Buddhist fascination?
Some notes on cultural archeology during the British Raj

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Abstract

The following pages present an overview on the archeological history in the Indian Subcontinent. This paper will also underline a few problematic terms and concepts, unavoidably incurred during the research: the use of the term Civilization, the overbearing employment of "Orientalism", the fragile notion of "Graeco-Buddhist art", the idea of superiority of "classicism" in canons and traditions, and so on. Systematic research was conducted by intellectuals who were moved by contemporary Romantic sentiment, in their quest for elegant canons of classical antiquity, as much as they were imbued with a sense of superiority of one tradition (Buddhism) over another but made possible the founding and development of the Archaeological Survey of India, the main agency responsible for archaeological research and the conservation during the British Raj.

Keywords: Archaeological Survey of India, Buddhism, Greek influence, The Asiatic Society.

1. Introduction

These notes will attempt to open a discussion on the early archaeology of India under the British rule so to understand the role of Buddhism-related findings in the larger context composed by British romanticism, colonial political agendas, and pro-Hellenic academic interests.

The first section will deal with the emergence of Orientalist studies, such as the systematic research of the languages, cultures and antiquities of the Indian subcontinent driven, as we shall see, by authoritative intellectual projects, as well as by political agendas aimed at legitimizing the British government. Starting from the 18th century, the first part of the paper will attempt to introduce the context of the birth of the first Societies, as specialized and voluntary institutions.

The second section is an overview on the Archeology of the Indian Subcontinent, devoted particularly to its beginnings, under the supervision of the early directors of the Archeological Survey of India. This section will, through the discoveries and choice of excavations conducted, attempt to introduce the imbalance of interest that began to manifest itself with the leadership of some of the Survey's directors.

The final section will consider the long-standing issue of the so-called Buddhist fascination and will try to explain why the – claimed – rediscovery of the lost magnificence of ancient India finds Buddhism, in its traditional, architectural and historical forms, as its main subject.

The issue of museum display will only be touched upon, although it is equally central in the study, as it results from the investigations dealt with in the article.

Even though the paper does not pretend to exhaust every aspect of the topic, it aims to present the complexity that characterizes the birth and development of archeology in the Indian subcontinent, the extent to which colonial legacy has influenced the interpretation of excavations, how much "Buddhist fascination" is related to political agendas or simply to a comparative approach moved by a human interest to decode the "novel" through "classical" canons, known or considered universally valid at the time.

2. The birth of Orientalism

In 1758, Warren Hastings (1732-1818) resided with the Raja of Murshidabad and quickly achieved his political career by becoming Governor of Bengal in 1772, and Governor-General the following year.

Hastings' cultural policy buttressed his belief that good governance of British India lay in knowledge of its culture and languages. Indeed, during his rule (1772-1785) he engaged in the protection of scholarly figures such as Hindu Pundits and Muslim Maulvis, to the point of founding the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784). This new institution, devoted to early Indological studies, heralded the beginning of the 100-year tradition of Orientalist studies.

British Supreme Court judge Sir William Jones (1746-1794) joined him in the fledgling project of systematic research of the Indian subcontinent, marked by spontaneous and dispassionate cultural interest, devoid of snobbery and in strong collaboration with Indian scholars. (Thapar 1990: 106-130)

Having laid the foundations for modern Orientalism, scholars moved their interest toward antiquity, the true place to find the essence of Indian civilization: given the background of the researchers themselves – together with the importance of ancient Greek and Latin – the greater interest concerned the discovery of a distant, pre-Islamic past that could legitimize the conquest and presence of the British Raj.

The process, triggered by the need to give intellectual depth to self-legitimization, pushed dangerously toward cultural homogenization. This process of cultural involution would later be confirmed in the nineteenth century when the ideology of "traditional" India was formed: economically stagnant and culturally divided between different religious and caste groups, presented as unchanging and forever the same. (Humes 2012: 180)

As the strand of Indological studies was deeply rooted in the history of British colonialism in India, it led to the formation of theories that continue to find strong resonance till date – in political and academic contexts.

2.1 The Societies

As seen previously, the beginnings of systematic research into the history of the Indian subcontinent and developments in archeological institutions are closely linked to the birth of the Asiatic Society and its founder Sir William Jones.

Jones was a judge in the Supreme Court of Justice at Fort William in Calcutta (1783) and a prominent linguist, philologist and pioneer of Orientalist studies. The Asiatic Society, established in Calcutta on January 15, 1784, would become a model for many other societies devoted to the study of ancient texts and interpretation of prominent inscriptions. These associations, though formed in the interest of knowledge of Indian history, «closely intertwined with the colonial administration» (Humes 2012: 180) – also because they were attended by members of the East India Company.

Sir W. Jones was one of the first scholars to propose a theory regarding the relationship between Sanskrit, vernacular languages of India and European languages: the fundamental relationship between Indo-European languages and the theories derived from Jones' studies would (along with the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization) lead to the consolidation of the debate regarding the migrations-invasions of India.

Notable achievements included the publication of the periodical journal Asiatic Research from 1788 and the decipherment of the Brahmi script in 1837 by the Scientific Enquirer, James Prinsep, who would in fact find in numismatics (as in James Tod's collection) the possibility of applying the scientific method. (Allen 2002: 152)

Noteworthy among its early members was Charles Wilkins who published the first English translation of the Bhagavad Gita in 1785 under the patronage of the then governor-general of Bengal, Warren Hastings. Wilkins, moreover, would be instrumental in studies of the Gupta Brahmi, which he defines as "pseudo-Greek" in his study of the Firoz Shah pillar, (Allen 2002: 50) and because of his great linguistic expertise, he achieved a major political goal in 1778 with the publication of the Grammar of the Bengali language: for the first time, governing authorities were able to disseminate edicts and regulations directly into the vernacular of the governed. (Allen 2002: 47)

3. Archaeological Survey of India: the debut

Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814-1893) arrived in India in 1833 as an engineer following the East India Company Army and remained in the service of the British Army until 1860. In 1848, the year Punjab was annexed into British rule, Cunningham was one of the first to explore the Peshawar Valley:

> «In describing the ancient state of the Panjab, the most interesting subject of enquiry is the identification of those famous peoples and cities, whose names have become familiar to the whole world through the expeditions of Alexander the Great. [...] This plan has a double advantage for as Chinese pilgrims, as well as Macedonian invaders entered India from the West, the routes of the conquerors and the pilgrims will mutually illustrate each other». (Cunningham 1872: 1-2)

