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# Conservation and iconographic analysis of early Buddhist wall paintings from southern Uzbekistan

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**Abstract**—This paper delves into the conservation initiative undertaken for the wall paintings discovered at the Fayaztepa Buddhist site in southern Uzbekistan. It also presents findings from an iconographic study of the paintings. The Fayaztepa site, excavated by L. I. Al'baum in the 1970s, was found to be a Buddhist temple complex featuring a stupa and a monastery. The coins recovered during excavation indicated that the temple was operational during the Kushan dynasty (1st-3rd century AD). Some of the wall paintings discovered at the monastery have undergone treatment and are on display in the museum, while the rest are kept untreated at the Institute of Archaeology in Samarkand. Between 2016 and 2020, the author, in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology, implemented a conservation project focused on the wall paintings from Fayaztepa. The conservation of four wall paintings was consequently completed and made available to the public. The murals representing stupas are particularly interesting and offer unique insights into the transmission of Buddhist art. The shape of umbrellas can be compared with small stone stupas found in Gandhara. The ornamentation of the umbrella with a net of strands of pearls and small bells traces its roots back to the balustrades of Bharhut, central India (2nd or 1st century BC). It is therefore likely that the decoration consisting of a net of pearls and bells was introduced from India to Central Asia through the Gandhara region.

**Keywords**—Central Asia, Buddhist art, stupa, Kushan Dynasty, murals

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Several ancient Buddhist temple sites have been discovered in southern Uzbekistan near Termez on the northern side of the Amu Darya River. The best-known site is the Karatepa site, located 8 km northwest of the city, which is a large Buddhist temple complex consisting of several cave and ground temples. The Fayaztepa site is a Buddhist temple site located 900 m north of Karatepa, which was excavated by L. I. Al'baum in 1968-1976. Some clay statues, murals, and stone sculptures discovered during the excavations are displayed in the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan in Tashkent. In addition, drawings of murals decorating both the left and right walls of the shrine have been published and have attracted considerable attention, but the actual murals from that part of the shrine have never been exhibited and shown to the public. From 2016 to 2019, the author, in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology in Samarkand, conducted a conservation project for the Fayaztepa murals in the Institute's collection, completing the conservation of murals depicting male donors, known only from drawings and previously unknown murals, and published two volumes of reports with photographs of the murals [1][2].

This paper begins by reviewing the original locations of the six Fayaztepa murals shown in Al'baum's reports or exhibited in the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan, as well as the other two murals rediscovered during our project. Next, among the wallpaintings for which conservation has been completed, two fragments representing stupas and male donors are examined, their iconography is discussed, and the dating of the wall paintings is discussed. Based on the coins found and the iconography of the murals, Al'baum dated the Fayaztepa murals to the Kushan Dynasty (1st-3rd century). Recently, Lo Muzio published his opinion that murals date from the end of the 4th century onwards based on iconographic features.<sup>1</sup> The author followed Lo Muzio at the beginning of the project but now supports Al'baum's theory and considers the Fayaztepa murals to date back to the Kushan Dynasty. It is one of the few surviving sources of early Buddhist art in Bactria, the middle valley of the Amu Darya River.

Bactrian art is considered important, as it forms three schools of Kushan art, together with Gandhara and Mathura art, according to Schlumberger's discussion in 1960; however, there is very little surviving material.<sup>2</sup> Recently, well-preserved wall paintings depicting several figures have been discovered at the Karatepa site, and it is hoped that this increase in material will lead to further research [6: pp. 42, 46, 51]. We have used newly published Fayaztepa murals to consider the transmission and inheritance of Kushan art in Central Asia.

