

## APPENDIX I

### Graphic Summary \*

Given the particular nature of the sculptures and the complexity of their analytical survey, it has been judged appropriate to supply the text with recapitulatory charts of distributions and drawings as a visual overview of the reconstruction process.

The reconstruction drawings presented here do not cover the whole range of iconographic types. They take into consideration only types or specimens that permitted safe renderings, which is to say reconstructions based on complete retrieval of details through internal comparisons, or at least highly probable integrations of non-extant or conjectured parts.

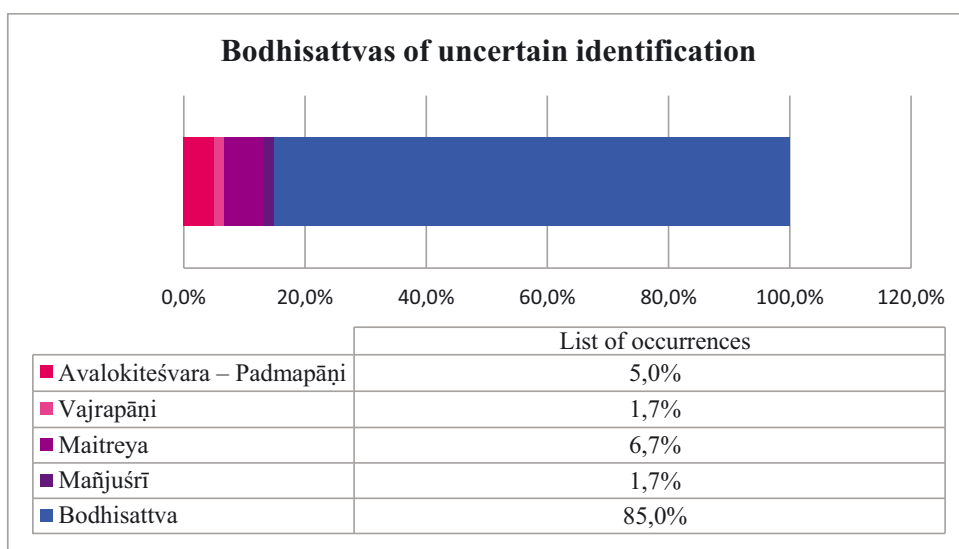
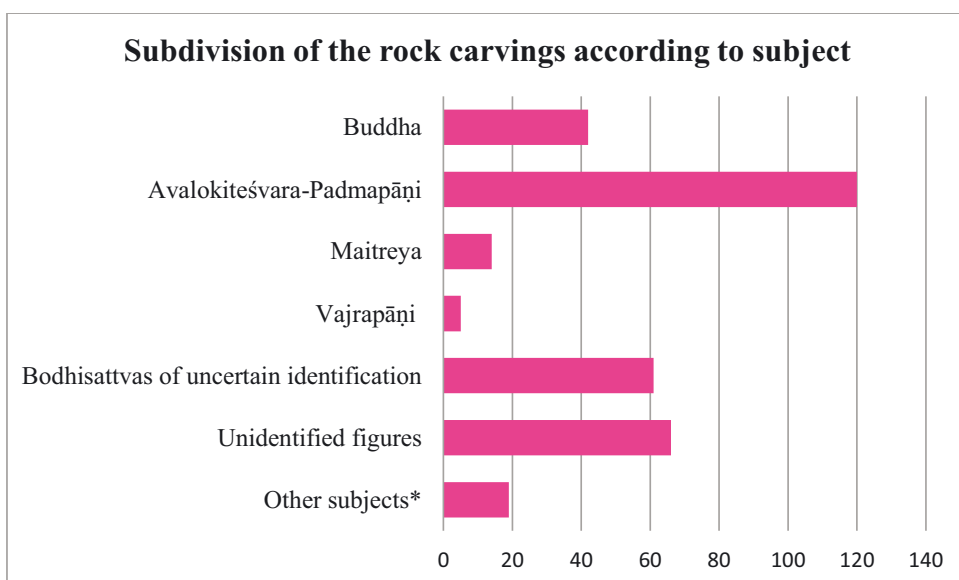
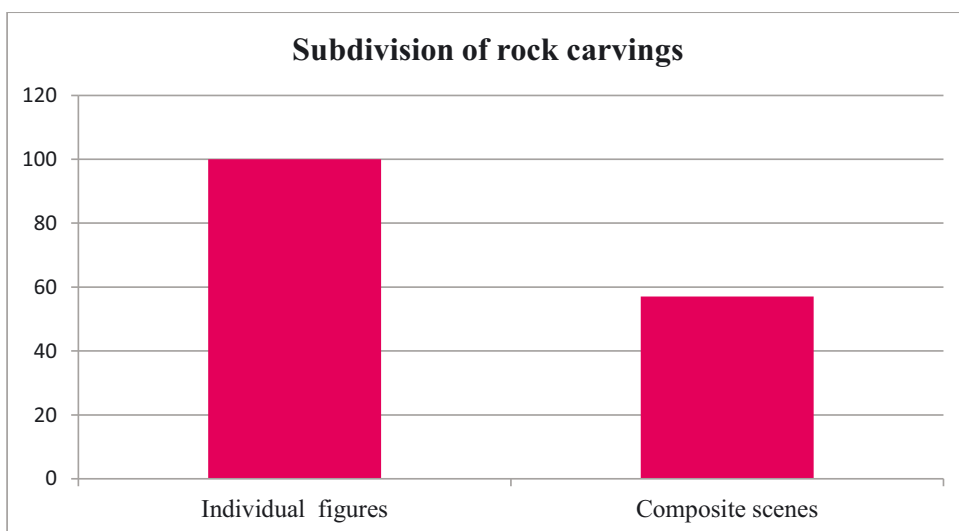
For the sake of simplicity and internal coherence, the numbering of the drawings generally follows an order based on a categorisation of types rather than a strict conformity to the succession of references in the text.

Special focus has been put on iconographic types (such as Maitreya and Vajrapāṇi) whose recognition provided new paradigms for understanding the internal code, features, and pantheon composition of this artistic production, at the same time highlighting its prominent place in the cultural history of Buddhist art and culture.

Specimens that, though fully recognisable on account of their unmistakable profile, are too poorly preserved are excluded from the reconstruction process. This is the case, for instance, of the eight-armed goddess killing a caprid (Inv. Rep. S70; II: Fig. 72a,b) and the eight-armed bodhisattva of stela S124 (II: Fig. 109).

These reconstructions are to be considered a work in progress, whose main scientific aim is to provide a preliminary thesaurus to be enriched, refined or corrected as new studies on comparable material hopefully appear.

\*Distribution charts by Sara Marsano. Drawings by Anna Filigenzi and Bernardo Velletri.



\*Other subjects include worshippers, donors, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, *stūpas*, flying genii.

