



FOUCHER, ALFRED

FOUCHER, ALFRED (1865-1952), the first head of the French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (see [DÉLÉGATIONS ARCHÉOLOGIQUES FRANÇAISES, ii.](#)) and a noted scholar on Græco-Buddhist art.

After studying Sanskrit with Sylvain Lévi, Foucher went to India for the first time from 1895 to 1897 in order to study Buddhist art and iconography, particularly the Græco-Buddhist art of Gandhara (q.v.). He then spent six years (1900-1906) at the *École française d'Extrême-Orient*, first as a resident fellow and then as its director. Invited by John Hubert Marshall (1876-1958), the British art historian and archaeologist, he returned to India in 1919. In 1922 he negotiated on behalf of France the first archaeological convention between the Afghan government and a foreign country. He subsequently founded and became the head of the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan, the activities of which lasted until 1982. Later in life, he taught at the Sorbonne, took part in the establishment of the Institute for Indian Civilization, and was elected to that institute in 1928.

Although Foucher himself excavated little, and usually without success, in Bactria (q.v.), the archaeological project he established, beginning with his numerous field surveys, will serve to guide his successors. All his works are based on the comparison of texts with monuments. His erudition, his experience on the ground, and his understanding of the country enabled him to compose the first attempt at a historical geography of Afghanistan, *La vieille route de l'Inde, de Bactres à Taxila*.



Publications: *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhara*, 3 vols., Paris, 1905-22. *La vie du Bouddha d'après les monuments de l'Inde ancienne*, Paris, 1939. *La vieille route de l'Inde, de Bactres à Taxila*, MDFAFA 1, 2 vols., Paris, 1942-47. *Éléments de logique et de systématique indienne: Le compendium des topiques d'Annambhatta*, Paris, 1949. *Les vies antérieures du Bouddha d'après les textes et les monuments de l'Inde*, Paris, 1955. With J. Marshall and N. G. Majumdar, *The Monuments of Sanchî*, 3 vols., Calcutta, 1939.