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A Jain bronze altar-piece from India in Razgrad History Museum, Bulgaria

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ABSTRACT

The Jain bronze altar-piece identified so far as Buddha or as Anantanātha now in Razgrad Museum (Bulgaria) shows the strands of hair typical for the Jina Ṛṣabhanātha, hanging down behind his ears onto the shoulders. Ṛṣabha's symbol, the bull, also appears on the front of the pedestal. For the authors the anthropomorphic elaboration of the grahas suggests that the bronze was produced in the 9th or 10th c. AD. This article discussed an artefact that accidentally ended up in Bulgaria, which is no way connected with the cultural and religious traditions of the region, neither at the time it was produced, nor after.

KEYWORDS

Jainism, Jain Bronzes, Jain Iconography, Razgrad, Tīrthamkara Ṛṣabhanātha (Ṛṣabha), Middle Ages, Bulgaria

Evidence of Jainism from pre-modern times is very rarely found outside South Asia[1]. This makes the discovery of a fragment of a Jain bronze altar in Zavet in northeastern Bulgaria all the more significant. Jainism (or Jinism) is an Indian religion of redemption that according to tradition came into existence around the middle of the 1st millennium BC in northeastern India. It is centered around the veneration of the Jinas, a series of twenty-four mythical enunciators or renovators of an eternal doctrine of salvation. It propagates a practice of strict asceticism and rigorous non-violence that is believed to lead to salvation from the cycle of rebirths. While Buddhism spread across large parts of Asia, Jainism stayed in the Indian subcontinent for a long time. Jain diaspora communities only started to develop in the early 20th c., first in Africa, then a bit later in Europe and North America. In this context, the Jain altar-piece discovered in Zavet deserves special attention.

On 29 April 1928, a peasant from the village of Zavet, Razgrad region of Bulgaria, while digging his fields for a vineyard to the north of the village, found a bronze statuette of a man at a depth of 0.70 m, which Ananie Yavashov identified as Buddha (Yavashov 1929, 8–11). This first announcement is used as evidence for the hypothesis that Buddhism was spread in the First Bulgarian Kingdom (for details of such hypothesis see: Rashev 1978, 24–29; Balkanski 1985, 41–44; Kvinto 1991, 56, etc.). The supporter of this hypothesis, Burchard Brentjes, also includes it in his arguments, although he identi-

1 The considerations presented in this article are based on joint research between the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and an ongoing subproject of the Collaborative Research Center 1475 'Metaphors of Religion' funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – SFB 1475 – Project ID 441126958.

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Fig. 1. Bronze altar-piece of Jina (front view), Inv. no. 5774, Razgrad History Museum (photo Razgrad History Museum)

fies it as a statuette of a Jina, made in Kashmir in the 8th–12th c. AD (Brentjes 1971, 215–216). Such an interpretation is not supported by Lidia Kvinto in 1991 in her better presentation of the statuette (Kvinto 1988, 2 (a newspaper publication); Kvinto 1991, 56–60), however it appears later in Bulgarian research papers (Gergova 2004, 67)[2]. There are folklore-like stories about a cave in the vicinity of the above-mentioned vineyard in which a stone statue of Buddha was also discovered along with religious parallels of later Muslim sects and Gypsy populations in the region, which are not verified (Ibid., following Kvinto 1991). However, the most serious publication of the artefact so far remains the text by Kvinto, who claims that the statuette was produced for Jains in Gujarat, West India, in 11th–12th c. AD, and was transported by Jaina merchants or itinerary monks to the Balkans, where it was stolen by locals or it belonged to a group of Jaina related people who settled in the region of contemporary Razgrad. According to Kvinto the (conjectural) identification of the *tīrthaṃkara* from the statuette is possible if one assumes that the *cihna*-symbol is a bear (according to Brentjes 1971, 215, it is an elephant). If so, she assumes,

2 Diana Gergova mentions that a statuette of Buddha was also discovered in Helgö, Sweden, in order to support the spread of Buddhist ideas in Europe during Middle Ages, and to provide evidence that the Volga Kama Bulgarians followed the 'Brahma's law' until the 10th c. AD.

the one depicted is Ananta(nātha), the 14th *tīrthaṃkara*, the altar was yellow in color and belonged to a Jain of the Digambara sect. Ananta, according to the symbols, possessed might, a warlike spirit, and the gift of healing diseases (Kvinto 1991, 59). It is noteworthy that Kvinto's comparative pictorial material consists of three photographs, but none of them shows the mentioned *tīrthaṃkara* Ananta.

