

Ancient Adornments of Central Asia Influenced by the Greek Jewellery of the Classical and Hellenistic Period

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ABSTRACT

Central Asia absorbed the stimuli of shifting cultural influences and for many centuries created an original artistic expression, which can be observed in all branches of arts and crafts. One of these branches is jewellery production. Many pieces of jewellery were largely inspired by the culture of the ancient Mediterranean. The attention of the article is focused on the Central Asia jewellery finds, the production of jewellery and examples of the influence of ancient Greek jewellery of the Classical and Hellenistic period on the jewellery production in Central Asia from the points of view of technology (production and decoration processes), typology (types of jewellery) and iconography (frequently occurring themes as inspirations from the ancient mythology).

KEYWORDS

Central Asia; Greek; jewellery; arts and crafts; Bactria; Gandhara.

INTRODUCTION

The territory of Central Asia was, due to its location on the crossroads of ancient trade routes and to its historical development, influenced by many cultures that ruled or transited through it. The stormy political developments in the centuries around the turn of the eras brought cultural influences there both from near and remote areas – Parthian, Indian, East Asian (Chinese and that of East Asian nomadic tribes), Eurasian nomadic – which amalgamated with the art of earlier periods, that is Persian and local to Central Asian. These effects are also reflected in the production of jewellery. As one of the significant impacts in the production of jewellery and ornaments during the several centuries before and after the turn of the eras we can observe also the artistic traditions of the ancient Mediterranean. We can find it in the forms of jewellery, iconography and the use of decorative motifs or techniques. Over time, significant transformations occurred there in some of the employed iconographic motifs, which were tailored to the local traditions, ideas and tastes. The following overview introduces the ancient jewellery of Central Asia and presents several examples of gold jewellery, building on the jewellers' artistic traditions of the ancient Mediterranean.

According to many iconographic sources, the jewellery in Central Asia was worn by both men and women. In general, we can say that male jewellery was more inspired by the trend of Asia (the previous Achaemenid, currently Parthian, Eurasian nomadic environments; MUSCHE 1988). It seems that especially men from the upper classes wore personal ornaments more often in Central Asia than in the Mediterranean, where jewellery was the domain of women. This male jewellery often had a symbolic function, highlighting the status of its owner (torque, belt, belt and shoe buckles). Female jewellery on the other hand shows a stronger influence of the Mediterranean, Parthian and nomadic environments in both iconography and the types of jewellery.

ANCIENT JEWELLERY OF CENTRAL ASIA – FINDS, CHRONOLOGY, SOURCES

Most Central Asian jewellery finds come from the historical regions of Bactria and Gandhara located in the territory of today's southern part of the former Soviet Republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, northern and eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. These areas were the hub of military activities and political formations, referring in many respects to the Mediterranean traditions, and so they contributed to the dissemination and preservation of some elements of ancient Greek cultural heritage in architecture, sculpture, but also in small art crafts. The known pieces of jewellery from the territory of Central Asia can be dated from the 3rd century BC until the early 4th century AD. The spectrum of jewellery thus covers the period from the campaign of Alexander the Great, through a short Seleucid rule and the period of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, the Indo-Greek Kingdom and the numerous invasions of nomadic tribes until the constitution and flourish of the Kushan Empire. Most of the finds of jewellery from precious materials come from the relatively turbulent period of the 1st century AD, when the area of Central Asia was the scene of the gradual formation of the Kushan Empire.

Three sites from ancient Bactria and Gandhara stand out in terms of the number and workmanship of local jewellery finds: the jewel hoard from the site of Dal'verzintepa in southern Uzbekistan; the gold treasure from six graves of Tillya Tepe in northern Afghanistan; and the huge amount of jewellery from Taxila in Pakistan. Each of these comes from a different cultural context: Tillya Tepe, a necropolis of a probably small tribe with close ties to Parthia but also to east Asia, emphasizing its nomadic traditions; Dal'verzintepa, a town under the Kushan rule with a golden treasure hidden under a house floor; and Taxila with rich jewellery hoards in the houses of wealthy citizens in the Saka/Parthian layers. Also worth mentioning in this context is the interesting similarity of some iconographical, technological and decorative elements in the jewellery of those three sites.

