

Review: Harald Hauptmann (2024)

***Lords of the Mountains, Pre-Islamic Heritage along the Upper Indus in Pakistan*, (ed.) Luca Maria Olivieri. Heidelberg University Publishing.**

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This monograph on the history and archaeology of the mountain areas towards the Western Himalayas and beyond, known as Gilgit-Baltistan or formerly ‘Northern Areas of Pakistan’, opens with reference to ‘*iha uttarāpatha*’ meaning ‘here the upper (northern) path’ (p. 7). It is one of the books of advanced academic value because of its discussions and interpretations on the complex archaeological data. Throughout the book, the debate on the efforts of earlier contributions, and critical analysis based on the field experience and personal observations of Hauptmann are noticeable, providing theoretical results. Therefore, this effort concludes the extensive field activities of the Author in the mountain area of Gilgit-Baltistan, from 1989 until his demise in 2018, continuing the tradition of Karl Jettmar (1918-2002) and Ahmad Hasan Dani (1920-2009).

In order to trace the focus of his attention we can take one of his discussions in which he argues on the various names of this area (pp. 8-9). Here, he attempts to trace the relevancy of Leitner’s ‘Dardistan’. The scholarship may agree with him that this is an academic ‘misconception’ and that, consequently, ‘the name has no scientific value’, as has been rightly concluded. Similarly, ‘Yaghistan’ cannot be applied to the entire territory, as the free land of *Yaghis* (rebellions) is more specific to the Upper Indus Kohistan, including Darel and Tangir, as its central part is also called ‘Shinakai’ [should be Shinaki]. However, the other names like Burushal/Buruza, Bolor/Palor (mentioned in later instances) etc. are ignored by the Author for the purpose of this discussion. This leads us to believe that his focus is primarily on the District of Diamir, as it is more relevant to his field work and area of interest.

Again, and again the author attempts to drag the attention of readership towards the fact that “ [...] high concentration of rock carvings exists on a long stretch of ca. 100 kilometres between the mountain-barrier narrowing the Indus gorge west of Shatial and the Raikot Bridge” (p. 55). However, with aim to trace his most important consideration among rock art examples he considers the location of Shatial, mentioning “[...] 600 inscriptions in Iranian besides 15 inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī and 410 in Brāhmī. With more than 550 in Sogdian, nine in Bactrian and two in Middle Persian and Parthian respectively, they represent the most important Iranian epigraphical complex in the Northern Areas.” (p. 56) beside the major sites of rock art including Hunza Haldeikish, Alam Bridge, Thalpan, Chilas, Hudur etc.

The results of his field work are summarised by this statement, “Until 2009 ca. 288 archaeological sites including 151 rock carving assemblages had been surveyed.

These sites comprise 6854 stones and rock faces with 44,387 petroglyphs enclosing 5259 inscriptions, and their number is increasing every year as a result of further exploration” (p. 56). This data, when compared to the results of the previous year, 2008, documenting 277 sites, including 141 rock art sites comprising 43747 petroglyphs having 5246 inscriptions (p. 291), express the annual addition to the dataset. This means that the further continuation of exploration will be necessary to add more to the existing body of knowledge.

However, classification of data, and its analysis is always a difficult and confusing task, particularly in identifying the prehistoric art differentiating from historic artworks on stones. The author's understanding is remarkable in following a method that relates the data to the subject of prehistory, interpreting the conveying hunting environments (pp. 107-115). This work argued that the 5% of total data shows hunting activities with technique of ‘on the contour’ depiction of Himalayan or Asian ibex types dated to 9th or 8th millennium from the Neolithic period, compared with the cultural developments in Central Asia, South Asia, Mesopotamia and Egypt. The second observed technique is ‘bi-concave outline’ of late prehistory having diverse data, and third with abstract stories narrated or created with ‘filled bi-concave or bi-triangular style’. Similar hunting scenes with men holding bows with supporting dogs occur at Dadam Das and are one of the rare examples of this period from the Upper Indus that occur in the third technique of art executions. Such discussions are very rare in the rock art of Upper Indus Valley.

It is interesting to note Bronze Age influences from Central Asia, represented by comparable ‘maskoid’ shamanic expressions, mythic figures of giants’ images, which seem to have local continuity in the form of *Dañal* or *Biñan* (pp. 115-126). The humped cattle are compared to the examples from Indus plains and Rajasthan (p. 128). The emergence of northern nomads of the Bronze Age is evident from Megalithic circles. Here, we have some new information about the Dain/Dañin graves (Ishkoman). Dani and Hauptmann place them in the same category but to me they are different from the Megalithic graves of nomadic Andronovo Culture (from his references, Hakal 2015). The site of Dañin is much comparable with other settled complexes. Hauptmann possibly conducted a trial excavation (?) for two days at the site, but here we have only a claim of date to ‘the second half of second millennium BC’ (p. 131) interestingly contemporary of Andronovo culture. Further, the culture of horse domestication and two wheeled carts emerged in late Bronze Age of Central Asia as represented in Chilas V (pp. 132-135) is very valuable. It is followed by the ‘Scythian Animal Style’ of 1st millennium BC, discussed extensively with reference to their primary and secondary sources of history and its antiquity found in rock art and others including the golden ring from Pattan, Kohistan (pp. 136-169). The Iranian style associated with the ‘Altar Rock’ at Thalpan may show the connection of Achaemenid Empire

with Gandhara and connected areas including the images of fire Alters, Parthian dressed warriors, and winged animal style (pp. 178-184).

It continues with the early Buddhist period, which began with the formation of the Kuṣāṇa empire, represented by Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, stupa drawings and figures of Śākyamuni Buddha or Bodhisattva (pp. 184-200). The next phase of the history of Buddhism under the three kingdoms of Dāradas, Little and Great Palūr has been discussed as having the climax of Buddhism between 5th to 8th century AD. Besides inscriptions in Gupta Brāhmī, Proto Shāradā and Shāradā representing personal names as well as devotional texts, there appear monumental depictions of stupa drawings (pp. 67, 74, 81, 97, 104, 174, 192, 193, 204, 215, 220, 225, 227, 234, 242-246), Buddha images and Buddha life stories (pp. 234, 241), Sasanian textile pattern of 5th century (p. 255), symbols of Iranian and Sogdian origin (pp. 247-250), images of crosses (p. 251), celestial horses (pp. 252-255), *tamgha* or *nishan* (pp. 256-257), liṅga and trīśūla (pp. 257-263), Chinese and Hephthalite evidences (pp. 265-266) and anti-Buddhist movements of battle-axe warriors (pp. 266-274). A discussion on the introduction of Islam from different surrounding areas in different historical phases is discussed with supporting evidence from original sources (pp. 290).

The epilogue (pp. 291-294) concludes this work, and the author's concerns are evident regarding the major challenges posed by infrastructural developments in areas where heritage sites are concentrated. In this regard, contributions of Pak-German Archaeological Mission (PGAM) and the results of studies focussing on Chilas valley in Upper Indus Region, conservation efforts of Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan, and future directions to investigate Naupura, Zwapa (Shigar) and Ghizer are presented.

This contribution is an overall summary of the studies conducted by Harald Hauptmann and his team. It extensively discusses the major findings obtained during explorations of PGAM and other significant contributions. Therefore, I acknowledge him for keeping his valuable thoughts written well in detail, narrating his devoted service of entire life to archaeology. His name will be remembered and prayed for the rest in peace. Further, many congratulations to the editor Dr. Luca M. Olivieri (Associate Professor at Ca' Foscari University of Venice) for getting the opportunity, spending his time and energies in presenting this important work, available in open access.