

Hindu Diptych Type Portable Shrines from Gandhara and Kashmir: An Introduction

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Abstract

Hindu themes are not unknown within the context of sculptural art of Gandhara and Kashmir. There are representations of Hindu deities such as Indra, Brahma, Skanda, Sakkra, Sasthi, Kumara, Surya, Yakshas, Yakshis, Gandharavas, Mother goddess, Nagas and Naginis, etc. In Gandhara and Kashmir, more often than not, these Hindu gods and goddesses are there not only to glorify Hinduism but also to appear as subordinate beings to serve the cause of Buddhism. They are depicted on a small number of fragments of diptych type portable shrines. They were made of stone and carved from both sides and some from one side. Most of the diptychs are broke and preserved in the form of fragments as either single wing or fraction of a wing of the diptychs. These fragments are referred to as “Hindu Diptychs” and preliminary information will be given in the present paper.

Keywords:

Introduction

This paper discusses seven fragments of the Hindu diptychs. These fragments are divided into the following sub-types:

- Śaṣṭhī Type
- Ekamukhalinga Type
- Śiva and Pārvatī Type
- Kumāra Type

Śaṣṭhī Type Fragment from Cleveland Museum of Art

The first fragment of the “Hindu Diptychs” belongs to the Cleveland Museum of Art. It

consists of the right wing of a diptych with an unadorned exterior (Figure 1). The Museum purchased this fragment from the John L. Severance Fund. It was first published by Czuma (1985: 162-163) and then discussed by Agrawala (1993: 271-274), Sen-Gupta (2002: 46) and Siudmak (2013a: 96-97). Nothing is known about its find-spot.

The fragment's interior is divided into two parts, an upper arched panel and a lower rectangular panel. Both panels are framed inside with prominent tiny rectangular blocks. The space beyond the decorated border is plain and marks the outline of the fragment. Two tiny holes are also visible on the edges and were probably used for hinges in order to join both wings. The iconography of this fragment is significant and unusual regarding its subject matter. It depicts seated male and female figures in the arched section and a standing couple in the lower rectangular panel.

From right to left: The arched panel depicts a seated male, facing the viewer (Figure 1). His right leg rests on the ground and the left foot rises to the calf of the right leg. The man wears thick drapery that covers both shoulders and the lower parts of his body. His hair style forms a top knot. He holds a lance in his right hand and a bird in left hand, placed close to the left knee. He was identified as Pañcika¹ and later on as Skanda-Kārttikeya.² These interpretations of the male figure can be challenged after comparing this depiction with the "Kumāra Type" diptych fragment in the present collection. Both figures hold a bird in their right hand and a lance in their left hand. In the "Kumāra Type diptych" the lance is not visible but its slanting position can be seen passing over the deity's left leg. With regard to this comparison, the seated male is neither Pañcika nor Skanda-Kārttikeya but Kumāra.

The other seated figure to the male's right is female. She wears a long tunic that falls down to the ground covering her feet. She seems to be wearing a necklace and her head is surrounded by five human heads. In her right hand she holds a circular object from the

¹ Czuma mentioned that Pāncika, husband of Hārītī, holds a spear in his right hand and that he is considered a war hero. Czuma, however, did not mention anything about the objects in this figure's left hand.

² Agrawala challenged Czuma's interpretation of the seated male figure and argued that the male holds a bird (a cock) in his left hand in a traditional manner. Czuma did not notice the bird and this created confusion in his interpretation of the figure as Pañcika instead of Skanda-Kārttikeya.

bottom and a hanging cylindrical object from the top left. Czuma (1985: 163) did not explain these objects; however, Agrawala identified them as a lotus and a purse (1993: 272).³ With regard to the figural identification, Czuma discerned her as Hārītī (1985: 163) whereas Agrawala identified her as Śaṣṭhī (1993: 272).⁴

The lower rectangular panel represents a standing female figure wearing a blouse and a heavy lower garment that covers her feet (Figure 1). She wears a helmet type headdress, centrally adorned by a horn like object. A tiny object in her right hand, raised to chest level, is also visible. She holds the fall of her garment in left hand. The male figure wears a lower garment down to his knees characterised by a broad collar, his earrings and sacred thread are made of garment. Half of his long hair is tied up into a top knot and the rest falls over his shoulders. He holds a lotus flower from stem in his right hand whereas a bird sits on his left hand, close to his thigh. He can be identified as Kūmara, depicted a second time here, but this time in standing position. He holds a bird in his right hand and a lotus flower instead of a lance. Another seated figure is depicted below the hanging lotus and next to the right knee of the male figure. He faces the standing figure and joins his hands in añjalimudrā. A similar small figure can also be seen standing in the lower left corner of the relief.

