

Colonial Archives and the Exploration of Gandhāran Heritage

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Abstract: *The British annexation of Punjab and Peshawar encouraged colonial officers to investigate the region's rich archaeological landscape, initiating early research on Gandhāran heritage. Although none of these officers were formally trained archaeologists, their pioneering efforts produced valuable records of numerous Gandhāran Buddhist sites, some of which have since vanished or been forgotten. The Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, preserves a substantial corpus of these exploration reports, dating from the 1860s to the creation of Pakistan in 1947. This paper examines selected archival records to highlight the methods and practices employed in the exploration of Gandhāran heritage during the latter half of the nineteenth century.*

Keywords: Gandhāran heritage, colonial period, Civil Service Officers, Archival records, Nineteenth Century.

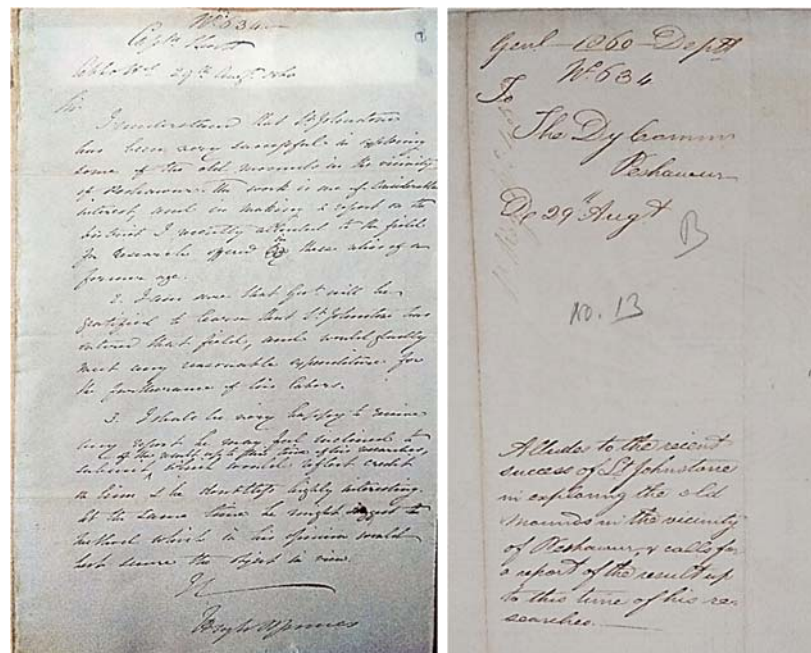
Introduction

The overthrow of the Sikh Empire in Punjab, paved the way for the expansion of British rule into the northwestern regions of India. During the initial decade of British administration, efforts were largely directed towards suppressing tribal unrest, mutinies and the militancy of the Hindustani Mujahideen Movement. It was in the course of various punitive expeditions against frontier tribes that several notable archaeological discoveries were made by officers of the Corps of Guides and other military regiments. Among these, the site of Jamal Garhi was reportedly identified in the 1850s, while the ruins at Kharkai were excavated in 1852 (Errington: 1987: 84-86). In addition to military personnel, officers of the Indian Civil Service were also undertaking explorative activities, documenting archaeological remains in and around Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi and other neighboring areas under their administrative control. Some of their preliminary exploration notes were published in various journals, gazetteers and annual progress reports, while a significant collection of their unpublished correspondence and documentation is now preserved in the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.

The Archival Records

The archival material at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries (hereinafter the DoAL), Peshawar, includes documents relating to early archaeological endeavors during the second half of the nineteenth

century. Among these, one folder contains a handwritten letter dated 29 August 1860¹, submitted by Captain Shortt, then Assistant Commissioner in Punjab, to the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. The letter refers to the successful exploration of ancient mounds in the vicinity of Peshawar by Lieutenant Johnstone² and highlights Captain Shortt's interest in receiving a detailed report on the artifacts discovered. It further requests government support for Johnstone's pioneering archaeological investigations (Figures 1 & 2).



Figures 1&2. Letter from Captain Shortt to the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar (Photographs courtesy of the DoAL, Peshawar).