Buddha figures

Buddha figures



GS 1



GS 2



GS 3

Buddha figures



GS 4



GS 5



GS 6



GS 7

Buddha figures



GS 8

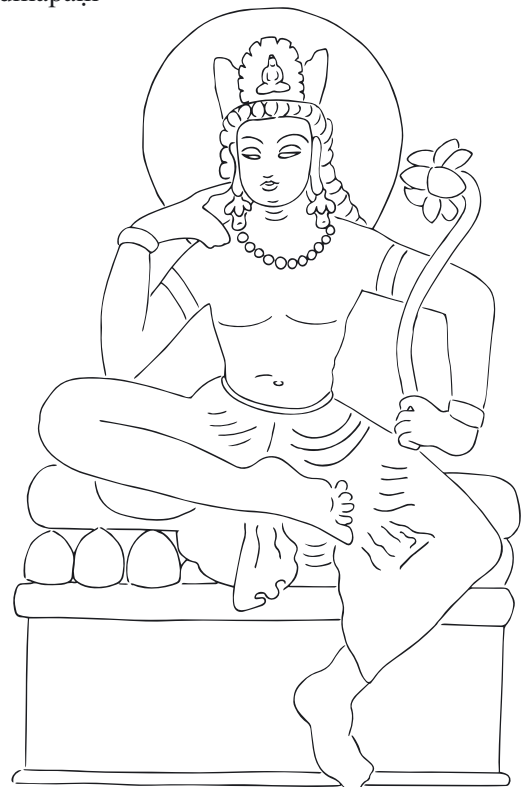


GS 9

Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi

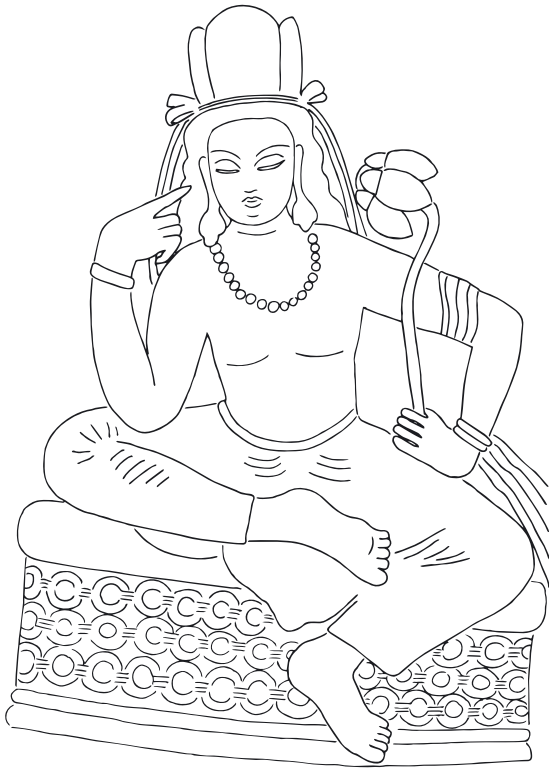


GS 10

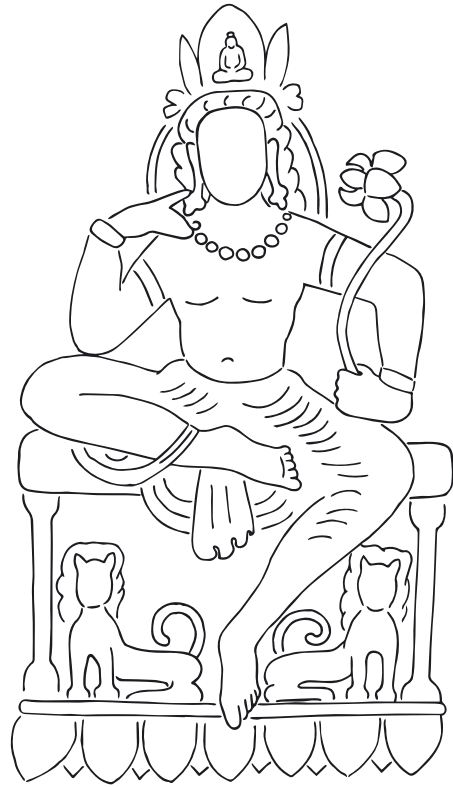


GS 11

Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi



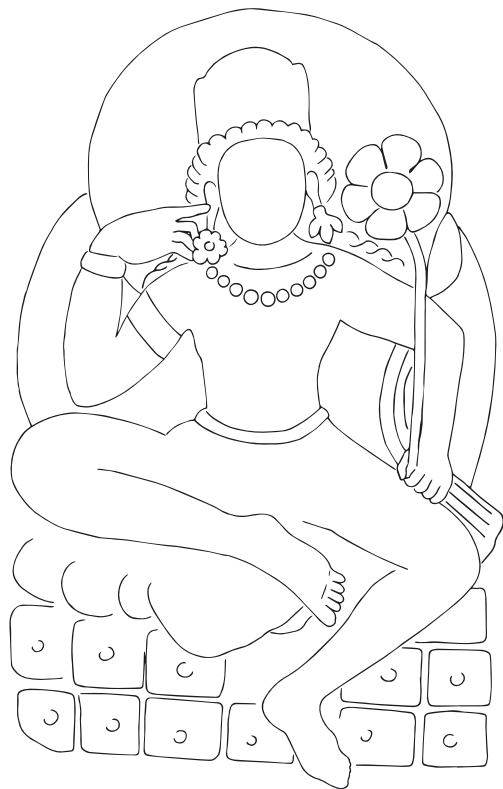
GS 12



GS 13

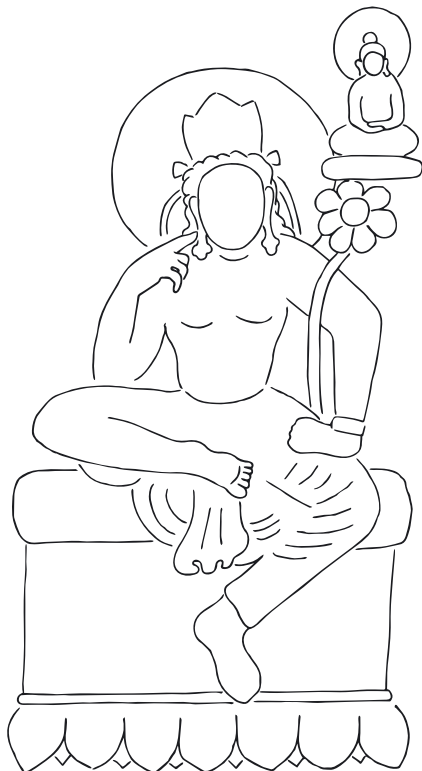


GS 14

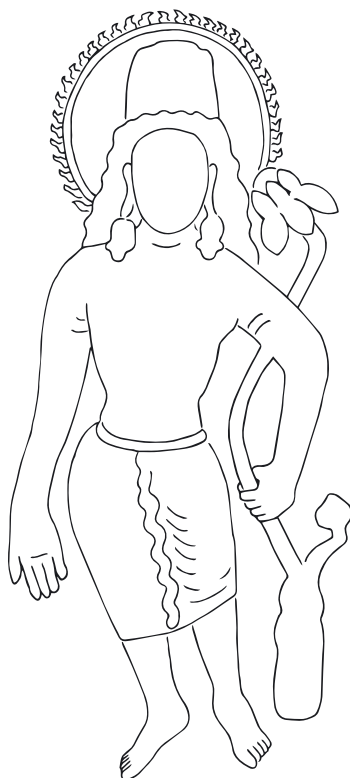


GS 15

Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi



GS 16



GS 17

Maitreya

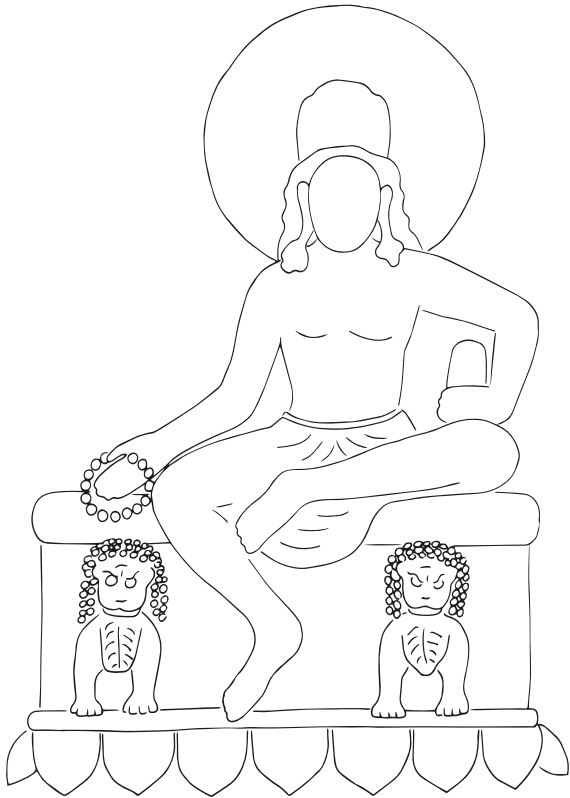


GS 18

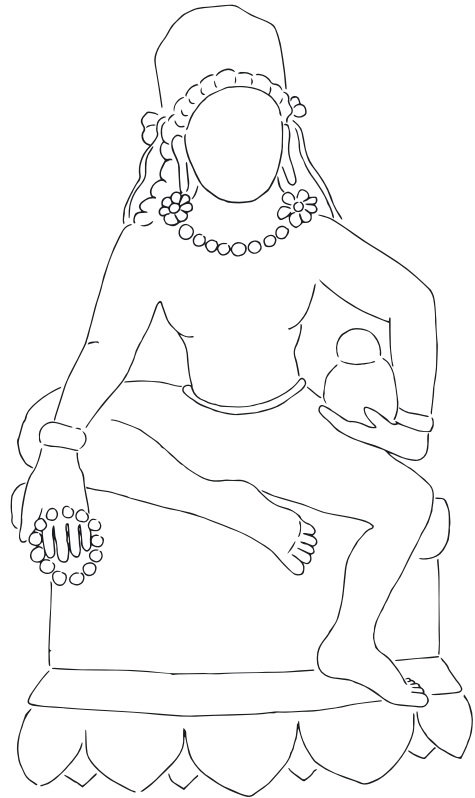


GS 19

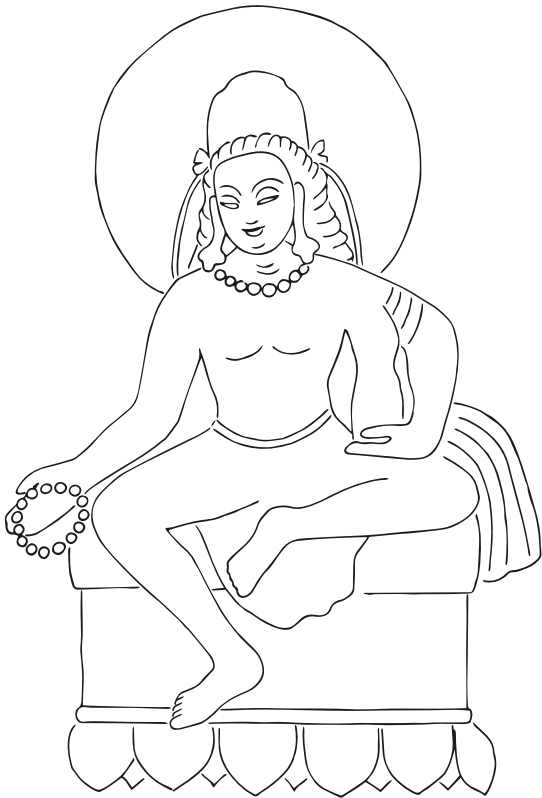
Maitreya



GS 20



GS 21



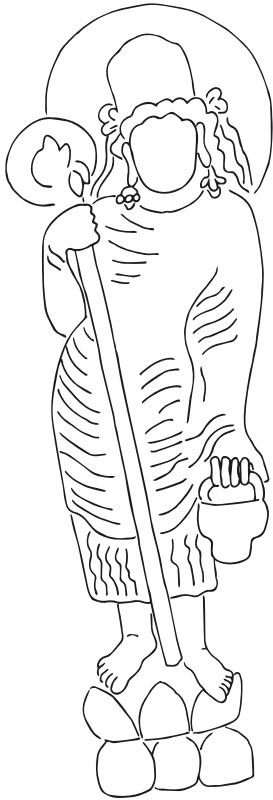
GS 22



GS 23

Maitreya

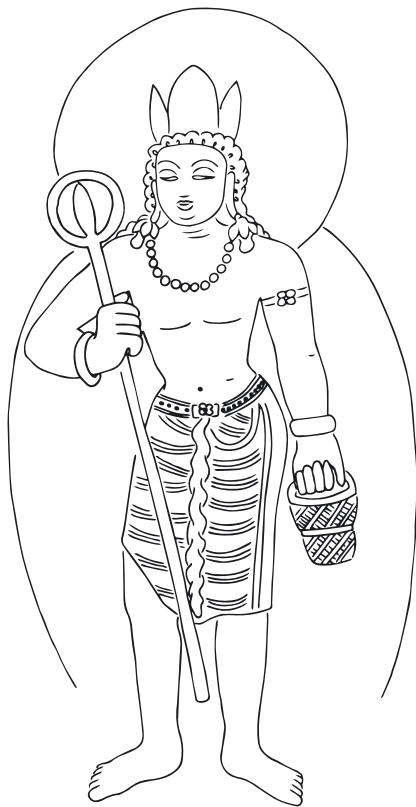
Maitreya



GS 24



GS 25



GS 26



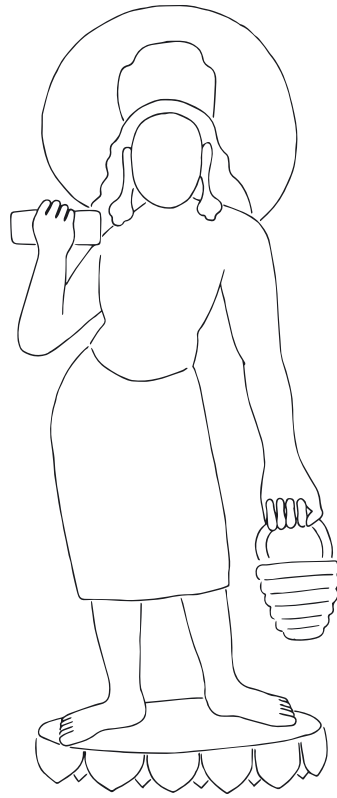
GS 27

Appendix I

Maitreya

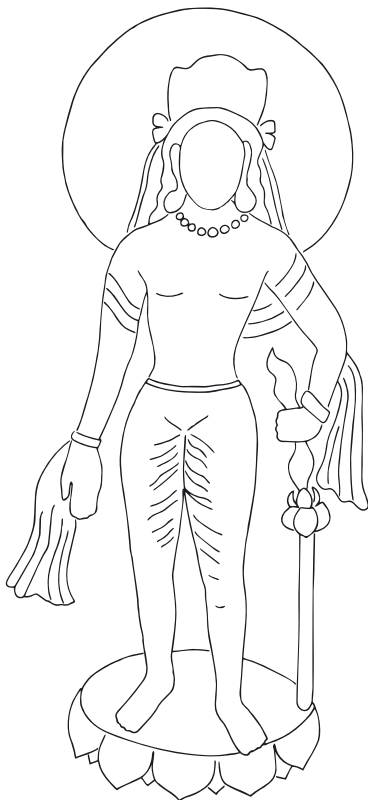


GS 28

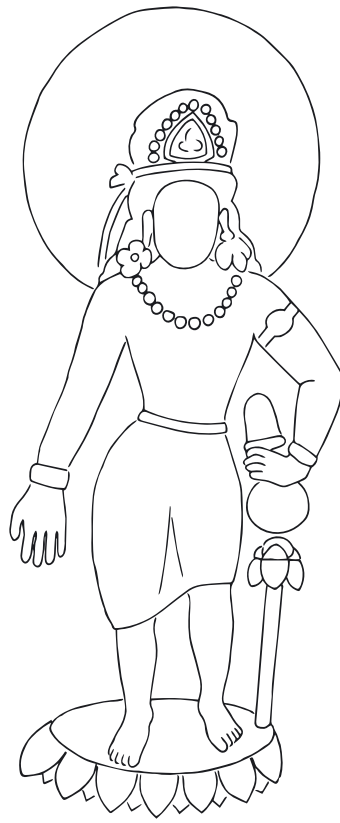


GS 29

Vajrapāṇi



GS 30



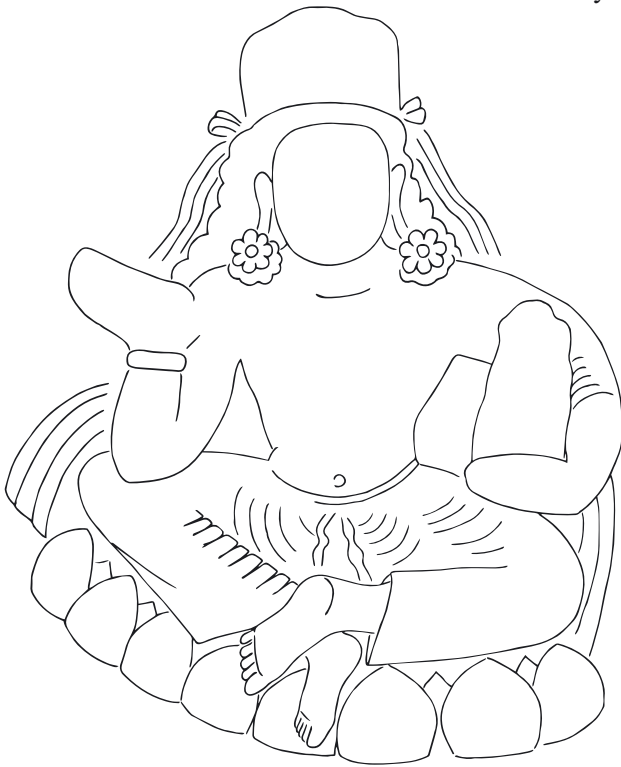
GS 31

Vajrapāṇi

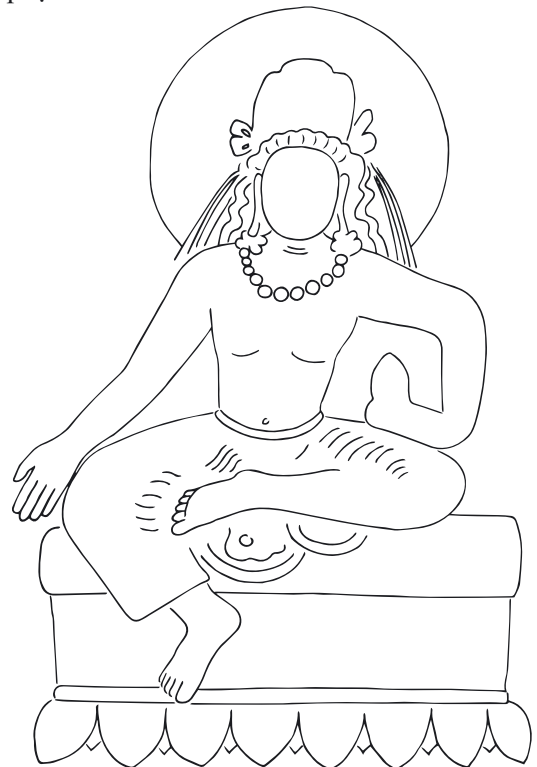


GS 32

Maitreya/Vajrapāṇi



GS 33



GS 34

Maitreya/Vajrapāṇi



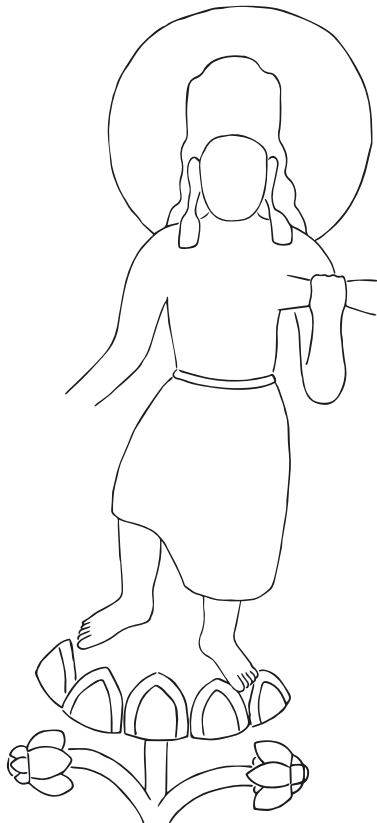
GS 35

Mañjuśrī



GS 36

Maitreya/Mañjuśrī



GS 37

*siddha*



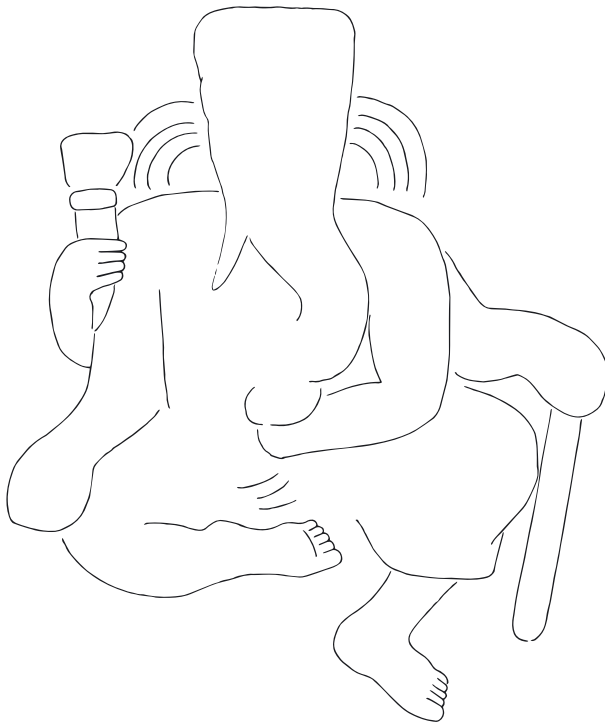
GS 38

Sūrya



GS 39

Gaṇeśa



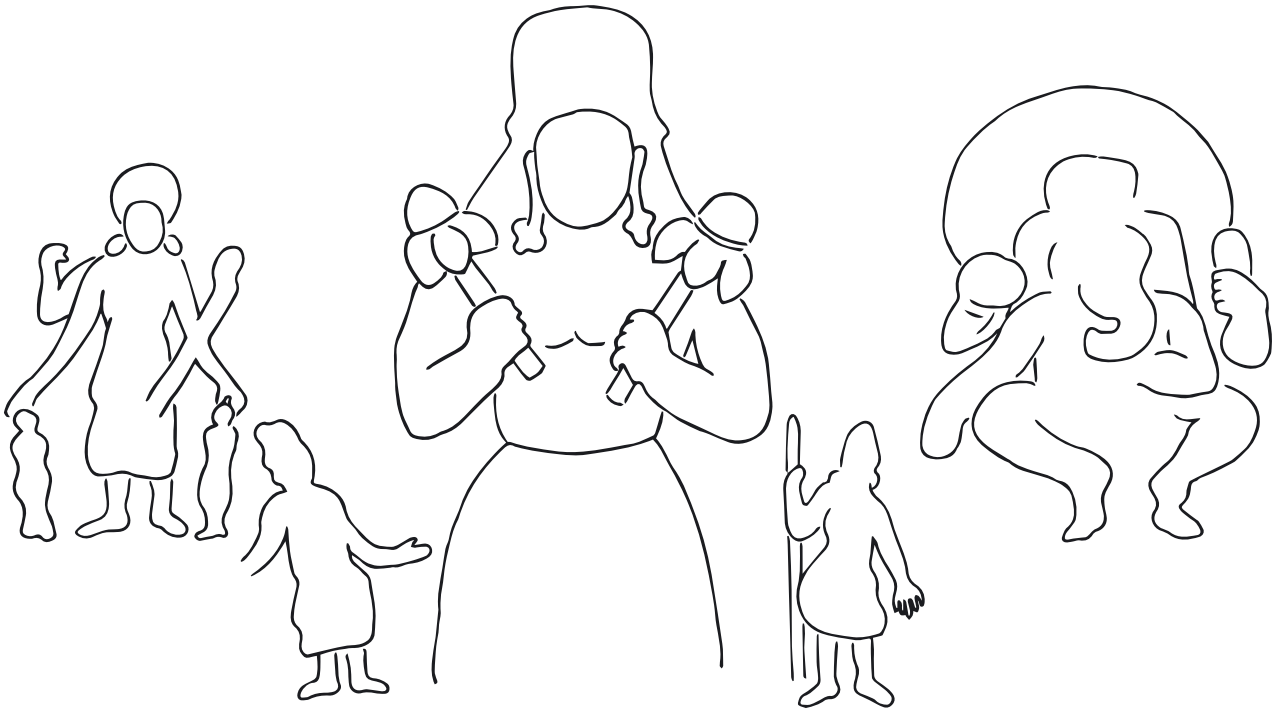
GS 40

Sūrya and Gaṇeśa



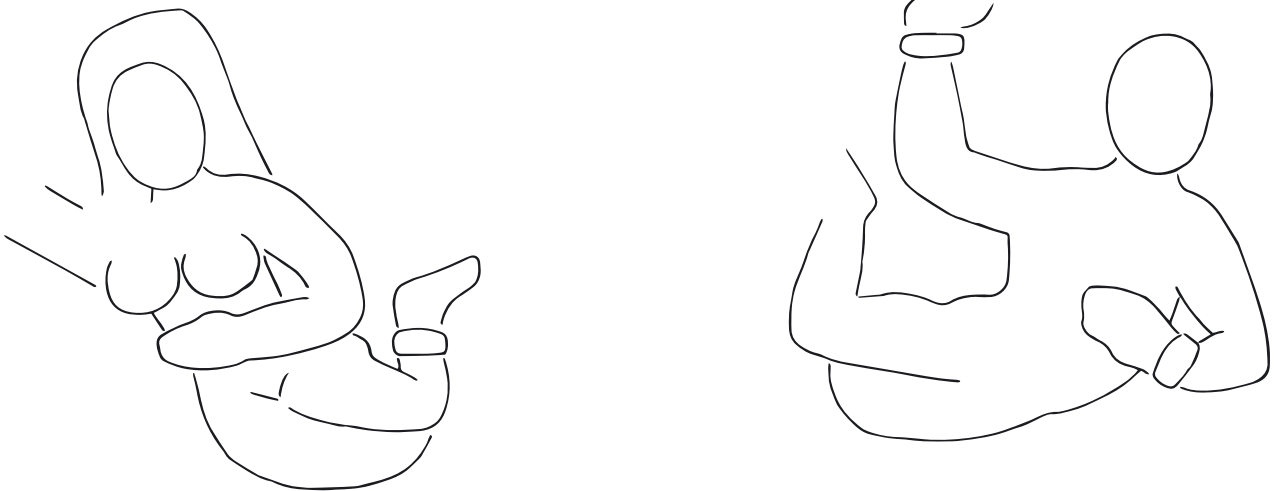
GS 41

Sūrya and Gaṇeśa