The figures in the lower panel were identified as “titular couple, probably the donors, in the elegant attire of Kuṣāṇa nobility” (Czuma 1985: 163). The figures in the upper arched panel were identified as “six-headed Śaṣṭhī in the company of Skanda”; their appearance next to each other is certainly an interesting trait (Agrawala 1993: 272).⁵ According to another interpretation, “standing two-armed Kumāra accompanied by a fanged tutelary goddess with flaring hair [...]” (Siudmak 2013a: 96).

Keeping the fragment’s iconographical details and the analysis of Agrawala in view, an

³ Agrawala mentioned that she holds a lotus in her right hand (mistakenly stated as the left hand) and a purse in her left hand.

⁴ According to his interpretation, the carving of five tiny human heads around her main head calls for her specific identification with Śaṣṭhī, the goddess who is associated with Skanda-Kārttikeya, both as his wife and sister in Indian literature.

⁵ Agrawala goes on by saying that it is not possible to identify him as Skanda Kumāra, although the presence of a bird in his left hand is quite interesting. This panel calls for closer scrutiny, as the six-headed Śaṣṭhī in the company of Skanda is certainly an intriguing trait. One has to search for more icons of this type, though we already know some Kuṣāṇa Mathuran panels where the standing Śaṣṭhī is flanked by Skanda and Viśākha. Also see Härtel 1987.

analysis of the object suggests that it may mark the beginning of diptych type portable shrines with a Brāhmaṇical theme in Gandhara. In this regard, this fragment is being dated to the 5th century – approximately.⁶ This tradition travelled to Kashmir where several diptychs were produced with themes taken from Hindu mythology.

Ekamukhaliṅga Type

Considering all the fragments of Hindu diptychs in the present collection, it can be presumed that Kashmiri sculptors preferred to depict Śiva. The majority of the fragments represent Śiva in different forms. The exterior surface illustrates Ekamukhaliṅga due to which these are named “Ekamukhaliṅga Type”. The interior depicts Śiva either with Pārvatī or as Maheśa. The following paragraph shall discuss five fragments of such shrines.

Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The first example of the “Ekamukhaliṅga Type” belongs to the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.⁷ Only the left wing of this diptych has been preserved. In 1964, Goetz published a first account of this fragment after it was shown to him by an American collector; he referred to it as a 10th century Ekamukhaliṅga from Kashmir (Goetz 1964: 275-279). The following year, Taddei discussed this Ekamukhaliṅga-shaped shrine and attributed it to the Hindu Śāhi period (Taddei 1965: 24-25). This section of the diptych was also included by Rowan while discussing a Buddhist ivory diptych (Rowan 1985: 279-280). Later on, Srinivasan included the diptych in her work about Para Śiva, Sadāśiva and Maheśa in Indian Art (Srinivasan 1990: 108-142). Then in 1991, Lerner & Kossak listed this particular object in their catalogue of Indian and South Asian Art from the Samuel Eilenberg Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Lerner & Kossak 1991: 113, No. 82). Yoshihide quoted this piece in his work about Buddhist portable shrines (2000: 136. Pl. 23). Recently Behrendt quoted it in his article about asceticism (2012: 299-332).

⁶ Samad 2010, has also mentioned the same date. His dating formula is based upon the popularity of the Skanda-Kumāra cult in Gandhara in the 5th century C.E. Moreover, Skanda and Śaṣṭhī were perceived as a divine couple in Gandhara.

⁷ The fragment is available on the official website of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The external surface of this fragment illustrates Ekamukhaliṅga (Figure 2). The facial features show a round face, a long nose, thin lips, a moustache and a small chin.⁸ The thin and slightly oblique eyes have a carved pupil and iris and broad lid under a thin round eyebrow. His hair forms a wavy lock that runs across his receding forehead and over his ears. The hair also forms a jāṭa straight above the forehead. The jāṭa is also adorned by a crescent. It is interesting to note that Śiva wears large earring which cover a part of his back jaw and the fleshy neck. The neck shows three horizontal folds, the lower one is adjacent to the necklace. This fragment has a semi-circular base forming a garland decorated with geometric designs.