DAL'VERZINTEPA

Dal'verzintepa (e.g. PUGACHENKOVA 1978; PUGACHENKOVA – RTVELADZE 1978), a settlement located in the Surkhandarya region about 60 km northeast of Termez, flourished especially in the 2nd to the first half of the 3rd centuries AD. During the excavations in a wealthy district of the city, an intact pottery vessel was found containing 150 hidden gold objects. The entire hoard is dated to the second half of the 1st century AD. The treasure contained several types of jewellery, e.g. gold earrings (LUNEVA 2005, 66–67, Fig. 5:1–3), a torque, a necklace and bracelets (PUGACHENKOVA – RTVELADZE 1990, 119), some of them inspired by Greek models.¹ In addition to the jewellery, pieces of solid gold of various shapes were found in Dal'verzintepa, probably ready as raw material for jewellery making.

TILLYA TEPE

The necropolis of Tillya Tepe (SARIANIDI 1985; CAMBON – JARRIGE 2006; SCHILTZ 2011, 219–293) is located in northern Afghanistan, near the site of Emshi Tepe. The six tombs (five of them female, one male) contained exceptionally rich funerary equipment including more than

1 E.g. plain overlap bracelets with twisted wire spirals (LUNEVA 2005, 74, Fig. 9:2,4), the shape emerging in Hellenism and popular also in the Roman jewellery (OGDEN 1990, 225–226); engraved gem, inserted in the central part of the torque, represents a schematic male head in profile, interpreted as Heracles (PUGACHENKOVA – RTVELADZE 1978, 41), which was employed secondarily in the piece.

20,000 objects made of gold. According to a coin of Emperor Tiberius (minted in Lugdunum in 14–37 AD: HIEBERT – CAMBON 2011, 261, no. 176), the burials can be dated to the second third/second half of the 1st century AD. The amount of the golden jewellery in almost all the tombs is spectacular. Many pieces are massive and made of gold sheet in low and high relief. An interesting element in Tillya Tepe jewellery decoration is the very rich use of turquoise and garnet inlays and the large number of pendants in the form of a smooth circular disk. Overall, it is possible to distinguish several sources of inspiration or provenances in the Tillya Tepe material – from China and present-day Mongolia to India, through the Eurasian steppe and the Black Sea area, Parthian Iran to the relatively strong influence of Mediterranean jewellers' art.

TAXILA

Gandharan Taxila (MARSHALL 1951) is located in north-western Pakistan. The first settlement was situated on the Bhir Mound, by the time of the Greek control of the area the settlement moved across the river to the site of Sirkap. There it lasted until the end of the Saka-Parthian period after the mid-1st century AD. The site has produced a total of 213 pieces of jewellery from precious metals, most of which is made of gold. 180 pieces come from the later layers on Sirkap and are dated to the 1st century AD, another 27 pieces come from Bhir Mound and are dated from the 5th to the 2nd centuries BC (MARSHALL 1951, II, 616). In comparison with the highly incrustated jewellery from Tillya Tepe, the jewellery from Taxila uses colourful stones (turquoise, white orthoclase) to a lesser extent. The jewellery design is subtler, with more emphasis on the detail; the ornamentation is worked out in the spirit of the Indian environment, but with a clear relationship to the Hellenistic jewellery art in the forms and iconography.

COLLECTIONS AND THE OTHER FINDS

Other examples of ancient Central Asian jewellery include pieces from the nomad burial sites of southern Tajikistan² (Tulkhar, Aruktau or Bishkent burial places and others) or the recent finds from the site of Mes Aynak (FATICONI 2014, 23–36); jewellery of an earlier period is represented for example by the objects from the so-called Oxus treasure (DALTON 1926).

Other pieces of jewellery are also kept or displayed in the collections of the world's major museums such as the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and the Miho Museum in Japan. Many of them were obtained through purchases from public auctions, private sales or as gifts and therefore they are often without provenance and exact archaeological context (OGDEN 1992, 9–13). The stylistic analysis of the unprovenanced gold pieces depends mainly on the comparison with other items with known provenance. It is very likely that a lot of other jewellery from ancient Central Asia can be found in private collections.³

The picture described so far can be complemented by personal ornaments from less expensive materials, which could be inspired by and surely often followed the trends of the gold jewellery. The examples of the richest deposits of ornaments from conventional materials such as bronze, bone and others are the burial sites of the Bishkent area (e.g. MANDEL'SHTAM 1966) or settlements such as Kampyrtepa (LUNEVA 2001) or Zartepa (ZAV'YALOV 1993) in southern Uzbekistan.

2 Many of these finds are documented by photographs in ZEJMAĽ 1985.

3 For example, the pendant with a divine figure holding two dragons, which is supposed to have come from the treasure of Mir Zakah (BOARDMAN 2012, 102–111).

