

# The Achaemenid Expansion to the Indus and Alexander's Invasion of North-West South Asia

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There is a range of evidence that informs us about the organisation of the Achaemenid Empire, but our understanding of the eastern-most reaches of the empire, which lie within the bounds of modern-day Pakistan is relatively limited. While there is evidence for the eastern provinces in imperial art and references to them in Achaemenid Royal inscriptions, the archaeological record in the subcontinent is far more ephemeral and less straightforward to interpret. Some of the clearest information about these eastern regions comes from the historians who wrote about the conquest of Alexander at the end of the 4th century BC. The evidence for the Achaemenid period in the east is also informed by an understanding of the archaeological evidence from the preceding periods, which implies that the Achaemenid Empire annexed existing regional entities during the 6th century BC, and employed a layered administrative system in the east that saw differing degrees of control exerted in different regions.

**Keywords:** Achaemenid Empire; Pakistan; Satrapy; Imperialism; Post-Colonial Theory; Emulation

## Introduction

The Achaemenid Empire was the largest political entity to develop in ancient Western Asia. It saw the incorporation of regions and populations from Central Asia to Egypt and from the west of Asia Minor to the subcontinent come under an overarching political system based on the emplacement of royally vetted satraps controlling individual provinces (e.g. Kuhrt 2001; Van de Mieroop 2004: 277-278). Much research has been devoted to characterising Achaemenid administration and influence in the western parts of the empire, but relatively little attention has been given to the nature of imperial authority and impact in the eastern regions that fall within the borders of modern day Pakistan (fig. 1). This is at least partly because the evidence for Achaemenid control at the easternmost edge of the empire is limited, and although there is archaeological evidence from various sites in the western borderlands of Pakistan, much of what is known comes from inscriptions and texts from palaces and tombs in Susiana and Fars in Iran, and Classical Greek and Roman historical sources relating to the Achaemenid period and the conquests of Alexander. The latter texts are particularly relevant as these eastern regions also

became part of the empire of Alexander the Great of Macedon, which was established in the wake of the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire after his defeat of Darius III at the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC, and his campaigns across the Iranian plateau, into Central Asia and across the plains of the Punjab between 330-326 BC.

An informed understanding of the impact of Achaemenid control in the east can only come by contextualising the evidence for this period in relation to the preceding centuries in the region. There have been relatively few attempts to systematically examine the archaeological evidence for the 1st millennium BC in Pakistan, but several papers by the authors of this paper and others have attempted to reinterpret the extant archaeological material, present new archaeological evidence, and correlate all of this data with that from the inscriptions and texts (Ali T. *et al.* 1998; Bivar 1988; Coningham *et al.* 2007b; Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010; Petrie and Magee 2007; Petrie *et al.* 2008; Vogelsang 1986; 1990; 1992; 1998; Young 2003;). These studies have attempted to clarify our understanding of these regions, which are true borderlands in that they are simultaneously the easternmost Achaemenid provinces and also the westernmost regions of the sub-continent. This paper will make extensive reference to this research to

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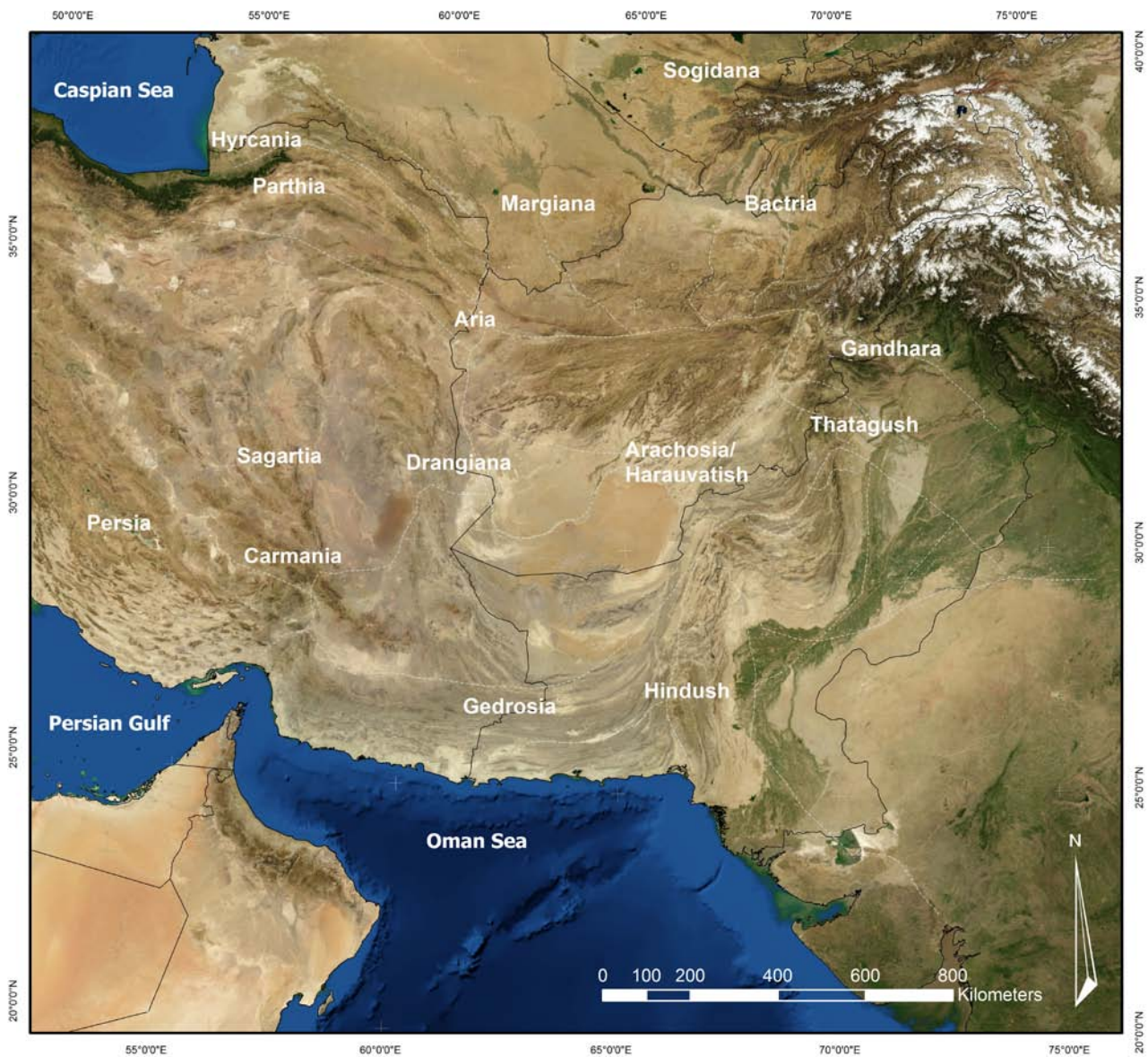
outline the evidence related to the pre-Achaemenid socio-economic and political structures in the north-west of the subcontinent (c.1200-500 BC) and then turn to the evidence for imperial control and local response to that control during the time of the Achaemenid Empire (c.500-330 BC), and finally the evidence related to Alexander's invasion (327-326 BC).

**Western South Asia before the Achaemenids**

*Archaeological Evidence*

The early to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC witnessed

the decline of the urban centres of the Indus Civilisation and the concomitant increase of the rural village-based population in various parts of western South Asia (reviewed in Petrie 2013). Most of the medium and large Indus settlements were situated out on the alluvial plains of the Punjab and Sindh, and although the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC saw these settlements progressively reduced in size or completely abandoned, the same period also saw the rise of new settlements of substantial size in various borderland areas. These new settlements include Pirak on the Kacchi plain in Baluchistan, which was established around 1800 BC and occupied up until 800 BC (Jarrige and Santoni 1979), the



*Fig. 1: Location of satrapies at the eastern end of the Achaemenid Empire.*



Bala Hissar at Charsadda in the Peshawar Valley, which was established as early as 1400 BC and apparently occupied more or less continuously up until around 150 BC (Coningham and Ali 2007; Petrie in press 2013 a), Akra in the Bannu Basin, from which artefacts dating to c. 1800-1700 BC have been recovered and where occupation has been dated from c. 900 BC onwards (Khan *et al.* 2000a; 2000b; Magee *et al.* 2005), and the Hathial mound at Taxila, which appears to have been established in the early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC (Allchin 1982; Khan 1983; Dani 1986; Petrie in press 2013 b). It is now clear that regionally distinct assemblages of cultural material are associated with many of these regional settlements. In fact, the apparent regionalization of pre-Achaemenid archaeological assemblages is one of the most important aspects of the archaeological data.

### ***The Peshawar and Swat Valleys and Taxila***

Sir Mortimer Wheeler's (1962) excavations at the Bala Hissar at Charsadda provided the first well-stratified archaeological sequence in the Peshawar valley. He initially outlined a series of major postulates, two of which related to the appearance of iron in the earliest deposits and the discovery of a ditch along one side of the main mound, which lead him to date the foundation of the Bala Hissar to the Achaemenid period. Reanalysis of Wheeler's sequence (Dittman 1984; also Vogelsang 1988), and renewed excavations at the site (Ali *et al.* 1998: 6-14; Young 2003: 37-40; Coningham and Ali 2007; Petrie in press 2013 a) have shown that the earliest known levels date much earlier, and that it is the only site in the Peshawar Valley with an unbroken sequence of occupation from c.1400 to 50 BC (Dittmann 1984: 159, 193). Radiocarbon dates show that the site was first occupied c. 1420-1160 BC, and the first appearance of iron is believed to date to c. 1200 BC (Coningham and Batt 2007: 93-98; also Young 2003: 39; Petrie in press 2013 a). The recent excavations have also shown that the ditch, which Wheeler (1962: 33-36) believed dated to the siege of the site by Alexander's general Hephaestion, was filled at some point between c.790-380 BC, at least 55 years before the arrival of the Macedonians (Coningham and Batt 2007: 96-98; Petrie in press

2013 a).

