

## The Long Path of Nanāia from Mesopotamia to Central and South Asia

Andrew SCHUMANN<sup>1</sup>, Vladimir SAZONOV<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract.** *In this paper we show that the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia had some attributes (such as ‘warrior goddess’ and ‘sitting on a tiger/lion/standing with a lion/lions’) which were preserved in her worship from the period of Ur III (the second millennium BC) in Mesopotamia up to the period of the Kuṣāṇas and Kūšānšāhs (from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD), and even up to the period of later Nomadic dynasties of Northern India, such as the Kidarites and Hepthalites (from the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD to the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD) in Central and South Asia. In later stages we detect early Hindu images of Nanāia presented as Durgā as well as early Hindu images of the divine couple Oešo and Nanāia presented as Umāmaheśvara. So, the standard Indian iconographic motif of Durgā could be traced back to the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia.*

**Rezumat.** *În cadrul prezentului articol dorim să demonstrăm că zeița mesopotamiană Nanāia avea unele atribute (precum cea de „războinică” și „șezând pe un tigru/leu” sau „alături de un leu/lei”) ce au supraviețuit în cultul său din perioada Ur III (mileniul al II-lea î.Hr.) în Mesopotamia, până în perioada lui Kuṣāṇas și Kūšānšāhs (din primul secol d.Hr. până la finalul secolului al IV-lea d.Hr.), și chiar până spre dinastiile nomade târzii din nordul Indiei, precum cele ale Kidarites și a Hepthalites (din secolul al IV-lea d.Hr. până în cel de-al VIII-lea d.Hr.) în Asia Centrală și de Sud. În încheiere observăm unele imagini hinduse timpurii ale zeiței Nanāia ce sunt prezentate ca fiind ale lui Umāmaheśvara. Astfel, motivul iconografic standard al lui Durgā poate fi urmărit până la originile sale, în reprezentările zeiței Nanāia.*

**Keywords.** *world-system, Nanā, Nanāia, Oešo, Umā, Durgā, Maheśvara.*

### 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show how different Sumero-Akkadian beliefs revolving around the worship of <sup>d</sup>NA.NA.A (<sup>d</sup>Nanaya, Nanā, Nanāia) influenced the worship of the eponymous female deity in Central Asia – (i) *nn̄y* (Sogdian: Nanāia) in Sogdiana and Khorosmia (today’s Tajikistan and the South of Uzbekistan); (ii) *Ναννα* (Greco-Bactrian: Nanāia), *Ναννα* (Bactrian: Nanā) in Bactria (modern Afghanistan) and Gandhāra (present-day north-west Pakistan and north-east Afghanistan) – and through them even influenced some Hindu beliefs about Durgā in North India. On the one hand, the influence of Sumero-Akkadian

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<sup>1</sup> University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszow (Poland), andrew.schumann@gmail.com.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Oriental Studies, University of Tartu (Estonia), sazonov@ut.ee.

Nanāia on Sogdian-Bactrian Nanāia is quite well-known.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the claim about the possible impact of Sogdian-Bactrian Nanāia on the cult of Durgā needs special argumentation, which is presented in this paper.

Methodologically, there is a difference between reconstructing the cult of Nanāia in Mesopotamia<sup>4</sup> and reconstructing the cult of Nanāia in Central Asia. In the first case, we have a lot of long textual fragments mentioning this goddess. So, we can extrapolate the dynamics of identification of the goddess by tracing her attributes in texts from Ur III (2112–2004 BC) to the Neo-Babylonian period in the late 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. In the second case, we deal with a few mentions of Nanāia in long texts, but there is a huge number of her images in paintings, sculptures, and coins with very short inscriptions. Therefore, we cannot analyse long texts but only visual attributes in her images and their dynamics.

Thus, in this paper we are going to trace and classify the identification of Nanāia/Nanā from the earliest mentions in Ur III (from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century BC according to the middle chronology) up to the possible influence of Nanā on Durgā in Northern India (from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD). In this tracing and classifying, we use the world-systems analysis introduced by Immanuel Wallerstein<sup>5</sup>, and, thereby, we completely agree with the statement later made by André Gunder Frank<sup>6</sup> that various regions have been linked to each other by close economic, social and political relations since ca. 3000 BC, and, in this way, they have united into a kind of world-system. We show that Nanāia is a goddess whose worship has been a significant part of religious diffusion of this world-system since its inception. So, the world-systems analysis can be treated as an *eternalistic* approach to history, when each historical event is understood as unique, and there is only one history without repetitive processes with some historical laws holding for different societies or civilizations. For instance, the cult of Nanāia as mother goddess has an unbroken living tradition that goes back over 4,000 years and it is now preserved in the cult of Durgā in India.

Our research within the framework of the world-systems approach is based on different combined methods, such as critical study of texts from Mesopotamia (e.g., royal inscriptions, myths, offering lists etc) and texts of coin legends from Central and South Asia. We use comparative analysis of textual sources in Sumerian, Akkadian, Bactrian, Sogdian and some other languages, philological analysis, and diachronic and synchronic analysis. This combination of methods is useful for examining a wide variety of sources from different genres, epochs and geographic scopes for reconstructing one intercultural religious tradition within the world-system. In order to combine these methods into one piece of research, we

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<sup>3</sup> RTVELADZE 1993/4: 84; POTTS 2001; REINER 1974; AZARPAY 1976; WESTENHOLZ 1997; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008; PALEOTTI 2013.

<sup>4</sup> HEIMPEL 1982, 65–67.

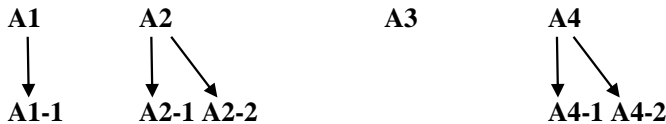
<sup>5</sup> WALLERSTEIN 1976.

