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THE
STÛPA OF BHARHUT:
A BUDDHIST MONUMENT
ORNAMENTED WITH NUMEROUS SCULPTURES
ILLUSTRATIVE OF
BUDDHIST LEGEND AND HISTORY
IN THE
THIRD CENTURY B.C.

Rep

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"In the sculptures and inscriptions of Bharhut we shall have in future a real landmark in the religious and literary history of India, and many theories hitherto held by Sanskrit scholars will have to be modified accordingly."—
DR. MAX MÜLLER.

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Cunningham
Stûpa of Bharhut

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C.—ANIMALS.

The animals represented in the Bharhut Sculptures are of two classes, the Natural and the Fabulous. The latter, however, are limited to three varieties, an Elephant with a fish-tail, a Crocodile with a fish-tail, and a winged Horse; while the former comprises no less than 14 Quadrupeds, 6 Birds, 1 Snake, 1 Fish, 1 Insect, 1 Crocodile, 2 Tortoises, 1 Lizard, and 1 Frog. The quadrupeds include the Lion, Elephant, Horse, Rhinoceros, Wild Boar, Bull, Deer, Wolf, Monkey, Cat, Dog, Sheep, Hare, and Squirrel. The birds comprise the Cock, Parrot, Peacock, Goose, Wild Duck, and the Quail. The Snakes and Fishes appear to be of only one kind each; and the solitary Insect is beyond all doubt a Flesh-fly.

The *Lion* is represented in several of the small scenes on the coping of the Rail, where he is at once distinguishable by his mane. A large figure of a Lion was placed as the first stone of the coping at each entrance facing the in-going visitor. Portions of three of these Lions have been found, but the head is unfortunately missing in two of the examples. The remains of these figures are shown in the accompanying Plate of Copings.¹ The single head is boldly designed, but the mane is both stiff and formal. The mouth shows much spirit. The feet are perfect and correctly delineated. The general pose of the body shows considerable freedom of design as well as more truthfulness of execution than is generally found in Indian sculpture. The tail is rather too long and its tuft is very much exaggerated.

The *Elephant* seems to have been a favourite subject with the ancient Indian artists, and in my judgment a very successful one. No doubt the small scale on which they are sculptured has helped to diminish any faults of execution; but the outlines of the bulky figures are generally very correctly rendered, and the action in many cases is natural and spirited. The animal is represented in almost every possible position, as standing, walking, running, sitting down, eating, drinking, throwing water over his back, and, lastly, kneeling down in reverence before the holy Bodhi Tree. He is also represented in full front view, half front, and full side.

The sitting Elephant is found on the beginning of all the copings with a figured housing (*Jhūl*) on his back, and an undulating line issuing from his mouth, which encloses a separate scene within each of its progressive undulations.² These figures are all executed with much spirit and considerable accuracy. Another sitting Elephant is shown in the well-known scene of Mâyâ Devi's dream,³ but the hindlegs of this figure are weakly drawn, and it is altogether inferior to most of the other elephants of these sculptures.

On the first pillar of the Eastern Gate there is a large Elephant full face who is carrying a royal rider in charge of a relic-casket.⁴ The Elephant's head is encircled by a string of pearls with pendent symbols, and the rider carries the *ankus*, or elephant-goad, which he rests on the forehead of the animal just as we see the Mahauts do at the present day.

In the bas-relief of the *Nâga loka* one half of the medallion is occupied by six elephants in various postures. As *Nâga* means an "Elephant" as well as a "Snake," I

¹ See Plate XXXIX.

² See Plates XI., XII., and XXXIX.

H 255.

³ See Plate XXVIII. fig. 2.

⁴ See Plate XII., corner Pillar with Relic bearer.

infer that the artist intended by their insertion to represent their native land, as well as that of the Serpent.¹ Of the six animals here sculptured the one at the bottom is shown in the act of plucking a sheaf of corn; the next above him is throwing his trunk backwards over his head; the third is filling his trunk with water from a stone bowl; the fourth is pouring the water from his trunk down his throat; the fifth has thrown his trunk back over his head like the second; and the sixth, a large tusker, stands full to the front, his ears extended. The attitudes of some of these figures are well conceived and fairly executed, and altogether the scene is both natural and animated.

The bas-relief of Bodhi-worship also presents the figures of six Elephants; but there the attitudes are limited to the two reverential acts of presenting garlands and bowing before the Tree.² The figure of the larger Elephant in the act of bowing, with his hogged back, and his forelegs bent backwards beneath his body, is sketched with equal spirit and accuracy.

In the *Latuwá Játaka*, or "Birth as a Latuwâ—bird," the Elephant is represented under three different aspects:³ first, as being attacked by a bird and an insect; second, as running away; and third, as plunging down a precipice. In the second figure, where the passion represented is fear, I notice that the animal's tail is placed between his legs; and in the third, where madness is intended to be shown, the tail is swung violently backwards; while in the first scene, before he is roused to passion, his tail hangs down unmoved.⁴ These differences show that the artist was not unobservant of the character of the animal, although the drawing and execution of the figures are inferior to those of the sitting Elephants on the coping.

