

# Introduction

In 1996 a large hoard with remnants of more than 400 Buddhist sculptures, mainly originating from the Northern Qi dynasty, was found at the former location of the Longxing Temple of Qingzhou in the province of Shandong. Although Chinese Buddhist sculptures from the sixth century AD have been found and collected from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, they were not widely known before the discovery of the Longxing hoard. The sheer size of the find drew attention to the extraordinary quality of the art produced during a remarkably short period of time. Since 1996 several catalogues and articles on statues from that hoard have been published, highlighting some of the most extraordinary pieces. However, more artworks from the Northern Qi exist, hidden in museums and private collections as they have been treasured by connoisseurs long before their sudden increase in popularity. Thanks to the present catalogue, some of these objects from European collections can now be seen for the first time, enhancing knowledge of and appreciation for the extraordinary artworks of this dynasty.

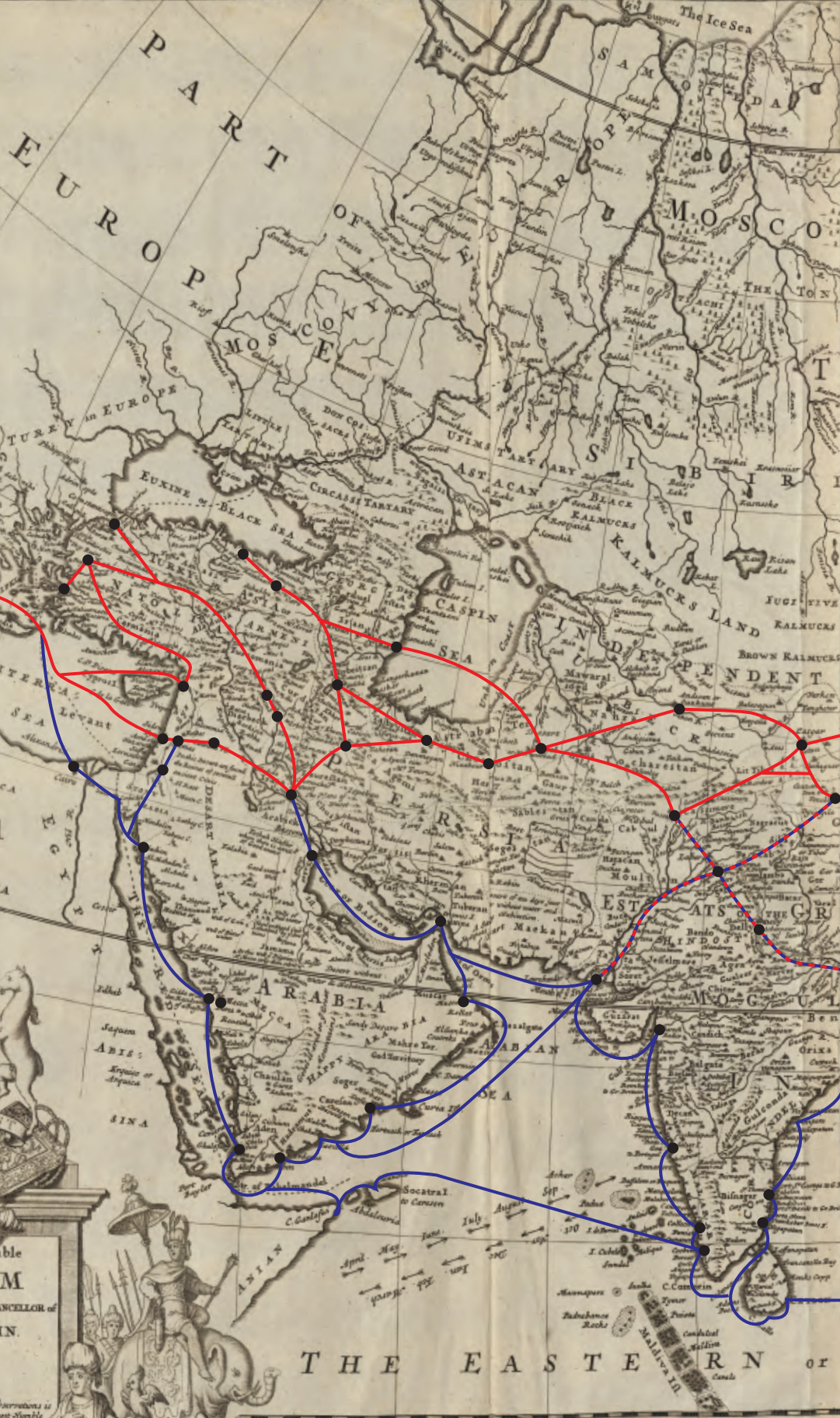
This book comprises three sections. The first contains some introductory chapters in which some of the main questions regarding the sculptures will be studied. They will hopefully contribute to a better understanding and