The inner surface of Ekamukhaliṅga diptych presents an elaborate content. It depicts Śiva with his vāhana, Pārvaṭī and a smaller attendant, all in standing position (Figure 2).

Śiva, with crossed legs, is turned to his left having three heads, four arms and prominent ūrdhva liṅga. He wears large earrings, a necklace, a yajñopavīta or upavīta, bracelets and a lower garment up to knee level. His facial features are similar to what can be observed on the exterior of the diptych, except for what seems to be a third eye in the centre of the forehead. The depiction makes it “one of the rare images of Śiva where god is three-headed and at the same time shows the third eye” (Taddei 1965: 25). Among the three heads, the central is larger with wavy hair and a jāṭa. The smaller head on Śiva’s left has upraised hair. From the facial expressions, it looks like a male head with a fleshy face, a long nose and protruding eyes. The one on other side gives a feminine look with hair tied in chignon.

Three-headed Śiva holds a rosary in his lower right hand which is placed in his hip. He holds a trident in his upper right hand, visible next to a smaller head. The lower left hand of the god rests on a gadā placed in between him and Pārvaṭī. His upper left hand holds a kamaṇḍalu. The left arm is probably placed on Pārvaṭī’s right shoulder.

Frontal Pārvaṭī stands with a slightly flexed left leg. Her face is turned to the right,

⁸ According to Goetz, some physical elements like the receding forehead and the long nose seem to be characteristics of the ancient population of Kashmir, namely the Khāśas. Such features are also visible in Hārvaṇ tile reliefs, a stucco head from Ushkur (Srinagar Museum), in a portrait of king Avantivarman in the Avantīśvara Temple at Vanitpor, the head of Buddha-avatāra, on king Śamkaraverman’s screen from Divsar (Srinagar Museum) and on Avalokiteśvara and Māyā (Birth of the Buddha) belonging to the reign of queen Diddā (Srinagar Museum).

towards Śiva. Her drapery includes a thin blouse, heavy lower garment covering both feet and an upper garment running perpendicular from right shoulder to legs. She wears a necklace that falls between her breasts, a bracelets and large earrings, identical to her companion. Her facial features include a receding forehead, thin round eyebrows, broad eyelids, sharp eyes, a long nose, thin lips, prominent cheeks and a fleshy neck. These features are quite similar to her companion both on the exterior and on the interior of the diptych. Pārvatī is two-armed and holds a round mirror in the left hand positioned close to her breast. Her right hand is raised to chest level and probably holds a casket, “the two objects still carried by Hindu brides at the moment of their marriage” (Taddei 1965: 25).

The smaller figure is male and stands in the bottom right corner, turned to his right side. His facial features are damaged, but the hair style and large earrings can be identified. These elements resemble those Śiva and Pārvatī. He holds a trident in his right hand and something that resembles a pot in the left hand. Taddei believed that both objects are in fact attributes of Pārvatī (Taddai 1965: 25).

In the left bottom corner of the composition, a half-length bull is depicted behind standing Śiva. The remaining space follows the outline of the external carving. Two holes on the right edges of the piece were made to support hinges.

There are different opinions regarding the interior’s identification: Taddei suggested that the interior illustrates Śiva as Kalyāṇa-Sundara or Vaivāhika Murti, that is, the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī (Taddei1965: 24). Srinivasan, however, mentions that the interior of this shrine depicts the Umā-Maheśvara pair (Srinivasan 1990: 128).⁹

Talking about the utility of this Ekamukhalinga diptych type portable shrine, Goetz believed that this pocket-size object served the purpose of personal use of either a

⁹ Maheśvara is a three-headed and four-armed. The middle head with the third eye is larger than the lateral heads; its hair style is similar to that seen on the outer Ekamukha. Again, thereby, a formal connection between the two beings (i.e., Sadāśiva and Maheśvara) is stated in visual terms. The nature of the lateral heads is somewhat problematic, although the head on the left may be feminine. Maheśvara holds a trident in the upper right hand and a water pot (kamaṇḍalu) in the upper left hand; the lower right and left hands hold the rosary and gaḍā respectively. Leaning towards his consort, Maheśvara stands cross-legged in front of Nandi in a manner recalling the stance of Oeśo in front of the bull on coin issued by Vāsudeva II (Srinivasan 1990: 128).

nobleman or a high official who travelled extensively (1994: 275).¹⁰ On the other hand, Taddei suggested that this *līṅga*-shaped portable sanctuary is similar to stone reliefs of Buddhist subject found by Sir Aurel Stein (Taddei 1965: 24). Its use as portable shrine was equally supported by other scholars.¹¹

As far as the dating of this fragment is concerned, most scholars consider this an example of the Hindu Śāhi period of Kashmir¹² but Behrendt corrects the date back to the 6/7th century C.E. (Behrendt 2012: 304).