<sup>6</sup> FRANK and GILLS 1992; FRANK and GILLS 1993.

apply a general methodology developed within the structuralist analysis of mythemes founded by C. Lévi-Strauss<sup>7</sup> and V. Ya. Propp<sup>8</sup>. Let us recall that they proposed the methodology of analysing the mythological narratives of different languages, epochs and geographic locations. Following their approach, we distinguish between syntagmatic (horizontal) and paradigmatic (vertical) orders of mythemes. So, we distinguish between syntagmatic and paradigmatic orders of attributes of deity. According to the syntagmatic order of the first level, we obtain the following attributes of Nanāia in Mesopotamia<sup>9</sup>:

- ‘mother goddess’ (A1)<sup>10</sup>
- ‘love (fertility)’ (A2)<sup>11</sup>
- ‘royal patron’ (A3)<sup>12</sup>
- ‘woman warrior’ (A4)<sup>13</sup>

The attribute ‘crescent moon’ (A1-1) is paradigmatically subordinated to A1, according to Old Babylonian texts<sup>14</sup>; the attribute ‘healing of epidemics’ (A2-1) is paradigmatically subordinated to A2 and ‘marriage (children)’ (A2-2) to the same A2, according to Old Babylonian texts, too (STRECK 2012; VS 10, 215: 11); ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1) to A4<sup>15</sup>. The attribute ‘four or many arms’ (A4-2) was not mentioned in the Mesopotamian sources, but it occurs first in Kuṣāṇa and Sogdian images of Nanāia. It is subordinated to A4, also. First of all, according to numismatics<sup>16</sup> of the Kuṣāṇas, we can reconstruct all the Mesopotamian attributes of Nanāia in the Kuṣāṇa period in India and, additionally, A4-2. These attributes are as follows:



Later these attributes were ascribed to Durgā – one of the main goddesses in Hinduism – but with some new attributes. So, using this structuralist methodology, we show the

<sup>7</sup> LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1955.

<sup>8</sup> PROPP 1968.

<sup>9</sup> STRECK 2012.

<sup>10</sup> DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 33; WEIDNER 1924, 1–18.

<sup>11</sup> SIGRIST 1984, 147; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008.

<sup>12</sup> SIGRIST and WESTENHOLZ 2008, 667–704

<sup>13</sup> KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201.

<sup>14</sup> STRECK 2012; VS 10, 215: 3

<sup>15</sup> See ETCSL translation: t.1.3.2 *Inanna and Ebih*, lines 7–9, ETCSL, <https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr132.htm> (accessed 18.11.2021)

<sup>16</sup> JONGEWARD and CRIBB 2015.

dynamics of the main attributes of Nanāia from the Mesopotamian goddess <sup>d</sup>Nanaya in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC to the Hindu goddess Durgā in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

## 2. Nanāia in Mesopotamian Sources

<sup>d</sup>Nanaya (Nanāia) appears in Mesopotamian sources within different texts in different contexts and also in different periods at least since Ur III. As Joan G. Westenholz rightly remarked:

for <sup>d</sup>Nanaya is a latecomer to the assembly of Sumerian gods; she appears from nowhere to become the greatest Mesopotamian goddess of all times – greater than the Sumerian Ninḫursaĝ, the highest lady of the Sumerian pantheon, more enduring than even the Semitic goddess par excellence, Iṣtar, who was worshipped from one end of the Near East to the other. <sup>d</sup>Nanaya was a goddess whose name was never lost on the pages of time.<sup>17</sup>

Let us trace back some earliest mentions of this goddess.

There are some suggestions that Nanāia could originate from an Elamite word, e.g., the Elamite root *nan(n)* means “day, morning”<sup>18</sup>, but there is no direct proof of that<sup>19</sup>, although it is possible. We do not have any direct evidence in the early Mesopotamian sources from the Early Dynastic Period (2800–2335 BC) to the Old Akkadian Period (2334–2154 BC) that this goddess indeed existed at that time.

From Ur III, the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia was the goddess of erotic love.<sup>20</sup> We know that some offerings to Nanāia were performed during the reign of Šulgi (e.g., in the 33<sup>rd</sup> or 32<sup>nd</sup> regnal year); for example, we can find some information about this fact from the texts from Drehem.<sup>21</sup> In Drehem, Nanāia was mentioned in different years of Šulgi<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, we know that offerings of lambs were performed in “various months, starting in the 44<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Šulgi (2094–2047) and continuing until the second year of the rule of Ibbi-Sîn (2028–2004)”.<sup>23</sup> There were some other types of offerings, too, e.g., kid offerings (they were mentioned for the first time in the 35<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Šulgi).<sup>24</sup> So, in other words, offerings continued until the end of Ur III.

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<sup>17</sup> WESTENHOLZ 1997, 57.

<sup>18</sup> ZADOK 1984, 30.

<sup>19</sup> DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 19.

<sup>20</sup> STOL 1998–2001, 147.

<sup>21</sup> DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 33.

<sup>22</sup> e.g., Šulgi's 26<sup>th</sup> year – OZAKI and SAUREN 2020; Šulgi's 35<sup>th</sup> year – BDTNS, AnOr 07 056, CDLI P101351.

<sup>23</sup> DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 33.

<sup>24</sup> MVN XVIII 56 = AnOr 7, 56, PDT 32, 998; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 34.

It is worth noting here that in the cities of Ur and Uruk, during the whole Ur III period, some texts describe that offerings were made for the following goddesses: Inanna, Nanāia, Bēlat-tirraban, Bēlat-suhnir, Ulmašitum and Annunītum, and others.<sup>25</sup> According to W.G. Lambert, Ulmašitum and Annunītum are Ištar of Akkad and Ištar of Babylon, respectively.<sup>26</sup> Hence, Nanāia was one of the highest deities mentioned together with Inanna and Ištar<sup>27</sup>, and one of her earliest main attributes was to be a ‘*mother goddess*’ (A1). Nanāia’s name occurs in the Old Babylonian period as <sup>d</sup>na-na-a in Weidner’s God List<sup>28</sup>, line 12:

[<sup>d</sup>bi-zil]-[lá<sup>1</sup> [<sup>d</sup>]na-na]-[a<sup>1</sup>]-a  
 [<sup>d</sup>ka-ni-sur]-ra [DUMU<sup>1</sup>.MUNUS <sup>d</sup>na-na-a-a] –  
 “<sup>d</sup>Bizilla (is) <sup>d</sup>Nanaya  
 [<sup>d</sup>Kanisur]ra (is the) daughter of [<sup>d</sup>Nanaya]”.<sup>29</sup>

