

A VISUAL SURVEY OF THE
BACTRO-GANDHARAN
GODDESS ARDOX[CH]SHO
AND RELATED IMAGES

John C. Huntington
The Ohio State University

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho
(British Mus.)

Contemporaneous identification



Gold Stater of Kanishka I Rev. Ardoxsho
(ca. 127/8-152)

JCH

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho
(British Mus.)

Contemporaneous identification



Kushan Empire, Huvishka (c. 158-95 AD), gold [stater](#): emperor riding on elephant r., legend in Greek letters (obv.); goddess Ardoxsho with cornucopia standing l., Greek legend *Ardochro* (rev.). Fitzwilliam Museum ©

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho
(British Mus.)

Contemporaneous identification



Kushan Empire, Huvishka (c. 158-95 AD), gold [stater](#): emperor in profile r., legend in Greek letters (obv.); Pharro (rev.). Najaf Cooins

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho
(British Mus.)

Contemporaneous identification



Gold Stater of Kanishka I Rev.
Ardoxsho.

In this “attested document,”
Ardoxsho is definitively portrayed
as a standing goddess with a
cornucopia, a halo and a head band
which holds her hair in place. She is
fully covered from shoulder to feet
in a garment.

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho
(British Mus.)

Contemporaneous identification



Sketch of
Gold Stater of Kanishka I Rev.
Ardoxsho.

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ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho
(British Mus.)

Contemporaneous identification



Gold Stater of Huvishka I
(152-192)

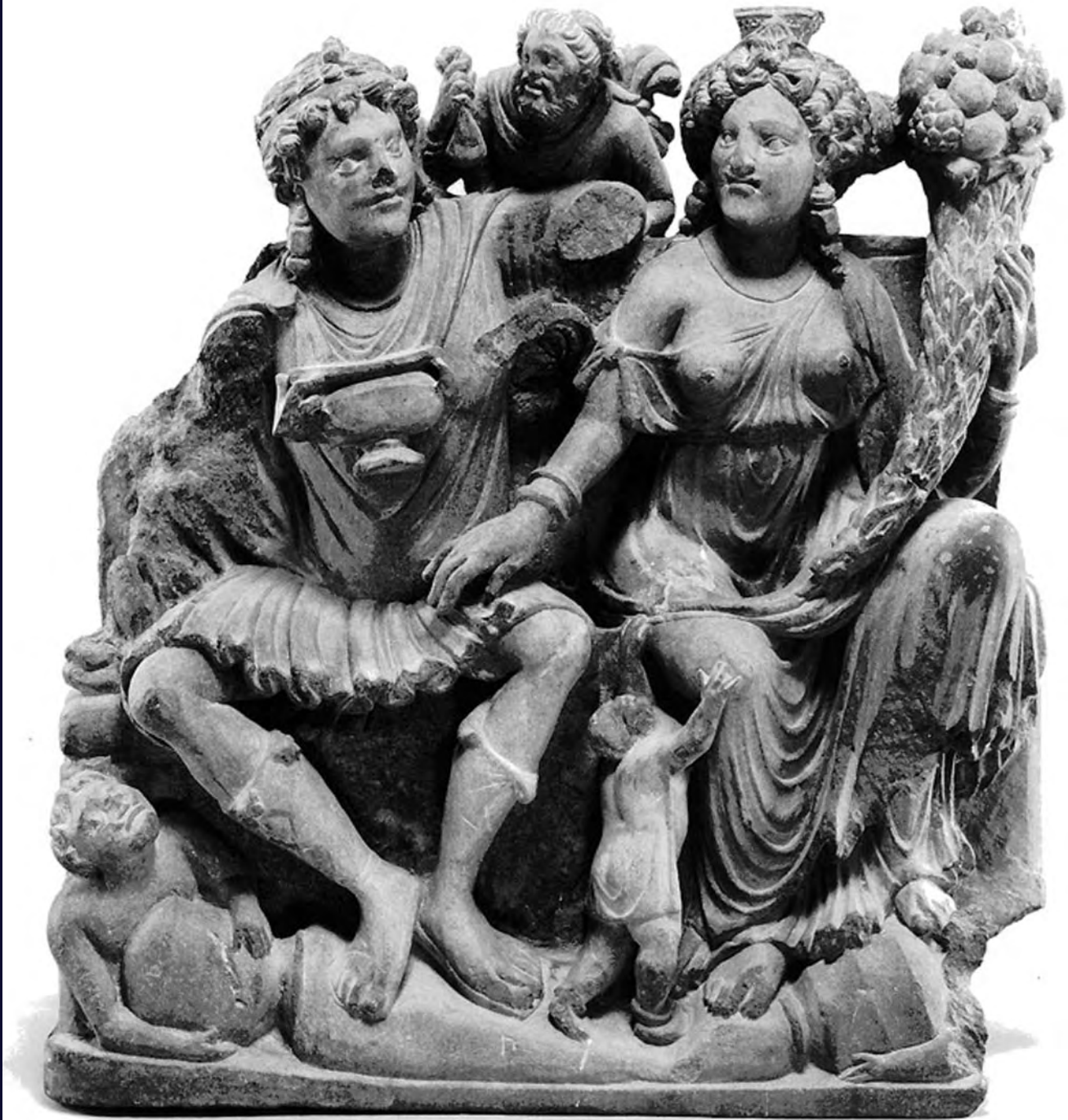
Rev. Phar[r]o.