THE ICONOGRAPHIC SOURCES

In addition to the actual finds of jewellery, the iconographic sources provide important information on the form and manner in which the jewellery was worn: this is the case for example of the mural paintings from Khalchayan (PUGACHENKOVA 1966, 144-153), Toprakkala (TOLSTOV 1964, рис. 28, 30), Dal'verzintepa (PUGACHENKOVA - RTVELADZE 1978), the more recent Balalyk Tepe (AL'BAUM 1960, рис. 98, 100), or of the sculptures from Airtam (FAKHRETDINOVA 1988, 25; LUNEVA 2005, рис. 1-2), Dal'verzintepa (PUGACHENKOVA - RTVELADZE 1978), and Taxila (MARSHALL 1951), of the Gandhara sculpture (from the view of jewellery see e.g. FABRÉGUÉS 1991), as well as the jewellery images on sculpture from the Parthian Empire (MUSCHE 1988) and other sources.

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

The most widely used material of Central Asian jewellery is gold. Pieces from silver do not occur that often. Cheaper personal ornaments were, as in other areas, produced from less valuable metals (brass, iron, copper, bronze), or glass, bone, and other available organic and inorganic materials.

Higgins claims the areas of Arabia and Bactria as a source of gold for the Hellenistic world from Alexander's conquest to the period around the turn of eras. He also reminds us of the other gold-rich regions of Siberia and Altai, which had been in constant contact with Central Asia due to the frequent migrations or potential business relations (HIGGINS 1981, 9). It is widely supported even by the current analyses of mineral resources, that the region of Central Asia is richer in gold than in silver (ERRINGTON - CRIBB 1992, 258-259).

Several material analyses of jewels from the territory have been carried out so far. On the occasion of the exhibition *Afghanistan - les trésors retrouvés* in Musée Guimet, Paris, the XRF analysis of four chosen pieces from Tillya Tepe was carried out. The analysed pieces included a metal gem ring with an image of a female figure and the inscription ΑΘΗΝΑ, pendants with the Master of Dragons; a ring with an oval turquoise gem with a schematic Athena and an appliqué with the so-called Kushan Aphrodite, all the items came from the female grave II. The results were presented by T. Calligaro in the exhibition catalogue (CALLIGARO 2006, 292-293). Three pieces showed a high gold content (95-97%) with a small admixture of silver and copper (HICKMAN 2012, 80). According to T. Calligaro and J. Hickman this composition indicates the use of natural gold (at least in the analysed objects), because metal in its natural form is often found just with the admixtures of these two elements (CALLIGARO 2006, 293; HICKMAN 2012, 80). This fact could correspond with the ancient reputation of Bactria as a gold-bearing region.

Other materials, which richly complemented the production of gold jewellery, were precious stones of various colours that were inserted into boxes. Turquoise was especially in great vogue there (HICKMAN 2012, 80). The sources of turquoise were probably situated in the present-day Iran and on the lower right course of the Oxus River (CALLIGARO 2006, 293, Fig. 3); other deposits were known also in Egypt (Nubia and the Sinai). The turquoises used in the decoration of the Tillya Tepe jewellery are supposedly of Iranian origin, more precisely from the Nishapur region (CALLIGARO 2006, 292), from where the stone was imported through the Middle East (PRICE - WALSH 2006, 133). Another precious stone, often employed in the Central Asian jewellery, is the dark red garnet, a stone also highly popular in the Hellenistic jewellery.

Garnets are mainly used in the shape of oval cabochons. The examples from Tillya Tepe containing traces of iron are more precisely almandines (CALLIGARO 2006, 29). The XRF

analysis of several Tillya Tepe jewellery pieces also helped to determine the precise element composition of the inserted stones. The place of origin of the almandines was established probably as India, Rajasthan (Jaipur or Udaipur site: CALLIGARO 2006, 292). The garnets from India and Sri Lanka were of good quality and also common in the Mediterranean jewellery production (OGDEN 1992, 38). The dark blue lapis lazuli was also used in Central Asian jewellery, often with golden colour additions. Given that its biggest deposits are located in the mountains of Badakhshan in Afghanistan, its relatively rare use in the decoration of local jewellery is remarkable. One possible explanation is fashion: it is possible that the people of Central Asia did not regard lapis lazuli as a noble stone for the valuable gold jewellery (HICKMAN 2012, 80). Among other materials pyrite, varieties of chalcedony, amethyst (both probably also from the Indian Deccan plateau) and others occurred in Tillya Tepe (CALLIGARO 2006, 292–293). The use of jade and amber is interesting. Pearls and nacre also belonged to the well-liked materials in the decoration and production of personal ornaments. As mentioned above, white orthoclase is widely used in the Taxila jewellery.

