.[48]

This situation calls for a religious system made of a set of beliefs and practices that do not necessarily look for a religious synthesis or blending. Rather, one can argue that in the construction of a religious identity through practices, the individual moves across multiple levels of belonging or religious 'selves' in relation to personal religious needs and to the domains of the social world (e.g. individual, household, inter-household) related to the specific situation.[49] A condition that can be described as a multi-layered household religiosity.

## Beyond Stupas: Appropriations of Urban Religious Forms

At Barikot, besides the monumental Buddhist stupa dominating the cityscape from the top of the Vajra hill, many other stupas were located across the settle-

ment on the plain.[50] The stupa is the Buddhist monument *par excellence*, the earliest ritual focus for both monks and laity and the centre of individual and community rituals.[51] Attested at Barikot and in other Gandharan urban centres from the mid-first century onwards, stupas were relocated to cities in more or less the same standardised shape they took in the countryside and despite regional architectural differences across South Asia, open-air stupas across space and time entail similar forms of presentation and participation.[52]

Unlike stupas, the Buddhist temples that developed in the city of Barikot in the third century have no parallel in earlier and coeval Buddhist complexes located in the countryside, and they seem to be the original product of the interaction between the *saṃgha* and the distinctive urban fabric of a Late Kushan/Kushano-Sasanian city. Although the spatial organisation of these urban temples is shaped by the architectural layout of the earlier residential units on which they were constructed, shared targeted architectural interventions, such as the creation of a roofed open platform, the addition of an altar and shallow water tanks, as well as the creation of niches or shrines in the lower court, speak of an architectural configuration that aims to accommodate new forms of religious practices developed in urban context. If we look at the Buddhist architectural and ritual traditions from a historical perspective, these religious innovations can be considered ephemeral from a chronological point of view, as they do not survive the third century. Nevertheless, they imply that changes of a certain scale were taking place at that time.

This phenomenon was in fact not limited to Barikot. A very similar type of urban temple can be identified in the so-called "house of Naradakha" located in a quite central area of the large city of Shaikhan-dheri,[53] in the southern plain of the Gandharan region, about 90 km to the south of Barikot. This unit, originally identified by Dani as the house of a distinguished Buddhist teacher, was already suggested to have a religious function by Allchin.[54] The similarity with the Barikot temples (which was already noted)[55] is striking, and the reassessment of the archaeological evidence by C. Moscatelli confirms the parallel.[56]

What can be pointed out is that the "house" of Shaikhan-dheri has the same spatial organisation of the urban temples of Barikot as it consists of an open court connected through a flight of steps to a platform, probably roofed in the same fashion as those in Barikot, and some other service rooms. On top of the platform stood a small stupa, while, among other finds (Buddha stele, Bodhisattva stele, stupa reliquary, four-armed goddess, a sword fragment, helmet plates etc.), a stele of Hariti

very similar to that found at Barikot in the court of Temple Bn was found in the court. Moreover, several rotary querns for the production of flour were found in situ, and a small room open to the court was used for storage of condensers for distillation bearing royal stamps. The similarities between the temples of Barikot and Shaikhan-dheri indicate that religious innovations occurred during the third century in urban religious architecture and practice had, at least, a (sub)regional character.[57] Although the dynamics that allowed to "make space" to Buddhist temples within the urban layout may have also varied from city to city, it is evident that these religious changes were the result of a more general re-orientation of Buddhist doctrine and practice. A detailed analysis and discussion of these aspects are beyond the scope of the present article as they would require a wide-ranging perspective in chronological, theoretical, and geographical terms. Yet, a series of preliminary and small-scale observations can be drawn for our case study.

At Barikot, the construction of the urban Buddhist temples implies that two phenomena were taking place. First of all, a demographic drop. Since no enlargement of the city boundaries is attested in this phase, the fact that several residential units were transformed into temples and related structures, inevitably implies that the people previously living there must have left the neighbourhoods or the city itself. Subsequently, the peripheral neighbourhoods were "gentrified" by Buddhist specialists. In fact, the increased number of urban Buddhist temples also indicates a previously unattested "intrusion" of the Buddhist specialists into the city-space and a significant reconfiguration of the socio-spatial setting of the south-western neighbourhoods, one-third of which was now occupied by religious complexes. Indeed, the series of rooms within the temples used to produce flour (rotary querns in Shaikhan-dheri and Temple H) and dairy products (oil for lamps in Temple B) suggest the permanent presence of a well-organised and self-sustenance system. Further, the singular concentration within the court of temples of circular pawns/counters for the *navakankari* game may suggest that these areas were also common places of sociability where religious actors regularly engaged with peers or devotees in entertainment activities when rituals were not taking place, as common in ancient and modern India.[58]

To understand the dynamic behind this phenomenon we should probably enlarge our scale of analysis and briefly look beyond the city wall. As mentioned at the beginning of the article, during the first centuries of the Common Era the ability of the *saṃgha* to master the agrarian resources and the movements across the

hinterland of Barikot enabled them to accumulate a high socio-economic position within the urban society.[59] Hence, we can speculate that at the beginning of the third century, they reinvested and channelled the capital gained from their grip on the countryside to "enter" the city that, by that time, was probably experiencing an economic, political, and demographic crisis. This intensive and permanent engagement of the *saṃgha* with city life and urban actors was evidently not without consequences. Here, I advance some brief considerations on how the urban condition may have affected Buddhism.

