

Modern bracelets (Plate 34 & 35) from the tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Afghanistan confirm the connection of older trends with the modern ones. They look a lot like the openwork bracelets discovered from Taxila (Plate 7). They also resemble with the bracelets worn by Bodhisattva from Sahri Bahlol (Plates 21).

Conclusion:

Armlets, bracelets and bangles are displayed beautifully which signify their importance among the other jewelry items. The study of Gandhara sculptures signify that these items were worn by males and females of royal and common class alike. Armbands were highly decorated when depicted on the images of Bodhisattvas. Finger rings were infrequently worn. The minuteness, of those depicted, do not allow to study the details.

It should be noted that the designs of arm jewelry depicted in the Gandhara sculptures are the source of design for the present-day jewelry. Many of them still prevail not only in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and tribes of Afghanistan but they also circulated all over South Asia. Continuity of antique trends across the boundaries of South Asia indicates the appreciation of past skills and techniques.

The continuity of earlier designs and styles of arm jewelry, depicted in the Gandhara sculptures, in modern culture of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa establish the endurance of styles over centuries. The culture of modern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is still famous for the skill of jewelry. The Pakhtun culture remains distinct due to its connectivity with its ancient heritage serving as the symbol of their recognition.

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Comparative Analysis of the Gandhāran Floral Motifs from Butkara (I and III) and Takht-i-Bahi

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Abstract

The representation of floral motifs is deeply rooted in the arts and crafts since the prehistoric era. In South Asia, these motifs have long been used for the purpose of decoration as well as religious symbolism. The earliest representation of floral motifs in the region is assigned to the 3rd millennium BCE. For instance, the pottery from Mundigak in southern Afghanistan and Indus seals from Nausharo dated to the third millennium BCE depict Pipal leaf designs which later became a religious symbol in the South Asian Buddhist Art. Floral motifs were extensively used in the Buddhist art of Gandhara both for religious and ornamentation purposes. The present paper focuses on the stone sculptures unearthed from Butkara I and III (Swat) and Takht-i-Bahi (Mardan) depicting a variety of floral motifs. A detailed analysis of these motifs shows that many of the sculptures from the selected sites bear common motifs. However, each of the site also represent some unique motifs used for ornamentation or religious symbols.

Keywords: Floral Motifs, Butkara I, Butkara III, Takht-i-Bahi, Gandhara, Buddhist Art

Introduction

Floral motifs are deeply entrenched in South Asian art. We find them in every phase and in every period, whether it be in the early Buddhist sculptures, in the mediaeval paintings of Ajantā, in the elaborate architecture of the Hindus and Jains, or in the monumental structures of the Mughals (Marshall, 1960: 13-15). Floral motifs are used as a decorative element as well as being imbued with a range of symbolism, both religious and secular and those produced by the Buddhist school of Gandhāra bear the most detailed and exquisite floral representations. They are most commonly seen on stone panels that elaborately depict the biography of the Buddha.

The Buddhist school of Gandhāra represents a unique amalgam of South Asian and western styles of art and has been a subject of research and continuous debates for years. The ancient province of Gandhāra in the northwest frontier of the Indian subcontinent was comprised of the Peshawar Valley and the hilly areas of Swāt, Dīr, Buner and Bajaur. However, for cultural purposes its boundaries can be said to have extended up to the Kabul Valley, southern Afghānistān and the Potwar plateau of the province of Punjab, where the grand stupa of Manikyāla is situated (Hasan, 2013: 3). Owing to its important position on the trade routes connecting the Central/Western Asia, Iranian and Graeco-Roman worlds with the South Asian polities, this region received cultural influences from many directions (Ali & Qazi, 2008: 9; Vogel, 1953: 124-126).



Map 1. Map Showing location of the Selected Sites



Figure 1. Butkara I: General view of the structural remains



Figure 2. Butkara III: General view of the Buddhist stupas

The legacy of Hellenism was integrated with local traditions, thus creating a multi-cultural Hellenistic lexicon out of which was born the Gandhāra School of art – a unique blend of east and west. Although, this art has remained one of the main subjects of research and debates for years, there are still many important aspects that need proper attention. One such aspect is the representation of floral motifs on stone panels. A good number of such motifs have come from the Buddhist sites of Butkara I and III (Swāt) and Takht-i-Bhai (Mardān). The floral motifs of these sites are the focus of the present study.

Aims and Objectives

The present research focuses on the floral motifs found from three important sites, which include Butkara I and III in Swāt and Takht-i-Bhai in the Mardān District of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The aims of the present study are fourfold; firstly, to know about the religious significance and symbolic meanings of various floral motifs; secondly to highlight the common floral motifs found from the three selected Buddhist sites (i.e. Butkara I and III and Takht-i-Bhai); thirdly to investigate the unique floral motifs from the selected sites and lastly, to trace the origin and development of various floral motifs found from the selected sites. The study will not only help to understand the religious aesthetic meaning of the floral motifs depicted in the Buddhist art but also will throw light on the common and unique motifs used by the ancient artists in the Gandhara and Udiyana regions.

The floral motifs, being one of the most important features of the Buddhist Art of Gandhāra, were extensively used for ornamentation as well as religious symbolism. For instance, the lotus flower is a major Buddhist symbol of purity and renunciation. It represents the blossoming of wholesome activities, which when performed to completion, eventually allows a person to free him or herself from the suffering of cyclic existence. The lotus thrones upon which the deities sit or stand symbolize their divine origin (Beer, 2003: 13). The polygon of a stupa has a logical place as a symbol of an intermediary world of space, being fixed literally by the four, eight, sixteen or thirty-two directions of space. This concept of



Figure III. The World Heritage Site of Takht-i-Bahi, overlooking southeast

spatial orientation has given rise to the beautiful treatment of an expanded lotus flower with its eight, sixteen or thirty-two petals – a recurring feature of stupa-ornamentation (Irwin, 1980: 28). Similarly, in Tibetan Buddhist art, the branch of tree with a single stem with three fruits and leaves symbolizes the three jewels, i.e. *Buddha, Dharma and Sangha* (Beer, 2003: 33: 33).