## II. FAYAZTEPA BUDDHIST SITE AND MURAL PAINTINGS

### A. Archaeological site

Excavations by Al'baum have shown that the Fayaztepa site is a Buddhist temple site consisting of a stupa and monastery.<sup>3</sup> The stupa is a double structure, with a larger stupa built in concentric circles over the older stupa. The monastery has a rectangular plan (118 m × 34 m) and consists of three square sections of approximately equal size, with the central axis inclined at approximately 30° from true north to west. Further excavations were conducted between 2002 and 2006 with the aim of conserving the remains. Fig. 1 shows the new plan developed at the time.<sup>4</sup> The central axis connecting Room 19, the entrance to Section B of the monastery, and Room 8, located in front of Room 19, was arranged to pass through the centre of the old and new stupas.<sup>5</sup> Section B is a rectangular courtyard (30 m × 20 m) surrounded by a series of small independent rooms. It is known that a colonnade runs along the walls surrounding the courtyard, as foundation stones for the pillars have been found. The importance of Room 8 (hereafter referred to as Room B8) is confirmed by its location in front of the entrance to Section B and by the fact that the room was renovated and extended in later periods (Fig. 1, grey part of Room B8, 6.4 m × 6.2 m) and was decorated with wall paintings, clay statues, and a stone sculpture. Fussman suggests that the 20 small rooms surrounding the courtyard in Section B were monks' cells, while room B8 functioned as *gandhakuti*, where the Buddha is said to have resided [15: pp. 23, 266].

Based on coins and inscriptions on pottery, the period when the temple functioned as a Buddhist temple was estimated to be roughly between the first and third centuries during the Kushan Dynasty.<sup>6</sup> Coins from the Greco-Bactrian, Kushan, Early Sasanian, and Kushano-Sasanian dynasties were recovered from the site, but the majority were from the Kushan Dynasty.<sup>7</sup> Fussmann, who examined ninety-three pieces of pottery with Karoshti (partly Brahmi) inscriptions, stated that the dates of writing ranged from c. 50

<sup>1</sup> [3]. Many researchers support Lo Muzio's dating; [4, p. 137], [5, p. 88, note 27] (see note 19 below).

<sup>2</sup> For Schlumberger's discussion (D. Schlumberger, "Descendants non-méditerranéens de l'art grec", *Syria* 37, 1960, pp. 131-166, 253-318).

<sup>3</sup> [7, 9-12]. All these papers are short reports of less than ten pages. They are summarised in [13].

<sup>4</sup> The report on the excavations by Annaev et al. (*Консервация и реставрация руин Фаязтепа*, 2006) is not available to the author, but the construction periods of the site are published in [14]. The overview of the site by [15] is also based on the findings of Annaev and others, as well as [16], who verifies the report of Dz. Annaev and others. Also useful is Iwamoto's, "The Current Status and Issues of Research on Buddhist Monuments in Northern Bactria" in [6: pp. 9-28], which outlines the state of research on Buddhist monuments in the Bactrian region, including Fayaztepa.

<sup>5</sup> It has been noted that the plan of the Fayaztepa site, with its adjacent monastery with a stupa and courtyard, has similarities to the arrangement of the main stupa and central monastery on the northern hill of the Karatepa site [15: pp. 22, 264]; T. Honma, "Structure of the Central Monastery on the Northern Hill of the Karatepa Site" in [6: pp. 135-142].

<sup>6</sup> It is not possible to discuss the question of the dating of the site in detail here. See [16], where Mkrtichev presents his own theory after summarising the chronological views of Al'baum and Annaev et al.

<sup>7</sup> Of the forty-four coins found in the Al'baum's excavations, thirty-four are Kushan coins. Ten coins of Vasudeva (reigned c. 190-225 AD) were found in layers deposited by the collapse [11: p. 26]. Sixteen of the 18 coins discovered by Annaev et al. in their excavations are Kushan coins [17]. In this paper, the reign years of the Kushan kings are based on [18].

to 450 AD, but most dates were from the first to second centuries.<sup>8</sup> Al'baum and Annaev et al. estimated that temples were destroyed the Sasanian invasions; however, there are conflicting views on this matter.<sup>9</sup> Annaev et al. also suggested that the temple might have been rebuilt by the end of the fourth century (see below).