Another material composition analysis examined the elemental composition and technical specifications of gold jewellery dating back to the Kushan period of the National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan (GUERRA *et al.* 2009, 177–185). The PIXE/PIGE analysis included five pieces of jewellery from the Bishkent and Dangar valleys, all coming from the 1st century BC–2nd century AD cemeteries: An amphora-shaped and a circular pendant from the Bishkent burial place V; a pendant with cloisonné decoration from the Bishkent burial place VII; an earring from the burial place Ksirov III; and an earring from the Ittifok burial place. The pendant from the Bishkent burial place VII contains an average of 82 ± 1.2 % gold, 1.0 ± 14.7 % silver and 3.1 ± 1.1 % copper. The other four objects have lower gold content of 76.3 ± 2.1 % gold, 2.3 ± 21.8 % silver and 1.7 ± 0.8 % copper. The elemental composition of these jewels shows other values than the analysed finds from Tillya Tepe. In the article the authors mentioned other rare analyses of a few objects of a Central Asian origin, such as the analysis of the Kanishka coin and medallion made of an alloy of gold (with the gold content differing from that of the analysed jewellery; GUERRA *et al.* 2009, 183; SACHS *et al.* 2003) or the analysis of some objects from the Xiong-nu necropolis (GUERRA *et al.* 2009; GUERRA – CALLIGARO 2003).

The production of gold jewellery was certainly a highly specialized activity. Today, the documentation of the jeweller's work and advanced decorative techniques are visible directly on the jewellery pieces, sometimes also on the finds of craft tools and parts of the sites that could have served for jewellery production. Golden ingots were found in Dal'verzintepa and in Ai-Khanoum⁴ (BERNARD 2011, 107). Stone moulds for the production of personal ornaments come from Dal'verzintepa from the layers of the 1st century AD; they were probably used to produce very simple objects (PUGACHENKOVA – RTVELADZE 1978, 204–205). Another slate mould with four circular grooves comes from the 2nd century BC from Ai-Khanoum (GUILLAUME – ROUGEULLE 1987, 79, Pl. 26, Fig. 15). In Taxila, several moulds for jewellery production were found too (MARSHALL 1951, III, 142). Two hoards of objects from Sirkap in Taxila were referred to by Marshall as “the jewellers' equipment” (MARSHALL 1951, II, 505). Both groups included small objects from stone (pieces of turquoise, lapis lazuli) or shells that probably served as a part of jewellery, as well as metal samples and metal cast moulds for production of jewellery decorative elements from metal sheets. The metal pieces are mostly made of sheet (they can serve as testing samples), but also of cast metal (e.g. copper). Overall, they contain 102 and 66

4 Elemental composition of a golden ingot from Ai-Khanoum was analysed by XRF method, its composition shows similarities with the aforementioned jewellery from Tillya Tepe (more information in CALLIGARO 2006, 293).

pieces. As far as their shapes are concerned, they find similarity with almost every piece of the golden jewellery from Taxila (MARSHALL 1951, I, 189). Two moulds from aforementioned groups from Taxila in the shape of a fish (MARSHALL 1951, III, Pl. 180:109) found their parallel in the oblong fish mould of Begram (**Fig. 1**; ERRINGTON 1999, 229, Pl. 8.34), dated to the same period of the 1st century AD. They can present evidence of transmission or liking for the same motifs among the different parts of the territory of Central Asia.



Fig. 1: Fish-shaped pendant, Begram (British Museum, Museum Number 1880.3678.c. Information and photography available online: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=709425001 & objectId=179681 & partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=709425001&objectId=179681&partId=1) (visited 10/10/2015).

The majority of the Central Asian jewellery, as it was also in the Mediterranean, was established by forming from gold sheets rather than casting. Gold wire was also an important element, especially for fixing great amounts of pendants (most often of a simple circular shape) to the body of the jewel. Chains of the loop-in-loop type which are very likely a result of the Mediterranean influences often occurred in the jewellery of Central Asia from the first centuries AD (CHANDRA 1979, 33). These chains appeared either as a single piece of jewellery (e.g. SARIANIDI 1985, 227, no. 8; MARSHALL 1951, III Pl. 192:68), or in the form of short chains with pendants which hung from earrings (for example MARSHALL 1951, III Pl. 190). The decorative techniques whose favour increased in this area through the influence of Greek jewellery are filigree and granulation (CHANDRA 1979, 33). Granulation especially occurs widely in the jewellery from Tillya Tepe and Taxila, in the form of simple geometric designs, covering the chosen part of the object's surface or as a rim around the inlays, which is certainly the most popular decoration technique of the Central Asian jewellery.

