
Terracotta Art of Vidarbha: An Appraisal

Mohan S. Pardhi¹

- ¹. Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur, Maharashtra – 440 033, India (Email: ms.pardhi67@gmail.com)
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Abstract: *The art of backed clay was a beautiful creation of human mind. Ancient people chose clay as a medium to express their thoughts, showing their feeling and also the emotions. The present paper discusses terracotta art recovered from the archeological sites of Vidarbha, one of the important archaeological regions in Maharashtra. The present paper reviews important aspects of the terracotta art of this region.*

Keywords: Vidarbha, Early Historic, Terracotta, Gajalakshmi, Graeco-Roman, Yaksha, Chauri Bearer

Introduction

The word 'Terracotta' is derived from an Italian term, which means 'baked clay' (Sant 1997: 2; Jayaswal and Krishna 1986). The art of backed clay is one of the important facets that show the real picture of not only the contemporary society but also of ancient culture. Ancient people selected clay because it is flexible and soft in nature, and can be easily fashioned in any desired shape and also could be hardened by fire (Sant 1997). Because of its easy accessibility, it was largely used by man for various purposes. Terracotta arts continuously evolved, developed and changed its form and concepts through the ages. The usage of terracotta was extensive and its purpose varied. It not only served as a piece of art and culture, but also represented the activities and changes in the customs and manners of humans in the different periods of history (Dhavalikar 1977: 3).

The history of making clay images in the Indian sub-continent go back to the end of 7th millennium BCE as the earliest evidence of unbaked clay image of human form was recovered from Period I of Aceramic Neolithic (7000 BCE) at the archaeological site of Mehrgarh. The first evidence of backed clay animal figurine was found from Period III (5000 BCE) of Mehrgarh (Jarrige 2008: 155-166). Similarly, in Indian context, the ancient terracotta history can be traced from prehistoric sites from south India (Brecks 1873, Foote 1901 and 1916, Dasgupta 1961). It has also been reported from various sites belonging to pre-Harappan and Harappan periods in large number (Marshall 1931, Wheeler 1962, Rao 1962-63, Lal and Thapar 1967, Gupta 1972, Bisht 1977, Sankalia and

Dhavalikar 1969, Chakrabarti 2002, Clark 2007). However, from rural Chalcolithic cultures like Kayatha, Ahar, Malwa, Jorwe (Sankalia and Dhavalikar 1969, Sant 1997); Ochre Coloured Pottery and Painted Grey Ware period (Joshi 1978, Dikshit 1979, Desai 1986) sites, terracotta art objects are reported in sporadic form. During Early Iron age, terracotta art objects occur in lesser numbers (Dasgupta 1961, Dhavalikar 1976) but are predominant in Early Historic period (Agrawala 1948; Kala 1950, 1980; Narain and Agrawala 1978; Biswas 1981; Dhavalikar 1977; Prakash 1985; Verma 1986).

Vidarbha Region

Vidarbha region (Lat. 19° 21' N; 76° 80' 23" E) is the eastern most part of the Maharashtra state, covering an area about 93,654 sq. kms (Figure 1). Wardha River forming a natural line to divide a Vidarbha in two parts i.e. eastern and western Vidarbha (Deotare *et al.* 2007a). Wainganga, Wardha and Purna are the three main river system of this region where all the important ancient settlements are evolved, developed and flourished.

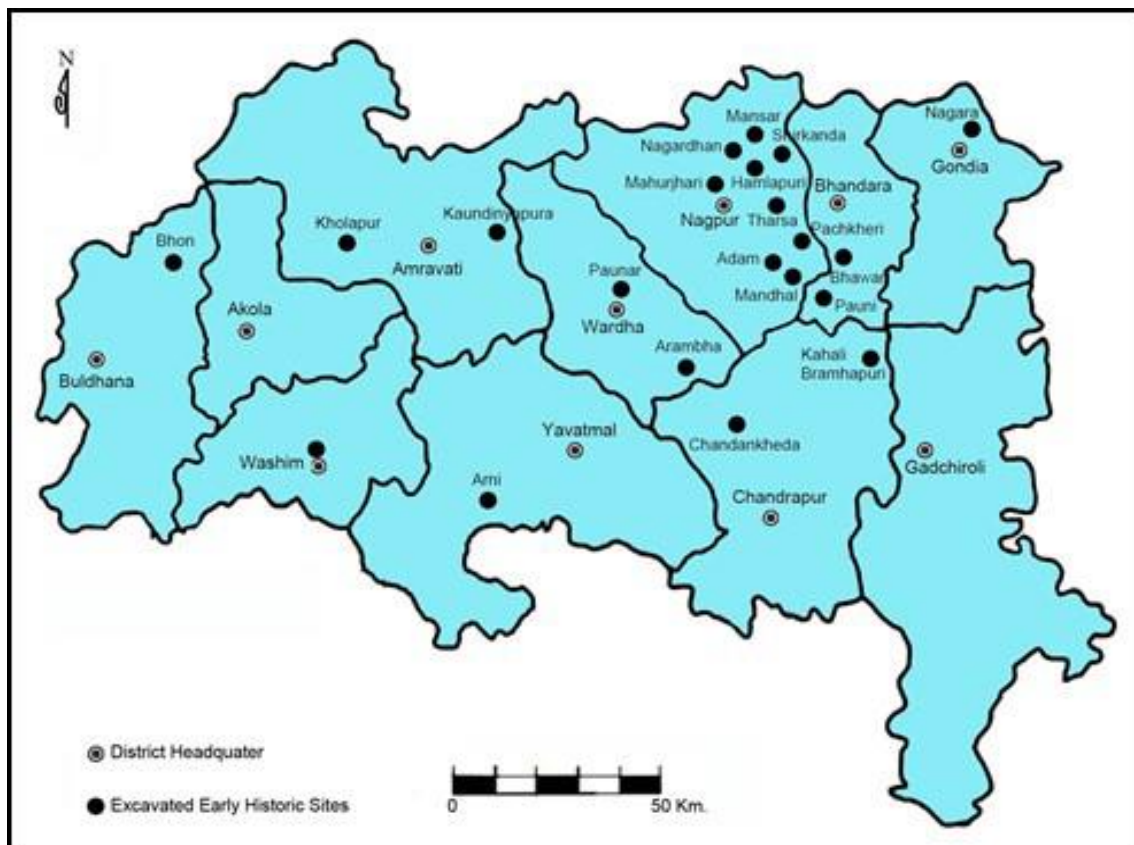


Figure 1: Map showing excavated Early Historic sites of Vidarbha Region

Vidarbha has a long continuous culture history and well-known for its material culture right from Palaeolithic period to late medieval period. In Chalcolithic period, around second half of second millennium BCE, human settlements began in this region (Nath 2016: 48-49). However, at most sites, human occupation started from the Iron Age (c. 800-700 BCE) mostly characterized by megalithic burials as well as megalithic habitation-cum-burial sites (Deo 1970; Sawant 2010). The study of terracotta art objects

began in post-independence era. The terracotta art object's traditions begin from Chalcolithic period onwards and intensify in the early historic period. Most of the excavations of Early Historical sites of Vidarbha region were limited in nature and terracotta findings were also limited. However, excavations at the sites of Adam, Pauni, Bhon and Nagardhan have yielded a good quantity of terracotta objects.