‘*Love (fertility)*’ (A2) as one of her additional attributes is reconstructed from the analysis of the royal inscriptions since the early second millennium BC, i.e., since the Isin-Larsa period and Old Babylonian period (2000–1595 BC). This reconstruction is based on identifying Nanāia with Inanna. This identification took place at the time of Sîn-iqišam.<sup>30</sup> For example, Būr-Sîn, ruler of Isin, begins his inscription by mentioning Nanāia, to whom he dedicated this text as a whole:

1–7) <sup>d</sup>na-na-a nin-a-ni-ir nam-ti <sup>d</sup>bur-<sup>d</sup>EN.zu lugal-ki-en-gi-ki-uri ki-ág-<sup>d</sup>in[anna] ù <sup>d</sup>na-na-a-<sup>r</sup>šè<sup>7</sup> – “For the goddess Nanāia, her lady, for the life of Būr-Sîn, king of the land Sumer and Akkad, beloved of the goddesses In[anna] and Nanāia.”<sup>31</sup>

It is also important to refer here to an inscription from Ur describing the construction of a temple devoted to the goddess Nanāia. This inscription belongs to Sūmû-El, the ruler of Larsa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century BC:

1–6) <sup>d</sup>na-na-a-a nin ħi-li-a šu-du, <sup>d</sup>su-mu-èl nita-kala-ga lugal-uri, KI-ma lugal-ki-en-gi-ki-uri – “For the goddess Nanāia, the lady with perfect voluptuousness, Sūmû-El, mighty man, king of Ur, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>25</sup> DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 34; COHEN 1993, 136–140.

<sup>26</sup> LAMBERT 1989, 324.

<sup>27</sup> STOL 1998–2001, 147; CHARPIN 1994, 37.

<sup>28</sup> WEIDNER 1924, 1–18.

<sup>29</sup> Weidner’s God List was most probably composed in the Old Babylonian period – see JOHANDI 2019, 15; POMPONIO 1998–2001, 21; VELDHUIS 2003, 628. This mention is as follows (ZAIA 2017; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 9

<sup>30</sup> see SIGRIST 1984, 147; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 5.

<sup>31</sup> RIME 4, Būr-Sîn E4.1.7.3, lines 1–7.

Innana and Nanāia are mentioned in one inscription of Rīm-Sîn I but separately.<sup>33</sup> Thus, we have another confirmation of the attribute ‘love (fertility)’ (A2).

The name of Nanāia also appeared in the “sacred marriage” of Rīm-Sîn I. This “sacred marriage” joined Rīm-Sîn I and Nanāia.<sup>34</sup> In this context, we can reconstruct the following new attribute of Nanāia: to be a ‘royal patron’ (A3) granting forces and powers to kings. Nanāia has been mentioned in many inscriptions of Rīm-Sîn I, such as some inscriptions which are known from one bronze foundation canephore and three stone foundation tablets. They are devoted to the building of the temple of Nanāia by Kudur-mabuk and his son Rīm-Sîn I:

<sup>d</sup>na-na-a nin ħi-li še-er-ka-an-di nam-sa<sub>6</sub>-ga-ni gal diri dumu-zi-le-an-gal-la nin-a-ne-ne-er – “For the goddess Nanāia, lady adorned with voluptuousness, whose beauty is excessively great, comely daughter of great Anu, their lady.”<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, the beginning of *Hymn to Nanāia* by Sargon II is destroyed, but we can reconstruct an invocation and celebration of Nanāia's military prowess<sup>36</sup> and her battle with Sebēttu – the seven evil demons of one mother and one father:

2–6) [na]m-ša-ru pe-tu-ú x[x x x x] [q]ul<sup>l</sup>-mu-ú zaq-tu si-mat <sup>d</sup>[se-bet-tu] im-na u šu-me-la su-ud-dur tam-ħa-ru a-šá-rit-ti ilānī(diġir)<sup>mes</sup> šá me-lul-šá qab-lum a-li-kàt maħ-ri šu-ut se-bet at-ħe-e – “The naked sword, [emblem of Nergal], the pointed axe, suited to the [Sebēttu] on (her) right and left battle is arrayed. The foremost of the gods, (she) whose play is battle, who goes ahead of the brotherhood of the Seven.”<sup>37</sup>

Konstantopoulos accentuates that this reference echoes much earlier attestations of the Sebēttu as a group of brothers who form a context of battle within which Nanāia has been engaged. Hence, a clear connection between Nanāia, Ištar, and evil demons (Sebēttu) is visible here to trace the ‘woman warrior’ (A4) as a new attribute of Nanāia.<sup>38</sup> As we know from the Akkadian literary text entitled *Descent of Ištar to the Netherworld*<sup>39</sup>, the goddess Ištar decides to visit the netherworld, but Ištar's sister, the goddess Ereškigal (the lady and queen of the netherworld), is jealous and she orders her gatekeepers (demons) to remove all of Ištar's

<sup>32</sup> RIME 4, Sūmû-El E4.2.7.2, lines 1–6.

<sup>33</sup> RIME 4, Rīm-Sîn I E4.2.14.3.

<sup>34</sup> YOS 11 24 = YBC 4643; SIGRIST and WESTENHOLZ 2008, 667–704.

<sup>35</sup> RIME 4, Rīm-Sîn I E4.2.14.3, lines 1–5.

<sup>36</sup> KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201.

<sup>37</sup> KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201; SAA 3, nr. 4, 13.

<sup>38</sup> KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201.