It is noteworthy that Lieutenant Johnstone himself left no record of his archaeological investigations, and the letter from Captain Shortt is perhaps the only contemporary document that survives. Interestingly, Captain Shortt was also among the amateur explorers during the 1860s. This is well attested by a note from Reverend Isidore Loewenthal, a member of the Peshawar Church Missionary Society, who recorded that both Johnstone and Captain Shortt demonstrated a keen interest in investigating the ancient remains scattered across Peshawar and the Yousafzai frontier. Johnstone excavated a mound approximately two miles from the Peshawar station, where he uncovered sculptures along with an urn containing ashes and bone fragments, while Captain Shortt acquired a significant collection of sculptures from Nagram, which he subsequently transferred to Hoti Mardan and the Museum at Peshawar (Loewenthal 1861: 411-413). Captain Shortt also discovered a marble inscription of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, from the ruins of a fort in the village of Garhi Kapūra, which is now on display in the Lahore Museum (Bellew 1864:74-75, Rahman 2013: 96).

Regarding Johnstone excavation at Peshawar, Elizabeth Errington suggests that the mound he excavated was probably the stupa once located at Lower Tahkāl, now vanished and occupied by modern constructions. From this mound, the statue of Kuvera, now preserved in the Lahore Museum, was

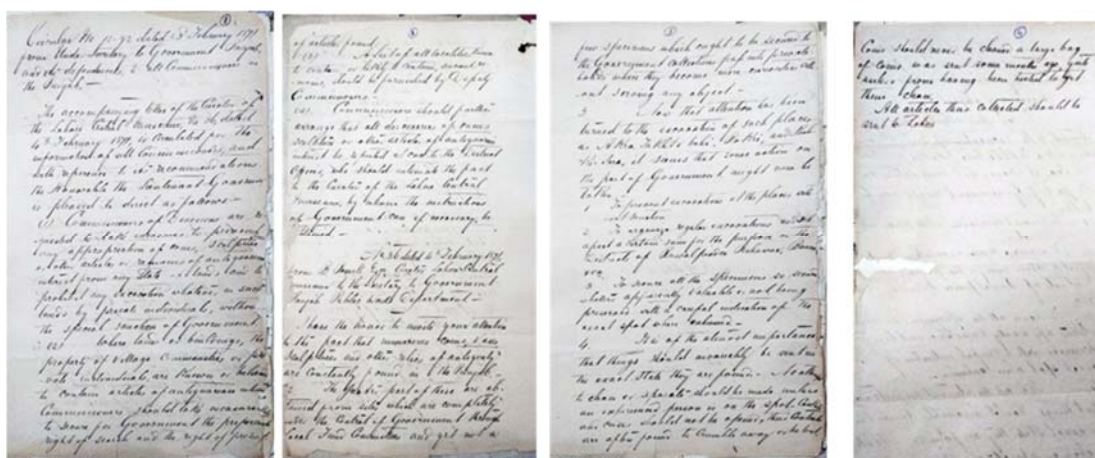
¹ Letter no. 634, dated 29th August 1860, File no. 13, Serial no. 273, Bundle no. 22, General /Miscellaneous, 'Lt. Johnstone's success in exploring ancient mounds in and around Peshawar and the local Government's financial support', DoAL, Peshawar.

² Most probably Johnstone Jame William Hope, who served as an Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner in the Punjab from March 1858. See 'The India List and India Office List for 1905; Compiled from Official Records by Direction of the Secretary of State for India in Council', (1905: 534).

excavated, along with other sculptures and cornices, whose whereabouts remain unknown to this day (Errington 1987: 105-109).

The second folder contains a series of official circulars issued to regulate archaeological activities in Punjab. The first document draws the attention of the Divisional Commissioners to a letter from Mr. Bendon Powell, then Curator of the Lahore Central Museum³. Powell's letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Punjab Public Works Department, expresses concern over the frequent discovery of coins, sculptures and other antiquities from sites managed by the Punjab Government through Local Funds Committees, noting that a considerable portion of these relics was finding its way into private hands instead of official repositories. Referring to the excavations being conducted at Akra, Takht-i-Bahi, Rokri and Shah-ki-Dera, Bendon Powell urged the government to discourage illicit pursuit of antiquities and to regulate archaeological activities in the districts of Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Bunnu. He also stressed the importance of cataloguing all recovered artifacts with precise documentation of their provenance and ensuring their safe transport to Lahore in their original condition by avoiding the cleaning of coins, the opening of relic caskets, and the disintegration of fragile contents⁴.