Second Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The next fragment of a “*Ekamukhalinga* Type” diptych belongs to the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.¹³ It was first published by Lerner & Kossak in their catalogue of Indian and South Asian art from the Samuel Eilenberg (Lerner & Kossak 1991: 114, No. 83) and later on by Yoshihide (2000: 89. Pl. 24). We have preliminary details about this right section or wing of the portable shrine, attributing it to a pure Kashmiri style.

This fragment portrays another *Ekamukhalinga* on the outside (Figure 3). Unlike the previous pieces, this fragment depicts the image in a slightly different way. “The proportions of the *Ekamukhalinga* carved on the exterior and the physiognomic type of Śiva reflect earlier models” (Lerner & Kossak 1991: 114).

His facial features are less refined than in to the previous piece. The face is oval in shape. Other features include a low forehead, thin curvy eyebrows, less broad eyelids, sharpe eyes, a thin nose, prominent cheeks and a small chin. The part below his chin is damaged leaving no clue of the neck shape. The face is adorned with comparatively small earrings. The earrings are further marked by a hole, probably used either as hinge

¹⁰ Goetz added that small idols were carried in the luggage, which is often mentioned in the Rājput traditions and must have been an old custom. When in ritual use, such idols were placed on a collapsible bronze or silver stand with an umbrella, such as are rarely depicted in Rājasthānī and Pahārī miniatures. This may again have suggested the idea of a sort of chapel, because such chapel-like boxes were likewise used in travelling, are infact still the custom in Nepāl and Tibet, and are likewise common as house shrines in Rājput castle of Himālaya (1964: 275).

¹¹ Rowan 1985: 279-280. Srinivasnan 1990: 128. Lerner und Kossak 1991: 113-114 . Behrendt 2012: 304.

¹² Goetz 1964: 275-279, Taddei 1965: 24-25, Rowan 1985: 279-280, Srinivasan 1990: 108-142, Lerner & Kossak 1991: 113, No. 82.

¹³ Photograph courtesy: the online collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

to joint or to carry the object. Śiva's hair style shows two different settings. A part of the front hair forms a wavy line that runs across his forehead and falls down to his ear, similar to Kumāra. The rest of the hair forms vertical lines and is drawn upward, pulled into a top knot. A garland of geometric designs runs from top to bottom between the līṅga and the image of the god. The lower part of this fragment is damaged leaving its content difficult to interpret.

The inner surface of this left wing is divided into two panels, separated by a decorated frieze. The upper panel is in complete shape and depicts a standing deity, however, most of the lower section is damaged, only leaving the head of deity intact.

“The interior has in its upper section a representation of Parvati holding a mirror [...]” (Lerner & Kossak 1991: 114). The entire image is framed by a miniature rectangular blocks, except for the base. Pārvaṭī is depicted in standing position with crossed legs (Figure 3). Her head is slightly leaning to her right side. She seems to be wearing a thin upper garment and a heavy lower garment fastened to her waist. It is interesting to note that the lower garment not only covers her down to the feet but also falls down to both corners in different layers. Among the body ornaments, she wears a necklace that falls between her breasts, four bangles or bracelets in each hand and prominent earrings.

Pārvaṭī has a round face with prominent cheeks, a long nose and protruding eyes. Her forehead, chin and neck seem to be less worked. The hair style forms a semi-circular curves running across her forehead and ears. She seems to be wearing a crown-like object.

The damaged lower panel represents a deity's head. “In its lower portion only the head of a deity, probably Shiva but perhaps Skanda, has survived” (Lerner & Kossak 1991: 114). The deity stands frontally, its face is almost round in shape. The facial features consist of a flat forehead, prominent eyes, cheeks and a small chin. The hair is drawn upward from the front forming a large *jāṭa* at the top. However, the side hair forms wavy curls that fall down to the ears. We can also see a hole right above the deity's left ear.

From the object's shape and size the use as a portable shrine in the form of a diptych can easily be identified. Unfortunately, like many other objects of a similar category, only one

wing has survived.

