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## ON THE ANTIQUITIES OF BÁMIÁN.

BY C. MASSON.

Bámíán is situated in one of the Paropámisan valleys, distant about eighty or eighty-five miles from Cabúl, bearing N. 75 W. The valley is deep, the enclosing hills on either side exhibiting, to a greater or less extent, perpendicular walls of rock, whence their convenience and adaptation for the construction of caves. The rock is called *Mung*, being a conglomerate of small pebbles, sand, and divers-coloured earth, remarkably compact and hard. The length of the valley is about nine or ten miles, in direction from east to west. Its breadth is inconsiderable, but greatest at the particular spot in it, pre-eminently called Bámíán, and where the statues and principal caves are found. At this point also the streams of Súrkh Dur, and Júi Foládí, by their junction, form what is called the river of Bámíán, which, flowing eastward down the valley, receives at Zohák the waters of Kálú, after which winding to the westward of Irak, Búbúlák, Shibr, Bitchílík, &c., and augmented by their rivulets, eventually escapes from the hills, and passing Ghorí, falls into the river of Kundúz.

The appellation *Bámíán* may perhaps be equivalent to 'high region,' in contradistinction to *Damián* or *Damán*, the 'low region,' or that at the skirts of the hills—'Bám' signifies 'roof;' and when it is remembered that Asiatic roofs are flat, as are in general the summits of the mountains in this part of the country, we are at no loss to account for the name, once probably universally applied to it, though now retained by a particular locality; and when we further consider its elevation above the surrounding regions, we may admit the figurative and emphatic interpretation of *Bámíán*, as afforded by some of the inhabitants, who render it the 'roof of the universe.'

The mountains, among which Bámíán is situate, are no doubt those designated by the Greek historians and geographers Paropámisus, as opposed to the true Indian Caucasus, or Hindu Kosh, from which they are distinct. The term has been cavilled at, but without justice. It was no creation of the Greeks, but the native name for the hills; nor need we doubt this, when we find it made up of *par* and *pám*, signifying 'hill' and 'flat.' *Paropámisus* may therefore be translated 'the region of flat summited hills,' and is a term peculiarly appropriate to the countries on which it was conferred. Knowing the etymology of Paropámisus, we learn that of *Pamir*, the 'lord of hills.'

The principal antiquities of Bámíán are its idols and caves, which have manifestly a connexion with each other—the castle of Zohák, so called—and the remains of the city and citadel of Ghúlghúleh.

The evidences of Ghúlghúleh are numerous and extensive, proving that it must have been an important city. Refraining from speculations as to its origin, we know from authentic history that it was destroyed by Genghiz Khán in 1220, A.D. The natives of Bámíán have a tradition, that it was re-edified, and again fell into decay, which is probable, there being many Mohamedan tombs referring to it, which have a less antiquity than six centuries, if painted glazed tiles to be seen in them were confined to China until the era of Genghiz Khán, as supposed by some authors. The most striking of the remains of Ghúlghúleh is the citadel or place, the walls of which encompass an isolated eminence.

The fortress of Zohák, so called by the natives and by Abul Fazil, occurs at the eastern extremity of the valley, where the rivulet of Kálú falls into the

river of Bámíán. We have not inspected it with sufficient attention to decide upon its character, or to venture to advance an opinion on it, which future research may controvert; we therefore merely observe that, agreeing with Abul Fazil as to its antiquity, we differ both from his notion and that sanctioned by tradition, that it was a place of defence.

The caves of Bámíán are found in the cliffs or perpendicular fronts of the hills on either side of the valley, and on the northern side they uninterruptedly occur for a distance of six or seven miles. At the spot called Bámíán, the elevation of the cliffs being most considerable, there are found the greater number of caves, or *samuches*, as called in these countries, congregated as in a focus. Among these caves stand in niches the two large idols long known in Europe, and between them are two other niches, in one of which are the fragments of a former idol, and the other as certainly once contained one. Opposite to these, diverging to the south-west, is the valley through which flows the rivulet of Júi Fóládí, and eastward of the citadel of Ghúlghúleh is a valley stretching to the south; the hills to the north and east of both these valleys are also perforated with caves, and among those of the latter is a large idol, inferior only in size to the two superior ones at Bámíán.