Previous Works Related to Terracotta Art in Vidarbha

After the independence, a number of individuals and various institution/organizations in Vidarbha region started carrying out a number of explorations and excavations. This led to the discovery of cultural remains of Prehistoric, Chalcolithic, Early Iron Age, Early Historic, Late Historic as well as Medieval period. Along with other findings, terracotta remains were also reported from various explorations and excavations. Details of explored and excavated terracotta art objects from different sites are given below.

Terracotta Art Objects Found in Exploration

Since last two decades, large exploration works have been carried out in Vidarbha. During the exploration, many Early Historic as well as Medieval sites have been discovered. In the surface exploration of ancient habitation sites, many beautiful remains of terracotta art have been found. Among all the sites, the ancient habitation sites like Udaipur (IAR 1978-79), Kholapur (IAR 1979-80), Deulgaon-Raja, Bhandak, Nagardhan (IAR 1981-82), Tekdi (IAR 1984-85), Arambha (IAR 1989-90), Hingna, Bhandak (IAR 1994-95), Kharbi (Lokade 1989: 50-55), Asoknagar (Vaigaon) and Borgaon (IAR 1996-97), Kate, Nagara, Pachkheri, Ghugusgad, Pandharabodi, Ghuggus, Vivekanandpur (Sali 1998), Adegaon (Sali 1998; Khobragade 2000), Dahili, Bhamewara and Rithi Vayphal (Pardhi and Vaidya 2016), Hamlapuri (Bhaisare 2012), Pauni (Naranje 2013), Chandankheda (Thakur 2005) and Wedi Rith (Pardhi and Pendam 2014-15) are worth mentioning. These sites mainly yielded human figurines, animal figurines, toys, ornaments, ritualistic objects and a number of other miscellaneous objects.

However, above all mentioned explored terracotta was found associated with megalithic, early historic as well as medieval potteries and other archaeological remains. In Megalithic potteries, mainly black-and-red ware, black ware and red ware found (IAR 1984-85). Likewise early historic and Medieval potteries include red slipped ware, black and red ware, red ware, red polished ware, coarse red ware, micaceous red ware, black ware, coarse grey ware (IAR 1978-79; 1979-80; 1981-82; 1984-85; 1987-88; 1989-90; 1994-95; 1996-97). The above explored sites have significant terracotta findings with potential for further excavations to enrich the new findings of terracotta objects of Vidarbha region.

Terracotta Art Objects Found in Excavation

Besides the explored sites, there are a number of excavated sites where various terracotta evidences have occurred in different cultural phases of Vidarbha region. The

excavated terracotta objects are generally discussed in the excavation reports, various research articles and in *Indian Archaeological: A Review of Archaeological Survey of India* (ASI). Published excavated reports are Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Takalghat-Khapa (Deo 1970), Pauni (Deo and Joshi 1972; Nath 1998), Tuljapur-Garhi (Bopardikar 1996) and Mandhal (Singh and Trivedi 2019). These have discussed about terracotta art objects but not in an elaborate manner. These do not discuss other aspects related to terracotta objects such as their evolution, stylistic features and comparative forms. Adam (Nath 2016) is the only excavation site, where terracotta art objects are reported in large number and discussed in detail also.

Some of the terracotta art objects have been reported in the IAR (Indian Archaeological: A Review of ASI) and research papers. These art objects are from the sites of Mandhal (Shastri 1978; Sali 1998), Arni (IAR 1978-79; 1984-85), Tharsa (IAR 1985-86, 1989-90), Arambha (IAR 1991-92), Shirkanda (IAR 1991-92), Bhawar (IAR 1992-93), Pachkheri (IAR 1992-93), Washim, Hamlapuri (Sali 1998), Mansar (IAR 1994-95, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-2000; Joshi and Sharma 2000: 127-131, 2005; Sharma and Joshi 2015; Shastri 2002: 176-177), Dhamna-linga (IAR 2000-01) Paturda (IAR 2000-01; Deotare *et al.* 2007a), Kahali-Brahmapuri (Walimbe 2003; Sawant 2012: 53-54), Mahurjhari (Mohanty 2003a-b), Bhon (Deotare 2007a, 2008, *et al.* 2007b, *et al.* 2013) and Kholapur (Deotare 2009, *et al.* 2012, *et al.* 2013).

Along with those discussed above, there are few research articles which have described some of the terracotta specimens. S. B. Deo and M. K. Dhavalikar (1968: 14-15) have published a clay seal from Paunar from private collection in the report. Later on, the same seal was re-deciphered and described by A. M. Shastri (1968: 215-218) and G. R. Yadav (1969: 180-181) in a different perspective. There are many terracotta art objects such as human, animal, ornamental, seals, sealings, coin-mould and other objects found in the Adam excavation which were studied and published in research publications by Amarendra Nath (1990: 87-96; 1992c: 55-59; 1994: 81-82; 1995: 149-172; 1996a: 183-187; 1996b: 94-96; 1997: 30-36; 1999: 460-466; 2016).

Similarly, from Arambha excavation, a coin-mould of the Kshatrapa period, made of baked clay was discussed in detail by Amarendra Nath (1992a: 69-74; 1992b: 60-61). P. S. Meshram has also described single terracotta Roman bullae from a private collection, found from Paunar (2009: 79-85). In recent excavation at Nagardhan, various terracotta art objects in the form of human and animal figurines, ornamental objects, playing and religious objects were reported (Sontakke *et al.* 2016: 42-51).

Classification of the Terracotta Objects

A large number of terracotta objects have been recovered from the excavations at Vidarbha. These terracotta objects can be classified into six broad types such as human figurines, animal and bird figurines, ornamental objects, playing objects, religious objects and miscellaneous objects (Figure 2). Each type has their sub-types. All have different style and made of various techniques and can be kept in different phases.