### B. Wall paintings

Al'baum reported that wall paintings were found on the walls and deposits of the courtyard and Room 8 in Section B<sup>10</sup>. He found traces of paint on the perimeter walls of the courtyard around the colonnade, suggesting that the entire perimeter walls were originally decorated with murals, but that the best-preserved area was around the entrance to Room B8. The front wall of the room was painted black. A stone statue of a seated Buddha and a pair of monks under a tree, as well as fragments of two clay statues of bodhisattva, were also found in the chamber.<sup>11</sup>

Further excavation by Annaev et al. revealed traces of renovation on the ceiling, floor surface, entrance, and front wall of Room B8. The front wall was considered to be rebuilt to enlarge the room (6.4 m × 6.2 m), after which the room was majestically decorated with clay statues and murals. It is also estimated that the renovation of Room B8 and the construction of a larger stupa took place simultaneously during the reign of King Kanishka I (c. 127/8 – 150AD).<sup>12</sup>

The following eight murals from Fayaztepa have been published to date:<sup>13</sup> (i) and (iii) have been studied in detail by Al'baum, and their drawings have been published. It is now known that they decorated the left, right, and rear walls of Room B8. (ii), (iv), and (v), which are exhibited in the State Museum of History, have brief references in Al'baum's report, so that the original location can be estimated. A black-and-white photograph was published for (vi), but its original location is unknown. (vii) and (viii) were published for the first time because of the current conservation project. There is no reference to them in Al'baum's report, and their original location is unknown.

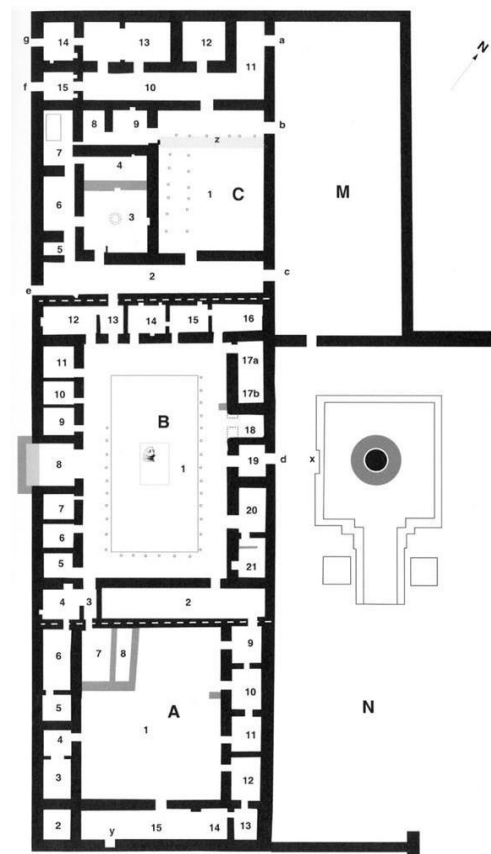


Fig. 1. Plan of the Fayaztepa site [15: pl. 21]

- (i) Twelve male donors: right wall of Room B8 and right wall side of the rear wall<sup>14</sup>, Institute of Archaeology (Fig. 5).
- (ii) Two male donors: the left wall side of the rear wall of Room B8, State Museum of History<sup>15</sup>
- (iii) Two standing Buddha images and three female donors: left wall of Room B8, partially at the Institute of Archaeology (Fig. 7).
- (iv) Female donor with earrings and other figures: In front of the entrance to Room B8, the State Museum of History (Fig. 11).
- (v) Large, seated Buddha and small Buddhas: In front of the entrance to Room B8, the State Museum of History<sup>16</sup>
- (vi) Head of a female donor: The original location is unknown, Institute of Archaeology<sup>17</sup>
- (vii) Large and small stupas: The original location is unknown, Institute of Archaeology (Fig. 2).
- (viii) Half-naked boy: The original location is unknown, Institute of Archaeology<sup>18</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Approximately sixty inscriptions from c. 50 to 170 (200) AD, eight inscriptions from c. 150 to 450 AD, and nineteen inscriptions that cannot be dated [15: pp. 109-125].

<sup>9</sup> [15: pp. 261-262], [16: p. 20]. On the decline of Buddhist temples in Bactria, see [19].

<sup>10</sup> In addition to this, the hemispherical part of the earlier stupa at Fayaztepa was painted with dharma rings and lotus flowers [13: p. 24, Fig. 2: 26].

<sup>11</sup> [11: p. 21]. L. I. Al'baum states that the northwest wall of the shrine was painted black, but this is probably a mistake for "south-west wall".