<sup>39</sup> FOSTER 1996, 402–409.

clothing as she enters the netherworld, whereupon Ereškigal sets disease demons upon her, and Ištar dies.<sup>40</sup>

In Akkadian, the name of Nanāia was written syllabically in the following way: *Na-na-a(a)*.<sup>41</sup> At the time of the early II millennium BC, Nanāia became very popular and was often mentioned in different texts, including some royal inscriptions of Mesopotamian rulers and hymns. For example, the king of Uruk Sîn-kāšid (the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC) organized the building of a temple devoted to the goddess Nanāia, where an inscription was found on a cone excavated at Uruk

1–9) <sup>d</sup>*na-na-a nin-hi-li-sù nin-a-ni-ir* <sup>d</sup>EN.zu-kà-šì-id *nita-kala-ga lugal-unu.Ki-ga ib é-[šà]-hú1-1a-ka-na mu-na-dù* – “For the goddess Nanāia, lady adorned with charm, his lady Sîn-kāšid, mighty man, king of Uruk, built for her an oval in her E[sa]hula [‘House of rejoicing’].”<sup>42</sup>

Besides the royal inscriptions and other texts, Nanāia also often played an important role in cultic texts (hymns). For instance, there is the *Hymn to Nanāia*<sup>43</sup> which ends in a conclusion consisting of a blessing for the king. It is important to note that the structure, vocabulary and content are quite similar to the *Hymn to Ištar*. Thus, in this hymn we see the four attributes of Nanāia simultaneously: ‘mother goddess’ (A1), ‘love (fertility)’ (A2), ‘royal patron’ (A3), and ‘woman warrior’ (A4). These attributes occur in different Old Babylonian texts<sup>44</sup>:

**A1** (‘mother goddess’): Nanāia is the daughter of An (VS 10, 215: 17f.; UET 6/2, 404: 5); she is the most powerful goddess among the Igigi (VS 10 215); the mistress of the world (VS 10, 215: 23); the mighty in the world (UET 6/3 889 ii 14);

**A1-1** (‘Sun and/or Moon’): Nanāia is luminous; she is the sun of the people (VS 10, 215: 1); like the moon to behold (VS 10, 215: 3); endowed with brilliance (VS 10, 215: 4); people look upon her light (VS 10, 215: 24; UET 6/2, 404: 1f);

**A2** (‘love/fertility’): Nanāia is full of songs of love (VS 10, 215: 5–8; VS 10, 215: 16);

**A2-1** (‘giving life / curing of epidemics’): Nanāia brings well-being and life (VS 10, 215: 11);

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<sup>40</sup> FOSTER 1996, 402.

<sup>41</sup> POTTS 2001, 24; RAINER 1974, 222, n. 8.

<sup>42</sup> RIME 4, Sîn-kāšid E4.4.1.10, lines 1–9.

<sup>43</sup> FOSTER 1996, 72.

<sup>44</sup> STRECK 2012.

**A2-2** (*'helping in childbirth'*): Nanāia helps in childbirth (UET 6/3, 889 ii 3–10);

**A3** (*'royal patron'*): the stubborn king is seized by her (UET 6/2, 404: 8f); she is just (VS 10, 215: 9) and wise (VS 10, 215: 25); Samsuiluna (ca 1750-1712 BC), the king of Amorite dynasty of Babylon<sup>45</sup>, presents her offerings (VS 10, 215: 33–36), he rejoices over her (VS 10, 215: 42), he is granted life and kingship by her (VS 10, 215: 37–40, 49–52), the king is named by the goddess (VS 10, 215: 46–48, 55), through her, he is made the champion of the world (VS 10, 215: 53f);

**A4** (*'woman warrior'*): Nanāia is a raging and furious goddess (VS 10, 215: 26; UET 6/2, 404: 3; UET 6/3, 889 ii 11f); she tramples the field of the people (UET 6/2, 404: 6).

Potts already tried to clarify the identification of Nanāia (Nanā) and the role of her place in the ancient Mesopotamian pantheon.<sup>46</sup> He accentuated that Inanna (Ištar) must be distinguished from Nanāia<sup>47</sup>, and just the latter goddess became Nanāia (Nanā) in Soghd and Bactria without the attribute *'love (fertility)'* (**A2**), see.<sup>48</sup> But, in contrast, this attribute (**A2**) of Nanāia became very important in Soghd and Bactria.

It is notable that Nanāia was also mentioned in the Neo-Assyrian list from Sultantepe (STT, 376–386), and that the name of Nanāia appears after the Dumuzi-Innana deity group.<sup>49</sup> There is also other evidence, but we mention only some to show the link between Nanāia and the Dumuzi-Ištar-(Innana) group. Hence, in the Neo-Assyrian (see also about warlike Ištar<sup>50</sup>; Nanaya Hymn to Sargon II<sup>51,52</sup>) and Neo-Babylonian periods we see the same attributes of Nanāia: *'mother goddess'* (**A1**), *'love (fertility)'* (**A2**), *'royal patron'* (**A3**), and *'woman warrior'* (**A4**).

### 3. Nanāia in Central and South Asia

The goddess Nanāia became extremely popular in Bactria and Gandhāra (today's Afghanistan and Pakistan) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC under the same name *my* (Sogdian), *Νᾰνᾰῖα* (Greco-Bactrian), and *Νᾰνᾰ* (Bactrian). Let us show that she also preserved her main attributes: *'mother goddess'* (**A1**), *'love (fertility)'* (**A2**), *'royal patron'* (**A3**), and *'woman warrior'* (**A4**). First, her images appeared within the classical Hellenistic iconography of Cybele (containing her main attribute – to be accompanied by a lion) in the Hellenistic Temple with

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<sup>45</sup> First Babylonian Dynasty.

<sup>46</sup> POTTS 2001.

<sup>47</sup> POTTS 2001, 23; HOFFMAN 1880, 133; STRECK 1916, 757, EDZARD 1965, 108.

<sup>48</sup> POTTS 2001, 24.

<sup>49</sup> DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 24.

<sup>50</sup> STOL 1998–2001, 148.

<sup>51</sup> SAA 3, nr. 4, 13–16.

<sup>52</sup> Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II ruled 722–705 BC.



Indented Niches at Ai-Khanoum (Afghanistan) and in the semi-Hellenistic and semi-Mazdean Oxus Temple at Takht-i Sangin (Tajikistan), then on the coins of the Kuṣāṇa rulers with the same main attribute – to be accompanied by a lion – but her name *Ναναία* (Nanāia) was also mentioned explicitly in Greek legends, which connects Cybela to Nanāia. At that time, she was the main royal patron of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty – she was depicted on the coins as holding the royal diadem as a sign of Kuṣāṇa power. So, the ‘royal patron’ (A3) was her main attribute there. These Kuṣāṇa rulers used Bactrian (one of the Eastern Iranian languages) as one of the official languages (most probably, together with Gāndhārī) and reigned over the territory of modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and North India at least up to Varanasi at the height of their power. This dynasty existed from the early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Initially, they used Greek as their official language, but the situation changed after the reform of the Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniška (Bactrian: *Κανησκι*), presumably in 127 AD, the main aim of which was changing the official language of the Kuṣāṇa Empire from Greek to Bactrian (called "Aryan"). The text of this reform is known as the Rabatak inscription<sup>53</sup>, and after the reform all the legends on the Kuṣāṇa coins were written only in Bactrian, and the goddess was called *Νανα* (Nanā). So, after 127 AD, the spelling of the name of the goddess changed in Bactria and Gandhāra (it became Nanā) but remained the same in Soghd: *nny* (Nanāia).