### Structural Transformations of the Saṃgha

While most of the Buddhist monks lived in monasteries located in the countryside[60] and might periodically move into the city to perform urban services, it is hard to say who exactly took care of religious services, management of donations, offerings and supplies in the urban temples. According to the Buddhist texts, cities were the realms of Buddhist nuns. The suggestion to identify Temples B and attached structures as part of nunneries is indeed very appealing and plausible.[61] Yet, it is worth to mention that Gandharan Buddhism seems to have been particularly androcentric as the presence of nuns is particularly inconsistent in the epigraphic record when compared to India.[62] However, an indirect reference to nun's order appears in the inscription of the Oḍi king Senavarma, "He greets […] the *twofold community* that has assembled […]"[63] thus confirming their existence in the third quarter of the first century. At any rate, be they nuns, novices[64] or monks, it is clear that in the third century a good number of Buddhist specialists practiced services and lived in the city. If, on the one hand, we should not necessarily expect the monasteries/nunneries within the city to have the same layout of those in the countryside, on the other hand, we should also consider the fact that a different spatial organization of the members of the Buddhist community within an urban monastery/nunnery must have also entailed a substantial internal reorganisation of the community itself. For instance, if we interpret the rooms annexed to Temples B as residential rooms for Buddhist specialists, then we must acknowledge that the ideal principles of equality and communality that inspired the traditional layout of the monastery consisting of a central courtyard surrounded by cells of roughly equal size, are here lost. Certainly, practical reasons might have played

a part, but this spatial rearrangement might also reflect a renegotiation of monastic internal structure and monastic lifestyle in cities if not the development of new forms of Buddhist priesthood.[65]

### Appropriation of Urban Religious Media and Practices

As discussed in the previous pages, built environment and artefacts attested in urban temples are substantially different from what we would expect when having Buddhist monumental architecture as a reference. Also, it is similarly relevant that the Buddhist specialists now engaged in rituals seemingly involving local religious practices, like, for instance, the consumption of intoxicating drinks. This, as attested by the presence of distilling vessels since at least the first century, was a common urban practice at Barikot.[66] Although officially banned by monastic codes, a monastic involvement in wine production has been hypothesised on the basis of inscribed bowls, Sanskrit literature,[67] and the proximity of winepresses to Buddhist monasteries in the hinterland of Barikot.[68] If scenes of wine-drinking and wine-production remain spatially separated from the Buddhist narrative on stupas, in urban practices, the boundaries between these two religious dimensions are blurred. In particular, the recovery of condensers and drinking vessels within the temple of Barikot and Shaikhan-dheri indicate that wine drinking represents an essential transversal component of both urban life and urban Buddhist rituals, such to be possibly centrally regulated by the political power as suggested by the presence of Kushan royal stamps on condensers.[69]

Another significant feature of these urban Buddhist temples is their substantial analogy with the courtyard of domestic areas in terms of "fixed" features of religious communication (niches, very similar shrines), "unfixed" media of communication (stele of Buddha, local deities, stupa models) and type of offerings (lightening of oil lamp, shell bangles, etc.). Both in the courtyard of Unit D and in that of the temples, religious communication took place through similar acts, like the lightening of oil lamps, the breakage of shell bangles or ephemeral offerings that occurred in front of small stele statues and stupas models housed either in niches or in sort of aediculae.

Although from evidence available at Barikot we are not able to establish which appear first, urban temples or household cultic places, it is perhaps not so far-fetched to see these similarities as the result of a progressive appropriation of religious household practices and media by urban Buddhist *saṃgha*. The plausibility of this trajectory is substantiated by the fact that the use of small stele statues depicting Bodhisattvas and local

deities are indeed attested in earlier phases in residential units of both Barikot and Sirkap,[70] suggesting that their use as media of religious communication was originally an urban feature.

On a speculative level, it can be assumed that, once settled in the city, the Buddhist *saṃgha* not only had to adapt its internal organisation to the urban space, but also appropriated selected media and practices of urban religiosity – with which they had become familiar through the long-term relation with urban actors – by bringing them within the walls of "official" urban religious space and putting them under the permanent authority of religious specialists. In other words, by the third century the on-going interaction between the *saṃgha* and the other realms of the city-space might have urbanised some aspects of Buddhism in a way that led specific groups of Buddhist specialists to successfully appropriate the city-space, though not for long.

