

Contextualising Sir John Marshall's Photographic Collection at Durham University

Report of Dr Abdul Azeem, IMEMS Library Fellow

Introduction

Sir John Hubert Marshall, CIE, FBA (1876-1958) was one of the most influential Directors-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, a post which he held between 1902 and 1928. His pioneering profile was built on his focus of excavation campaigns on a number of key city sites across the subcontinent, including his discovery of the hitherto unknown Bronze Age civilisation shared between the cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappan. As significantly, he excavated extensively in the Taxila Valley, the ancient capital of the region known as Gandhara, and exposed three separate urban phases. Located in modern Pakistan, these cities (the Bhir Mound, Sirkap and Sirsukh), and their associated hinterland sites, form the basis of our understanding of the second urbanisation of South Asia as well as shedding light on the growth of Buddhist monasticism and the adoption of the image of the Buddha. Marshall was also committed to presenting his findings to the public and did so in the form of lavishly illustrated volumes and a new innovation, site museums – including one at Taxila. Sir John Marshall continued to write up his excavations with reference to his personal collection of site, object and museum photographs following his retirement to England. The majority of this immensely valuable collection, 4910 photographs, was acquired for Durham University from Sir John by the Spalding family. Covering the whole of his service as Director-General, Sir John Marshall's Collection offers the potential to be an enormously important resource for researchers interested in a range of fields, from archaeology and architecture to conservation and Buddhism. Only partially scanned and available online, many of its images are unique and offering views of structures and features now damaged or lost.

Aim and Objectives

In April 2019, I was awarded an IMEMS Library Fellowship to initiate a new project "Contextualising Sir John Marshall's Photographic Collection at Durham" to provide new insights and understandings of this unique resource for South Asian Archaeology, the history of the discipline and current and past heritage management, particularly at Taxila.

During this time, I reviewed the images preserved in *Marshall Collection Volume 18: Panjab, Taxila; Marshall Collection Volume 19: Panjab, Taxila; Marshall Collection Volume 20: Panjab, Taxila* and *Marshall Collection Volume 21: Panjab, Taxila*.

The purpose of this review was to facilitate the following objectives:

- a) the compilation of a full description of the subject of each photograph in Taxila, including building and date to be added to the individual item description;
- b) the creation of a map showing the location from which each photograph of Taxila was taken;
- c) the taking of a modern photograph to recreate the views of a selection of 100 photographs of Taxila from the collection;
- d) and a review of the conservation methods implemented by Marshall at Taxila, and an evaluation of their long-term suitability.

Fellowship Activities

During my Fellowship, I reviewed and analysed the collection relating to Taxila, including the sites of Badalpur, Jaulian, Jundial, Kunala, Lalchak, Mohra Mouradu, Piplan, Dharmarajika Stupa, the Bhir Mound, Sirkap and Sirsukh. I also examined photographs of artefacts and sculptural fragments displayed in Taxila Museum. I completed updated descriptions of individual photographs, where necessary, and submitted copies of the new text to the Oriental Museum. In addition to these activities, I took 99 new photographs to recreate views from photographic scenes within Marshall's archive. The images related to the following sites:

- Badalpur – 2 images;
- Bhir Mound – 8 images;
- Dharmarajika Stupa – 12 images;
- Jaulian – 11 images;
- Jandial – 1 images;
- Kunala – 3 images;
- Lalchak – 2 images;
- Mohra Mouradu – 4 images;
- Pippala – 6 images;
- Sirkap – 12 images;
- Sirsukh – 2 images;
- Taxila Museum Artefacts – 36 images.

This latter process revealed that access to many of Taxila's sites access has changed over time and the construction of shelters after Marshall's excavations of Marshall has led to restricted views, making it difficult to photograph from exactly the same angle. Wherever possible, the same angle of photograph has been retaken but, when not possible, I took the closest angle to the original photograph as possible for comparison. Maps showing these viewsheds were created and submitted to the Oriental Museum at Durham University.