That same year, after assisting the research of Orientalist James Prinsep (1799-1840), he formulated an archeological survey plan to present to the governors of the British Raj. After the failure achieved with the proposed archeological project and the following the tensions and sanctions due to the Indian Wars of Independence of 1857, a new opportunity arose. Thanks to the attention and correspondence with Charles John Canning (later appointed viceroy of India), Cunningham established the Archaeological Survey of India in 1861, and became its first Director-General (1871-1885). Due to lack of funds, the first surveys (largely following in the footsteps of the Xuanzang's pilgrimage) were temporarily suspended between 1861 and 1865. Thanks to the new viceroy Lord Lawrence, the Survey was restored as a separate department independent of the government and Cunningham honored as director in February 1871. In Memorandum of Instructions (1871) – originally addressed to his assistant – he states his ideology in no uncertain terms:

> «Archaeology is not limited to broken sculptures, old buildings and mounds of ruins, but includes everything that belonged to the world's history ... our researches should be extended to all ancient remains, whatever that will help to illustrate the manners and customs of former times». (Chakrabarti 1982: 333)

His dedication to Chinese pilgrimages remains a prominent element among his distinct interests, from Faxian to Xuangzang (Allen 2002: 180): thanks to the coeval translations of Chinese texts, Cunningham – flanked by Prinsep and Markham Kittoe – led the first excavation of the Dharmarajika stupa, in Taxila. His research, in the footsteps of Alexander the Great's history, also led him to discovering one of Ashoka Maurya's rock edicts, near Shahbazgarhi, and the Buddhist monasteries of Jamalgarhi and Ranighat, of which he sought to bring out the Greek influence. (Prabha Ray 2014: 66-71)

The archeological department, thus restored, aimed to pursue organic and systematic research throughout India (made so by the work of experts such as James Fergusson). Such research ushered in a marked fascination with Buddhist monuments and the image of the Buddha (understood by him as a true social reformer). Thus, Cunningham tried to project excavations – sometimes forcibly – as discoveries of Buddhist-related artifacts and monuments, for two main reasons: one, he was in search of evidence that would show that the Brahmanical tradition did not represent the only religious and traditional spectrum of ancient India, and

two, he attempted to find justifications that could lend validation to British power in India through archeological findings and interpretation.

Indeed, Cunningham believed that the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India was a key resource for the colonial state and could influence the British public: in this sense, demonstrating that the Brahmanical tradition was of relatively recent origin could prove useful for the spread of Christianity in the subcontinent. In support of his vision, he published The Ancient Geography of India (1871), in which he outlined the boundaries of India's sacred geography (divided into three periods, Brahmanical, Buddhist and modern Islamic). It was a project of great ambition, and he conducted his survey committing several errors: he referred only to the areas of northern India (Pakistan, Kashmir, Myanmar and Uttar Pradesh), never going beyond Maharashtra; secondly, for the entire volume, he took sources relating to the activities of Alexander the Great (ca. 4th century) as guidelines, parallelly with those of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (texts from a thousand years later).

Cunningham's investigations would lead to several discoveries of monolithic capitals and other remains datable to the Maurya power, specimens of Gupta and post-Gupta period architecture, the great stupa at Bharhut, Gupta inscriptions at Eran, sites at Udayagiri. In 1872, after the devastation of the site caused by the construction of the railway from Lahore to Multan, he organized the first excavation at Harappa.

Cunningham's work certainly also had great relevance to the establishment of archaeology as an essential discipline for the Raj, but his investigation was so broad and sometimes so rushed that it was almost never comprehensive or professional. (Prabha Ray 2014: 58) Indeed, it should not be forgotten that due to the unscientific nature of the research and methodological imprecision, he would compromise the excavations, for example, of the Dhamek stupa in Sarnath (1843).

3.1 James Burgess' interlude and John Marshall's debut

With the rise of anti-British movements, Lord Curzon (1859-1925), Viceroy of the Raj from 1899 to 1905, entered the political landscape. This period is often considered to coincide with the empire reaching the apex of its political parabola. Characterized by efficiency at work, toughness and impartiality in law enforcement, Lord Curzon is also considered a key figure in the revival of the Archaeological Survey of India: measures included reform of the municipality in Calcutta (1899) and the universities (1904).

At the end of 1885, Alexander Cunningham's tenure ended, and he was succeeded by James Burgess (1832-1916).

Mainly inspired by the tradition of architectural studies begun by James Fergusson, he founded the annual journal The Indian Antiquary (1872), whose

annual epigraphic publication Epigraphia Indica (1882) would become a supplement, edited by such great scholars as Georg Bühler (1837-1898), Lorenz Franz Kielhorn (1840-1908) and Julius Eggeling (1842-1918). (Chakrabarti 1982: 333-4)

Among the major merits attributed to the new director-general of the archaeological mission is his contribution to the unification of the three fields of exploration, conservation and epigraphy within the Survey. Once again due to lack of funds, James Burgess's work was suspended in 1889 and not reinstated until 1902. This period, also known as the "Buck Crisis" (1888-1898), suffered heavy pressure from Sir Edward Charles Buck (1838-1916), caused by government expenditure cuts on the Archaeological Survey of India.

Although Burgess's monographs and publications constitute some of the major studies of Indian architecture of the period, the phase following Cunningham's direction is generally characterized by insufficient work.

The arrival of John Marshall (1755-1835) determines the golden period for the development of archeology in the Indian subcontinent, which some historians have come to describe as «glorious and 'imperial'». (Chakrabarti 1982: 334) The excavations he initiated were mainly related to the period of Buddhist India.

The investigations carried out by Alexander Cunningham in the area of Harappa, Pakistan (1860-70) and interrupted by the British construction of the new railway link, were not resumed until 1920-21 precisely because of John Marshall's efforts.

Some of the sites overseen by John Marshall, thanks to renewed attention to the preservation of monuments and finds, are still overseen by ASI today.

Marshall consolidated the organization of archeological investigation through a new model governed by circular divisions: organizational decentralization allowed by the various archeological circles paved the way for the formation of more working groups and more "specialized" officers at different sites. The Annual Reports following this innovation show how the quantity of excavations carried out simultaneously (Chakrabarti 1982: 334-5) contributed positively to the preservation and protection of monuments by repealing the remarkable Ancient Monuments Preservation Act in 1904.