EXAMPLES OF CENTRAL ASIAN JEWELLERY INSPIRED BY THE MEDITERRANEAN ENVIRONMENT

Of the entire spectrum of jewellery that comes from the sites in Central Asia, some are apparently inspired by Greek or Roman jewellery from a technological, typological or iconographical point of view. The following examples such as earrings with animal heads or figures, earrings with pendants in the shape of amphorae or sewn-on appliques with the goddess Aphrodite represent different approaches to the tradition of the ancient Greek jewellery – adoption of a certain type of jewellery (earrings in the form of tapering hoops with animal heads or figures, amphora pendants), use of mythological motifs (appliques with Aphrodite, pair clasps with Erotes riding dolphins) or single decorative elements (e.g. heart shaped inlay, schematic dolphins).

EARRINGS IN THE FORM OF TAPERING HOOPS TERMINATING WITH A HEAD, PROTOME OR FIGURE

Earrings in the form of tapering hoops terminating on one side with a head (animal, less commonly human), a protome, or a figure, belong to the most popular and widespread forms of Hellenistic ear ornaments (HIGGINS 1981, 159–161). Several pieces of this kind come from Central Asia, e.g. the pair with a coiled hoop in the form of small Erotes from Tillya Tepe (**Fig. 2**; SCHILTZ 2011, 281, no. 209). Older examples of this type dated to the 3rd c. BC are represented in the Oxus treasure (CUNNINGHAM 1881, 156, T. 16,1; PFROMMER 1990, 190) and in the collection of the Miho Museum (INAGAKI 2002, 131, T. 179 v, w).⁵ Another find terminating with a protome of a sphinx was discovered in the Babashow burial V (**Fig. 3**; ZEJMAL 1985, 99, 252; BELAŇOVÁ 2015, 89), the figure is decorated with filigree. A similar elaborate example with a sphinx protome originates from the Punjab or northern India of the 2nd c. AD (HANSEN – WIECZOREK – TELLENBACH 2009, Kat. Nr. 272); its intricate decoration is provided by granulation, filigree and twisted wires.



Fig. 2: Tillya Tepe earrings with Erotes (HIEBERT – CAMBON 2011, 289, no. 219).

Pfrommer indicates the type of earrings with an Eros body as a variant of Hellenistic earrings with animal or female heads (PFROMMER 1990, 187–193). According to V. Schiltz the shape and type of earrings mainly follows the works from Taranto (HIEBERT – CAMBON 2011, 289). They were among the most popular shapes that, especially in the East, survived the fall of the Seleucid Empire. The type appeared in the first half of the 3rd century BC (HIGGINS 1981, 159). Specimens are known from the area of Asia Minor, Syria and other areas of the Seleucid Empire, Macedonia, northern Black Sea area, Italy and the Parthian environment (MUSCHE 1988, Taf. X–XIII). The specimens from Central Asia prove that earring type appeared in this distant part of the Hellenistic world and its popularity continued apparently also in the first centuries of our era.

⁵ INAGAKI 2002, 249: the publication mentions another similar earring with Eros from Turkmenistan, Uzboy.



Fig. 3: An earring with a protome of a sphinx (ZEJMAL 1985, 99, 252).

AMPHORA EARRINGS

Another widespread type of ear ornament or earring pendant in Central Asia is a small amphora, often with handles in the form of dolphins or spirals, which can represent a schematic conversion of a dolphin's body. This form – again clearly inspired by the forms of the Hellenistic art – is known in Central Asia in several versions of varying quality, not only in gold combined with colourful stones but also in less precious metals. Most of the examples from Central Asia show both the local persistence and the popularity of this form of earrings after the Hellenistic era.