The cast bronze statuette from Razgrad History Museum (Inv. no. 5774)[3] with a worn front surface has a height of 13.5 cm, of which 6 cm is occupied by the three-dimensional human figure (fig. 1). The pedestal – multi-figured, relief, openwork, with engraved ornament, 8.4 cm wide at the base – stands on only two feet and the statuette lacks balance, indicating that it is part of a more complex structure.

L. Kvinto describes the statuette as follows: 'The image of the seated yoga naked man with an athletic build is precisely rendered, with anatomical detail but no facial features. Only two incised arcs delineating the chin and two dashes above them are visible. A bun rises on the top of the round head, there is a quartered protrusion on the back of the head. The ears are hidden by two braids of hair that fall down and rest on the shoulders. A horizontal furrow can be seen on the neck. In the middle of the chest there is an almost oval protrusion with two incised lines, damaged by oxidation. The hands – right on top of left – lie on the lap. There is an indentation on the upper palm. The legs are intertwined according to the requirements of the pose: on the inside is the left leg with the foot pushed up to the right knee, and on the outside is the right leg, also with the foot up at the left knee. A circle with a dot in the center is engraved under the toes of both feet. The pillow under the man is decorated with three incised rhombuses. The lower part of the figure is hollow up to 1.5 cm high on the back, where old scratches are visible. With the stepped pedestal between the two profiled legs descends a tri-angle point down. The graphic decoration is of double straight and curved lines and arcs. There are three figurines on the lower step and they indicate the places of three more. The one missing is from the front row of human figures seated with raised right knee and hands resting on knees. Here too, the images are sketchy, without facial features. They also have braids above the ears and a bun on the crown touching the flat of the upper foot. A deep notch is visible in the place of the bun on the missing figurine. The positions of the remaining two missing figures are at either end of the step in the background, unlimited in height, and were probably different from the other four. On the second step, the composition is multi-figured, symmetrical and two-plane. In the foreground, in the middle of the foot, on a stand brought forward is a figure of a crouched animal, which cannot be definitely identified and may be a small bear. Behind it, on a double high plinth, is a figure of a man, the same as those on the lower step, making them five in all. It is the centre of symmetry for the multi-figure composition in the background. Two birds with folded wings are depicted in profile next to the figure's shoulders. Next are two curved thin twigs (?) with a thickened leaf at the top, resembling snakes. The next two crouching animals with spirally coiled ends of their tails are lions with geometrical ornamentation of their bodies and have embraced the branches with one paw. At the end of the composition are the two supports for the upper plane, with a complex triple-conical shape, with three rings decorated with dots. Behind them, two semicircles emerge, also decorated with dots and protrusions. The front side of the plates is ornamented with incised vertical dashes and zig-zag, where the triangles on only one row are halved with dashes – on the upper one in a zigzag along the lower plane and on the lower row of triangles in a zigzag along the upper plane' (Kvinto 1991, 56).

The description of the statuette in the Inventory book of Razgrad Museum made on 28.01.2002 more or less repeats Kvinto's text given above. However, the dimensions added are more precise: height – 14 cm; width at the base – 8.5 cm; thickness at the pillow's level – 3 cm; height of the human figure – 5.5 cm; height of the entire pedestal – 5.5 cm. It also added that the person who found the artefact and donated it to the Museum was named Geno Stanev.

As a result of the opening of Bulgaria to the world and the expansion of research horizons, such

3 Old no. 1338, see Kvinto 1991, 60.

as the establishment of a department of Indology at the University of Sofia, interest in Jain art appeared again. Jain statuettes (altar-pieces with inscriptions) from a late period, fake duplicates, replicas also appeared in Bulgarian private collections (Ruseva, Moutafov 2025, 5–35). For this reason, we also turned to this accidental find, already known to scholarship, for interpretation from the point of view of our contemporary knowledge and access to comparative material.

Representations of the Jina are among the earliest images of religious figures in Indian art; the first representations in stone emerged at roughly the same time as the earliest Buddha images, maybe even slightly earlier. The theory that the image of the Jina was derived from the representation of the Buddha that developed slightly earlier is, at least for the region of Mathura, counteracted by the supposition that the Jina image was created based on the depictions of *yakṣas*. This means without any Buddhist influence (Shah 1988, 55) and thus probably earlier than the iconic Buddha image (Shah 1955, 5).