<sup>12</sup> The description of the renovation of Room B8 is given in [14: pp. 61-62], [15: pp. 23, 265-266], albeit with some disagreements. Here, we have followed the description in [15].

<sup>13</sup> Other fragments are stored in untreated condition at the Institute of Archaeology in Samarkand and the State Museum of History in Tashkent.

<sup>14</sup> In this paper, the southwest wall of Room B8 is referred to as the front wall, the northwest wall as the right wall, the southeast wall as the left wall and the north-east wall with the entrance as the rear wall.

<sup>15</sup> [20: p. 199, pl. 155]. These male donors wear a red ribbon around their neck. Grenet refers to the work of Lerner, who states that wearing a necklace with ribbons was characteristic of the aristocracy of the Hephthalite Empire, and cites the red ribbons of these male donors as an example [5: p. 88, note 27]. However, this red ribbon could not be considered a feature of the Hephthalite period, as it was not attached to the necklace, but to the caftan to secure its front fastening.

<sup>16</sup> [21], [22: pp. 62-63], [1: pp. 16-17, fig. 2:12]

<sup>17</sup> [8: p. 123], [1: pp. 25-26, pls. 1-2]

<sup>18</sup> [1: pp. 26-27, pls. 3-4]



Fig. 2. Large and small stupas, Fayaztepa (71 cm long, 59 cm wide).

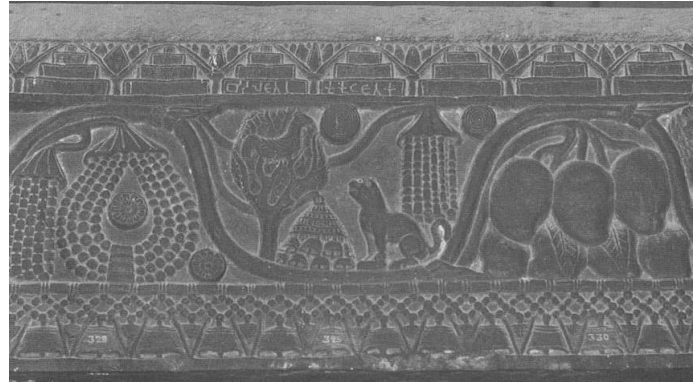


Fig. 4. Reliefs of balustrades, Bharhut (*jāla* and bells at the bottom), late 2nd century BC [23: frontispiece 3]

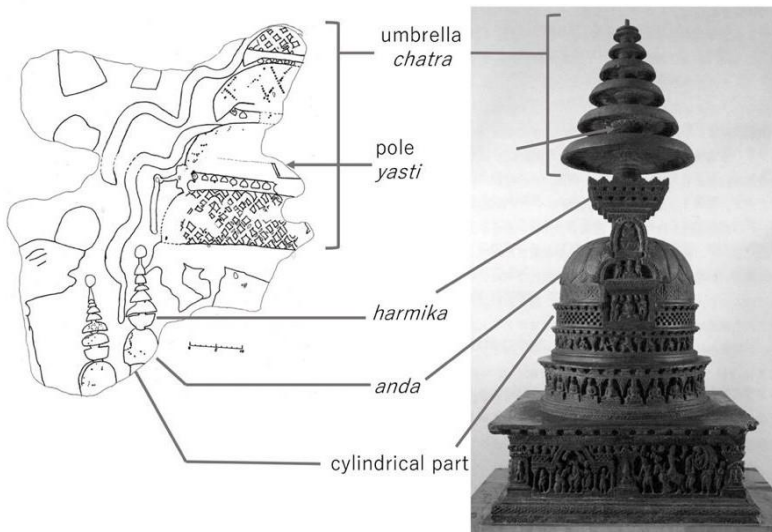


Fig. 3. (left) Drawing of Fig. 2 (by M. Reutova) (right) Votive stupa, Loriyan Tangay, 2nd - 3rd century AD [20: p. 12].

### III. MURAL DEPICTING LARGE AND SMALL STUPAS

Mural (vii), depicting the large and small stupas (Fig. 2), originally consisted of three small fragments. During the restoration process, Reutova discovered that they could be joined into one, and clarified that one large stupa and two small stupas were depicted. Against a blue background, four red or white umbrella-shaped objects were superimposed, which were identified as umbrellas (*chattra*) attached to the top of the stupa. Smaller stone stupas with similarly shaped umbrellas were excavated from 2nd and 3rd century sites in Gandhara (Fig. 3).

