

I-TIEN HSING

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM G. CROWELL

Heracles in the East: The Diffusion and Transformation of His Image in the Arts of Central Asia, India, and Medieval China

The question of contacts and cultural influences between the Mediterranean world of Greek and Roman times and Han-Tang China has long piqued the curiosity of people from both West and East. The idea that major empires could have existed contemporaneously at opposite ends of the Eurasian continent without affecting one another has seemed, especially to Westerners, an unlikely proposition.¹ Trade contacts have long been assumed, though there has been some disagreement over whether there was any direct contact or whether the trade was conducted entirely through intermediaries in Central Asia and India. Likewise, artistic influences, especially from Greece, that appeared in Gandharan Buddhist art and made their way to China with the spread of Buddhism have been widely studied.

The scope of the present study is more limited. Its purpose is to examine the migration and transformation of particular iconic elements associated with the Greek mythological figure Heracles as they traveled from the Mediterranean region eastward through Afghanistan and

A PREVIOUS version of this paper appeared in Chinese as “Helakelisi zai dongfang: qi xingxiang zai gudai Zhongya, Yindu yu Zhongguo zaoxing yishu zhong de liubo yu bianxing” 赫拉克利斯在東方,其形象在古代中亞印度與中國造型藝術中的流播與變形, in Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 and Li Xiaozong 李孝聰, eds., *Zhongwai quanxi shi, xin shiliao yu xin wenti* 中外關係史新史料與新問題 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2004), pp. 15-47. I am deeply indebted to a number of persons for their contributions to the original Chinese version and to the revised English version. Professor Xie Mingliang 謝明良, who has written on possible links between Tang warrior figures and Greek art, directed me to important studies. I wish to thank Professor Michael Speidel for encouraging this study and for his comments, which have greatly improved it. I am also grateful for the comments of the anonymous referees for *Asia Major*. All line drawings are by the author, based on published works and websites, except several figs. denoted as “courtesy of.” Citations of the standard histories are to the modern, punct. Chung-hua edns.

¹ E.g., see below, nn. 13, 80. Other examples are Frederick Hirth, *China and the Roman*

northern India into Central Asia, the western regions of China and on into central China.

In Greek and Roman mythology, Heracles is a heroic figure with clearly defined form and attributes. In order to become an immortal god, he relied on the superhuman strength and intelligence of a demigod. He helped mankind in times of disaster and performed the famous "Twelve Labors." In Greek and Roman art he has a well-defined and characteristic form. Because the characteristics are so well defined, we are able to trace the diffusion and transformation of his image with some confidence. In the process of diffusion, the identifying characteristics might be retained or they might be transformed, added to, or lost. Within a different cultural matrix the defining characteristics might be assumed, in toto or in part, by a "human" or "god" with a different role such that ultimately the original role of the "owner of the image" might be lost as an entirely different role appears. Because the story of Heracles is so well known and studies on it are numerous,² I shall omit points that may be familiar to the reader and treat in detail the less familiar. While I briefly touch on Heracles' original form in the Greek and Roman worlds and its diffusion into India and Central Asia, the focus will be on its transformation and reappearance in China.

The immediate catalyst for this study was a three-colored Tang dynasty figurine of a warrior displayed at the Shaanxi Museum of History.³ The figure is dressed in the armor typical of Tang pottery warriors (figure 1). A unique feature, however, is the helmet made from a tiger's or lion's pelt. The animal's ears, eyes, and nose are clearly visible on the helmet, and fangs protrude from the bottom edge on either side of the warrior's head. The pelt extends down the back of the figurine, and its paws are crossed beneath the warrior's chin. This sort of helmet is found in the depictions of some Buddhist guardian figures as well. Some have asserted that the tiger skin found on such figures has its origins in the attire of Tufan 吐蕃 warriors, who were a powerful

Orient: Researches into Their Ancient and Mediæval Relations as Represented in Old Chinese Records (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1885); Frederick J. Teggart, *Rome and China: A Study of Correlations in Historical Events* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1939); and D. D. Leslie and K. H. J. Gardiner, *The Roman Empire in Chinese Sources* (Rome: Bardi Editore, 1996).

² A good introduction to available studies is www.sas.upenn.edu/~ekondrat/heraklesbiblio.html.

³ During a visit to the museum in August, 2000, I was able to see this object, which was part of an exhibition titled "Selected Treasures of the Past Dynasties: The Rare Gems of the New Archeological Discoveries in Shaanxi Province." I want to express my gratitude to the museum's director, Mr. Zhou Tianyou 周天游, for taking me through the exhibition and for a copy of the exhibition catalogue, which contains a picture of the figurine.

presence in western and northwestern China during the Tang.⁴ Others have pointed to India or to Greece as the helmet's source and have even made a connection with Heracles.⁵

In addition to the transformation of the headgear from the representation of a lion into that of a tiger as it moved from West to East, other iconic elements associated with Heracles, which have been less remarked on by other scholars, also made their way westward. Most important of these is the club made from the branch of an olive tree, which sometimes remains or is sometimes transformed into a sword or even a *vajra*. A similar metamorphosis occurred in the Heracleian physique, which changes from the strongly muscled nude figure of Greek and Roman mythology into the rounder more com-



Figure 1. Three-colored Tang Warrior

After Shaanxi lishi bowuguan 陝西歷史博物館, Sanqin guibao, Shaanxi Xinfaxian wenwu jinghua 三秦瑰寶, 陝西新發縣現文物精華 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2001), p. 88.

⁴ “Tufan” is the Chinese term for the Bod, a group of early Tibetans whose territory in Tang times extended from the Himalayas in the south to the Nanshan range in the north. See Howard J. Wechsler, “T’ai-tung (Reign 626–49) The Consolidator,” *Cambridge History of China*, 3: *Sui and Tang China, 589–906, Part 1*, ed. Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1979), pp. 229–30, and Helmut Hoffman, “Early and Medieval Tibet,” in Denis Sinor, ed., *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1990), pp. 372–74. A possible indigenous association might be the “tiger brave” (*huben* 虎賁) warriors often mentioned in ancient Chinese works. But the ancient texts and commentaries suggest that “tiger brave” refers to the soldiers’ bravery and is unrelated to their dress. Numerous representations of warriors are found on bronzes, pottery, stone and murals, but none has been shown wearing a lion or tiger helmet. During the Han there were “tiger braves” attired in clothing with tiger stripes, but they wear a “pheasant hat” decorated with a pheasant tail feather. Military hats decorated with such tail feathers continued in use down into the Sui and Tang periods. See Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1988), pp. 24, 27–28; Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1985), p. 258. *Sui shu* 隋書 11, p. 234; *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 97, p. 3055; *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 23A, p. 481.

⁵ See, e.g., Xie Mingliang 謝明良, “Xila meishu di dongjian, cong Hebei Xianxian Tang mu chutu tao wushi yong tanqi” 希臘美術的東漸從河北獻縣唐墓出土陶武士俑談起, *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 15.7 (1997), pp. 32–53, and Li Song 李淞, “Luelun Zhongguo zaoqi

pletely clothed guardians of Buddhist iconography. This examination leads to the conclusion that these characteristic forms and transformed imagery were without doubt transmitted to China in the wake of Buddhism and that the “great beast pelt” (*da chong pi* 大蟲皮, indicating the tiger pelt of the Tufan warriors) quite possibly also has its origins in the image of Vajrapani and the devas of Buddhism and thus also has an indirect connection with Heracles and Greece.

HERACLES IN THE GREEK AND ROMAN WORLD

The tale of Heracles was disseminated extensively throughout the Greek world and existed in many versions. According to the most common version, the first labor that Heracles performed was to fight a lion whose skin could not be pierced by knife or spear. After he succeeded in killing the lion, he skinned it and draped himself with the pelt, the head thus becoming his helmet.⁶ He carried several weapons received from the gods, the best known of which was a club fashioned from olive wood. Starting from about the middle of the sixth century BC, the club and pelt became part of the defining features of Heracles, appearing on thousands of Greek and Roman vases, murals, coins, bronzes, stone sculptures and ornaments.⁷ These features have several points worth noting (see figures 2 and 3):

1. usually depicted nude, very muscular, and bearded, though some examples depict him dressed, clean shaven, or attired in armor (figure 4);
2. pelt typically complete with not only the head attached but also the paws and even the tail. In some cases Heracles is wearing the pelt;

tianwang tuxiang ji qi Xifang lai yuan” 略論中國早期天王圖像及其西方來源, paper presented to the International Academic Conference on the Art of the Maijishan Grottoes and the Buddhist Culture of the Silk Road (July 2002), pp. 10–14. Japanese scholars such as Kurita Isao 栗田功 have already pointed to the connection between the guardian figures in Gandharan art and the figure of Heracles. See Kurita’s *Gandara bijutsu II: Butsuda no sekai* ガンダーラ美術II, 佛陀の世界 (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1990), pp. 298–301. Also, Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan 東京國立博物館, *Shiruku rôdo dai bijutsu ten* シルクロード大美術展 (Tokyo, 1996), p. 173, 181, points out the influence of the image of Heracles on the lion-skin headgear. Numerous Japanese scholars have pointed out the link between Greek and Gandharan art. The work by Kurita Isao just cited and Tanabe Katsumi 田邊勝美, *Bishamonten ôzô no tanjô* 毗沙門天王像の誕生 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hiroshi bunkan, 1999) are representative.

⁶ The story exists in many different versions. See C. Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1959), pp. 125–43, and Pierre Grimal, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 193–207.

⁷ On the evolution of the form of Heracles, see Frank Brommer, *Heracles: The Twelve Labors of the Hero in Ancient Art and Literature* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1986), pp. 65–67 and Mark W. Padilla, *The Myth of Herakles in Ancient Greece* (Lanham, N.Y.: U.P. of America, 1998), pp. 3–6. According to Brommer, there are as many as 8,000 pieces of pottery alone with motifs from the stories about Heracles; those with the story of the lion are the most numerous. Also see Padilla, *Myth of Herakles*, p. 42.



Figure 2. Greek Vase

Staatl. Antikensamm. u. Glyptothek, Munich. Munich 2620. After www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?arch=1990.34.0304&type=vase.



Figure 3. Attic Amphora

Ca. 525-500 BC. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Boston 99.538. After www.perseus.tufts.edu/Herakles/lion.html.

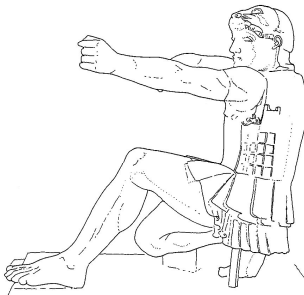


Figure 4. Temple of Aphaea at Aegina, East pediment; early 5th c. BC. Staatl. Antikensamm. u. Glyptothek, Munich. After www.sandstead.com/.../birthplace/birthplace.html.



Figure 6. Aquilifer on Trajan's Column

After <http://cheiron.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~trajan/buildtrajanpage.cgi?452>.



Figure 5. Landsdowne Herakles

ca. 125 AD. Getty Museum. After www.getty.edu/art/collections/presentation/p42_111632-6.html.

- in others he grasps it in his hand. Sometimes he is seen wearing only the pelt without the head, and sometimes he wears only the head as a helmet;
3. the olive-wood club's handle is thin and the end is thick; the surface studded with the stubs of limbs that have been trimmed away;
 4. in the Roman period the figures for the most part modeled on Greek works. Heracles in some cases rests the club on shoulder and in others, the club is stood on the large end and inclined slightly with his hand resting on the top. The Roman club does not differ from the Greek version (figure 5). In the first and second centuries the lion's-head helmet became the formal attire of standard bearers (*aquilifer*) of the Roman legions, whose armor was the same as the normal legionnaire's, but using Heracles' lion's-head helmet, with legs attached to the pelt and crossed on the chest (figure 6).⁸
 5. Though the most important of Heracles' marks, the lion's pelt and club do not always occur together. Because they may be paired with certain other figures and situations, just one of the marks is sufficient to distinguish Heracles.
 6. Heracles has these distinctive poses: seated, standing with hand raised adjusting headgear; one hand resting at an angle on club. Even a pose in a fragment can allow specialists to determine a figure's role and even the period.⁹

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, ROMAN EMPERORS, AND THE DIFFUSION OF THE IMAGE

With the campaign of Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) in the fourth century BC and the expansion of the Roman empire in the first century BC, the myths of Heracles and other Greek gods spread throughout Central Asia and eastward.¹⁰ The history of the figure of Heracles in the eastern Eurasian continent over the following 1000 years shows transformations of the form and the emergence of a mythology.

Diffusion eastward from the Mediterranean of the stories and personae of Heracles and other figures of Greek mythology did not begin with Alexander, but can be traced at least to the Persian Wars of

⁸ See the image at <http://cheiron.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~trajan/buildtrajanpage.cgi?452>.

⁹ Examples are numerous. See David M. Robinson, "A New Heracles Relief," *Hesperia* 17.2 (1948), pp. 137–40; C. C. Vermeule, "Herakles Crowning Himself: New Greek Statuary Types and Their Place in Hellenistic and Roman Art," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957), pp. 283–99. For examples of dating see Robert Weir, "Nero and the Herakles at Delphi," *Bulletin de correspondance Hellénique* 123.2 (1999), pp. 397–404. I am grateful to Dr. Zhang Guming for copying these papers.

¹⁰ See John Boardman, *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1994), chap. 4.

the fifth and sixth centuries BC.¹¹ In 1935–1937 an archeological team from the University of Chicago working in Iran excavated Persepolis, the capital built by Darius the Great (520–515 BC) of ancient Persia. In Hall 38 they discovered a fragment of a stone carving just under 7 cm in height and 4 cm in width. Although the head was missing, a hand, a leg and half the torso remained. From the remaining fragment, one can discern a nude body with a lion's paw draped across the chest below the neck. Something is also draped on the back of the left shoulder (figure 7).¹² Although the piece is fragmentary and physical aspects uncertain, if this is indeed a carving of Heracles, his appearance in Persia antedates Alexander by one or two centuries.

It is of course undeniable that Alexander's expeditions, his establishing cities of Alexandria all over the East, and moreover, his active fostering of a melding of Greek with Eastern peoples and cultures were the impetus for the rapid and extensive dissemination of Greek culture.¹³ Following the collapse of the Alexandrian Empire came the Hellenistic period, during which regional commanders divided and held the empire for more than a century. Elements of Greek culture became deeply implanted in the soil of Central Asia and India and were subsequently disseminated to the neighboring regions of China and elsewhere.

The relationship between the hero-god Heracles and Alexander is especially close. Alexander and his kin firmly believed



*Figure 7. "Heracles" Fragment
After Treasury of Persepolis (cited n.
12), fig. 48.*

¹¹ Boardman, *Diffusion of Classical Art*, pp. 21–48.

¹² Eric Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis and Other Discoveries in the Homeland of the Achaemenians* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1939), pp. 67–69, fig. 48.