GS 42

*gandharva/vidyādhara*



GS 43

## APPENDIX II

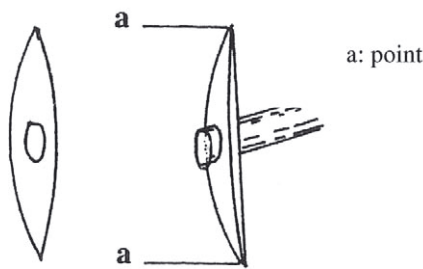
### Rock-cut carving and stelae in the Swat Valley: a commentary on the carving technique by Peter Rockwell

Most essays describing the techniques of a group of carvings can follow a rational sequence, describing the tools and the techniques involved. For a number of reasons this is not possible with the rock-cut carvings and the stelae of the Swat Valley. These carvings show a variety of technical contradictions (or so it seems at least to this observer) between the carvings and differences from both what one would normally expect and what one sees in other areas and periods of stone carving. Therefore this essay will take the form of a series of commentaries which will attempt to give a technical description of the carvings as well as explain how unusual they are. The result may not solve the problem of how these works were carved but rather suggest why such a solution is difficult to arrive at. Finally, some of the reasons for the technical anomalies certainly exist outside the area of technique. The carver/sculptors may have had to meet religious or aesthetic paradigms which required that they carve in particular ways or meet unusual conditions. As this is an essay on technique it is not the place to discuss this aspect, although it may be necessary to suggest its existence.

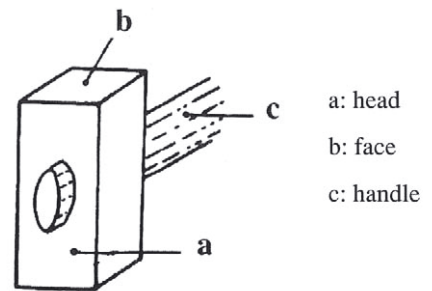