This type is represented e.g. by the earring with amphora pendant and handles in the form of a small Eroses riding sea lions, which was found in Sirkap, Taxila (**Fig. 4**; context dated to around the middle of the 1st century AD, MARSHALL 1951, III Pl. 190, no. 2). The massive pendant with a length of about 9.5 cm certainly belongs among the most beautiful jewels from Central Asia. The upper part of the earring pendant consists of a gold rectangular frame with inserted rosette. It consists of four heart-shaped petals decorated on their entire surface with delicate granulation, more petals grow from the rosette's centre, which creates a base for a miniature reclining figure of Eros. In the corners of the frame, four smaller six-petal rosettes are arranged. At the bottom of the frame the circular hook holds an elaborate amphora pendant, whose body is decorated with turquoise paste inserts and granulation. The pendant has a stepped square base, accompanied in the bottom by gold beads of various sizes in pyramidal compositions. The handles of the amphora are formed by cast gold pieces of high quality – a small Eroses riding the sea monsters. It is possible to distinguish the wings of small gods, twisted tails of mythical creatures and details of the body decorated with turquoise inserts. Four loops with chains are fastened to the lower part of the creatures, each plaited chain terminates in a pendant consisting of a pearl and gold leaf. On this splendid ear pendant we can find several elements of Greek jewellery tradition which were popular in the heart of Asia – granulation, single *loop-in-loop* chains, rosettes, heart-shaped boxes, amphoras, Eroses lying on rosettes or riding sea lions.

Another gold earring pendant of similar shape, but less ornate, was found in Taxila on the Bhir mound. It is dated earlier to the 3rd-2nd century BC (MARSHALL 1951, III Pl. 190, no. 1). The



Fig. 4: Earring with amphora pendant, Taxila, National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi. Photography by Christian Luczanits available online: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/asia-society-exhibit-explores-pakistans-buddhist-past/> (accessed 20/12/2014).

pendant again consists of two parts – the upper half is linked to the amphora by a ring. The upper part is a six-petal rosette, partly decorated with granulation. The body of the amphora in the lower part is decorated with granulation in simple triangle shapes and at the bottom, handles are represented by schematic dolphins.

Two finds of similar shape and details of decoration from different strata can prove the popularity of this form of earring pendants in Taxila over a longer period of time.

Another seven examples of amphora-shaped pendants come from the Tulkhar burial place (GORBUNOVA 2001, 130). They are made of gold, inlaid or completed with white stones and dated to the 2nd–1st centuries BC. Other examples are known from the cemeteries of Bishkent (three examples from the Bishkent burial place V; two examples from Bishkent IV) and from the Aruktau burial place (a pair of earrings: GORBUNOVA 2001, 130). These amphora pendants from south Tajikistan show the tendency to a certain simplification of form, which is especially noticeable in the details of the dolphins. The pendants are made of gold, combined with other metals or coloured stones. The earrings are decorated with simple chains with small pendants, attached to the amphorae or dolphin-like handles, and pyramidal granulation clusters attached to the bottom of the amphora also appeared. In one case, the upper ring of the earrings is decorated with a stylized Heracles knot, supplemented with white glass paste (**Fig. 5**; Bishkent burial place V, kurgan 46, LITVINSKIJ – SEDOV 1984, Fig. 32). The cemeteries of the Bishkent area can be possibly dated to the 1st–2nd centuries AD (LITVINSKIJ – SEDOV 1984, 129–132) while Gorbunova dates the Tulkhar necropolis and the Bishkent burial place V to the 2nd century AD, and the Bishkent burial place IV to the 1st–2nd centuries AD (GORBUNOVA 2001, 143). One example



Fig. 5: Amphora earrings from Ittifok burial ground (GUERRA *et al.* 2009, 59).

of an amphora shaped pendant comes from the cemetery of Ittifok (GUERRA *et al.* 2009, 178). The earring pendant is adorned with amphorae with white glass paste, stylized dolphins with a gold chain and a gold wire central axis, they are dated to the 1st-2nd centuries AD.

According to Higgins, the amphora pendant type seems to belong mainly to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, though they appeared earlier (6th century BC; MUSCHE 1988, 101); examples are known from Vulci, Perugia and Bettona, Delos or Samothrace (HIGGINS 1981, 163), they also appeared in the Black Sea region and in Parthian contexts (MUSCHE 1988, 101-103, Taf. XVIII-XIX).⁶ This type of gold jewellery inspired the production of much more simple bronze or copper amphora-shaped earring pendants, such as those from Begram (Fig. 6; ERRINGTON 1999, 229, Pl.8:26-32) which recall their elaborate gold prototypes from Taxila (MARSHALL 1951, III, Pl. 190:1-2) or gold and precious stones amphora earring pendants from the burial places in southern Tajikistan (ZEJMAL 1985, 106-107). Other examples of amphora pendant earrings



Fig. 6: Copper alloy amphora-shaped earring pendants, Begram (British Museum, Museum Number 1880.3714.f. Information and photography available online): [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3526018 & partId=1 & searchText=begram & images=true & object=21119 |21119 & page=3](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3526018&partId=1&searchText=begram&images=true&object=21119|21119&page=3) (accessed 11/01/2014).