Significance of the Research

Like other parts of the world floral motifs have also been used by the artists in the ancient Gandhara and Udiyana regions. But despite their religious and artistic significance, very limited research has been undertaken on these motifs. The book 'Art Greco-bouddhique du Gandhāra' by Alfred Foucher, is no doubt one of the most comprehensive works on the floral motifs of Gandhāra Buddhist art (Foucher, 1905: 218-222). However, for scholars not proficient in French, this monograph is not accessible. The Repertory of terms by Domenico Faccenna, and Anna Filigenzi is perhaps the best source for understanding the various terms of different Gandharan motifs. The present paper is an attempt to understand artistic, religious and symbolic meanings and importance of the floral motifs depicted in the Buddhist Art.

It is not possible to discuss the floral motifs from all of the excavated sites in Gandhara and Udiyana, the present paper therefor focuses on the motifs unearthed from the three sites (i.e. Butkara I and III and Takht-i-Bahi).

The selected sites (Map.1, Fig. II-III) have been extensively excavated by scholars from different institutions. The Buddhist site of Butkara I, lies about a kilometre north-east of Mingora on the left bank of the rivulet of Jambil Valley. The site is surrounded by other important archaeological sites including that of Loebanr and Butkara II (Hasan, 2013: 65-66). The name Butkara according to the scholars is the corrupted form of the Persian word "*Butkada*" meaning the house of Idols (Rehman, 1991: 152; Faccenna, 1980). Excavations at Butkara I, were carried out by the Italian Archaeological Mission to Pakistan from 1956 to 1962 (Domenico Faccenna, 1980). IsMEO published a series of excavations reports on Butkara I, but the most comprehensive report and memoir was published in 1964 (Domenico Faccenna & Taddei, 1964).

The second site, i.e. Butkara III lies astride on the sides ravine called Nari Khwar – one of the natural streams which drains the northern side of the Kato-Khpa hill and finally joins the Jambil, a tributary of the Swāt River (Rehman, 1991: 152). Excavations at the site were conducted by the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar in 1982, which were latter resumed in 1985 under the supervision of Abdur Rahman. These excavations revealed a large number of artefacts including 180 sculptures, which are now housed in the Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum (SSAQ) Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar.

The World heritage site of Takht-i-Bahi is located in District Mardān about 15 km to the northwest of Hothi, to the right side of Mardān-Swāt road. The site was for the first time discovered by General Court in 1936. It was later visited by many other amateur British Army officers and archaeologists including Sir Alexander Cunningham. Excavations at the site were first carried out by Sappers and Miners, which were later resumed by D.B. Spooner and Hargreaves (Spooner, 1911). Excavations at Takht-i-Bahi yielded thousands of archaeological objects including sculptures now lying in different Museums in Pakistan and abroad. But the most extensive collection of sculptures including those adorned with floral motifs, reported from this site, is now housed in the Peshawar Museum.

Floral motifs have been represented through different media and using different materials – most of which being perishable, have decayed and disappeared with the passage of time. For primary evidence, therefore, one has to rely mainly on sources such as sculptures, paintings and literature. The study of these motifs, which are also infused with a distinct cultural identity, help us to interpret the ancient past of the region. The panels depict floral motifs reported from the three selected sites have come from proper stratigraphic context and have been assigned different periods based on numismatic evidences and other associated artifacts.

Classification and Analysis

Most of the archaeological artefacts specially, the Buddhist sculptures are housed in different museums in and abroad, therefore, access to all these materials was not easy. Fortunately, the researchers had access to the most extensive collection from the three sites now housed in the Peshawar Museum, Peshawar, Mardān Museum and the SSAQ Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar. In addition, the published excavation reports and catalogues were also consulted in the present study.

A total of 416 stone sculptures adorned with floral motifs were selected from three sites. Of these, 168 floral motifs were selected from Butkara I, 145 motifs from Butkara III and 103 from Takht-i-Bahi. In nearly every style, motifs are derived from the plant world to produce various patterns. Leaves and flowers either singly or combined have been adopted in almost all schools of art. For this purpose, the artists have selected some leaves that have specific form and shapes, which are further developed into basic ornaments in accordance with rules of rhythm and symmetry. The floral motifs (flowers and leaves) selected from the three sites may be classified into the following categories:

- **Lanceolate Leaves** (Fig. IV): Lanceolate leaves were one of the most common floral motifs used from all the selected sites. A total of 142 lanceolate leaves were noticed from the three sites of these, the most extensive number (i.e. 70) have come from Butkara III. Butkara I reveal 45 and 27 were

reported from Takht-i-Bahi.

- **Lotus** (Fig. V): A total of 130 panels adorned with lotus motifs were noticed from the three sites during the present study. Of these, 52 have come from Butkara I, 51 from Butkara III and 27 from Takht-i-Bahi.