The first technical anomaly and perhaps the most important is that whereas most stone sculpture done in a limited period in a particular area is executed in one or two usually similar stones (the rock-cut temples in Deccan are all carved in volcanic tuff while the carving in Mahabalipuram and the surrounding area is all in a form of granite), the carvings in the Swat Valley are in a wide variety of stones which not only vary greatly in hardness but also in their reaction to tools. Many of the carvings are in gneiss, a hard granite-like stone. But there are also carvings in marble, a medium-hard material which is worked differently from gneiss, while still others are carved in forms of limestone, generally a softer stone. Finally, one unfinished stela is carved on green schist, a very soft stone which also has a tendency to split easily. Each of these stones has characteristics which required it to be carved differently and often with different tools from the others. We are thus presented with a group of stone-carving sculptors who were technically sophisticated enough to be experienced with a wide variety of stones and knew that they must be treated differently, often with different tools.

There are two over-life-sized rock-cut Buddhas which are virtually identical in pose but in different materials. One (C92; II: Figs. 92a-d) in gneiss is carved on a rock face rather high above ground level. It is perhaps the largest of the rock-cut Buddha figures. The other (C115; II: Fig. 115; GS 2) is in marble, also large, considerably over-life-sized, but at ground level. The pose and design of the drapery are very similar, yet there are obvious differences in the sculptures. The sculpture in gneiss is in lower relief, and the drapery folds, the spaces under the legs