As far as the dating of the object is concerned, it is also based entirely on stylistic grounds. There is no information about the provenance of this fragment. So, by comparing this piece to other fragments of the same category, it seems to be work of Kashmir artists that can be dated to a period between the 6th and 7th century as mentioned by Lerner & Kossak (1991: 114).

Third Fragment from Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The third fragment of the “Ekamukhalinga Type” diptych is carved on both sides. Again it belongs to the collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.¹⁴ Unlike other pieces, this fragment is badly damaged and merely a part of its right wing has survived. It was published by Srinivasan.¹⁵ This is the only publication referring to this particular fragment.

While explaining the exterior (Figure 4) of this portable shrine, Srinivasan writes:

The outer side, quite damaged, shows the top of the *liṅga* and a proportion of the head below. The deep groove of the glans penis separates the two. The proportion of the head that remains is a crown with large locks of hair descending along the brow. The crown is decorated band topped with crests; these crests somewhat resemble crenelated turrets. From the center of each crest hangs a tassel (a bunch of jewels? ribbons?) The shape of the crown is the single most important clue to identify the subject of the diptych. The crown worn by Ekamukha on the outer side matches the shape of the crown worn by the four-armed, fully anthropomorphic figure on the inner side. (Srinivasan 1990: 127)

Srinivasan also explains the interior carving (Figure 4) of this diptych's fragment in the following words:

The latter is also in poor condition. It is not possible to determine the attributes held in the hands. All that can be said is that the extra, raised left arm follows the

¹⁴ Photograph courtesy: online collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

¹⁵ Srinivasan 1990: Figs. 3 & 4.

curve of an arch under which stands the male figure. The figure wears a dhoṭī and is sparsely and simply adorned, with earrings, armlets, and necklace. In spite of the few details and the damaged condition, the identity of the figure is unproblematic. (Srinivasan 1990: 127)

The figure's face is round and displays a relaxed countenance. His small eyes, prominent cheeks and tripple-grooved neck are among the notable features. Moreover, the crown he wears seems to differ slightly from the crown worn by Ekamukha on the outside. Although the crown is similarly decorated with a band of crests the shape of the side crests is more like a spike or bead. The figure is set inside a carved border in the form of tiny rectangular blocks, the traces of which are visible on the right side of the border.

The subsequent part will try to identify the subject matter of this liṅga-shaped diptych. Srinivasan believes that it represents the image of Sadāśiva on the exterior and standing Maheśa on the interior (1990: 127). She further explains that on the exterior the top of the liṅga recalls Para Śiva and the head recalls Sadāśiva. Similarly it depicts Maheśa on interior, which is in fact the Ekamūrtī version of the triple Śiva Reality (Srinivasan 1990: 127).

The provenance of this fragment is unknown. It was initially part of the Samuel Eilenberg Collection and then given to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Based upon a stylistic analysis, the object's dating can assumaly be loated in the Hindu Śāhi art.¹⁶

Enough details are avaiable to determine the shape and use of this object as a diptych type portable shrine.

Fragment from the John Siudmak Collection, London

This fragment of the "Ekamukhaliṅga Type" diptych with a carved exterior and interior in this collection and was presensted by Siudmak in an exhibition catalogue of Indian

¹⁶ Talking about its date, Srinivasan mentions in footnote 16 that it is difficult to date and place this object. The Śāhi period is determined largely on the distinctive physiognomy of full figure, although the crown may also be a factor. The round, full face, high cheek bones, small eyes and pursed lips resemble the Śāhi facial type. For information about Śāhis see Rehman 1979.

and Himalayan Sculptures (Siudmak 2013b: 4-5).¹⁷ Only the left wing of the complete diptych is preserved. “Acquired in Kashmir by Professor Janey, daughter of the British Resident of Kashmir, Sir James Acheson, and brought back to England in the 1930’s. Janey Ironside’s daughter Virginia inherited it from her mother, and gifted it to Denis Whyte in 1992” (Siudmak 2013b: 4). Siudmak put the object on sale and its present location is unknown. His exhibition catalogue provides us with the only published material.

The external surface of this fragment represents the lower section of Ekamukhalinga resting on a small pedestal (Figure 5). According to Siudmak “The external part has a tall pedestal and the stump of an Ekamukhalinga with swept-back hair and a necklace. The complete sculpture would have had an inner upper register containing a further figure or figures” (Siudmak 2013b: 4).