Followed by architect and archeologist Daya Ram Sahni (1879-1939), the new ASI director investigated the city of Harappa and probed the site of Mohenjo Daro, which would prove to be a major discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization. But problems arose under his direction: in fact, Marshall would not take a polycentric view (unlike Aurel Stein), often tackling research elements individually and tracing their relationship to the rest of the excavation area only later; moreover, his method of excavation, determined by a fixed level that set chronological depth, would be deemed particularly unsuitable.

Although he strongly supported a centrally managed Survey (in 1912, the government in fact considered abolishing the post of Director General), he

collaborated with senior colleagues, such as Aurel Stein (in Baluchistan) and N. G. Majumdar (in Taxila), as well as Indian scholars Ram Raj, Bhagwanlal Indraji, and Rajendralal Mitra.

Following the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms (1919) and changes brought about by the Devolution Rules (1921), Sir John Marshall relinquished office between 1928 and 1931.
This was followed by the brief directorships of H. Hargreaves (1928), Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni (1931) and J. F. Blakiston (1935).

3.2 Archeology and prehistory: the directorate of Mortimer Wheeler

In 1939, Leonard Woolley made a seething criticism of the work of the ASI, mainly directed at the problem related to the opening of excavations and archeological finds to the public. A few years later, following financial cuts imposed yet again by the Indian government, followed by the end of Marshall's term, Mortimer Wheeler (1944-1948) was appointed, and in the capacity of the Survey's new Director General proposed innovations in line with Woolley's criticism. Wheeler promoted the release of a new publication, Ancient India (1946), and edited its first five issues. A comprehensive scholarly retrospective of prehistoric archeology, Wheeler's work focused primarily on exemplary sources from the Indus Valley Civilization – especially concerning the cities of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa.
With a great sense of planning in archaeological analysis and research, he tackled sites like Taxila, Harappa and Arikamedu (getting university students to do fieldwork) and introduced the concept of archaeological stratigraphy, thereby inaugurating his own tradition of excavation methodology, and leading to a source of both success and dissent.

The so-called three-dimensional recording is the technique devised by Wheeler for the identification of pits within trench sections, mainly used to achieve greater chronological accuracy of material evidence (see Fig. 1). In adopting this method, he consequently supported the comparative study of the various stratifications of ceramic objects in order to determine the succession history of a material culture of the sites under consideration.

The development of archaeology in the Indian subcontinent of this period (taking its first steps as early as the 1820s and 1830s) is characterized by the introduction of systematic studies of the protohistoric and prehistoric phases of India, generated by discoveries related to excavations in Gandhara and the Gangetic Valley. Wheeler, in fact, projected modern archaeology in a very ancient direction: from the discovery of iron tools at the excavations directed by him, he hypothesized the arrival of iron in the Indus Valley only in 400 B.C. (evidence of a prejudicial view) and, in the present city of Pondicherry, he defines an architectural structure as an Indo-Roman emporium (we now know that the Roman component is not the main one in this context).

4. «A forgotten age revealed»: the Buddhist slant

The relentless march of scientific archaeology from the 18th century onward, as a result of the Romantic sensibility of the time, is deeply linked to the idea of the changing nature of classical antiquity. For instance, in these years the German art historian and archaeologist Johann J. Winckelmann (1717-1768) as the highest theoretician of neo-classicism, championed theories on the Romantic image of ancient Greece. The primitive simplicity, architectural elegance, and order of classical antiquity became the formal canons that the innate and profound humanistic need attempted to unveil, moved by the deep Romantic desire to know classical Greco-Roman and Gothic – considered two sides of the same coin. (Mitter 2001: 13-33)

As we have seen through the brief détour on the emergence of the first systematic studies of languages and cultures of the Indian subcontinent, the origin of the Societies and the genesis of ASI, the birth of Orientalism entails a shift in gaze in both geographical and semantic terms: the meaning of Oriental art ceases in fact to refer solely to Egyptian and Persian experiences (Mitter 1977: 145) and expands to include the monuments of the Indian subcontinent. From this point on, a «golden age» (Mitter 1977: 143), that is the period that blended archeological finds in territories conquered by the British Raj with western influence or belonging, would be discovered and established.

As the active interest of the British government (encouraged by archeologists and officials) also grew, so too did concern for the preservation of antiquities and sites (in the days of the East India Company devoted especially to sites such as Bombay, Elephanta, Kanheri, Madapeswar, Ellora, Mamallapuram, Tanjore, Madurai, etc.).

With the emergence of classical archaeology, the adoption of new methods of scientific investigation, and the influences of pro-Hellenic Romanticism, Greek antiquity became part of the «European 'classic'» (Falser, 2015: 6) However, it was around 1833 that European scholars finally became aware of Gandhara art. Henry Hardy Cole (1843-1916), who had never doubted the perfection of classical art, in the face of the magnificence of the discovery in Gandhara, proposed a statement that would mark the beginning of an ideological and interpretative strand of cardinal importance for future research developments. Indeed, according to Cole, the early style of Buddhist art was superior to the later Hindu style, a predominance justified by Buddhist simplicity that recalled classical Greek elegance. Considering Sanchi's revealing example, he argues that the formative period of Buddhist art was generated by the influence of Greek powers:

> «There is reason to believe that Buddhist art was a good deal influenced by that of the Graeco-Bactrians. The Greek colonies in the Panjab have left a number of cravings and coins so far south-west as Mattra, and the exceptional excellence of

> the Sanchi bas-reliefs suggests that Greek masons, or possibly designers, may have been called in to assist the great work.» (Mitter 1977: 279)

In a period dominated by the Victorian sentiment of pursuit of the "sublime", the concept of picturesque became a spokesman for the Romantic Orientalist strand: among the most emblematic figures, both for their advocacy of this vision and for the academic and stylistic impact of Indian painting, Thomas and William Daniell stand out. Fergusson embraced the coeval trend and, as is clear from his publication Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindostan (1848), he defined the "picturesque" as «the only available frame of representation». (Guha-Thakurta 2006: 8)

As an example among many, this growing fascination with the various aspects of Buddhist ritual and tradition in the Gandhara context leads to new relevant discoveries, such as Shahji-ki-Dheri site tackleld by David Brainerd Spooner (from ASI), with the accreditation of Alfred Foucher.

The Gandharic area thus provided archaeologists and prominent figures such as James Fergusson (1808-1886) with the right yardstick for an esthetic measurement that took into account classical canons.
Vincent Smith, for example, was determined to show the indelible imprint of Greek dominance on Buddhist art, analyzing – often simplistically – the "local" art style of sites such as Bharhut, Sanchi, Ajanta and Amaravati deemed excellent examples of Western contact.