AAAUM

ARDOXSHO

Pharro & Ardoxsho

British Museum



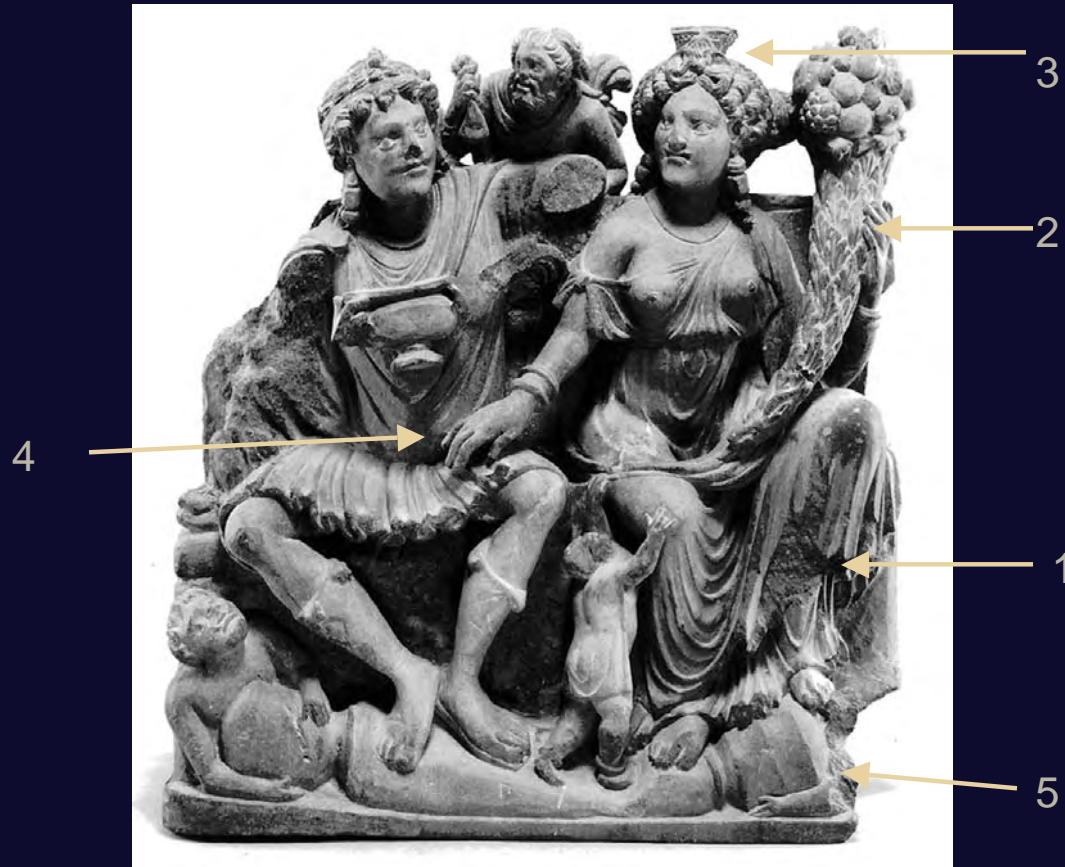
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10A PRAJNA

