



## BASAWAL

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**BASAWAL**, the site of a Buddhist cave temple complex in eastern Afghanistan, first visited and described in 1878 by William Simpson and completely measured and partly excavated in 1965 by the Kyoto University Archeological Mission; it extends about 3 km along the schist cliff facing to the south and on the left bank of the Kābolrūd and is named for a village on the opposite side located some 50 km east of Jalālābād. The caves, 150 in all, are partly hewn out in two rows and arranged in seven groups, which presumably correspond to the seven monastic institutions of Buddhist times. Each group consists of three kinds of caves: 1. Residential caves with barrel-vaulted ceilings, oblong in plan, are the simplest and most numerous. 2. Caves roofed with cloister vaults on a square plan are few in number; they were once decorated with stucco or clay sculpture on the walls and with painted buddhas or bodhisattvas on the four sides of their pyramidal ceilings. 3. Most exceptional in both plan and number are caves on a square plan of huge dimensions with central square pillars, around which circumambulatory rites may have been performed. In the central area of the site, in particular, caves are supplemented with open-air buildings of various dimensions, some of which were cleared to reveal a shrine where images in clay, terra cotta, and stucco were found almost in situ. The clay head of a prince with mustache sculpted in the round is worthy of special attention, particularly in relation to clay sculptures from Kama Daka, Haḍḍa, Ġaznī, Bāmīān, and from beyond Afghan territory; however, the dating of the Basawal head and of the caves themselves remains uncertain.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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