Among those who turned to Gandhara was Harold Arthur Deane (1854-1908), a soldier and officer of Malakand and the North-West Frontier under British rule. During his tenure as administrator of the far-western territories of the Raj, he witnessed a period of severe internal and external conflicts and uprisings and began to compose a narrative account. The itinerary he traced, from the Swat valley to the northernmost areas of Gandhara (the Panjkora and Barawal valleys) would take shape in the pioneering 1896 publication: the Harold Deane manuscript Note on Udyāna and Gandhāra was not only the ambitious drafting of an ancient topography of Swat (Morgan, Olivieri 2022), but also revealed trhe extent to which the «great classical bias» coloured the perception of Gandhara archeology. (Morgan, Olivieri 2022: 9)

Dean's investigation fits neatly into the coeval imperialist trend enraptured by India's antiquities, with a focus on Grecian touch (Morgan, Olivieri, 2022: 24): indeed, the manuscript, which completely ignores the centuries of Islam in Swat, reveals the – decidedly Victorian – slant of the investigation, aimed at demonstrating how much Buddhist tradition could be a spokesperson for the apogee of Indian civilization as it was inextricably intertwined with Greek, i.e. Western, aesthetic and cultural intervention.

Thus, these years of reflections and visceral debates would result not only in the Buddhist visual ideal finding its best expression in the "Greco-Roman" art

of Gandhara, but also in the emergence of a profound polarity between Buddhist artistic tradition (classical and "Greek") and Hindu production (primitive and indigenous).

Already with Cunningham, there was a strong distrust of historical and cultural value in Hindu tradition, so far as defining the eighteen Puranas as «the printing of all rubbish […] », comparing publications of ancient architectural and sculptural remains, to accounting documents. (Guha-Thakurta 2006: 32)

Similarly, James Mill (1773-1836) too defined Indian art as not only grotesque in taste and form, but also «offensive and not infrequently disgusting» (Mill 1818: 354). While William Hodges (1744-1797) went so far as to speak of the «Barbarick splendor of those Asiatick Buildings. » (Mitter 1977: 270)

Thus, it can be deduced that the great fascination for Buddhism was not a phenomenon solely generated by purposes of legitimization of British power (as seen in the preceding paragraphs) and resemblance to Greco-Roman artistic vocabulary: the emergence of this phenomenon also involved a debate on the superiority (in chronological and esthetic terms) of Buddhism over the Brahmanical tradition (thus, even before the well-known division between pre-Islamic and Islamic periods).

The rediscovery of such "lost greatness" of Indian civilization generated a profound paradox that would deeply affect not only European perception of British India, but even Indian perception of its own identity.

As already mentioned, the discovery of the ancient Indus Valley civilization was announced in the weekly newspaper The Illustrated London News on September 20, 1924 (Humes, 2012: 185): «The two sites where these somewhat startling remains have been discovered are some 400 miles apart – the one being at Harappa in the Montgomery District of the Panjab, and the other at Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana District of Sindh. Both these places contain a vast expanse of artificial mounds evidently covering the remains of once flourishing cities, which... must have been in existence for many hundreds of years. » (See Fig. 3)
As much as there was a paucity of traditions of archeological studies related, for example, to Jainism, the line of research immediately found great fascination and interest in Buddhist production.

As is well known, Buddhist art – especially figurative art – had a strong impact on European scholars, who now faced a new but readable common language: Buddhist production discovered by archaeological excavations between Gandhara and northwest India was immediately associated with the Indo-Greek presence, with a Hellenistic vocabulary. Alfred Foucher, first head of the Délégation Archéologique Française, concluded that the figure of the Buddha and the figurative development of Buddhism, were innovations to be attributed to Greek coexistence. (Falser, 2015: 43)

The debate inaugurated by the Orientalist Foucher on the origins of the Buddha image engaged the attention of many scholars, again promoting studies of Gandharic art using a Greco-Hellenistic lens.

However, this debate was characterized by a focus on form rather than context. One reason lay in the issue of museum collections and exhibitions. For example, Buddhist art can be said as representing a kind of visual illustration of Siddhartha's story.

Among the many stupas, reliquaries, monasteries, and Buddhist works excavated by teams of archeologists from the late 1800s onward, much of the related material culture had come into the possession of private individuals or state museums (in Britain as well as the Subcontinent).

Many nineteenth-century collectors and antiquarians were interested in Buddhist sculptures, for example, without particular care to record them chronologically or in terms of geographic and architectural location.
In fact, there is not much methodology in this regard: similarly, there is no all-encompassing strand exhibiting Greco-Roman history, nor examples of heterogeneous itinerary projects composed of artifacts explaining, for instance, the history of Rome.

This model can be approached in the Buddhist case: as seen throughout this short paper, given its role in India's colonial and independent history, and given the multiple implications of its study by past academics, it also acquired a special position in the expository context.

5. Conclusions

This essay firstly aimed to analyze the emergence of Orientalist studies, as a general and prolific environment characterized by a strong interest in the knowledge of the material culture and languages of Indian territory. By this reckoning, the context emerges as a historical contingency of the political-organizational needs of British rule:

> «Professor Said's central assertion was that Orientalism was an instrument of Western imperialism, in the form of "an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness" whereby, in setting out to "discover" the cultures of Asia, Orientalists reshaped an Orient to suit their own Occidental prejudices. » (Allen 2002: 4)

As observed, systematic research conducted by intellectuals (professionals as well as amateurs), made possible the founding and development of the Archaeological Survey of India. In this regard, the chief concern of this paper has been to open up to the directorships ranging from Alexander Cunningham (1871-1885) to

Mortimer Wheeler (1944-1948), who eventually left charge to N. P. Chakravarti (1948-1950).

The examples of case study are not exhaustive, as it would have been possible to narrate several other exhaustive motifs, monuments, events related to Buddhism in Swat Valley.