and overall depth of relief of the details are much less pronounced than those of the marble Buddha. The marble Buddha has small details of design – such as a twisting fall of drapery from the right ankle and the treatment of the drapery where it lies across the platform on which the figure is sitting – which are carved much more ornately than on the gneiss figure. The gneiss figure has decorative falls of drapery in the same area, they are just simpler and in low relief. At first sight we might attribute these differences to different artists, period or clients.

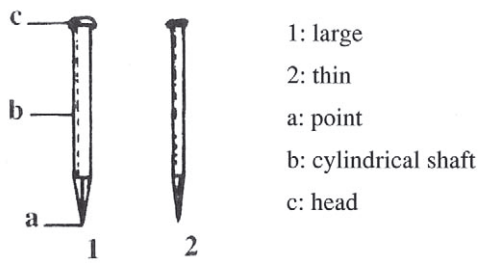
The gneiss has been carved using a sculptor's pick hammer or *picchiarello* – a common tool in granite carving (Fig. 50). This tool, still in use in Swat, is like an axe with the cutting part being a point at one or both ends. The tool hits the stone at a ninety-degree angle, slowly chipping away the material. The carver gradually picks out the form, breaking off small pieces of stone with each blow. He does not cut the stone but rather shatters it. With this tool it is easy to engrave shallow lines and forms, but more difficult to create a three-dimensional form. It is especially difficult to cut deep narrow passages and next to impossible to carve undercuts into the stone. Because this Buddha in gneiss was in good condition until the iconoclastic attack in 2007 (see Chap. 3.1, fn. 60), we can see in the details such as the eyes and the lines of the drapery the little holes made by the pick hammer (II: Figs. 92b,c). At no point do we see the long lines of a tool passing along the stone.