The idols are cut or hewn in the rock, and have been covered with a surface of cement. They are erect figures, with their hands extended, and supporting the folds of drapery with which they have been clothed. Their features have been destroyed, by removing one-half of their heads, or as far as their lips, leaving the hinder halves with the ears, enormously large, appended.\*

The work of mutilation was one of some labour, and having been executed with precision, will have been directed by authority, possibly by that of the Arabian conquerors. A subsequent and less systematic mutilation has been practised on the idols, by breaking off their hands and fracturing their legs, for the merits of which Jenghiz, Timúr, Aurangzéb, and even Timúr Sháh Dúránní, who are all accused, may dispute.

The idols stand in vast niches formed in the rock, whose sides, on a level with the necks of them, have been embellished with paintings. These consist of busts and seated figures, both male and female. The niche of the superior idol has on each side a line of twelve female figures, and, what is of great importance, at its summit, over the idol's head, is an inscription, obviously intended to unravel the mystery. The niche in which stands the second idol in importance has no inscription, but on either side has lines of twelve male and female busts, among which is one so valuable, that we need not regret the absence of a literal testimony; over the head of this idol is a painted full length female figure. The niches of the other idols are also embellished with paintings.

On either side of the niches are series of stairs, cut in the rock, which conduct to their summits, or to the heads of the idols; each series of steps leads to a small square apartment, and these several apartments have been superbly decorated with gilding and lapis lazuli. To illumine these passages, apertures have been cut through the rock towards the idols. We ascended to the summit of the second idol by the passage on the one side, and walking round the hinder part of its head, descended by the steps on the other side. Near the summit, or above the lines of paintings, the niches have been widened; and on either side has been formed a *takht*, or 'sofa,' obviously for the convenience of sitting upon. The superior idol has or had the same facilities of

\* See a Sketch of them published with Lieut. Burnes' Description, J. A. S., vol. ii. 361.

ascent to the summit, but at the time of our visit the lower caves near it were occupied by an unaccommodating Tajik, who had stowed in the passage his stock of provender. We could not prevail upon him, by menace or entreaty, to open the path; and he evasively affirmed that he had never heard of one. We did not insist with him, relying upon making a further visit, which until now has not happened. It is a great point to gain these upper stations, as from them may be profitably inspected the paintings.

Between the legs of the superior idol are entrances conducting into spacious apartments surmounted with domes—and there are many other caves at Bámíán which display the dome or cupola:—these we imagine to have been particularly temples. They, in common with all other caves, were covered with cement, in which the lines of moulding surrounding their circumferences, with the ornaments at the summits of the domes, have been formed. The interiors of all of them are of a glossy black colour, from the smoke of fires which were or have been kept up in them. Many of the caves at Bámíán are remarkable for their dimensions, and have other peculiarities in their form and embellishments. The most curious are found above the superior idol, but in another cliff rising backward; so that in walking from them to the front or south, we reach the edge of the perpendicular wall of rock in which that sculpture is carved. In these caves we saw the names written with charcoal of W. Moorcroft, W. Trebeck, and G. Guthrie! They are gained by an ascent a little to the left or west of the idol.

There can be little doubt, but that of the vast number of caves which do not terminate in cupolas, many were the residences of the priests connected with temples; others may have been the abodes of ascetics or monastic classes; and as we find in Afghánistán that the cave is invariably the companion of the sepulchral tumulus, without reference to its nature, or whether it be a tomb or cenotaph, we may suppose the majority of the excavations at Bámíán to be of the same character. When circumstances permitted the erection of a tumulus, it became necessary to excavate a cave; and we need not be surprised at the vast number of caves at Bámíán, when we have under our eyes the ruins of a large and once flourishing city, or when we consider the spot was a sacred one, possibly the most sacred, of the professors of the then existing religion, and whither the dead of the surrounding regions might, from pious motives, be carried for deposit.