Yet, the most important point that this article tries to stress, by way of conclusion, concerns Greek and Buddhist "classicism", and can be summarized in three points. The engaging period of "Buddhist fascination" was indeed achieved by the observation of canons (architectural elegance and order in classical antiquity); secondly, by acknowledging the superiority of Buddhism, as Henry Hardy Cole asserts (1843-1916):

> «There is reason to believe that Buddhist art was a good deal influenced by that of the Graeco- Bactrians. The Greek colonies in the Panjab have left a number of carvings and coins so far south-west as Mattra, and the exceptional excellence of the Sanchi bas-reliefs suggests that Greek masons, or possibly designers, may have been called in to assist the great work». (Allen 2002)

Finally, the coeval Romantic sentiment, or humanistic pro-Hellenic interest, as seen in the framework of Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, by Eugène Burnouf (1844): «Romantics like Schlegel had earlier seen Buddhism as a primal fons et origo out of which all religions had sprung, a universal truth that answered to their romantic longing. » (Allen 2002: 198)

The final thoughts of this paper might (want to) emphasize some problematic terms and concepts that persist in this field of study, meaning the use of the term Civilization, the selfsame overbearing – sometimes abusive – employment of Orientalism, as well as of "Graeco-Buddhist art":

> «The excavations of Marshall and Spooner at Taxila and elsewhere (…) produced a wealth of wonderfully fluid Buddhist sculptures from the first to the fourth centuries CE that (…) showed clear evidence of Hellenistic influence, and were therefore termed "Graeco-Buddhist". (…) It is generally agreed that the Kushans, lacking any monumental artistic heritage of their own, adopted and then developed the Greek traditions of their Bactrian predecessors. » (Allen 2002: 287)

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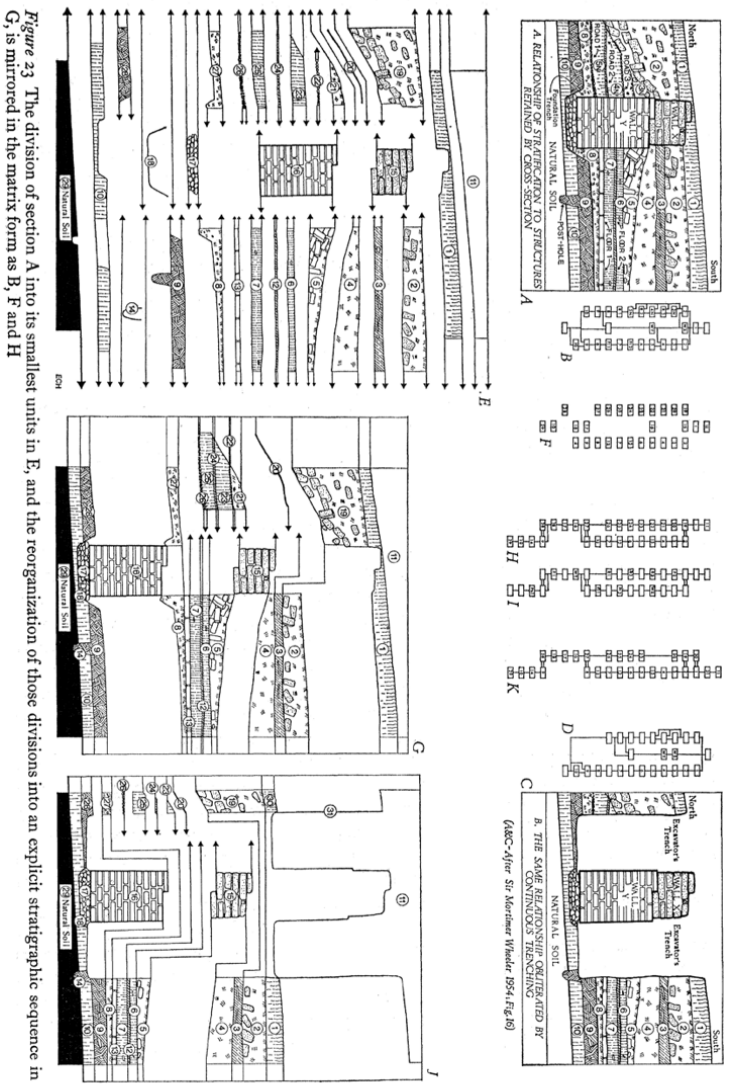


Fig. 1 - Example of three-dimensional recording by Mortimer Wheeler (after Harris 1975: fig.23).