Ardoxsho's iconographic elements

Pharro & Ardoxsho

British Museum



1. Greek style garments (never Kushan)
2. Carries the Cornucopia
3. Some kind of tiara (not cityscape)
4. This image is unusual in the contact between Ardoxsho and Pharro
5. Feet rest on over-flowing water jars (rare)

ARDOXSHO

Pharro & Ardoxsho

Isao Kurita



ARDOXSHO

Pharro & Ardoxsho

Isao Kurita



In this sculpture of Pharro & Ardoxsho, Ardoxsho carries a lotus in her right hand. The tiara and cornucopia are very close to the previous image.

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho

Isao Kurita

In this sculpture fragment of what was originally a Pharro & Ardoxsho image, Ardoxsho also carried a lotus in her right hand. The tiara and cornucopia are very close to the previous image. However, the cornucopia is resting on the ground.



ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho

Cleve Right
V&A left



These famous gold medallions may be compared to the two previous images. The iconography is almost identical (e.g. tiara, modest dress, and lotus.) However, a second lotus has been substituted for the cornucopia. This additional lotus supports symbols of abundance one would expect to emerge from the cornucopia. Therefore, it is plausible that this figure is Ardoxsho.

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho

Cleve Right



The back of the Cleveland version has a lotus which strongly suggests a Buddhist context for the two medallions.

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho



Guimet

The Great conjuror's transformation at Sravasti (from Paitava Afghanistan) has a unmistakable image of Ardoxsho as a detail at the left side which proves her role in the Buddhist context. Ca. 3-4th century

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho

Possible prototypes, the Iranian goddess of harvest, Aredvi Sura Anahita, and the Greek, Tyche, goddess of good fortune and prosperity have been mentioned as possible conceptual and iconological prototypes

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho



Later Kushan Kings Vasu Deva II & Successors Gold Dinar 7.7 grams;
Gobl, Vasu Deva III, 569. Good Fine.

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho



Later Kushan Kings Shaka Type Gold Dinar 7.81 grams, Gobl Vasu Deva III, 589, VF.

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho



Later Kushan Kings Vasiska Type Gold Dinar, 7.8 grams; Gobl 559, VF.

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho



Kushan Rebel Migra Gold Dinar Issue 7.85 grams, MK 578, Donum 744, Superb EF, **EXTREMELY RARE**

ARDOXSHO

Ardoxsho



Kushan Vasudeva III Gold Dinar 7.8 grams, after 360 C.E.; MK 579,
Superb EF

ARDOXSHO

**Greek and/or
Iranian
sources for
Ardoxsho**

Tyche, goddess of wealth
and good fortune, is often
understood as the “city
goddess”
Hellenic period.



Vatican

ARDOXSHO

**Greek and/or
Iranian
sources for
Ardoxsho**

Tyche, goddess of wealth and good fortune, is often understood as the “city goddess”
Hellenic period.

In this example she wears her characteristic “mural” crown which resembles the walls of a city. She carries wheat in her right hand