In the Rabatak inscription, we see an identification of Nanā with Umā (Hārīti), the Buddhist goddess: “the lady Nanā and the lady Umā” (*ια αμσα Νανα οδο ια αμσα Ομμυα*). Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Umā (Hārīti) had the following attributes in Buddhism:

- (i) ‘mother goddess’ (A1) as the mother of the *yakṣas* (e.g., the *Āryadānapāramitānāmamahāyānasūtra*, Degé Kangyur, vol. 61, fol.79.a; the *Mahāsāhasrapramardanināmasūtra*, Degé Kangyur, vol. 96, fol. 253.a – 254.a);
- (ii) ‘love (fertility)’ (A2) as the wife of Maheśvara and mother of children, then protecting families (e.g., the *Āryakāraṇḍavyūhanāmamahāyānasūtra* 2.96, Degé Kangyur vol. 51, folio 242.a–242.b; the *Āryatārākurukullākālpa* 5.3, Degé Kangyur vol. 81, folio 39b);
- (iii) ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1) and ‘helping in childbirth’ (A2-2) as the subject of different *dhāraṇīs* for protecting against demons (e.g., the *Hārītisūtra*, 佛說鬼子母經, T. 1262; the *Samyuktaratnapīṭakasūtra*, 雜寶藏經, T. 203);
- (iv) Umā (Hārīti) was considered a wife of Maheśvara (e.g., the *Āryatārākurukullākālpa* 5.3, Degé Kangyur, vol. 81, fol.39b) who was named *Orḥo* in Bactrian and *wyšprkr* in Sogdian; he is the Buddhist-Zoroastrian deity of wind and exaltation.<sup>54</sup>

In Hinduism (e.g., the *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Devīmāhātmyam*), Umā (Durgā) became a wife of Śiva, and she has the same attributes even at present: from (i) to (iv).

<sup>53</sup> MUKHERJEE 1995; SIMS-WILLIAMS 1998, 2008.

<sup>54</sup> SHENKAR 2014, 82.

According to the *Āryatārākurukullākalpa* and some other Mahāyāna texts, Hārītī was a child-eating demoness, but the Buddha made her a protectress of children, women, the *saṃgha*, and all beings. Archeologically, there were the following two main groups of attributes of Hārītī, detected in her statues: (i') the enthroned mother nimbate holding a lotus flower and cornucopia (e.g., Peshawar Museum PM\_02338) – ‘mother goddess’ (A1); (ii') the enthroned mother with small children (e.g., British Museum 1886,0611.1) – ‘love (fertility)’ (A2), ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1), ‘helping in childbirth’ (A2-2). Let us note that these attributes (i') and (ii'), reconstructed archeologically, are consonant with the attributes from (i) to (iv) reconstructed textologically. This means that the Mahāyāna texts mentioning Umā (Hārītī) are well confirmed by archaeological evidence. Furthermore, both manifestations (i') and (ii') of Hārītī have been excavated in almost all Buddhist sites of Gandhāra dated to the Kuṣāṇa period (i.e., from the late 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.). Her statues were placed at the entrances to Buddhist monasteries.<sup>55</sup> The Hellenistic-style images of mothers (*mātrkās*) became very popular in India from the Kuṣāṇa time.<sup>56</sup>

We know from the early Mahāyāna texts that Hārītī protects children against epidemics (A2-1) and helps in childbirth (A2-2). In the early Chinese translations of Mahāyāna texts about Hārītī from Gāndhārī or Sanskrit, her name was “mother of demons” (*Guizimu* 鬼子母). She appears in the *Hārītīsūtra* (*Fo shuo Guizimu jing*, 佛說鬼子母經, T. 1262), translated during the Western Jin dynasty (265–316 AD), and in the *Samyuktaratnapitakasūtra* (*Zabaozang jing*, 雜寶藏經, T. 203), the section *Avadāna Story of How Hārītī Lost Her Child* (*Guizimu shizi yuan*, 鬼子母失子緣), translated in 472 AD during the Northern Wei dynasty.

We can add that the attributes of Hārītī/Nanāia such as ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1) were preserved in the folklore of different Caucasian peoples, e.g., in Georgian folklore in ritual songs against Batonebi (children’s infectious diseases such as measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, etc.). Nana (Georgian: ნანა) was regarded as the Great Mother of Georgians and their children (BARDAVELIDZE 1957, 81), and reciting her name protects against any illness. The rituals are performed during child sickness and include singing special songs and walking around the sick person carrying gifts and offering apologies (BARDAVELIDZE, 1957, 85).

The same attributes of Nanāia ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1) occur in Armenian mythology where Nane (Armenian: Նանե) is associated with Anahit (Armenian: Անահիտ), the goddess of fertility and healing. It is worth noting that Nanāia is associated with the Mazdean goddess Anāhitā by the Kūšānšāhs, too.

As we see, Nanāia with the same name was popular among different peoples in different territories controlled in former times by different Iranian tribes from the Persians to the Indo-Scythians and the Kuṣāṇas. We can assume that the name *nanā* started to mean

<sup>55</sup> BIVAR 1970, 19.

<sup>56</sup> JOSHI 1986.

“mother” in Sanskrit and later in Farsi (the word **ننه** in Farsi has the additional meaning of being an old lady) only after the Kuṣāṇas. It is worth noting that the meaning of *nanā* being a mother is missing in the Vedic or Avestan languages, but it corresponds to the main connotation of the name Nanāia/Nanā as divine mother. Hence, the Sanskrit *nanā* is a loanword from the Bactrian *Navā* (Nanā), and the latter, in turn, is a loanword from the Akkadian <sup>D</sup>NA.NA.A (Nanāia).