The earliest stone sculptures that can be identified as a Jina with certainty were created in the 1st c. AD in the region around the North Indian city of Mathurā. Whether the production of Jain bronzes goes back to this time as well remains uncertain. The oldest known image of a standing Pārśvanātha (findspot unknown)[4], now kept in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS; formerly known as Prince of Wales Museum) in Mumbai, as well as two other Jinas from a hoard discovered in Chausa, Bihar and now part of the collection of the Patna Museum[5], can be dated to the 2nd c. AD. In stone sculptures from Mathura, sitting as well as standing Jinas are represented with a certain repertoire of side figures as early as the 2nd–3rd c. AD. Part of this early visual programme are the lion figures (Ghosh 1974, vol. I: Pl. 17) that support the throne seat (*siṃhāsana*); they may have been borrowed from Buddhist visuals. Undoubtedly Buddhist in origin is the depiction of the wheel of the doctrine (*dharmacakra*) in the centre of the of the throne; in Jain representations it is not flanked by gazelles, but by worshippers (Ibid.) or monks[6]; after AD 300, sitting Jinas (Ghosh 1974, vol. I: Pls 46–47) can also be represented next to the wheel. Around the 3rd–4th c. AD the visual programme is further expanded to include even more side figures; these are positioned beyond the throne base and are much smaller than the main figure. The most frequent addition are fly whisk bearers (*cāmaradhara*) who accompany the main figure either as a couple[7] or as a single figure[8]. The iconography of the metal images initially remains untouched by these developments.

The probably oldest extant Jain bronzes from western India show the Jina standing in an ascetic pose (*kāyotsarga*); slightly later examples feature an entire set of different side figures. The fragmented representation of a standing Pārśva(nātha) (ca. AD 600) that was part of a hoard discovered in Akota (Gujarat), depicts – apart from the *dharmacakra* already mentioned – the eight planetary deities (*aṣṭagraha*) and a pair of mythical anthropomorphic snakes (*nāgas*) with cobra hoods and knot-like intertwined bodies below the level of the main figure (Shah 1959, fig. 17.a–b). These features already represent a marked deviation from the iconography of the stone images which during the ‘middle phase’

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4 Shah 1975, fig. 1. The figure does not show the usual chest mark, the śrīvatsa. The snake hood consists of only five instead of seven heads. Despite this feature, it is highly improbable that at this early date, the Jina Supārśva, who is usually depicted with five snake hoods, was represented.

5 Both images are shown standing in kāyotsarga-mudrā: one of the figures (Shah 1975, fig. 2) displays a seven-headed snake hood behind the Jina head and can thus be identified as Pārśvanātha; its legs are lost from the knees downward and it can be dated to the 1st (Shah 1975, 275) or 2nd c. AD (Ibid. 292). The other (Shah 1975, fig. 5) seems more or less complete, but lacks a śrīvatsa on the chest; Shah (1975, 292) dates it to the early Kuṣāṇa period or slightly different, to the 3rd c. AD (Shah 1975, 276).

6 For example, Tiwari 1983, fig. 19. Here, apart from two standing laymen, two sitting monks, recognisable by their shaved heads, are represented on both sides of the dharmacakra.

7 For example, in Rajgir (Sonbhaṇḍār, Relief on the southern wall of the eastern cave, see Ghosh 1974, vol. I, Pl. 51B).

8 For example, on a rock relief in Gwalior (see Ghosh 1974, vol. I, Pl. 60B [left]).

in the development of Jain metal sculpture (ca. 6th–12th/13th c. AD) culminate in an entirely independent 'bronze style'. From the 11th–12th c. AD, a slow rapprochement of the iconography of stone and metal images can be observed. From the 14th c. AD onwards, images in both materials as well as the now flourishing miniature paintings display a rather unified iconography and style in their representations of the Jinas as cult images (on the classification of Jain bronzes see Krüger 2011). At least until the 11th c. AD, we can therefore, with a certain amount of caution, speak of a 'bronze style' in the Jain art of western India that is clearly distinguishable from that of the traditions manifest in Jain stone images.