The white and red ribbons flutter in the wind from the top of the umbrella. The top and bottom umbrellas show a red cloisonné pattern on the white ground, whereas the second umbrella has a diagonal grid pattern of white dotted lines on the red ground. The latter is thought to represent *jāla*, a net made of pearls. Small red bells were closely attached to the lower edge of the umbrellas, and

white dots on top of the bell provided a three-dimensional effect. The lower parts of the umbrellas are painted red, which may represent the undersides of the umbrellas. The red part visible between the lowest and second lowest umbrellas and the light brown part above it may be part of the umbrella pole.

Kuwayama refers to the description by Song Yun, who travelled from China to India at the beginning of the sixth century, that “the great stupa Quelifutu was completed and Kanishka made *jāla* out of pearls to cover it, but he untied it for fear of theft after his death”, and points out that the custom of making a net out of a string of pearls and hanging it over precious objects was a tradition

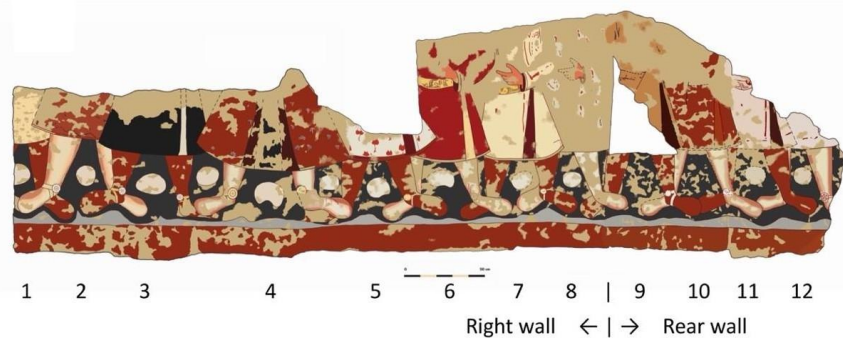


Fig. 5. Male donors, Room B8, right wall and rear wall, reproduction (by M. Sultanova), 160 × 540 cm.

from Gandhara to Central Asia.<sup>19</sup> Decoration with *jāla* and bells can be seen on the reliefs of the balustrades surrounding the stupa at Bharhut, one of the earliest Buddhist sites in northern India (Fig. 4).<sup>20</sup> It is believed that stupa ornaments from ancient northern India were introduced to the Bactria through the Gandhara region.

Two small stupas were arranged in the lower left corner of the fragment (Fig. 2), with a red *harmika*, white *anda* and a small part of a red cylindrical body visible under red and white umbrellas. The umbrellas are likely to be five-tiered. The red pole extends above the top umbrella, and a red spherical ornament can be observed at its tip.

This mural is a fairly accurate representation of the stupa superstructure at that time. The stupa found at Fayaztepa was likely surmounted by similar *harmika* and umbrellas. In addition, square platforms were found on either side of the stairs (or ramp) placed in front of the stupa, which are thought to be the remains of a smaller stupa [15: p. 21, p. 264].

#### IV. MURAL DEPICTING A GROUP OF MALE DONORS

The mural depicting a group of men standing side by side (i) is described in detail in Al’baum’s report, and a drawing and black and white photographs of the mural in situ have been published [11: pp. 23-25, figs. 1, 3, 4]. The fragment showing the upper bodies of the two men (ii) is in the State Museum of History and its colour photograph has been published [20: pl. 155].

##### A. Original location of the paintings

It is necessary to summarise the original locations of these paintings. According to Al’baum, there were four figures on the rear wall of Room B8, with two figures on each side of the entrance. The paintings on the left side are poorly preserved. On the right side, fragments of the painting fell from the wall surface and were found in deposits. The fragments were found to be part of a painting of two male figures looking towards the left wall, that is, towards the Buddha(s) [11: p. 25].

The conservation project has found that twelve male figures survived from the right wall to the rear wall of Room B8 (Fig. 5). Figures one–eight from the left are painted on the right wall and figures nine to twelve are painted on the rear wall. As noted above, Al’baum stated that two figures were painted on each side of the entrance; however, at least four men were painted on the right side of the entrance.