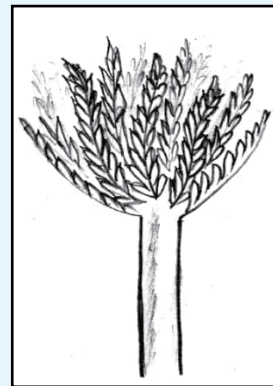


Figure IV. Lanceolate Branch (Sketch by the Senior Author)

- **Acanthus (Leaves/Scrolls)** (Fig. VI): Acanthus leaves motifs is placed in the 3rd position in terms of number. The three sites reveal 101 acanthus scrolls and leaves. Forty-eight out of the total number were reported from Butkara I, twenty-eight from

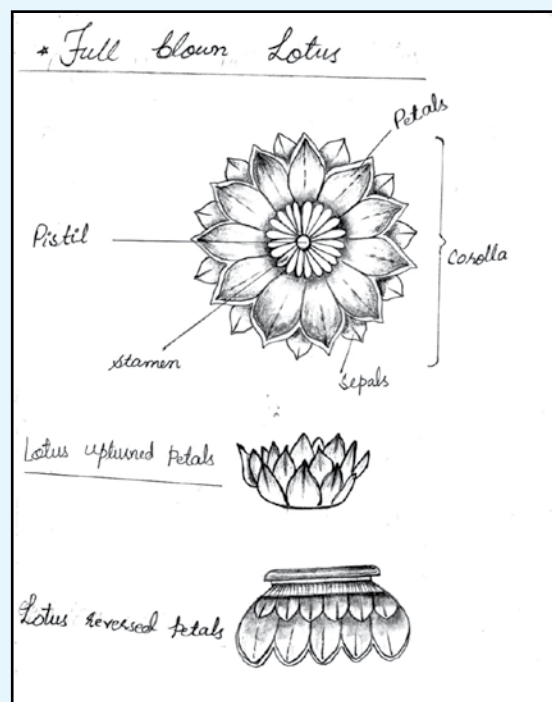


Figure V. Lotus in different form (Sketch by the Senior Author)

Butkara III and twenty-five from Takht-i-Bahi site including the two acanthus scrolls.

- **Rosettes (Fig. VII):** The present study has revealed a total of 56 rosette motifs. Of these, 27 have come from Butkara I, 17 including three scrolls from Takht-i-Bahi and 12 from Butkara III.

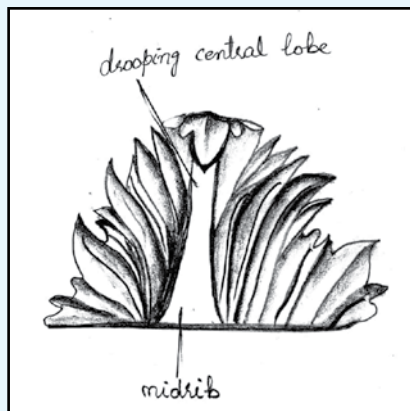


Figure VI. Acanthus Leaves (Sketch by the Senior Author)

- **Vine (Leaves/Scrolls/Shoots) (Fig. VIII):** A total of 31 vine motifs were noticed from the Butkara I and III sites during the present study. The former revealed 10 vine scrolls and 12 shoots, while the latter 3 leaves and 6 scrolls. No Vine motif was noticed from the Takht-i-Bahi collection exhibited in the Peshawar and Mardān Museums.

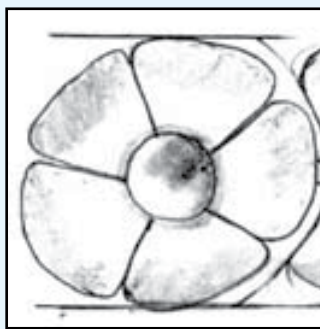


Figure VII. Rosette (Sketch by the Senior Author)

- **Leaf-and-dart pattern (Fig. IX):** Analyses of the stones panels from the three sites revealed a total of 24 Leaf-and-dart pattern. Of these, the most extensive number i.e. 22 have come from Butkara I, while the remaining two sites revealed one each.

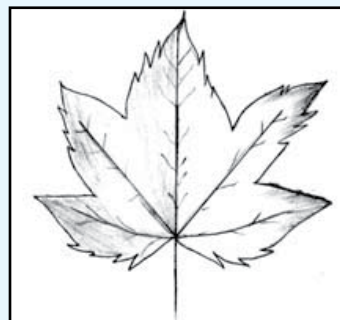


Figure VIII. Vine Leaf: Sketch by the Author

- **Trifid calices (Fig. X):** A total of 23 stone panels adorned with Trifid calices were reported from Butkara III and Takht-i-Bahi. Nineteen out of the total Trifid calices motifs have come from

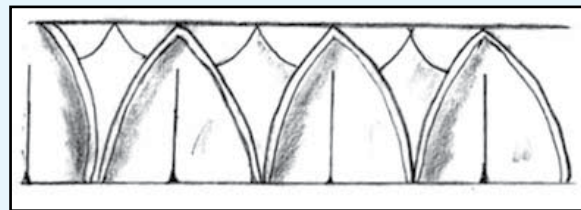


Figure IX. Leaf and Dart Pattern: Sketch by the Author

Butkara III and four from Takht-i-Bahi. No traces of Trifid calices were found from Butkara I.

- **Flame palmette/ honey suckle plant (Fig. XI):** A total of 15 Flame palmette/ honey suckle

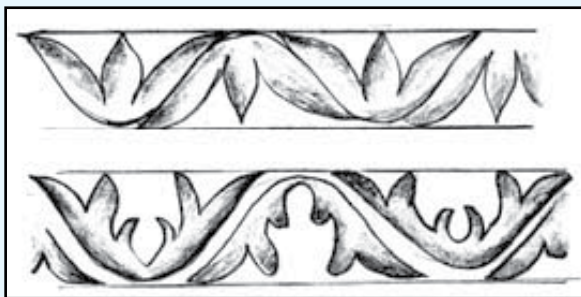


Figure X Trifid Calcite: Sketches by the Author

plant were reported from the three during the present study. Ten out of the total have come from Butkara III. Butkara I revealed three and only two of the said motifs were reported from the selected collection of Takht-i-Bahi.