It is interesting to note that such treatment of the exterior is slightly different in character than the previous examples. Here, a prominent base which covers almost half of the total height of the fragment’s exterior surface can be identified. The base consists of a plain body or shaft and is decorated with receding bands on the top and bottom. The fragments listed in the present collection are also broken and only the central or upper parts are preserved, leaving us with no clue to determine any possible use of the pedestal. On the other hand, catalogue number 29 shows the complete left wing of a diptych but it has no base. This method of using podiums or bases was quite common in Buddhist diptych type portable shrines. This similarity in treatment of a base suggests that the idea of making a diptych type portable shrine was adopted from Buddhist artistic traditions.

Unlike the exterior, the carving on the inner side is preserved in good condition (Figure 5). Siudmak describes the inner contents in the following words:

“The inner part of the present example is carved in deep relief with a standing ithyphallic, eight-armed, three headed image of Maheshvara accompanied by his bull and a diminutive standing donor. His lower garment is a voluminous lion

¹⁷ This fragment was published in an exhibition catalogue 3, “Indian and Himalayan Sculptures: Including property from the collection of the late Simon Digby”. The exhibition was held in New York on Friday 15 March and Saturday 23 March, 2013.

pelt, the animal's head falling below his knees, its legs serving as a belt framing his prominent erection. His pacific central head, which has the third eye, is framed by a diminutive male head on the proper left and a wrapped female head on the right, both of which have elongated necks and project well beyond the central head. It dates from an early stage of the development of the multi-headed Śiva in Kashmir, and the pacific form of the lateral male head gives no clue to its future identity as the fierce Bhairava. The hair is centrally parted and combed to the sides and crowned by a huge topknot. Three of his four left hands survive, of which one holds a pot, a long mace and the third, charmingly, the tail of the bull. The slanting pole to the left is the shaft of a trisula" (Siudmak 2013b: 4).

A close examination of the interior carving shows some more details. It appears as if three-headed Śiva wears a sort of upper garment that covers his shoulders and is wrapped over the left side. The fragmentary details also suggest that is wearing a necklace and armlets. He has a round face. Other features include a broad forehead, thin eyes with heavy upper lids, prominent cheeks, pursed lips, a low chin and a plump neck (the nose is broken). These facial features are almost identical to the depiction of Śiva in the former fragments of Ekamukhalinga. The topknot (jaṭā) is comparatively larger in size. Only one in four right hands has survived and holds a wreath. Underneath the hand, in bottom left corner of the relief stands a small figure of a man. He wears upper and short lower garment and a crested turban. He either holds an object or joins his hands in añjalimudrā. The entire carving is framed inside a decorated border in the form of miniature rectangular blocks. The rest of the space marks the outline of the external pedestal. The fragment's bottom left corner is slightly broken and shows the remains of a hole on the edge, probably for a hinge.

Sufficient details are available on both sides to identify the subject matter of this diptych. The exterior, there is no doubt, illustrates Ekamukhalinga on a tall podium. The interior, on the other hand, depicts three-headed and eight-armed Śiva standing frontally. Siudmak has identified the subject as Maheśvara (Siudmak 2013b: 4).

Explaining the provenance of this fragment, Siudmak is unsure whether the fragment belongs to Kashmir. His observation determining a Kashmiri provenance is based upon

the short history of the object's acquisition because it was reported to be collected by a British citizen, residing in Kashmir in the early 19th century.

On stylistic accounts and considering various sculptures of Ekamukhalinga from the vicinity of Baramula, this fragment relates to a 5th century style or to an early phase of what Siudmak calls "formative period" in Kashmir (Siudmak 2013b: 4). The dating seems to be incorrect because when we compare this fragment with the other fragments of a similar category, the iconographical details are very similar. Therefore, it would be more adequate to date the object somewhere around the 7th century C.E.¹⁸

Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Only the left wing of this fragment of a Hindu diptych has survived.¹⁹ The Museum's records mention that the piece arrived as a gift with the Samuel Eilenberg collection of 1987. Lerner & Kossak listed this object in their catalogue of the Samuel Eilenberg Collection (1991: 112. No. 81). Afterwards, Yoshihide quoted it in his study on portable shrines from India (2000: 136. Pl. 25). The online source states that this portable object was a section of a diptych in *linga* form.²⁰