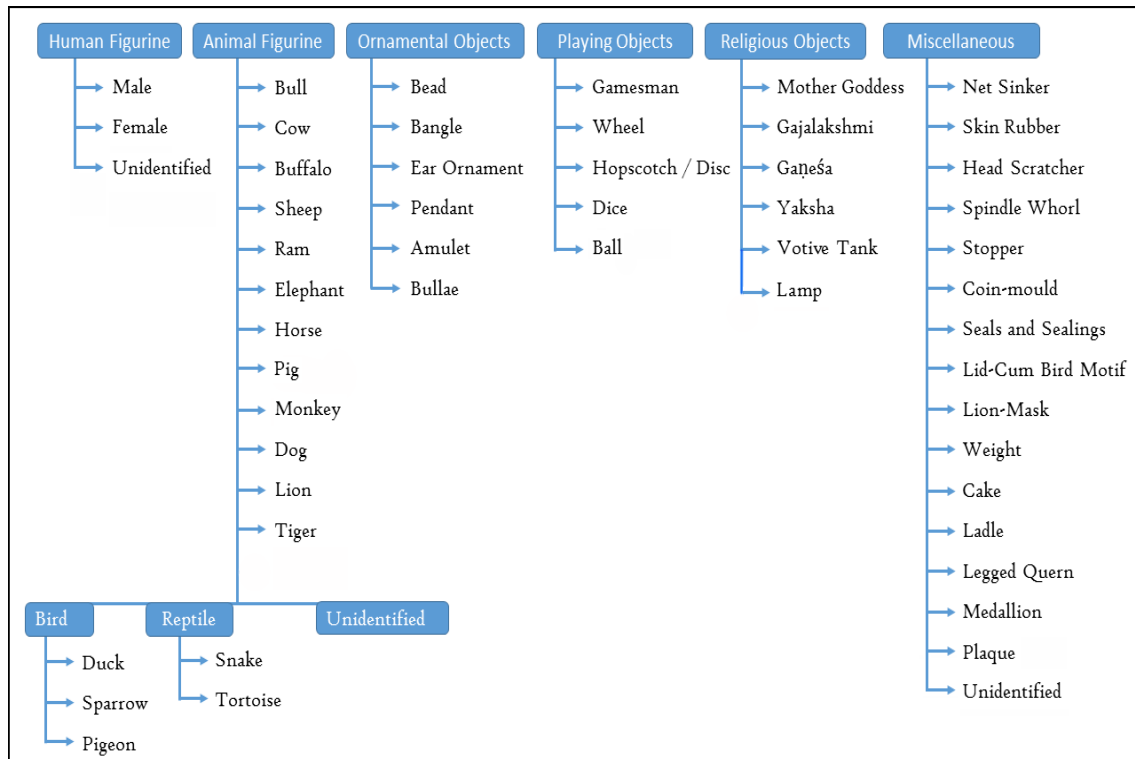


Figure 2: Classification of main types and sub-types of the terracotta objects

Chronological Framework for the Present Research

In present research paper, focuses is also on the early historic chronological framework which has been considered according to different phases. Various scholars have used various periodical terminology to define the culture which are also on the basis of cultural material i.e. pottery as well as other material and also dynastic affiliation. However, these dynastic affiliations do not represent the uniform picture of chronology. In this regard, it can be seen that most of the scholars have ignored the technological and material changes to understand the cultural sequence. Hence, the terracotta art of Vidarbha can be an important tool to fill the lacuna of cultural sequence in its chronological aspects. An attempt has been made here to divide the entire time period into different phases.

These phases used here are based on two important parameters. First parameter deals with that terracotta which is recovered in proper stratigraphic context with other archaeological materials. Second, the technological and the stylistic changes are also taken into consideration. These two aspects help us to understand the tentative chronology of the cultural sequence. Therefore, the entire time period of the early historic has been further divided into following four phases:

Phase I	:	c. Late Fifth Century BCE to c. Early Second Century BCE
Phase II	:	c. Early Second Century BCE to c. Late First Century BCE
Phase III	:	c. Late First Century BCE to c. Middle Third Century CE
Phase IV	:	c. Middle Third Century CE to c. Late Fifth Century CE

Phase wise Distribution of Terracotta Art Objects

Terracotta art objects began to appear from the Chalcolithic Period in Vidarbha, and their production intensified during the Early Historic period. The Chalcolithic sites of Vidarbha have not been excavated on large scale and a limited number of excavations were carried out. The sites like the Tuljapur-Garhi (Bopardikar 1996) and Adam (IAR: 1988-89, Nath 2016) are the earliest reports where we find mention of terracotta objects. They have meager account of the objects, especially in the form of beads compared to the frequent findings in the adjacent Deccan Chalcolithic sites of Nevasa (Sankalia *et al.* 1960b), Inamgaon (Dhavalikar *et al.* 1988) and Daimabad (Sali 1986).

Craft production of various forms out of different kinds of materials such as metal, terracotta and stone are notable technological development perceived during the Iron Age/Megalithic period. Beads, crucibles, net sinkers, discs, spindle whorls, hopscotch, sarcophagus are common and the lid with a finial of bird or animal forms made of terracotta can be considered as exceptional types in their craft assemblage. Conical lids surmounted by bird finials made of copper were found at Takalghat-Khapa (Deo 1970), Mahurjhari (Deo 1973), Naikund (Deo and Jamkhedkar 1982), Khairwada (IAR 1981-82), and at Mahurjhari black burnished lid/cover with the finial of a goat shape was also retrieved (Deo 1973). Similar crafts in metal are found as grave furniture in the Megaliths of this region. It is interesting to note that the animal and human forms of terracotta figurines are exceptional in their existence. These two combinations of evidence in the forms of clay and metal throw light on not only on their expertise in craftsmanship but also on an increasing supply for the communal functionalities, as they are found on par with the customs of disposing the dead in the Megaliths. Phase-wise details of the same are given as follows.

Phase I : c. Late Fifth Century BCE to c. Early Second Century BCE: Under Phase-I, Pre-Mauryan and Mauryan terracotta art objects are included. During this phase in Vidarbha, some large settlements formed and developed. They are Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Paunar (Deo & Dhavalikar 1968), Adam (Nath 1998, 2016), Pauni (Deo and Joshi 1972), Bhon (Deotare *et al.* 2007a-b; Sawant 2012) and Chandankheda (Meshram *et al.* 2015). Due to long distance trade, the commercial production of various materials and goods was increased. However, at the same period, the production of terracotta art objects did not flourish much in Vidarbha in comparison to sites of Ganga-Yamuna doab. A careful look into the cultural materials of pre-Mauryan period shows that few terracotta beads and single head scratcher are reported from the excavations. However, detailed descriptions are not available. Above terracotta objects are found from the sites of Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Adam (Nath 2016), Pauni (Nath 1998) and Kahali-Bramhapuri (Sawant 2012). All these sites were not seen much flourished during this phase.

However, the scenario appears to have changed in later half of this phase. There are certain reasons which were responsible for the less availability of terracotta art objects in this phase. The first is the lack of good quality clay; second the urbanization

processes began late in comparison to north, and the existence of agro-pastoral Early Iron Age culture. The studied terracotta art objects suggest that in initial stage of third-fourth c. BCE the settlements did not flourish much. However, it was during second-first c. BCE when most of the settlements gained importance, flourished and extended.

During the Mauryan period, a variety of terracotta art objects are reported from the excavations. The numbers increased compared to the previous period. They are mainly human and animal figurines, beads, ear ornament, amulets and pendants, gamesmen, hopscotch, wheels, spindle whorls, net sinkers, head scratcher, weight as well as mother goddess. The technique was handmade and fabric is crude in appearance.