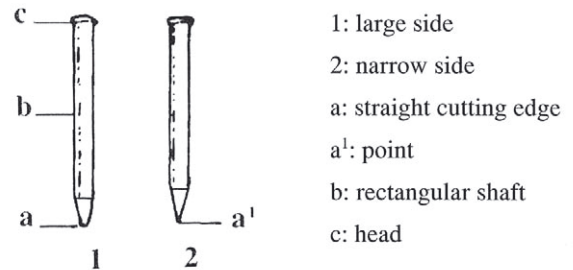
**Fig. 50** – Picchiarello (after Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 27, pl. 1.6; modified by the author)



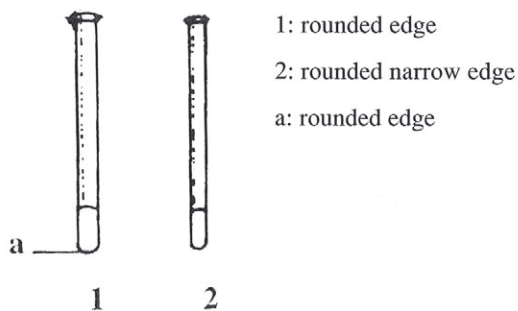
**Fig. 51** – Hammer (after Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 27, pl. 1.1; modified by the author)



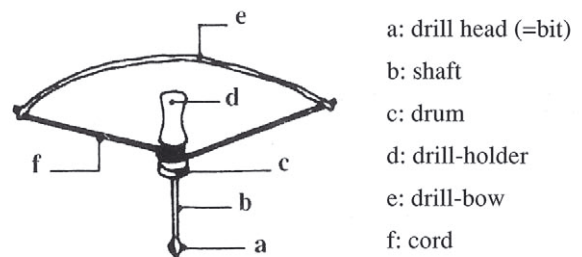
**Fig. 52** – Point chisel with cylindrical shaft (after Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 28, pl. 2.1; modified by the author)



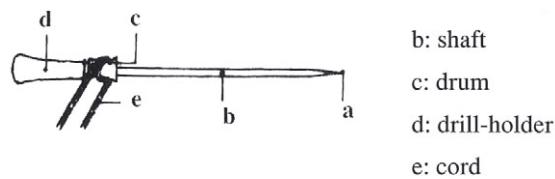
**Fig. 53** – Point chisel with rectangular shaft (after Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 28, pl. 2.2; modified by the author)



**Fig. 54** – Rounded edge chisel (after Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 28, pl. 2.4; modified by the author)



**Fig. 55** – Bow drill (after Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 30, pl. 4.1; modified by the author)



**Fig. 56** – Strap drill (after Faccenna and Filigenzi 2007: 30, pl. 4.2; modified by the author)

The marble Buddha is in much worse shape. The head and shoulders of the figure are damaged so as to be unrecognisable. However, we can see that the whole figure is carved more deeply into the stone and the arms and legs cut more roundly and in deeper relief. The drapery beneath the legs is carved more intricately and in deeper relief as well. Although the damage makes the tool marks much harder to recognise, there are no signs of the *picchiarello* visible. The more complicated drapery around and beneath the ankles seems to be carved with a hammer (Fig. 51) and flat or round-headed chisels (Figs. 52-54). It is possible that a drill (Figs. 55-56) was used in the areas of complicated drapery. In other words, the sculptor is using a marble carving technique which allows him to carve deeper incisions and a more three-dimensional form.

A third figure, this time from Puran (Olivieri 1994: fig. 19; here, Figs. 36a,b,c), has been carved with a *picchiarello*. I do not have an identification of the material but it looks like gneiss. One can see this from the details of the arm bracelets as well as from the drapery beneath the raised ankle and foot (Figs. 36b,c). Although the relief is deeper and the drapery is in slightly deeper relief and more complicated than that on the first gneiss figure, one can see that the carver has avoided the more intricate folds of the marble Buddha. The difference between these two gneiss carvings suggests the difference between two sculptors' interpretations of the medium, whereas the difference between these and the marble carving show the differences between the handling of two types of stone.

A fourth carving is an unfinished stela in schist (S105; II: Figs. 105a,b,c), the soft stone that was used frequently in Gandharan sculpture. In this carving one sees the use of a point chisel to rough out forms. These forms are carved out deeply and not rounded, but the cuts to outline the arms and legs are vertical to the face of the stone. One has the impression that the depth of relief will be even greater than the marble carving. The carver is clearly working with a very soft stone which allows both deeper and cleaner cutting even than the marble. Interestingly, the workmanship is not the same as unfinished Gandharan sculpture. On this stela there is much more work with a point chisel whereas at the same level of work a Gandharan sculptor would be using a flat chisel. The composition of the figure indicates that it is probably contemporary to the rock-cut figures discussed above.

The conclusion we can draw from this comparison is that we are dealing with sculptures carved by sculptors who were capable of working in different materials with different techniques. If we do not accept this, we have to presume that there were enough sculptors working in the Swat Valley, during a period in which it was not an important centre, that there could be specialists in each material. Both possibilities have existed in different periods. There was specialisation in Western Europe and the northern US in the second half of the nineteenth century. For example, the granite decoration on the outside of the New York State Capitol building was carved by sculptors of German descent whereas the soft sandstone interior work was done by Irish carvers. However, there were over a thousand stoneworkers working on the building at the time. Given the number of rock-cut carvings it is impossible that there would have been such a large number of sculptors working in the Swat Valley during the period in question.

An opposite example can be given from the present: I have been working in a carving shop in Carrara, with no more than fifteen workers, where the carvers were able to carve in almost any stone. This is because there are now no large carving shops; each needs to be able to do work that arrives from many parts of the world, such as a full sized portrait of the wife of the President of Korea in marble, a large granite abstraction for Europe, or limestone carvings for North America. It is therefore necessary for carvers in this workshop to work in many different types of stone. However, this type of workshop depends entirely on modern tools, such as the pneumatic hammer and tungsten carbide (Widia) cutting tips, which allow a marble carver to treat granite with a technique that is closer to marble technique than was possible before the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the case of the stela and especially the rock-cut carvings in the Swat Valley, it seems to me that the only reasonable possibility is that a small number of sculptors were forced to learn to work in a variety of materials. The reasons for this unusual situation are derived from the special conditions they worked under. The first of these is the peculiar geological nature of the Swat Valley. Existing as it does along a major geological fault, it seems to contain almost every variety of stone imaginable. While almost every other area with stone monuments has only one or two workable stones – for example, marble at Pisa, volcanic tuff in Deccan and on Easter

Island, and travertine and peperino in Rome – the Swat Valley has gneiss, marble, limestone, schist, and slate. Even in the Gandharan monuments, on which the sculpture and carved decoration were made in schist, the structures were in a variety of stones, often that which was closest to the building site. Thus the schist could be reserved for the sculpture and carved decoration. The second reason is that these are rock-cut sculptures, and it is possible that the places where the rock-cut figures were sculpted were determined by clients not on the basis of the stone. Perhaps the placing of the rock-cut carving was dictated by the presence of a monastery or a particularly holy site. Given the variety of places where these carvings are found, this seems the most likely explanation. Therefore the carvers had to be prepared to work in any one of a variety of stones. The geological makeup of the area is so complex that the conditions did not exist for the carvers to specialise.

An important characteristic of the rock-cut carvings is the lack of preparation of the surroundings for the carvings. The sculptures are occasionally cut into rock faces, as with the large gneiss Buddha, but in many cases they are carved on rocks sticking up out of the ground. If the rock face is slanted, then so is the relief. If the mass of the rock is rounded, then the figures at the sides are either smaller or set lower than those in the centre (C30, C48; II: Figs. 31a and 48a respectively). The figures always seem to be carefully placed so that they do not break the original profile of the mass of the rock. No attempt is made to prepare the form of the rock for the reception of the sculpture. The sculpture is carved to fit the rocks rather than the rocks being shaped to give a controlled space for the carving. An interesting comparison is with the carving in Mahabalipuram. The rock forms there are often rounded boulders (it is evidently one of the oldest unchanged geologic areas in the world). The boulders are much more detached from their environment than those in the Swat Valley. Yet the carving of these forms is so complete that they have lost all sense of being boulders. Even those areas where the basic outline of the natural rock forms has been preserved have been so completely filled with carved figures and architectural forms that the original outline of the rock is totally unimportant (see S.L. Huntington 1999: 302-303, figs. 14.16 and 14.18). Thus while the Swat carvers allow their work to be dominated by the natural surroundings, those in Mahabalipuram dominate the natural surroundings.