##### B. Posture and garment: comparison with Kushan royal images

The overlapping garments and boots indicate that the fourth figure from the left is the central figure standing in the foreground of this composition, with three men standing to his left and eight to his right. The fourth figure is the only person wearing a knee-length jacket. The other figures wore knee-length garments with gold belts around their waists. It is worn on the right side and wrapped over the left side. Its hem is embellished with cloth of different colours. The left hand of the sixth to eighth figures can be observed around the abdomen. They appear to hold something that cannot be identified. Legs were spread widely, with toes pointing outwards. The figures wore long boots with round toes. Round golden buckles and straps were observed in the ankles.

<sup>19</sup> Sh. Kuwayama, “Ramou”, Web version of the New Compendium of Pure Land Buddhism (in Japanese), last updated 30 March 2008, <http://jodoshuzensho.jp/daijiten/index.php/%E7%BE%85%E7%B6%B2> (accessed 27 December 2023).

<sup>20</sup> [23: p. 53, frontispiece 3].



As Al'baum points out, the standing posture and clothing of the fourth figure (open legs, jacket flared at the bottom, boots with rounded toes<sup>21</sup>) match those of stone statues representing Kushan royal figures (the standing figure from the Surh Kotal site, the seated figure of Vima Takto (reigned c. 90-104AD) and the standing figure of Kanishka I from the Mat temple at Mathura). Al'baum compared the fourth figure to Kanishka I but did not provide sufficient evidence. We can only assume that the male donors depicted in Room B8 were royal figures from the Kushan period.

*C. Representation of the ground*

In his article specialising in the murals of the Fayaztepa site, Lo Muzio draws attention to the black background of the murals on the sidewalls of Room B8 (Figs. 5 and 7).<sup>22</sup> If we look at the lower part of the mural on the right wall, which represents male donors, we can see a red decorative band at the bottom (approximately 15-20 cm wide). Across the white line, the background is entirely black, with rounded white objects filling the space. Al'baum described in detail the lower part of the mural depicting Buddhas and female donors on the left wall of Room B8. At the bottom of the wall was a 15 cm wide red band with a diagonal grid pattern of white lines. From there to 45 cm vertically, the background was painted black and small white flowers with five petals and rounded white objects were depicted.<sup>23</sup> The upper line of the black part is indicated in the drawing (Fig. 7), and we can see the black part in the actual fragments that are currently being treated by the conservators [11: p. 22], [1: fig. 3: 17]. The lower part of the composition was painted black to represent the ground on which the figure stood, providing depth to the painting.

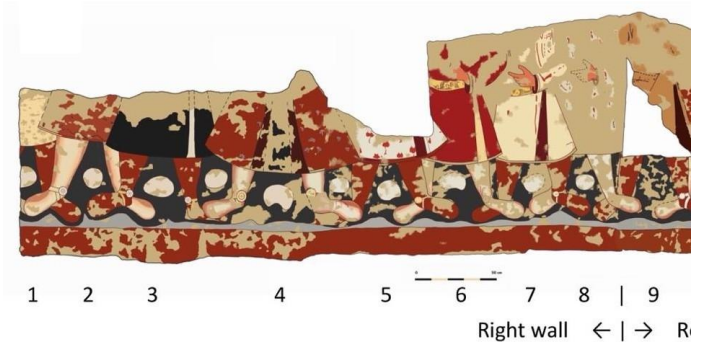


Fig. 6. Male donors, Room B8, right wall and rear wall, reproduction (by M. Sultanova), 160 × 540 cm.



Fig. 7. Buddhas and female donors, left wall of Room B8 (the upper part of the drawing is a reconstruction) [11: fig. 2].



Fig. 8. Representation of the ground, Kafiritat Tepe, 4th-5th century [3: pl. 7]

<sup>21</sup> L. I. Al'baum speculates that the men in the Fayaztepa murals wear long trousers, the hems of which are fastened to their boots with buckles and straps, as in the royal figures from the Surkh Kotar site (Fig. 6 left). However, as the men in the murals are always painted in one colour (red or white) from the knees to the toes, it is better to assume that the long boots are fastened at the ankles, as in the statues of Vima Takto and Kanishka I from Mathura (Fig. 6 right).