The earliest ceramic vessels from the Bala Hissar have been referred to as both Soapy red' ware (Wheeler 1962: 39) and red burnished ware (Allchin 1982; Coningham *et al.* 2007a: 100), as vessel forms have a distinctive red burnished surface and registers of low ridges, grooves or wavy lines. This ceramic ware is found throughout the earliest levels exposed in Ch. I (Layers 51a-33; Wheeler 1962: 37-40, 46-54, Figs. 11-18). Similar red burnished ware has been observed at the cemetery at Zarif Karuna (Khan 1973), at the Hathial where it is called 'ridged red burnished ware' (Allchin 1982, 1995: 127; Khan 1983; Dani 1986: 37-38, Figs. 13, 52); the Bhir mound in the Taxila Valley where the grooved 'red burnished ware' variety appears (Bahadur Khan *et al.* 2002: 29-31, 74-5, Plate 1; Petrie in press 2013b) and at settlements (e.g. Aligrama and Ghaligai) and cemeteries (e.g. Kherai, Loebanr, Katelai, Butkara and Timargarha) in and around the Swāt Valley (Period V) and the surrounding areas where it is regarded as an element of the so-called "Gandharan Grave Culture" (e.g. Stacul 1966: 261-74; Stacul 1967; 1993; Dani 1967; Salvatori 1975; Stacul and Tusa 1977; Tusa 1979; Müller-Karpe 1983; Vinogradova 2001; Ali, I. *et al.* 2002; Ali, I. and Zahir 2005; Petrie in press 2013 a). It is notable that only two fragments of the red burnished ware with ridges were recovered from the site of Akra in the Bannu Basin (see below; Khan *et al.* 2000b; Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010).

These distinctive red burnished ceramics were in use during the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC in a large yet restricted area stretching from Swat and the surrounding valleys, across the Peshawar Valley and to the east across the Indus into the northern Punjab at Taxila. However, the extent to which it is possible to recreate any aspect of the economic, political or social configuration of the societies living in these regions is constrained by the lack of extensive horizontal excavations at any site. The widespread use of the red burnished ware across a region that is subsequently referred to by the name 'Gandhara' indicates, however, the existence of some form of economic interaction sphere. It is very likely that geographical considerations played a role



in the operation of this economic zone, as the primary distribution of the red ware lies along east-west communication routes from the northern Punjab to the Peshawar region and from there into the highland valleys to the north (Magee and Petrie 2010).

### ***The Bannu Basin***

Research conducted in the Bannu basin has revealed another regionally distinct cultural assemblage in the borderlands to the south of the Peshawar Valley. The basin is a small topographically defined region to the east of the Sulaiman Range, and is separated from the Peshawar Valley to the north by the ridges of the Salt Range and from Gomal plain in the south and the Indus River and plain to the east by a series of substantial mountain ranges. The Bannu Archaeological Project excavations at the sites of Ter Kala Dheri and Akra between 1995 and 2001 revealed evidence for a regionally distinct cultural assemblage marked by what has been referred to as Bannu Black on Red Ware, which has been dated to the early-mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, thus making it pre-Achaemenid (c. 900-600 BC; Khan *et al.* 2000c: 81-100; Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010). It is estimated that the settlement at Akra was nearly 30 hectares in size during this timeframe (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010). The two most characteristic ceramics are Bannu Black on Red Ware and globular spouted vessels (labelled Assemblage 2). Neither of these ware types has been reported elsewhere in the western borderlands of the subcontinent, and the closest technological, morphological and stylistic parallels for Bannu Black on Red Ware are to be found in the early Iron Age (Yaz Depe I) cultures of south-west Central Asia (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010).

Just as the material culture from Gandhara is sharply delineated in its distribution, the distinctive material culture of the Bannu region in the early-mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC seems to have specific geographical limitations, and the economy of Akra and its hinterland appears to have been limited to the Bannu basin. The reasons for the similarities between the Bannu Black on Red Ware and the ceramics from the early Iron Age/Jaz Depe I cultures of south

Central Asia is unclear (Magee *et al.* 2005), though Lhuillier (2012) has confirmed that the parallels represent the strongest link to any Bactrian Iron Age assemblage either inside or outside of Central Asia. Akra is the largest settlement in the Bannu region and is located, just like Charsadda, near a snow-fed river system. Smaller settlements located in Akra's hinterland, such as Ter Kala Dheri and the 13 other sites in the basin that have also been identified with Iron Age and later occupation, suggest the existence of some type of settlement hierarchy (Magee and Petrie 2010).

### ***The Kachi Plain and the Makran***

The clearest information about the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> millennia BC in the southern parts of the western borderlands of the subcontinent comes from the excavations at Pirak on the Kachi plain. The uppermost levels of the site revealed a distinctive phase of occupation characterized by both new architecture constructed on top of existing Period II buildings and new ceramic types (Jarrige and Santoni 1979; Enault 1979). Period III began sometime after 1500 BC, probably between c. 1460 and 1150 BC (Magee and Petrie 2010).

The early phases of Period III are marked by the continued use of bichrome geometrically decorated ceramics, which first appeared in limited quantities in Period I but which become diagnostic of Period II (Jarrige and Santoni 1979). The style of decoration evident at Pirak has few parallels at other sites, and particularly lacks recognizable parallels with either Bannu Black on Red Ware or the globular spouted vessels seen in the Bannu basin (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010). It can only be speculated that the pre-Achaemenid occupation attested at Pirak Period III is limited to the Kachi plain. However, in contrast to the situation in Bannu and Peshawar, the distinctive occupation seen at Pirak does not appear to preface continued occupation through the early-mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC and into the Achaemenid period (Magee and Petrie 2010). Pirak was abandoned before the mid-1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC and no new sites certainly datable to the Achaemenid period have yet been noted in this region.



## Evidence for Achaemenid Control in the East

### *Textual and Epigraphic Evidence*

The processes that lead to the formation of the Achaemenid Empire and the nature of the control structures that helped it operated have been much debated (e.g. Frye 2010; Kuhrt 2001; Potts 2005; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1990). There are several strands of evidence that make it clear that there were three major provinces or satrapies (Persian *dahyava*) at the easternmost edge of the Achaemenid Empire, which lie modern South Asia: Gandhara, Thatagush and Hindush (reviewed in Vogelsang 1992: 94-179; also Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010) (fig. 1). The names of these provinces, variants of those names, and the names for peoples from these regions appear in royal inscriptions of various Achaemenid kings, several *Persepolis Fortification Texts*, a number of major Sanskrit texts including the *Rigveda*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and a variety of Classical sources, including Herodotus' *Historiaes*, and the accounts of Alexander's conquest by Arrian and Quintus Curtius (Vogelsang 1990: 97-102, 1992: 94-244; Magee *et al.* 2005: 711-714; Magee and Petrie 2010).

The evidence for the location of the Achaemenid provinces in South Asia have most recently been reviewed by Magee *et al.* (2005) and Magee and Petrie (2010). It has long been argued that Gandhara was centred on the Peshawar Valley, in the north of the modern NWFP, and that it might also have included the upper reaches of the Kabul River valley near Kabul (Vogelsang 1985: 80-81; 1992: 129). Since the 1950's, archaeological teams have been engaged in more systematic excavations at chronologically relevant sites within the bounds of the territories of the Guraeans and Assaceniens (which may or may not have been a part of Gandhara - e.g. Kherai, Stacul 1966: 261-74; Loebanr, Katelai, Butkara, Salvatori 1975: 333-51; Timargarha, Dani 1967: 22-40; Aligrama, Ghaligai, Stacul 1967: 9-43; Stacul and Tusa 1977). The situation is less clear for Hindush, which is generally supposed to be analogous with modern Sind (Bivar 1988: 202-204; Vogelsang 1990: 101-102) and possibly parts of Baluchistan though the precise limits of the province have not been defined (Magee and Petrie 2010). Various suggestions have been put

forward about the location of Thatagush, ranging from claims that it was to the south of Kabul, in the Gomal Valley or the Multan area of the Punjab, but recent research in the Bannu Basin of the NWFP has indicated that Thatagush may have been centred on the site of Akra (Magee *et al.* 2005: 732ff) (see below).

Achaemenid and Classical historical records indicate that Achaemenid rulers claimed control of the northwest of modern Pakistan at some point during the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Vogelsang 1992; Magee *et al.* 2005: 711-714; Petrie and Magee 2007: 4-8; Magee and Petrie 2010). There are, however, no well-dated archaeological contexts that can be correlated specifically to this event (Magee *et al.* 2005: 711-718; Magee and Petrie 2010). It is notable that there are no clear indications of an Achaemenid presence in South Asian literature (Petrie and Magee 2007: 8; after Raychaudhuri 1953; Witzel 1980).