¹³ W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), p. 147. Tarn effusively praises Alexander's eastern campaigns for their contributions to "the unity and brotherhood of mankind" and implausibly suggests "Possibly his example even inspired the unification of China under the first Han dynasty" (143).

that they were the descendants of Heracles and Achilles. What is important is that according to Alexander's most important biographer Arrian (ca. 95-175 AD), throughout his life Alexander aspired to emulate and even surpass his ancestors.¹⁴ According to the legends of the Greeks, Heracles had not only accomplished the so-called Twelve Labors; he also used his incomparable strength to conquer numerous places and monsters, ridding mankind of disasters. Achilles, the main protagonist and hero in Homer's epic, led the Greeks in attacking Troy. Arrian and modern Alexandrian scholars as well have recognized this sort of desire to emulate or surpass his ancestors as a significant motivation behind Alexander's achievements. The great German Alexandrian scholar Ulrich Wilcken described the relationship between Alexander and these two figures of Greek mythology:

Two of the heroes [Aristotle] mentions actually lighted Alexander on his path of conquest, Heracles and Achilles, whom Alexander revered as his ancestors: on his father's side he was a descendant of Heracles, and on his mother's side an Aeacid, sprung from Achilles. If in Alexander's later years Heracles became more prominent, in his earlier days Alexander was inspired by the pattern of the youthful hero Achilles. This deeply-rooted and vivid conception of his personal affinity with these heroes is one of those non-rational and instinctive motives, without which we cannot understand him.¹⁵

While on eastern campaigns, Alexander would often plan an action just because Heracles had done it, even attempting feats at which Heracles had failed. For example, according to the account of the historian Callisthenes, when Alexander campaigned in Egypt, he made a special trip to see the oracle at Ammon. His reason for doing so was that according to tradition, Heracles and Perseus (a Homeric hero) had sought out such oracles.¹⁶ When Alexander reached India, he determined to conquer Ora, a place that, according to legend, Heracles had failed to subdue. Later, he used the example of his easy conquest of Ora to urge on his generals, who were unwilling to continue the eastern campaign.¹⁷

¹⁴ Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, trans. Aubrey de Selincourt (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 151, 214, 219-22.

¹⁵ Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander the Great* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), p. 56.

¹⁶ Arrian, *Campaigns*, p. 151; Wilcken, *Alexander*, pp. 122-23, and other examples, pp. 179, 197-98.

¹⁷ Arrian, *Campaigns*, pp. 248, 294.

In order to highlight the close link between himself and Heracles, Alexander often appeared in the guise of the demigod.¹⁸ On coins and engravings, he depicted himself as Heracles wearing a lion-skin headgear.¹⁹ Examples of this are numerous; I offer but one here. On a silver coin that Alexander minted in Syria in 325 BC, on one side there is a



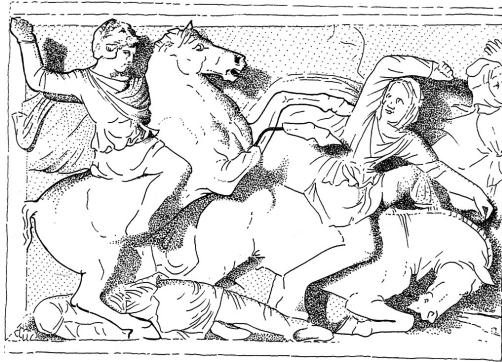
Figure 8. Alexander Coin
After Crossroads of Asia
(cited n. 19), pl. 11.

wearing lion-skin headgear, weapon in hand, attacking a Persian cavalryman, who is unable to escape.

Alexander was an object of veneration and emulation for countless prominent Romans. From Marcus Antonius (83–30 BC) and Julius Caesar (110–44 BC) dur-

seated Zeus while on the other is Alexander's profile. Like Heracles, he is wearing a lion-skin headgear with the two paws crossed beneath his chin. (figure 8).²⁰ A nearly exact likeness appears on a stone sarcophagus Alexander had made for the king of Sidon around 320 BC.²¹ Found at Sidon, it now resides in the Istanbul Archeological Museum. Upon examination, it was determined that the bas-relief on one side is a depiction of Alexander attacking the Persian Army at Issus (figure 9). It shows a mounted Alexander

Figure 9. Alexander Sarcophagus from Sidon
After Alexander the Great (cited n. 19), pl. 4.



¹⁸ Scholars have determined that it was Alexander's court artist Lysippos who depicted Alexander as Heracles. The sculpture done by Lysippos later became an important model for subsequent statues of Heracles. See J. P. Uhlenbrock, "The Herakles Motif in Classical Art," in idem, ed., *Herakles: Passage of the Hero through 1000 Years of Classical Art* (New York: Caratzas Publishing Co., 1986), pp. 7–17; On the relationship between Alexander and Lysippos, see Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives. VII: Demosthenes and Cicero, Alexander and Caesar*, trans. Bernadott Perrin (London: William Heinemann, 1919), p. 23.

¹⁹ See Elizabeth Errington and Joe Cribb, eds., *The Crossroads of Asia* (Cambridge: The Ancient India and Iran Trust, 1992), pl. 11; Robin L. Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London: Futura Publications, 1975), pl. 4.

²⁰ See Errington and Cribbs, *Crossroads of Asia*, pl. 11.

²¹ Fox, *Alexander*, pl. 4.

ing the Republic, down to the fourth-century emperor Julianus (r. 361–363), few could resist the dream of becoming the second Alexander. Some emulated Alexander’s accomplishments and planned campaigns to India – for example, Marcus Antonius, Julius Caesar, and Traianus (r. 78–117 AD). Traianus defeated Parthia and took its capital. He extended the empire’s dominion eastward to Mesopotamia and is reputed to have said, “I should certainly have crossed the Indus, if I were still young.”²² He regretted deeply that he was unable to reach the Indus as Alexander had done. But on the records of his battles found on the Column of Trajan one can see how the legionnaire standard-bearers of the time were modeled on both Heracles and Alexander and wore lion-skin helmets.²³ The first emperor of Rome, Augustus, had the image of Alexander inlaid on his signet ring.²⁴ Then there were emperors, such as Commodus (r. 177–192), who imitated Alexander in dressing up as Heracles. A marble statue of Commodus dating from 191–192 was unearthed on the *Mons Esquilinus* in Rome. On his head he is wearing lion-skin headgear; in one hand he holds a club, while in the other he has three golden apples, emulating the last of Heracles’ Twelve Labors (figure 10).²⁵ The third-century emperor Severus Alexander (r. 222–235 AD) changed his name



Figure 10. Mons Esquilinus, 191–92 AD
Museo dei Conservatori, Roma. After
Sekai bijutsu (cited n. 23), pl. 169.

²² Cassius Dio Cocceianus, *Dio's Roman History*, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), LXVIII.29.1. On the Roman fascination with Alexander, see Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002).

²³ For additional material on military standard-bearers on Trajan's Column, see Aoyagi Masanori 青柳正規, *Sekai bijutsu dai zenshū: Seiyō hen* 世界美術大全集, 西洋篇, 2d edn. (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1997) 5, pll. 193, 195.

²⁴ Suetonius. *Divus Augustus*, I.

²⁵ Another emperor who dressed as Heracles was Caracalla (188–217 AD), a bronze statue of whom is in the Boston Museum. See Uhlenbrock, “Herakles Motif,” pl. 46. Beginning with Commodus, several emperors not only dressed themselves as Heracles but had the image of Heracles struck on coins. See J.P.C. Kent, *Roman Coins* (London: Thames and London, 1978), nos. 358, 364 (Commodus); 477 (Aemilian); 494 (Gallienus); 547 (Probus); 583, 584, 595 (Maximian); 586 (Constantine I); 602 (Severus); 612 (Maxentius).

because of his veneration of Alexander.²⁶ With such encouragement from the emperors of Rome, Heracles the mythological figure, cum Alexandrian ancestor, became very popular. There are many indications of the reverence accorded him that existed in the eastern empire, and further east – to Western and Central Asia.

HERACLES IN CENTRAL ASIA AND INDIA

From Greece eastward to Bactria, countless kingdoms in northern Greece, Kushan, Bactria and Scythia were influenced by the representations of Alexander as Heracles through the dissemination fostered by the Romans from the third century BC to the second or third century AD. Some rulers copied Alexander in dressing themselves up as Heracles, while others put the image of Heracles with lion skin and club on their coinage.²⁷ Numerous bronze sculptures, stone reliefs, and coins containing the image of Heracles have been found in these regions. Only a small portion of extant examples can be adduced in this essay (see appendix, tables 1–3, and figures 11–19).

Heracles of course was not the only figure of Greek mythology popular in this region. Apollo, Zeus, Dionysius, Poseidon, and others are found in abundance. By the second century BC, as Rome extended its dominion over the Mediterranean, many of these gods took on a Roman coloration, and belief in the transformed Greco-Roman gods then spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean and beyond. As the gods diffused into Central Asia and India, some retained their original elements, and others fused with local gods, resulting in further changes of form. I present several examples in what follows.

Item 6 in table 2 was excavated in Begram, Afghanistan, and is a typical bronze statue of the Roman god Serapis-Heracles.²⁸ Serapis was originally an Egyptian god of the Ptolemaic period and was related to Osiris, god of the underworld, and Apis the Bull. Ptolemy I is said to have wanted to create an Egyptian god acceptable to both Egyptians and Greeks, so he matched Osiris and Apis to produce a god named Serapis. Serapis corresponded to the Greek god Hades and was connected with Zeus and the god of medicine Aesculepius. He was responsible for health and mortality, and originally worship was limited to Egypt and

²⁶ See *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Severus Alexander, v.1–5, XIII.1–5, XXV.9, XXX.3, XXXI.5, XXXV.1,4, XXXIX.1, 1.3–5.

²⁷ Errington and Cribb, *Crossroads of Asia*, pll. 12, 20, 34, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76–78.

²⁸ Rosa M. Cimino, ed., *Ancient Rome and India: Commercial and Cultural Contacts between the Roman World and India* (New Delhi, 1994), pp. 214–19.



Figure 11. Euthydemus I Coin
After Crossroads of Asia (cited n. 19), pl. 70.



Figure 12. Demetrios I Coin
After Crossroads of Asia, pl. 71.

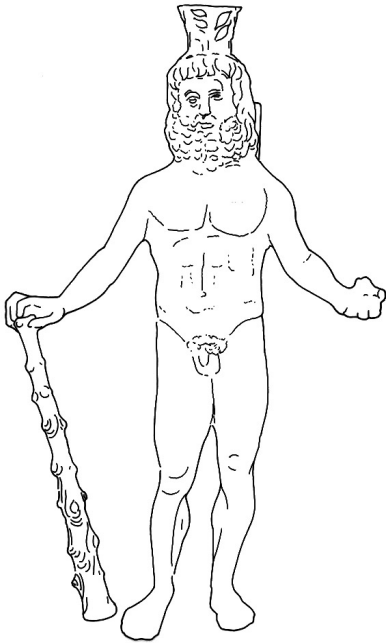


Figure 13. Serapis-Heracles
Bronze

After Rosenfield, Dynastic Arts of the Kushans, fig. 97b.

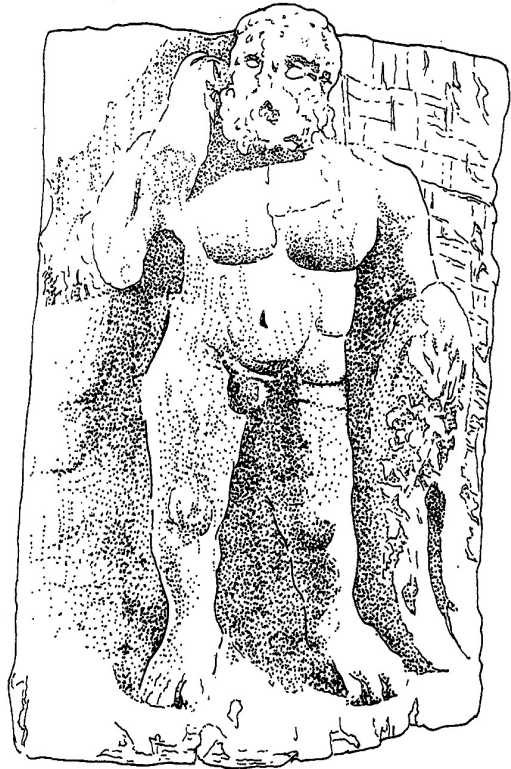


Figure 14. Bas-Relief

From Chaika, Bulgaria. After E. A. Popova and S. A. Kovalenko, "New Find of a Relief with a Depiction of Heracles in the North-west of the Crimea," Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia (1998) 5, pp. 99-105.



Figure 16. East Terrace
Detail of podium. After Nemrud Dağı, fig. 60.

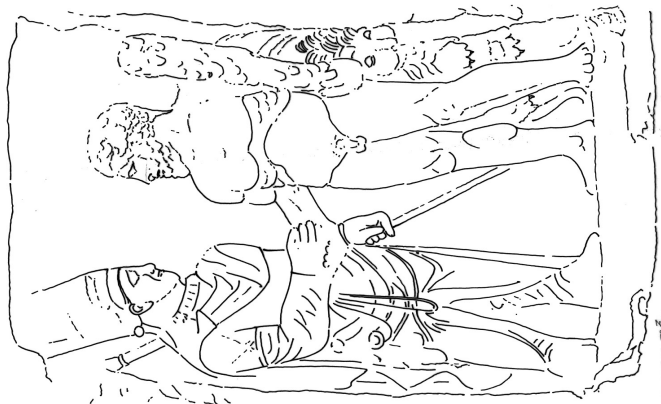


Figure 15. Heracles and Antiochus I
of Commagene
Bas-relief. After Nemrud Dağı (cited
n. 29), fig. 655.