6 B. Musche (1988, 102-103) classifies the earrings from Taxila as the third regional variant of Parthian amphora pendant earrings.

with supposed ancient Gandharan or Bactrian provenance come from the collections of several museums (e.g. the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Miho Museum: BELAŇOVÁ 2015, 86–87). Examples from various sites in Central Asia and also imitations of this type of earring pendants in conventional materials demonstrates the wide popularity of the amphora pendant earrings.

PECTORALS

Several types of jewellery worn on the chest found inspiration or older parallels in ancient Greek jewellery, even if the original model is sometimes partially transformed in the Central Asian environment. The massive pectorals with long pendants from Tillya Tepe and Taxila are good examples of the use of the same motif in contemporary Mediterranean and Central Asian jewellery (SCHILTZ 2011, 282, 210; MARSHALL 1951, III, Pl. 193).

This small group of pectorals is characterized by an alternation of long pendants with circular motifs (or rosettes) and bilaterally concave elements (referred to as double crescents, sheaves, or palmettes/lotus-palmettes). An elaborate example from the female burial V in Tillya Tepe is composed of a combination of smooth double crescent elements with upper granulated rings and round elements with upper smooth beads, both completed by almond-shape settings and gold disks (HIEBERT – CAMBON 2011, 282, no. 210). A similar use of an alternation of two motifs, round and biconcave, also appeared on other gold personal ornaments from the same site – sewn-on plaques composed in vertical decorative bands (SARIANIDI 1985, 233, no. 19–20, 256, no. 22) and as a bottom decorative element on the appliqué plates with “Man with the dolphin” (HIEBERT – CAMBON 2011, 233, no. 117).

Three pectorals from Taxila, Sirkap are composed of the same type of round and biconcave components with pendants and boxes for inlays, which differ in details (MARSHALL 1951, II 627, III, Pl. 193, no. 56–58). In one case (Fig. 7; MARSHALL 1951, II, 627, III, Pl. 193:56), the circular type of pendants is decorated around its circumference with two curved dolphin bodies.

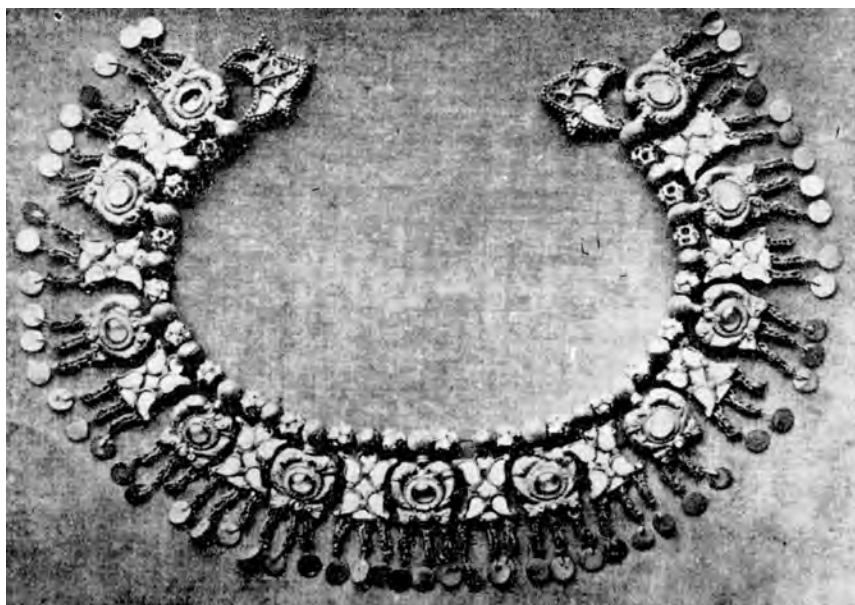


Fig. 7: Pectoral, Taxila (MARSHALL 1951, III, Pl. 193, no. 56).