The Punjab Government duly endorsed Powell's recommendations and directed the Divisional Commissioners to ensure that coins, sculptures and other antiquities discovered on state land were not appropriated by private individuals without prior approval from the Government. Moreover, for lands or buildings containing archaeological artifacts but owned by village communities or private individuals, the Commissioners were required to secure for the government the preferential right of search and the right of pre-emption for any article found. Further, the prompt reporting of all discoveries of coins, sculptures, and other antiquities to the Curator of the Lahore Central Museum was emphasized (Figures 3-6)⁵. This resolution was further amended in 1876, by declaring that legal matters concerning the discovery of treasure and ownership claims should be reported directly to the Government, while the Curator of the Lahore Central Museum was to remain responsible only for the antiquarian aspects of the subject⁶.



Figures 3–6: Regulations concerning the discovery of archaeological findings in Punjab.
(Photographs courtesy of the DoAL, Peshawar).

³ See Circular no. 12-92, dated 23 January 1871, from the Undersecretary to Government of Punjab, Public Works Department. File No. 331, Serial no. 1884, Bundle no. 70, 'Impression of the inscribed rock at Shahbaz garhi & rules as to the discovery of objects of archaeological interest', DoAL, Peshawar.

⁴ Letter no. 36, dated January 4th, 1871, from Mr. Bendon Powell to the Secretary to Government of Punjab, Public Works Department. File No. 331, Serial no. 1884, Bundle no. 70, DoAL, Peshawar.

⁵ Circular no. 12-92, dated 23 January 1871. File No. 331, Serial no. 1884, Bundle no. 70, DoAL, Peshawar. See also Errington (1987:138).

⁶ Circular no. 21-469, dated 10th April 1876. File No. 331, Serial no. 1884, Bundle no. 70, DoAL, Peshawar.

The remaining documents in this folder are dateable to 1888 and describe the archaeological activities carried out by Captain Harold Arthur Deane, then Assistant Commissioner of Yousafzai⁷. Captain Deane, as known from other sources, was commissioned into the British military service on 13th November 1874. He joined the Indian Civil Service in July 1885 and served in various capacities, including Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Political Officer for the Dir, Swat and Chitral Agency, and later as Chief Commissioner of the newly created North-West Frontier Province.⁸ During his tenure as Assistant Commissioner, Captain Deane developed a personal interest in exploring the archaeological remains within the British administered territories of Yousafzai. Some of his archaeological activities, particularly the excavation of the Buddhist site of Sikri and the discovery of wooden sculptures from Kashmir Smast are well known from both published and archival sources. However, the circumstances under which his antiquarian pursuit first came to the attention of the Government remain to be examined.

In this context, one of the documents in the file is a handwritten letter from the Commissioner and Superintendent of the Peshawar Division to the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar District on the subject “Treasure trove: Sculptures and objects of valuable antiquities.” The Commissioner of Peshawar notes that Captain H.A. Deane, Assistant Commissioner in Yousafzai, has recently discovered valuable antiquities including an inscribed rock bearing Ashoka’s edict, and was taking a keen interest in the preservation of these artifacts. However, under the Treasure Trove Act, the Government require detailed information regarding the precise location of these finds. Accordingly, a report was requested specifying the village limits on which the antiquities were discovered and whether further excavations might yield additional material. The letter also inquired whether Captain Deane or other officers of the Corps of Guides were engaged in any recent exploration⁹.

To comply with these directives, Captain Deane submitted a report of his explorative activities in the Yousafzai Sub-Division to Mr. W.R.H. Mirk, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar District, on 13th