The inhabitants, in speaking of the three superior idols, call them the father, mother, and son,—presuming the second in consequence to be a female; but there is no distinction in the figure to warrant the supposition that its sex varies from the others. Of whatever sex the whole may be, there is little reason to doubt but they are of one and the same.

We visited Bámíán under the idea of meeting with Buddhist antiquities, but it became evident that they were of another character. The inscription was in characters unknown to us, and continued so until we were favoured by the alphabets of the Pehlevi and Zend from Mr. Prinsep, when we ascertained it to be a form of Pehlevi. The bust of the king, among the paintings in the niche of the second idol, we had found to bear an exact resemblance to the busts on a series of coins constantly and numerous found at Beghrám, and which we called Parthian provisionally; but the characters of the legends on these coins were very different from those of the Bámíán inscription. At length, however, a coin was found of the same class, with the characters plainly similar; in fact, comprising three of those forming the inscription. We now began to suspect we had sufficient evidence to assign the idols of Bámíán.

Under the idea that the inscription might be rendered *NANAIA*, we had ventured to communicate our suspicions to Mr. Prinsep: should they be confirmed, the idol might be supposed to be an image of Diana, or the moon, called by the old Persians *NANAIA*, but we are not yet confident of the reading; and viewing a succession of idols, it occurs to reflection, that they may possibly commemorate a series of sovereigns,—and this, even if the reading be allowed; for we find over the second idol, which has no inscription, a full length female figure, which may be Nanaia, and the first idol has no figure, but a name in its place. We must confess, from the general appearance of the idols, we should suppose them to represent male personages.

The coins referred to are probably of that description marked by Colonel Tod, when he enumerates among his collection, “rare ones of a Parthian dynasty, unknown to history.” The term Parthian may cease to be applicable, but we doubt whether the kings commemorated by these coins, and, as we suspect, by the idols of Bámián, are unknown to history. We take them to be the Kíánián dynasty, whose records, more or less authentic, are to be found in Persian authors; and whose descendants, if their own accounts be credited, still exist in the persons of independent chiefs in Seistán. The Tájiks, so numerous dispersed over Afghánistán and Túrkestán, and no doubt the more ancient inhabitants of the countries, represent the nation, in olden time, obedient to the princes of this dynasty. For a series of ages, in Afghánistán at least, the Tájik authority has been superseded; and, within memory, the proprietary rights of the Tájik to the soil have been seriously infringed by the encroachments of the Afgháns. He preserves few traces of his origin or descent, and as convert to the uncompromising tenets of Islamism, recollects with horror that his country was once governed by infidels; while, as at Bámián, he resides, and follows the ordinary occupations of life, in the temples, from whence his ancestors, in all due solemnity, invoked the glorious sun and dazzling hosts of heaven.

Admitting the evidence upon which we ascribe the idols of Bámián to the princes of the Kíánián race, without prejudice to their individual character, or whether they be idols of Nanaia and other deities, or statues of sovereigns, we naturally turn to consider the possible epoch of their construction; and this, if not absolutely to be fixed, is brought within a certain and comparatively recent period, or one subsequent to the destruction of the Greek-Bactrian monarchy. This monarchy, as Justin testifies, was overthrown by the Parthians; and the fact is, perhaps, as easily to be credited, as that its subversion was effected by the Getæ; though it must be allowed, that in support of the latter opinion, Strabo is very grave authority, particularly when he enumerates the hordes or nations that effected the subversion, the Asii, Pasiani, Tochari, and Sacarauli. It may be, as Schefed hints, that both had a hand in it; but the conclusion, by the same learned author, that the Getæ remained in possession, may be liable to doubt, if we recognise the Bámián idols to be memorials of the Parthian (qy.) conquerors of Bactria. It is proper, however, to note, that about this time, the *AZOS* dynasty, whose coins we have, seems entitled to be considered; and if that appellation have any connexion with the name of the first of the four Getic hordes, as, we believe, Mr. Prinsep suspects, both Justin and Strabo may be reconciled; for, according to every appearance, the Azos dynasty originated in the regions bordering on the Indus, towards its source. At the same time, it must be remembered, that we suggest the possibility only, that the Bámián idols may refer to the Parthian (qy.) conquerors of Bactria. We have remarked, that the year 56 B.C. has been mentioned as