appraisal of the artworks. The second section contains the catalogue raisonné, in which the statues are depicted and described. The third includes a contribution by Carlos M. Roos and provides a thorough insight into the proportions of the sculptures' faces.

The first chapter sheds light on the historical background of the statues. It sketches the origins of Buddhism and its early spread into China. The political setting and its effects on the dissemination and practice of the religion are also briefly taken into account.

A stylistic analysis is provided in the second chapter. Although the focus lies primarily on sculptures from the Northern Qi dynasty, Buddhist statues of earlier and contemporaneous dynasties are also briefly discussed. These include objects of the Northern and Eastern Wei, as well as of the Northern Zhou dynasties. Apart from their amazing quality, they also enhance understanding of the stylistic evolution in Buddhist visual culture of that period. Furthermore, possible stylistic continuities between the Northern Qi and the Indian Gupta styles will be dwelt on.

The third chapter contains some thoughts on the Longxing hoard, as this discovery is probably the most important to date in terms of the information gained on the historical circumstances of burial and the conditions in which Northern Qi objects can be found.



**PART OF AFRICA**  
Tropick of Cancer  
DESART of BARCA

**P. or NEGRO**  
**LAND**



**THE EASTERN or**

Printed by H. Wall, over the Church of St. Dunstons, in Fleet Street, London, and by J. B. White, in St. Pauls Church-yard.  
By Philip Owen, Map and Printers, and by J. B. White, in St. Pauls Church-yard.

**INDIAN OC**



— Area of the Northern Qi  
 北齊領土  
 Silk and Spice Routes:  
 絲綢和香料之路線:  
 — Land Routes  
 陸上路線  
 — Maritime Routes  
 海運航線



Fig. 2.10  
Standing Buddha from  
Shandong, see cat. 3.



Fig. 2.11  
Standing Buddha from  
Hebei, see cat. 10.

The idea of naturalism translated primarily into an emphasis on the body of the Buddha sculptures, in stark contrast to the highly stylized forms of the previous dynasties. This also becomes clear when looking at the back-side of some of the Buddha sculptures (see Fig. 2.9).

Northern Qi sculptures might deviate considerably from one another, yet the new emphasis on the body persists. The Hebei sculptures in this catalogue, for instance, are more voluminous than those from Shandong and have amazingly realistic draperies; the execution differs, but the naturalism remains (see Fig. 2.10 and 2.11).

The different styles of the above dynasties of Northern or Eastern Wei and Northern Qi also gave me an impression of a shift in the meaning of the artwork.<sup>47</sup> In the scriptures,

a representation of the Buddha is conceived as a manifestation of the dharma. Whereas Buddhist figures from the Northern and Eastern Wei dynasty mostly come across as a reminder of the dharma and a representation of Buddhism in general, the new style gives the impression that the Buddha himself is emphasized, as the teacher, the enlightened one.