The claims of Achaemenid control over areas of south Asia are found in a number of inscriptions and documents. The commemorative Bisitun inscription, carved between 520 and 518 BC, lists Gandhara and Thatagush amongst the provinces that Darius inherited when he seized the Achaemenid throne in 522 BC (DB: - §6. 1.12-17 - Kent 1953: 117-19; also Lecoq 1997: 187-214; Schmidt, R. 1990: 299-300). Thatagush is also listed as one of the provinces that rebelled against the new king (DB: - §20. 2.5-8 - Kent 1953: 121-23) and was the location of one of the three battles in the ensuing campaign against rebellious forces (Bivar 1988: 200; Fleming 1982; Magee and Petrie 2010; Magee *et al.* 2005; Vogelsang 1990: 100; 1992: 127-29).

Earlier, Cyrus the Great had marched through Arachosia in southern Afghanistan, destroying the city of Capisa (modern Begram), and campaigned into Bactria between 539 and 530 BC, and died somewhere in the northeast of his newly expanded Empire. However, accounts of these events do not refer to the annexation of Gandhara and Thatagush (Francfort 1988: 170; Bivar 1988: 198-199; Vogelsang 1992: 187-89). The arrangement of the eastern provinces in a number of Darius' royal inscriptions has been taken to indicate the existence of close relationships between Bactria (Bactria) and



Gandhara (Vogelsang 1990: 99-100), and between Harauvatish (Arachosia) and Thatagush, and this might indicate that Gandhara and Thatagush were annexed at the time that Cyrus secured Arachosia and Bactria during his campaigns between 539-530 BC (see Magee *et al.* 2005: n.10; also Magee and Petrie 2010). Whether or not this is the case, Darius certainly considered these regions to be part of his Empire in 522 BC.

Hindush is absent from the Bisitun inscription, but it does appear on all but one of Darius' other surviving inscriptions, including two of the so-called *Foundation Charters from Susa* that do not mention either Gandhara or Thatagush (Magee *et al.* 2005: 713, n.16; Magee and Petrie 2010). Hindush also appears with Thatagush among the twenty-four "fortress cartouches" inscribed on either side of the base of a statue of Darius from Susa and both are represented on the Canal Stelae from Egypt (Stronach 1972; Roaf 1974; Vogelsang 1992; Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010). Bivar (1988: 201-203; Herodotus *Historiae* 1972 IV: 44) has suggested that Hindush was annexed in 515 BC, after to the reconnaissance of the Indus River by Scylax of Caryanda in 517 BC (also Vogelsang 1990: 101-104; Magee *et al.* 2005: 713, n.16; Magee and Petrie 2010). As for its location, Bivar (1988: 202-204) and others have argued that Hindush is analogous with modern Sind, although there are no excavated remains that support this suggestion (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010).

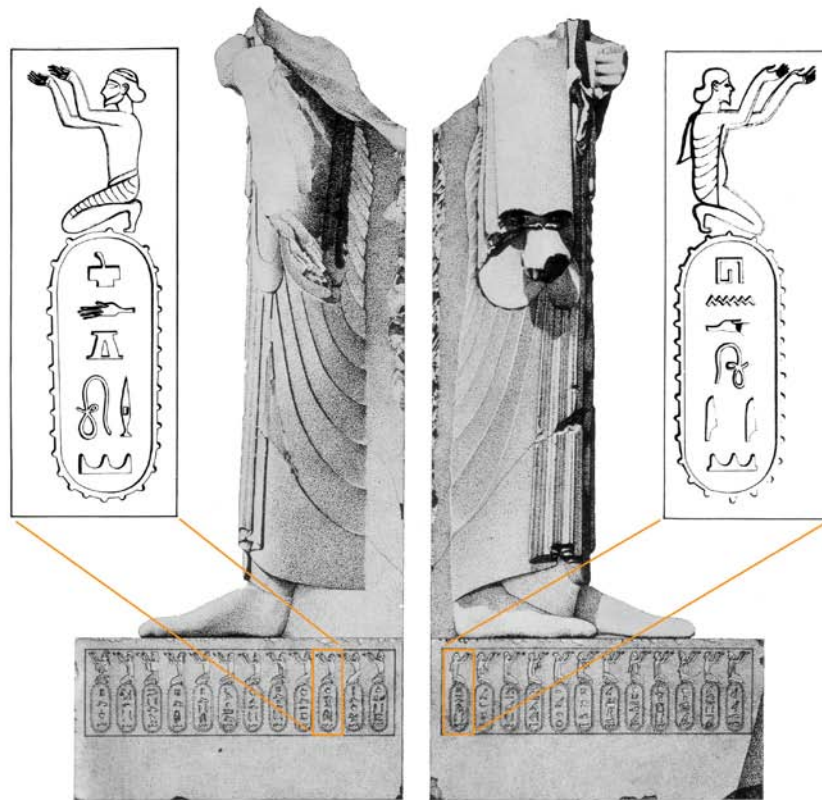
These eastern provinces and people from them are referred to in a number of the ration disbursement documents in the *Persepolis Fortification Text* corpus (509 - 496 BC) (Bivar 1988: 206-207; Hallock 1969: 6; Vogelsang 1990: 101). Harauvatish (Arachosia) and Hindush are the most regularly appearing eastern toponyms, whereas Gandhara is only listed twice, and Thatagush is not mentioned at all (Vogelsang 1990: 101). This differential appearance seems to match the variable presentation of provinces on the Darius statue and the Canal Stelae. It is notable that the one documented journey from Gandhara to Susa (PF1358) was made via Harauvatish under the authority of an official there (Bivar 1988: 205; Vogelsang 1990: 101). This may indicate that a route from Gandhara to southwest Iran

via modern Kandahar was commonly used (Magee and Petrie 2010; Magee *et al.* 2005; Vogelsang 1985: 82-87; 1990: 101). How the route proceeded west from Kandahar is unclear, but it potentially went via Dahan-i Ghulaman in Sistan (Drangiana), where major Achaemenid-style buildings have been exposed (Scerrato 1966), though other routes also existed. It is notable that the journeys to or from Hindush however, were not authorized in Harauvatish, implying that they were made by another route, possibly through Baluchistan and Carmania (Vogelsang 1990: 102; Magee *et al.* 2005: 713; Magee and Petrie 2010). The significance of the paucity of documents related to Gandhara and Thatagush is unclear and could be a product of differential document survival. However, it may indicate that there was little movement between these two eastern provinces and the western centers at this time (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010) (fig. 1).

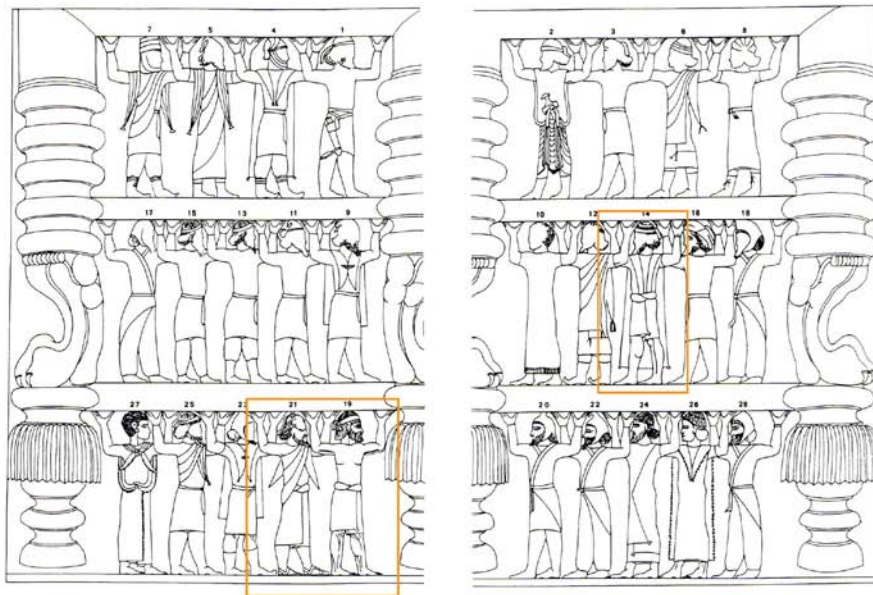
At the Achaemenid capital of Persepolis, dignitaries from Gandhara, Thatagush and/or Hindush are depicted bringing gifts to the Achaemenid king on the *Apadana* staircases, and also appear as throne/dais-bearers on the *Tripylon* and *Hall of One Hundred Columns* (Roaf 1974: 84-92; 1983: 1-164; Schmidt, E.F. 1953: 82-90, 116-120, 134-137; Vogelsang 1992: 147-151) (Figs. 2-3). Similar figures also appear on the reliefs decorating the tomb facades of all of the Achaemenid kings at Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis except the unfinished tomb of Darius III (Bivar 1988: 208-10; Hachmann 1997: 195-224; Schmidt, E.F. 1970: 77-118, Pl. 39-52; Vogelsang 1992: 135-143). In each instance, the representatives of Gandhara, Thatagush and Hindush wear loincloths, sandals and have an exposed upper body, which distinguishes them from the representatives from the other eastern provinces such as Bactria and Arachosia (Vogelsang 1990: 98; 1992: 140-143; Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010).

Herodotus' *Historiae* lists these three provinces and their tribute payments, and also gives a precise yet possibly fantastical description of India (*Historiae* 1972: III. 89-95; 98-105). Indians as a collective group are clearly numbered amongst the armies of Xerxes and Mardonius (*Historiae* 1972:





a.