the epoch of the construction of the idols (that will be of the more ancient one), and this epoch might coincide with that of the supercession of the Greek-Bactrian monarchy; but when this date is quoted as being found in the *Mahabhárat*, either the authority of that work has been carelessly advanced, or the work itself must considerably abate its pretensions to the antiquity conceded to it by some.

We feel repugnance to renounce old and favourite theories, but they must yield to facts. We had plausibly enough given the Greeks in Bactria for successors a race of Getic or Indo-Scythic sovereigns, as we conveniently called them; and we concluded them to be of the Buddhist faith, because we have read that such faith was prevalent in Central Asia about the commencement of the Christian era. Without deeming it necessary to contest the latter fact, in favour of which, indeed, some proof may be adduced, we have gradually, however, grown sceptical as to that of Buddhist supremacy in these regions; and the term Indo-Scythic has yielded to that of Mithraic, which may safely be adopted, as clearly indicating the religion of the ruling powers, while it affects not the question of their race or descent. It may be observed, that the later antiquities in Afghánistán and the Panjáb, or in the countries along the course of the Indus, are apparently mixed Mithraic and Buddhist; nor is it improbable that the two systems, if they were really generically distinct ones, should have been blended in the limits to which both extended, and were both met,—it being considered that Buddhism will have been propagated with vivacity, when Mithraism was languishing in decline.

Our objections to the term Parthian, as applied to the coins provisionally so called, and to the princes commemorated by them, and possibly by the idols, arise principally from the impossibility of deeming them Arsakian. Under that powerful dynasty, which so long controlled Persia, it is generally understood that the worship of Mithra was discouraged;—we know not why it should have been, and might ask in return, of what religion besides the Mithraic could the Arsakian monarchs have been professors? It may be, that as Parthians, who have been supposed to be of Scythic origin, they were followers after the manner of their forefathers, whose rites it is one of the objects of the *Zendavesta* to depreciate and to condemn; while, with the virulent feelings common to sectarians, and in possession of the necessary power to allow their exhibition, they might have neglected no occasion to discountenance the opposite rites and observances in vogue with the people of Cyrus; whence may be accounted for, during their sway, the neglect of Persepolis and the fire-temples of Istakr. The fire-altar never occurs on any of the coins of the Arsakian princes, while it is seen on those we suspect to be referrible to the princes commemorated at Bámíán. The same emblem, indeed, distinguishes the coins of the Sassanian princes of Persia, successors in authority to the Arsakian line, and who re-kindled the sacred fires throughout the land, which had been extinct for centuries—but on their coins, it is always accompanied by two guardians or defenders—which are wanting on the coins of our princes; and as the more simple may be presumed the more ancient form, we might deduce from the circumstance a corroborative proof, that they are prior in date to the Sassanian monarchs of Persia. Should this view be correct, we learn that cotemporaneous with a portion of the Arsakian dynasty, a powerful and independent sovereignty existed in Bactriana, whose princes became of the orthodox Mithraic faith, or that so lauded in the *Zendavesta*. It is obvious also, that they must have been subsequent to the Greek monarchy; and who they were, and whence they came, can only be profitably speculated upon

when we become acquainted with the antiquities hidden in the regions north of the Indian Caucasus. It is an advantage, however, to possess the knowledge of their existence, their coins and memorials, which display alike their language and religion.