<sup>22</sup> [3: pp. 195-196], who calls it a "black floor".

<sup>23</sup> The red band with the white line and the black background are assumed to have been continuous on the three walls of Room B8, except for the front wall, suggesting that the murals in this room were painted at the same time [3: p. 195].



Fig. 9. Representation of the ground, late 5th century  
(left) Dilberjin [26: p. 124, fig. 4]; (right) Penjikent [20: pl. 173].



Fig. 10. Representation of the ground, Kushan period [28: fig. 1].

Lo Muzio points out that such representations are found in paintings dated a few centuries later than the Kushan period, such as the 4th and 5th century wall paintings found at the Buddhist temple site of Kafiriat Tepe in the Mes Aynak site complex south of Kabul (Fig. 8).<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the depiction of a black background with small white flowers (and white rounded objects) in the lower part of the composition is found in the late 5th century wall paintings excavated at the temple of the Dilberjin site in Bactria and at the temple site of Penjikent in Sogd (Fig. 9).<sup>25</sup> However, this expression is also found in a cloth painting which, on the basis of its iconographic features, dates back to the reign of Huvishka I of the Kushan Dynasty (reigned c. 150-190 AD) (Fig. 10)<sup>26</sup> and in mural fragments recently discovered at Karatepa,<sup>27</sup> which is thought to have functioned at the same time as Fayaztepa. As Lo Muzio points out, “the possibility that the well-established set of Kushan dynastic and aristocratic iconographic formulae could have been inherited by the following ruling élite of Tokharistan (...) is still poorly investigated” [3: p. 196]. This ground representation is just an example of such a formula. Interestingly, this type of representation was also introduced in Sogd, where Buddhism did not spread, unlike in other Central Asian regions. This technique was likely introduced when new styles of painting were brought to Sogd from Tokharistan (Bactria) during Kidarite or Hephthalite rule in Central Asia. This is an example of the spread of painting techniques caused by the expansion of political power, rather than that of the religious sphere. However, the murals of the donors in the Buddhist caves of Bamiyan and Kucha do not have black backgrounds around their feet.

<sup>24</sup> [3: p. 196]. This representation also appears in the murals depicting standing Buddha images, stupas and donors at the monastic site of Kafiriat Tepe [25: p. 18].

<sup>25</sup> Fig. 9, left, shows a mural on the north wall of Room 16 of the shrine, which lines the north wall of the temple. This room was painted three times, this being the second layer [26: p. 124, figs. 3, 4]. I. T. Kruglikova writes: “The men are standing on the ground. The ground is painted black with white flowers. In the second layer of the mural, the ground is represented by these wide black bands and white flowers” [26: pp. 126-127]. The same features are also found in the Fragment no. 62, representing a male donor and the head of a giant ram, found in the second layer of the east wall of Room 16 [26: pp. 128-131, figs. 15, 16] and in the wall painting representing male and female donors in Room 13 [27: pp. 101-104, figs. 60, 62].

<sup>26</sup> The circumstances of its discovery are unknown [28].

<sup>27</sup> Wall paintings excavated from Room 52, north hill, Karatepa [6: p. 46, Figs. 37, 39]. It is also noteworthy that, as in Fayaztepa Room B8, there is a red decorative band at the bottom of the composition with a white line drawn over it.

#### D. The dating of the murals of Fayaztepa

Finally, it is important to mention the date of the mural production. After reviewing the iconography of the Fayaztepa murals in response to the report of Annaev et al. that the temple may have been rebuilt at the end of the fourth century, Lo Muzio concluded that the murals were produced after the end of the fourth century.<sup>28</sup> Of the five features presented as evidence for this dating, one is the depiction of the ground mentioned above, which should be considered a method of representation that already existed during the Kushan Dynasty and was carried over to later periods. Therefore, this feature does not support the new dating.