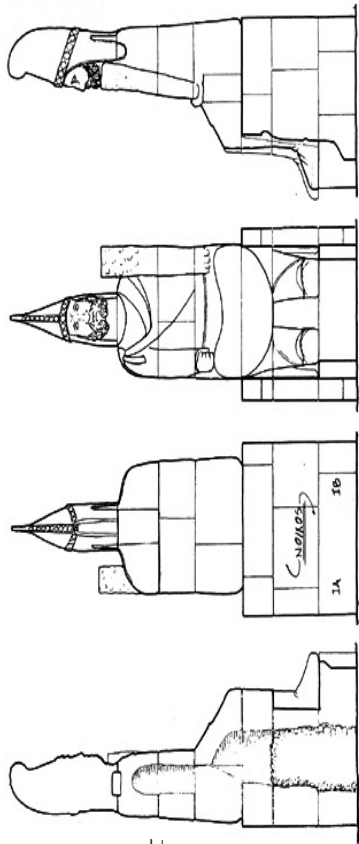
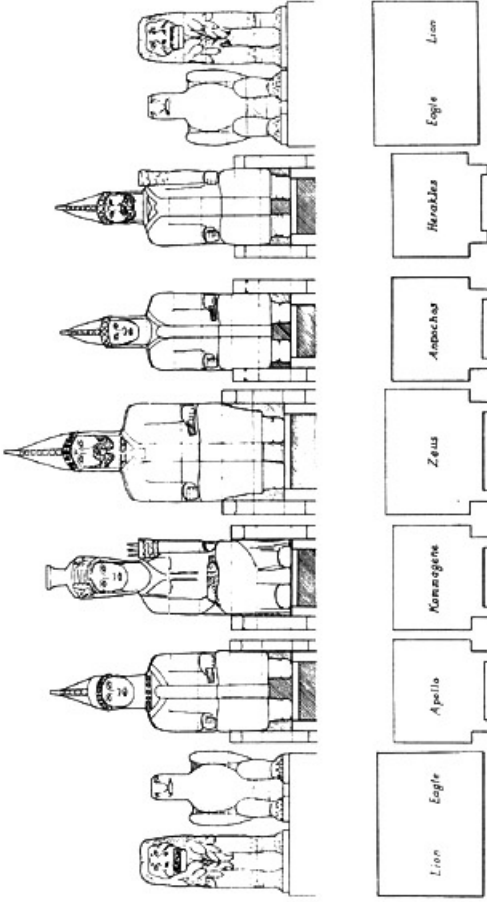
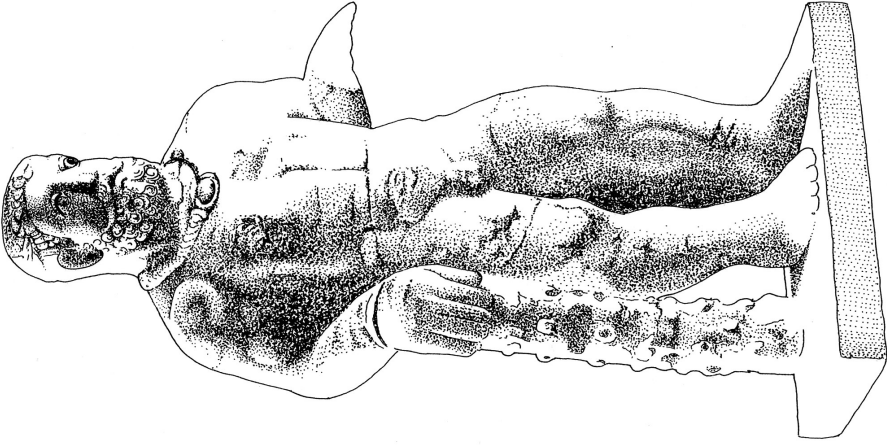


Figure 17. Reconstruction
of E. Terrace
Heracles
After Nemrud Dağı,
fig. 87.



*Figure 18. East Terrace
Reconstruction of colossal gods. After Nemrud Dagi, fig. 90.*

*Figure 10. Heracles Sculpture
Hatra, Syria. After Rosenfield, Dynastic Arts of the Kushans, fig. 142.*

a part of Greece. In the first and second centuries, however, he was favored by the Roman emperors and flourished wherever the power of Rome reached, especially in the eastern half of the empire. The figure of Serapis-Heracles excavated at Begram is shown enthroned with the *modius*, which is a basket /grain-measure on his head, a Greek symbol for the land of the dead, and holds the club of Heracles, testament to the amalgamation of the gods by the statue's maker. The basis for the amalgamation may have been that the Twelve Labors of Heracles included his journey into the underworld to bring back Cerberus, the dog that guarded the gates of the underworld for Hades (figure 20). This act established a connection between Heracles and Serapis. The intermingling of the roles and abilities of the gods was extremely common among the religious faiths of the ancient Mediterranean.

The muscular figure of the demigod Heracles who relied on superhuman strength to assist mankind to eliminate disasters also appeared in Central Asia. Alexander's glorification of himself, which was imitated by his descendants in action and in image, influenced later rulers in Central Asia, some of whom glorified themselves as descendants of Alexander by having themselves depicted as Heracles. An example of this is Antiochus I (69–34 BC), who ruled the kingdom of Commagene during the first century in what is now southeast Turkey. For himself and his ancestors, he constructed a *hierothesion* occupying 26,000 square meters at Nemrud Dağı. The core of the structure was a large tomb in the shape of a dome following the contours of the mountain. The structure of the east and west sides of the tomb are similar, with altars comprising architectural groupings and large statues. From the Greek inscriptions on the backs of the low seats of the gods we know that Antiochus claimed to be a descendant of Alexander and that the sanctuary is where both his deceased ancestors and the gods alike were worshipped.²⁹ The content and order of the statues of the eastern and western altars is the same and includes seated images of Antiochus himself together with Zeus, Apollo, an anthropomorphic god of Commagene, and Heracles (figures 16 and 18).

The sculptures are a fusion of Greek, Persian, and Commagene artistic styles. For example, while Heracles still has a beard and carries a club, he is wearing Persian attire and a pointed hat (figure 17). Typical of these cases of fusion, although the image and role of Heracles in Central Asia may have changed, the characteristic club and lion skin

²⁹ Donald H. Sanders, ed., *Nemrud Dağı: The Hierothesion of Antiochus I of Commagene* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1996), pp. 176–82.

were retained and remain clearly distinguishable.³⁰ A similar development is seen in the Buddhist-influenced Gandharan art of Central Asia and India.

THE "MODIFIED HERACLES" OF GANDHARAN ART.

The Gandhara region was a hub of cultural interchange between the Eurasian continent and the Indian subcontinent. As is well known, in the late BC/early AD period, the region fell under Scythian, Indo-Greek, Parthian, and Kushan control, and from the first century AD Buddhist art in the region was deeply influenced by Greece.³¹

As Errington and Cribb, compilers of *The Crossroads of Asia* have written, in the Greek kingdom of Bactria a purely classical Greek style was preserved (figure 21), but in Gandhara and India there was a transformation. Many figures of Greek mythology had their heads and faces changed so that the god of fortune, Tyche/Fortuna, became Hariti and Heracles became Vajrapani, guardian of Sakyamuni.³² There is a wealth of material and studies on the subject; here only a few examples are presented to explain how Heracles went from being a purely classical Greek figure to being a guardian god in the Buddhist pantheon.

The first example is a standing stone figure of Heracles very much in the Gandharan style found in a private collection in Japan (figure 22).³³ His nude body is inclined a bit to the right, and his left leg extends outward to the left with the weight resting on the right foot. The pose is Greek, but the representation of the musculature lacks the Greek realism and muscled physique, and it manifests typical Gandharan softness and plumpness. The expression of the head, the face and the hair are also fairly typical of Gandharan art and represent a departure from Greek classicism. But in his left hand, he holds a club that rests on the ground and is smaller at the upper end and thicker at the lower with clear protuberances. The left hand is held in front of the body, and a lion skin is draped across the arm. These elements are basically a continuation of the typical aspect of the Greek Heracles. He is standing in

³⁰ Not all are that easily distinguished. Cf. K. Fischer, "Icons of Heracles and Alexander in the Eastern Part of the Latter's Empire," in G. Pollet, ed., *India and the Ancient World* (Leuven: Department Orientalistiek, 1987), pp. 59-65.

³¹ Publications on Gandharan art are innumerable. A convenient bibliography may be found in W. Zwalf, *A Catalogue of the Gandhara Sculpture in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 1996).

³² Errington and Cribb, *Crossroads of Asia*, p. 37; F. B. Flood, "Heracles and the 'Perpetual Acolyte' of the Buddha: Some Observations on the Iconography of Vajrapani in Gandharan Art," *South Asian Studies* (London) 5 (1989), pp. 17-27.

³³ Kurita, *Gandhara bijutsu II*, p. 300, fig. 25.



Figure 20. Hercules Sarcophagus
 2d c. AD. Piazzale del Verano, Roma,
 Museo dei Conservatori, Roma; after
 Sekai bijutsu (cited n. 23), pl. 242
 (detail).

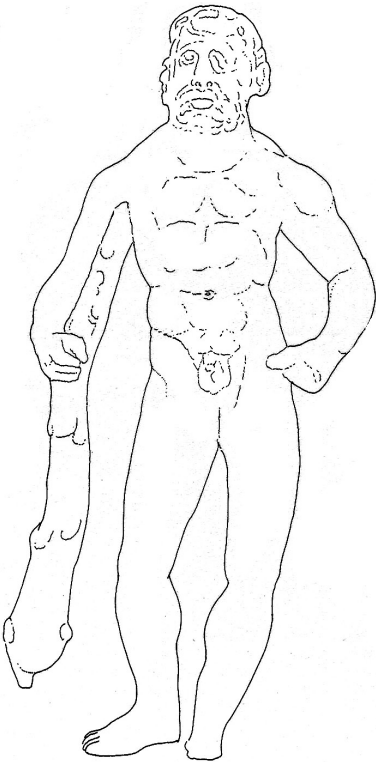


Figure 21. Bactrian Bronze
 After Crossroads of Asia (cited n.
 19), pl. 102.

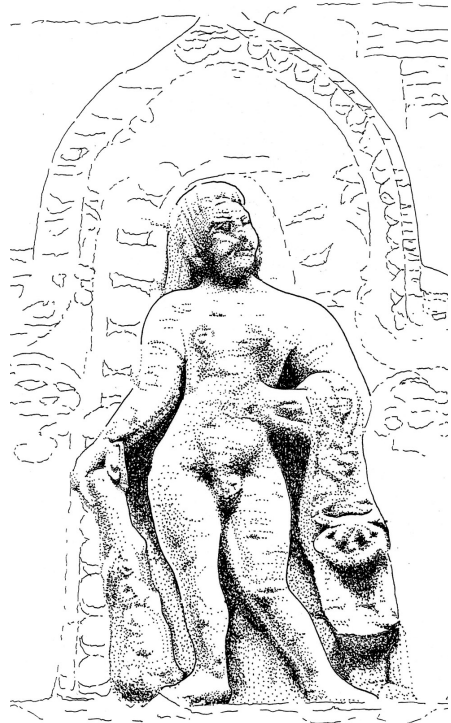


Figure 22. Gandharan "Heracles"
 After Gandara bijutsu (cited n. 5), p.
 300, pl. 25.

a small niche, the right side of which is damaged and the left side of which has a pillar. While it is difficult to discern from the incomplete picture whether he is standing next to a Buddha, he has assumed the stance of a protector. His location in a niche is typical of Gandhara.

Representative of the clear transformation of Heracles into Vajrapani are the Buddha and "Heracles-Vajrapani" excavated in Afghanistan in 1973 at the ruins of Tapa Shotor at Hadda (figures 23, 24). The Heracles excavated here next to the image of Buddha clearly retains the Greek face and the exposed, realistic muscled physique.³⁴ Draped over his left shoulder is a lion's pelt with head attached and the club in his right hand has become nothing less than the weapon of Vajrapani. While the number of statues of Heracles, carved from rock or molded from clay, recovered from this area is quite large (figure 25),³⁵ this piece from about the first century AD is evidence of the direct development of Gandharan art from Hellenized Bactrian art.³⁶

From a second-to-third-century painted clay bust of Vajrapani in the collection of the Kamakura Silk Road Research Institute in Japan (figure 26) and a stone sculpture of a Gandharan Vajrapani (figure 27) from about the same period in the British Museum, we can see clearly how the particularly Greek characteristics of Heracles gradually faded and the Indic coloration of Gandhara became stronger. The Kamakura bust is wearing lion-skin headgear that is virtually the same as that of Heracles, and the paws attached to the head are crossed beneath the bust's chin. The face of the god retains a strong Grecian flavor, and although the beard is not long, it covers both cheeks. But the clothing covering the shoulders and the chest is obvious and no longer like the usual nude body of Heracles. Another obvious change is that Vajrapani's *vajra* has replaced the club of Heracles.

The sculpture fragment in the British Museum comprises only the right half of a rectangular bas-relief containing the figures of four persons. All four figures are gazing to their right toward a figure (not

³⁴ For the site report, see M. Z. Tarzi, "Hadda à la lumière des trios dernières campagnes de fouilles de Tapa-è-Shotor (1974-1976), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (Paris, 1976), pp. 381-410. I wish to thank Enno Giele for copying this and the paper cited in the following note.

³⁵ Klaus Fischer, "Einer Shiva-Buddha-Herakles Stein von Soazma Kala: Neue Funde und Forschungen zur indischen Kunst in Archosien, Baktrien und Gandhara," *Archäologischer Anzeiger des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* (Berlin, 1957), p. 420.

³⁶ Chaibai Mustamandy, "The Impact of Hellenised Bactria on Gandharan Art," in R. Allchin, Bridget Allchin, N. Kreitman, E. Errington, eds., *Gandharan Art in Context: East-West Exchanges in the Crossroads of Asia* (New Delhi: Regency Publications, 1997), pp. 17-27. On the other side of the main statue of Buddha is a Greek-style Tyche, which also attests to the Greek influence. For clearer plates of these figures, see Tarzi, "Hadda," figs. 9, 12, 13.

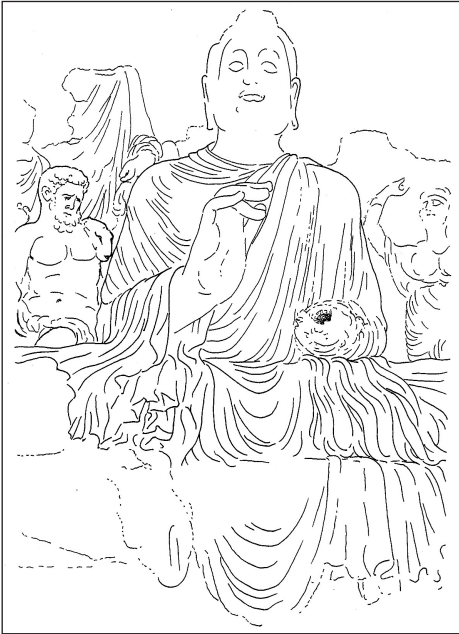


Figure 23. "Heracles"

*Tapa-Shoter, Hadda. After Gandara
bijutsu (cited n. 5), p. 120, pl. 323.*

Figure 24. Detail, Fig. 23

*After Jakob Ozols and Volker
Thewalt, Aus dem Osten
des Alexanderreiches:
Völker und Kulturen
zwischen Orient und Ok-
zident Iran, Afghanistan,
Pakistan, Indien (Cologne:
DuMont Buchverlag, 1984)
inside cover; also
"Impact of Hellenised Bactria"
(cited n. 36), fig. 4.*

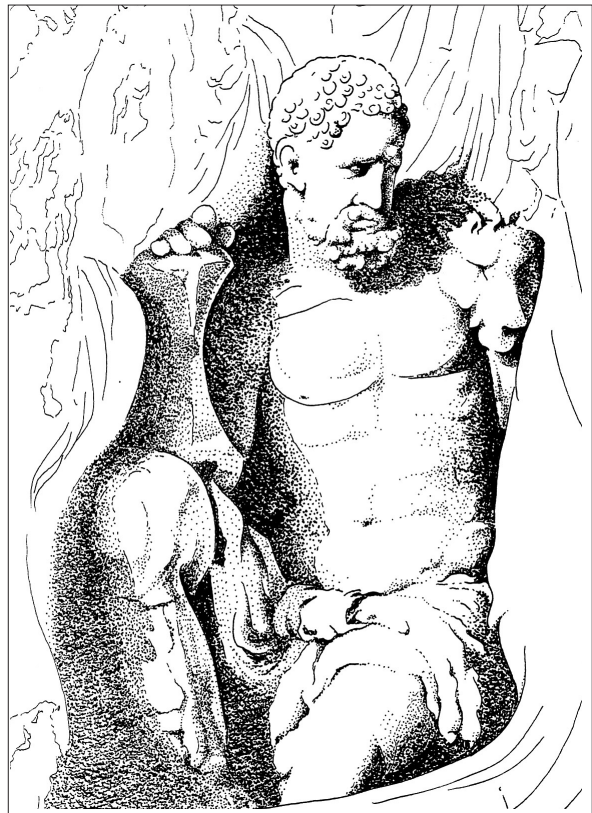




Figure 25. Shiva-Buddha Heracles
Bas-relief. After "Einer Shiva-Buddha-Herakles
Stein" (cited n. 35), p. 420.