The height of the larger idols has been estimated at 120 feet and seventy feet respectively; the third may be about fifty feet, and the two others were thirty-five and twenty-five feet in height. Surveying them, in connexion with the theory that they serve to commemorate sovereigns, the gradations in size, as well as their numbers, may be turned to profit; the former denoting the degrees of prosperity under which they were formed, and the latter authorizing us to infer that there were at least as many sovereigns as idols. It is also probable that these idols, with their accompaniments of caves and temples, are not posthumous memorials, but that they were constructed during the lives of the monarchs who projected them. That they are the labours of a series of kings, is an inevitable conclusion, from the moral impossibility that they could have been formed by a single one.

Supposing that Bámíán was peculiarly a sacred place, and on that account pre-eminently selected for the burial-place of the sovereigns of the age, we may inquire what evidences we have of their sepulchres? Some ancient authority—we believe Ctesias or Diodorus—describes the mode of interment of the old kings of Persia; which was, by lowering down their remains from the summits of precipices into caves hewn in the rock, and then closing up their entrances. Some of the caves at Bámíán are so situated, as exactly to come within this description; they are now inaccessible, and from their small apertures, could scarcely have been intended for dwellings, while without some such contrivance as lowering down workmen from the top of the eminence, it is difficult to imagine how they could have been hewn at all. It is proper to observe, that at Bámíán there are none of the structures now familiarly known to us as topes, and which are so abundant in the regions east and west of the Indus; and their absence might suggest the idea, that they were a later mode of distinguishing departed royalty, and originated at the period when the Mithraic and Buddhist practices became mixed. Such a conclusion might be convenient for adjusting that epoch, and to sanction it, the whole mass of Afghán topes might be adduced as proofs, exhibiting the chaitya and the cave; but there is no reason to suppose the chaitya exclusively a Buddhist form, and topes are not irreconcilable with the mode of commemorating Persian monarchs—if the monument at Múrghá, north of Persepolis, be really the cenotaph of Cyrus, it being nothing but a chaitya or dahgopa; and we hesitate to believe it not to be the tomb of Cyrus, having the hints of Arrian and Aristobulus, and the interpretation of an inscription (we believe found on some contiguous monument, which renders the subject doubtful) by Professor Grotefend. Moreover, if it be, we may inquire,—where are the dahgopes of the successors of Cyrus?

The most ancient of the topes of Afghánistán, which have been yet examined, we think may be referred to the close of the first or commencement of the second century of the Christian era. While we suppose that Bámíán may be the burial-place of a dynasty of kings, we mean not to infer that it was also their capital—rather supposing that it was not, although the comparatively recent Ghúlgúleh may, nevertheless, be supposed to have been the representative of a preceding ancient and considerable city. The Paropámisis had been, previous to the conjectured period of the formation of the Bámíán idols and caves, the seat of a considerable power—that of the Pandava prince

Subhág, whose son Gaj, the founder of Gajni (Ghuzni), lost his kingdom to Euthydemus and his sons.