The interior of this fragment depicts Śiva with Pārvatī and the bull (Figure 6). Śiva is illustrated standing frontally, facing the audience, his right leg crossed over his left. He wears his usual lower garment up to his knees, fastened around waists, ending in wavy edges leaving his left thigh and erected penis uncovered. In bodily ornaments, Śiva wears a necklace, armlets and bracelets but no earrings. His face is slightly raised and is in almost square shape. Although damaged, the facial features consist of a broad forehead, thin eyes with prominent lids, a properly shaped nose, pursed lips, a balanced chin and prominent cheeks. His neck is also quite fleshy, marked by three horizontal grooves; the long ears are also significant. The hair style forms large curls running along his forehead and falling behind his ears. The rest of the hair is simply combed upright to form a top knot. A small round object to the left topknot appears to be crescent.

¹⁸ To read more about the worship of Śiva in the form of *Liṅga* and *Ekamukhalinga* and about the dating of this piece with regard to other fragments, see Bhan 2010: 83-102.

¹⁹ The fragment is available on the website of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

²⁰ Ibid.

Śiva is depicted with three heads. The central head is larger in size. The side heads are quite identical in shape and size to the previous diptych fragments. The head on the right side shows hair which is combed upright and most likely depicts the head of male figure. The depiction of the head on the viewer's left is much more feminine.

Only two of Śiva's four hands have survived. His lower left hand rests on a club or gadā. His lower right hand is placed on his thigh and holds a rosary or akṣamālā. Lerner & Kossak believe that Śiva holds a trident in his raised right hand and that his raised left elbow rests on Pārvaṭī's shoulder (Lerner and Kossak 1991: 113).

Śiva is accompanied by Pārvaṭī on his left. She stands in a frontal position and her body is thoroughly covered by a thin upper garment and heavy lower garment that falls all the way down, covering her feet. Another upper garment with a decorated border covers her left arm and falls downwards to cover her legs. The ornaments she wears include a necklace, garlands, earrings, and bracelets. Her face is almost round and the other facial features are quite identical to her companion. Her hair forms descending curls over her forehead, similar to Śiva. The rest of her hair is properly combed into an upright position. She holds mirror in left hand and rosary in her right hand, attributes which could already be seen in previous fragments as well.

The front of the bull is depicted behind Śiva. The bull has a prominent hump and a smaller face. Its fore-legs are positioned in the shrine's bottom right corner.

The overall impression of this object gives us enough details to determine its utility as a diptych type portable shrine.

Lerner & Kossak identified Mahādeva as the subject, similar to the way in which Śiva is depicted with four arms, standing cross-legged with erected penis (Lerner and Kossak 1991: 113).

As far as the provenance of this fragment is concerned, nothing is recorded. Keeping in view the iconographical similarities, it has been attributed to Kashmir.

Keeping in subjective and artistic characteristics it has been suggested that this miniature shrine would have been produced in 7th century C.E. Lerner & Kossak comment the

dating as follows: “The artist has with considerable skill and sensitivity rendered the two deities in relaxed, intimate poses in contrast to the frontal and hieratic postures adopted for them at a later date” (Lerner & Kossak 1991: 113).

Kumāra Type

The final group of the “Hindu diptychs” is related to the “Kumāra Type”. This fragment has a blank exterior like the previous piece. The deity, whose head has broken off, is identified on the bases of iconographical analysis and attributes in hands.

Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The right wing of the complete diptych has survived and shows a carving only on its inner side. The object belongs to the collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It has been referred to as the panel of a portable shrine with Kārttikeya, the god of war.²¹

Siudmak published this fragment while discussing many sculptures depicting the same deity (2013a: 80-95).²²

Interior of the fragment depicts a standing four-armed figure, whose head is no longer visible, carved in high relief. He stands in a frontal position and wears a short lower garment which is skilfully fastened around his waist. Among the body ornaments, he wears a beaded necklace across the chest, an armlet and bracelets. Each hand holds a different attribute. The left lower hand holds a rooster while the lower left hand holds a bell with a clanger. His upper right hand is broken which could possibly have held a lance. In the lower right hand, he holds a ring-wreath.

A small standing figure of a male devotee is depicted in the bottom left corner of the relief. He wears a proper upper garment and a short lower garment up to his knees, belted around his waist. He also wears a headdress and earrings. He holds offerings in both hands – a wreath in the left and an unidentified object the right hand.

²¹ The fragment is available on the Museum’s website.

²² Siudmak believes that most of the sculptures depicting Kumāra were produced in Bijbihara and date back to the early phase of fifth century C.E. For more details, see chapter three of his work.