In Greek jewellery, necklaces made of two similar alternating motifs occurred in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. One example from the collections of the British Museum is dated to the first half of the 4th century BC. The biconcave motif, referred to as a double axe (WILLIAMS – OGDEN 1994, 62, Fig. 15), is complemented with small rosettes. A similar necklace of alternating circular and concave parts made of terracotta, again from the collections of the British Museum, is dated between the 4th and the 2nd centuries BC (MARSHALL 1911, 249, Pl. XLII, no. 2190). Rosettes and biconcave lotus-rosettes alternate on the necklace from the Panticapaeum of the first half of the 4th century BC (WILLIAMS – OGDEN 1994, 152–153, no. 94). The same elements can be seen on the necklace from Taranto dated to the second half of the 4th century BC (WILLIAMS – OGDEN 1994, 205, no. 135). This type of alternating elements is also known from the Etruscan jewellery of the 6th century BC (HIGGINS 1981, Pl. 35), but the motifs are broadly popular already in the Near Eastern art in the centuries before our era such as, for example, on the statue from Nimrud from the 8th century BC, the Darius crown in Bisutun of the 5th century BC or from the balustrade in Bodh Gaya of the 1st century BC (according to FABRÉGUES 1991, Pl. 13). Due to the fact, that both in Greek jewellery from the period before our era and in later Central Asian jewellery the alternating round and biconcave elements were used mainly for the construction of necklaces, examples of Greek provenance could have served as an inspiration for Central Asian gold jewellery pieces. The use of details in the form of dolphins on one of the Taxila necklaces also shows the inspiration of Greek iconography.

DECORATIVE STRIPS

Taxila also provides another interesting group of jewellery – decorative strips composed of equal, interlocking link plates or appliqués, perforated on the rim (MARSHALL 1951, III, Pl. 194:76–77). Through the perforations they can be linked together or attached to the ground from fabric or leather. The shape of the appliqués resembles a double crescent, a schematic bird or a broader volute. These strips of appliqués can be used as necklaces, belts or chest ornaments. Objects of the same form were also found in Tillya Tepe where they were sewn on the fabric and decorated the neckline of female garments (SARIANIDI 1985, 255, no. 12). Similar pieces come from other sites, for example the Tulkhar burial ground, Tajikistan (Fig. 8; here connected with the motif of a Heracles knot: GORBUNOVA 2001, 145, no. 12,1), or Passani stupa (ERRINGTON 1999, 231, Pl.10). An iconographic source depicting exactly this kind of jewel is the relief depicting a group of musicians from Airtam, Uzbekistan (Fig. 9; YACENKO 2006, ill. 127, 133) in which the appliqués decorate the sleeves and garment neckline of the figures. Similar finds also come from Egypt of the first centuries AD but occur through the whole Roman Empire (OGDEN 1990, I 192, II no. 319, 320).



Fig. 8: Decorative strip with Heracles knot, Tulkhar burial ground (MANDEL'SHTAM 1966, LX:1).



Fig. 9: Relief depicting a group of musicians, Airtam (YACENKO 2006, ill. 127).

ICONOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS

In addition to the aforementioned types of jewellery, which occurred both in the ancient Greek and Central Asian environment, in Central Asia we can distinguish types of local jewellery (not popular or common in ancient Greek production), using motifs or figures from Greek mythology. The best examples of this mythological motif transmission are gold appliqués with a semi-naked goddess Aphrodite (**Fig. 10**; HIEBERT - CAMBON 2011, 245, no. 141; 288, no. 217; MARSHALL 1951, III, Pl. 191:96–97). These appliqués are made of gold sheet, with attachments on the rear. The central figure of all these bigger appliqués depicts the standing Greek goddess of beauty and love. For the jewellery originating from Central Asia, the motif of a naked or semi-naked female figure of Hellenistic origin appears only on these golden embossed plates. The motif is almost the same – a naked or semi-naked female figure with or without a small Eros leaning on a column. In Central Asia, the Mediterranean iconography is only modified by the additions of wings, rich jewellery or a sign on her forehead. The explanation for the wing element may be the linking of Aphrodite to Psyche, as implied by Boardman (1995, 118).



Fig. 10: Appliqué with the goddess Aphrodite, Tillya Tepe (HIEBERT - CAMBON 2011, 288, no. 217).

In addition to the appliqués where he is depicted with his mother, Eros appears in the Central Asian jewellery separately or with his wife Psyche. Examples from Taxila include a gold appliqué of Eros with Psyche or a gem with a similar motif, both from Sirkap, Taxila (MARSHALL 1951, III, Pl. 207:11, Pl. 191:98).

CONCLUSIONS

The above exposed evidence shows that the gold jewellery produced in the territory of Central Asia absorbed in its designs, technology as well as the employed iconographic motifs inspiration from many sources.

The local jewellery from the period around the turn of the eras has an original character, which is the result of the absorption and organic re-creation of elements characteristic of different cultures. Among these, a strong inspiration also comes from the Greek world. The paper has provided a brief overview of several types of jewellery or iconographic motifs that have their roots in the ancient Greek jewellery and artistic tradition. These pieces have strong ties to the ancient art mainly of the Hellenistic period. In Central Asia they got preserved but also developed in their own direction even after the end of the Hellenistic period.

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