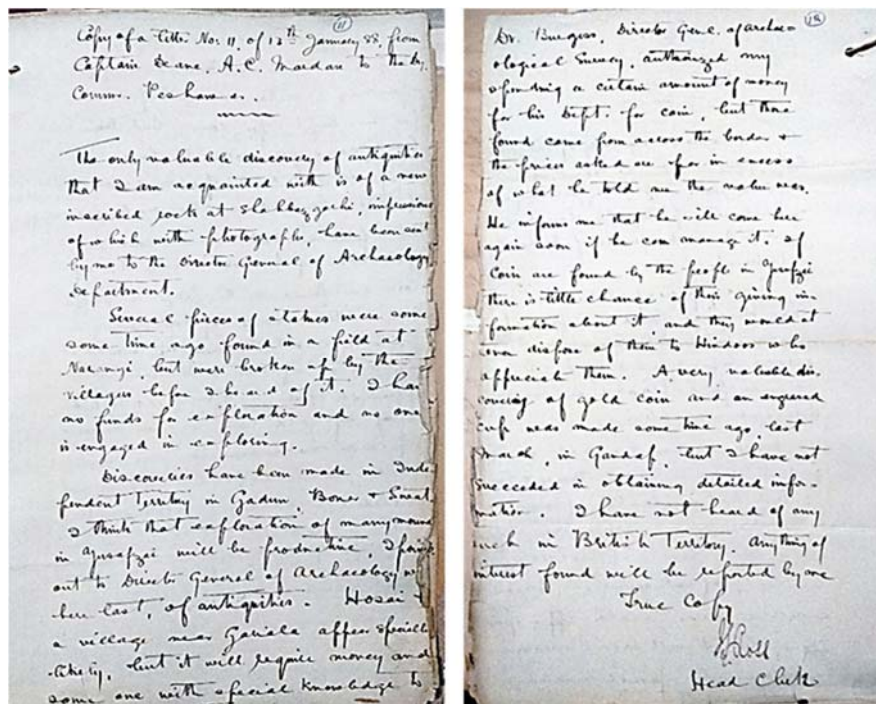
⁷ Apart from this folder, there is a collection of files containing deteriorated folios of official correspondence and other miscellaneous papers, placed on separate shelves at the DoAL, Peshawar, for conservation and chemical treatment. One of these files, not yet numbered and properly catalogued, includes several detached pages from the printed report of Lieutenant C. Maxwell of the Corps of Royal Engineers. Although, the title page of this document is missing, the contents page lists headings such as “Journal of Researches on Karamar Hill, with description of Temple, Plans Nos. 1 and 2; Report on Explorations at Taja, Plan No. 3; Chargul, with Copies of Inscriptions Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7; and Explorations at Galiara, Plan No. 8.” The report was originally submitted in two parts. The first part, titled “Journal of Buddhist Researches on Karamar Hill by the 10th Company Sappers and Miners, under Command of Lieutenant C. Maxwell, R.E., from 31st March to 12th April 1882,” was submitted to the Secretary to the Government of Punjab, Public Works Department, under No. 128, dated 13 April 1882. The second part comprised three sections, each titled as (i) “Report on the Explorations of Buddhist Ruins at Taja, near Karamar Hill by the 10th Company Sappers and Miner, from 14th to 18th April 1882, under Command of Lieutenant C. Maxwell, R.E.”; (ii) “Report on Buddhist Researches at Chargul, by 10th Company Sappers and Miners, from 19th to 21st April 1882, under Command of Lieutenant C. Maxwell, R.E.”; and (iii) “Report on Buddhist Researches at Rana Galiara, by the 10th Company Sappers and Miners, 23rd April 1882, under Command of Lieutenant C. Maxwell, R.E.” This combined document was submitted under No. 154, dated 25th April 1882. It is possible that a completed version of these reports was later published under the title “Report on Buddhist Explorations in the Peshawar District by the 10th Company Sappers and Miners, April 1882, Lahore 1882,” as quoted by Gordon (1958: 111, fn. 9), and Errington (1987: 414).

⁸ See ‘*The India List and India Office List for 1905; Compiled from Official Records by Direction of the Secretary of State for India in Council*’, (1905: 478). See also Morgon & Olivieri (2022: 9 & 13).

⁹ Letter No. 95, dated 7th January 1888, from the Commissioner and Superintendent of Peshawar to the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. File No. 331, Serial no. 1884, Bundle no. 70. ‘*Impression of the inscribed rock at Shahbaz garhi & rules as to the discovery of objects of archaeological interest*’, DoAL, Peshawar.