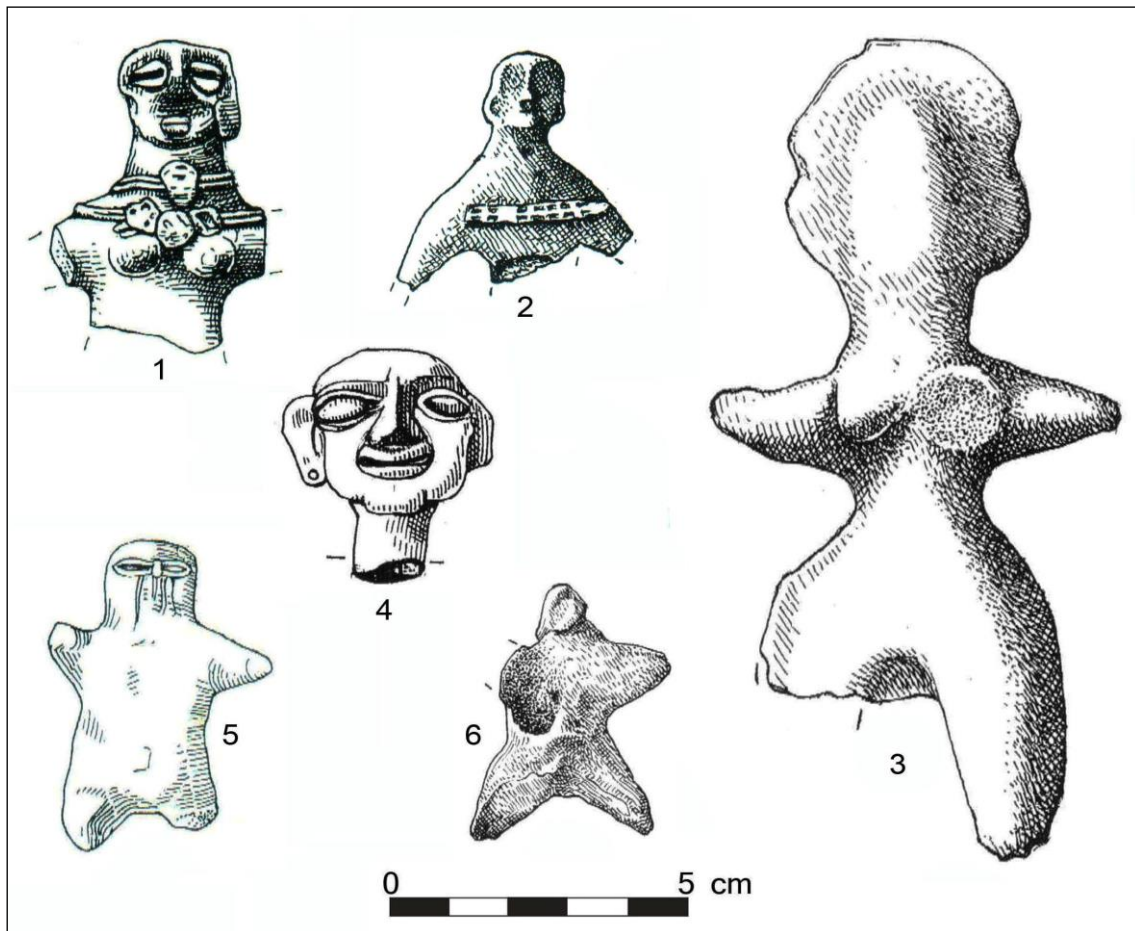


Figure 3: Female (1-3) and male (4-6) figurines from Adam, Phase I (After Nath 2016)

From Mauryan period, some archaic types of human figurines i.e., male and female figurines as well as other terracotta objects are reported. All human figurines of this phase have been recorded from the site of Adam only. All these, male as well as female figurines, are handmade and mostly coarse to medium fabric and ill fired (Nath 2016: 391). There are a total of seven male figurines, 14 female figurines and five unidentified human figurines. All these figurines have the archaic feature such as pinched nose and ears, eyes are marked through shallow depression, applique pallels and some of with broad bulging. Some of them have decoration of notched circlets, floral knob, applique

clay band and incised lines, pin holes and dots. The hands and legs are stumpy; hands are straight extended some are parallel to the shoulder whereas legs are having pointed ends. Likewise, mouth is partially open; some have slit lips, shown as mouth features. The female figurines have prominent applique breast, some have fan shaped like headdress features. However, most of the facial features of both types are abraded. Hands and legs are either completely or partly broken. Some figures have applique necklace, girdle, armlet and bracelets (Figure 3).

The archaic type, star shape and some of hollow potbellied type of human figurines are very much common in the Ganga-Yamuna doab. All these handmade figurines of this Phase are bare; hence depiction of cloth is not seen. The fan-shaped like headdress are commonly seen in the South Indian site of Peddabankur (Telangana state) (Sastry 1979). The animal figurines are also reported from Kahali-Bramhapuri (Walimbe 2003). The occurrence of animal figurines in this phase is noticed very less. This may be due to the limited number of excavations.

Various shapes of beads with simple, moulded and decorated form are reported from a number of sites. Amulets and pendants are found from Kholapur (Deotare *et al.* 2012) but details are unpublished. Some of single specimens like ear stud, weight, head scratcher, net sinker, spindle whorl, disc or hopscotch and gamesmen are found from Kholapur and Kahali-Bramhapuri.

The artistic quality of this phase was crude in appearance. It is quite interesting to point out that during the same phase in the north India artist made beautiful terracotta art objects technically as well as artistically. This was certainly not the case in the region of Vidarbha during this time.

Phase II: c. Early Second Century BCE to c. Late First Century BCE: Phase II can be politically assigned to Shunga-Bhadra and Mitra period. This is categorized on the basis of numismatic as well as epigraphical data and other archaeological materials like terracotta objects which have served to fill the gap between Mauryan and Satavahana. In a number of excavated sites such as Adam, Arni, Bhon, Kholapur, Pauni and Tharsa, Pre-Satavahana or Post-Mauryan period is cited. These sites have yielded some of diagnostic terracotta art objects which can be placed in Phase II. They are female and *mithuna* figurines, animal figurine, mother goddess, decorated beads, ear ornament, pendants, amulets, head scratcher and spindle whorl. The fabrics of these objects are coarse, medium to well and ill to medium and in some cases well-fired. The technique employed is mostly single moulded and few of them are handmade and double moulded. As compared to previous phase, the artistic sense was developed and the taste of ornamentation on objects is increased.

Based on available material, as compared to Phase I, in Phase II, the quantity of human figurines is reduced as very few male and female figurines have been recorded from this phase. From Pauni and Arni, female figurine is made by single mould and handmade techniques, respectively. A single star shaped male figurine has been

reported from Arni and two handmade male figurines have been reported from Tharsa. The Arni female specimen has archaic features (Figure 4.1). A single fragment of Pauni *mithuna* plaque is exactly similar with Ahichchhatra specimens and belongs to Shunga Period (Nath 1998) (Figure 4.2). Similarly, from Adam, an applique *Gajalakshmi* found on storage jar and has Shunga stylistic idioms (Nath 2016) suggesting the common trend during the time of second century BCE (Figure 5). In same time, *Gajalakshmi* was very much popular and constantly depicted on terracotta art as well as stone art of stupa railing of Bharhut and also Sanchi gateways. In Deccan, there are two circular terracotta plaque of *Gajalakshmi* found in Ter. She is shown seated over a lotus and a pair of elephant flanks the goddess on either side pouring water over her head and dated 1st c. CE (Nagar 2008: 27). There are number of sites in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal where terracotta *Gajalakshmi* plaque often found in the excavations.