As the same craftsmen produced Jain as well as Buddhist and Brahmanical cult bronzes (Shah 1988, 55), stylistic and iconographical overlaps are hardly surprising. After transcending the 'bronze style' and the development of a standardised representation of the Jina, its accompanying figures and the decorative elements in stone, metal and painted images, a distinctly Jain visual tradition came into existence that moved away from the comparative liveliness of earlier representations; it rather turned towards a strict geometrisation of figures and a rigidly schematic arrangement of decorative elements. This development is a phenomenon in Jain art mostly limited to West India; neither in Bengal and Odisha nor in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka a similar geometrisation of the depictions or a similar schematic arrangement of decorative elements can be observed. In western India, the 14th c. AD marks the beginning of an increasing production of usually smaller bronzes; it is therefore conceivable that geometrisation and schematic composition are the results of this increase in production numbers, that is a kind of early 'mass production'.

An art historical analysis of the bronze altar under discussion that includes relevant comparative material allows us to locate the altar within the line of development of Jain bronze art. The object in question is the fragment of an originally larger and maybe more complex Jain altar-piece from western or northern India; the fragment once formed the centre of this object. The original size of the altar-piece cannot be determined; it is quite possible that there are parts missing on both sides and that the central Jina was once framed by a *parikara* (Skt. 'girdle').

The *parikara* originally was part of the sculpture; its development can be traced particularly in bronze sculptures from western India where between the 9th and 11th c. AD the composition of the side figures changed from a horizontal arrangement to strict verticality and the addition of new visual elements above the head of the main figure; this led to the formation of an arched upper end of the altar that finally was turned into a kind of decorative gable (Krüger 2011, 41ff.).

Decoration and side figures in the *parikara* followed seemingly fixed rules and could be combined in certain fashions. Thus, the plain Jina image without any side figures in the course of time became a compact and, in the case of the bronzes, also transportable miniature altar. Since the Middle Ages such cult images were produced in large numbers and were present in most Jain households of western India. This would be in keeping with the increasing numbers of side figures added to the central Jina image in bronzes from the 6th c. AD onwards.

In the course of the expansion of Jain bronze images in the 8th c. AD, representations of the Jina sitting on a throne pedestal became more popular; these often-resembled depictions of the Buddha. It is therefore not surprising that the object was wrongly identified as a Buddha image in the beginning. However, while the Buddha is dressed in a monk's robe, the Jina is usually naked or, in the case of later Śvetāmbara imagery, dressed in a plain garment that covers the body from the hip downwards. This piece of garment, that served to distinguish the cult images of the Śvetāmbaras, with thier monks and nuns clad in white garments, from those of the Digambaras, whose monks wore no cloths at all, was only introduced into the representation of the Jinas by the 6th c. AD. The oldest known representation with *paridhāna* is a bronze figure from the Akota hoard, dated by Shah to the late 5th c. AD (Shah 1959, 26,

fig. 8.a–b). Before that time Jinas were to be represented without any clothing[9], and it is only by the 8th c. AD that sitting Jinas are also depicted with a garment covering their lower body. This is relevant in so far as the hem of the garment is clearly visible around the hip of the main figure; a date before the 8th c. AD for the production of this image can therefore be ruled out.

The face and body of the figure from Razgrad Museum (fig. 2) are worn off, yet the characteristic chest mark (*srivatsa*) of the Jina is still visible as a lozenge-shaped lotus flower. On his head, there is a cranial protuberance (*usnisa*). Long strands of hair fall down on his shoulders; this allows for an identification of the Jina as Ṛṣabha, the first Jina of the current era. In general, the cult images of the 24 Jinas venerated by the Jains are almost identical; it is only four of them who can be identified by their physical features or particular iconography and among them is Ṛṣabha with his characteristic strands of hair.

The head and body of the Jina are depicted in a rather naturalistic manner and do not yet display the rigid geometrisation of later bronzes from western India which dominated in images since the 12th–13th c. AD. It is thus possible to further limit the period the bronze was produced to between the 8th and 12th c. AD.

The Jina sits on a cushion decorated with lozenges with his legs crossed and upturned soles. This pose, which in Jain iconography represents asceticism as well as all-encompassing knowledge and liberation (Balbir 2009, 135), is usually called *padmāsana*, *paryaṅkāsana*, or *paryaṅka* (see for example Bhattacharya 1974, 138 or Shah 1955, 57).