The closest thing I have seen to this sort of treatment of carved designs to the natural rock face is the drawings on the rock faces in the Upper Indus Valley (see Jettmar 1982). The Swat carvings are not put together in such a confused overlapping grouping as these drawings, it is true.<sup>240</sup> There is control and composition in the relationship of various figures. However, the siting seems to have an almost accidental characteristic about it, as if the carvers either do not care about the surroundings or desire the surroundings to dominate the sculpture. Little or nothing has been done to create a monumental environment for the figures or to group them with some sense of a formal aesthetic.

It is important to note how unusual it is for rock-cut carving to be carried out in this way. We have rock-cut carving in many areas of the world, from Egypt, Jordan, India, China, Korea, Italy (Etruscan tombs) and the modern United States (the portraits of four presidents at Mount Rushmore and a Confederate Memorial in Georgia). In every case the intent is for the carving to dominate the environment and not vice versa. It would seem that we are dealing not with an accident but with a technical-aesthetic decision. It cannot even be said that the placing of the carvings in some way protects them or avoids the inevitable weakness of the outer surfaces of the rocks. The reliefs carved on slanted stones are more subject to weathering than they would be if they were vertical. Nor are the figures of some of the carvings (C30, C48) set enough below the top of the block to avoid either weathering or the natural weakness that the more weathered surfaces would have. Thinking in technical terms, it almost seems as if some of the carvings were sited so as to make them as difficult to carve as possible.

A characteristic that the stelae have in common with the rock-cut carvings is that the outer shape of the block shows no signs of special shaping (Figs. 1-2). It would seem that the stelae were not quarried as such.

<sup>240</sup> It is interesting to note that the Swat carvings in gneiss and the carvings and the inscriptions in the Upper Indus Valley are carried out with the same type of tool used in the same way, although in the case of some of these works the tool may have been a stone rather than metal tool.

More likely, they were either smaller stones found in the fields or stones that could be conveniently broken from a larger mass. Therefore they share with the rock-cut carvings a lack of interest on the part of the sculptors in preparing a carved environment for the figures. The principal differences between the stelae and the rock-cut carvings are two. The first is that with a few exceptions (S69, S85, S140, S141; II: Figs. 71a,b [GS 39], 87, 140 [GS 38] and 107 [GS 18] respectively) the stelae all depict single figures.<sup>241</sup> The stelae are obviously meant to be simpler and dedicated to only one figure, whereas the rock-cut sculptures are more complex in their frequent representation of several figures and the way they relate to each other. In technical terms, this means that the stelae are simpler to design and to carve.

The second distinction between the stelae and the rock-cut carvings is that the stelae all have a flat background to the figures. The background would seem to be the same level throughout.<sup>242</sup> This means that the sculptors could be preparing their design much as archaic Greek sculptors prepared their reliefs. The method involves first drawing an outline of the figure on the face of the stone. Then the stone around the outline is carved away to a flat plane which is the background. After this, the rounding of the figures and their details are carved as a separate process. If this is the method by which the stela figures were carved, it means that for a design the sculptor needs only a simple outline drawing. The details of dress and anatomy are not included in the design but are invented by the sculptor as he carries out the final carving. The one unfinished stela, the schist piece (S105), suggests that this is the process. Nonetheless, this description of the method must be considered a hypothesis, as we have only one example. In any case the fact of the flat background is an important distinction between the stelae and the rock-cut carvings.

In the rock-cut carvings the shape of the outer line of carving around the figure or groups of figures is just enough to allow the sculptor to carve the figure to the depth desired. It is as if the sculptor drew his basic design on the rock face and then started carving, leaving just enough space from the outline of the figure to allow carving the relief to the desired depth. The effect is almost like having a shadow outline around the figure which always follows the outline of the figure itself. This effect is especially clear in the gneiss carvings, such as the large Buddha (C115), but it is also clear in the other gneiss carvings. The marble carvings, in contrast, have a much deeper cut around the figures, which allows a deeper relief. The cut is also inclined to be at a sharper angle to the front face of the stone. One would suspect that the reason for this is the hardness of the gneiss, which makes it much more difficult to cut deep relief into it.

Another interesting and unusual technical characteristic of many of the rock-cut reliefs is that the background – what there is of it – is not flat but rather a concave curve moving into the stone. Because of this the relief of many of the figures is deepest between the torso and the arms of the figures. One has the impression that the carver started from the outside and worked toward the centre of the relief, carving deeper and deeper relief as he got nearer the centre. I have never observed a technique like this before and it is therefore difficult to explain its logic. One can only presume that it somehow facilitated the carving of the relief, although it is not clear why it did so.

This technique is not without variations, which suggests that it was thought out and not an automatic reflex. There is a large sculpted rock that has two groups on one side (C30; II: Fig. 31a). The larger group is made up of a central figure on a sort of throne flanked by two standing figures, while to the right of the figure standing on the right-hand side is a smaller figure that may or may not be part of the three-figure composition. The relief curves in toward the figures in much the same way it does in other compositions. However, the central figure stands out from the background further than the two side figures, while the deepest part of the background is not between the arms and torso but the area immediately behind the outline of the central enthroned figure, thus clearly defining the outline and emphasising the importance of this figure. The sculptor has clearly thought

<sup>241</sup> It should be noted that S140 is perhaps the most sophisticated in design of all those I have seen, including the rock reliefs. The organisation and balancing of the figures, as well as the upper framing, look much more carefully designed than any of the other sculptures.

<sup>242</sup> The only exception is again S140.

about his relief's subject matter and modified the normal relief carving technique in order to emphasise the central figure. The result of this analysis of the relief techniques is to suggest that we are dealing with sculptors who are not simply craftsmen following a formula. They may have had formulas that they normally followed, but they were capable of making modifications when necessary.

The *picchiarello* has already been briefly described, but it deserves more attention because it is so important to the effect of the gneiss sculptures, which represent a majority of the rock-cut sculptures. As far as I know, the *picchiarello* was very seldom used as a finishing tool. Instead, it held the same place in the carving process of marble as the tooth chisel normally does in marble. It clarifies forms roughed out with a point chisel but does not clearly define them. In granite carving or in carving with stone tools (Inca and some Egyptian carvings, for example) the *picchiarello* or a pointed stone that functions in the same way as a *picchiarello* gradually refines the surface of the stone until it is ready for smoothing with abrasives.<sup>243</sup> To my knowledge, the gneiss carvings of the Swat Valley are the only sculptures where the *picchiarello* is used as a finishing tool. This leads to a certain kind of finished surface to the figures. Because the *picchiarello* works by striking the stone vertically and breaking away small pieces, it cannot cut sharp edges or deep narrow passages, which would create strong sharp-edged shadows. Therefore the surface of a sculpture finished with a *picchiarello* always has a certain softness of form. The forms are clearly visible but lack any sharp edges. This can be clearly seen in the face of the large gneiss Buddha (C92; II: Fig. 92c): the eyebrows are clear but the line formed by the juxtaposition of the forehead with the eye socket is soft because of the way it was cut. The same is true for the hair, where there is a certain softness in the passage between the forms. Thus the use of a particular tool, the *picchiarello*, imparts a certain effect to the sculpture.

The question that comes to mind, of course, is to what extent this is intentional. The carvers used different tools on the softer stones, so they certainly knew that the *picchiarello* was not the only tool available. This might suggest that its use was intentional. However, its use exclusively on the gneiss sculpture suggests that this was the only tool they had that could reliably cut the gneiss. The lack of any hard stone work finished with abrasives suggests that they did not have or did not know how to use abrasives to achieve a sharper finish. From another point of view, however, if they were satisfied by the effect of the *picchiarello*, why try for a sharper finish? It seems to me that the finish must have implied intentionality on the part of the sculptors because it is so consistent.