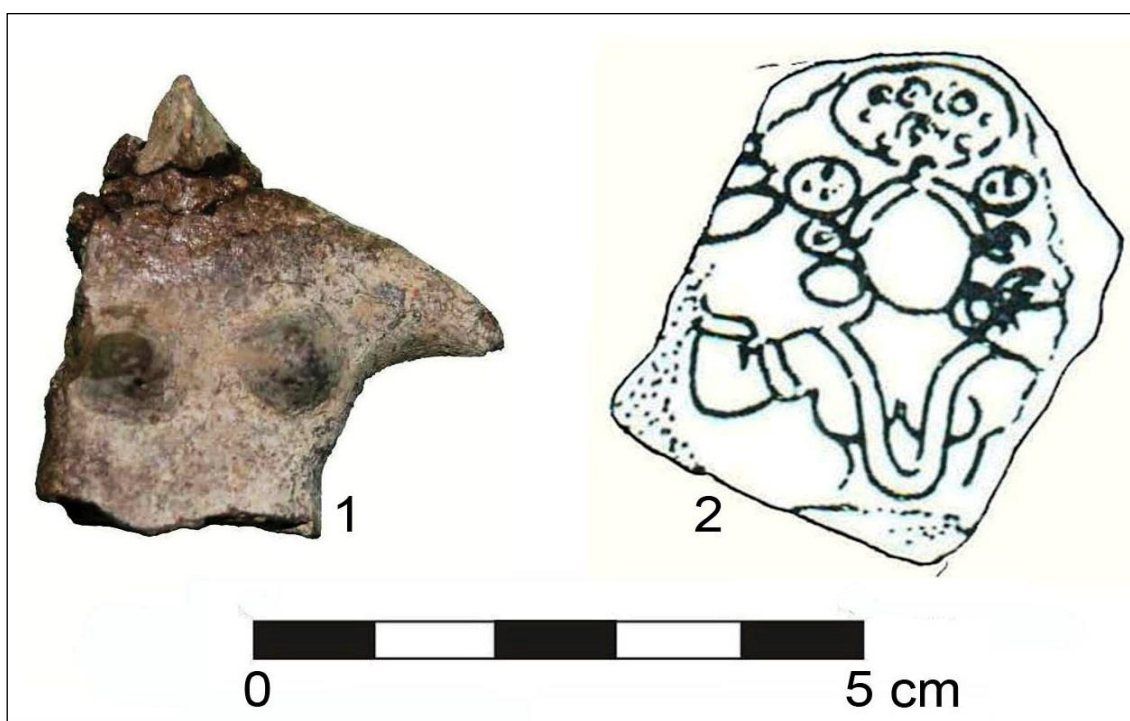


Figure 4: 1. Female figurine from Arni, Phase II (Courtesy: RTM, NU) and 2. Mithuna plaque from Pauni, Phase II (After Nath 1998)

Similarly, there are decorated beads (Figure 6.1) as well as pendant of *triratna* (Figure 6.2) which were depicted in the necklace of divine and semi-divine icons of Bharhut and Sanchi stupa. These are considered religiously auspicious and have also been reported from Bhon (Deotare *et al* 2013; Sawant 2012) and Adam (Nath 2016). A single specimen of *ankusha* pendant is found from Kaundinyapura (Figure 6.3) and assigned to Phase-I, but on the basis of style and technology it can be placed in Phase-II. These type of pendants were famous during Phase II as a part of necklace and later as hair pin of the mother goddess or female plaques which continued till the second and third century CE in north India and eastern India (Biswas 1981; Sengupta *et al.* 2007).

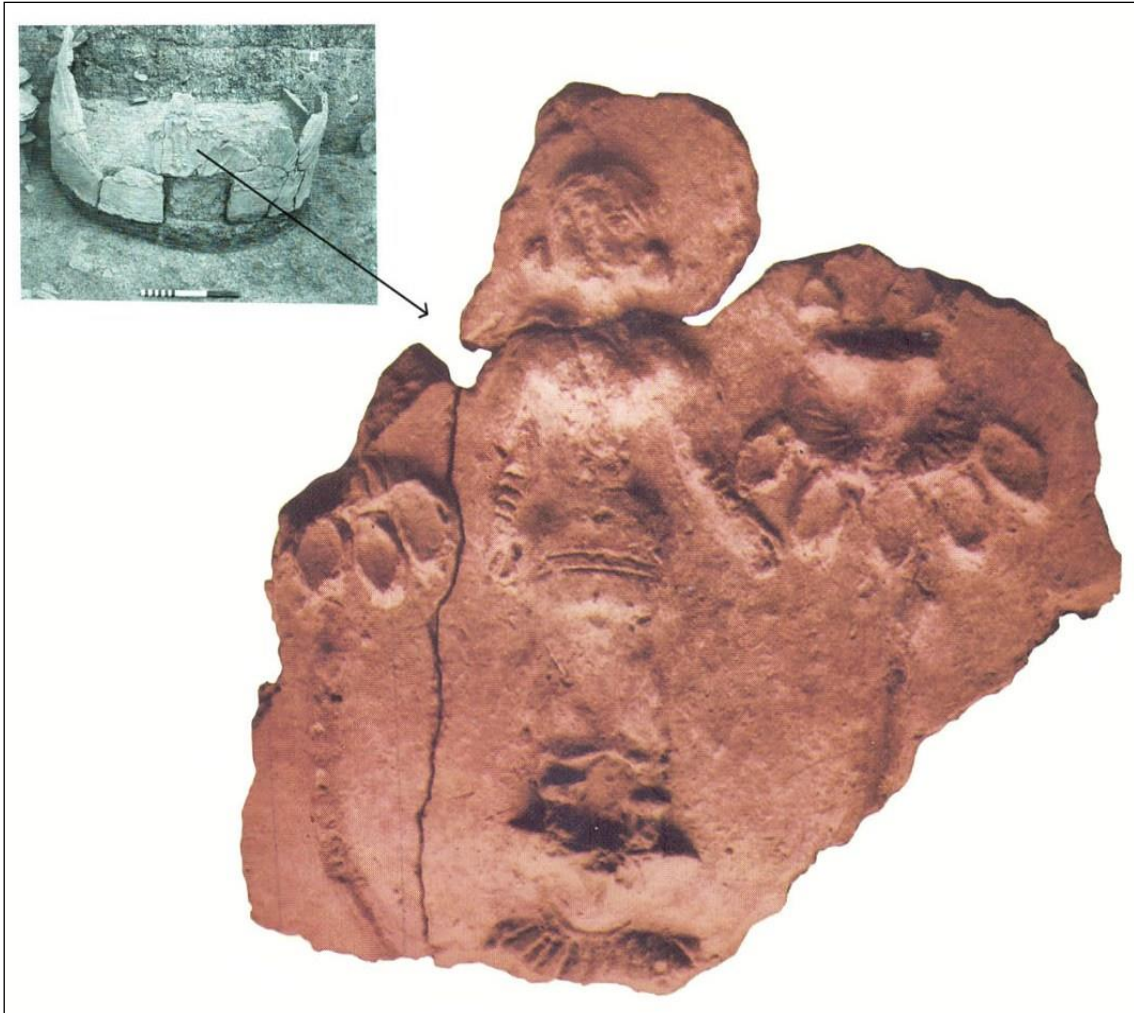


Figure 5: *Gajalakshmi* from Adam, Phase II (After Nath 2016)