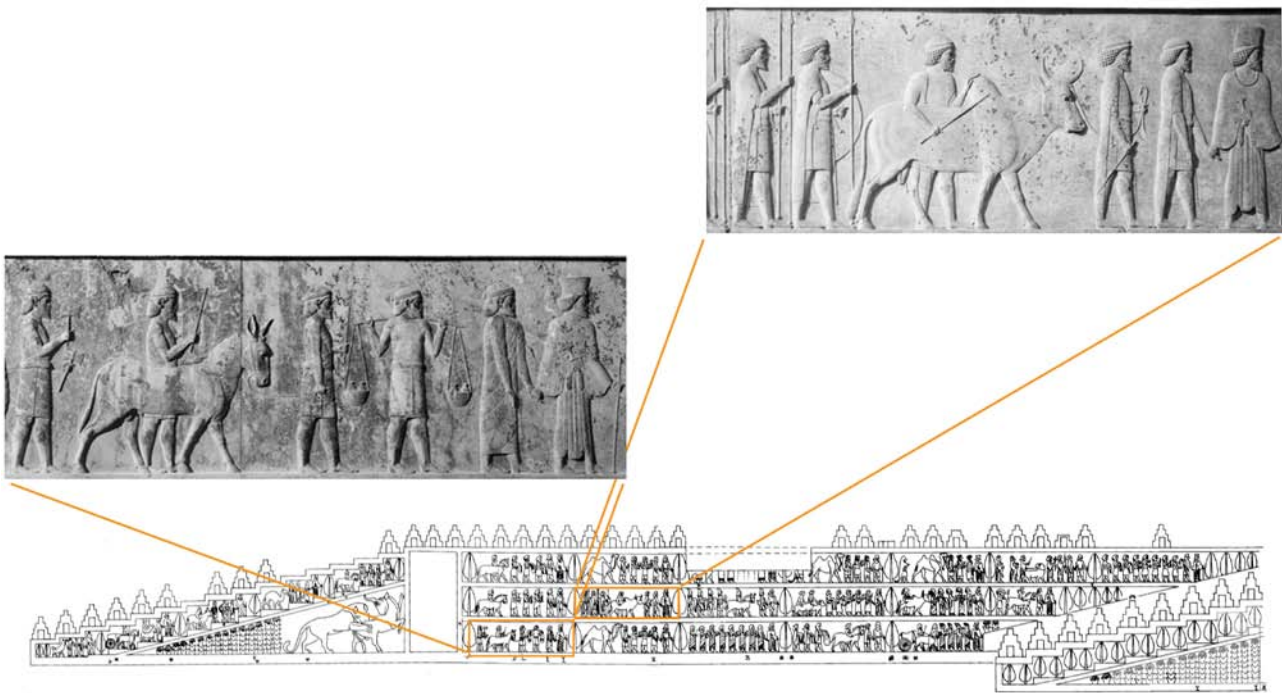


b.

**Fig. 2a:** *Left:* Statue of Darius I from Susa and close-ups of the cartouche of Thatagush. *Right:* The cartouche of Hindush (After: Stronach 1972; Roaf 1974).

**Fig. 2b:** Line drawings showing the throne/dais bearers from the far eastern provinces as depicted on the Hall of One Hundred Columns at Persepolis (After: Vogelsang 1992).





**Fig. 3:** **Left:** Line drawing of Apadana staircase at Persepolis and close-ups of the delegation from Hindush. **Right:** The delegation from Gandhara/Thatagush (After: Roaf 1974; 1983 and Schmidt 1953).

VII.67, 71, 86, VIII.113, IX.29). The corpus of Sanskrit literature only provides limited evidence about the regions that lay at the western edges of South Asia: the name Hindush is analogous with the Indus River, which appears frequently as the Sindhu in the Rig Veda, but there is no obvious correlate for the region that might have been the Achaemenid province in the literature. The same is true for the region of Thatagush or Sattagydia, but Gandhara is, however, quite different, particularly in that its name is likely of Sanskrit origin. It is also one of two of the *Mahajanapadas* that flourished in the northwest of the sub-continent during the time of the Buddha, and Gandharis are attested in the *Rigveda* (1.120.1) and the *Atharvaveda* (5.22.14), and Gandharas and their king were active in the Mahabharata war (Magee and Petrie 2010). According to the *Ramayana*, the primary cities of Gandhara were Takshashila (Prakrit Taxila) and Pushkalavati, which are said to have been named after Taksa and Pushkara, the two sons of Bharata (Dani 1986: 40; Dittman 1984: 185; Raychaudhuri 1953: 146-147; Witzel 1980).

Representatives of Gandhara, Thatagush and Hindush appear on each royal tomb reliefs from Darius I up to Artaxerxes III, indicating

that these provinces continued to be a part of the royal conception of the empire up to at least 338 BC, less than ten years before Alexander's victory at Gaugamela (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010). The likelihood that fealty with the Achaemenid king was maintained beyond this date is suggested by Arrian's description of the army of Darius III at Gaugamela, where the king is said to have "obtained the help of those Indians who bordered on the Bactrians, together with the Bactrians and Sogdianians themselves, all under the command of Bessus, the satrap of Bactria" (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004 III: 8.3; also Vogelsang 1992: 221-223; Briant 2002: 756). Arrian also notes that "Barsentes, satrap of the Arachotians, led both the Arachotians and the Indian hill-men, as they were called" (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004 III: 8.4; also Vogelsang 1992, 221-223; Briant 2002, 756). Arrian does not use all of the more specific ethnic determiners used by Herodotus, but if the evidence for the existence of a relationship between Bactria and Gandhara is taken into account, then it is possible that the Indians bordering on the Bactrians at Gaugamela were troops from Gandhara (Vogelsang 1992, 222-223). The Indian hill-men were thus presumably either from Thatagush or Hindush, depending on





the perceived boundaries of those provinces (see Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010) (fig. 1).

While there are indications that Thatagush is administratively associated with Arachosia (Vogelsang 1990: 100; 1992: 110-114, 129), there have been a range of proposals put forward for its specific geographical location have ranged from the suggestion that it lay in the area to the south or southeast of Kabul (Vogelsang 1992: 129), to the more precise suggestion of the region around the Gomal River in NWFP (Bivar 1988: 200; Dani 1970/71: 1), or the area of Multan in the Punjab (Vogelsang 1985: 80-1; 1990: 100; 1992: 227-228). However, thus far, no convincing archaeological evidence has been found that supports any of these suggestions (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010).

### *Archaeological Evidence*

There is relatively little unequivocal evidence for the Achaemenid period in the western borderlands of the subcontinent and archaeological research relevant to the timeframe of these 'events' has more often than not focused on attempting to correlate the historical and archaeological records. Attempts to identify evidence for an actual Achaemenid presence or even influence have tended to focus on the presence or absence evidence such as coinage (Allchin 1995: 131), Aramaic (Allchin 1995: 132-133) and/or architectural influence (reviewed by Chakrabarti 1997: 190-191), but such data is not a direct proxy for influence and provides little insight into indigenous responses to imperial control strategies (Magee *et al.* 2005: 717; Petrie *et al.* 2008). However, there are a number of distinctive ceramic vessel forms that are likely to be indicative of Achaemenid *period occupation*, and also provide insight into processes of acculturation and emulation resulting from this episode of imperial dominance.

### *The Valleys of Gandhara*

While Gandhara is mentioned in a range of sources from South Asia (see above), its precise geographical boundaries appear to have changed

over time. Although the *Ramayana* notes that the primary cities of Gandhara were Taxila and Pushkalavati (Charsadda), evidence from the Alexander historians suggest that in the twilight of the Achaemenid empire, Taxila may have lain outside of the imperial province of Taxila (see below). Strabo (1976: XV.1.10) pointed out that according to Eratosthenes the Indus River was the boundary between greater India and the Achaemenid Empire in Alexander's time (Brunt 2000: 546; Petrie and Magee 2007). It is notable that the archaeological evidence from the early-mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC suggests that similar material culture was being used throughout the Peshawar Valley, the Swat region and at Taxila, but this pattern does not continue into the period of Achaemenid control.

Although the recent excavations at the Bala Hissar have provided new insights into the timing of the site's foundation (Ali, T. *et al.* 1998: 6-14; Coningham and Ali 2007; Young 2003: 37-40), they have produced little direct evidence for the Achaemenid period occupation at the site. As such, our knowledge of the Achaemenid period in the Peshawar valley primarily comes from Wheeler's excavations at Charsadda, which can now be contextualised more coherently (Petrie in press 2013 a). Reanalysis of the sequence exposed in Ch. I by Wheeler has shown that there is a change in the ceramic assemblage from Layer 32, with red burnished ware disappearing, and the appearance of bowls with an s-shaped rim, which is a vessel form that has widespread parallels in the Indo-Iranian region, at Tepe Yahya for example, during the mid-1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC (Khan *et al.* 2000b; Magee 2004: 65-7; Magee and Petrie 2010; Magee *et al.* 2005; see Petrie in press 2013 a). Furthermore, from Ch. I Layer 28, another distinctive form known as the tulip bowl, which continues to appear up to Layer 22. In his reassessment of the Charsadda sequence, Dittman (1984: 189) suggested that this vessel form was Late Achaemenid (and later) in date, and although this has been contested (e.g. Vogelsang 1988: 104), the parallels for this form that can be found throughout Iran, western Turkey, Afghanistan and also elsewhere in Pakistan suggest that these levels potentially date to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Magee and Petrie 2010; Magee *et al.* 2005; Petrie and



Magee 2007; Petrie *et al.* 2008; Petrie in press 2013 a; see below).