January 1888¹⁰ (Figures 7-8). Captain Deane wrote:

The only valuable discovery of antiquities that I am acquainted with is of a new inscribed rock at Shahbazgarhi, impressions of which, with photographs, have been sent by me to the Director General of Archaeology Department. Several pieces of statues were some time ago found in a field at Narangi, but were broken up by the villagers before I heard of it. I have no funds for exploration, and no one is engaged in exploring. Discoveries have been made in independent territory in Gadun, Boner & Swat. I think that exploration of many mounds in Yusafzai will be productive. I pointed out to Director General of Archaeology when here last, of antiquities. Hosais & a village near Gariala appear specially likely, but it will require money and someone with special knowledge to superintend it. Dr. Burgess, Director General of Archaeological Survey, authorized my spending a certain amount of money for his Dept, for coins, but these found come from across the border and the prices asked are for in excess of what he told me the value was. He informs me that he will come here again soon if he can manage it. If coins are found by the people in Yusufzai there is little chance of their giving information about it, and they would at once dispose of them to Hindus who appreciate them. A very valuable discovery of gold coins and an engraved cup was made some time ago last march in Gandaf but I have not succeeded in obtaining detail information. I have heard of any such in British territory. Anything of interest found will be reported by me.



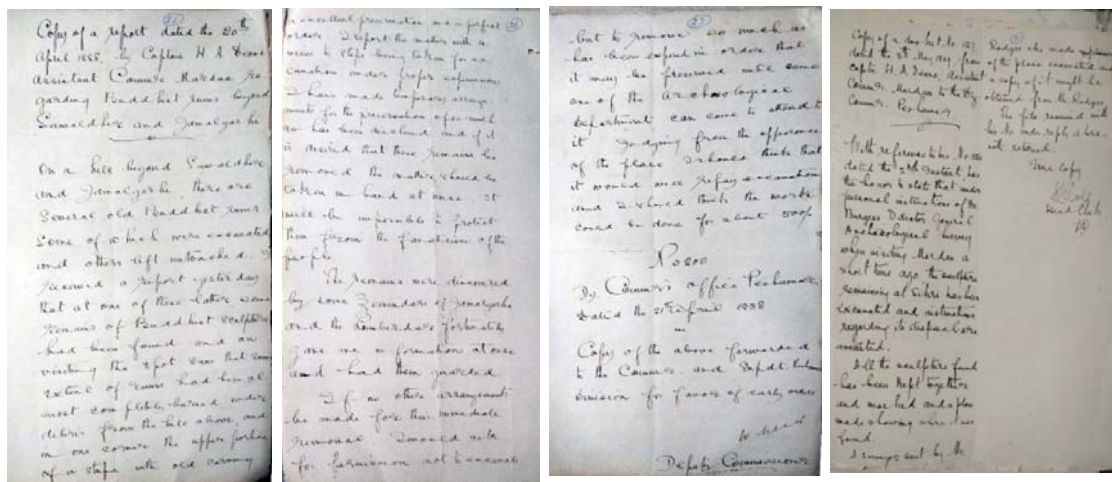
Figures 7-8: Copy of Captain H.A. Deane's report about the Inscribed rock at Shahbazgarhi and other discoveries in Yousafzai (Photographs courtesy of the DoAL, Peshawar).

The documents of this folder highlight at least two significant events in the archaeological history of Gandhāra during the late 19th century. Firstly, the regulatory framework proposed by the Curator of the Lahore Central Museum was formally approved by the Government and disseminated for enforcement

¹⁰ Copy of a letter no. 11, 13th January 1888, from Captain Deane, A.C. Mardan to the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. File No. 331, Serial no. 1884, Bundle no. 70, DoAL, Peshawar. The folder also contains documents about the Punjab government's efforts towards the preservation of historical buildings and objects of antiquarian and historical interest, the compilation of a list of inscriptions, and the prevention of unauthorized excavations of ancient remains.

across the province to ensure the systematic exploration, documentation, and preservation of ancient monuments, sculptures, and inscriptions within its jurisdiction. This decisive action not only curbed the unauthorized excavation of ancient remains but also laid the groundwork for the formal coordination of archaeological activities at the Buddhist sites such as Tahkāl and Shah-ji-ki-Dheri, Karamar Hill and Charsadda, through collaboration between the Punjab Public Works Department and the Archaeological Survey of India (Cunningham 1875: 5, Maclagan 1875:vi, Garrick 1885: 126). Secondly, these records document Captain Deane's early archaeological endeavors, including the discovery of a previously unrecorded inscribed rock at Shahbazgarhi¹¹. This find renewed scholarly interest in Indian epigraphy and was ultimately recognized as the twelfth rock edict of Emperor Aśoka (Buhler 1892: 16).