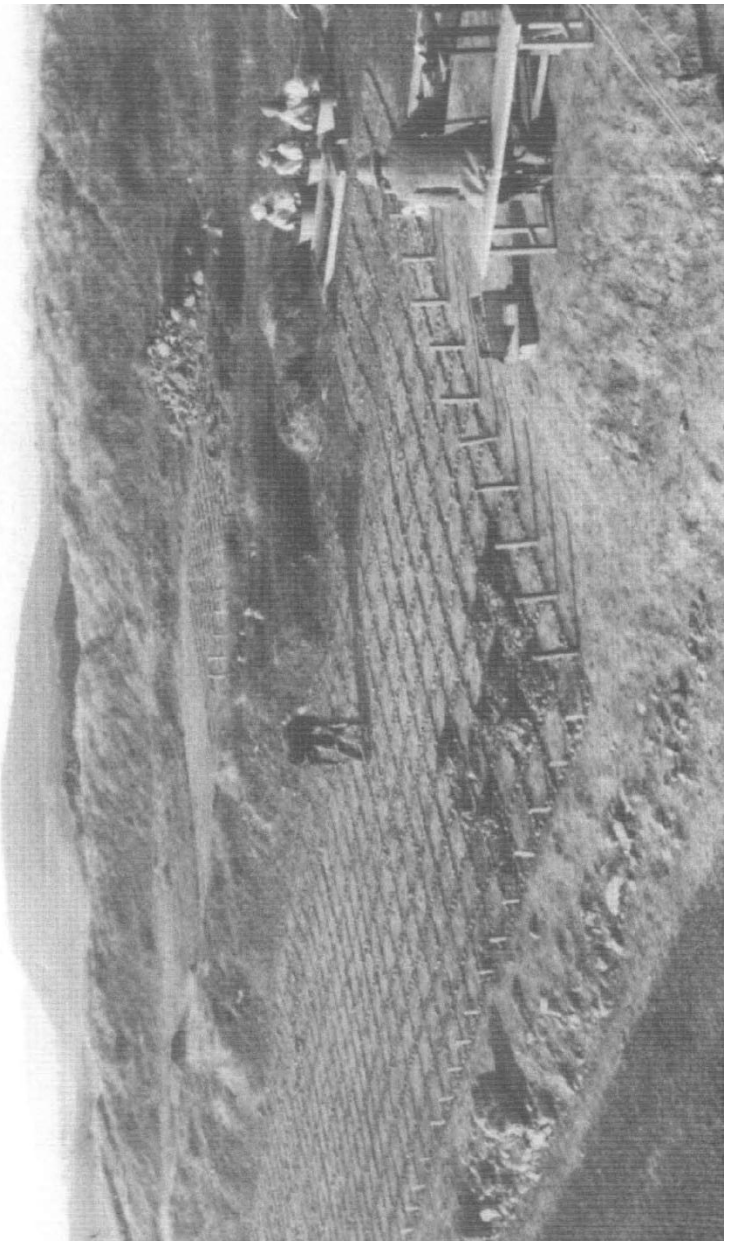
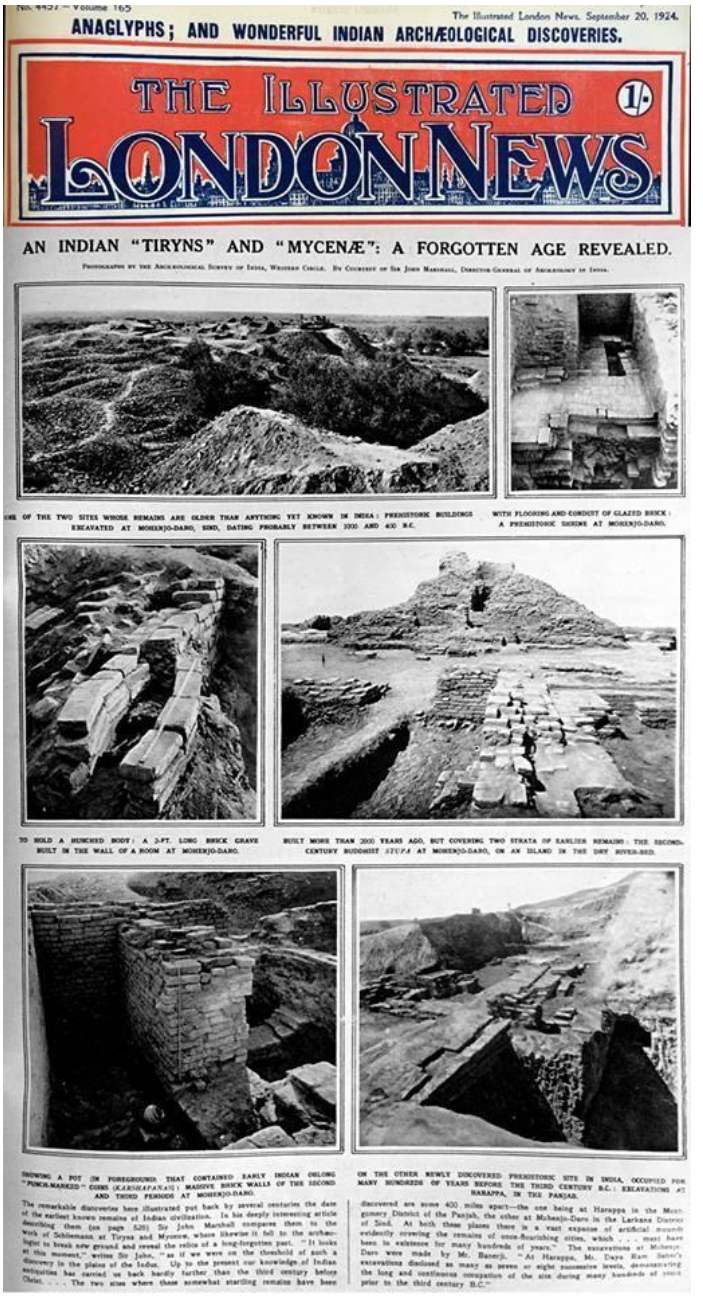


Fig. 2 - Excavation of Sirkap, SKR, Taxila, 1944-45
(after Sudeshna 2003: fig.1).



The Illustrated London News, September 20, 1924.

ANAGLYPHS; AND WONDERFUL INDIAN ARCHÆOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES.

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS 1/-

AN INDIAN "TIRYNS" AND "MYCENÆ": A FORGOTTEN AGE REVEALED.

Photographs by the Archæological Survey of India, Western Circle. By Courtesy of Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archæology in India.

ONE OF THE TWO SITES WHOSE REMAINS ARE OLDER THAN ANYTHING YET KNOWN IN INDIA: PREHISTORIC BUILDINGS EXCAVATED AT MOHENJO-DARO, SIND, DATING PROBABLY BETWEEN 3000 AND 400 B.C.

WITH FLOORING AND CONDUIT OF GLAZED BRICK: A PREHISTORIC SHRINE AT MOHENJO-DARO.

TO HOLD A HUNCHED BODY: A 3-FT. LONG BRICK GRAVE BUILT IN THE WALL OF A ROOM AT MOHENJO-DARO.