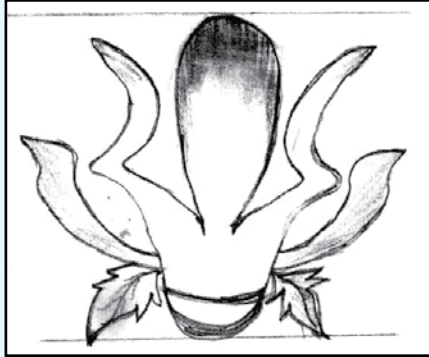


Figure XI. Flame Palmette/Honey Suckle: Sketch by the Author

- **Pipal (Leaves/Scrolls)** (Fig. XII): The representation of Pipal leaves and scrolls was noticed from Butkara III and Takht-i-Bahi. A total of 14 such motifs (seven from each site) were reported during the present study.

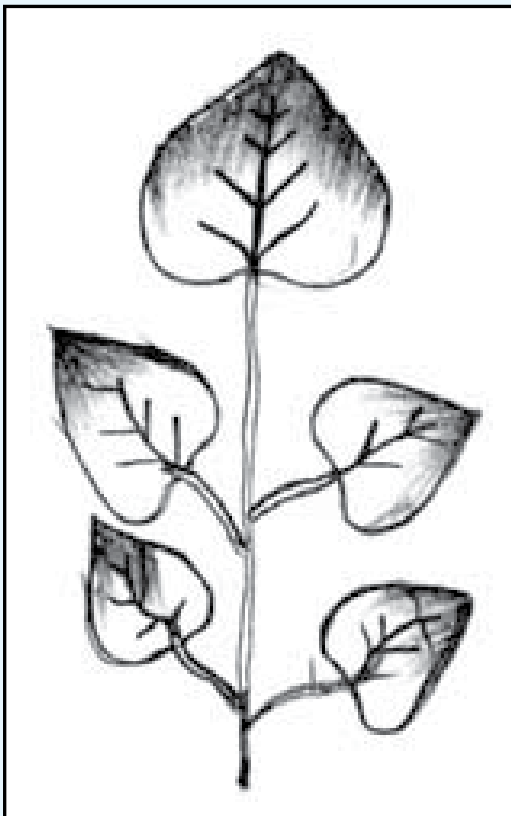


Figure XII. Pipal Branch: Sketch by the Author

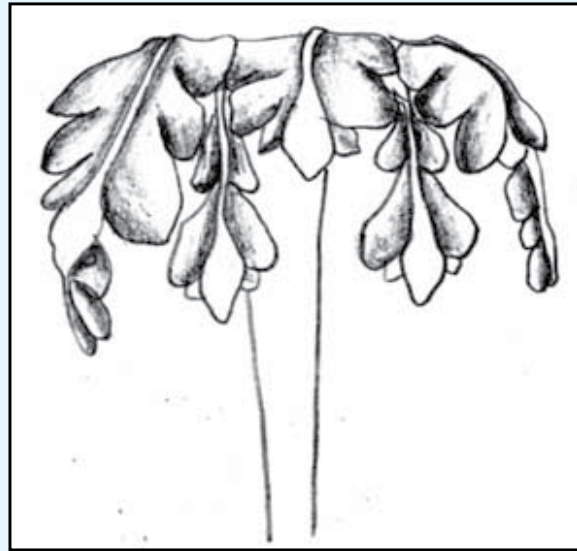


Figure XIII. Lobate Leaves: Sketch by the Author

- **Lobate leaves** (Fig. XIII): The lobate leaves motif was very exceptional. Only one panel from Takht-i-Bahi depicts this design.
- **Rosette and Sheaf** (Fig. XIV): A total of 7 rosette and sheaf design were identified from Butkara I and III sites during the present study. Of these the former contains five and the latter only two. No evidences of this floral motif were reported from the Takht-i-Bahi collection housed in the Peshawar and Mardān Museums.

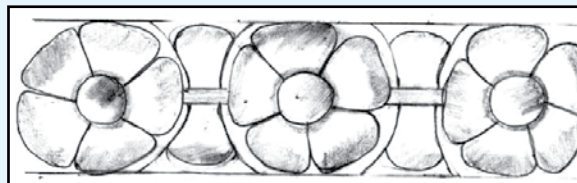
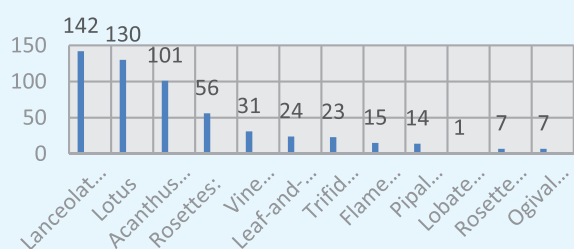


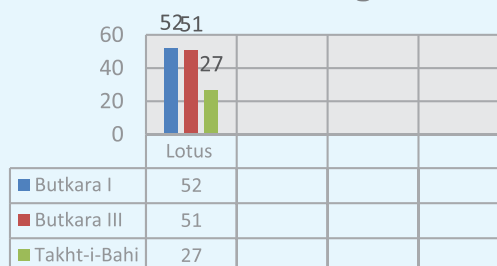
Figure XIV. Rosette and Sheaf: Sketch by the Author

Graphs Showing the Types Distribution of the Floral Motifs from the Selected Sites

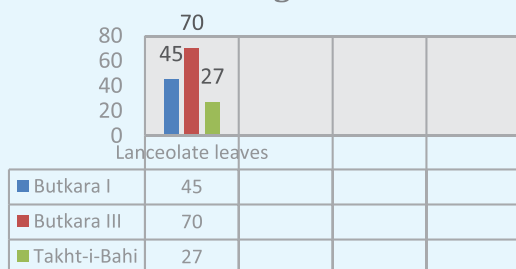
Graph showing types of floral motifs from Butkara I, III and Takht-i-Bahi sites



