



Fig. 18 – The Barikot inscription no. 119 (Lahore Museum) (Photo by C. Moscatelli)

*Addendum: The name of the city*

Introductory note

The earliest recorded occurrence of the name of the site is found in BELLEW 1864. There is mention of the village Barikot in the area occupied by the Abakhel clan of the Akozai division of the Yusufzai (IBID.: 42-43). Lately, the site is recorded as Bir-kot (e.g. in STEIN 1930), which should be considered as the local Pashto pronunciation of the original Dardic name. In Lt. Colonel Godfrey's account published (GODFREY 1912), it is reported that – according to local elders - the village Barikot in Dir, was founded nine generations earlier by Baria [methatheisis of Baira], the then chief of their tribe, at that time “kafirs” or “unbelievers”. The tribe had been forced by the Yusufzai Pashtuns to leave their ancestral settlement, Barikot in Swat. The story was confirmed to Godfrey by the Pashtun khans of Barikot in Swat. They told him that the aboriginal settlers were forced to migrate to Kunar in the 16th century, where they founded a new Barikot. The old Barikot maintained its name simply because the Babuzai settled there permanently only after the *wesh* system was abolished in early 20th century. By that time the toponym, which had survived as a small Hindu trade centre and military checkpoint, was firmly established, and maintained, although it has very little or no meaning for Pashto speakers<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Another Barikot, a third very small border trade point in Kunar, was probably founded in the late 18th century. BELLEW 1864 cites the first Barikot (on pp. 42-43, 49), and adds a very interesting piece of information: the shortest (but most difficult) way to reach upper Dir (i.e. the location of the second Barikot) from Swat is from Barikot through Munjai pass (two days) (IBID.: 49). In the map published in BIDDULPH

According to the Classic sources, two towns were garrisoned by Alexander in the valley of Swat, Ora and Bazira/Beira, the same that the archaeologists found again fortified and occupied by the Indo-Greek two centuries later (OLIVIERI 1996<sub>a</sub>). Both names disappeared from Western sources.

Aurel Stein (STEIN 1930: 28) and Giuseppe Tucci (TUCCI 1958: 296 and 327, fn. 28) proposed the identification of the site with a city, reported by classical historians as being conquered during Alexander's campaign in Swat in 327 BCE. The city is known as Beira in Q. Curtius Rufus (*Historiae Alexandri* VIII, 34) and Bazira in Arrian (*Anabasis*, IV, 27). In a 10th century CE Śāradā inscription from Barikot the toponym Vajīrasthāna is mentioned. The toponym was initially interpreted by the first editor as "Waziristhan" (SAHNI 1931-1932), while Tucci was the first to associate Vajīrasthāna with the toponyms reported by Alexander's historians (TUCCI 1958, p. 296, fn. 28).

It has been demonstrated that the inscription comes from Barikot, Swat. The inscription was collected by H. Deane, Political Agent at Malakand (see SAHNI 1931-1932: 293) and transferred to the Lahore Museum in 1898 (see Document 19 in OLIVIERI 2015<sub>b</sub>). The inscription is mentioned under entry no. LXIV in a list of impressions and inscribed stones (apparently handwritten by H. Deane = Document 20 in OLIVIERI 2015<sub>b</sub>) with the following description "Inscribed stone from a hill to the north of the village of Barikot in Upper Swat (by Lachman Das)" [a Supervisor of the Works Department? See the *Indian Biographical Dictionary 1915* by C. Havayadana Rao, Madras 1915; see also *Supplement to Who's Who in India 1912*, Lucknow 1912]. The description is reproduced *verbatim* by Sahni in his study (SAHNI 1931-1932: 301; only the name of Lachman Das is omitted)<sup>27</sup>.

The new elements provided by Profs. O. von Hinüber, M. De Chiara, and S. Baums (below) should be added to the recent excavation data (OLIVIERI/IORI 2020), which have proved the existence of rich urban phase prior to the construction of the Indo-Greek Defensive Wall, matching the description of an *urbs opulenta* given by Curtius Rufus, and marking a point in favour of a positive association of the site with the ancient toponyms reported in the written records.

Luca M. Olivieri

#### The Barikot Śāradā inscription no. 119

The inscription is currently preserved in the storerooms of the Lahore Museum (Inv. no. 119). Thanks to the courtesy of the then Director of the Museum Ms. Sumaira Samad, it was photographed anew by Mr. Cristiano Moscatelli who had joined the Barikot excavation in 2016 (Fig. 18). The inscription was studied on its new photographic documentation. It was originally published in *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XXI, 1931-32, p. 301 (SAHNI 1931-1932) together with a rubbing, which shows a better state of preservation than the recent photographs. Therefore it is difficult to verify all the readings in the edition by Sahni.

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1880 the first Barikot (in Swat) is not indicated, while the other two (in Dir and Kunar) are marked respectively as 'Barkot' and 'Bir-kot'.

The third Barikot became famous as a crucial battlefield during the Soviet-Afghan war. Finally, we should not forget the once famous Barikot Cinema Theatre, still a ruined landmark in Kabul. The name, quite unattractive for a movie theatre when compared to most appealing brands like Pameer and Ariana Cinemas, derives from the neighborhood, composed mostly of families who may have migrated from the third Barikot.

The secondary foundations of Barikot are really interesting events. Even more interestingly, the name of the founder of the second Barikot, "Baria" [metathesis of "Baira"], certainly the eponym of a clan, clearly echoes the early-Medieval toponym of the first Barikot, Vaira/Vajra.