Amulets are other important types which were used to be worn on neck as a part of necklace by a person for some magico-religious reason or magical benefits or magical power (Margabandhu 1985). From Bhon, there are three different types of amulets found. These are mainly warrior types (Figure 7.1), *yaksha* type (Figure 7.2) and centaur or *kinnera-mithuna* type (Figure 7.3). The craftsmanship of all is highly developed, double moulded and fabric is seen very fine (Deotare *et al.* 2007b). The warrior type of amulet has single example reported from Vidarbha whereas standing *yakṣa* type of specimen is earlier reported from excavation at the site of Nevasa (Sankalia *et al.* 1960b) in Maharashtra. Both Bhon and Nevasa specimens have religious importance. A single centaurs (Therianthropomorphic) amulet found in the form of animal body with female head and male riders. Excavator has suggested the body of a lion (Deotare *et al.* 2007b: 184) but careful examination of the object shows that the body and hoop of the legs do not match with lion, but looks closer to an elephant. In the ancient Indian art, the depiction of therianthropomorphic i.e. a combination of animal and the human form is very common. Such incongruous figures reveal a composite and unreal nature that can be assigned to an imaginary realm or a world of fantasy (Jose 1999: 1).

This type of representation of an animal body with human torso of male or female and carrying a male or female rider has been identified with *kinnara-mithuna*. A pair of centaur has been found in stone art of Sanchi and Mathura as well as terracotta plaques from Rajghat, Mathura and Ahichchhatra (Agrawala 1936: 32; 1941: 5; Krishnadasa 1942: 43-44; Srivastava 1983: 127). The tradition of centaur goes back to 4th-5th c. BCE and continued up to 5th c. CE. All these depictions of centaurs are mythical depiction of human being.



Figure 6: 1. Decorated bead from Bhon (After Deotare *et al.* 2013); 2. Decorated triratna pendant from Bhon (After Sawant 2012); 3. Ankusha pendant from Kaundinyapura (Courtesy MSDAM), Phase II



Figure 7: 1. Warrior type; 2. Yaksha type; 3. Centaur type from Bhon, Phase II
(After Deotare *et al.* 2007b)

There are three *karnavestana* (two almost complete and third one is small fragment) in terracotta and one is in lead metal found in Vidarbha region. A metal and two terracotta (Figure 8) ear ornaments are found at Adam; while the single object is reported from Chandankheda (Figure 9). The occurrences of *karnavestana* ear ornament in terracotta are the earliest evidence reported at Adam, Chandankheda and Pauni (Pardhi *et al.* 2018) in India. Earlier, it was reported in metal like copper or bronze and gold (Postel 1989).

There are a number of early Buddhist stupa and rock-cut cave sites such as Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati (Sivaramamurti 1956), Kanaganahalli (Poonacha 2011), Jaggayyapeta, Karle and Bedsa where we have depiction of *karnavestana*. It is depicted either in single or in both the ears of the semi-divine, nobles, *Jataka* stories panel, couple or *dampati* and devotees of the stupa and rock-cut cave reliefs. It is also found in the form of antiquity or piece of art from number of early historical sites. *Karnavestana* made of terracotta and metal have been reported from various sites such as Chandankheda, Adam, Kausambi and Andhra Pradesh.

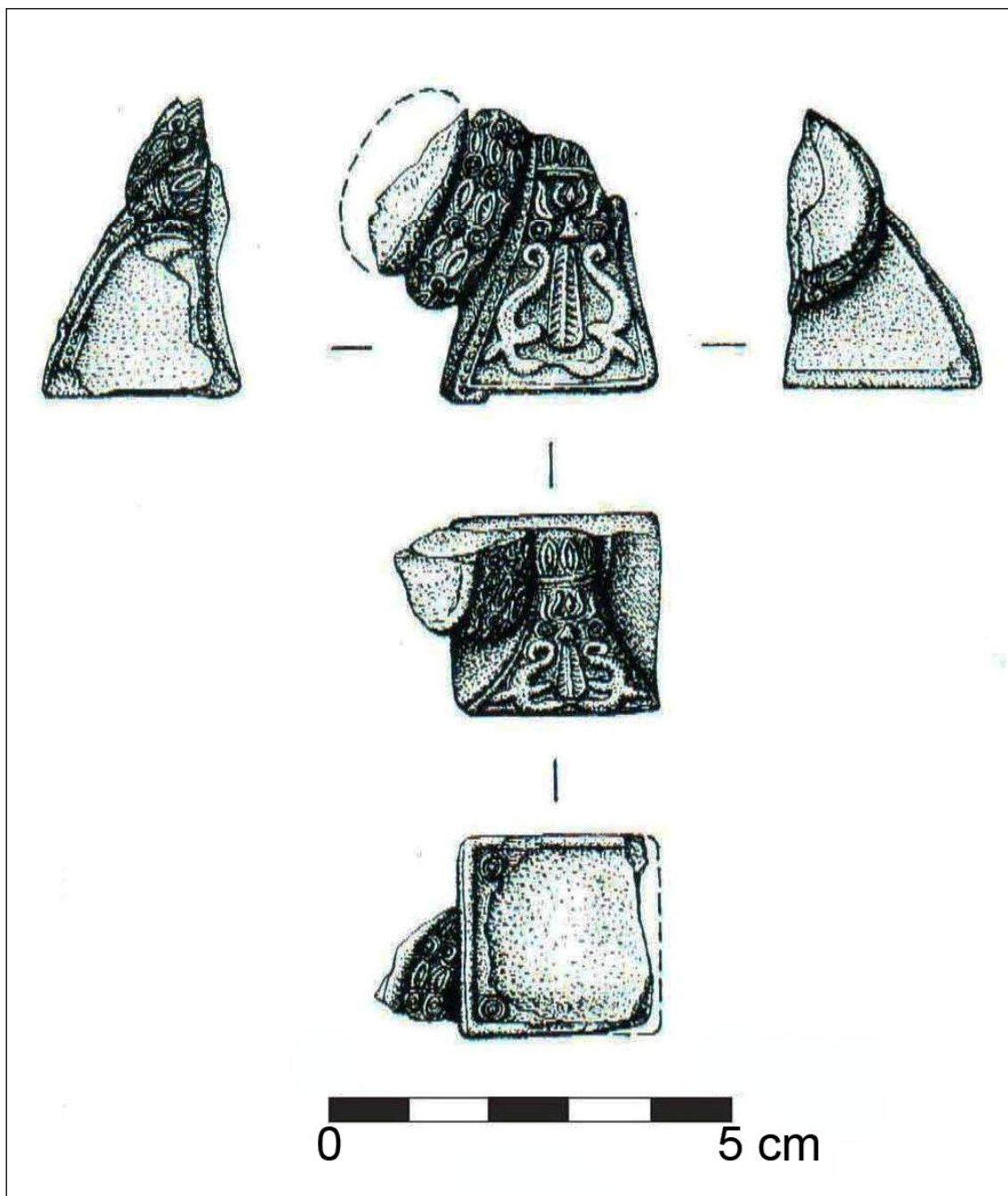


Figure 8: Fragment of karnavestana ornament from Adam, Phase II (After Nath 2016)