The presence of Tulip bowls at Charsadda and other major north western urban centres during the mid- to late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC has the potential to illuminate some of the effects of the Achaemenid annexation of this area. This form is Iranian in origin and its appearance at a time of political engagement with the Achaemenid Empire suggests that they are a concrete manifestation of the impact of the Empire in north western South Asia. These vessels are effectively skeuomorphs of metal vessels used by royalty that were made of gold and silver and even within the heart of ancient Persian heartland, ceramic tulip bowls have been found at both royal (e.g. Qaleh Kali; Potts *et al.* 2009) and village sites (e.g. Tol-e Spid; Petrie *et al.* 2009: 4.93, TS 439, 495; Tol-e Nurabad; Weeks *et al.* 2006: Fig. 3.188). Dusinberre (1999: 101; 2003: 172-193) has suggested that the adoption of clay versions of the tulip bowl at Sardis may be indicative of the emulation of elite banqueting habits by non-elite individuals.

Sir Aurel Stein (1929: 40, 47) was the first to identify the site of Bir-kot-ghwandai in the Swat Valley as Bazira, a city, which, according to Arrian (*Anabasis* 2004: IV. 27-8) was captured and fortified by the Macedonians during Alexander's conquest of Swat. Excavations at such a site aimed to establish the validity of Stein's identification (Filigenzi and Stacul 1985: 436). A fortification wall was discovered during the excavations (Callieri 1990: 676; Callieri *et al.* 1990: 164; see also Callieri *et al.* 1992), but numismatic finds show that this wall could not have been constructed until the Indo-Greek period in the 2nd-1st centuries BC (Olivieri 1996: 50). While there is mid- to late 1st millennium BC occupation at sites such as Aligrama, Balambat and Ghaligai, no bowls with an s-shaped rim or tulip bowls have been recovered (Magee and Petrie 2010; Petrie *et al.* 2008).

Tulip bowls have, however, been recovered from what Marshall labelled as *Stratum II* and Sharif labelled as *Period III* (Petrie in press 2013 b) on the Bhir mound at Taxila (e.g. Sharif 1969: 14, 31-32, Plate X.a, Fig. 19.1; Vogelsang 1988: 107). There are no absolute dates from Taxila that would

help provide clarity for the dating of the various chronological phases, and there is no agreement as to the precise parallels that can be used to date this particular stratum. However, there is broad consensus that Marshall *Stratum II* and Sharif *Period III* is post-Achaemenid in date, suggesting that tulip bowls were not used at Taxila until after the period of Achaemenid dominance. It is also notable that part of the problem of dating the Taxila sequence comes from differences in the ceramic assemblages found at Charsadda and the various Taxila mounds once the red burnished ware ceases to be used.

It thus appears as though there is variation in the types of ceramic vessels being used in the mid- to late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC within the bounds of greater Gandhara. It is interesting to speculate about how the existence of a pre-Achaemenid economic zone (see above) resonates with the establishment of the Achaemenid satrapy of Gandhara. The historical evidence leaves little doubt that the ancient city of Pushkalavati at the Bala Hissar was one of the primary satrapal capitals of Gandhara (Ali *et al.* 1998: 2-3; Coningham and Ali 2007; Magee and Petrie 2010; Wheeler 1962: 3). It is also clear that the Bala Hissar was occupied throughout the early to mid- 1st millennium BC, and it appears that the Achaemenids encouraged, or acquiesced, to existing political structures in the Peshawar Valley rather than reorganize them, as they claim in the Behistun inscription. However, it is unclear how the city of Taxila fits into this system, in either its first manifestation on the Hathi ridge, or its second manifestation as the Bhir mound (Magee and Petrie 2010). Magee and Petrie (2010) have also suggested that the pre-Achaemenid Gandharan economic zone was split at the end of the 6th century BC into a western sphere under Achaemenid control (the satrapy of Gandhara), while the area east of the Indus developed into a separate entity that was free of Achaemenid control.

#### *Akra and the Bannu Basin*

There is considerably less evidence for mid- to late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC occupation in the Bannu region, but what exists is telling. Excavations



in Area B at Akra have revealed evidence for a ceramic assemblage (labelled Assemblage 1) that post-dated the Bannu Black on Red Ware (labelled Assemblage 2). Assemblage 1 includes examples of bowls with offset vertical rim, banded beakers, bowls with an s-shaped rim and tulip bowls, and typological comparisons with material from Iran and Afghanistan suggest a dating between 600 and 300 BC for this assemblage (Magee *et al.* 2005: 724-25). The presence of this material provides some archaeological confirmation for the argument, hitherto based on epigraphic and historical data, that Akra might be the capital of the Achaemenid satrapy of Thatagush (Magee *et al.* 2005: 732-37; Magee and Petrie 2010).

### *Baluchistan*

Unequivocal archaeological evidence dating to the mid- to late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC in Baluchistan is even sparser. It is unclear how far into the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC the occupation at Pirak continues, and recalibrated of the published radiocarbon dates suggest that Pirak Period III ended between c.1300/1200BC and 760 BC (Magee and Petrie 2010). Santoni's (1980) has argued that there was Achaemenid period occupation at the nearby site of Dur Khan, but many of the parallels cited have since been re-dated there is no stratigraphic control to provide any confirmation (Magee and Petrie 2010; also Magee 2005: 43; after Verardi 2002).

Magee and Petrie (2010) have noted that elsewhere in Baluchistan there are several archaeological assemblages that potentially date to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, particularly the so-called Durrah-i Bust assemblage, which is characterized by a coarse grog-tempered ware with distinctive appliqué decoration (Besenval and Sanlaville 1990: 89, Fig. T). Franke-Vogt (2001: 268-70) has convincingly drawn parallels between this material and the Appliqué ware from her surveys in south-eastern Baluchistan, and Magee (2004: 52) has identified several sherds that have comparable decoration and paste in Period II at Tepe Yahya (Magee 2004: 52, fig. 15-16), which has been dated from 500 to 250 BC by radiocarbon dates and ceramic comparanda (Magee 2004: 73-75). It is

therefore possible that many of the sites that Stein, Fairservis, Besenval and Franke-Vogt have surveyed where the Durrah-i Bust and related assemblages were found might date to the Achaemenid period, but this will only be confirmed through excavations and independent dating (Magee and Petrie 2010).

## **Evidence for Alexander in the East**

### *Textual and Epigraphic Evidence*

The arrival of the army of Alexander in the subcontinent has been a compelling historical event in the eyes and words of the Classical Greek and Roman historians and commentators whose accounts have survived (reviewed in Petrie and Magee 2007) (fig. 2). The known historical texts contain information about cities, toponyms and routes, and much research has focussed on the identification of these features (e.g. Cunningham 1871; Stein 1929; Olivieri 1996). In addition to the route of Alexander's advance and the political geography of ancient India, these texts also contain evidence about the nature of Achaemenid control over its far eastern provinces in the Late Achaemenid period and also the nature of indigenous control structures at this time (reviewed in Petrie and Magee 2007; see McCrindle 1896; Bosworth 1995; 1996).

It was only after completing his campaigns in Central Asia in 327 BC that Alexander marched into the eastern provinces of his newly won empire. As noted above, Arrian's description of the army of Darius III at Gaugamela tells us that in 331 BC the army of the Achaemenid king included one group of Indians serving until the command of Bessus, the satrap of Bactria, and one serving under Barsentes, satrap of the Arachosians (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: III.8.3-4; also Vogelsang 1992: 221-223; Briant 2002: 756). There is some additional evidence that indicates the importance of at least one small district that lay in the areas to the west of the Indus. Magee *et al.* (2005; also Petrie and Magee 2007) have noted that in describing Alexander's march toward Drangiana in late 330 BC, Arrian notes that Barsentes, satrap of the Drangians and Arachosians, fled to "the Indians on this side of the Indus" (*Anabasis* 2004: III. 25.8; Vogelsang 1992: 227; also



Quintus Curtius 1976: VI 6.36; Briant 2002: 757). Furthermore, following the conquest of Arachosia and while on his way north to Parapomisadae (Kabul/Begram), Alexander is said to have approached the “the Indians who lived nearest to the Arachosians” (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: III: 28.1; Vogelsang 1992: 227; see Magee *et al.* 2005; Petrie and Magee 2007). Precisely who these “Indians on this side of the Indus” and “Indians who lived nearest to the Arachosians” were and where they lived is unclear, but geographically they must both lie somewhere to the east and north of Kandahar and to the south and southeast of Kabul (Petrie and Magee 2007). The terminology used by Arrian and the fact that the satrap of Arachosia fled to a region in India again reminds us of the relationship between Harauvatish and Thatagush suggested by the Achaemenid royal inscriptions (see above; Petrie and Magee 2007).

As Petrie and Magee (2007) have pointed out, Arrian (*Anabasis* 2004: IV.22.3-6) reports that on his return across the Hindu Kush, Alexander travelled to the recently founded Alexandria in the district of Parapomisadae (*Alexandria in Caucaso*, modern Begram; Bosworth 1995: 144), before advancing towards the Cophen (Kabul) River (fig. 2). It was here that Alexander met with Taxilas (ruler of Taxila, which is east of the Indus) and the Indians west of the Indus, who are all called ὑπαρχοί or hyparchs, i.e. subordinate leaders, having “sent a herald in advance . . . with orders to meet him, each at their earliest convenience” (*Anabasis* 2004 IV.22.6). This group of summoned princes is likely to have included Taxilas (from Taxila), who is named, and also Astis (the ruler of Peucelaōtis), Cophaeus and Assagetes (rulers of regions close to the Indus), who were all named and listed later by Arrian as the ὑπαρχοί of regions west of the Indus (e.g. *Anabasis* 2004: IV.22.8, 28.6). It appears that these rulers of regions within or near the former Achaemenid province of Gandhara were all expected to offer submission to the new king. Brunt (2000: IV.22, n.7) and Bosworth (1995: 146, 1996: 155) have noted that Taxilas had been encouraged by his son Omphis (Taxilas) to send envoys to submit to Alexander while the new king was in Sogdiana (Diodorus Siculus 86.4 and Quintus Curtius 1976 VIII.12.5). Petrie and Magee (2007) have suggested that this may have been a very effective ‘pre-emptive strike’ by Omphis

(Taxilas) in order to consolidate and legitimise his position in the eyes of the new ruler.