Figure 26. Color Bust of Vajrapani
After Shiruku rōdo (cited n. 5), pl. 173.

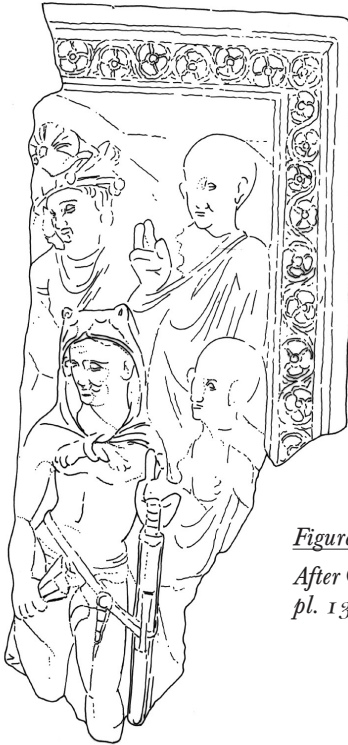


Figure 27. Gandharan Vajrapani
After Crossroads of Asia (cited n. 19),
pl. 134.

shown) that is possibly Śākyamuni. In the upper register of the fragment is a figure of a king or ruler and beside him is a monk in robes. Beneath him is a similarly attired monk. Next to the lower monk is the figure portrayed as Vajrapani that concerns us. Vajrapani is standing in a relaxed stance with his body slightly turned to his right and his weight on his left foot. On his head is the lion-skin headgear with the attached legs crossed below his chin. There is no doubt that this headgear derives from Heracles, but the club that is the signature of Heracles is missing; in its place he holds the *vajra* in the right hand and a long sword in the left. Neither does he sport the thick beard of Heracles, though his likeness seems Indian. Only above the mouth is there a small moustache. Some of the characteristic features of the Greek Heracles are retained in the firm musculature revealed in the naked upper body, exposed shoulders and tapered waist and in the slightly inclined stance. A very similar Vajrapani can be seen at the Kizil grottoes in China's Xinjiang province.

THE TRANSFORMED HERACLES IN CHINA

Fourth to Sixth Centuries

Between Kucha 庫車 and Baicheng 拜城 counties in Xinjiang, some seven kilometers southeast of Kizil township in caves on the north bank of the Muzart River, is the largest Buddhist grotto in what was the ancient state of Qiuci 龜茲. According to the noted Chinese archeologist Su Bai 宿白, the Kizil grottoes, "are located in the region between the Bamiyan grottoes in Afghanistan to the west of the Congling Mountains and the various grottoes east of Xinjiang. The number of Kizil grottoes with murals from the early period preserved in them far surpass Bamiyan, and the dating of the Kizil grottoes from the first stage predates the earliest remaining grottoes east of Xinjiang by at least 100 years."³⁷ The key role of this site in the diffusion of Buddhist art is obvious. A Vajrapani figure that is very similar to that in the British Museum described above is found in the main mural in the central hall of cave 175, which has been dated by Su Bai to period 2, that is, 395-530 (figure 28, below).³⁸

³⁷ Su Bai 宿白, "Xinjiang Baicheng Kezier shiku bufen dongku de leixing yu niandai" 新疆拜城克孜爾石窟部分洞窟的類型與年代, in idem, *Zhongguo shiku si yanjiu* 中國石窟寺研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), p. 37.

³⁸ Some scholars believe the correct dating is somewhat later, from the mid-6th to the first half of the 7th c. See Liao Yang 廖陽, "Kezier shiku bihua fenqi yu niandai wenti yanjiu" 克孜

Cave 175 has a central pillar. The front chamber is not preserved, but the main chamber has a remaining length of 230 cm, width 320 cm, and height 360 cm with a vaulted ceiling, the center of which illustrates the heavens and the two sides of which illustrate parables and jataka stories. On the rear wall of the main chamber in the upper register are two deva entertainers bending downward and three flying devas. On either side of the top of the niche in the rear wall is a figure of a *dharmapala*. The one on the right is wearing a multi-pointed felt cap and has body armor. With one leg crossed, he sits on a high seat. The figure we wish to note, however, is the one on the left. His shape is similar, but his costume is different. On his head he wears a lion/tiger helmet very similar to that of the Vajrapani in the British Museum described previously and has the attached paws crossed beneath the chin. In his left hand, he holds a religious ring-like object and his right grasps the *vajra*.³⁹ From the coloring of the mural, we know that the color of the torso is quite different from that of the exposed parts of the body (face, feet, and so on), moreover, the garment he is wearing has a collar and lapels.

A *lokapala* dating from the same period and another from a somewhat later period whose headgear is very similar to that in Cave 175 are found respectively in Caves 26 and 41 at the Simsim grottos not far from the Kizil grottos (figures 29, 30).⁴⁰ Moving eastward, by the time of Northern Zhou (561–581) at the very latest, this headgear had reached Cave 4 of the Majijishan 麥積山 grottos at Tianshui 天水. The main wall of the front hall contains a bas-relief of devas and others of the eight classes (nagas, *yaksas*, *asuras*, and so on). Among them is the

爾石窟壁畫分期與年代問題研究, *Yishushi yanjiu* 藝術史研究 3 (2001), p. 348. For the present article I follow the dating of Su Bai, “Kezier bufen dongku jieduan huafen yu niandai wenti di chubu tansuo, daixu” 克孜爾部分洞窟階段劃分與年代問題的初步探索, 代序, in Su Bai, *Zhongguo shiku, kezier shiku* 中國石窟克孜爾石窟 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989) 1, pp. 1–23.

³⁹ See *Zhongguo shiku: kezier shiku* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997) 3, pll. 14–18. The explanations accompanying plates 17 and 18 have the right and left *lokapalas* reversed, and the explanations do not completely match the plates. The iconic origin of the *vajra*, of course, is the thunderbolt of Zeus, and it is often referred to as such in discussions of Indian art and in the preceding section of this article. However, in Chinese art it had already lost the association with the thunderbolt.

⁴⁰ See *Zhongguo bihua quanji bianji weiyuan hui* 中國壁畫全集編輯委員會, ed., *Zhongguo Xinjiang bihua quanji* 中國新疆壁畫全集 (Shenyang and Urumqi: Liaoning meishu chubanshe and Xinjiang meishu chubanshe, 1995) 5, pll. 10, 46. In the collection of Mr. Xu Zhantang of Hong Kong there is a Northern Wei glazed mounted warrior wearing a lion or tiger skin helmet. If this piece is authentic, it is the earliest known example of a warrior with such headgear. See Linshi quyu shizheng ju 臨時區域市政局, ed., *Han Tang taoci yishu, Xu Zhantang boshi juanzeng Zhongguo wenwu cuixuan* 漢唐陶瓷藝術徐展堂博士捐贈中國文物粹選 (Hong Kong: Linshi quyu shizheng ju, 1998), p. 70.



Figure 28. Mural of Vajrapani

Courtesy of Zhang Aihong 張愛紅 and Shi Xiaomin 史曉明, eds., Kezier shiku xianmiaoji 克孜爾石窟線描集 (Anhui meishu chubanshe, 1974), p. 15.



Figure 30. Mural of Lokapala

Cave 41, Simsim grottos; after Zhongguo bihua quanji 5, pp. 10, 17.

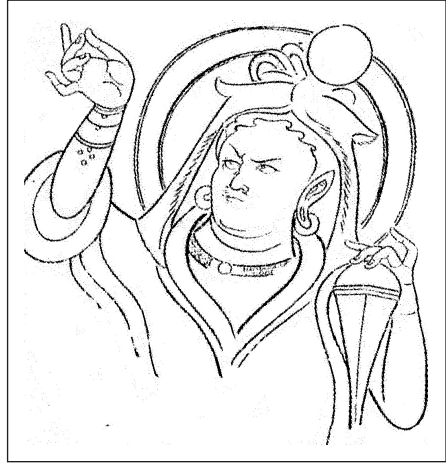


Figure 29. Mural of Lokapala

Cave 26, Simsim grottos; after Zhongguo bihua quanji (cited n. 40) 5, pp. 10, 17.

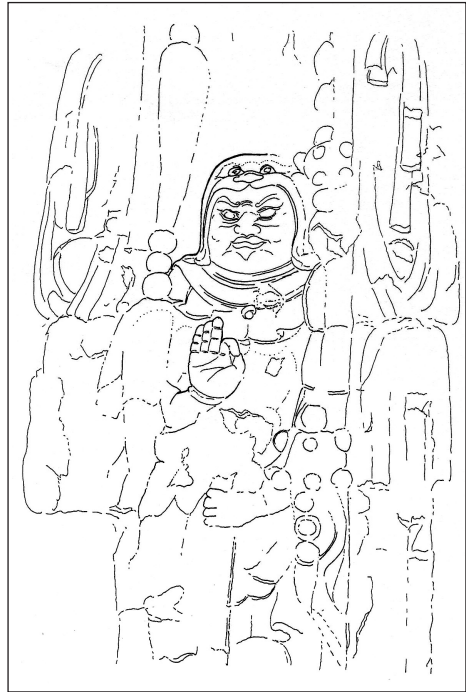


Figure 31. Bas-relief of Lokapala

Cave 4, Maijishan grottos; After Chūgoku sekkutsu (cited n. 31), pll. 224-29.

figure of Vajrapani, the bottom half of which is missing but the upper half of which is intact. On his head is the lion/tiger headgear with eyes and nose clearly depicted but without the paws crossed beneath the chin. He is no longer nude but wears armor. The right hand makes the *vitarka-mudra*. The left hand is damaged and one can only perceive in front of the lower abdomen an indistinct hand that appears to grasp a sword whose point is resting on the ground (figure 31).⁴¹ Comparing this figure with that of the Vajrapani in Cave 175 at Kizil, the only link between the two is the lion/tiger headgear. A similar situation is found with Cave 4 of the Gongxian 鞏縣 grotto in Henan province. This cave is generally recognized as having been dug during the late-Northern Wei (386–534) or the beginning of the sixth century. Each of the four sides of the base of the central pillar contains a *lokapala*, and among them on the north face is a lion *lokapala*. The special characteristic of the latter is that he is wearing lion-skin headgear and the paws are crossed beneath the chin. Another special characteristic is the presence of wing-like mane on either side at the back (figure 32).⁴²

A cursory examination suggests that the farther east one goes, the more the special characteristics of the Greek Heracles are dropped,



added to, or modified. As he was transformed into Vajrapani in Gandhara, Heracles lost the club. As he moved from the traditionally so-called Western Regions (modern Xinjiang) into the Hexi 河西 region of China, he ceased to be completely nude. He was made first to cover himself partially with a necklace of precious stones or a decorated belt, or he was simply dressed in armor. Any trace of the crossed paws of the lion's or tiger's pelt disappeared. In their place were

Figure 32. Lion Lokapala

Bas-relief. After Chang Qing 常青, "Beichao shiku shenwang diaoke shulüe" 北朝石窟神王雕刻述略, KG 1994.12, p. 1133, p. 15.

⁴¹ *Chūgoku sekkutsu: Bakusekizan* 中國石窟麥積山石窟 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1988), pll. 224–29.

⁴² See Henan sheng wenwu yanjiu suo 河南省文物研究所, ed., *Zhongguo shiku: Gongxian shiku* 中國石窟鞏縣石窟 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989), pl. 176.

an increasingly Asian face, postures closely associated with Buddhist sculpture – mudras, or religious objects such as the *vajra*.

But in fact, this is not what occurred. On closer examination, we find that the two major distinguishing features of Heracles – the club and the lion-skin headgear with attached claws – sometimes complete, sometimes scattered, surprisingly still clearly appear elsewhere on Buddhist sculpture of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (317–589) period and on Tang-era (618–907) pottery warriors. The sites known so far where such images have been found are as widely separated as Sichuan, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan and Hebei. And the “missing” club of Heracles in fact is still seen in the hands of the *lokapalas* and in Cave 77 at Kizil. Following chronological order, we shall first discuss Kizil Cave 77 (figure 33).⁴³

Cave 77 has a central column. The front wall of the main room, the cave ceiling, and the side walls are largely damaged. The remnant side-walls have depictions of the Buddha discussing the law of causation. The mural of the cowherd in the collection of the Museum of Indian Art in Berlin is from the side-wall mural of the Buddha discussing the law. King Bimbisara invited the Buddha and accompanying monks to reside with him and discuss the law.



Figure 33. Mural of Nanda
After Doitsu shirukurōdo
(cited n. 43), pl. 12.

⁴³ Tōkyō kokuritsu hakubutsukan 東京國立博物館, *Doitsu Shirukurōdo tankentai seiiki bi-jutsuten* ドイツ、シルクロード探險隊西域美術展 (Tokyo: Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 1991), pl. 12.

The cowherd Nanda delivered curds each day, and the king, becoming very fond of him, arranged for him to be received by the Buddha. Nanda asked the Buddha about herding, and the Buddha explained the laws of cow herding using twelve events. Nanda consequently exhibited reverence for the Buddha and left home to become one of his disciples.⁴⁴ The remnant mural depicts the cowherd listening to the Buddha explain the law. On the left side, one can still see a part of the Buddha's shaved head and his seat. Nanda is standing with both hands resting on a club. Behind him two cows are resting on the ground. Of interest here is the apparent connection between Heracles and the shape of the club and the cows.