Hence, the dynamics of identification of Nanāia/Nanā and her attributes since the earliest mentions in Ur III allow us to understand which of her attributes were finally accepted in Central and South Asia and could have been continued as some attributes of Durgā as the Hindu goddess, such as ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘woman warrior’ (A4). Let us trace back these dynamics in more detail. The point is that all these goddesses bear the same name Nanāia/Nanā and possess the same or similar attributes.

The earliest archaeological evidence of Nanāia in Central and South Asia has been found in Bactria dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, and then in Sogdiana dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Her main attribute of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1) can be identified as paradigmatically subordinated to the attribute ‘woman warrior’ (A4), and it may be treated as a diffusion of the cult of Cybele in the Hellenistic states of India (SHENKAR 2014, 118). It is worth noting that ‘sitting on a tiger’ (A4-1-1) meaning a ‘woman warrior’ (A4) is the main attribute in the iconography of Durgā now. This attribute denoted by A4-1-1 is paradigmatically subordinated to ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1). Some earliest pieces of evidence of Nanāia have been collected into Table 1.

**Table 1**

Description	Site	Date	Identification	Attributes	Museum ID or other reference
Silver plate depicting the goddess standing in a chariot drawn by lions	Temple with Indented Niches at Ai Khanum	2 <sup>nd</sup> -1 <sup>st</sup> century BC	Cybele associated to Nanāia	Lion as a sign of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1), chariot as a sign of ‘woman warrior’ (A4)	(FRANCFORT 1984; CARTER 2005, 15; CARTER 2008, 116, no. 76).
Silver plate depicting the goddess standing in a chariot drawn by lions	Oxus Temple at Takht-i Sangin	2 <sup>nd</sup> -1 <sup>st</sup> century BC	Cybele associated to Nanāia	Lion as a sign of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1), chariot as a sign of ‘woman warrior’ (A4)	(FRANCFORT 1984; CARTER 2005, 15; CARTER 2008, 116, no. 76).
Seal showing the goddess facing right and holding a bowl and a sceptre ending with a lion’s protome. She wears a diadem topped with a crescent. The seal carries a Sogdian inscription <i>mnyh-βntk</i> ‘wxsrō, “Nanai-vandak (the	India	2 <sup>nd</sup> century AD	Nanāia	Lion as a sign of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1), diadem topped with a crescent as a sign of ‘crescent moon’ (A1-1)	(CALLIERI 1997, U 7.21); British Museum 1892,1103.186

son of) Aw-xsarth” or “Aw-xsarth (the son of) Nanai-vandak”.					
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The attribute ‘*sitting on a lion*’ (A4-1) was borrowed from western goddesses such as Cybele/Rhea or Ištar due to the spread of Hellenism in India, while her name and iconography were initially Mesopotamian (AZARAPAY 1981, 132–139). This attribute occurs differently in the Kuṣāṇa period: a lion on which the goddess sits, a lion without the goddess, a sceptre ending with a lion’s protome held by the goddess in her hand. Let us remind that the Mesopotamian Inanna/Ištar was also often represented by a lion in her iconography, and even compared with a lion:

<sup>1-6</sup> Goddess of the fearsome divine powers, clad in terror, riding on the great divine powers, Inanna, made complete by the strength of the holy *ankar* weapon, drenched in blood, rushing around in great battles, with shield resting on the ground (?), covered in storm and flood, great lady Inanna, knowing well how to plan conflicts, you destroy mighty lands with arrow and strength and overpower lands.

<sup>7-9</sup> In heaven and on earth you *roar like a lion* and devastate the people. Like a huge wild bull you triumph over lands which are hostile. Like a fearsome lion you pacify the insubordinate and unsubmitive with your gall.<sup>57</sup>

In the late period of Mesopotamian history, namely in the Neo-Babylonian period, it is well-known iconography of Ištar Gate (built in 575 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar II<sup>58</sup> of Babylon) where lions are also depicted.<sup>59</sup> Of course, many other examples of Ištar’s (Inanna’s) connection to lions can also be mentioned.

Nanāia as the ‘*mother goddess*’ (A1) was first very popular in Bactria and Gandhāra (from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. to the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD) and later in Sogdiana and Khorosmia (from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD).<sup>60</sup> Her attribute ‘*sitting on a lion*’ (A4-1) occurs in different forms. So, in the mural from Jartepa II Temple (Sogdiana) dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, she is depicted as sitting on a throne with legs shaped like lion protomes.<sup>61</sup> On Kuṣāṇa coins, she is depicted as a lion or a woman holding a lion protome, see Table 2. On these coins, her name is spelled as *Ναναια* (Nanāia), *Νανα* (Nanā), or *Ναναβαο* (Nanā-šah, “Nanā, the ruler”).

<sup>57</sup> ETCSL translation: t.1.3.2 *Inanna and Ebih*, lines 7–9, ETCSL, <https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr132.htm> (accessed 18.11.2021).




<sup>58</sup> Ruled 605–562 BC.

<sup>59</sup> WATANABE 2015.

<sup>60</sup> TANABE 1995; DE JONG 1997, 268–284; POTTS 2001.

<sup>61</sup> BERDIMURADOV and SAMIBAEV 2001, 59.

Table 2.