After this meeting and presumably somewhere to the west of Jalalabad (Bosworth 1995: 149), Alexander divided his forces and sent Hephaestion and Perdicas forward with Taxilas and the other hyparchs to the territory of Peucelaōtis (Πευκελαώτιν, Sanskrit Pushkalavati) and on to the Indus, with instructions to seize, either by force or agreement, all places on their march (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV.22.7; also Bosworth 1995: 149) (fig. 2). On reaching the Indus they discovered that after their passing, Astis, hyparch of Peucelaōtis, had attempted or was attempting to revolt (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV.22.7-8). The brief descriptive paragraph in Arrian’s *Anabasis* (2004: IV.22.8) presents an interesting example of the nature of the local power politics in play at the time of Alexander’s arrival. Having attempted revolt, Astis is said to have fled to a city for refuge, though the name of this city not being specified (Bosworth 1995: 153; Petrie and Magee 2007). Hephaestion subsequently besieged and captured the city after thirty days, and following his capture, Astis was put to death and replaced as governor by a certain Sangaeus, who had previously “escaped from Astis and gone over to Taxilas” (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV. 22.8). Petrie and Magee (2007) have noted that this act is said to have guaranteed Sangaeus’ loyalty to Alexander (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV. 22.8). Brunt (2000: IV.22.n.7) and Bosworth (1995: 153) have pointed out that in effect, Taxilas was supporting someone who had rebelled against Astis, and that Astis may well have rebelled against Alexander through fear of Taxilas, who had recently allied himself to the new conqueror. This entire episode highlights the existence of rivalries and indigenous power politics.

Relying on the vulgate tradition, Bosworth (1995: 146) has pointed out that Taxilas was a name apparently adopted by successive rulers (Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.12.14). Quintus Curtius (1976: VIII.12.4-5), states that the crown prince Omphis, persuaded his father to send an embassy to Alexander in Sogdiana, and when his father died some months later, he allegedly refused to take the throne until offered it in person by Alexander (Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.12.14; Bosworth 1995:



147; Petrie and Magee 2007). It is likely that it was the father who met Alexander near the Cophen, and there is no reference to submission at this time (Bosworth 1995: 147). Arrian (*Anabasis* 2000: V.4.3) says that when Alexander crossed the river he entered the land of the Indians (see above), and if this is true, then Taxila actually lay outside the empire *per se*, and therefore may have been outside what the Achaemenids viewed as Gandhara (Petrie and Magee 2007; Magee and Petrie 2010). Petrie and Magee (2007) have suggested that Taxilas and Omphis/Taxilas were involved with sending envoys to the new king while he was in Sogdiana, meeting him in Parapomisadae, and effectively using Alexander's troops to dispose of their rival Astis of Peucelaotis, deftly manipulating the situation to expand Taxilan influence into the parts of Gandhara that were formerly part of the Achaemenid domain.

While Hephaestion was busy in the Peshawar Valley, Alexander was busy brutally reducing the Aspasians, Guraeans and Assaceniens in the Bajaur, Chitral and Swāt valleys to the north (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV.22.1ff; also Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.10; Bosworth 1995: 158ff; 1996; Petrie and Magee 2007) (fig. 2). In the region of the Assaceniens Alexander sacked and/or seized Massaga, Bazira, Ora, Embolima and Aornos (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV.26.1-27.9, 28.7-30.4; also Bosworth 1995: 169-177). According to Quintus Curtius (1976: VIII.10.22-23), Alexander did not actually encounter Assacenus, the ruler of the Assaceniens, at his capital Massaga, as the king had recently died and was succeeded by his mother (also Bosworth 1995: 169), but this suggests that there was a potentially independent ruler controlling an area immediately to the north of the Peshawar Valley, indicating that they may not have been part of Achaemenid Gandhara (Petrie and Magee 2007). Alexander then travelled down the Indus and joined Hephaestion and Perdicas at their crossing point (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV.30.9).

While on the banks of the Indus, Alexander received gifts of cattle, sheep and soldiers from Taxilas, who also sent word that he was willing to surrender his kingdom (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.3.5-6; also Bosworth 1995: 220-221). This second offer of submission from the king of Taxila is taken

as confirmation of the vulgate story that there had been a change of regime, and that the son Omphis had succeeded his father (Bosworth 1995: 220; after Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.12.4-5). Alexander then travelled to Taxila where he was received by Taxilas/Omphis himself and the "Indians of this district" (*Anabasis* 2000: V.8.2; also Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.12.7-10; Bosworth 1995: 260). Bosworth (1995: 260) has pointed out that Taxilas' submission to Alexander was clearly enthusiastic, and served to highlight when others were less enthusiastic, and Petrie and Magee (2007) have asserted that this was undoubtedly a shrewd step towards legitimising his rule in the eyes of the new king.

Quintus Curtius (1976: VIII.12.7ff; also Bosworth 1995: 260) provides the clearest information about Alexander's visit to Taxila, including the description of Omphis being given permission to assume the royal diadem and adopt the regnal name of Taxilas, and the additional details about Taxilas/Omphis telling Alexander that he is at war with two kings, Abisares and Porus (Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.12.13-14). Arrian (*Anabasis* 2000: V.8.3) and Quintus Curtius (1976: VIII.13.1) both mention that Alexander subsequently met with envoys of Abisares, the king of the "Indians of the hills", for the first time at Taxila. Alexander despatched an envoy to Porus king of the lands between the Hydaspes (Jhelum) and the Acesines (Chenab), convinced that Porus would surrender due to the fame of his name, and received the reply that Porus would meet Alexander, but would be waiting in arms (Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.13.2; Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.8.5; Bosworth 1995: 263).

Magee *et al.* (2005; also Petrie and Magee 2007; Magee and Petrie 2010) have noted that Quintus Curtius (1976: VIII.13.3-5) also tells us that after Alexander had decided to campaign to the Hydaspes and while still at Taxila, Barsentes the former satrap of Arachosia was handed over in chains, along with Samaxus (or Damaraxus), who was "the king of a small district of India who had allied himself with Barsentes" (Vogelsang 1992: 227; Bosworth 1995: 260; Briant 2002: 757). It is not possible to identify the precise location of this territory. It was, however, presumably south of both the Peshawar region and the areas near the Indus that were



traversed by Alexander and his men on their route to Taxila, which had different rulers named elsewhere in the text (i.e. Astis, Cophaeus and Assagetes; Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: IV. 22.8, 28.49), and was also presumably not a great distance from Taxila. It is tempting to presume that in fleeing to the land of the Indians on this side of the Indus, Barsentes fled to Thatagush (Sattagydia) and its local ruler (in this case Samaxus), who had been his subordinate under the Achaemenid king (Magee *et al.* 2005; also Petrie and Magee 2007; Magee and Petrie 2010).

Despite conferring the kingship of Taxilas before departing Taxila for the Hydaspes, Alexander also appointed his own satrap, Philip son of Machatas, and left behind a garrison (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.8.3). The campaign against Porus and most of Alexander's subsequent campaigns in India took place beyond the boundaries of what was the Achaemenid Empire, but involved various South Asian regional polities (fig. 2). Although Alexander ultimately defeated Porus in battle (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.8.4-18.3), Alexander decided to save the Indian king's life as he had acquitted himself manfully, and he was granted the right to rule his Indians. In time Porus' was granted territory far greater than the extent of his old realm (*Anabasis* 2000: V.18.4-19.3; Quintus Curtius 1976: VIII.14.45; Bosworth 1995: 310).

After his victory against Porus, Alexander apparently founded two cities (Nicaea and Bucephala; Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.19.4-6) (fig. 2), and then moved against Porus' neighbours the Glauganicae, and subsequently handed the government of this region to his recent foe (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.20.3-4). Following this, Abisares again offered his surrender via envoys, while further envoys came from the so-called "self-governing Indians" and from another Porus (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.18.5-6), and Alexander was also informed of a revolt by the Assaceni in the Swat area, who had killed their local hyparch, and he despatched an army to deal with them (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.20.7; Bosworth 1995: 322) (fig. 2). Petrie and Magee (2007) have suggested that this evidence all clearly indicates that Alexander was embroiled in a maelstrom of local political intrigue, marked by the independent actions of a range of rulers and kings.

Alexander subsequently crossed the Acesines (Chenab), and then the Hydraotes (Ravi), seizing towns and soldiers and handing them over to his new ally Porus (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.21.1-5; Bosworth 1995: 325). Upon crossing the Hydraotes, Alexander encountered more self-governing Indians, including groups called the Adastae and the Cathaeans, the latter who had a capital at Sangala (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.22.1ff). Alexander violently razed Sangala and annexed the neighbouring territories (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.24.5-8; Bosworth 1995: 334-336), then advanced to the Hyphasis (Beas), and made ready to cross before being faced with the infamous rebellion of his army (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.24.8-25.1ff). Effectively forced to turn back from his intended course, Alexander handed over the annexed territories as far as the Hyphasis to Porus as well (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.29.2), thereby massively expanding Porus' former realms (fig. 2). Had Alexander continued further to the east, he would inevitably have encountered the nascent Nanda state, whose power was growing in the Ganges valley and the neighbouring areas (reviewed in Petrie and Magee 2007).