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## NOTES

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33. Micheli Roberto, 'Gifts of the sea in the mountains: The shell bangles', in *The Last Phases of the Urban site of Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai (Barikot). The Buddhist sites of Gumbat and Amluk-dara (Barikot)*, ed. by Luca Maria Olivieri. ACT-Field School Reports and Memoirs 2 (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publisher, 2014), pp. 223–247.
34. Rabbani Mubariz A., 'The typology, production and adornment of Gandharan beads during the mid-3rd century BCE – 1st century CE: Preliminary results from Barikot, Swat, Pakistan', *Archaeological Research in Asia*, 24 (2020), 1-20 (pp. 15-17).
35. See Olivieri, 2015, 2016; Moscatelli.
36. For the alternative interpretation of the stele as devī with lotus flower and cornucopia with goat head-

shaped termination see Moscatelli, fn. 50, p. 145, CAT. 1, NO. 23. In any case, for female counterparts of the stele in Unit D see note 37 in the present article. Another very worn stele in grey schist representing a seated goddess with cornucopia was found in the last occupation phase of BKG 1 corresponding to the second half of the third century, Callieri et al., 1984, p. 491; Callieri, 2010, p. 375, fig. 12.
37. Taddei Maurizio, 'Non-Buddhist Deities in Gandharan Art – Some New Evidence', in *Investigating Indian Art, Proceedings of a Symposium on the development of early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography held at the Museum of Indian Art Berlin in May 1986*, ed. by Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1987), 349–362.
38. Esposito Giuseppina and Gennaro Altieri [in press].
39. Schopen Gregory, 'The Urban Buddhist Nun and a Protective Rite for Children in Early North India', in *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters: Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*, ed. by Gregory Schopen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), pp. 3–22 (p. 14). On the fear of spirit in Ancient South Asia see Decaroli Robert, *Haunting the Buddha: Indian Popular Religions and the Formation of Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 87–104.
40. Olivieri, 2014, p. 96.
41. Rüpke Jörg, *Pantheon. Una nuova storia della religione romana* (Torino: Einaudi, 2018), p. 250; Lipka Michael, 'Notes on Pompeian Domestic Cults', *Numen*, 53, 3 (2006), pp. 327–358.
42. Rüpke, 2018, p. 103; Lipka, pp. 333, 336.
43. Filigenzi, pp. 63-77.
44. Schopen Gregory, 'The Ritual Obligations and Donor Roles of Monks in the Pali Vinaya', in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, ed. by Gregory Schopen. Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 72–85.
45. On conceptual approaches to 'urban services' see Smith Michael E. et al., 'Conceptual Approaches to Service Provision in Cities throughout History', *Urban Studies*, 53, 8 (June 2016), 1574–1590.
46. Schopen, 1997, p. 80. The request from the lay-brothers/sisters usually includes the formula "I

want to give a gift and to hear dharma and to see the monks", see Schopen, 1997, pp. 73–75.

47.  Coningham and Edwards, pp. 57-60.

48.  For comparative examples see the domestic cults in kitchen, atrium and vestibule at Pompei in Lipka.

49.  On the polyphonic nature of religious identity in the contemporary world see McGuire Meredith B., *Lived Religion: Faith and Practices in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); on antiquity, Gasparini et al.

50.  So far, one small stupa with chapels was uncovered in the south-western part of the city (Unit I), while a larger one was intercepted further north, in a more central location, during the construction of an electric post in the 1990s. More recently, an enshrined stupa was found in the central area of the city. Olivieri et al. 2023.

51.  See Hawkes Jason and Akira Shimada, *Buddhist stupas in South Asia: recent archaeological, art-historical, and historical perspectives* (New Delhi/Oxford: Oxford University Press, SOAS studies on South Asia, 2009).

52.  See Fogelin Lars, 'Ritual and Presentation in Early Buddhist Religious Architecture', *Asian Perspectives*, 42(1), (2003), 129-154. In addition to the anniversary of stupas, and festive days connected to the Buddhist calendar (e.g. awakening of the Buddha, parinirvana) the typical list of Buddhist festivals includes: pañcavarṣika-maha or "Festival of the Fifth Year", ṣadvārṣika-maha or "Festival of the Sixth Year", mahā-maha or the" Great Festival".

53.  For further details see Dani Ahmad Hasan, 'Shaikhan Dheri Excavation. 1963 & 1964 seasons', *Ancient Pakistan*, 2 (1965-1966), 17–214 (pp. 28-19, fig. 4 stele of Hariti).

