



# BAĠLĀN I. KUSHAN PERIOD

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## i. Kushan Period

The name originally derives from the Bactrian *bagolango* “image-temple” (< OIr. \**baga-dānaka-*), a term used in the inscription of Nokonzoko (SK4) from the archeological site of Surkh (Sork) Kotal in Afghanistan. In this text, the temple-complex excavated by the Delegation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan from 1951-63, is named as *Kanēško oanindo bagolango*, probably to be understood as “Kanishka-Victory-Temple.” Though since the word *oanindo* represents both the name of an astral deity of victory, depicted winged and thus named on the Kushan gold coinage, and as an adjective “victorious,” some scholars have taken it as an epithet referring to Kanishka.

The temple excavated at this site appeared to be a fire-temple of dynastic character, dedicated for the rulers of the Kushan dynasty. It was founded perhaps early in the reign of Kanishka (according to the unfinished inscription SK2 in the year 289 of an unstated era which is most probably a Greco-Bactrian era of about 155 B.C., thus fixing the date of construction to about A.D. 124), and restored in the year 31 of a different era, probably of Kanishka I’s own enthronement, perhaps thus equivalent to A.D.  $125 + 31 = 156$  or shortly after. The complex contained a *cella*, an attached subsidiary fire-temple piled with fine ashes, statues of at least two Kushan emperors, one of which seems identical with a coin-portrait of Huvishka, and a stone orthostat in poorly preserved state which appears to show an enthroned ruler in the presence of a trophy (for another theory see Fussman, p. 123).



The temple site is some 15 km northwest of Pol-e Ƙomrī in northern Afghanistan on the road to Balk, and about the same distance from the modern administrative center of Baġlān, a straggling settlement on the opposite (east) bank of the Qondūz River beside the road from Pol-e Ƙomrī to Qondūz. The meaning and original location of the name were evidently forgotten during the Middle Ages, so that it attached vaguely to the district as a whole, and ultimately to its modern center. The region was no doubt closely connected with the Kushan dynasty, and it bore in the Islamic period the name Ʀokārestān which derives from that of the Tocharoi, the ancient horde of which they became the rulers.

See also [BACTRIA](#); SORĶ KOTAL.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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D. Schlumberger, M. Le Berre, and G. Fussman, *Surkh Kotal en Bactriane*, MDFAFA 25, Paris, 1983, 2 vols. Besides the excavation reports there listed on p. viii, see especially W. B. Henning, "Surkh Kotal," *BSOAS* 18, 1956, pp. 366-67; idem, "The Bactrian Inscription," *BSOAS* 33, 1960, pp. 47-55; also I. Gershevitch, "The Well of Baghlan," *Asia Major* 12, 1961, pp. 90-109; idem, "Bactrian Inscriptions and Manuscripts," *IF* 72, 1967, pp. 27-57; A. D. H. Bivar, "The Kaniska Dating from Surkh Kotal," *BSOAS* 26, 1963, pp. 498-502.