Image	Description	Date	Identification	Attributes
 <p>15.0 mm; 1.3 g.</p>	<p>Indo-Scythian silver hemidrachm. <i>Obverse:</i> the helmeted bust of king at right, the Greek legend at left <math>\text{C}\alpha\pi\alpha\delta\beta\iota\zeta\eta\varsigma</math>. <i>Reverse:</i> the lion standing at right, tamgha above, the same Greek legend at left and at right <math>\text{N}\alpha\nu\alpha\iota\alpha</math>.</p>	<p>Late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.</p>	<p>Nanāia</p>	<p>'Crescent moon' (A1-1), lion as a sign of 'sitting on a lion' (A4-1).</p>
 <p>11 mm; 2.04 g.</p>	<p>Huviška (Bactrian: <math>\text{O}\sigma\eta\beta\kappa\iota</math>), gold quarter drachm. <i>Obverse:</i> the half-length profile bust of king at left, above the clouds, holding a mace and <i>arikuśa</i> (elephant goad), the Bactrian legend around: <math>\text{P}\alpha\omicron\nu\alpha\nu\omicron\beta\alpha\omicron\ \text{O}\sigma\eta\beta\kappa\iota\ \text{K}\omicron\beta\alpha\nu\omicron</math> ("King of Kings Huviška Kušāṇa"). <i>Reverse:</i> the goddess standing at right, nimbate, holding a protome of lion, a tiny crescent above, Greek legend at left: <math>\text{N}\alpha\nu\alpha</math>, a tamgha at right.</p>	<p>ca. 150–190 AD.</p>	<p>Nanāia</p>	<p>Lion protome as a sign of 'sitting on a lion' (A4-1).</p>
 <p>17 mm; 3.08 g.</p>	<p>Ardašīr I Kūšānšāh copper drachm. <i>Obverse:</i> the bust of the crowned, diademed king. <i>Reverse:</i> the goddess enthroned, facing, holding a sceptre and a diadem.</p>	<p>Before ca. 230–245 CE.</p>	<p>Nanāia/ Anāhitā</p>	<p>Enthroned as a sign of 'mother goddess' (A1) holding the royal diadem as a sign of 'royal patron' (A3).</p>

Sometimes Nanāia appears on the coins of the Kūšānšāhs too. The Kūšānšāhs are a branch of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, who become satraps of the Sasanian rulers. So, on the coins of Pērōz I (Bactrian: Πιρωσο κοβανο βαρηο), dated from ca. 245–275 AD, we can see Nanāia having a nimbus and a crescent on the top of her head, appearing in the form of a female bust surmounted on an altar. On both sides of the bust, there is the Bactrian inscription Bayo Nawo “the goddess Nanā”. Her attribute here is presented by a ‘crescent moon’ (A1-1) on the top of her head.<sup>62</sup> This attribute is paradigmatically subordinated to the attribute ‘mother goddess’ (A1). This image of a bust on an altar was borrowed on a Bukharan coin.<sup>63</sup>

Nanāia was a patron goddess of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty (see Table 2) and later of the Kūšānšāhs. As we see, her attribute ‘royal patron’ (A3) was very significant at that time. The same attribute has been reconstructed in Sogdiana as well. So, in Panjikent city of Sogdiana, Nanāia was a patron goddess; she is also represented as the most significant deity in several private houses (III/7; VI/26; VI/41; XXI/2; XXIII/50; XXV/12).<sup>64</sup> Her image appears not only on the coins of the Kuṣāṇas and the Kūšānšāhs but also on the coins of Sogdiana – on the coins minted during the reign of Dhēwāshtīch (died in 722 AD) with the Sogdian legend *pncy mn(δ)-βηpn-wH* “Nanāia, the Lady of Panč”.<sup>65</sup>

Worshipping Nanāia as the ‘mother goddess’ (A1) among the Iranian speaking peoples at least from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC is mentioned in the following two sources: (i) the Sasanian king Šāpūr II (reigned from 309 to 379 AD) ordered his general converted to Christianity to worship the Sun, the Moon, Fire, Zeus, Bel, Nebo and *Nanai* – “the great goddess of the world”<sup>66</sup>; (ii) in the Syriac version of *The Alexander Romance*, we find a mention of a temple in Samarkand dedicated to “the goddess Rhea whom they call *Nani*”.<sup>67</sup> This reference is of particular interest, because it identifies Cybele/Rhea with Nanāia.

Hence, the Mesopotamian attributes of Nanāia (<sup>d</sup>Nanaya), ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘royal patron’ (A3), were continued in Central and South Asia. An additional attribute was represented by ‘woman warrior’ (A4) with the subattribute ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1).

‘Love (fertility)’ (A2) as the Mesopotamian attribute of Nanāia (<sup>d</sup>Nanaya) was well expressed by her subattribute ‘marriage (children)’ (A2-1) in Central and South Asia. So, according to the Rabatak inscription<sup>68</sup>, Nanāia can be associated with her manifestation Ομμα/Ομμο (Umā), the wife of the bodhisattva Maheśvara:

<sup>62</sup> CRIBB 1990, no. 31.

<sup>63</sup> NAYMARK 1995, 43, 3.

<sup>64</sup> SHENKAR 2017, 198.

<sup>65</sup> LURJE 2004.

<sup>66</sup> SHAKED 1994, 91.

<sup>67</sup> GRENET 1995/1996, 2015–2016.

<sup>68</sup> MUKHERJEE 1995; SIMS-WILLIAMS 1998, 2008.

Ἰνδο ἀβο ἰ σινδο ωσταδο. ταδι βαι Κανηρικε ἀβο βαφαρο καραλαργγο φρομαδο ἀβεινα [...]ο βαγολαγγο κιδι σιδι β {<sup>2</sup>vac.} ἀβο ριζδι ἀβο μα κα {<sup>2</sup>vac.} ραγα φαρειμοανο βαγανο κιδι μαρο κιδδανε ἰ μα ο[φ]αρρο Ομμα οσηλδι ἰα ἀμσα Νανα οδο ἰα ἀμσα Ομμα – “King Kaniška gave orders to šafar the Karalrang \*at this ... to make the sanctuary which is called B ... ab, in the \*plain of Ka ..., for these gods, (of) whom of Pharro, Umā leads the \*service here, (namely:) the \*lady Nanā and the lady Umā (translated by Nicholas Sims-Williams and Joe Cribb, but instead of “glorious” the word [φ]αρρο is read as the god Φαρρο).”<sup>69</sup>

On some coins of Huviška (Bactrian: Οσηρικι), the son of Kaniška, we can see the couple of Ομμο/Οηβο (Umā/Oešo) as well as some inscriptions Οηβο/Ναν identifying Ομμο with Νανα.<sup>70</sup> This Oešo is the most important royal patron of the Kuṣāṇas together with Nanāia. He is very often depicted on their coins with the following main attributes of the Buddhist deity Maheśvara: bull, two- or four- or six-armed, single- or three-headed, trident-axe or simple trident, thunderbolt, water pot, lion skin, lotus flower, antelope, elephant goad, wheel, club, nimbus (sometimes flaming), diadem as the Kuṣāṇa royal crown.<sup>71</sup> On the coins of the Kūṣānšāhs, we quite often find a female bust surmounted on an altar. She is identified as Nanāia (or Anāhitā). And we also find a bearded male bust surmounted on an altar but very often without inscriptions.<sup>72</sup> In the paintings of Panjikent in Sogdiana, Oešo (Οηβο) is represented under the Sogdian name *wyšprkr* (Wēšparkar). The latter name is treated as deriving from the following Avestan epithet of Vayu: *vaiiuš uparō.kairiō*, “Vayu, whose activity lies in the upper region.” Therefore, the Bactrian name Οηβο may represent *wēš*, delivered from the Avestan *vaiiuš*.<sup>73</sup>

For the Kuṣāṇas, the wind god Wēšparkar/Oešo was considered an emblem of royal glory<sup>74</sup> to the same extent as Nanāia. No doubt, Wēšparkar/Oešo is associated with Maheśvara (treated as bodhisattva from Mahāyāna sūtras).