Deane's successive discoveries in Yousafzai, particularly the exploration and excavation of the Buddhist site of Sikri during 1888 and 1889, represent another important contribution to Gandhāran archaeology. His preliminary excavation reports, currently housed in the DoAL, Peshawar (Figures 9-12), are one of their kind in terms of the pioneering Buddhist exploration carried out in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India¹², while the sculptures recovered from the site, along with a complete drum of the stupa decorated with Buddhist narrative reliefs, form one of the prized collections of the Lahore Museum¹³.



Figures 9-12: Captain H.A. Deane's report on the discovery and excavation of the Buddhist site of Sikri (Photographs courtesy of the DoAL, Peshawar).

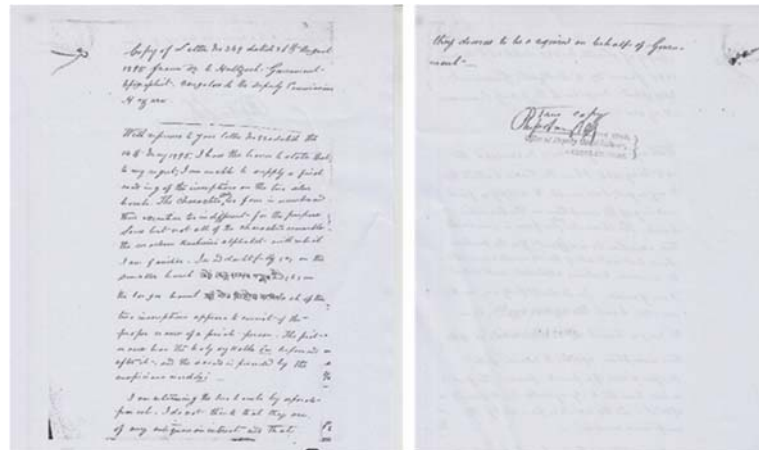
Another folder in the archival record of the DoAL, Peshawar, contains documents concerning the accidental discovery of four silver bowls by a peasant named Halim, while ploughing a field in the village of Sum Elaimung, situated in the Bhugarmang Valley of the Hazara District. The discovery was reported to the Commissioner of the Peshawar Division by Mr. C. E. F. Bunbury, the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara, on 14 May 1895. Two of the bowls reportedly bore inscriptions and weighed 18.8 and 17.1 tolas, respectively. These were forwarded to Dr. E. Hultzsch, the Government Epigraphist

¹¹ Whereas his notes on the Buddhist remains at Naranji and Surkawai on the British border, including Naugram, Kashmir Smast, and Shah Kot Pass, became part of his memorable article. See Deane (1896: 657-674).

¹² See handwritten report no. 200, dated 20th April 1888, and no. 127, dated 8th May 1889, from H.A. Deane, Assistant Commissioner Mardan, to the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. File no. 41, Head XXIII, Sub Head B, 1884-91, Serial no.123, Bundle no. 3, 'Preservation of buildings of architectural and historical interest', DoAL, Peshawar.

¹³ For more details on the Sikri sculptures, see Dar (2000).

in Madras, for assessment of their antiquarian value¹⁴. Dr. Hultzsch, however, was unable to provide a conclusive reading of the inscriptions due to the limited number of characters and the poor quality of their execution. Nevertheless, he observed that some of the characters resembled the modern Kashmiri script and appeared to include the names of private individuals. He further noted that the first name was flanked by the sacred syllable *om*, while the second was preceded by the honorific *Śrī*. Based on this analysis, he concluded that the bowls possessed no significant antiquarian value and therefore recommended that they should not be acquired on behalf of the Government¹⁵ (Figures 13–14).



Figures 13& 14. Dr. E. Hultzsch's report on the inscribed bowls from Hazara (Photographs courtesy of the DoAL, Peshawar).

Although the acquisition of the silver bowls was declined by both the Commissioner of the Peshawar Division¹⁶ and the Government of Punjab¹⁷, Dr. Hultzsch's preliminary drawings and transliterations of the inscriptions nonetheless furnished valuable material for subsequent scholarly investigation. The texts have recently been reexamined by scholars, particularly by Muhammad Nasim Khan¹⁸ and Nasha Rodziadi Khaw¹⁹. According to Nasim Khan, the inscriptions probably contain two proper names, presumably those of deities, both beginning with the sacred syllable *om*. He interprets one of the names as *Lalta* or *Lalla Sandha/Ghaka Paplaka*, and the other as *Śrī Mekha Sihodha/Gha Katisha*. While Nasha Rodziadi Khaw reads the text as *om Lata Santa Papnaka Śrī Hota Sihotha Hatisha*²⁰.