The *Horse* is more rarely represented in the Bharhut Sculptures than would have been expected. The principal examples are the two chargers of the male and female standard bearers at the East and South Gates; a caparisoned Horse on one of the pillars of the South-west Quadrant, and the Chariot Horses of Raja Prasenajita and of the *Mugapakka Játaka*.⁵

Arrian relates, apparently on the authority of Nearchus, that the Indians "have
" neither saddles nor bridles for their horses, like those the Grecians or Keltæ make use
" of, but instead of bridles they bind a piece of raw bullock's hide round the lower part
" of their horse's jaws, to the inner part of which the meaner sort fix spikes of brass or
" iron, not very sharp, but richer ones have theirs of ivory. Within the horse's mouth
" is a piece of iron like a dart, to which the reins are fastened. When, therefore, they
" draw the reins, the bit stops the horse, and the short spikes thereto fixed make him
" subservient to the rider's will."⁶

An examination of the Bharhut Sculptures shows distinctly that the Indians had no saddle, while they certainly used a bridle. Of course it is quite possible that the bridle may have been introduced between the time of Alexander and that of Asoka. Instead of a saddle there is a thickly-wadded pad, with ornaments at the four corners. The

¹ See Plate XXVIII. fig. 1.

² See Plate XXX. fig. 2.

³ See Plate XXVI. fig. 1.

⁴ In Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 178, a frightened elephant is thus described: The "Elephant Girimekhalo, fell upon his knees, trembled with fear, . . . curled up his trunk, and thrust the end into his mouth, put his tail between his legs, growled fiercely, &c., and fled away."

⁵ See Plate XXXII. for the standard bearers, and Plates XIII. and XXV. for the four-horse chariots.

⁶ See *Arrian Indica*, XVI.

bridle, which is made of a twisted cord, is fastened to the head-gear over each side of the horse's mouth. The head-stall itself has the usual band passing over the top of the head behind the ears, and a second band down the face. These are connected by three horizontal bands, the lowest being level with the mouth, the middle one passing under the cheek, and the upper one above the cheek. A broad horizontal band, ornamented with flowers or rosettes at regular distances, passes right round the horse from chest to tail. As to the horses themselves they are all round-barrelled animals with short thick necks and thick legs.

The Chariot Horses of Râjâ Prasenajita have plaited manes, and plumes on their heads. The crossbar of the chariot pole rests on the necks of the two middle horses. The Raja is driven by a charioteer.

The *Ass* is perhaps represented in one of the half-medallions, as the tail is much too long for any animal of the Deer kind, but the beast has long ears and a hairless tail.¹

The *Bull* is represented only on a small scale in the bas-reliefs of the coping. The chief scene is that of the *Sujâta Jâtaka*, where according to the legend the animal should be represented as dead. But the design in the bas-relief is not happily rendered, as the bull appears to be sitting up. On the Pillars and Rail-bars there are larger figures, but they are rather clumsily drawn. All of them have humps.²

The *Rhinoceros* (or an animal very like one) is represented only once in the half-medallion at the top of one of the North-east Pillars.³ The long snout approaches that of the Tapir, but from the appearance of a horn on the top of the head I am inclined to believe that the artist really intended to represent a Rhinoceros. The bulky legs are in favour of this identification. The sculptor's sketch must certainly have been made from memory, as the tail is quite a fancy one of the most preposterous length.

The *Deer* is frequently represented. No less than six specimens, both male and female, appear in the *Miga Jâtaka*, or "Deer birth," and a single buck is shown in the *Isi-Miga Jâtaka*.⁴ But the largest and best figures of the Deer are in the half-medallion at the top of one of the South-east Pillars.⁵ They are true Deer with Antlers, and not Antelopes. The Antelope is also represented as well as the spotted Deer or Pârâ,⁶ and the bas-reliefs show that the artist was quite familiar with the forms of these animals.

The *Monkey* was evidently a favourite subject with the Buddhist Sculptors, as he is represented in several scenes and in various aspects, both serious and humorous. He appears in the *Bhisa-haraniya Jâtaka* as an important personage, seated on the ground and energetically addressing the chief person in the scene.⁷ A second scene seems to be intended for a fight between men and monkeys. About one half of it is lost, but there is so much life and variety in the figures which remain that the loss of the rest is very much to be regretted.⁸ As the whole of the monkey scenes will be separately described in another place, I will only refer here to the spirit and freedom of the drawing which most of these bas-reliefs display, and to the real humour shown in the two scenes exhibiting an Elephant taken captive by Monkeys.

¹ See Plate XXXV. fig. 4.

² See Plate XXXIV. fig. 1, Plate XVII. fig. 10, and Plate LVII.

³ See Plate XXXVI. fig. 4.

⁴ See Plate XXV. fig. 1, and Plate XLIII. fig. 2.

⁵ See Plate XXXVI. fig. 3.