A major effect of the soft finish of the *picchiarello* is something that is impossible to convey in photographs. When one sees the figures in better condition, such as the large Buddha, they do not seem so much sculptures in stone as living presences in the hillside. The way they fit into the stone face without architectural framing or preparation of flat surfaces for the relief, combined with the softness of the detail, makes these figures seem to be expression of the mountains themselves rather than of human labour. This same effect is brought about by those reliefs that are carved into unprepared boulders. The question we must ask, then, is whether this technique is an intentional method to express a certain religious viewpoint. Is the carving done this way to show us that these religious figures actually exist in the environment? I certainly do not have sufficient knowledge of Buddhism to know if this notion would be consistent with its beliefs.

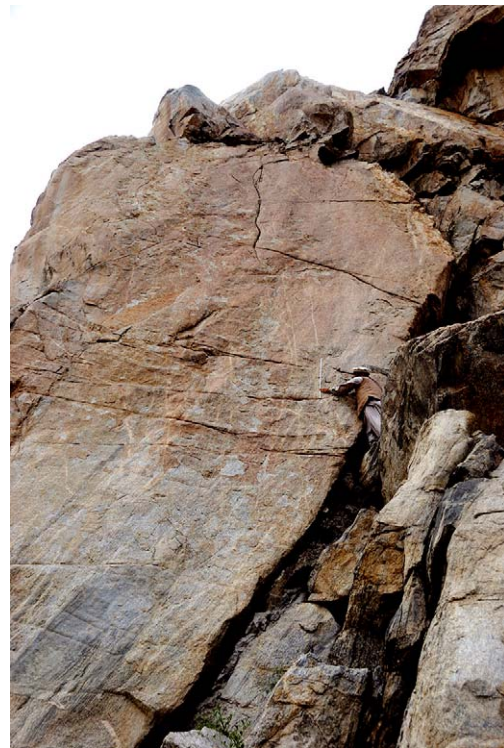
There is a problem concerning the statues which is made most clear by the carving of the eyes on the large Buddha C92. These eyes are carved as flat surfaces between the eyelids. There are no pupils or details within the eye proper. Were they left this way because they were intended to be painted with colour, or were they in fact painted and the colour has weathered away? This is of course a problem with all the rock-cut figures as well as with the stelae. They may have been intended to be painted, and there is nothing in the carving inconsistent with this, but the paint no longer remains. We know that some Gandharan and much ancient statuary were painted so there would be nothing inconsistent in painting them. However, the lack of any evidence of paint means that we have no way of answering the question.

<sup>243</sup> The *picchiarello* is also used as a sort of drawing tool, creating drawings on polished coloured stones. Examples of this can be seen in modern Muslim tombstones in Swat and on some Ancient Egyptian granite figures. The marks of the *picchiarello* are white against the colour of the polished stone, thus creating the drawing.

How were these reliefs designed and how were the designs applied to the stone? Again we face a lack of evidence. There are no signs on the carvings themselves of centring lines or measuring lines. In fact, there is no evidence showing a method of applying a drawing to the stone. We can see that these carvers were either unaware or uninterested in the earlier methods of using incised lines for working from design to finished carving.

A notable element of these sculptures, both the rock-cut figures and the stelae, is the limited number of designs and figure types. Added to this is the simplicity of their placing without any architectural settings. What variations there are could easily be the product of an individual sculptor, carried out while he was carving. It would therefore seem that we have two possibilities for the way the designs were passed. The first is that there existed some sort of design book or series of drawings of the basic figure designs that a sculptor would carry with him as a part of his tools. This solution is one often preferred by art historians for other periods: the existence of a sort of pattern book that could be copied and passed on. An interesting variation on this existed in the Carrara workshop, which in the 1960s specialised in Christian religious statuary. There was a printed catalogue which contained nothing but small photos of most of the variations on the Virgin and important saints. When a statue was ordered, the carver was simply told to do number 23, for example, and given the height. Thus one would see a carver carving a statue of the Virgin with flowers in a block of marble almost two metres high, working from a printed photograph only about twenty centimetres high. The carver did not take measurements but worked only by eye. There is no reason why the carvers of the Swat Valley could not have been working in the same way from a set of simple line drawings. The question then is what was the material on which these line drawings were made?

There is, however, another method within the traditions of stone carving. This is the simple one by which an apprentice carver learning the trade also learns a group of traditional designs. These designs do not need to exist except in the memory of the master, who can then pass them on to his apprentices, who memorise them. Given the fact that the carvings in the Swat Valley have few basic designs which are repeated with variations, this seems to me as likely an explanation for the continuity of the designs as the existence of drawn designs on paper, wood, etc.



**Figs. 57a,b** – Saling (Baltistan): Graffito or preparatory sketch for a relief (a: after Klimburg-Salter 1982: 20, fig. 2; b: courtesy Heidelberg Akademie der Wissenschaften, Felsbilder und Inschriften am Karakorum Highway)

In either case, the carver probably simply sketched the composition on the stone with a coloured stone or a piece of charcoal and worked from there.<sup>244</sup> Given the lack of any sign of measuring marks or incised design lines, this seems most likely. What this presumes then is probably a small number of itinerant or semi-itinerant sculptors who were prepared to carry out commissions within a limited number of designs. What makes them different from what one would expect from this description is their ability to work in a variety of different stones requiring different techniques. They were not simple craftsmen used to working in one or two materials. They were sophisticated craftsmen at least in terms of their ability to adjust to a variety of stones. In this sense our image of humble itinerant sculptors is wrong. They were technically highly competent stone-carvers.

Another aspect of their technical skill is their ability to work on rocks lying about in the countryside. Under the normal conditions of carving, one avoids stone that has been on the surface and weathering for a long period of time. This is because this stone is likely to have fractures and weakness caused by its long exposure to the elements. The Swat sculptors were obviously working with this sort of stone. One must presume, I think, that the stones they were working with weathered well, or that they had some choice in location so that they could avoid those areas where the stone was not fit for the type of sculpture that they carved.

A further point contradicting the image of a simple itinerant sculptor is the variety of details added to their basic designs and the quality of the works, even given the weathering damage they have received. This is true both of the lower drapery of the large marble carving (C115) and of the details of some Padmapāṇi figures (e.g. C41; II: Fig. 36, GS 11; cf. also the above-mentioned relief from Puran). Especially on this latter figure the carving of the flowers, the drapery falling from his waist under his ankle, and the necklace all show a delicacy and an individuality of carving that suggest an expert sculptor. We are thus looking at the work of sculptors who could not only handle large sculptures but also add delicate and interesting details. This, as well as the ability to handle a variety of stones, indicates sculptors of considerable ability and training.

This combination of a small number of basically repetitive overall designs and a lack of any interest in a background or framing for the figures, along with the seemingly contradictory evidence of elements of technical virtuosity, is what makes it so difficult to place these sculptors in relation to carvers and sculptors in other places and periods. In contrast, the carvers of Mahabalipuram from close to the same period are wonderfully consistent. Perhaps we can only say that there must have been special conditions in the Swat Valley in the seventh and eighth centuries which allowed for or demanded sculptor/carvers with such seemingly contrasting characteristics.

Finally, from my point of view as a carver I can feel only great admiration for the qualities of the sculpture they were able to create under difficult conditions. Carving on site is difficult enough without the added difficulty of carving in the countryside on rock faces or masses rising from the field. The condition of stone types and their positioning represented circumstances for the sculptors that make it difficult to imagine that these craftsmen could have learned their trade somewhere else. I therefore think we must be dealing with a local tradition which developed locally and lasted as long as there were clients who wanted this type of work.

<sup>244</sup> Possible evidence in support of this hypothesis is offered by a gigantic graffito (c. 8 m high) in Saling (opposite Khaplu, Baltistan), representing a bodhisattva (Figs. 57a,b). This graffito might rather be the outline sketch of a relief never executed. The inverted-V lines above the head of the figure, indeed, suggest a canopy frame, which is more congruous to a relief. Though from a different area, this appears to be a suitable comparison for the technique we can conjecture in Swat. Moreover, the presence of canopies elsewhere, serving the function of protecting rock reliefs, makes even more significant their absence in Swat (cf. Chap. 3.2, fn. 65). I am grateful to Martin Bemann for pointing out to me the particular case of Saling, and for providing the relevant photograph [note by A. Filigenzi].