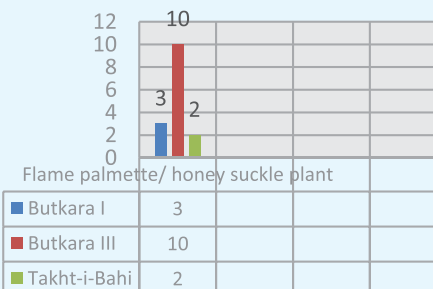
Graph Showing Distribution of the Lotus Design



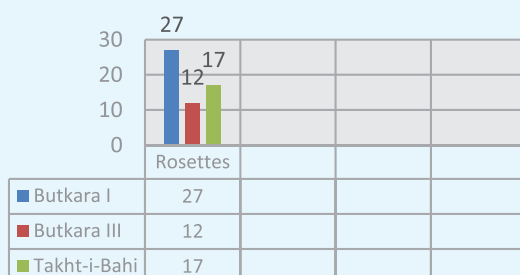
Graph Showing the Distribution of Lanceolate Design



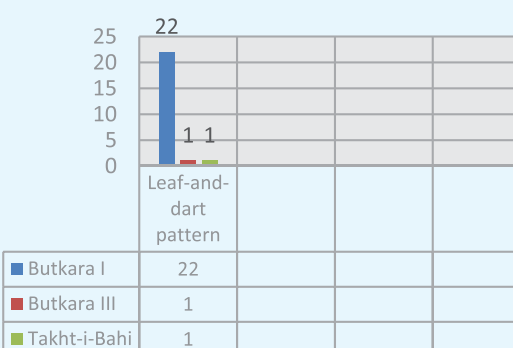
Graph showing Distribution of Flame Palmette/ Honey Suckle Plants



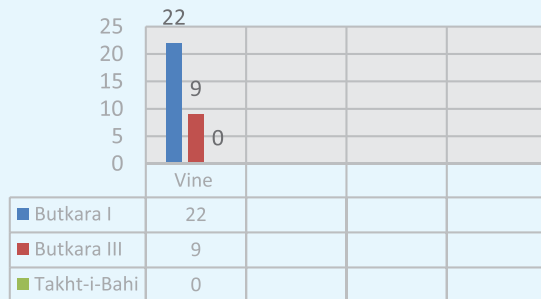
Graph showing Distribution of the Rosette Motif



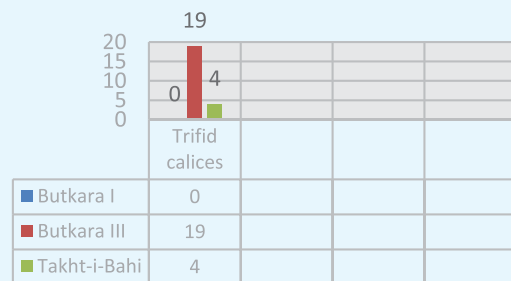
Graph showing Distribution of Leaf and Dart Pattern



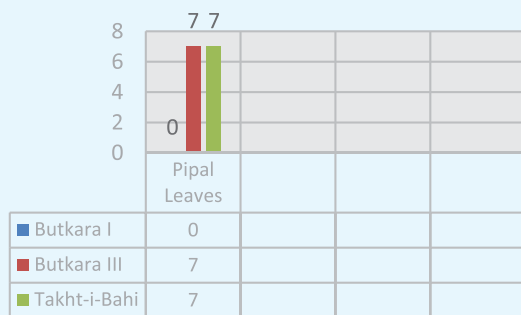
Graph showing Distribution of Vine Leaves/Scrolls and Shoots



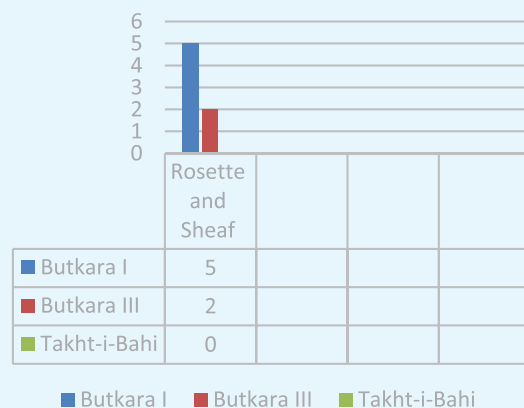
Graph showing Distribution of Trifid Calices



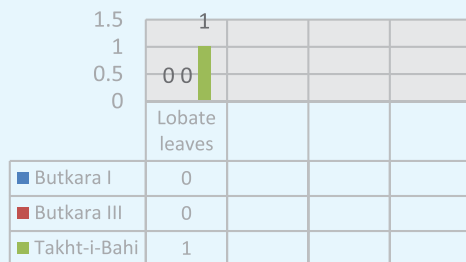
Graph showing Distribution of Pipal Leaves



Graph Showing Distribution of Rosette and Sheaf



Graph showing Distribution of Lobate Leaves



Analysis and Discussion

After a detailed documentation of the floral motifs from the three sites, it was noticed that the three sites do share many common floral motifs. However, some of the motifs are unique and are confined to one or two sites. For instance, the common floral motifs from the three sites include lanceolate leaves, acanthus leaves, lotus, rosettes, flame palmate, leaf-and-dart pattern. Of the remainders, the Vine leaves/scrolls were reported from Butkara I and III; the pipal leaves and trifid calcite from Butkara III and Takht-i-Bahi. While lobate leaves were identified from Takht-i-Bahi collection. The full blown upward or inward lotus is used to represent the Buddha's throne. In some reliefs the Buddha is seated under the lanceolate branched trees. The acanthus and lanceolate leaves are mostly used to adorn the cornices of architectural elements. The top of the arches is decorated with flame palmate.