Dating from almost the same time is a club of similar shape in the hands of a *lokapala* found recently with a Southern Dynasties statue of the Buddha, dating from the late-fifth to the early-sixth century. In June 1990, four similar-looking stone Buddhas were discovered during construction of a shopping mall in Chengdu, Sichuan.⁴⁵ Among them are two inscribed with dates – Jianwu 建武 2 of the Southern Qi 南齊 dynasty (495) and Tianjian 天監 10 of the Liang 梁 (511), providing solid dating material for this group. Of these, item number 90CST(5): 1 has only the lower half remaining. According to the original report, “each side of the stone image has a bas relief of a *mahārājadeva*. They are damaged. Both hands grasp a *vajra*.”⁴⁶ The report contains only a line drawing of the original stone image (figure 34). Concerning the line drawing: 1. because the upper body is missing and the lower body is only sketched, it cannot be determined whether the figure is a *vira* (Ch.: *lishi* 力士) or a *mahārājadeva* (Ch.: *tianwang* 天王); and 2. the hands are clearly grasping a long club, not a *vajra* as stated by the report. One need only compare the form of the *vajra* held by the *vira* in item 90CST(5):5 from the same group to see the difference.⁴⁷

A similar error was made with item 90CST(5):7. This piece is very well preserved. The front contains a Buddha and four bodhisattvas. Concerning the sides, the report says, “Each side has a bas-relief of a *lokapala*. The face and eyes look extremely fierce. He stands barefooted on flat ground. On his head is a cowl. On his body he wears a

⁴⁴ For the story of the herd-boy Nanda, see *Fo shuo fangniu jing* 佛說放牛經, *T*no. 123, vol. 2, pp. 546A-47B; *Wuliangshoujing lian yi shuwen zan* 無量壽經連義述文贊, *T*no. 1748, vol. 37, p. 133C; *Amituojing yi shu* 阿彌陀經義述, *T*no. 1756, vol. 37, p. 358B; *Weimojing lue shu chui yu ji* 維摩經略疏垂裕記, *T*no. 1779, vol. 38, p. 728C; *Bei shan lu* 北山錄, *T*no. 2113, vol. 52; *Fanyi mingyi ji* 翻譯名義記, *T*no. 2131, vol. 54, p. 1088B.

⁴⁵ Zhang Xiaoma 張肖馬, Lei Yuhua 雷玉華, “Chengdu shi Shangyejie Nanchao shike zaxiang” 成都市商業街南朝石刻造像, *WW* 2001.10, pp. 4-18.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7, and fig. 6.

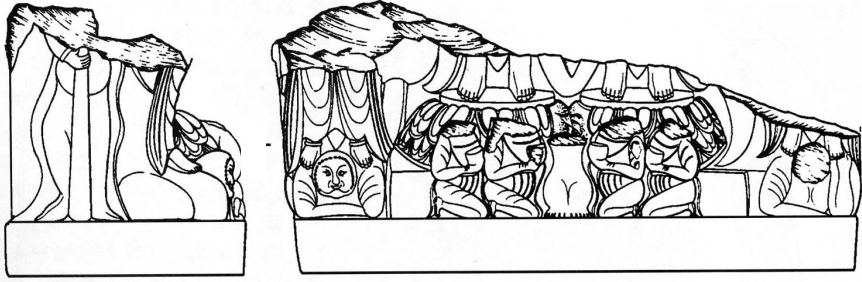


Figure 34. Stone Image

Front and side view; 90CST (5):1. After "Chengdu shi"(cited n. 45), p. 5 (pl. 2).



Figure 35. Stone Image

Front and side view; 90CST (5):7. After "Chengdu shi," p. 8 (pl. 9).



Figure 36. Stone Image

Side view; 90CST (5):9. After "Chengdu shi," p. 15 (pl. 23).

short jacket. His waist is belted, and both hands are grasping a *vajra* in front of the chest.”⁴⁸ Again, all one need do is compare these with the *vajra* held by the *vira* on either side of the front of the same stone to know that the *lokapala* are not holding *vajras* but clubs whose surface has indentations and protrusions and which are tapered from bottom to top. Moreover, the line drawing shows the figure not to be wearing a cowl but a leather or metal helmet (figure 35, above).

Described correctly is item 90CST(5):9. This stone fragment is badly damaged, and the front face has a Buddha and two bodhisattvas. According to the report, “on each side of the figure is a carved *lokapala* standing barefoot on a dais with curled hair parted in the middle, a short jacket with tight sleeves, a belted waist, and both hands grasping a club-like object in front of the body.” The line drawing (figure 36) shows the club as tapered from bottom to top, with protrusions and crooked.

The common characteristic of these three *vira* and deva kings (*shenwang* 神王) is that they are all positioned on either side of the image of the primary statue. The shape of their clubs, strictly speaking, is different. One is comparatively smooth, one has protuberances and is crooked, and the third has symmetrical protuberances and indentations. All of them are thicker at the lower end. Thus, it is safe to conclude that they can all trace their ancestry back to Heracles’ club. As for the headgear, one image is damaged, so we cannot know what it had, one has curled hair parted in the middle, and one is clearly wearing a leather or metal helmet.

A stone image from Wanfosi 萬佛寺 in the Sichuan Provincial Museum also has a *vira* that holds a similar club.⁴⁹ For example, the club can be seen on either side of the back of an image of Śākyamuni (no. W5Z41) dated Putong 普通 4 (523 AD) of emperor Wu of Liang, either side of the rear of a statue dated Zhongdatong 中大通 5 (533), and the right side of a stele (no. WSZ50) commemorating the commissioning of a statue. Two more images held by the Sichuan University Museum dated Zhong Datong 4 (532) and Taiqing 太清 3 (549) of the Liang dynasty have *viras* holding similar clubs on either side (figures 37-40).⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁹ Yuan Shuguang 袁曙光, “Sichuan sheng bowuguan cang Wanfo si shike zaoxiang zhengli jianbao” 四川省博物館藏萬佛寺石刻造像整理簡報, *WW* 2001.10, pp. 19-38.

⁵⁰ Huo Wei 霍巍, “Sichuan daxue bowuguan shou cang de liang zun Nanchao shike zaoxiang” 四川大學博物館收藏的兩尊南朝石刻造像, *WW* 2001.10, pp. 39-44. Through the good offices of Mr. Huo, who is director of the Sichuan University Museum, I was able to examine these two images. Not only was I able to clearly see the clubs on either side, but the front surface also had a meticulously executed relief.



Figure 37. Wanfosi Stone Image
Left side; 532 AD. After "Sichuan daxue," pl. 4.



Figure 38. Wanfosi Stone Image
Rt. side; 532 AD. After "Sichuan daxue" (cited n. 50), pl. 5.

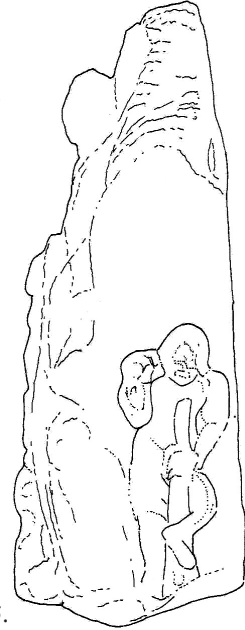


Figure 39. Stone Image
Left side; 549 AD. Sichuan U. Museum. After "Sichuan daxue," pl. 6.

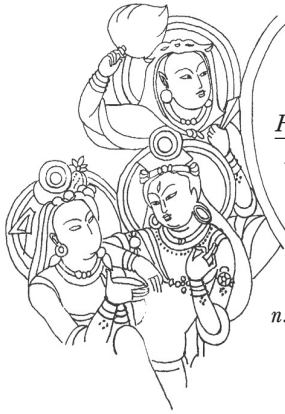


Figure 42. Mural of Vajrapani
Cave 97; Kezier grotto. After "Xinjiang Qijuci shiku" (cited n. 54), p. 68.

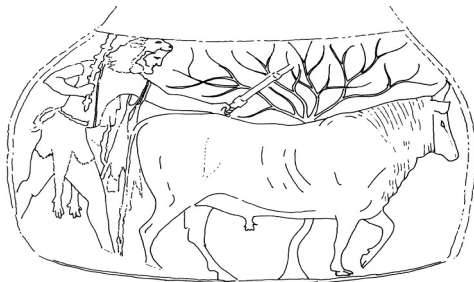


Figure 41. Heracles and Cretan Bull
Boston Museum of Fine Arts 99.538. After <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?arch=1992.11.0281&type=vase>.



Figure 40. Stone Image
Rt. side; 549 AD. Sichuan U. Museum. After "Sichuan daxue," pl. 7.

The appearance of this sort of club almost simultaneously in the Buddhist art of northwest and southwest China cannot be fortuitous. For we find virtually the same form of club in the hands of Tang pottery warriors from a slightly later period (see below). We can go so far as to say that from the second or third century onward the "Heracles-type club" had already become part of the formal vocabulary of artistic expression in Central Asia and the surrounding regions. Moreover, it was not always associated with the body of Heracles. This is very similar to the images in Greek art of the thunderbolt in the hands of Zeus that symbolized his authority, or Poseidon's trident. When these made their way to Central Asia, they were adapted by rulers there and shown being held by them.⁵¹ If we take our analysis a step further, we find that for this sort of club to have appeared in the hands of a cowherd is not without reason. One need only examine a bit closer the story of Heracles to know that two of the Twelve Labors involved cattle. One was the command to capture alive the Cretan bull that carried Europa, with whom Zeus was smitten, and which had been cursed by Poseidon and had become mad (figure 41, above); the other was the command to seize the herd raised by the three-headed giant Geryon.⁵² In the latter story Heracles uses his club to slay Geryon and his herd dog. Given this story as background, it is not at all surprising that Heracles' club made its way into the hands of Central Asian cowherds.

In addition, Heracles' lion-skin headgear was not completely abandoned. At the very least, it is discernible in Caves 97 and 224 at Kizil. These two caves date from sometime during the Northern and Southern dynasties to the Sui dynasty (420-617). Recently Yao Shihong 姚士宏 carefully identified the attire of the Vajrapani found in a depiction of the Buddha subjugating six heretical teachers (figure 42).⁵³ The original wall painting had been blackened by smoke, and the Vajrapani had erroneously been assumed to have his head covered by the cowl of a cape. In fact, he is wearing a tiger-skin headgear. According to Yao Shihong,

The first figure on the [Buddha's] right, previously always mistakenly identified as wearing a cap, in fact wears a tiger-skin helmet. Because of discoloration by smoke, the original colors have blackened but one can still see the erect ears and broad nose of the tiger in the painting. The tiger-skin spreads as it drapes to the shoulders, suggesting that it extends to both sides and to front

⁵¹ Errington and Cribb, *Crossroads of Asia*, pll. 39-44, 47.

⁵² Kerényi, *Heroes of the Greeks*, pp. 158-59, 163-74.

⁵³ *Zhongguo shiku: Kezier shiku* 中國石窟克孜爾石窟 (Beijing, 1966) 2, pl. 80.



Figure 43. Mural of Vajrapani
Cave 224; Kezier grotto. After Kezier shiku 3, pl. 220.



Figure 44. Tang Warrior Figurine
Palace Museum, Beijing. After Zhong-
guo meishu (cited n. 56), pl. 33.

and rear. Because only a small part of the upper body is depicted, the arrangement at the back is unclear. One can see only that the front part of the pelt gradually narrows to form a belt that is tied at mid chest. It reveals a round face in the Kuchean style with a pair of raised eyebrows and the eyes, ears and nose placed close together. The upper body is exposed, the shoulders are wrapped with a flowing ribbon, there are bracelets on both wrists, and a bangle at the elbow. The left hand holds a *vajra* at chest height while the right hand holds a duster above the head. He directs his eyes at the six teachers.⁵⁴

The tiger-skin headgear of the guardian of the law *dharmapala* found on the east side of the door of the front hall of Cave 224 (now in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Berlin) is similar in form to that in Cave 97, but the painting shows only the head. On the left of

⁵⁴ Yao Shihong 姚士宏, "Guanyu Xinjiang Qiuci shiku de Tufan ku wenti" 關於新疆龜茲石窟的吐蕃窟問題, *WW* 1999.9, pp. 68-70.

the Lord Buddha there ought to be a Vajrapani (figure 43, above).⁵⁵ It is not clear that what Yao has identified as a tiger skin is in fact a tiger skin. This question is discussed in more detail, below.

Aside from the wall-paintings from this period, the lion- or tiger-skin headgear is seen also on a warrior figurine held by the Palace Museum in Beijing. This figurine is 49 cm tall (figure 44). According to *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, “This figurine wears an animal-head helmet, its torso is attired in armor, and below it is dressed in a long skirt. The hand holds a missing implement.”⁵⁶ The “animal helmet,” from its eyes, nose and teeth, is clearly distinguishable as a tiger or lion. What is unusual is a column that protrudes from the top of the helmet. Because it is not possible to view the object from the side, from the illustration it is not possible to determine immediately just what the protuberance is. Regardless, the form of the headgear on this piece and similar pieces from the Sui-Tang period, discussed below, are mutually corroborative and evidence that following the transformation of the headgear and club of Heracles, they could appear separately or together.

Seventh to Ninth Centuries

Now we turn to the question of the separation of the club from the lion/tiger headgear and their acquisition of an independent existence. A considerable number of Tang warrior figurines has been unearthed (table 4). These figurines wear lion- or tiger-skin headgear, and they either grasp a sword or are empty handed. None holds a club. The eleven figurines listed in the accompanying table are but a very small part of the total number discovered, and the majority were found in Hebei province in north China. Does this suggest that particular geographic considerations are involved? For example, did this particular head dress enter north China along the still unobstructed Silk Road?⁵⁷ This is a question that will bear further examination but which cannot

⁵⁵ *Zhongguo shiku: Kezier shiku*, vol. 3, pl. 220.

⁵⁶ *Zhongguo meishu quanji: diaosu bian* 中國美術全集，雕塑篇 (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988) 4, pl. 33, p. 11.

⁵⁷ I wish to express my appreciation to Mr. Qi Dongfang 齊東方 for his comments during the conference “History of Ancient Relations between China and the World,” and for the opportunity to consult his paper that was read at the conference, “Yisilan boli yu sichou zhi lu” 伊斯蘭玻璃與絲綢之路, in the conference collection “Gudai Zhong wai guanxi shi, xin shiliao de diaocha, zhengli yu yanjiu guoji xueshu yantao hui lunwen huibian” 古代中外關係史新史料的調查整理與研究國際學術研討會論文匯編, November 15-16, 2002, pp. 225-31. Concerning the existence of steppe Silk Road, Zheng Yan 鄭岩 also raised this point in discussing tomb wall-paintings from Hexi and Gaogouli. See his “Hexi Wei-Jin bihua mu chu lun” 河西魏晉壁畫墓初論, in Wu Hong 巫鴻, *Han Tang zhi jian wenhua yishu de hudong yu jiaorong* 漢唐之間文化藝術的互動與交融 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 415-17.

be easily answered. Rather than examining this issue, however, the question for the present article is how we can convincingly show that the independently occurring lion/tiger-skin headgear and club also trace their origins back to distant Greece. When one seeks to verify the relationship among particular “unique” elements in a cultural diffusion, it is often easy to fall into arbitrariness. If there should be a “group” of elements occurring together, then the case becomes much more persuasive. Fortunately, in addition to the examples of the independent appearance of these two elements, we can find cases where the two are found together.