¹⁴ Letter no. 819, dated 14th May 1895, from Mr. C.E.F. Bunbury, Deputy Commissioner of Hazara to the Commissioner and Superintendent, Peshawar Division. File No. 257, Head XLIII, Sub Head A, 1875-95, Serial no. 1817, Bundle no 68, 'Discovery of four small silver bowls at the village of Sum Elaimung in the Bugharmang valley, Hazara District', DoAL, Peshawar.

¹⁵ Copy of handwritten letter no. 349, dated 16th August 1895, from Dr. E. Hultzsch, Government Epigraphist, Bangalore, to the Deputy Commissioner Hazara. File No. 257, Head XLIII, Sub Head A, 1875-95, Serial no. 1817, Bundle no 68, DoAL, Peshawar.

¹⁶ Handwritten letter no. 1505, dated 4th September 1895, from C.E. F. Bunbury, Esquire, Deputy Commissioner Hazara to the Commissioner and Superintendent, Peshawar Division. And letter no. 298, of 11th September 1895, from the Commissioner and Superintendent, Peshawar Division to Financial Commissioner, Lahore. File No. 257, Head XLIII, Sub Head A, 1875-95, Serial no. 1817, Bundle no 68, DoAL, Peshawar.

¹⁷ Copy of letter no. 862, dated 15th November 1895, from the Financial Secretary to Govt. of Punjab to the Senior Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab. File No. 257, Head XLIII, Sub Head A, 1875-95, Serial no. 1817, Bundle no 68, DoAL, Peshawar.

¹⁸ Former Professor of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, and currently Professor at the World Art History Institute, Shanghai International University, Shanghai, China.

¹⁹ Associate Professor at the Centre for Global Archaeological Research, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

²⁰ A full translation of the text will be published in a forthcoming research paper.

List of Photographs of Sculptures from Swat

In addition to the archival documentation, the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar, preserves a list of archival photographs dating from 1897²¹. The photographs illustrate ancient remains and Buddhist sculptures from the lower Swat Valley. A note printed on the first page of the list records:

The sculptures represented on the photographs come from a place called Lorian Tangai, in the lower Swat Valley, and also from other places. No exact information as to their respective find-spots is available. The Lorian Tangai Stupa was excavated by Mr. A. E. Caddy in 1896 by order of the Government of Bengal, and the sculptures found by him were sent to the India Museum in Calcutta. The photographs were taken by the same gentleman. They, however, represent some selected pieces which are not in the Indian Museum.” (Figure 15)

The list is bound in hardcover, with the photographs systematically numbered and clearly captioned (Figures 16–19). It reflects Caddy’s professional documentation of Gandhāran Buddhist art, following the established practice of preserving photographic records as part of archaeological reporting in the late nineteenth century. His archaeological tour to the lower Swat is described by Alfred Foucher, the well-known French archaeologist and art historian, who asserted that he, along with Dr. L. Wadell, were deputed by Sir Charles Elliot, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in 1896 to take delivery of these sculptures for the Calcutta Museum. The sculptures had been acquired by Colonel Harold Arthur Deane, then Political officer for the Chitral expedition, and Major F. Maisey, commander of the Dargai post, from both sides of the Swat mountains (Foucher 1905: 22). Moreover, the archival materials of the former Political Agency for Dir, Swat, and Chitral have revealed an important report by Alexander Caddy documenting his excavations at the Shahkot Pass, the Lorian Tangai Stupa, and the exploration of the Ionic temple at Chakdara (Behrendt 2015: 271-272, Khan 2017: 65). Although the report lacks original photographic illustrations (Olivieri 2025: documents 41-42), the accompanying images, prepared to be affixed in the empty spaces of the report, were believed to be housed in the British Library (Morgon & Olivieri 2022: 3).