It has been usually conjectured that Bámíán is the Drapsaca of Arrian, occurring in Alexander's route from Bactra, or Bulkh, to Alexandria ad Caucasum. Drapsaca is called *Drastoca* by Ptolemy, which Wilford tells us is a substitute for the Sanscrit *Drashatca*, or 'the stone city.' Admitting the etymology, we need not credit the accompanying assumption, that "towns before were only assemblages of huts,"—an assumption founded on the caves of Bámíán being hewn, as indeed all caves are, in the rock, and thereby forming a stone city. If our preceding deductions be correct, they never, strictly speaking, formed a city at all; although one naturally, and as is proved by its remains, grew up and existed in their neighbourhood. Farther, if our conclusions as to the epoch of the formation of the idols be well founded, they consequently did not exist at the period of Alexander's expedition, which may account for no hints being given of them by the classical historians and geographers of the West. We are not certain, therefore, that Drapsaca was Bámíán, or that a city existed there at all, admitting the probability that a valley so conveniently situated and fertile, was even at that time adequately peopled. The stone city was a term applicable to any substantial one. Timur, in his march from Bulkh to India, halted for some days, as Sherif-u-din says, at the "fine city" of Khúlm. This is an ancient site; and with Hybuk, Kunduz, and any other locality in the route, may have a claim to be considered Drapsaca. Bámíán has also been suggested to represent Alexandria ad Paropámisum. The last word appears to be a careless introduction of the geographers for Caucasum. We believe it was not used by the original historians—excusable however, when we consider that the ancients deemed the Paropámisus a continuation of Caucasus, and the passes of the hills between Cábul and Bámíán are, to this day, spoken of by the natives as passes of the Hindu Kosh, which, strictly speaking, they are not. Alexandria, it is clear, was built at the southern base of Caucasus—indications of its locality more fully answered by Ghorbund and Beghrám. Bámíán may be termed south, but widely, of the true Hindu Kosh, and, we should think, has little pretension to be considered Alexandria ad Caucasum, beyond the doubtful one conferred by vicinity.

Examining the pretensions of Bámíán to be considered in another point of view—as a sacred locality, implied perhaps by its being selected as the burial-place of kings, we have Wilford's authority, that it is represented in the books of the Buddhists as the source of holiness and purity. This may be of some value, as showing that the same spot was held in the same venerated light by the followers of two religions generally understood to be very opposite; and as the antiquities are certainly Mithraic, we might draw the conclusion, that the Buddhists have appropriated the property of others, and that the books referring to Bámíán are comparatively modern; or, we may suspect that Buddhism was originally merely a modification of Mithraism. We judge it unnecessary to detail the Mohamedan traditions respecting Bámíán, which ascribe, however, the idols to Salsál, whom they generally assert to have been a giant infidel, first vanquished and then converted by Azaret Ali; nor need the Buddhist and Brahmanical traditions be noted, with a view to comment, which consider Sharma, or the patriarch Shem, to be the founder of Bámíán, because we have no proof that he was, or was not; but when a writer so talented as Wilford asserts, with apparent gravity, that Bámíán is the Mosical Eden, it may be useful to review the grounds on which he bases his opinion, and makes an assertion so singular. He is compelled to recognise in the Landhi Sind



Helmend, the rivers of Kundus and Balkh, the Phison, Gihon, Frat and Hiddekel of the Mosaic accounts; but it is plain that he depends upon the statements of the *Purávas* and *Zendavesta*. The former contain so many evidences of modern composition, that they surely ought not to be brought into competition or comparison with records of high antiquity, as are acknowledged to be those of the Pentateuch. The age of the *Zendavesta* has been much disputed, some conceiving it of unfathomable antiquity; others, among whom is our countryman Hyde, ascribing it to the epoch of Darius Hystaspes; while others have deemed it of comparatively modern origin. We are free to confess that we espouse the latter opinion, and the very passages cited in favour of its remote age, we think, are decisive against it. We advert to this subject the more willingly, because we cannot help suspecting the possibility, that the *Zendavesta* was compiled in the court of the sovereigns commemorated at Bámíán.