In 1975, an early-Tang brick tomb of a couple was excavated southwest of the old city of Anyang 安陽, in Henan.⁵⁸ According to the stone epitaph found in the tomb, the occupant, Yang Kan 楊侃, was born in the year Kaihuang 開皇 5 (585) of the Sui dynasty and died in Yonghui 永徽 5 (654) of emperor Gaozong 高宗 of the Tang; his wife was born in Kaihuang 16 (596) and died in Shangyuan 上元 2 (675) of Gaozong. Because the tomb had flooded, the ceiling collapsed and the funerary objects were all scattered. Among them were six warrior figures. According to the site report, the figurines were divided into three types. Types I and II are especially noteworthy. The report describes them thus,

Type I: 0.575 m high. On the head is a tiger-head helmet. The figure’s eyes are round and glaring, and it has two protruding incisors, and a goatee. It has red armor on the shoulders and has on a neck protector. On the armor, the plates are outlined in black, and the waist is tied with a purple and red belt. The figure is wearing black boots, his right hand is clenched in a fist across his chest, and the left hand rests on a sword.

Type II: 0.575 m high. The head is slightly lowered and the figure is wearing a helmet, has red armor on the shoulders, and wears a neck protector. The waist is belted with a green belt, and he wears black boots. The left hand rests on the hip and the right hand on a long staff. (the staff is 0.36 m). The right arm is broken off. These two are perhaps two of the four tomb spirits, Dangkuang 當壙 and Dangye 當野.⁵⁹

The report contains illustrations of the two figurines, labeled plates 5-1, 3. The plates are not very clear, but enough so that we may

⁵⁸ Anyangshi bowuguan 安陽市博物館, “Tang Yang Kan mu qingli jianbao” 唐楊侃墓清理簡報, *Wenwu ziliao congkan* 文物資料叢刊 1982.6, pp. 130-33.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.



*Figures 45 and 46. Tang Warrior Figurines
Tomb of Yang Kan. After "Tang Yang Kan"
(cited n. 58), pl. 5-1 (left), pl. 5-3 (rt.).*

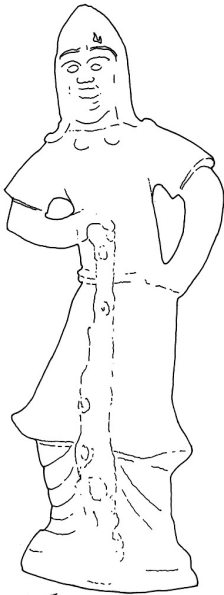
correct some inaccuracies in the report (figures 45, 46). First, "Type I," is said to be resting his left hand on a sword, but closer examination reveals the left hand to be resting on a tapered club, not a sword. Unfortunately, the poor quality of the illustration does not permit us to determine what the club's surface is like. Second, the report says that the "Type II" figurine is wearing a "helmet" but does not specify what kind of helmet. If one compares it with the "Type I" figurine, it is easily seen that in fact it is a tiger-head helmet with the tiger's eyes and nose. Only the left ear is missing. Thus both figurines are wearing similar tiger-head helmets and each is holding a club – one comparatively shorter and held in the left hand, the other very much longer and held in the left hand. The longer club of the "Type II" figurine is tapered and significantly has numerous discernible protrusions. The report refers to the helmet as a "tiger-head helmet," but the illustration is insufficiently clear to determine whether it is a tiger's head or a lion's head. Whichever, the two trademarks of Heracles have unexpectedly appeared in this fashion on Tang warrior figures. Is this simply fortuitous? The report carefully points out, "The form of the warrior figurine is similar to those excavated in the Shanxi region."⁶⁰ By "Shanxi region" is meant the Tang tombs at Beishicao 白石槽, in Changzhi 長治 county.

In 1961, two Tang-dynasty brick tombs were discovered at Beishicao in the eastern suburb of the Changzhi county seat.⁶¹ The shape of the two tombs was similar, and they were over 100 meters apart. Tomb No. 2

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 133.

⁶¹ Shanxisheng wen guan hui 山西省文管會, Shanxisheng kaogu suo 山西省考古所, "Shanxi Changzhi Bei Shizao Tang mu" 山西長治白石槽唐墓, *KG* 1962.2, pp. 63-68.

contained an epitaph that indicates that the tomb's occupant was buried east of the provincial seat during the year Chang'an 長安 2 (702) of the reign of empress Wu Zetian 武則天. Tomb No. 3 dates from about the same period. On each side of the entrance to Tomb No. 3 was found a warrior figurine. The site report says, "The item found on the left side of the entrance is wearing red armor and green ribbons. Below the chin are two round buttons. The waist is belted and the feet have black boots. The left hand rests on the hip while the right hand rests on a long staff. The figurine is 58 cm high. The warrior figure to the right of the tomb



opening wears a tiger helmet on which cloud patterns are painted in red, green, and blue. The armor is grass-green, and a red cloth is draped over the shoulders. There are black shoes on the feet, and the two hands rest on a long staff."⁶²

Besides this brief sketch, the report contains two illustrations that are not clear (figures 47 and 48; originally labeled plates VIII.1-2). Their postures are rather different, as are the shapes of the helmets.



Figures 47 (l.) and 48 (rt.). Warrior Figurines

Tomb no. 3, Beishicao, Changzhi. After "Shanxi changzhi" (cited n. 61), pll. 8-1, 8-2, respectively.

What is interesting, however, is that both figures are holding a club very similar to that seen in Cave 77 at Kizil. Even more striking is the figure from the left side of the tomb opening. Not only is he holding a club, but he is also wearing the lion/tiger-head headgear. The occurrence together of the club and the headgear is not simply a fortuitous creation of the artisan but must have been the result of a particular development.

How this development underwent alterations and changes as it made its way to the Central Plains region of China probably no one can

⁶² Ibid., p. 66.

understand clearly. However, we can venture to say that if one traces it back to its origins, the connection with Heracles is inescapable. Also worth noting is that the original link between the club and lion skin and the image of Heracles has been severed; they have become independent accoutrements of an entirely different persona. If we examine these together with the eleven figurines listed above, there are several noteworthy phenomena:

1. *The Tang Figurines Are Essentially Warriors*

This can be determined from the few pieces whose placement is relatively clear: these figurines were placed on either side of the tomb path or entrance. They held weapons and displayed a martial power, undoubtedly as symbolic protectors of the tomb. Their role is similar to Vajrapani or the *gandharva* responsible for guarding the law in the wall paintings and sculptures in the Buddhist grottoes. Clearly, although “Heracles” had changed appearance before he entered China, his original function as warrior and guardian was essentially unchanged.

2. *The Status of the Herculean Figure Had Declined*

In Greece, Rome, and Central Asia Heracles and the rulers – be it Alexander, the emperors of Rome or the kings of Parthia or Kushan – were associated with, and had positions of, incomparable respect. Within the matrix of Buddhist art, however, Heracles was transformed into one or the other of Sakyamuni’s host of Vajrapani, *lokapalas*, *viras*, or *gandharvas*, not only losing a position of veneration in his own right but being demoted from the position of principal to that of attendant. His sacred and invincible club was retained through the transformation to Vajrapani or *vira*, sometimes as a club, sometimes in the form of a *vajra*. In the wall paintings of Kizil, the club had become an object held by a lowly herder. Only the lion-skin headgear continued to be prized and worn on the head of the warriors.

3. *The Headgear and Club Had Become Iconic*

Among the warrior figurines found in Shanxi and Henan provinces, the lion-skin headgear and the club are both present in some cases, while in others there is only the club or the lion-skin headgear. Those so far unearthed in Shaanxi and Hebei provinces have only the headgear; the club has not been found. In contrast, in Sichuan we find only the club without the lion/tiger-skin headgear. From this, one can see that the lion/tiger-skin headgear and the club had become iconic elements with independent existences, adapted to figures of an entirely

different type and status. Moreover, they had already lost their original significance as representative of a particular personage.

4. *The Ox and the Herder Nanda*

The ox at the feet of the warrior figurine unearthed at Luoyang, Henan, conjures up an association with the herder Nanda in the Kizil grottoes and with Heracles, who subdued the mad ox. Besides the linkage of the element of the ox, warriors unearthed in Xian county, Hebei, have an image resembling Medusa on their chests, as Xie Mingliang has conclusively shown.⁶³ One might note that in completing his eleventh labor, Heracles battled Medusa in Hades and discovered that she was merely an empty image.⁶⁴ That such figures and formalistic elements that were originally linked to the story of Heracles were able ultimately to persist in this way, appearing in Tang-wall paintings and on sculpture and pottery figures, is astounding.

Finally, there is the question of whether the headgear worn by the Tang-period Vajrapani and warriors were the pelts of lions or tigers. Chinese scholars, for example, Xiang Da 向達 and Duan Wenjie 段文杰, have consistently referred to the headgear as a tiger-skin helmet, tiger-skin hat, or a helmet in the shape of a tiger's head. And virtually all scholars, basing themselves on Fan Zhuo's 樊綽 (Tang-era) *History of the Barbarians* (*Man shu* 蠻書), the "Monograph on the Southern Zhao" of the *New Tang History* (*Xin Tangshu* 新唐書, "Nan Zhao zhuan 南詔傳"), the "Monograph on the Tufan" of the *Old Tang History* (*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書, "Tufan zhuan 吐蕃傳"), and a caption in Cave 144 of the Mogao Grotto in Dunhuang, have seen the tiger-skin headgear as based on the garb of the Tufan warriors and so assigned the motif's origins to Tufan.⁶⁵

In 1998, Li Qiqiong's 李其瓊 discussion of Dunhuang wall paintings of the Tufan period concluded that the *mahārājadevas* and the *viras* that wore tiger-head headgear and had tiger skins draped around their shoulders "were Buddhist guardians whose form is modeled on Tufan warriors."⁶⁶ In 1999, in order to resolve the question of the Tufan Cave in the Qiuji grotto, Yao Shihong carefully collected materials relating to headgear style. He reaffirmed the position held by Xiang, Duan and Li, stating "these depictions are based on Tufan warriors who have achieved merit in battle; they reflect the uniform of honor

⁶³ Xie, "Xila meishu," pp. 41-50.

⁶⁴ Kerényi, *Heroes of the Greeks*, pp. 180-81; Grimal, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, p. 201.

⁶⁵ On the Tufan, see n. 4, above.

⁶⁶ Li Qijing, "Lun Tufan shiqi de Dunhuang bihua yishu" 論吐蕃時期的敦煌壁畫藝術, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1998.2, pp. 1-19.

of the Tufan warrior.” Going even further, he concludes, “*dharmapalas* wearing a tiger skin as clothing and as headgear could have appeared in the Mogao and Yulin grottos only following the Tufan occupation of the Hexi region, and they disappeared with the end of Tufan rule. They had obvious ethnic and temporal characteristics.”⁶⁷

There is some evidence for the view that the tiger-skin apparel originated with the Tufan. The “Monograph on the Tufan” of the *New Tang History* contains a clear statement, “The slope is all tumuli. Next to them are sheds. They paint them in red and illustrate them with white tigers. All the barbarian nobles who have gained merit in battle wear the [tiger] pelts when they are alive, and they use them to symbolize their bravery after they are dead.”⁶⁸ The Southern Zhao, which were strongly influenced by the Tufan, had similar attire,⁶⁹ and the section on customs in Fan Zhuo’s *History of the Barbarians* contains reliable accounts.⁷⁰ A *vira* depicted in a wall-painting in Cave 15 of the Yulin 榆林 Grotto of Anxi 安西 is wearing a cap that clearly shows tiger stripes, and behind the figure the tail and paws of a tiger are clearly visible (figure 49). Thus, there is no problem with saying that this particular *vira* is draped in a tiger skin with a tiger-head headgear. This sort of clearly distinguishable tiger-head headgear is also seen on the *gandharva* and *Vaiśravaṇa* fragment of the Tang silk painting in the British Museum (figure 50).⁷¹ The *gandharva* in the painting is wearing a tiger’s head headgear with visible stripes, and a tiger’s tail hangs down behind and curls between the figure’s feet. Similar headgear is seen on a *gandharva* in a fragment of a painting on silk from a Turfan grotto that is in the

⁶⁷ Yao, “Guanyu Xinjiang Qiuji shiku,” p. 70.

⁶⁸ *Xin Tangshu* 141B, p. 6103.

⁶⁹ Examples of the Southern Zhao and Dali warriors wearing tiger-skin headgear or apparel and representations of Southern Zhao and Dali kings are found in the painting “Nan Zhao tu zhuan” 南詔圖傳, in the Yurinkan, Kyoto, or in the painting “Zhang Shengwen hua juan” 張勝溫畫卷 (“Zhang Shengwen Picture Scroll”; also referred to as “Dali guo fan xiang juan” 大理國梵像卷, or “Buddhist Image Scroll of the Dali Kingdom”), now in the Palace Museum, Taipei. The depiction of a king wearing the tiger-skin headgear appears in “Kings of the Sixteen States” section of the “Zhang Shengwen Picture Scroll.” Warriors wearing tiger-skins appear in two places on “Nan Zhao tu zhuan.” See Li Linxuan 李霖燦, *Nan Zhao Dali guo xin ziliao de zonghe yanjiu* 南詔大理國新資料的綜合研究 (Taipei: Gugong bowuyuan, 1982), pp. 106, 122, 129.

⁷⁰ Fan Zhuo 樊綽, *Manshu jiaozhu* 蠻書校注, ed. Xiang Da 向達 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962). Section 8 of this work, which describes the customs of the Man and Yi, says, “[They] esteemed the two colors crimson and purple. After attaining purple, if one achieved great merit he attained brocade. Further, those who had extraordinarily special merit got to drape themselves completely in a tiger (*boluo*) skin. The next rank of merit got to drape their chest and back but omitted the sleeves. The next rank of merit got to drape the chest and omitted the back. They called it “skin of the great beast” (*da chong pi*); it was also “tiger skin.” (*boluo pi*) (see p. 208).

⁷¹ Roderick Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1982) 2, pl. 111.



Figure 49. Mural of Vira

Cave 15, Yulin grottos, Anxi. After Zhongguo shiku: Anxi Yulin ku (cited n. 74), pll. 4, 6.



Figure 50. Painted Gandharva

Silk; Tang era; British Museum. After Art of Central Asia (cited n. 71), p. 111.



Figure 51. Painted Gandharva

Silk; Turfan grotto. After Shiruku rōdo (cited n. 72), pl. 181.