In Panjiken XXV/12, the figure of Nanāia is accompanied by an armed male identified as Tištrya who is depicted with a dragon crown and seated to the right of Nanāia.<sup>75</sup> She is also depicted with two warlike female personages (Temple II at Panjikent) or with two small archer figures (Sogdian palace of Kujruk-tobe).<sup>76</sup> All of these are to emphasize her two attributes – ‘woman warrior’ (A4) and ‘marriage (children)’ (A2-1) – simultaneously. In these paintings, we see a new attribute – ‘four or many arms’ (A4-2) – as paradigmatically

<sup>69</sup> MUKHERJEE 1995; SIMS-WILLIAMS 1998, 2008.

<sup>70</sup> ROSENFELD 1967, 94, c.166; CRIBB 1997, 35, pl. G8.

<sup>71</sup> SHENKAR 2014, 154.

<sup>72</sup> CRIBB 1990, no. 24–29.

<sup>73</sup> HUMBACH 1975.

<sup>74</sup> LO MUZIO 1995, 169.

<sup>75</sup> GRENET and MARSHAK 1998, 15.

<sup>76</sup> see SHENKAR 2014, 125 and Table 3.

subordinated to ‘*woman warrior*’ (A4). This attribute first appears in some rare images at the time of the Kuṣāṇas, such as their gold coins. The canonical image of Nanāia with four arms sitting on the lion is recognized in Khoresmia, too – among the Khoresmian bowls.<sup>77</sup>

**Table 3.**

Name in Sogdian	Identification	Function	Attributes
Tyš	Tištrya	The rain or war god	wearing a dragon-like crown and holding a long object, most likely an arrow, in his hands
Nny	Nanāia	The war goddess	‘ <i>Four or many arms</i> ’ (A4-2) which are supporting the symbols of the sun and the moon above her shoulders – ‘ <i>Sun and/or Moon</i> ’ (A1-1), sometimes ‘ <i>sitting on a lion</i> ’ (A4-1).

Hence, for the Kuṣāṇas and Kūšānšāhs, Nanāia possesses the following attributes and subattributes: ‘*mother goddess*’ (A1), ‘*crescent moon*’ (A1-1), ‘*love (fertility)*’ (A2), ‘*marriage (children)*’ (A2-1), ‘*royal patron*’ (A3), ‘*woman warrior*’ (A4), ‘*sitting on a lion*’ (A4-1), ‘*four or many arms*’ (A4-2). Meanwhile, according to its iconography, the divine couple of Nanāia and Wēšparkar/Oešo, in paintings of Penjikent (the temple II) dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century, can be treated as the Umāmaheśvaramūrti, i.e., a representation of Maheśvara along with his wife Umā, seated on a bull.<sup>78</sup> In Kyzyl, on the right-side wall of Gorge Cave<sup>79</sup>, we can observe the Umāmaheśvara where Maheśvara is also:

black-skinned and wears a tiger-skin tied on the left shoulder, a scarf, leggings, a long garland, large circular earrings, a necklace and bracelets; he is ithyphallic (with penis concealed by the dress) and three-faced: central face dark, slightly bent towards the goddess; side faces fair skinned; above them animal heads. He has six arms.<sup>80</sup>

So, we have a smooth transformation of Nanāia of the Kuṣāṇas into an image of Umā (Durgā) which became canonical for Hinduism as well as a smooth transformation of Oešo of the Kuṣāṇas into an image of Śiva which became canonical for Hinduism, too.

<sup>77</sup> AZARAPAY 1979; MARSHAK 1986, figs. 170–172.

<sup>78</sup> LO MUZIO 2002, fig. 2.

<sup>79</sup> LO MUZIO 2002, fig. 5.

<sup>80</sup> LO MUZIO 2002, 58.



## Conclusion

To sum up, in Bactria, Gandhāra, Sogdiana, Khoresmia, and Northern India, we observe a smooth transformation of the main attributes of the mother goddess starting from the Hellenistic goddess Cybele/Rhea (associated with the Mesopotamian Nanāia/Nanaya) and finishing in the final stages fixed on the paintings of Sogdiana, where we see the early Hindu images of Nanāia presented as Durgā as well as the early Hindu images of Wēšparkar/Oešo and Nanāia/Ομμο presented as the divine couple of Umāmaheśvara. Meanwhile, their cult was a part of Gandhāran Buddhism at that time. In other words, we have the following strong sequence: (1) the earliest realistic images of mother goddess in Northern India since the 2nd century BC which belong to Cybele/Rhea → (2) the earliest occurrences of Cybele/Rhea's attributes with the inscription Ναναία (Nanāia) since the 1st century AD → (3) the new attribute 'four or many arms' (A4-2) of Nanāia since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD → (4) the smooth iconographic transformation of Nanāia into Umā (Durgā), first of all, in Bactria and Sogdiana. Thus, Durgā as a 'woman warrior' (A4), 'sitting on a tiger' (A4-1-1) with 'four or many arms' (A4-2) is well traced back to the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia with the attributes of 'woman warrior' (A4) and 'sitting on a lion' (A4-1), although the Mesopotamian goddess did not have four arms, and the motive of four arms is not common in Ancient Near East.

So, we applied the world-systems analysis and structuralist methodology to show that some religious practices, such as the worship of Nanāia, developed along with the development of the world system as such through its diffusion. As a result of this expansion, Nanāia obtained some new attributes in addition to the old ones.

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