

Remarks on a Crowned Man from Haḍḍa Reconstructing a Lost Identity

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Questo articolo tratta di una testa in stucco proveniente dal sito monastico buddhista di Bagh Gai a Haḍḍa, nella provincia di Jalalabad in Afghanistan. La testa, rinvenuta parzialmente danneggiata e conservata ora presso il Museo di Kabul, rappresenta un giovane uomo imberbe, il quale indossa una particolare corona lobata. Ogni lobo è decorato a rilievo con mezza rosetta circondata da bordo liscio ed è cinto attorno alla fronte dell'uomo da un diadema decorato con gemme preziose. L'articolo propone di identificare il personaggio rappresentato in questo ritratto scultoreo con un principe locale o un governatore della regione di Haḍḍa, riportando dapprima una possibile ricostruzione del contesto archeologico dell'oggetto e, in un secondo momento, una comparazione iconografica e stilistica della corona lobata. Il contributo ipotizza, come cronologia di riferimento, il periodo del III o IV secolo EC, quando l'area di Haḍḍa si trovava sotto la dinastia kushano-sasanide, che gestiva il territorio orientale per conto dell'impero sasanide.

The article discusses a stucco head from the Buddhist monastic site of Bagh Gai at Haḍḍa, in the Afghanistan province of Jalalabad. The head was found partially damaged and is now stored at the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul. It depicts a young beardless man wearing a special lobate crown. Each lobe is decorated with a half-rosette and is tied around his forehead by a diadem, decorated with precious gems. The article argues that the young man represented in this sculptural portrait was a local prince or governor from the region of Haḍḍa. It first advances a possible reconstruction of the original archaeological and iconographic context of the object; in a second moment, it offers a set of iconographic and stylistic comparisons for the lobate crown. The article proposes to identify the 3rd-4th century CE as the historical moment of reference for this object, when the area of Haḍḍa was under the rule of the Kushano-Sasanian dynasty, who managed the eastern territories of the Sasanian empire.

Introduction

Among the stucco objects retrieved from Haḍḍa, a cluster of Buddhist monasteries near the city of Jalalabad in present-day Afghanistan, is a small yet remarkable head depicting a youthful man with large open eyes, straight nose and a benevolent smile, turning slightly towards his left (Fig. 1). Ring-shaped earrings hang from his long earlobes, one of which is damaged. He is wearing a crown, which sits comfortably atop the figure's head; few strands of hair are visible at the sides, over the tip of the ears. The bottom band of the crown is decorated with a row of baguette-cut stones set within a bezel alternating with *cabochons*. Semicircular lobes spring from this band and each of them is decorated with half a rosette within a flat fillet. Vertical lines were painted in red pigment on the fillet. A disc-shaped object is placed horizontally on top of the