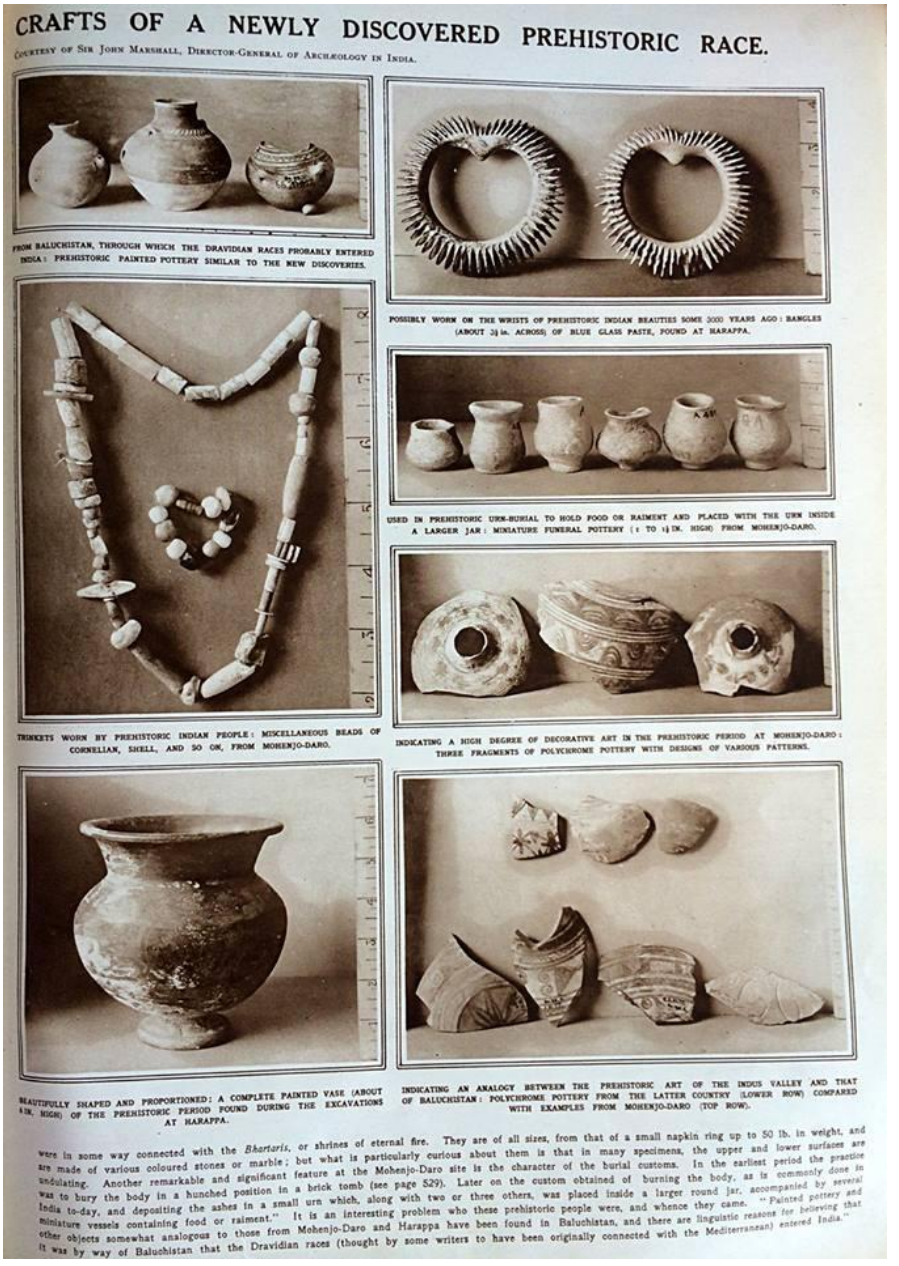
BUILT MORE THAN 2000 YEARS AGO, BUT COVERING TWO STRATA OF EARLIER REMAINS: THE SECOND-CENTURY BUDDHIST *STUPA* AT MOHENJO-DARO, ON AN ISLAND IN THE DRY RIVER-BED.

SHOWING A POT (IN FOREGROUND) THAT CONTAINED EARLY INDIAN OBLONG "PUNCH-MARKED" COINS (*KARSHAPANAS*): MASSIVE BRICK WALLS OF THE SECOND AND THIRD PERIODS AT MOHENJO-DARO.

ON THE OTHER NEWLY DISCOVERED PREHISTORIC SITE IN INDIA, OCCUPIED FOR MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS BEFORE THE THIRD CENTURY B.C.: EXCAVATIONS AT HARAPPA, IN THE PANJAB.

The remarkable discoveries here illustrated put back by several centuries the date of the earliest known remains of Indian civilisation. In his deeply interesting article describing them (on page 528) Sir John Marshall compares them to the work of Schliemann at Tiryns and Mycenæ, whose likewise it fell to the archæologist to break new ground and reveal the relics of a long-forgotten past. "It looks at this moment," writes Sir John, "as if we were on the threshold of such a discovery in the plains of the Indus. Up to the present our knowledge of Indian antiquities has carried us back hardly further than the third century before Christ. . . . The two sites where these somewhat startling remains have been discovered are some 400 miles apart—the one being at Harappa in the Montgomery District of the Panjab, the other at Mohenjo-Daro in the Larkana District of Sind. At both these places there is a vast expanse of artificial mounds evidently covering the remains of once-flourishing cities, which . . . must have been in existence for many hundreds of years." The excavations at Mohenjo-Daro were made by Mr. Banerji. "At Harappa, Mr. Daya Ram Sahni's excavations disclosed as many as seven or eight successive levels, demonstrating the long and continuous occupation of the site during many hundreds of years prior to the third century B.C."

Fig. 3 - Article in The Illustrated London News, September 20, 1924 (after Mehta 2016: fig.2).



CRAFTS OF A NEWLY DISCOVERED PREHISTORIC RACE.

COURTESY OF SIR JOHN MARSHALL, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ARCHÆOLOGY IN INDIA.

FROM BALUCHISTAN, THROUGH WHICH THE DRAVIDIAN RACES PROBABLY ENTERED INDIA: PREHISTORIC PAINTED POTTERY SIMILAR TO THE NEW DISCOVERIES.

POSSIBLY WORN ON THE WRISTS OF PREHISTORIC INDIAN BEAUTIES SOME 5000 YEARS AGO: BANGLES (ABOUT 2¾ in. ACROSS) OF BLUE GLASS PASTE, FOUND AT HARAPPA.

USED IN PREHISTORIC URN-BURIAL TO HOLD FOOD OR RAIMENT AND PLACED WITH THE URN INSIDE A LARGER JAR: MINIATURE FUNERAL POTTERY (1 TO 1¾ IN. HIGH) FROM MOHENJO-DARO.