Figure 52. Woodblock Print Gandharva

Paper; 947 AD. After Tonkō ka (cited n. 76), pl. 120, rt.



Figure 53. Mural of Maitreya

Cave 25, Yulin grottos, Anxi. After Zhongguo shiku: Anxi Yulin ku, pll. 12, 26.

Museum of Indian Art in Berlin (figure 51, above),⁷² and in a paper woodblock print dated to the Tang reign-era Kaiyun 開運 4 (947 AD) that is in the British Museum (figure 52).⁷³

Most interesting is that in the Tang grotto and the woodblock print there are also figures that are very clearly wearing lion-skin headgear.

These must have had an origin other than Tufan. An example is the *gandharva* found in the depiction of the Maitreya scene on the north wall of the main hall of Cave 25 at Yulin, Anxi (figure 53).⁷⁴ This cave belongs to the Tang, and the painting is extremely beautiful and clear. Only the head of the *gandharva* is visible, and he is wearing a lion-skin headgear. The head shows eyes, ears, and the nose, and the paws are tied beneath the figure's chin. There is no sign of tiger markings or stripes. On the contrary, the lines drawn outward from the head are



Figure 54. Woodblock Print Maitreya
Paper 890 AD. After Tonkō ka, pl. 122a.

clearly meant to be the mane that is unique to lions. The discussion of the art in this cave in *Zhongguo shiku: Anxi Yulin ku* 中國石窟安西榆林窟 describes the figure as dressed in a tiger skin. Because the figure is white, absence of the tiger's coloring is explained by saying that the skill with which the lines are drawn made it unnecessary. This view results perhaps from focusing too narrowly on the human figures and paying insufficient attention to the different characteristics of lions and tigers. (Curiously, the descriptions of the individual plates later in the book correctly identify the pelt as that of a lion.)⁷⁵ A lion-skin headgear with mane intact is also clear in the British Museum woodblock print dating from Tang Longji 龍紀 2 (890) (figure 54). The *gandharva* in the picture

⁷² Tokyo National Museum. *Shiruku rōdo dai bijutsu ten*, pl. 181.

⁷³ Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia* 2, fig. 153. Because of the dynastic change occurring in 947, the correct date would be Tianfu 天福 1 of the Later Han (Five Dynasties).

⁷⁴ Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, ed., *Zhongguo shiku: Anxi Yulin ku* 中國石窟, 安西榆林窟 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997), pp. 166, 230, pll. 12, 26.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

stands to the right of the *Vaiśravaṇa* of the north. Although it is a fragment, the lion-skin headgear with mane is entirely clear.⁷⁶

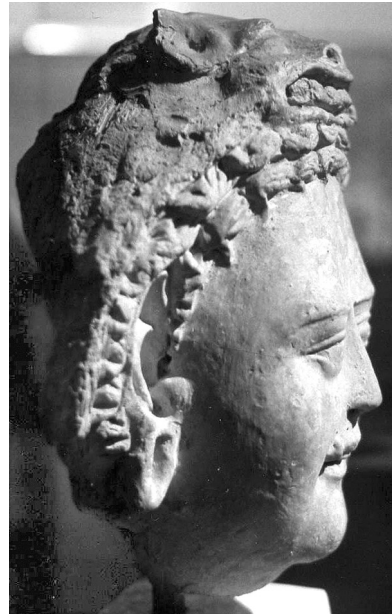
Aside from the foregoing examples, it is impossible to distinguish between a lion skin or a tiger skin in the majority of cases that can presently be seen in wall-paintings, sculpture, and pottery figures. In some cases this is a result of the poor quality of the plates, while in others it is because of a lack of a clear delineation in the original object. In Tang-period art one finds examples of Vajrapani, *mahārājadevas*, and *gandharva* wearing tiger-skin headgear with a pelt draped over the body, and one sees examples with a lion skin. These are not isolated cases. Bearing this in mind, first we should avoid referring to these types of headgear simply as a tiger-skin hat, a tiger-skin helmet, or a casque in the shape of a tiger's head. They should be separately denoted. Second, regardless of whether the headgear of the Vajrapani and the *mahārājadevas* in Cave 175 at Kizil and Cave 4 at Maijishan are lion or tiger skins, they date anywhere from several hundred to more than a hundred years prior to the Tufan.⁷⁷ To attribute the origin of the headgear style to Tufan warrior attire is therefore mistaken. Two possibilities must be considered.

First, the lion skin worn by the Vajrapani that developed in Gandharan Buddhist art through a transformation of the figure of Heracles may have become a tiger skin. Because I have been unable to examine the objects themselves and have not seen any relevant studies by specialists, I am as yet unable to judge the likelihood of such a possibility.

The second alternative is that this transformation is incomplete with Gandharan art; both lion- and tiger-skin headgear are found. But the distinction tends to be unclear. An example is the previously discussed fourth- or fifth-century clay bust excavated at the No. 1 site of the Toqquz Sarai Monastery in Tumshuq, Xinjiang, which is in the collection of the Guimet Museum in Paris. The bust is wearing an animal-skin headgear with clearly rendered eyes, nose, ears, mouth, and fangs. From the front, the face could be that of either a lion or a tiger, but from the side, since neither mane nor tiger's stripes are apparent, there is no way of determining whether in fact this is a lion or a tiger

⁷⁶ Matsumoto Eiichi 松本榮一, *Tonkō ka no kenkyū* 敦煌畫の研究 (Tokyo: 1937) 2, pl. 122a.

⁷⁷ Li Qijing considers the caves to have been constructed during the sixty-seven years between 781 (Jianzhong 2), when the Tufan subjugated Shazhou (Dunhuang), and 848 (Dazhong 2), when Zhang Yichao of Dunhuang took back the twelve *zhou* of the Hexi region, to be "Tufan caves." See Li, "Lun Tufan," p. 1.



Figures 55–56. Clay Bust

No. 1 site, Toqquz Sarai Monastery, Tumshuq. At left, 55: front view; rt., 56: side view. Courtesy Dr. Xie Minglang 謝明良.

(figures 55, 56).⁷⁸ Therefore, from the beginning it was possible for both types to appear in China, or for there to be Vajrapani wearing headgear that could not be determined to be either lion or tiger.

Because I am not a specialist in either Gandharan art or in Chinese Buddhist sculpture, I am reluctant to jump to hasty conclusions. But should we not perhaps consider the question of the origins of the custom among Tufan and Nan Zhao warriors of wearing the pelts of beasts? In doing so, we should first take into account that this custom was already widespread in Central Asia and India. There were considerable cultural contacts between these regions and the Tufan, and the latter subsequently adopted Buddhism. Considered in this way, it would seem that we cannot exclude the possibility that the Tufan warriors were modeling themselves on the figures of Vajrapani and *lokapalas* who were draped with a lion skin.⁷⁹ At this point our understanding of

⁷⁸ See *Shiruku rōdo dai bijutsu ten*, p. 159, pl. 174. Once more, I want to express my gratitude to Xie Minglang, who has actually seen this piece and was kind enough to provide photographs taken from the front and the side of the statue. Without these, I would not have been able to have a clear understanding of the side view of the figure.

⁷⁹ On early Tufan culture (the introduction of Zoroastrianism in the 3d–7th cc. and the conversion to Buddhism in the 7th–8th), see Wang Xiaofu 王小甫, *Tang Tufan Dashi zhengzhi guanxi shi* 唐吐蕃大食政治關係史 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1992), pp. 1–17, and Xie Jisheng 謝繼勝, “Jingang cheng Fojiao chuanru Tufan yu Zang zhuan Fojiao shuang-

Tufan and early Tibetan culture is still weak, so many questions will have to await answers.

CONCLUSION

If in searching for traces of cultural contacts between China and the West, one is even a little careless, one can easily misinterpret the data. Over the past century or two, Chinese, Japanese, and Western scholars, based on a growing number of archeological discoveries, have clarified the outlines of these contacts.⁸⁰ But the materials remain limited, and our understanding is inadequate: misinterpretations and distortions occur all too often.⁸¹ The present article, in attempting to trace the origins of the foreign elements on Tang warrior figurines, has fol-

shen tuxiang de lishi kaocha” 金剛乘佛教傳入吐蕃與藏傳佛教隻身圖像的歷史考察, *Hualin* 2 (2002), pp. 215–26.

⁸⁰ See for example, *Shi shiji qian de sichou zhi lu he dongxi wenhua jiaoliu* 十世紀前的絲綢之路和東西文化交流 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1992); *Xinjiang wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, Xinjiang wenwu kaogu xin shouhuo (1979–1989)* 新疆文物考古新收獲 (1979–1989) (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1995); *Xinjiang wenwu kaogu xin shouhuo (xu) (1990–1996)* 新疆文物考古新收獲續 (1990–1996) (Urumqi: Xinjiang meishu sheying chubanshe, 997); Sun Ji 孫機, *Zhongguo sheng huo* 中國聖火 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996); Lin Meicun 林梅村, *Xiyu wenming* 西域文明 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1995); *Han Tang xiyu yu Zhongguo wenming* 漢唐西域與中國文明 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998); *Gudao xifeng* 古道西風 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2000); Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, *Zhong gu Zhongguo yu wailai wenming* 中古中國與外來文明 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2001).

⁸¹ One of the most persistent of these is the assertion that a Roman legion established the Lijian 驪軒 Fortress at modern Yongchang 永昌 in western Gansu 甘肅. This particular misinterpretation has its origins in the fertile imagination of Homer H. Dubs, who in a slim monograph based on a lecture delivered before The China Society, London, in 1955, asserted that a Roman legion had been captured in battle and settled near Yongchang (Homer H. Dubs, *A Roman City in Ancient China* [London: The China Society, 1957]). While Dubs's study is based on a close familiarity with the sources, his conclusions are highly speculative and rest on not impossible but ultimately unsupported assumptions. They were picked up by a freelance Australian journalist, David Harris, who, with no training in the field, set out to prove Dubs's assertions and published his conclusions and adventures in *Black Horse Odyssey* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1991). In the wake of Harris's efforts, Yongchang village has come to believe that its inhabitants include descendants of Roman soldiers and has erected monuments to commemorate the story. There is even a “legion” of local residents who dress up as Roman legionnaires for local celebration. See Eric Hoh. “Lost Legion,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* January 14, 1999, pp. 60–62; Henry Chu. “Digging for Romans in China,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 2000; “Do Descendants of Roman Soldiers Live in Gansu?” *China Daily*, July 31, 1998.

In the absence of reliable evidence, serious scholars have not accepted Dubs's speculations. See Xing Yitian (Hsing I-tien 邢義田), “Handai Zhongguo yu Luoma diguo guanxi de zai jiantao (1985–1995)” 漢代中國與羅馬帝國關係的再檢討 (1985–1995), *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 15.1 (1997), pp. 1–31; idem, “Cong Jinguan xian Quanzhi Han jian he Luoma shiliao zai tan suowei Luoma ren jian Lijian cheng de wenti” 從金關懸泉置漢簡和羅馬史料再探所謂羅馬人建驪軒城的問題, *Gujin lunheng* 古今論衡 13 (2005), pp. 49–72; Zhang Defang 張德芳, “Handai quezheng, Handai Lijian yu Louma zhanfu wu guan” 漢簡確證漢代驪軒城與羅馬戰俘無關, in Hu Pingsheng 胡平生 and Zhang Defang, eds., *Dunhuang Xuanquan Hanjian shi cui* 敦煌懸泉漢簡釋粹 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2001), pp. 22–29.

lowed them all the way back to a Greece that was 10,000 miles and a thousand years away. In such an enterprise it is of course difficult to avoid misinterpretation. Who could believe that the club and the lion- or tiger-skin headgear found on Tang warrior figurines originated in the Mediterranean world of ancient Greece?

This article has by no means presented all the evidence. Yet from disparate clues it seems that one can discern the eastward migration of the elements that define the image of Heracles and their transformation and persistence in another cultural matrix. Because the influence of Greek art on Gandharan art has long been the subject of study and is generally recognized, I have dealt with it only briefly. I have chosen to place the emphasis on Buddhist art after it entered China; and Heraclan elements began to appear there in Buddhist sculpture, tomb art, and wall-paintings. The lion-skin headgear or the transformed version, the tiger-skin headgear, can be seen in pictures of *mahārājdevas*, *lokapalas*, and *gandharvas* from the fifth century down into the Tang dynasty. The club and the lion/tiger skin headgear appear simultaneously on the heads of Tang warrior figurines unearthed in Shanxi and Henan. The reappearance of these two elements together suggests that they could not have been coincidentally created by indigenous Chinese artisans. Rather, it is likely that they were influences transmitted from abroad. Also worth noting is that the original link between the club and lion skin and the image of Heracles has been severed; they have become independent accoutrements of an entirely different persona.

The figures possessing these two attributes are not the original Greek hero Heracles. Moreover, the hierarchical status of the figures to whom these attributes were assigned appears to have declined over time. Even so, regardless of whether it is a Vajrapani, *mahārājadeva*, *lokapala*, *vira*, *gandharva*, or the guardian of an ordinary modern tomb, their symbolic role – guardian or protector – remains largely the same as that of Heracles' original role in Greek myth. It was entirely possible for Heracles' lion-skin headgear to adapt to local custom and turn into a tiger-skin headgear. After the passage of so much time and distance, for the club to have remained basically unchanged is astounding. While many previous scholars have noted the lion- and tiger-skin headgear, the present article has concentrated on the heretofore little-noticed club in hopes of adding another point for future discussion.

If the transformed club and lion/tiger-skin headgear entered China in the wake of Buddhism, questions about the means, the route, and the timing of that migration naturally arise. Answering them will require

a comprehensive approach that looks at the dissemination of the art of different sects of Buddhism, regional variants, and workshops and tastes. This is beyond the scope of the present effort. Grotto sculpture and funerary objects belong to different art forms. Through what process did a guardian attendant of the Buddha become a tomb guardian of an ordinary individual? During the Wei-Jin and Sixteen States periods, Buddhism was already widespread in the Hexi region (modern Gansu and western Inner Mongolia), but in tombs there are no clear traces of Buddhist elements.⁸² From about the fifth or sixth century, almost simultaneously vestiges of the club and the lion/tiger skin-helmet appear on Buddhist sculptures in the Kizil Grottos (Xinjiang), the Maijishan Grottos at Tianshui (Gansu), and around Chengdu (Sichuan). In the case of Chengdu, where the club is found, no lion/tiger-skin helmets have been found. By the Sui and Tang periods, with the exception of the examples of the clubs and lion/tiger-skin headgear appearing together that are found in Changzhi (Shanxi) and Anyang (Henan), the bulk of the tiger/lion-skin headgear is found in the Hebei region (Nanhe 南和, Yuanshi 元氏, Xianxian 獻縣, Anguo 安國, Dingzhou 定州 and Tianjin 天津). In this area, one does not find the club.