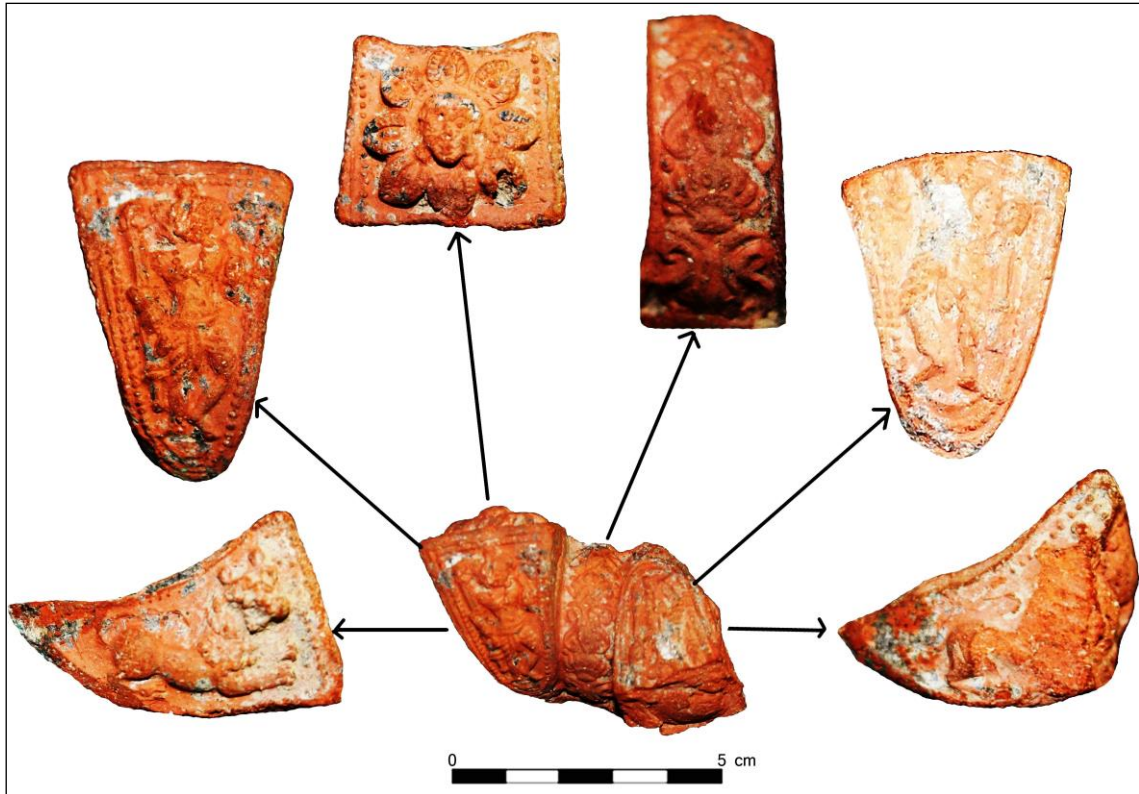


Figure 9: Karnavestana ornament from Chandankheda, Phase II (Courtesy: MSDAM)



Figure 10: Fiddle or violin shape mother goddesses from Arni, Phase II (Courtesy: RTM, NU)

It has been clearly observed that the availability of *karnavestana* ornament covered extensive area such as north India, central India, the western and eastern Deccan and further south which indicates its widespread popularity. All above mentioned sites

were prosperous and gained importance during the Early Historic Period. The reason behind the popularity of *Karnavestana* could be due to its constant depiction in the relief of sculptural art. Apart from terracotta, it was also made in various metals like gold, copper and lead. Gold could be easily moulded in any form resulting in beautiful design through repousse technique (Postel 1989: 34-35).

Further detailed examination of available sculptural reliefs and images suggest that this ornament was distinctly worn by divine, semi-divine and aristocrats within society. Apart from this, the motifs observed on the objects from Chandankheda are also noticed elsewhere. Especially a depiction of standing male figurine which is almost comparable with *yaksha* images which is carved on all the main pillars of the Sanchi stupa gateways. Stylistically, the standing male of *karnavestana* appears like mirror image of stupa *yaksha* and can be called as a *yaksha*. Frequent appearance of these motifs indicates that it may have symbolic importance during that period. The archaeological significance of this object is its usefulness in determining the relative dating.

All above inferences suggest that during the time of second century BCE various sculptures are made in stone either as a part of stupa architecture or as a separate sculpture which influenced the contemporary terracotta art or vice versa and artist copied the artistic elements from the contemporary stone art in clay art form.

There are two fiddle or violin shaped mother goddesses found from Arni (Fig. 10) which can be kept in Phase-II. This was very common shape which was found more or less right from Post-Harappan onwards and continued in Chalcolithic cultures of western India as well as Early Historic period of India (Banerji 1994: 55-56). According to H. D. Sankalia (1960a: 111-112), the origin of this type of figurines goes back to the end of the fourth millennium to end of the second millennium BCE, reported firstly in Cycladic and Neolithic Anatolian, identified as mother goddesses of 'violin type'. The occurrence of such type of figurines in Vidarbha region indicates their importance throughout the periods in Indian society. All these similarities show that the fashion of artistic parameter was familiar to all over the country during this Phase and this was possible due to extensive internal trade and commerce.

The terracotta head scratchers are noticed from Adam and Pauni. Scholar has diverse views about the usage of this object. Some have identified it as dandruff remover from hair, toilet object as skin rubber (Dikshit 1968) and some of them have considered it as part of a musical instrument (Nath 2016). Whereas some of the scholars claim the possibilities of auspicious symbols, motifs, and designs identified as a ritualistic object (Sawant 2012). But the actual use of this object is still doubtful.

Phase III: c. Late First Century BCE to c. Middle Third Century CE: The Phase III is referred as Satavahana/Kshatrapa period. Terracotta objects revealed from stratigraphic context and belonging to this phase are discussed in this section. During this phase, due to political stability and flourishing trade, a number of important urban

habitation settlements developed and flourished. They are mainly Brahmapuri (Kolhapur) (Sankalia and Dikshit 1952), Ter (Tagar) (Chapekar 1969; Deshpande 1999), Paithan (Pratishthana) (Dhavalikar 1975-76; Morwanchikar 1985), Bhokardan (Bhogavardhana) (Deo and Gupte 1974), Nevasa (Sankalia *et al.* 1960b), Junnar (Shinde *et al.* 2006-07), Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Adam (Nath 2016), Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Pauni (Nath 1998), Kholapur (Deotare *et al.* 2012) and Chandankheda (Meshram *et al.* 2015).