Another feature is the headdress of the female donor, which Lo Muzio considered reliable (Fig. 11 left). A fragment of a female donor with an elaborate headdress and earrings was found near the entrance



Fig. 11. (left) Female donor [20: fig. 156]; (right) Female statue, Butkara I, mid 1st century [29: no. 180].

of Room B8 on the perimeter wall of the courtyard (iv).<sup>29</sup> Previous research suggested that the woman was wearing a ram's horn on her head, and the museum display reconstructed the missing left part on this basis.<sup>30</sup> However, the author believes that the woman is not wearing a ram horn, but a ring-shaped ornament with a red band running through the centre [1: pp. 39-40, 124]. If the horns were drawn, their tips would have been clearly drawn, which was not the case. Fig. 11 (right) shows a stone statue of a woman excavated at the Butkara I site, dated to the middle of the 1st century AD. She wore two circular ornaments on her head; however, on the left side was a ring-shaped ornament with indentations and a braided cord protruding from the middle. This was probably the same ornament worn by a female donor at Fayaztepa.

Above the head of the male donor (ii) is a Bactrian inscription in Greek letters (φαρρ). Based on the comparison of the letters φ and α in some documents or silverware, Yoshida estimated that this inscription was most likely written during the Kushan period and the beginning of Sasanian rule.<sup>31</sup> The location and content of the inscription suggest that it is part of the name of the male donor and is contemporary with the mural. Ishimatsu proposed that the group of male donors depicted in Room B8 consists of a Kushan prince and Bactrian followers, considering the differences between Kushan and Bactrian dresses. She estimated the date of the wall painting to be before the mid-third century, when Bactria was under the control of the Kushan Dynasty.<sup>32</sup>

In view of the above, Lo Muzio's theory, which dates the Fayaztepa murals to the end of the 4th century or later, is open to reconsideration.

#### V. CONCLUSION

This paper examines the transmission and inheritance of Central Asian art using the iconography of two newly published Fayaztepa murals. The upper part of the stupa is similar in shape and size to the umbrella and *harmika* of the votive stupas of Gandhara, suggesting that Gandhara-style stupas were introduced to Bactria during the Kushan Dynasty. The paintings show that the umbrellas were decorated with *jāla* and bells, and Chinese documents indicate that the Gandhara stupas were also consecrated with *jāla*. The combination of *jāla* and bells is seen in the decoration of the Bharhut balustrades as early as the second half of the second century BC, and is thought to have spread from northern India through the Gandhara region to Bactria.

In murals depicting male donors, it has been noted that the lower part of the background is painted in black. Although few surviving paintings remain, they show that the ground representations originated in the Kushan period and were inherited in both the northern and southern regions of the Hindu Kush until the Hephthalite period, approximately 300 years later, and were transmitted to Sogd, which was neither in the realm of the Kushan Dynasty nor in the Buddhist cultural sphere.

<sup>28</sup> [3]. However, as noted above, Annaev et al. state that the murals in Room B8 were painted during the reign of Kanishka I. The extent to which the temple was rebuilt at the end of the fourth century is not noted and details are not available [14: p. 64].

<sup>29</sup> There is no explicit reference to this group of fragments in Al'baum's report. However, in his description of the male donors found in Room B8, he states that his face can be compared with that of Roman murals from the Republican period; further, the mural figure on the south wall of the courtyard (southwest wall) has large eyes, like the Egyptian portraits from Fayum [8: p. 93]. This may refer to the woman on the left of Fig. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Based on the ram's horn, various interpretations have been proposed, such as Alexander the Great, the god Pharro or Verethragna, or a male donor named after the god Verethragna. However, Grenet's interpretation, which sees her as a wealthy female donor, is now favoured. Incidentally, Grenet says that a horse is depicted in this scene. Probably he thinks that the reddish-brown part is a horse (Grenet in [28: p. 959, n. 21]). However, as Lo Muzio correctly points out, the reddish-brown part is the Buddha's robe, and the woman is probably standing behind the Buddha and looking at him [3: p. 195].

<sup>31</sup> Y. Yoshida, "Dating of Bactrian inscription on Fayaztepa painting and related issues" (in Japanese), in [2: pp. 37-71].

<sup>32</sup> H. Ishimatsu, "Buddhist artefacts from Fayaztepa: an examination of Buddha statue and paintings of donors" (in Japanese), in [2: pp.15-35].



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