When analysing the conservation methods implemented by Marshall at Taxila, and evaluating their long-term suitability, I found it first necessary to review the principles laid down in his pioneering book '*Conservation Manual*' and a pamphlet published in 1907 entitled '*Conservation of Ancient Monuments*'. Both were directed towards the care of ancient monuments and specifically compiled for the archaeological officers, architects, engineers and conservators entrusted with this responsibility. Sir John also issued instructions in the '*Report of the Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the year ending March 1913*', which led to the following classification of monuments, and how they should be conserved:

- (1) Class-I: Those monuments which form their present condition or historical or archaeological value ought to be maintained in permanent good repair;
- (2) Class-II: Those monuments which it is now only possible or desirable to save from further decay by such measures as the eradication of vegetation, the exclusion of water from the walls, and the like;
- (3) Class-III: Those monuments which, from their advanced stage of decay or comparative unimportance, it is impossible or unnecessary to preserve.

As Marshall made it mandatory that the conservation notes of Archaeological Officers should be accompanied by representative photographs showing the condition of the monument from all points of view prior to conservation and repair, it is possible to identify conservation interventions at the monuments of Taxila within the collection.

From my study it is necessary to stress the value of Durham's collection as it contains many unique images which offer views of structures and features now lost, and some of the artefact photographs are the only records of material destroyed in the Taxila Museum during a major earthquake in 2005.

I note positively that many of the monuments conserved by Marshall at Taxila are still intact and, in my opinion, subsequent conservation works conducted at Taxila have continued to adhere to the principles laid out by Marshall at the beginning of the twentieth century. Structures at the Bhir Mound, Sirkap, Dharmarajika Stupa, Jaulian, Mohra Moradu, Lalchak and Pippala are in a good state of preservation. In some instances, however, comparisons between Marshall's photographs and recent photographs, demonstrate that some more recent conservation does not match the original. Unfortunately, at several sites, such as Lalchak, several monuments have clearly suffered neglect from site managers. One of the key issues identified is the deterioration of lime plaster and stucco figures. Whilst this may not directly relate to Marshall's conservation protocols, it does highlight inadequate protection and management in the recent past. At other sites, such as Mohra Moradu, good maintenance of shelters has facilitated the continued preservation of stucco figures, illustrating the suitability and effectiveness of Marshall's conservation and presentation methods when supported by continuous maintenance and management. However, several small stupas at Jaulian have suffered deterioration of stucco and lime detail plaster from heat, wind and rain due to a defective old shelter; this has since been replaced. These examples illustrate that my Fellowship was not just an academic exercise but helped me consider ways in which enhanced preservation of the heritage of Taxila in the present, and in the future, is possible.

Observations from my Fellowship

One of the most striking impacts of my review of Sir John's collection at Durham is that he, and his colleagues in the Archaeological Survey, made every effort to avoid restoration, reconstruction and rebuilding of ancient structures and attempted to preserve whatever they uncovered during archaeological excavations. Furthermore, Marshall and his teams approached each site and monument on its own merits, by providing tailored shelter, treating exposed walls and securing foundations rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. Only using authentic materials, and clearly recording distinctions between original and conserved features, they maintained and bestowed an authentic and reliable record for future generations of archaeologists. Without possession of such a reliable archive record, much of which is held in Durham, we have been struggling to learn more about Marshall's exemplary conservation philosophy.

