



DAL'VERZIN TEPE

DAL'VERZIN TEPE, a large site in southern Uzbekistan located not far from the bank of the Surkhandarya river near Denau, a small city approximately 60 km northeast of Termez; it has yielded valuable data on the civilization and arts of northern Bactria and Tokharistan. The excavations were sponsored by the Uzbekistan Institute of Fine Arts, Tashkent, and were directed by the present author.

In the 1st century B.C.E. Dal'verzin Tepe, originally a small Greco-Bactrian fortified place, developed laterally into an extensive town surrounded by a fortification wall. Historical and archeological data suggest that this town was the original capital of the people designated in the Chinese chronicle *Zan Han-shu* as Yue-zhi (Yueh-chih), who founded it "on the northern side of the river Gui-Shui (Amu Darya)" (Bichurin, pp. 183-84). It was in the Kushan period (1st-3rd centuries C.E.) that the town experienced its most active period of urban and defensive construction; the Greco-Bactrian nucleus was rebuilt as a citadel, and the fortification walls became almost twice as thick. A rapid decline followed, however, and under the Hephthalites in the 5th-6th centuries the walls were used for burials. In the 6th and 7th centuries there was a smaller settlement on the site of the former citadel, but after the Muslim conquest in the early 8th century Dal'verzin Tepe was completely abandoned.

The ruined Kushan city was rectangular, with buildings laid out in parallel rows; it was subdivided into administrative-military, residential, religious, and manufacturing zones. The prevailing building technique was typical of Bactrian architecture: walls of unbaked brick or clay, ceilings supported by



beams, and vaults. Traces of Hellenistic influence can be observed in some of the architectural details, for example, the Attic stone column bases and terracotta antefixes. The excavations have revealed the methods of constructing the fortifications: The city was encircled by a ditch and massive walls with interior casemates and defensive towers. In addition, extensive dwellings of both the wealthy and the ordinary inhabitants of the city were uncovered. The typical large house is characterized by a columned entrance *ayvān*, a vestibule, a central hall surrounded by a corridor, living and working quarters, and a domestic sanctuary. A system of underground aqueducts supplied each house with water. Also uncovered were two Buddhist temples, two temples dedicated to a local goddess (apparently Ardoḱšo), and a receptacle for bones from Zoroastrian ritual exposure (see *corpse*) found with an inventory. On the outskirts of the city there was a potters' quarter, with workshops and a number of kilns.

The terracotta sculpture that adorned the temples presents considerable interest; the upper parts of many of the pieces were coated with layers of gypsum plaster. In the Buddhist temples the images of the Bodhisattva and secondary deities were executed according to the canons of Gandharan sculpture (*Plate LVII*); statues of donors, including worshipers, members of the Kushan clan, grandees, and soldiers, reflect a freer style (*Plate LVIII*). In the temples of the goddess there were images of her and also sculptures of female worshipers and children. The goddess is also represented in a large number of terracotta statuettes (*Plate LIX*), and there are a few such statuettes of a male deity. In addition, small extant fragments of wall painting attest the variety of subjects and mastery of execution.

The excavated coins ranged from the 1st century B.C.E. to the 7th century C.E. In one house a treasure of gold objects was discovered; it included necklaces, torques, bracelets, earrings, and gold ingots, some of them engraved with their weights in Kharoṣṭhī script. Both local and imported gems were found, as well as whole sets of beautifully executed Kushan ceramics.

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Plate LVII. Gypsum-coated clay head of a *devata*, from the Buddhist temple *extra muros*, Dal'verzin Tepe.

Plate LVIII. Gypsum-coated clay head of a youth, Buddhist temple *intra muros*, Dal'verzin Tepe.

Plate LIX. Terracotta bust of the goddess Ardoḱšo, Dal'verzin Tepe.