54.  Allchin Frank Raymond, 'Evidence of Early Distillation at Shaikhan Dheri', in *South Asian Archaeology 1977*, ed. by Maurizio Taddei (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Series Minor, IV, 2, 1979), 755–797 (p. 777).

55.  Olivieri, 2014, pp. 95-96.

56.  Moscatelli, pp. 49-78.

57.  Additionally see the evidence from Begram Site II, Morris Lauren *The Begram hoard and its context* (PhD Dissertation, LMU München: Faculty of Cultural Studies), p. 160, fn. 767.

58.  Iori Elisa, 'Framing Games in Sacred Spaces: a Case Study from North-West India', *Urbrel blog* (2020) 22.06.2020. Accessed July 23, 2021. https://urbrel.hypotheses.org/1053.

59.  The 'land resources-oriented sprawl' attested around the city of Barikot is not an isolated case in history but patterns of distribution of sites, resources to be exploited and, relations to cities change across time and space. For comparisons in Madhya Pradesh see Shaw Julia, *Buddhist Landscapes in Central India: Sanchi Hill and Archaeologies of Religion and Social Change, c. 3rd century BC to 5th century AD* (London: British Association for South Asian Studies, 2007); for Deccan see Morrison Kathleen D., 'Trade, urbanism, and agricultural expansion: Buddhist monastic institutions and the state in the Early Historic western Deccan', *World Archaeology*, 27, 2 (1995), 203-221; for Sri Lanka see Coningham Robin et al., 'The State of Theocracy: Defining an Early Medieval Hinterland in Sri Lanka', *Antiquity*, 81(313), 2007, 699–719; See also the considerations by Hawkes Jason, 'One Size Does Not Fit All: Landscapes of Religious Change in Vindhya Pradesh', *South Asian Studies*, 30(1), (2014), 1-15. For Mes Aynak see Iori Elisa, 'From Mining Site to Mining City. A Spatial Reading of Mes Aynak, Afghanistan', *Moderne Stadtgeschichte (MSG)*, Bd. 1 (2022), 56-68.

60.  For the survey of monastic complexes in the surrounding of Barikot see Olivieri and Vidale 2006.

61.  For Barikot see Moscatelli, pp. 16-17. For Sirkap see Schopen Gregory, 'On Emptying Chamber Pots without Looking and the Urban Location of Buddhist Nunneries in Early India Again', in *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters: Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*, ed. by Gregory Schopen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), pp. 23-46 (p. 38).

62.  Albery Henry, 'Buddhism and Society in the Indic north and northwest 2nd century BCE–3rd century CE' (PhD dissertation 2020, Munich, p. 415. In Gandharan epigraphic record we find only one reference to a nun Utaraya as a donor, 99/100 CE (Baums Stefan, 'Catalog and Revised Texts and Translations of Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions', in *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries, (Gandharan studies, volume 1)*, ed. by David Jongeward, Elizabeth Errington, Richard Salomon, and Stefan Baums (Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, 2012), pp. 200–251 (p. 239).

63.  Baums, pp. 227–233.

64.  See the reference to a monastic title ṣamaṇera 'novice' attested at Barikot in a Kharoshti inscription on vessel, Baums Stefan, 'Inscribed Pottery. Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī' in *Ceramics from the Excavations in the Historic Settlement at Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai (Barikot), Swāt, Pakistan (1984-1992)*, ed. by Pierfrancesco Callieri and Luca Maria Olivieri. ACT-Field School Reports and Memoirs,

Special Volumes, 2.1-2 (Lahore: Sang-e-meel Publications, 2020), pp. 279–296 (p. 280).

65. For instance, on householder monks see Giovanni Verardi, *The Gods and the Heretics: Crisis and Ruin of Indian Buddhism* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan & Fundación Bodhiyāna, 2018), pp. 419-433.

66. See Filigenzi, fn. 11.

67. On monastic involvement in wine production see Falk Harry, 'Making Wine in Gandhara under Buddhist Monastic Supervision', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute, New Series*, 23 (2009), 65–78.

68. On winepresses see Olivieri and Vidale, pp. 142–146. On the prominent role of wine in the region see Filigenzi.

69. Allchin, 1979; Brancaccio Pia and Xinru Liu, 'Dionysus and Drama in the Buddhist Art of Gandhara', *Journal of Global History*, 4 (2009), 219–244 (p. 226).

70. For Barikot see Unit G, second century CE, Callieri et al., 1992, pl. XVIII. For Sirkap see for instance Marshall John, *Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations, 3 vols.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951) 3, pl. 211.1, stratum II, first to-mid second century CE. In Sirkap, the (re)use of small figured architectural elements like figured false-brackets as well as the so-called 'toilet-trays' within domestic religious contexts of earlier phases is attested. See also Provenzali Anna, 'An inscribed naga-danta from Butkara and related questions', *East and West*, 62, (2022).

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