However, the list of Caddy’s photographs held by the DoAL in Peshawar presents new possibilities for revising previous assumptions. It appears that this list was initially sent to the office of the Commissioner and Superintendent of the Peshawar Division, intended for eventual delivery to Malakand, where Caddy’s report was already stored. For unknown reasons, however, the list never reached its destination and remained in Peshawar. Its presence in the Peshawar Public Library in Shahi Bagh was first noted in the early 1980s (Errington 1987: 397, fn.39). It was finally transferred to its current location after the establishment of the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar, in 1992.

Unlike the extensive photographic collection of Alexander Caddy preserved in the British Library, the photographic list held by the DoAL in Peshawar is confined to images of Buddhist remains explored at sites such as Lorian Tangai, Cherat, Gunyar, Diggar, Chatpat, and Chakdara (Figures 17–21), as well as sculptures recovered by Caddy and officers of the Chitral Relief Force. Some of these images were published by Alfred Foucher, who also provided scholarly commentary on the architectural features of the Buddhist monuments and interpretations of the iconographic details in the sculptures²².

Regarding the several Buddhist sculptures documented in Caddy’s list that were not relocated to the Indian Museum, it is noteworthy that these were later found embedded in the façade of a fireplace at the headquarters of the Queen’s Own Corps of Guides at Mardan (Errington 1987: 213: fig. 7.6). From

²¹ A computerized caption, recently affixed to the cover page of the list, reads: “Directorate of Archives & Public Libraries, Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar. Subject: List of Photographs of Sculptures from Swat. Period 1897.” The first page also bears the original archival number, written in red ink: 1897, C.R.U. N.W.F.P.

²² See Alfred Foucher, (1905), figs no. 3, 5, 10, 12, 15, 22, 32, 112, 116, 151, 152, 154, 155, 156, 182, 184, 189, 213, 220, 233, 246, 277, 279,

there, they were transferred to the Peshawar Museum in 1946²³ and are now commonly referred to as the “Guide Mess Mardan Collection.”



Figures 15 & 16. Caption of the cover page and photo no.1, of Alexander Caddy's list (Photographs courtesy of the DoAL Peshawar).



Figure 17 & 18. Photographs no. 49-50 of Alexander Caddy's list showing the stupa of Chakpat (Photographs courtesy of the DoAL Peshawar).



Figure 19 -21. Photographs no. 51, 52 and 54, of Caddy's list depicting an ancient doorway²⁴ (Photographs courtesy of the DoAL Peshawar).

²³ Almost four narrative reliefs from this group of sculptures (illustrated in Caddy's photographic list as nos. 16a, & 16b, 17a, & 17c), and later published by Foucher (1905, figs. 151, 155, 156 and 189), as well as by Marshall (1960, figs. 54,55,58, and 66), have been identified in the Peshawar Museum. They are inventoried under accession numbers PM_2724, PM_2728, PM_2731 and PM_2793.

²⁴ Correctly the doorway to the Ionic temple of Chakdra. See Behrendt (2015: 265-271), Khan (2017: 65), Olivieri (2015 comments to document no. 42, Foucher (1905: 108), notes that this building was demolished in the autumn of 1896 by the contractors of the British Military Works Department for reusing its stones into a culvert on the Chitral road.

Conclusion

The archival collection examined in this study sheds important light on the early phases of amateur but pioneering archaeological efforts undertaken by British military and civil officers stationed in the Peshawar Division from the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 20th century²⁵. These preliminary explorations not only laid the groundwork for more systematic archaeological practices but also prompted the Punjab Government to implement protective regulations for safeguarding ancient sites from natural degradation and human vandalism. The discoveries preserved in these archival records have played a crucial role in shaping our understanding of the historical and cultural legacy of what is now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.

Acknowledgments.

The authors express sincere gratitude to the Director and Research Officers of the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar, for their moral support and for providing pictorial copies of the archival documents, as scanning and photocopying were not feasible due to the fragile condition of the materials. Special appreciation is also extended to the officers of the Archival Section of the DoAL, Peshawar, for their tireless efforts in safeguarding these invaluable sources and maintaining them in an organized manner. We are also grateful to Prof. Muhammad Nasim Khan and Nasha Rodziadi Khaw for their preliminary transliteration of the inscription based on Dr. E. Hultsch's notes, which were shared for this purpose.

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²⁵ Other documents, particularly those dating from 1898 onwards and related to the archaeology of Malakand, are currently under consideration for future research.

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