The style of the Bodhisattvas also evolved with the start of the Northern Qi dynasty. To a certain extent, the overall shapes follow those of the Buddha sculptures: slender outlines and naturalistic carving. The garments, on the other hand, do not follow their Indian counterparts. The types of attire and motifs draw rather on those carved during the Northern and Eastern Wei periods, with the exception, or so it seems, of the jewellery with animal masks of mythical creatures that some North-

ern Qi Bodhisattvas wear, usually spitting beads (see cat. 13 and 17).<sup>48</sup> Necklaces, stoles, upper and under garments, crowns and beaded chains are often similar, although executed differently. The garments are thin instead of the heavy robes of the previous dynasties, but do not cling to the body as much as the Buddhas' attires. The dissimilarity with the Northern and Eastern Wei sculptures lies in the outline of forms.

### Analysis of the face

As stated above, considerable variations occur even within the Northern Qi style. This becomes evident when studying the faces of the sculptures of both Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In Appendix 2, a section is devoted to the proportions of heads of six Northern Qi Buddhist sculptures, examining whether, despite their optical variety, the proportions coincide. Although the samples are not statistically representative of the style, since there are simply not enough, the results are nonetheless interesting. While it must be kept in mind that the measurements are approximate, it becomes clear that the standard deviation from the average of the majority of the proportions is quite small.<sup>49</sup> The aesthetic characteristics can partially be measured, such as the geometrical contour of the face, but the said proportions do not necessarily explain the treatment of form and shape, which might lead to a different optical effect. This became apparent by placing a grid over a full-frontal picture of the face of a Buddha (see cat. 5), as done in Appendix 1.<sup>50</sup>

The measurements and grids in the appendices support the impression that the general form of the six faces is slightly rectangular, almost square, a notion that is further enhanced by the shape of the hairline which frames the forehead. The slight asymmetries in each face also become clear. The grid makes these minor irregularities in the face of Buddha 5 apparent; the proper left corner of the mouth, for example, is marginally higher than the right one, whereas the bottom of the nose is faintly tilted to the other side. These

kinds of small asymmetries can also be found in the other five heads.

Three types of eyebrows can be discerned. The first presents a quite gradual transition between the eye socket and the forehead; the top of the orbit is simply marked by a painted black line. No such examples are present in this catalogue, but many statues from the Longxing hoard exhibit this feature.<sup>51</sup> Eyebrows of the second type (see Fig. 2.12) are formed by an angular transition; a black painted line might further create the presence of the eyebrows, as can be seen on several sculptures from the Longxing hoard.<sup>52</sup>

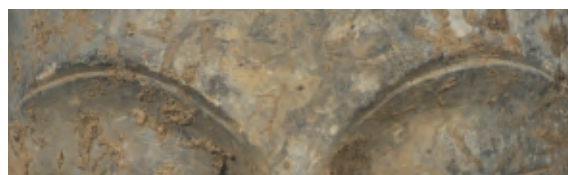


Fig. 2.12  
Eyebrows type 2,  
detail cat. 17.

Fig. 2.13  
Eyebrows type 3A,  
detail cat. Buddha 1.

Fig. 2.14  
Eyebrows type 3B,  
detail cat. Bodhisattva 15.

## 13 Seated Bodhisattva

550–577 AD, grey stone,  
63.5 x 38.5 cm,  
private collection.

A Bodhisattva meditating in the *padmasana* position from the Northern Qi dynasty such as this one is extremely rare. The figure is seated on a small pedestal which is covered at the front by his garments. It is likely that the pedestal only served as a support, giving the impression that the figure is floating in the air, and adds to the overall refinement of this elegant sculpture.

Since most of the tiara has been broken off and the arms and hands are missing, it is difficult to identify the figure. The rich garments and jewellery, the *padmasana* and the way it almost seems to be levitating indicate that the sculpture represents a Bodhisattva. Except for the above missing parts, this statue shows very little damage. Polychrome rests include beige, red, black and green pigments, as well as traces of gold leaf; they testify to its original, rich decoration.