Alexander then re-crossed the Hydraotes and the Acesines, and on meeting the brother of Abisares (yet another envoy) and a certain Arsaces, decided to make Abisares satrap of his own lands and the adjacent lands that belonged to Arsaces, and fixed their tribute (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.29.2-5; Bosworth 1995: 359). Alexander then re-crossed the Hydaspes, and prepared to sail downriver to the "Great Sea" (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: V.29.5-VI.1.1). Porus and Abisares were former local rulers that were both made satraps of Alexander's kingdom, and this almost certainly galled his initial ally Taxilas, who was only a king under a satrap (Petrie and Magee 2007) (fig. 2).

Bosworth (1996) has pointed out that although Alexander proceeded down the Hydases intent on subdue populations, he appears to have deliberately set out to crush the self-governing Malli and the Oxydracae (Sudracae) (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: VI.3.3, VI.6.1; Quintus Curtius 1976: IX.4.15; Bosworth 1996: 134) (fig. 2). Alexander's treatment of the Malli was extreme and brutally



efficient (e.g. Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: VI.6.3), carrying out what Bosworth (1996: 133-142, 147, 152) has described as a campaign of ‘calculated terror’ that led to the surrender of the surviving Malli and the Oxydracae (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: VI.14.1). As Alexander continued downstream, further envoys came from other independent tribes offering submission (*Anabasis* 2000: VI.15.1), and Alexander’s subsequent annexation of the Musicanus, Oxicanus, Sambus and Patala (*Anabasis* 2000: VI.15.6-18.2; Quintus Curtius 1976: IX.8ff), indicates that the regions of modern Sind were also populated by a significant number of seemingly independent kings/kingdoms at this time. It is notable that the Alexander histories give little indication as to whether any of these kingdoms had had any relationship to Alexander’s Achaemenid predecessors. Sambus is notable, as he had been appointed satrap of the Indian hillmen by Alexander (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000:VI.16.3), and these Indian hillmen may or may not have been the group who fought alongside the Arachosians at Gaugamela (Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: III: 8.4). However, judging from the geography, it is likely that their lands were somewhere in the Punjab. It is not known whether there is any connection to the king Samaxus, who had been put to death at Taxila. It is perhaps significant that in the regions closer to the border of the former Achaemenid empire, Alexander returned to appointing rulers from amongst his own men: the lands given to Philip son of Machatas now extended to the meeting of the Acesines and the Indus; and Pithon was made satrap of the lands from the Acesines/Indus to the sea (Arrian *Anabasis* 2000: VI.14.3, VI.15.2, VI.15.4; see Petrie and Magee 2007) (fig. 2).

### *Archaeological Evidence*

Although the arrival of Alexander in South Asia looms large in the historical record, there is very little archaeological evidence that can be tied to his passing. Various scholars have attempted to locate specific settlements and battlefields recorded in the narrative (e.g. Cunningham 1871; Stein 1929), but most of their proposals cannot be confirmed due to a lack of excavation. It is only really Charsadda and

Taxila that provide evidence of contemporaneous occupation.

There are inevitably difficulties when it comes to finding precise archaeological correlates for historical events, as the two types of evidence are in many ways fundamentally different. Although Wheeler (1962) proposed that the ditch that he exposed could be dated to the invasion of Alexander, the more recent work has demonstrated that this is not the case (see above). However, it is likely that the Bala Hisar was occupied at this time. In trying to date the arrival of Alexander, we are also trying to date the end of Achaemenid control, and as noted above, Ch. I Layers 28-25 are marked by the presence of the tulip bowl. The distinctive lotus bowl form appears together with a distinctive female figure type, which Wheeler referred to baroque ladies in Ch. I Layers 24-20, and it is probably that these deposits are post-Achaemenid in date, spanning from the late 4<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. If this dating is correct, then it is likely that Alexander’s invasion coincides with Ch. I Layers 28-25.

It is likely that the Bhir mound at Taxila was the city that was visited by Alexander, but there is no consensus about which stratum at the site was contemporaneous with that event. Marshall (1951, 1960) believed that what he identified as Stratum III was the one visited by Alexander, and this is equivalent to Sharif’s Stratum II (1969: 13-4) and Bahadur Khan *et al*’s Stratum III (2002) (Petrie in press 2013b). Unfortunately no unequivocal evidence from any of the excavations has revealed evidence for Alexander’s passing.

We know virtually nothing about the archaeology of the regions that Alexander campaigned through after he left Taxila, which is largely because we know virtually nothing about the late 1st millennium BC occupation in the Punjab and Sindh. With the exception of the stratigraphic excavations at Tulamba (Mughal 1967), there is no published Early Historic sequence for eastern Pakistan, and this is emphasised by the fact that Tulamba is the only sequence used to date Early Historic period surface collections made in the Punjab-wide surveys undertaken from 1992-1996 (Mughal *et al.* 1994-1996: 4). Although various suggestions have been made about the location of Alexandria



Buchephalous and Nicaea, with particular attention being given to Jhelum city and Mong in the Pakistani Punjab (Huntingford 1980; Eggermont 1993), none of these have been confirmed by excavation.

Our understanding of the regions immediately west of modern Pakistan is in some ways poorer. Both Mundigak and Old Kandahar (Shahr-i Kohna) have been proposed as the possible location of the capital of the Achaemenid province of Arachosia (Casal 1961; McNicoll and Ball 1996; Helms 1997), but even at the relatively well published Kandahar, there are conflicting interpretations of the chronology of the Iron Age and Achaemenid period deposits, and with the exception of one coin, minted in 334 BC (Helms 1997: 92, 96), there is a lack of clear evidence for Alexander's passing. McNicoll and Ball (1996: 394-5) suggest that the Hellenistic arrival saw a takeover of the existing settlement, while Helms (1997: 91-2) suggests that the site may have been abandoned prior to Alexander's arrival.

### **Dynamics of Power in the Mid- to Late 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium BC**

There have been numerous reviews of the administration of the Achaemenid Empire, but it has not formally been assessed from the viewpoint of post-colonial theory. It is however, possible to make a range of suggestions about the way in which the formal imperial system operated (Petrie and Magee 2007).

The bas-reliefs at Persepolis show dignitaries bringing gifts to the king and various surviving texts describing the payment of tribute (e.g. Herodotus *Historiae* 1972: III 89-95), and thus suggest that the Achaemenid Empire operated as a wealth finance system, with vassals paying tribute in gold or luxury goods (after D'Altroy and Earle 1985: 188). There is also clear evidence for the supply of levies from individual provinces for the armies of the king (e.g. Herodotus *Historiae* 1972: VII.67, 71, 86, VIII.113, IX.29; Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: III.8.3-6). In many ways, this is an exclusionary network strategy that focuses on the elite (Blanton *et al.* 1996: 4ff), and draws wealth and power from distant regions to the core of the empire in order to support and glorify

the king. Although the celebration of Nowrūz at Persepolis was in many ways an empire wide corporate event, it was still an activity for elites, be they representatives from provinces or members of the royal household. The Achaemenid system saw the creation and maintenance of imperial order and this, along with the redistribution of wealth, served to legitimise the position of the Achaemenid rulers (Baines and Yoffee 1998; also Van Buren 2000). However, while this is all coherent in terms of explaining the core of the empire, it gives little scope for understanding variation elsewhere in the system. Studies of imperialism have emphasised that empires are often very adaptable to circumstance, and various strategies might be used simultaneously.

There has been some debate of the nature of Achaemenid control over the eastern provinces using the Achaemenid and Classical sources, and this has been reviewed most recently by Magee *et al.* (2005), Petrie and Magee (2007) and Magee and Petrie (2010). Both Achaemenid and Classical sources are harmonious in reference to the existence of satraps in Bactria and Arachosia (Harauvatish), whereas at no point do either refer to satraps in Gandhara, Thatagush and Hindush (e.g. DB: - §38. 3.10-19, §45. 3.54-64; Kent 1953, Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: III: 8.3-4, III: 25.8; also see discussion in Vogelsang 1992, 169-173). The chroniclers of Alexander do, however, make it clear that there were rulers and/or official personages in the far eastern provinces in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (see above). In terms of authority from the Achaemenid "centre", Vogelsang (1985: 87-91, 1992: 227, 313-315) has argued that the sources indicate the existence of a stepped administration, with four levels of control: the king, the provincial governor, the local potentate and the local masses. Arachosia thus appears to have been an important administrative centre governed by a satrap, who had influence over the neighbouring provinces to the east, particularly Thatagush (Vogelsang 1985: 87-91, 1990: 100; 1992: 172-173, 227, 313-315), and a similar situation appears to have existed between Bactria and Gandhara (Vogelsang 1985: 87-91, 1990: 99-100; 1992: 178-179, 313-315; also Briant 2002, 746). This is supported by the fact that there are no clear references to Achaemenid officials in the Indus Valley in the ancient Indian literature, but there are





references to Bactrians and Kambojas (Vogelsang 1987: 187; after Witzel 1980; Bivar 1988: 199). The satraps in Bactria and Arachosia are mentioned in the Behistun inscription, suggesting that this system operated at least from 520-518 BC, and the description of the army of Darius III suggests that it was maintained until the Empire was subsumed by Alexander in 331 BC (e.g. DB: - §38. 3.10-19, §45. 3.54-64; Kent 1953; Arrian *Anabasis* 2004: III. 8.3-4; Vogelsang 1992, 314) (see Magee *et al.* 2005; Petrie and Magee 2007; Magee and Petrie 2010).