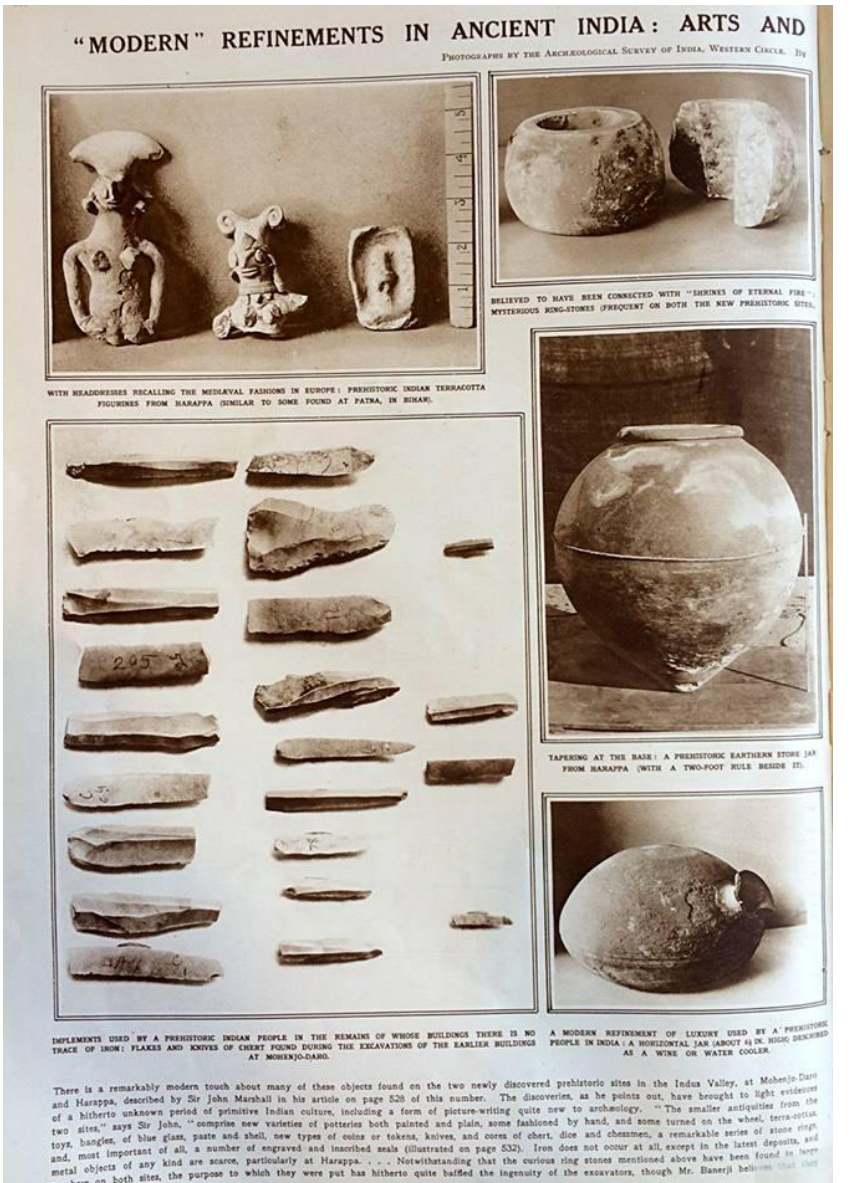
TRINKETS WORN BY PREHISTORIC INDIAN PEOPLE: MISCELLANEOUS BEADS OF CORNELIAN, SHELL, AND SO ON, FROM MOHENJO-DARO.

INDICATING A HIGH DEGREE OF DECORATIVE ART IN THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD AT MOHENJO-DARO: THREE FRAGMENTS OF POLYCHROME POTTERY WITH DESIGNS OF VARIOUS PATTERNS.

BEAUTIFULLY SHAPED AND PROPORTIONED: A COMPLETE PAINTED VASE (ABOUT 8 IN. HIGH) OF THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD FOUND DURING THE EXCAVATIONS AT HARAPPA.

INDICATING AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE PREHISTORIC ART OF THE INDUS VALLEY AND THAT OF BALUCHISTAN: POLYCHROME POTTERY FROM THE LATTER COUNTRY (LOWER ROW) COMPARED WITH EXAMPLES FROM MOHENJO-DARO (TOP ROW).

were in some way connected with the *Khartaris*, or shrines of eternal fire. They are of all sizes, from that of a small napkin ring up to 50 lb. in weight, and are made of various coloured stones or marble; but what is particularly curious about them is that in many specimens, the upper and lower surfaces are undulating. Another remarkable and significant feature at the Mohenjo-Daro site is the character of the burial customs. In the earliest period the practice was to bury the body in a hunched position in a brick tomb (see page 529). Later on the custom obtained of burning the body, as is commonly done in India to-day, and depositing the ashes in a small urn which, along with two or three others, was placed inside a larger round jar, accompanied by several miniature vessels containing food or raiment." It is an interesting problem who these prehistoric people were, and whence they came. "Painted pottery and other objects somewhat analogous to those from Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa have been found in Baluchistan, and there are linguistic reasons for believing that it was by way of Baluchistan that the Dravidian races (thought by some writers to have been originally connected with the Mediterranean) entered India."


"MODERN" REFINEMENTS IN ANCIENT INDIA: ARTS AND

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA, WESTERN CIRCLE. By

WITH HEADDRESSES RECALLING THE MEDIÆVAL FASHIONS IN EUROPE: PREHISTORIC INDIAN TERRACOTTA FIGURINES FROM HARAPPA (SIMILAR TO SOME FOUND AT PATNA, IN BIHAR).

BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN CONNECTED WITH "SHRINES OF ETERNAL FIRE": MYSTERIOUS RING-STONES (FREQUENT ON BOTH THE NEW PREHISTORIC SITES).

TAPERING AT THE BASE: A PREHISTORIC EARTHERN STORE JAR FROM HARAPPA (WITH A TWO-FOOT RULE BESIDE IT).

IMPLEMENTS USED BY A PREHISTORIC INDIAN PEOPLE IN THE REMAINS OF WHOSE BUILDINGS THERE IS NO TRACE OF IRON: FLAKES AND KNIVES OF CHERT FOUND DURING THE EXCAVATIONS OF THE EARLIER BUILDINGS AT MOHENJO-DARO.

A MODERN REFINEMENT OF LUXURY USED BY A PREHISTORIC PEOPLE IN INDIA: A HORIZONTAL JAR (ABOUT 8½ IN. HIGH) DESCRIBED AS A WINE OR WATER COOLER.

There is a remarkably modern touch about many of these objects found on the two newly discovered prehistoric sites in the Indus Valley, at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, described by Sir John Marshall in his article on page 528 of this number. The discoveries, as he points out, have brought to light evidences of a hitherto unknown period of primitive Indian culture, including a form of picture-writing quite new to archæology. "The smaller antiquities from the two sites," says Sir John, "comprise new varieties of potteries both painted and plain, some fashioned by hand, and some turned on the wheel, terra-cottas, toys, bangles, of blue glass, paste and shell, new types of coins or tokens, knives, and cores of chert, dice and chessmen, a remarkable series of stone rings, and, most important of all, a number of engraved and inscribed seals (illustrated on page 532). Iron does not occur at all, except in the latest deposits, and metal objects of any kind are scarce, particularly at Harappa. . . . Notwithstanding that the curious ring stones mentioned above have been found in large numbers on both sites, the purpose to which they were put has hitherto quite baffled the ingenuity of the excavators, though Mr. Banerji believes that they

Fig. 4 - The dating of the ancient Indus civilization was actually done through a letter to the Editor of the Illustrated London News by Professor A.H. Sayce on September 27, 1924. (Allen, 2002) This was the issue right after Marshall's sensational article on the discovery of the mysterious new cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro seven days earlier (after Possehl 2019: fig. 2-3).

Fig. 5 - Archeological Survey of India; John and Florence Marshall with Officers and Staff of the Archeological Survey, Simla, 25 April 1925, Silver Gelatin Print, 212 x 183 mm (after Guha 2010: fig.1).