The hair is tied up underneath a tiara; at the back, the hair is separated high in the neck and draped over the shoulders. The lower band of the tiara, which is still intact, has a round pearled medallion in the middle and a round gemstone on either side.

The statue has sharply outlined, fairly round and relatively high eyebrows, belonging to the second category on p. 43. The eyes, which are an example of type 1 on p. 44, are half closed and slant upwards. The delicate mouth forms a mysterious, knowing smile. The head is tilted downward, looking directly at any kneeling worshippers.

The figure wears an undergarment tied around the chest by a belt, with a short top tucked in underneath. Over this undergarment, he wears a lower garment which is folded over at the waist and held together with a decorated sash, which hangs down in the middle, folded double on the lap and draped over the legs of the Bodhisattva. An exquisitely carved, fierce-looking lion mask, an auspicious symbol, is visible at the bottom. Originally, the creature was spitting pearls. The figure wears a stole, on which a *yingluo* is draped with beads or pearls and metallic or jade ornaments. The clasp at the waist features the motif of a flaming pearl, a wish-granting jewel.

## 菩薩坐像

公元550–577年，灰石，  
63.5 x 38.5厘米，  
私人收藏。

菩薩以蓮花形 (*padmasana*) 坐姿冥想，這種雕像形式在北齊是極為罕見的。這尊雕像坐在一個小型基座上，前面被他的衣服遮住。基座很可能只是一個支架，目的是給人的產生這個人物漂浮在空中的印象，並且讓這個優雅雕塑的整體更為精練。

由於大多數頭飾已經破損，手臂和手都不見了，因此難以識別雕像的具體形象。豐富的服裝和珠寶，蓮花形 (*padmasana*) 坐姿和幾乎懸浮的方式，似乎意味著這尊雕像是菩薩雕像。除了上面提及的缺失部分，這個雕像其他部分的破損很少。多種顏色的殘留中包括米色，紅色，黑色和綠色顏料，也有殘存的金箔痕跡，這些都說明了佛像本來的豐富裝飾。

雕像的頭髮被束縛在頭飾下面，在背部，頭髮從頸部較高處分開，並且批覆在肩膀上。頭飾束帶仍然完好無損，其下端在中間部位有一個圓形珍珠獎章形狀的扣件，兩邊是圓形寶石。

這個雕像線條勾勒清晰，眉毛圓潤、眉骨較高，屬於本書第43頁中的第二類型。眼睛屬於本書第44頁的第一類型，半閉，向上傾斜。精緻的嘴唇形成一個神秘的，無所不知的微笑。頭向下傾斜，直視所有跪拜的信徒。

這個雕像的內衣用一條皮帶綁在胸前，一件短上衣收束進下衣中。在這件衣服外邊，穿著一件下腰衣裙，折疊在腰部，並用一個裝飾精美的縵帶收束在一起，並從中間垂下，折疊在雙腿上，批在菩薩的腿上。在雕像下方，可以看到有一個雕刻精美的，兇猛的獅子頭像，這是一個吉祥的符號。最初，這個獅子應該是吐珠的形象。雕像披著一件披肩，上面有瓔珞垂下，即珠丸、珍寶和金屬或翡翠裝飾的飾物。腰帶上的釦子是以光芒四射的珍珠，這是一顆施願的珍貴寶石。











## Facial measurements of six Northern Qi exemplars based on morphometric variables

Hinging on the configuration of proportional variables drawn from the graphic morphometric analysis (Appendix I), actual measurements of six statues in this catalogue, identified as Buddhas 1 and 8, and Bodhisattvas 4, 6, 10 and 11, were taken and represented in Tables 1 to 5. The information provided thereby includes calculations derived from the raw data, such as ratios, indices and statistical deviations.