The garlands reported from BK I and III and Takht-i-Bahi have pipal, grapes, lanceolate, acanthus and lotus decoration separated by different decorative bands. At Butkara I, the door jambs are beautifully decorated with rosette-and-sheaf pattern, rosettes, rosettes scroll, vine branches and vine scroll, and some fragments of a frieze decorated with leaf-and-dart molding. The sculptures from Butkara I, are unique in terms of decorative elements. For instance, no. 3744 (Fig. XV) is Corinthian capital, the abacus is decorated with full blown lotus flowers on slender stems on each side; right one has bilobed petals and left has cut petals design. The *Kalathos* (basket) is adorned with cauliculus and acanthus leaves. Another relief fragment of green schist depicts overlapping lanceolate leaves, unique specimen is no. 3212 (Fig. XVI), the halo behind the Buddha's head is decorated with five-petalled flowers, are seven in numbers (Faccenna, 1962: 11). The third important sculptures with unique floral motif is no. 6579, (Fig. XVII) preserves a part of standing Buddha with beamed lotus-shaped halo over which are four half blown lotus flowers (Faccenna, 1962: 11).



Figure XV. (After Faccenna 1962)
Butkara I: Corinthian capital, the abacus is decorated with full blown lotus flowers (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)



Figure XVI. (After Faccenna 1962)
Butkara I: Halo behind the Buddha's head is decorated with five-petalled flowers (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)



Figure XVII (After Faccenna 19762) Butkara I: Buddha with beamed lotus-shaped halo over which are four half blown lotus flowers. (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)



Figure XIII. (After Faccenna 19762)
Butkara I: female head having three rosettes on each cheek. (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)



Figure XIX. (After Faccenna 19762) Butkara I: A female figure having hair knot with a garland of flowers (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)



Figure XX. (After Faccenna 19762) Butkara I: A standing female figure having a garland of full blown rosettes on her head (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)



Figure XXI. (After Faccenna 19762) Butkara I: A female figure having wavy hair bound by a garland with two flowers (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)



Figure XXII. (After Faccenna 19762) Butkara I: Bed sheet adorned with bands of vine and lotus scroll (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)

In the Butkara volume III, the pattern is described as a rosette and sheaf. The pattern is common, being incorporated into textile, jewelry, and carpentry crafts of Gandhāra. The introduction of these elements in the relief expresses local values, customs, and belief that are, however, congenial to the Buddhist themes. Some of the female figures reported from Butkara I, have unique floral decoration like no.1716 (Fig. XVIII), a female head having three rosettes on each cheek and hair are bound by rows of flowers or beads. Another female figure i.e. no. 194 (Fig. XIX), having hair knot with a garland of flowers and a large ornament in the shape of a lotus flower on the left side of the head (Faccenna, 1964). Figure 1710 (Fig. XX), a standing female figure having a garland of full blown rosettes on her head. A female head (no.2207) (Fig. XXI), having wavy hair bound by a garland with two flowers (Faccenna, 1964: 13). A relief showing Maya's dream in which the queen is lying on bed covered with bed sheet adorned with bands of vine and lotus scroll no. 4207 (Fig. XXII), reported from BK I (Faccenna, 1964). Male figures emerging from an acanthus leaves, for instance, no.1507 (Fig. XXIII), and vine shoots having drilled holes in the leaves such as no.70, are also unique representation in Butkara I reliefs.

The reliefs reported from BK III are also significant. A panel showing Nagaraja emerging from full blown lotus having four petals of the corner are larger than the others and the middle one is smaller no. BK III 1982-1-197 (Fig. XXIV) (Khan, 2015: 53). Some of the panels from Butkara III comprise two or three compartments with different decoration, for instance no. BKIII 1985-1-180 (Fig. XXV), a rectangular panel comprises three compartments separated by Indo-Persepolitan column. Each section has figures in arches. The frame of first arch (right side) is decorated with a row of opposite scale and the central and left has bead and reel design. The tympanums of first and middle are filled with four petalled rosettes and the left with a pipal leaf. The cornice is adorned with a row of reverse rounded petals (Khan, 2015: 13). The undulating garlands reported from all the sites, but those reported from Butkara III are very exclusive and unique. These garlands are divided into different sections having multi floral designs. For example, no. BKIII 1985-1-148 (Fig. XXVI) representing a garland, which is divided into five sections by four decorated bands on regular intervals. The ribbons from right to left; the first one has a row of twisted



Figure XXIII. (After Faccenna 19762) Butkara I: Male figures emerging from an acanthus leave (Courtesy by ISMEO Italian Mission in Pakistan)

beads, (second and fourth) have a row of opposite trifid calices and third has a row or ovate leaves pattern. The lower right curve has strands of opposite pointed leaves. The upper right curve has pipal leaves, the lower central curve has overlapping lanceolate leaves. The upper curve has overlapping rosettes and the lower left curve has twisted beaded bands within oblique plain band motifs. The knotted bands are falling to the ground with the ends turned up. At the bottom of the central dip a bunch comprises a lotus bud, open lotus with reverse petals and grapes are hanging by their stalks (Khan, 2015: 57).

Rectangular panels having beautiful full-blown lotus with prominent pistil, stamens petals and sepals are unique representations on Butkara III reliefs, which can be seen on BKIII 1985-1-119 (Fig. XXVII) (Khan, 2015: 59). Panel under lunette arches (BKIII 1985-1-104, (Fig. XXVIII) carved with volute carinated arch. The registers are separated by dividing arches decorated with row of trifid calices alternating vertical and reverse and enclosed by vertical jambs decorated with vine



Figure XXIV. Butkara III: panel showing Nagaraja merging from full blown lotus (Courtesy of SSAQ Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar)



Greek god Dionysos and Female Attendants (Butkara III, Swat)

Figure XXV. Butkara III: Panel showing bead and reel design (Courtesy of SSAQ Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar)

scrolls. The upper lunette is filled with palmette and vertical tuft (honeysuckle plant and hanging scrolls of vines). The outer frame is embellished with saw-tooth motifs (Khan, 2015: 59).