The fact that the Achaemenid's appear to have made use of local kings in the easternmost regions, rather than appointing satraps of their own suggests that they may have adopted existing political structures in annexed regions rather than reorganizing them to their own formulae (see above; Magee and Petrie 2010).

The use of the title hyparchs by Arrian to refer to several of the local Indian kings has the connotation of subordination, and could emphasise both Alexander's perceived self-justification, and provide an indication of the nature of their relationship to the Achaemenid King (Bosworth 1995: 147-148, 1996: 156). Bosworth has suggested that when Alexander seized control of the Achaemenid Empire, he may have considered the Indian rulers to be, by right, his subjects; and in his invasion, he was effectively reaffirming control over his proper vassals (Bosworth 1995: 147-148, 1996: 164). It is not precisely clear how significant the terminology might be, but in this context, it is notable that Taxilas is mentioned as a ὑπαρχ, while Abisares is entitled βασιλεύς (Bosworth 1995: 148, 177), implying that Abisares has more independence.

Despite Arrian's references to hyparchs, Brunt (2000: 544-546) and Bosworth (1995: 147-148) have both observed that several sources make it clear that all rulers that Alexander encountered in India were kings in their own right. As it appears likely that control over the eastern frontier from the Achaemenid centre was indirect, it is interesting to speculate as to how (and why) the local rulers maintained their fealty to an empire centred thousands of kilometres to the west for up to 180 years. There is certainly evidence in the Behistun inscription of an army campaigning in the east on

behalf of the king in order to quash rebellion in Thatagush soon after Darius seized power (Magee *et al.* 2005). There is, however, no historical evidence to suggest that any of the provinces formally revolted against the Achaemenid's after this date, nor that there was any imperial retribution. Irrespective of whether the Achaemenid's ever lost their hold on any of their eastern possessions, it was certainly never acknowledged in the royal reliefs and inscriptions (Bosworth 1995: 148; Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010).

Magee *et al.* (2005) have noted that the fact that Indian troops were sent to fight at Gaugamela suggests that some of the key principles of fealty were still in operation in the Late Achaemenid period, but the precise arrangements for providing troops to the Achaemenid king are nowhere outlined. Although some of the local rulers in the eastern provinces may have been Persian vassals at the same time, particularly those to the west of the Indus, it is entirely feasible that they behaved independently, while retaining the official titles conferred by the Achaemenid king (Brunt 2000: 546; Bosworth 1995: 148). This duality of authority has particular ramifications for the types of evidence that we might expect to see in the archaeological record (Petrie and Magee 2007).

That there was a complex local series of political rivalries in play in the sub-continent is brought out by the detail of the Alexander narratives, particularly the vulgate of Quintus Curtius (reviewed by Petrie and Magee 2007). Although he had initially found favour from Alexander, the realm of Taxilas was only enlarged to a relatively small extent, and was only a part of a greater satrapy, under the leadership of Philip son of Machatas (Bosworth 1995: 261). However, the lands given to Porus during the conquest of the Punjab shows that there was a shift in Alexander's favour, which Taxilas seems to have resented (Bosworth 1995: 319, 325, 357-358). Bosworth (1995: 357-358) notes that although both Porus and Abisares were named satraps under Alexander, they remained kings of their subjects. Nonetheless, this all indicates that the east of the Achaemenid Empire was not just annexed by Alexander, but also reconfigured to incorporate the new lands that were not previously a part of the Achaemenid Empire. Although it is not stated



explicitly, it is possible that Alexander was fully aware that his empire was exceedingly stretched, and could see the value of empowering local rulers as satraps at the far eastern edge of his kingdom, while using Macedonians in the satrapies that lay closer (Petrie and Magee 2007).

In studying imperial ideology and power in the Inca empire, DeMarrais *et al.* (1996: 27) have highlighted the necessity for establishing authority over conquered or annexed groups and argue that the materialisation of power and ideology through ceremony and monument construction play an important role in imperial expansion. For the Achaemenid's, the creation of the raised platform at Persepolis, the carving of the Behistun inscription, and the issuance of this as a text in both Babylonia and Egypt undoubtedly served such a purpose. However, these actions only relate to the core and the western part the empire, and there is a notable lack of monumental imperial structures in the far eastern provinces. Thus while the Achaemenid imperial ideology may have been an inherent part of their strategy in some areas, in the east, it was seemingly far more contingent to adopt a more hegemonic approach (Earle and D'Altroy 1989: 187; D'Altroy 1992: 19-23).

In terms of the archaeology, we are far from understanding the nature and impact of Achaemenid control of certain areas. As there is a general absence of clearly defined archaeological contexts in Pakistan that relate to the historical narrative (see above), interpretations of the effects of Achaemenid annexation have, relied on generalizations about the beneficial impacts of imperial activity in South Asia or the identification of artefacts that might confirm a physical Persian presence (Magee *et al.* 2005: 717). As noted above, Achaemenid-style architecture is evidence at Dahan-i Ghulaman in Sistan (Drangiana) (Scerrato 1966), and there is evidence for an Achaemenid presence at Kandahar, but nothing so obvious further east. Without substantial evidence of an actual Persian military or bureaucratic presence east of Old Kandahar, scholars have looked to the appearance of punch-marked coins at Taxila (e.g. Allchin 1995: 131), the recognition of Aramaic as a known language in post-Achaemenid Mauryan inscriptions (Allchin 1995: 132-33) and

the influence of Achaemenid monumental sculpture on Mauryan palatial architecture (e.g. Chakrabati 1997: 190-91) as evidence to the influence of the Achaemenids. However, such evidence provides little perspective of the on-the-ground realities of imperial control. In fact, given that there is minimal evidence for direct Achaemenid control, and good evidence for the maintenance of local authority, it is feasible that there might have been minimal impact on material culture. One notable exception appears to be the adoption of the tulip bowl in the Bannu basin and the Peshawar Valley (see above; Petrie *et al.* 2008).

In fact, one of the clearest insights to come out of the most recent fieldwork at Akra and Charsadda is that the Achaemenids annexed polities that had existed at the western edge of South Asia from at least the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, and turned them into their eastern most provinces (Magee *et al.* 2005; Magee and Petrie 2010; also Ali, T. *et al.* 1998; Young 2003; Coningham *et al.* 2007b). In this, it is not clear whether the Achaemenids encouraged or acquiesced to such an arrangement. It is also not clear whether being a vassal was also important in terms of maintaining ones authority in relation to other regional kingdoms that existed further to the east, beyond the boundaries of the empire. Being attached to the king certainly seems to have been a priority for Taxilas the son.

The appearance of Iranian-inspired standardised vessel forms such as the tulip bowl at some sites in Pakistan (Petrie *et al.* 2008; Magee and Petrie 2010) is interesting in terms of what it might suggest in terms of Achaemenid influence on ritual banqueting, feasting and drinking behaviour (see above). These tulip bowls also appear at Akra and Charsadda with other 'western' forms, predominantly bowls (Magee *et al.* 2005; Petrie *et al.* 2008; Magee and Petrie 2010). But what does the adoption of such ritual behaviour and the influence of 'western' thinking indicate when it is taking place in an area that appears to all intents and purposes to be governed by more or less independent local rulers who act as vassals when necessary? The chronological placement of the tulip bowl in particular has been of some dispute (Dittman 1984; Vogelsang 1988), but it appears likely that these vessels came into



common usage during the Late Achaemenid period, most notably at Charsadda and Akra (Magee *et al.* 2005; Petrie *et al.* 2008; Magee and Petrie 2010). Rather than witnessing a legitimising strategy being imposed from the centre, might the deliberate emulation of elite, or perhaps more correctly 'western', banqueting habits not be a step by the local elite towards legitimising and maintaining their own local authority? Given the evidence for regional rivalries, the desire for legitimisation need not to have been limited to the individual kingdoms under nominal Achaemenid control, but may also have been useful in relations with surrounding kingdoms.

We are still left with many unresolved questions in our understanding of imperial and indigenous authority during the period of Achaemenid control of parts of Pakistan. None of the available evidence provides a particularly clear picture for the early Achaemenid period, and it will only be through future investigations that we are able to clarify this further. With the arrival of Alexander however, we have very clear evidence for the local political landscape in South Asia for the first time. Although the Indus River seems to have been viewed as the eastern edge of the Achaemenid Empire, it also flowed directly through a borderlands region that was simultaneously the western edge of the sub-continent. The textual evidence makes it apparent that the rulers of the provinces under Achaemenid control were also embroiled in local intrigue. One of the reasons why this border was not a 'hard' line is because there were no obvious rivals to imperial control in the east, however indirect it actually was. This was no doubt a result of the fact that there was no obvious rival to the Achaemenids in this area at the time of the formation of their empire, and that no organised resistance to the empire had developed during its existence. The lack of rivalry and rebellion may well have been a contributing factor to the persistence and success of the indirect stepped administration in the east. However, it is not at all clear how those along its eastern edge and those beyond that boundary perceived the empire. Did it provide legitimisation to the rulers in the easternmost provinces in the face of their rivals or was it viewed as a distant entity, without much obvious impact? The potential emulation of ritual

feasting and banqueting suggested by the presence of Achaemenid ceramic vessel forms indicates that many types of influence may have been taking place that were not immediately obvious.

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