The cushion covers the surface of the so-called ‘lion throne’ (*siṃhāsana*), that is a throne supported by or decorated with lion figures (fig. 3). The lion throne was the seat of the Jina, as well as that of the Buddha, already in the earliest stone sculptures dating back to the 1st–2nd c. AD. It continues to be shown in cult images of both religions over the centuries right into modern times; its origins as the seat of a ruler can be traced back to the cultures of the ancient Orient (Auboyer 1949, 44). In Indian art, too, the lion throne was first shown as the seat of worldly rulers; its use thus elevates the Jina metaphorically to the rank of a spiritual ruler. In the image under discussion, the lion throne consists of the seat covered with the cushion and two supporting pillars. Two lions with raised paws are depicted in the area between these pillars. Two curving lotus stems define the outer edges of the throne front. The sitting figure of the goddess Śantidevī is set in the centre of the throne front, between the lions. She was venerated during the Indian Middle Ages by Śvetāmbara Jains in northwestern India as a guardian ensuring the proper performance of rituals (Shah 1982, 281f.). Below this deity is represented the *cihna* (Skt. ‘symbol’) of the Jina; the reclining bull with his head to the right and the characteristic hump of the Indian Zebu (*Bos indicus*) which confirms the identification of the Jina as Ṛṣabha. To enable a distinction of the otherwise almost identical Jina images, a *cihna* is allotted to each Jina. These symbols partly differ in the Digambara and Śvetāmbara tradition.

The entire lion throne is mounted on a pedestal that in turn is placed on another, slightly wider base (fig. 4). This construction on the one hand serves to further elevate the Jina on his throne; on the other hand, it provides the space on the lowermost level for additional figures that fill the open space between the two lower levels of pedestals. The three cowering, dwarfish discernible figures can be identified, based on the iconographic conventions for Jain bronze altars, as three of the altogether eight or nine planetary deities (*graha*). The gap between two of the three figures and marks on the surface of this level of the pedestal indicate that originally more figures were placed here. Planetary deities were shown either as full anthropomorphic figures or, more often, as mere heads, either in relief or incised; their place was usually below the throne level of the Jina, thus indicating the Jina’s high position in the universe. Since roughly the 12th–13th c. AD, the heads were reduced to rather indistinct knobs and are

9 Varāhamihira in his Bṛhatsaṃhitā, a work compiled in the first half of the 5th c. AD, mentions that the Jina should always be depicted undressed (Shah 1951, 5f.).



Fig. 2. Bronze altar-piece of Jina (detail of the central figure), Inv. no. 5774, Razgrad History Museum (photo Razgrad History Museum)



Fig. 3. Bronze altar-piece of Jina (view to the throne), Inv. no. 5774, Razgrad History Museum (photo Razgrad History Museum)



Fig. 4. Bronze altar-piece of Jina (lower part of the base), Inv. no. 5774, Razgrad History Museum (photo Razgrad History Museum)

hardly recognisable for viewers without any knowledge of the earlier stages of their development. The clearly distinguishable human forms of the *graha*s therefore support the dating of this altar fragment. Furthermore, early cult images contain eight planetary deities (*aṣṭagraha*); it is only from the 11th c. AD onwards that nine deities (*navagraha*) are represented. The number of *graha*s depicted can thus be used in figurative art to narrow down the probable date of a Jina image. In this case, however, it is difficult to determine the number of *graha*s originally depicted. In front of the higher pedestal there probably were four planets, two more must have been placed to the sides where now only slightly raised areas on the surface indicate their position. The representation of the *graha*s as full-body figures without any traces of the geometrisation or reduction of detail common from the 12th c. AD onwards, suggests an early date of production. The integration of the eight planets into the iconography of Jain bronzes began in the early 7th c. AD and can be detected already in bronzes from the Akota hoard (Shah 1959, fig. 17.a–b).

If we consider the iconographic conventions governing Jain cult images, not only are there several *graha*s missing; there are other obligatory elements lacking in this image. One of them is the wheel of law flanked by two gazelles (*dharmacakra*) that was borrowed from Buddhist iconography. The others are the god of wealth and prosperity, Kubera, and the goddess of fertility, Ambikā, or a pair of nature spirits (*yakṣa*), Gomukha and Cakreśvarī; one of these pairs usually flanks the throne of a Jina. For the object under discussion, the absence of these vital iconographic elements from the composition underscores the probability of it either being part of a compact altar with a reduced visual programme or being only a fragment of a somewhat larger composition that included the missing features. The main figure probably was provided with a nimbus that was cast separately and fixed to the square protrusion on the back of the Jina's head (fig. 5). This method of connecting individually cast pieces to a figure is well known from other bronzes.