In the bottom right corner, a peacock is depicted, its head slightly damaged. Like the main deity, the peacock is also portrayed in a frontal standing posture.

The carving is framed inside a miniature rectangular margin of the usual pattern. The ornament represents successive tiny rectangular blocks. Two small holes on the inner edge of the fragment are visible. They were used for hinges.

The outer edge of the fragment shows two hinges on the right side and two at the bottom. These hinges were definitely made to join both wings of the diptych. This treatment confirms the use of this object as a diptych type of a portable shrine.

Siudmak's study has found many iconographical features of this fragment similar to many other sculptures of Kumāra from Bijbihara (2013a: 91). These features include a frontal standing position of a deity, a short round torso, a lower garment and attributes in figures' hands. The presence of the peacock is also important in this regard: "Several features of design are rendered in cross-hatching. The remains of a single grooved nimbus are visible in the upper left corner of the relief. Nothing remains of either ear ornaments, but they do appear to be annular" (Siudmak 2013a: 91). These details leave no margin of error to identify this headless figure on the inner side as Kumāra.

The museum's record does not provide any information about the provenance of this wing of a portable shrine. It would have been produced either in Gandhara or in Kashmir.

As far as the dating of this fragment is concerned, a stylistic study suggests a dating to the 7th century C.E., although Siudmak determines a much earlier date.

Conclusion

In comparison to the Buddhist diptychs, the Hindu diptych fragments are few in number. The latter represent a wide range of subject matter. With regard to their shape, we have both types of the diptychs, namely 1) diptychs carved on both sides and 2) diptychs with a plain exterior.

The variety of subject matter in the Hindu diptychs that were discussed in this chapter

depict not only the major god Śiva but also less popular deities such as Śaṣṭhī and Kumāra. The figural representation of Śiva in the Umā-Maheśa pair – Sadāśiva and Maheśa – is very significant. At the same time, shrines of the Ekamukhalinga type provide a version of the monolithic Ekamukhalinga of the 5th and 6th century C.E., from Baramula, Kashmir. Siudmak has discussed many of such examples in his book.²³ It appears as if the tradition of producing miniature Ekamukhalinga developed during the 6/7th century C.E. The idea of using Hindu diptychs must have been inspired by the existing Buddhist diptychs. It was adopted and modified according to faith, need and desire of the persons under whose reign these diptychs were manufactured. These diptychs were used as a private object of worship and were either kept inside the house or carried by their respective persons, travellers, traders or missionaries.

It is also obvious that, in the beginning, some of the main gods were depicted. However, later on, less popular deities like Śaṣṭhī and Kumāra were also illustrated. This expresses the popularity and the quick adoptability of diptychs in the local artistic tradition. Unfortunately, due to their tiny size, many of such pieces have not been recovered and only fragmentary details are available. We do not have any information about their archaeological context and exact provenance. By making a comparative analysis of the iconographical features, we can suggest that these diptych type portable shrines were produced in Kashmir around the 6th or the 7th century C.E.

²³ For detailed information about the style and shape of miniature Ekamukhalinga, see Siudmak, 2013a, chapter four which is referred to as the Formative period: Sculptures from Baramula from the fifth to the sixth Century.

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Figures



Figure 1. Interior of the Śaṣṭhī Type Fragment. (After Czuma 1985: 162)



Figure 2. Exterior and Interior of the Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, In The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Retrieved January 1, 2016, from <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/38254?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=Kashmir+&pos=16>

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Figure 3. Exterior and Interior of the Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, In *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Retrieved January 1, 2016, from <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/38255?rpp=90&pg=1&ft=Kashmir&pos=57>

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Figure 4. Exterior and Interior of the Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
In *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Retrieved January 1, 2016, from
<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/38710?rpp=90&pg=1&ft=Kashmir&pos=59&imgno=1&tabname=related-objects>
<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/38710?rpp=90&pg=1&ft=Kashmir&pos=59>

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Figure 5. Exterior of the Fragment from the Siudmak Collection, London (After Siudmak 2013b: 4)



Figure 6. Interior of the Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, In *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Retrieved January 1, 2016, from <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/38493?rpp=90&pg=1&ft=Kashmir&pos=58>

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Figure 7. Interior of the Fragment from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, In *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Retrieved January 1, 2016, from <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/38181?rpp=90&pg=1&ft=kumara+with+a+peacock&pos=37>

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