Vatican

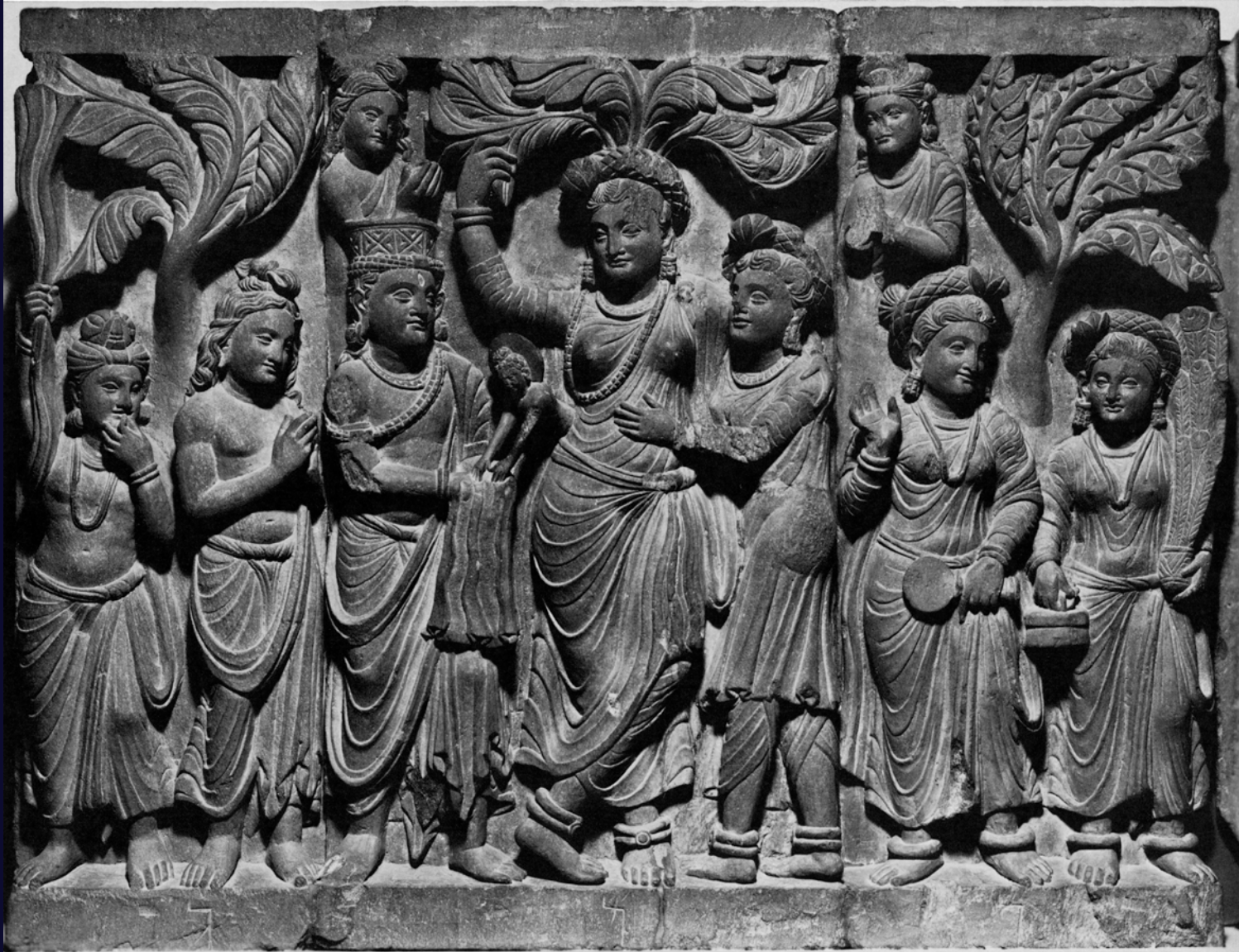
ARDOXSHO

Buddha Matri



10A PRAJNA

Not Ardoxsho!



Birth of Siddhartha with "Ardoxsho" at far right

FGA

ARDOXSHO
Not
Ardoxsho!



In this large and exquisitely detailed version of the Birth, the woman in question carries a food or water container and a jar of peacock feathers—not the cornucopia.

As far as I can tell, this applies to all such “Births with Ardoxsho”

Birth of Siddhartha with “Ardoxsho” at far right

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FGA

ARDOXSHO

Not Ardoxsho!



Great Departure from the city of Kapilavastu

Karachi JCH

ARDOXSHO

Not Ardoxsho!



The goddess carries none of Ardoxsho's "local" attributes, but wears the cityscape crown of Tyche in her guise as the goddess of the city. As the goddess is shown dozing as the prince departs. It is probable that she is Tyche as the city goddess.

Great Departure from the city of Kapilavastu

Karachi JCH