It is worthy of note, that the Brahmans, Buddhists, and Mithraists have the same ideas as to the locality of paradise, showing that they must have acquired them from each other, or from some common source. It is not improbable that the two first adopted them from the last; and it may be conjectured, though it will tell little for the antiquity of the *Zendavesta*, that Bámíán may have been clothed with a sacred character, from the very circumstance of its having been made a burial-place of kings—for so the *Zendavesta* itself commemorates, when it describes Gorotman (Bámíán, or its vicinity) as a terrestrial paradise, and reveals its nature when it figuratively and significantly adds, “the abode of the Supreme Being and the blessed.” There can be no doubt but that the larger idol of Bámíán is also the more ancient; and with its accompanying caves became the nucleus, around which all the other caves and idols were subsequently and successively formed; and it is a fair inference that, prior to the construction of the first idol, there was no burial-place of kings at Bámíán, and none worthy of emphatic panegyric by the author of the *Zendavesta*.

The remote antiquity conferred by some antiquaries upon the *Zendavesta*, is not claimed by its author; and why he should be called Zoroaster, who called himself Zerdesht, is only to be accounted for by the desire of theorists to identify him with a celebrated person of that name, who existed, according to authentic history, some centuries before him. Zerdesht so clearly narrates the details of his career, that it is impossible to misunderstand them, and they cannot be more correctly or more concisely represented, than in the elegant language of Professor Heeren, one of the most able advocates of the impenetrable antiquity of the *Zendavesta*. The Professor writes—“The works of Zoroaster (Zerdesht) abound in details relating to his own person, as well as the countries and kingdom, which were the first scene of his career as a reformer. He proves, by the clearest geographical data, that his native country was Northern Media, Azerbaijan, or the territory between the river Kur, or Cyrus, and the Araxes, both of which empty themselves into the Caspian. Here he first appeared as a legislator and a reformer; but soon quitting this district, he passed into the countries east of the Caspian into Bactra, the residence of King Gustasp, who became his disciple and admirer. The original seat, therefore, of his new religion or doctrine, was Bactra, whence (under the protection of Gustasp) it was disseminated over Iran.”

Zerdesht, in giving the name of the sovereign of Bactra, his patron, possibly gives that of one of the sovereigns commemorated at Bámíán. If it be so, we may associate with him Lohrasp, his predecessor; and it is deserving of

particular notice, that the romantic history of Persia ascribes to Lohrasp the construction of a hermitage, to which he retired, abdicating his throne in favour of Gustasp, and from which he was called forth to repel an invasion upon Bulkh (Gustasp being absent at the time in Scistan), when he fell in battle. We perhaps gain from this history a hint as to the origin of the caves and idols of Bámíán. Having coins with legends, which it is not too much to hope may be interpreted, we may ultimately ascertain these facts, when we shall be afforded triumphant evidence of the age of the *Zendavesta*; and it is cheering to reflect, that records are preserved of these kings, independent of the *Zendavesta*, itself a most important and valuable one. These records are within our reach, and we have only to distinguish fiction from reality, and history from romance, to acquire a full and satisfactory knowledge of a hitherto dark period.

Zerdesht has accurately described the extent and partitions of the kingdom in which he lived, as justly observed by Professor Heeren; and what he describes, we shall allow the Professor also to state for us. "The opening of his *Vendidad* contains a catalogue of the provinces and principal cities of that kingdom; and this record, so invaluable to the historian, is so clear and complete, as to leave no room for doubt. The chief provinces and places, sixteen in number, are registered according to their oriental appellations, and for the most part are easily to be recognised. We learn hence that, except Azerbaijan, to the west of the Caspian, all the countries east of the same, as far as northern Hindustan, were, together with the latter country, subject to King Gustasp, at whose court the sage resided. The whole of Khorásán is here enumerated, with the several provinces of which it is composed—Bactriana and Sogdiana, Aria or Sehestan, Cabul, Arokhage, the confines of Hindustan, and finally Lahore in the Panjáb, are all successively mentioned."