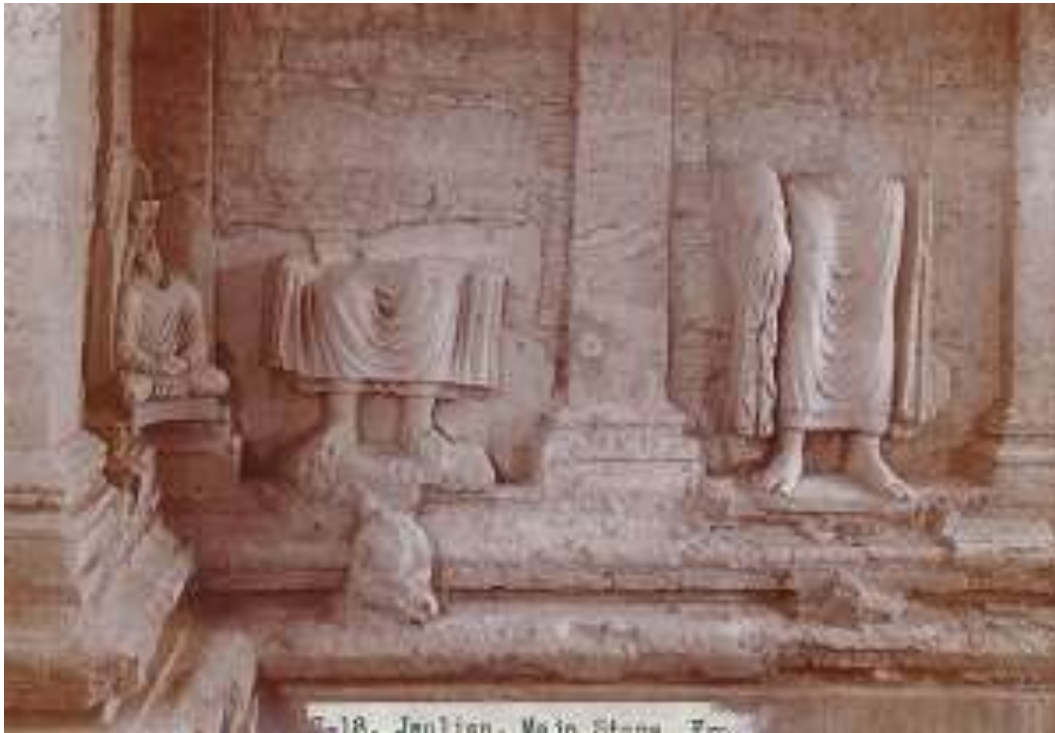
Academic Outcomes from the Fellowship

After the completion of my Fellowship, I published an article entitled 'Contextualising Sir John Marshall's Photographic Collection at Durham: research conducted under an IMEMS Library Fellowship 2019: A Review of the Conservation Methods Implemented by Marshall at Taxila and Evaluation of their Long-Term Suitability' in *Pakistan Archaeology* Volume 32. This is the journal of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Federal Government of Pakistan, and provides dissemination of the Fellowship and the archive to a wide audience of archaeologists and heritage professionals within Pakistan.

More recently, after taking up my new position as Director-General of Archaeology, Federal Government of Pakistan, I am keen to explore the possibility of developing a temporary exhibition showcasing Sir John's explorations and conservation at Taxila in his original site museum. Ideally, it would be accompanied by an online exhibition and be co-curated with IMEMS, the Oriental Museum and Durham University's UNESCO Chair on Archaeological Ethics and Practice in Cultural Heritage. Such an exhibition would help develop further links between Taxila Museum, the Department of Archaeology, Federal Government of Pakistan, and Durham University, and showcase both the collections of Taxila Museum and the archives of Durham to a national and international audience. It would also further disseminate the findings from my Fellowship on the history of Taxila and its monuments, from discovery through to historic and modern conservation, preservation and protection of heritage.

Exemplar Images

Jaulian



DUROM.1957.1.1550 (Marshall Collection)



Photograph from 2019 (Abdul Azeem)

Lalchak



DUROM.1957.1.1683 (Marshall Collection)



Photograph from 2019 (Abdul Azeem)

Mohra Moradu



DUROM.1957.1.1717 (Marshall Collection)



Photograph from 2019 (Abdul Azeem)

Dharmarajika Stupa



• DUROM.1957.1.1463 (Marshall Collection)



Photograph from 2019 (Abdul Azeem)

Taxila Museum



DUROM.1957.1.1888 (Marshall Collection)

(Left) Abdul Azeem 2019 (Right)



• DUROM.1957.1.1315 (Marshall Collection)



Photograph from 2019 (Abdul Azeem)