The date of 8th–12th c. AD for the production of this bronze, based on its iconography, can only cautiously be further narrowed down by a stylistic analysis. It has to be kept in mind, though, that our knowledge of the development of Jain bronzes before the 10th–11th c. AD is sketchy and an in-depth study is still missing. Another difficulty is the lack of detailed information about places and circumstances of the recovery of most bronzes from this period. Numerous bronzes, mostly from the 10th c. AD onwards, bear inscriptions either mentioning a year of donation or at least allowing for a tentative dating based on their paleography. The bronze from Razgrad unfortunately does not bear any inscription.

The heavily worn surface of the main figure hampers any stylistic analysis of this part of the bronze; any considerations will therefore have to focus on the pedestal and the lion throne. The frag-



Fig. 5. Bronze altar-piece of Jina (back-side view), Inv. no. 5774, Razgrad History Museum (photo Razgrad History Museum)



Fig. 6. Bronze altar-piece of Jina (bottom-side view), Inv. no. 5774, Razgrad History Museum (photo Razgrad History Museum)



Fig. 7. Bronze altar-piece depicting Jina Candraprabha, dated 1168 AD, State Museum Lucknow, Acc. no. 50.55 (after Joshi 1977, fig. 2)



Fig. 8. Bronze altar-piece depicting Ṛṣabha, dated 1066 AD, L.D. Museum Ahmedabad, Acc. no. Gho 1 (after Andhare 1992, Cat. no. 9)

mentation of the piece constitutes another obstacle as it makes it difficult to reconstruct the original size and composition of the complete object. The supposition has been expressed already that the fragment originally formed the centre of a complex bronze altar. Only the front part of the base has survived. The places of fracture on the back of the piece and the missing parts of the base (fig. 6) do by no means exclude this option, yet it is equally possible that the complete object was a smaller altar without any *parikara* containing additional side figures.

In our opinion the main figure of the Razgrad altar-piece can be identified ichnographically as the first *tīrthaṃkara* Ṛṣabha(nātha) with some certainty and probably dates from 9th or 10th c. AD. The anthropomorphic elaboration of the *graha*s suggests that the bronze was produced also exactly in the 9th or 10th c. AD. The shape of the throne and the pedestal, however, resembles that of bronzes from a period up to the 12th c. AD. For this reason, two slightly later objects were used for comparison, which to some extent illustrate the presumed original form of the bronze.

The dating is based primarily on the imagery on the throne base. Because of the condition of the piece, the style of the Jina figure can only be vaguely estimated. In addition to the throne, the relationship between the throne and the pedestal also plays a role in dating the piece, but also in determining the original form of the bronze. On the one hand, it is conceivable that it was a smaller object with few minor figures (fig. 7), which was not significantly larger than the preserved fragment. However, it is more likely that the fragment was the middle section of an originally larger altar (fig. 8). This is suggested by the broken edges on the sides and the fact that the *graha*s could only be completely depicted on a larger surface.

It is difficult to find suitable comparative pieces for this era. Regarding the iconography and composition of Jain bronze altars between the 9th and 13th c. AD, there was a transitional phase that finally

led to the very standardizsed and highly geometric bronze altars of the 13th to 17th c. AD especially in western India (Krüger 2011). The objects produced during this transitional period are characterised by a variety that rearrange previous compositions. Therefore, the comparative pieces shown should be understood with particular regard to the relationship between the throne and the throne base in order to demonstrate the assumed original size of the bronze; they not reflect the style or iconography. One distinctive feature for which no comparable objects could be found is the elevated throne resting on supports, creating a gap between the throne base and the pedestal.

The figure shows the strands of hair typical for this Jina, hanging down behind his ears onto the shoulders. Ṛṣabha's symbol, the bull, also appears in the front area of the pedestal. This altar-piece accidentally ended up in Bulgaria and is no way connected with the cultural and religious traditions of the region, neither at the time it was produced, nor after. However, it is evidence for the openness of the Balkans for different travelers and merchants during the Middle Ages.

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