The record of Zerdesht is, indeed, historically valuable, and describes the extended empire of Bactria, as it probably existed under Eucratides, and as it may possibly have fallen into the hands of the Kíánians; in many of the countries as we know, and very probably in all of them, are found their coins and memorials. It will be remembered that Ariana, or Khorásán, formed a portion of the Bactrian empire, as recorded by Strabo. Professor Heeren remarks—"Nothing, however, is said of the two chief provinces of the Persian empire, Persis and Susiana, nor of their capitals, Persepolis and Susa, nor of Babylon, which, nevertheless, were the customary residences of the kings of Persia, and in particular of Darius Hystaspes." So remarkable an omission will cease to surprise, when probably, at the epoch of Zerdesht, we may suspect those provinces, and also Babylon, were under the rule of the Arsakian provinces, and therefore could not be enumerated by him as forming part of the kingdom of Gustasp. They were also under the spiritual influence of those false Magi, in the estimation of Zerdesht, against whom he is so severe, and whom he stigmatizes a *káfraster*—a term for infidel, preserved by Mohamedans of this day in *kafr*. The possible fact of a powerful independent monarchy in Bactria, subsequent to the Greek one, gives rise to many singular reflections on the probable relative position it occupied with respect to the Arsakian: and we may divine other reasons besides those already known, which induced some of the latter Arsakian princes to fix their capital at Babylon, or rather Ctesiphon. We feel, however, that the time has not arrived for delicate speculations, neither can we venture to fix with certainty the epoch of the Kíánian monarch, but we do feel confident that materials

exist to fix it; and we do cherish the hope, that it is possible to destroy that flagrant monster of fiction and prodigy of national vanity, Persian history. If the Lohrasps and Gustasps prove to be Bactrian monarchs, as indeed Zerdeht tells us they are, we may ask whether Queen Homai may not be Semiramis, and Rustam may not turn out to have flourished a little before the age of Mohamed. The same sources of information are open to us, as were to Shah Ismael, when he wrote to Sheibani Khan, "That if the right of succession to a throne was decided by hereditary descent only, it was to him incomprehensible how the empire had descended through the various dynasties of Peshdadians, Kaiánians, and the family of Chengis, to him, Sheibani."

As for the *Zendaesta*, however, it may be admitted that a Zerdeht flourished in the reign of Gustasp. It is by no means certain that that work, as now preserved was written by him; on the contrary, the dialect, in which it is written, would seem to be proof that it was not—for it must assuredly be the most recent of all the dialects of the Pehlevi—if Pehlevi at all; and accordingly, on reference to coins, we discover the first traces of it on the very last of that series (whether Sassanian or Peshdadian) which bears them, and then not in the legends of the coins, but as marks manifestly punched on them after they had been in circulation!

We submit these notes on the idols of Bámíán, with the observations occasioned by them, in all due humility; and furnish the authorities in the inscription, figures, and coins, on which we have based our conjectures, that others may judge how far they may be correct; and it must be noted that the coins which bear legends in the characters of the Bámíán inscription, do appear to us, at least, to be the most recent of the class to which they belong. This we consider rather fortunate than otherwise; for if they are still Kaiánian or Peshdadian, we may be able to find other caves and hermitages for Lohrasp and Gustasp—it being remembered that we are yet standing only on the threshold of discovery.

Kabul, June, 1836.\*

\* From the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, for November 1836.

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## HUMAN FOOD.

WHEN man is considered with reference only to his intellectual part, it is not without reason that he is styled by Shakspeare, "the beauty of the world—the paragon of animals." A being, that is able in some degree to scan the work of creation,—that can measure the globe on which he lives, and calculate the motions of the mighty orbs which roll in the immensity of space,—that has subjugated the elements to his use, and made fire, air, and water his vassals, may be said to be, "in apprehension, like a god." To bring down our admiration of this "paragon" to a juster standard, however, it is unnecessary to enter upon an estimate of his moral imperfections—the specks which darken and disfigure the brightness of his understanding;—it is sufficient to contemplate him in his animal character, in order to see how nearly, with all his intellectual pretensions, he is allied in habit to the brutes. How mortifying is it to human vanity, to think that there is scarcely any species of matter, animal or vegetable, in any state of