The panels decorated with floral motifs reported from Takht-i-Bahi are also worth mentioning. For example, a beautiful panel representing Triratna or the three jewels arranged in a row and each bejeweled with 10-petalled rosettes having pistil and the chakra decorated with full blown lotus flower placed on the rectangular pedestal no. PM_02845 (Fig. XXIX). Accession no. PM_01102 (Fig. XXX), a stupa with elegantly engraved floral and geometrical designs. The dome is decorated with reverse bordered ogival leaves, the second portion with row of opposite triangle filled with parallel lines. The third fragment of the same depiction has row of trifid calices and last portion shows row of saw-teeth. A unique Stone water flask from Takht-i-Bahi, no. PM_00500 (Fig. XXXI), depicts with floral designs. The lower band is adorned with row of bordered ogival leaves pattern, the middle band with rosette having elaborated pistil. Other unique panels from Takht-i-Bahi include PM_01110), (Fig. XXXII), a broken fragment showing tangent rosette with pointed petals connected with each other and (PM_00999, (Fig. XXXIII), panel depicts Buddha, standing on a lotus throne.

The floral motifs reported from Takht-i-Bahi are from different periods. Among the selected sculptures and panels, 22 (i.e. PM_00868, 00954, 00999, 01011, 01063, 02713, 01925, 02828, 02829, 02832, 02844, 02845, 02929, 02973, 02974, 02981, 02999, 03020, 3037, 03120, 03129, 03254) are dated to 2nd to 3rd century A.D. While four (i.e. PM_00004, 00044, 00098, 00660) are assigned to the 3rd – 4th century CE. Rest of panels from Takht-i-Bahi depicting floral motifs having been received either as donations or confiscated materials, are yet to be assigned proper dates. The panels selected from Butkara III collection have been assigned to 1st-3rd century CE. While those from Butkara I, are of differed periods.

The most common floral designs dated to 2nd/3rd century CE from the three selected sites are: acanthus leaves, lanceolate leaves, lotus, Bodhi tree which also



Figure XXVI. Butkara III: Garland decorated with multi floral designs (Courtesy of SSAQ Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar)



Figure XXVII. Butkara III: Panel adorned with a full-blown lotus with prominent pistil between two Pilasters (Courtesy of SSAQ Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar)



Figure XXVIII Butkara III: arches decorated with row of trifid calices alternating vertical and reverse (Courtesy of SSAQ Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar)

continued in the succeeding periods i.e. 3rd and 4th century CE. The panels found at Butakara I and Bukara III are exceptional and very fine in terms of decoration. Taking the example of garland reported from the three sites, which is different in decoration. The garlands reported from Takht-i-Bahi have single decorative pattern; while the floral designs on the garland from Butkara III are more diverse. The garland of Butkara III are adorned with lanceolate leaves, rosettes, lotus flower, trifid calices, pipal leaves, vine leaves and leaf-and-dart pattern separated by decorated bands. The lotus flowers depicted on the panels is either close, half opened or full blown. Vine leaves are represented in some panels of the said sites in the form of vine leaves and vine scroll. But vine shoots and vine leaves having drilled holes are exceptional in Butkara I. The rosettes are also depicted in different designs. Some of them are four petalled, some five and some seven to eight having clear



Figure XXIX. Takht-i-Bahi: Triratna arranged in a row and each bejeweled with 10-petalled rosettes (Courtesy, DOAM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

Figure XXX. Takht-i-Bahi: stupa model with elegantly engraved floral and geometrical designs (Courtesy, DOAM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)



Figure XXXI. Takht-i-Bahi: Water flask decorated with floral motifs (Courtesy, DOAM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)



Figure XXXII. Takht-i-Bahi: A Stone broken fragment showing tangent rosette with pointed petals (Courtesy, DOAM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)



Figure XXXIII. Takht-i-Bahi: A stone Panel depicts Buddha, standing on a lotus throne (Courtesy, DOAM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

sepal, stamens and pistil. Lanceolate leaves are used to decor the cornices as well as the trees that covered the seated Buddha. The cornices of rectangular panels are also decorated with leaf-and-dart pattern. Flame palmettes are used to adorn the top of arches. The garlands are adorned with the all mentioned floral motifs. Correspondingly, visual analysis found likeness in floral elements, element character, compositional pattern and principle designs. Perhaps the one reason that the floral motifs were almost always applied by the craftsmen as they were inspired and fascinated by the beautiful elements of flowers and leaves because the floral motifs dominate the carvings and add attraction and beauty in it.

Conclusion

A total of 416 panels depicting floral motifs were selected and analyzed during the present research. Most of these panels are dated from the 2nd - 4th Century CE. Statistical analysis of the sculptures from the three selected sites shows that 313 floral motifs out of 416 have come from Butkara I and III. While Takht-i-Bahi site reveals lesser number of floral motifs.

The selected panels from the three sites depict a variety of floral motifs, which include lanceolate leaves, acanthus leaves, lotus, rosettes, flame palmate, Leaf-and-dart pattern, vine leaves, vine scrolls, pipal leaves, lobate leaves and Trifid calices. Except the last four motifs, the remaining designs found from all the three sites but in different ratio.

The exceptional decoration was noticed from Butkara III i.e. garlands embellished with all types of floral motifs i.e. lanceolate leaves, rosettes, lotus flower, trifid calices, pipal leaves, vine leaves and leaf-and-dart pattern separated by decorated bands. While among those reported from Butkara I, the female figures face and head elaborated with rosettes is incomparable. While the most common architectural elements adorned with floral motifs include Corinthian and Persepolitan columns, pilasters, capitals, carinated arches and medallions and cornices.