<sup>27</sup> The inscription was later published in SIRCAR 1983 and RODZIADI KHAW 2015, without adding nothing new to SAHNI 1931-1931.

The content of the inscription is by and large lost. However, the name *vajirasthāna* is preserved in line 2: (*meśvara*) *śrī jayapāladevarājye śrī vajira(sthā)ne*  
 Here *vajira* is certain (theoretically it could be read as *dhajira*, because *va/dha* here seems not only to be similar, as is often the case, but identical). Between *ra* and *ne* there is a strangely long gap, but still *sthāne* is likely.

All that can be said on this name was said by Aurel Stein (STEIN 1930: 28 and foll.) and Giuseppe Tucci (TUCCI 1958: 296 and 327, fn. 28). If Jayapāladeva ruled in 964-1002 (REHMAN 1979: 130), the linguistic form *vajira-*° is quite remarkable at this late date. It may be a literary form retained in Sanskrit, while the spoken language probably had *Bīr* already. The form used by Q. Curtius Rufus is, on the other hand, *Beira*. Following Stein (STEIN 1930: 29) this should be “obviously but another attempt to reproduce the indigenous designation \**Bajira* or \**Bayira*.” especially if the form *vāira* existed in the 1st century (if this date of Curtius Rufus is correct).

Oskar von Hinüber

#### Additional notes on *Vajirasthāna*

Suffix *-sthāna*, has to be interpreted as Skr. *sthāna-* ‘firm stance; place of abode; shape, form; position, place’ (TURNER 1962-1966: no. 13753), Cf. Pāli *thāna*; Sindhi *thānu* m. ‘stall in stable’, *thāno* m. ‘place, station’; Panjabi *thān* f. ‘place’, *thānā*, *thānā* m. ‘place, police station’ (*thānā* m. ← Hindi); Hindi *thān* m. ‘place, stable, manger’, *thānā* m. ‘police station’; Ashkun *tana*, *tāra* ‘place’ (MORGENSTIERNE 1929: 280), Waigali *stān* ‘place, abode’ (ID. 1954: 297); Dameli *thān* ‘place, land (of farm or field)’ (ID. 1942: 127); Pšt. *-tun* ‘place’ (Pastho toponyms like *Thānā*, are borrowed from IA). *Vajira-*, probably from *vājra-* ‘thunderbolt; diamond’ (TURNER 1962-1966: 11204; Cf. Pkr. *vajja*, *vayara-*, *vāira-*), √\*VAJ ‘be strong’ (Cf. *ugrā-*, *ōjas-*, *ōjmān-*, etc.). Therefore, *vajira-sthāna* can be translated as ‘strong place’, > ‘fortified place’. In Gāndhārī (Middle IA language used in Gandhara from 3rd BCE to 5th CE), in Swat and surroundings c. 1st century CE is present the form *vayira* (see *vayirasagaṇade* in the Senavarma inscription CKI 249, 5d). As a toponym (MONIER-WILLIAMS 1899) quotes *vajra-sthāna-* ‘N. of a place’ from Rāmāyaṇa. [According to FALK (2019: 5) *-sthāna* “very often is a place of veneration for a deity”.]

Matteo De Chiara

#### Postscript

There are other two occurrences of *vayira-* = OIA *vajra-* in Gāndhārī texts: CKI 52 (the Mount Banj inscription, mentioning a *vayira(stu)va-* ‘thunderbolt/diamond stūpa’) and CKI 367 (a monumental begging bowl, whose donor was called *Vāira*). The Mount Banj inscription (from a spur of Mt. Mahaban, Swabi) may be most relevant for the issue since there *vayira-* is also attached to a physical structure (possibly as part of a proper place name).

In Gāndhārī neutral vowels before [j] are usually palatalized, so an even better approximation for the pronunciation of G. *va(y)ira-* is [ve(j)irə]. That makes Curtius Rufus’ information (“*Coenon in obsidione urbis opulentae, Beira incolae vocant, reliquit*”, VIII, 34) on the name of the city (*Beira* from a Greek form \**Beīpa* = [veira]?) very precise indeed. [See also BAUMS 2019: 169-170, including fn. 9].

Stefan Baums

ISMEO SERIE ORIENTALE ROMA VOL. 22  
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(BARIKOT) SWAT, PAKISTAN  
(1984-1992)

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## CREDITS

The conclusive study of these materials was made possible by a research grant from the University of Bologna (Ravenna campus), Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali. The research work, denoted as “Pottery from the excavations at the historic settlement of Bir-kot-ghwandai (Swat, Pakistan): Taxonomical and stratigraphical study”, began in February 2013, and was completed in February 2016.

The publication of the research was funded by a contribution from  
ISMEO - INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEDITERRANEAN AND ORIENTAL STUDIES



PROGETTO MIUR “STUDI E RICERCHE SULLE CULTURE DELL’ASIA E DELL’AFRICA:  
TRADIZIONE E CONTINUITÀ, RIVITALIZZAZIONE E DIVULGAZIONE”

and from

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA



DIPARTIMENTO DI BENI CULTURALI

2020  
Published by  
Afzaal Ahmad  
Sang-e-Meel Publications

Translation by Ian McGilvray

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ISBN-10: 969-35-3312-7  
ISBN-13: 978-969-35-3312-5

This monographic study is composed of two volumes:

PART 1 – THE STUDY - by L.M. Olivieri (with contributions of others)  
PART 2 – THE MATERIALS - by P. Callieri (with contributions of others)

Cover: Assemblage of BKG Pottery - I (Photo by Aurangzeib Khan)  
[Box: Panorama of Trench BKG 11 (Photo by Fazal Khaliq)]



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