⁶ See Plate XLIV. fig. 8, for the spotted Deer.

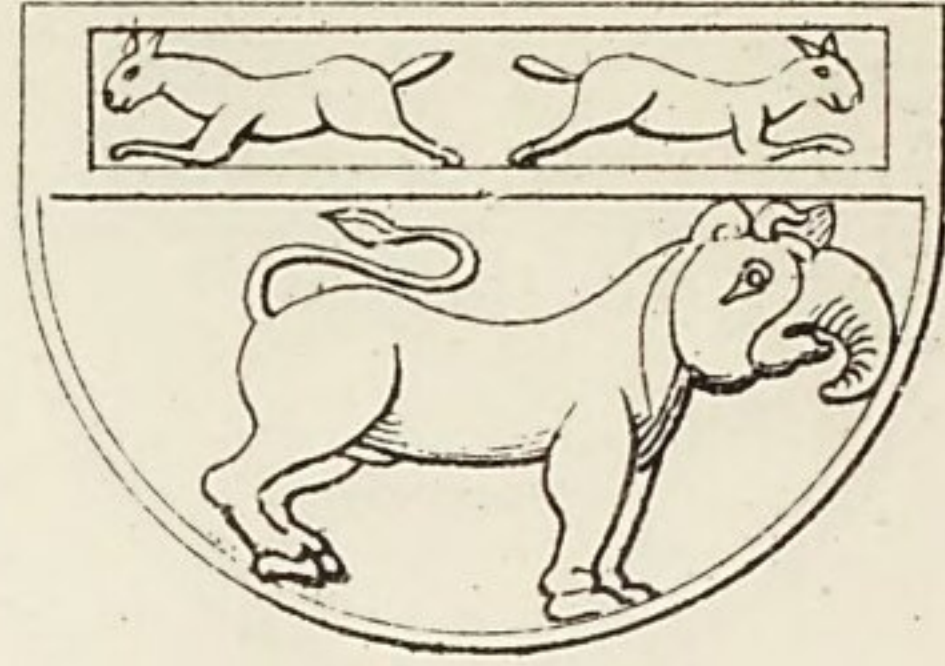
⁷ See Plate XLVIII. fig. 7.

⁸ See Plate XXXIII. fig. 5.

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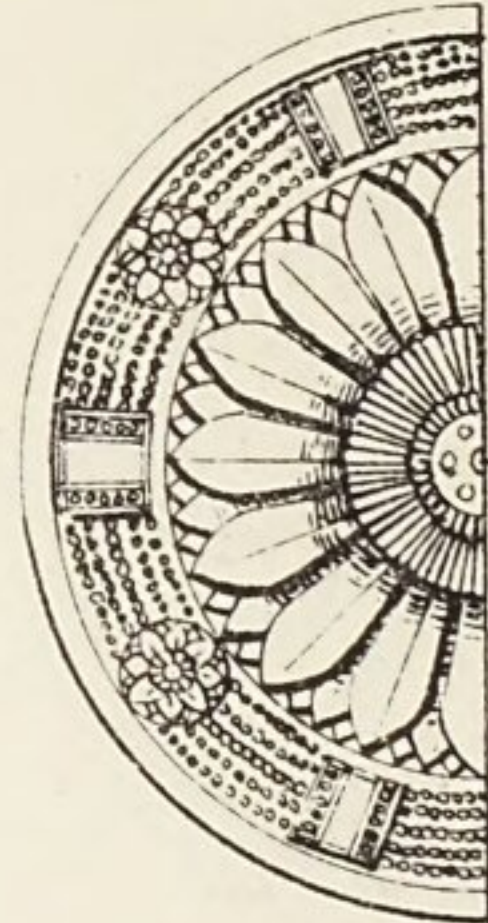
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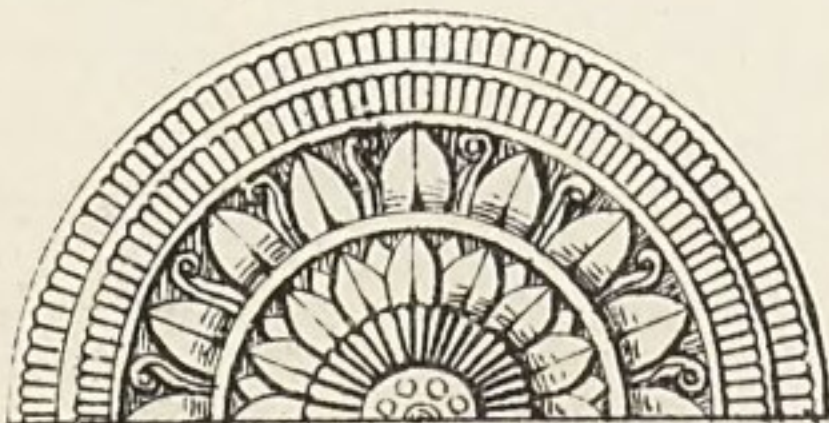
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