It is worth recalling that the landmarks used for the measurement of the sculptures were originally conceived for actual human individuals, whose anatomical make-up combines bone structures, cartilaginous protuberances and soft tissues that have little to do with the rigid stoniness of our Qi exemplars. The graphic analyst has a head start in this regard, because elusive landmarks determined

by structural anatomical joints, such as bone intersections or cranial sutures, are often deducible via facial geometry – as it has been done for determining the *nasion* (N) of Buddha 8 (see Figure 4 in Appendix I). The art historian measuring objects *in situ* is seldom in a position to make use of such resources. In the wake of this fact, and of the multiple difficulties pertaining to the handling of ancient artefacts, it should be noted that the numeric values presented here are always approximate, yet sufficiently accurate as to account for the proportions under consideration.

For the record, all ratios, indices and standard deviations in Tables 5 to 9 are based on axial distances between landmarks, namely ‘measured along one of the axes of the canonical coordinate system’ (DeCarlo et al. 1998: § 2).

The following measurements corresponding to our sample were made (in centimetres):

Table 1  
Measurements Buddhas 1 and 8, Bodhisattva 6.



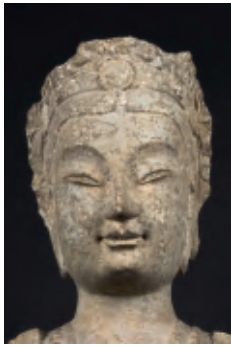
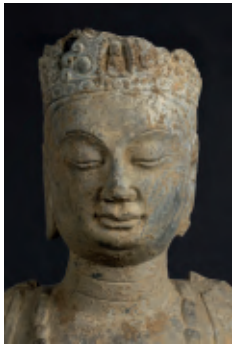

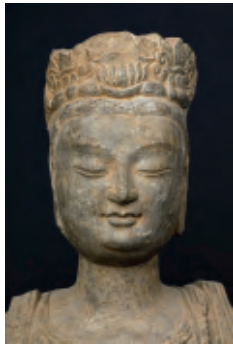
|                     | <u>Buddha 5</u>   | <u>Buddha 1</u>  | <u>Bodhisattva 13</u>   |
|---------------------|---|--|---|
|                     |  |  |  |
| TR-GN               | 13.35   | 12.5   | 10.8  |
| TR-N                | 3.9   | 4  | 2.5   |
| N-SN                | 4.1   | 4  | 3.5   |
| SN-GN               | 4.9   | 3.9  | 2.55  |
| SN-ST               | 1.8   | 1.8  | 0.9   |
| ST-SM               | 0.4   | 0.3  | 0.35  |
| SM-GN               | 2.7   | 1.8  | 1.3   |
| SA-SBA <sup>1</sup> | 10.9  | 9.8  | 8   |
| ZY-ZY               | 13.3  | 11.7   | 9   |
| EN-EX <sup>2</sup>  | 3.55  | 3.7  | 3.05  |
| AL-AL               | 2.65  | 2.6  | 2.1   |
| CH-CH               | 3.8   | 3.2  | 3   |

Table 2  
Measurements Bodhisattvas 15, 16 and 17.

|        | Bodhisattva 15  | Bodhisattva 16   | Bodhisattva 17  |
|--------|---|--|---|
|        |  |  |  |
| TR-GN  | 10.4  | 9.6  | 9.2   |
| TR-N   | 3.35  | 2.6  | 2.6   |
| N-SN   | 3.6   | 3.2  | 3.2   |
| SN-GN  | 2.8   | 3.4  | 2.4   |
| SN-ST  | 1.3   | 1.3  | 0.7   |
| ST-SM  | 0.3   | 0.4  | 0.4   |
| SM-GN  | 1.2   | 1.7  | 1.3   |
| SA-SBA | 7.8   | Damaged  | Damaged   |
| ZY-ZY  | 7   | 8.8  | 8.8   |
| EN-EX  | 3.1   | 2.7  | 2.55  |
| AL-AL  | 2.2   | 2.1  | 2   |
| CH-CH  | 3.05  | 2.6  | 2.55  |