The vine leaves, scroll, and shoots were found confined to Butkara I and III, the pipal leaves and

scroll were found from Takht-i-Bahi and Butkara III. The lobate leaves were noticed only from Takht-i-Bahi; while the Trifid calices came from Takht-i-Bahi and Butkara III. The absence of certain motifs from these sites may be due to the different environmental condition, religious sects and the chronology of the sites. The versatility in floral motifs from Butkara I and Butkarha III may be because of the abundance vegetation in Swāt that can still be seen in the region.

Analysis of the data collected from the three sites reveal that the floral motifs from Butkara I and Butkara III are more sophisticated as compare to those from Takht-i-Bahi. This may be because the earlier sites were occupied for a longer span of time or because of the access to the limited materials from the former site. Apart from the Peshawar Museum Peshawar and Mardān Museum, a large number of the Buddhist sculptures are presently house in different other Museums of the world including the Lahore Museum, Calcutta Museum and the British Museum, London.

Floral motifs were used in the Buddhist Art of Gandhāra, for both religious and decorative purposes. The lotus has been a symbol of purity since before the time of the Buddha. In Buddhist art, a fully blooming lotus flower signifies enlightenment; while a closed bud represents a time before enlightenment (Brien, 2017). The practice of depicting the deities on the lotus-seat, lotus-throne or lotus-pedestal signifies that the feet of the divine beings do not touch the earth. The lotus thrones upon which the deities sit or stand symbolize their divine origin (Beer, 2003: 13). In Tibetan Buddhist art, the branch of tree with a single stem with three fruits and leaves symbolizes the three jewels, i.e. *Buddha*, *Dharma* and *Sanghā* (Beer, 2003: 33: 33). Vine and lotus scroll have also been used for ornamentation. This example can be notice on one of the reliefs from Butkara I, showing Maya's dream, lying on bed covered with bed sheet embellished with bands of vine and lotus scroll. This type of ornamentation with different types of floral motifs is also still in practice. Similarly, the rosettes motifs were used to adorn the architectural elements as well as the sculptures. At Butkara I, these motifs are used to embellish the female figure faces; while the garlands on the head of female figures are for beautification.

Representation of tree is yet another important floral motif found from the three sites. In the Buddhist tradition, several different trees play a critical role in the life of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, most notably at the moments of his birth, his enlightenment, and his death. And in particular, the site of the tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, a pipal tree in Bodh Gaya, India, is still revered today as the locus of his spiritual awakening due to its powerful spiritual symbolism. According to Buddhist legend, Queen Maya, the mother of the prince, gave birth to her child (Siddhārtha) in a miraculous manner in a grove of trees at Lumbini. When she knew that her time was due, she grasped a branch tree with her right hand, and the baby emerged from her right side. The leaves of this tree more closely resemble the acanthus leaves of Greco-Roman sculpture than the simple oval leaves of a teak tree. He is believed to have remained under the tree in a state of deep meditation for several days before attaining *nirvana* and becoming the Buddha. Thus, the tree also became known as the Bodhi tree, or the tree of enlightenment (Mcarthur, 2015: 12-24).

Apart from the sculptures and architectural elements, floral motifs were also used to decorate utensils. The best example has come from the Takht-i-Bahi that has revealed a stone water flask decorated with bordered ogival leaves.

Many of the symbols of Buddhism were not Buddhist inventions, but the common property of all Indic religions. This interchange of symbolism is also seen in the various panels representing Maya, the mother of the Buddha, seated or standing upon a lotus flower springing from a vase, while on either side above her an elephant bathes her from a vase held in its trunk. No doubt, as M. Foucher says, this was meant by the sculptor to symbolize the nativity of the Blessed One. But to many generations of artists before the Buddha's time, it had meant the miraculous birth witnessed every morning when Ushas rose from the cosmic ocean, and the mystic Brahmā lotus, the Creator's throne, unfolded its rosy petals (Havell, 1920:31-33).

The present study measured the types of floral motifs, design their principal designs, compositional patterns, and forms of various carved components such as on panels, garlands, statues, thorns, frames, stupas, pilasters as well as those depicted above doors and cornices. The floral motifs were categorized into eleven major categories.

The most common motifs from the three selected sites as lotus, rosettes palmette, pipal, lanceolate, acanthus but their modes of depiction are different. For instance, there is no evidence of rosettes carving on the face or turban of sculptures from Takht-i-Bahi like those found at Butkara sites. Secondly, no traces of floral motifs on utensils was noticed from Butkara sites. While the Takht-i-Bahi site did reveal such motifs.

In summary, many of these floral motifs from the elected sites are deeply rooted in the South Asian cultures and thus, were transmitted from one to another generation without any distortion or alteration. While others were transformed by the artists according to the requirement. The present analysis of the floral motifs suggests that the carving panels from the 2nd to the 4th century CE illustrated a variety designs attributes and floral motifs and depict the craftsman's expression and creativity. This means that the transformation of the floral motif is an indicator in identifying a variety of elements that describe the craftsmen aptitudes and competencies in a certain era. Thus, the floral motifs derived from Buddhism became the most dominant motifs. The transformations of these floral motifs were also influenced by the craftsman's skill, natural elements, surroundings, religious belief and thoughts. Local craftsmen created floral motifs on carved components that represent different expressions based on their own creativity and artistic style yet maintaining a distinctive beauty. These key motifs originated from Buddhism have important symbolic meanings in their context. And the versatility in floral motifs from Butkara I and Butkara III may be because of the abundance vegetation in Swāt that is still seen in Swāt region.

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