The club and the lion/tiger-skin helmet are indeed peripheral elements in the design of Buddhist sculpture, but they should be an indication of the path of the dissemination of Buddhism. For example, at present there are, generally speaking, two theories of the early origins of Buddhist sculpture in the Sichuan region. One says that the chief source was the center of Buddhism at Jiankang 建康 (modern Nanjing 南京) in the lower reaches of the Yangzi River.⁸³ The other says that

⁸² There are differing views regarding this phenomenon. I generally accept those of Zheng Yan, in his article cited in n. 57, above.

⁸³ Yuan Shuguang 袁曙光, "Chengdu Wanfosi chutu de Liangdai shike zaoliang" 成都萬佛寺出土的梁代石刻造像, *Sichuan wenwu* 四川文物 1991.3, pp. 27–32; Yang Hong 楊泓, "Sichuan zaoqi Fojiao zaoliang" 四川早期佛教造像, in *Han Tang meishu kaogu yu Fojiao yishu* 漢唐美術考古與佛教藝術 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2000), pp. 283–90; Luo Shiping 羅世平, "Sichuan Nanchao fojiao zaoliang de chubu yanjiu" 四川南朝佛教造像的初步研究, in Wu Hong, ed., *Han Tang zhi jian de zongjiao yishu yu kaogu* 漢唐之間的宗教藝術與考古 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2000), p. 397–421; Li Yuqun 李裕群, "Shi lun Chengdu diqu chutu de Nanchao Fojiao shizaoxiang" 試論成都地區出土的南朝佛教造像, *WW* 2000.2, pp. 64–76; Zhang Xiaoma 張肖馬 and Lei Yuhua 雷玉華, "Chengdu shi Shangyejie Nanchao shike zaoliang" 成都市商業街南朝石刻造像, *WW* 2001.10, pp. 16–18. In his study of the origins of the stone grotto temples of Sichuan, Ding Mingyi 丁明夷 sees three primary sources: the Central Plain, Hexi and the Lower Yangzi. However, his citing of the Chengdu Wanfosi example as proof of Victor Segalen's theory of the Southern Dynasties capital of Jiankang as the origin is basically similar to Yang, Luo and Li. See his "Sichuan shiku gailun" 四川石窟概論, in *Su Bai xiansheng ba chi huadan jinian wenji* 宿白先生八秩華誕紀念文集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002) 2, pp. 463–66. For Segalen's views, see his *The Great Statuary of China*, trans. Eleanor Leveux (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1972), pp. 126–27.

Buddhism must have come through Henan or Qinghai, originating in Hexi or the “Western Regions,” and was even influenced by the Guanzhong 關中 region.⁸⁴ Whether the *vira* and *lokapalas* associated with the Buddhist sculptures of the Hexi, Guanzhong and Jiankang areas held clubs awaits further study. Regardless of which region first produced the same style of club as that found in Sichuan, it may help us understand the origins of Sichuan Buddhist sculpture.

⁸⁴ Wu Zhuo 吳焯, “Sichuan zaoqi Fojiao yiwu ji qi niandai yu chuanbo tujing de kaocha” 四川早期佛教遺物及其年代與傳播途徑的考察, *WW* 1992.11, pp. 40-50; Huo Wei 霍巍 and Luo Jinyong 羅進勇, “Minjiang shangyou xin chu Nanchao shike zaoxiang ji xiangguan wenti” 岷江上游新出南朝石刻造像及相關問題, *Sichuan daxue xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 四川大學學報(哲學社會科學版) 2001.5, pp. 91-99; Sun Hua 孫華, “Sichuan Mianyang Pingyangfu jun jue jueshen zaoxiang, jian tan Sichuan diqu Nanbei chao Fo Dao kanxiang de jige wenti” 四川綿陽平楊府君闕身造像兼談四川地區南北朝佛教道龕像的幾個問題, in Wu, ed., *Han Tang zhi jian*, pp. 89-137 (esp. 122-23, on the origins of the Buddhist niche icons in Sichuan).

HERACLES IN THE EAST

Table 1. Coins

TYPE	DATE	MINT	SITE OF FIND	COMMENTS, SOURCES
Alexander the Great; silver	ca. 325 BC	Myriandrus, Syria	Similar silver coins found at Taxila	Obverse: Alexander wearing lion-skin helmet; Verso: Zeus. <i>CA</i> , nos. 10-11
Bactria: Diodotus I, Euthydemus Agathokles; silver	250-230 BC 230-200 BC 190-180 BC		Bukhara, Uzbekistan	Obverse: King's head; Verso: Heracles w/ club and lion-skin helmet. <i>Uzbekistan</i> , figs. 44, 45
Bactria: Euthydemus I; silver	230-200 BC	Bactria		Obverse: head of Euthydemus I; Verso: Heracles w/ club and lion-skin helmet (fig. 11). <i>CA</i> , no. 70
Demetrius I; silver	200-190 BC			Obverse: Head of Demetrius I; Verso: Heracles w/ club and lion-skin helmet (fig. 12). <i>CA</i> nos. 20, 71
Thasos; silver	130 BC	Thrace	Reportedly Afghanistan	Obverse: Dionysus; Verso: Heracles w/ club and lion-skin helmet. <i>CA</i> no. 69
Scythian kings Spalahores and Vonones; copper	75-60 BC	Punjab, India		Obverse: Athena; Verso: Heracles w/ club and lion-skin helmet. <i>CA</i> no. 72
Scythian kings Spalyrises and Spalagadama; copper	30-75 BC	Punjab, India		Obverse: mounted king; Verso: seated Heracles w/ club. <i>CA</i> , no. 73
Early Kushan; King Hermaeus; copper	30-75 AD			Obverse: Bust of Hermaeus; Verso: standing Heracles holding club and lion skin. <i>CA</i> , nos. 34, 75.
Kushan King Huvishka; copper	126-163	Bactria		Obverse: mounted king; Verso: Standing Heracles holding club and lion skin.

Table 2: Bronze Sculpture

TYPE	DATE	SITE OF FIND	COMMENTS, SOURCES
Standing Heracles	4 th c. BC	Ai Khanum, Afghanistan	Nude Heracles: rt. hand bent toward head, left hand holds club. <i>SA</i> , p. 316
Standing Heracles	2 ^d –1 st c. BC	W. Afghanistan	Nude Heracles: rt. hand resting on hip, left resting on club. <i>CA</i> , no. 102
Standing Heracles	2 ^d –1 st c. BC	Nigrai, Peshawar Valley, Pakistan	Nude Heracles: left hand resting on hip, extended rt. probably originally rested on club, but club now missing. <i>CA</i> , no. 104
Standing Heracles	1 st c. BC–1 st c. AD	W. Afghanistan. Said to be same origin as previous item.	Heracles arms and legs spread. One arm broken off; perhaps originally held weapon. Other bears lion skin. <i>CA</i> , no. 103
Standing Heracles	2 ^d c. AD	Hatra, Syria	Nude Heracles: rt. hand holds club, left grasps lion skin. <i>Parthians</i> , pl. 59
Serapis-Heracles	2 ^d c. AD	Begram, Afghanistan	Nude Greek Serapis and Heracles combined in single body. On head is the underworld hat of Serapis, and in rt. hand is club of Heracles (fig. 13). <i>DAK</i> , fig. 97b

Table 3: Stone Sculpture

TYPE	DATE	SITE OF FIND	COMMENTS, SOURCES
Heracles?	5 th -4 th c. BC	Persepolis, Iran	Fragment of nude Heracles. One arm, partial body and leg. Remnant of lion's claw on chest. <i>TP</i> , fig. 48
Standing Heracles	ca. end 4 th to early 5 th	Chaika, Bulgaria	Nude Heracles: rt. hand holds club resting on right shoulder. Lion skin draped over left shoulder (fig. 14). <i>Popova</i> fig. 1
Mounted Alexander	ca. 320 BC	Sidon, Lebanon	Stone coffin Alexander constructed for King of Sidon; rt. side depicts Alexander in Heracles-style lion helmet, mounted on horse and attacking Persian rider. <i>AG</i> , pl. 4
Reclining Heracles	3 ^d -2 ^d c. BC	Near Tehran	Horizontally reclining nude Heracles carved on cliff wall. Rt. hand rests on ground holding remnant of an apple. Left hand rests on left thigh; club visible in background <i>SA</i> , pp. 434-435
Heracles and Antiochus I of Commagene shaking hands	69-34 BC	Arsameia on the Nymphaeus, below ND, Turkey	Nude Heracles: shaking hands w/ king with rt. hand; holding club w/ left. Lion skin hangs down behind left hand (fig. 15). <i>ND</i> , fig. 655
Seated Heracles	69-34 BC	ND, Turkey	Situated on e. altar of hall of the gods (?) at ND. Altered Heracles wearing pointed Persian hat; left hand holds club (fig. 16, 17, 18). <i>ND</i> , figs. 60, 87, 90
Seated Heracles	69-34 BC	ND, Turkey	Situated on e. altar of hall of the gods (?) at ND. Altered Heracles wearing pointed Persian hat; left hand holds club (fig. 16, 17, 18). <i>ND</i> , figs. 155-156
Standing Heracles	ca. 2 ^d c.	Side Museum, Turkey	Standing Heracles: rt. leg damaged; left hand supported on club and lion skin. <i>WS1</i>
Standing Heracles	ca. 2 ^d c.	Gate of Heracles, Ephesus, Turkey	Pillars on either side of gate have sculptures of nude Heracles draped in lion skin. <i>WS2</i>
Standing Heracles	ca. 2 ^d c.	Hatra, Syria	Nude Heracles: rt. hand damaged; left hand rests on club. Necklace about the neck (fig. 19). <i>DAK</i> , fig. 142

Table 4: Tang Pottery Warrior Figurines with Tiger-Head Helmet

SITE OF FIND	DATE	FIGURINE CHARACTERS	COMMENTS, SOURCES
Nanguan, Dingxian, Hebei	Early Tang	Animal-face helmet; belted; right hand resting on hip; left hand across chest as though holding weapon (probably wood but now rotted, leaving hand with an opening for grasping object). Entire figurine painted; helmet, shoulder-armor and legs orange-red; face and other parts brown.	Ht. 57.5 cm. <i>Wenwu ziliao congkan</i> 1982.6: 111, fig. 14.
Shaanxi, Zhaoling Wei Chi Jingde tomb	Tang: Xianqing 4 (659)	Wears tiger-head cap; tiger's eyes, ears, nose and teeth clearly distinguished. Light-blue shiny armor. Two chest rondelles are red; left hand on hip, rt. hand bent across chest as though holding a weapon	Li Xixing 李西興, Chen Zhichian 陳志謙, eds., <i>Zhaoling wenwu jinghua</i> 昭陵文物精華 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin meishu chubanshe, 1991), p. 46.
Houguo cun, Hexian, Hebei	Tang: Chuigong 4 (688)	Wears tiger-head helmet, with erect tiger ears and open mouth showing teeth. Tiger's face is ferocious. Warrior's eyes round and glaring; moustache curves upward; thick full beard; shoulders draped with skin forearms tied in front; wearing armor; waist belted; lower body covered w/ skirt; feet covered w/ round-toed boots. Left hand on hip and rt. elbow bent w/ hand in front of chest. Rt. hand has opening for grasping now-missing object. Left leg straight; rt. knee bent slightly outward.	WW 1993.6:22, fig. 3
Dong Jiaguo cun, Jia song xiang, Nanhe xian, Hebei	Tang: Chuigong 4 (688)	Figurine no. 11 has only head remaining; wears tiger-head helmet; both eyes round and glaring; ears erect; mouth open revealing teeth; full beard; angry eyes. Figurine 10 apparently belongs with this head. Body 73 cm high. Left hand holds long sword tapering towards lower end.	WW 1993.6:29, plate 3 l.

- Hebei, Yuan-shi xian, Dakong cun Tang: Chuigong 4 (688) Complete figurine head wearing tiger-shaped helmet; tiger's face fierce; open mouth and bared teeth. Warrior's face shows from the tiger's mouth. Both shoulders draped, and body armored. Rt. hand on hip; left hand holds short staff in front of chest. Waist belted. Right foot slightly bent; left straight. 河北省博物館, ed., *Hebei sheng chutu wenwu xuanji* 河北省出土文物選集, (Beijing: Wenwu, 1980), pl. 328.
- Hebei, Anguoshi, Liyuan cun ca. Chuigong 4 (688) Complete figure w/ tiger-head helmet; fierce tiger face with open mouth showing fangs. Warrior face seen in mouth of tiger. Warrior has knitted brows and glaring eyes, high nose and large mouth. Mustache on upper lip and straight beard on lower cheeks; expression severe. Wears body armor w/ flower-petal pattern and rondelles; shoulders draped and upper arms armored. Bottom half of figure missing. Height 62 cm *Wenwu chunqiu* 2001.3: 28, pl. 9:4.
- Hebei, Xianxian, Dongfantun cun Mid-Tang Tiger-head helmet; fierce tiger face w/ open mouth showing fangs; warrior face seen in mouth of tiger. *WW* 1990.5:28, pl. IV.1.
- Hebei, Tianjin Junliangcheng Tang Only head remains; prominent moustache; based on head size, body was large; head covered with tiger-head headgear. *KG* 1963.3:148, pl. 8:8.
- Shaanxi, Xi'an dong jiao, Hongqing cun Tang Intact three-color warrior figurine. Tiger-head headgear. Tiger's face ferocious; mouth open w/ bared teeth. Warrior's face appears from within the mouth of tiger's head. Paws attached to head crossed and tied beneath chin. Wears body armor; on either shoulder is image of tiger's head. Right hand on hip, left extends forward and probably once held weapon. Wearing boots. 陝西歷史博物館, ed., *San Qin guibao* 三秦瑰寶 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2001), p. 88.
- Henan, Luoyang shi Tang Intact three-color warrior figurine. Wearing body armor; on either shoulder is image of tiger's head. Left hand on hip; rt. extends forward and probably once held weapon. Wearing boots. Rt. foot slightly turned and stepping on bent head of ox. Left foot straight and standing on ox's body. Li Zhiyan 李知宴, ed., *Zhongguo taoci quanji* 中國陶瓷全集 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu, 1983) 7, pl. 82.

Provenance uncertain; held by Capital Museum, Beijing	Tang	Intact three-color warrior figurine. Tiger-head headgear. Tiger's face ferocious; mouth open w/ bared teeth. Warrior's face appears from within mouth of tiger's head. Warrior has full beard; wears body armor. Rt. hand bent across chest and originally held weapon. Rt. hand resting on long upright in front of the figure. Right knee slightly bent; one leg straight.	Li, ed., <i>Zhongguo taoci</i> 7, pl. 3.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used in tables

<i>AG</i>	Fox, <i>Alexander the Great</i> (cited at n. 19).
<i>CA</i>	Errington and Cribb, <i>Crossroads of Asia</i> (cited at n. 19)
<i>DAK</i>	John M. Rosenfield, <i>The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans</i> (New Delhi: 1967).
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