Based on recovered material, these settlements were rich in Satavahana period. This was the phase which witnessed the Indo-Roman trade in its peak. A number of sites were connected to each other through the increased trading network particularly in Deccan. A number of Roman currency/goods in the form of coins, ceramics, bullae, metal objects, terracotta art objects and other objects are found in above mentioned sites. Due to Indo-Roman trade, double mould technique was introduced in India and got popularity. This can be understood on the basis of terracotta evidence that comes from Satavahana layers from a number of sites of Deccan. The potters of Satavahana period copied the Roman technique and made various terracotta especially kaolin human and animal figurines. They also imitated the Roman features in their art which are clearly reflected in human figurines as well as bullae (imitation of Roman coins made in clay).

The Satavahana period of this phase was the richest period in Vidarbha region, as well as in Maharashtra. Terracotta art objects are found in large numbers from sites belonging to this period. The occurrences of the terracotta art objects from excavations are enormous as compared to preceding periods and succeeding periods. They are in various shapes such as male and female figurines, animal figurines, variety of ornamental objects (beads, ear ornaments, pendants, amulets and bullae), playing objects (wheels, Gamesmen, hopscotch's and sling ball), religious objects (votive tank, lamps and *yaksha*) and miscellaneous objects (net sinker, skin rubbers, weights, head scratchers, seal and sealings, spindle whorl, coin-mould) and other objects. All above objects are found from sites of Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Pauni (Nath 1998), Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Adam (Nath 2016), Mandhal (IAR 1975-76; 1976-77; Shastri 1978), Arni (IAR 1978-79; 1984-85), Tharsa (IAR 1985-86; 1989-90), Bhawar (IAR 1992-93), Pachkheri (IAR 1992-93), Mansar (IAR 1994-95; Sharma and Joshi 2015), Kahali-Bramhapuri (Sawant 2003; 2008; 2012), Bhon (Deotare *et al.* 2007a-b, *et al.* 2013), Kholapur (Deotare *et al.* 2012) and Chandankheda (Pardhi 2017; Pardhi *et al.* 2017).

During the Satavahana period production of terracotta art objects increased not only type wise but also quantity and quality wise. The artist produced human figurines in kaolin (pure clay) as well as simple clay. The terracotta fabrics of this period, compared to other periods, are medium to fine and the baking process was also medium to fine. After the Satavahana period, terracotta human figurines are not seen as such fine in quality wise and quantity wise. The occurrence of kaolin figurines is very less compared to other parts of Deccan. This might be because of the non-availability of

kaolin clay in Vidarbha region. Due to this reason, they might have given more focus on available local clay. Through which they had made double moulded human and animal figurines.

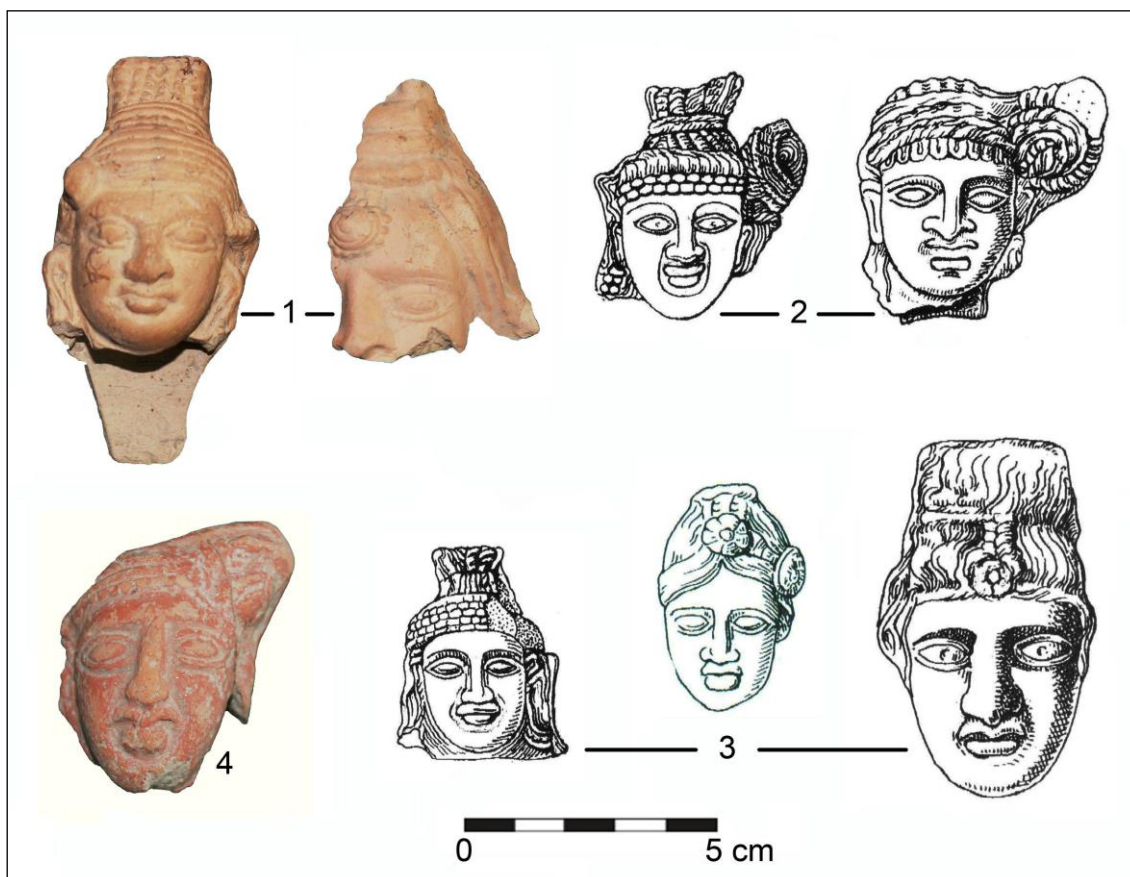


Figure 11: 1. Female figurines from Chandankheda (Courtesy: MSDAM); 2-3. Male and female figurines from Adam (After Nath 2016); 4. Male Figurine from Tharsa Phase III (Courtesy: RTM, NU)

There are a number of male and female figurines found in this phase. Among these, majority of figurines are double moulded, a few single moulded and few handmade figurines are noticed. These figurines are largely made of simple clay whereas few are in kaolin. Apart from this, a few double moulded kaolin female figurines are found from the surface exploration of Chandankheda (Figure 11.1) and Pauni. The majority of double moulded male (Figure 11.2) and female (Figure 11.3) figurines are found in Adam only. A single double mould male head was found from Tharsa (Figure 11.4). Some of the human figurines of Adam have Graeco-Roman facial features. The face is shown elongated and hair-curl is turned clock wise which are harmoniously tied with cloth-band knotted at the left side of the head, eyes are wide open with outsized eye-balls and eye-brows are slightly cambered. The nose is aquiline with puffy nostrils; mustaches are made well cushioned with drooping ends. Likewise, lips are prominent and chin seems to be in 'U' shape; the foreheads are more flattish than being curved (Figure 12) (Nath 1995: 149-172). This is probably due to trade activities of Graeco-

Roman people. Indian artist depicted their facial features in terracotta art. Most of the Adam specimens are double moulded and few of them are in single mould.



Figure 12: Graeco-Roman facial features of male figurines from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016)

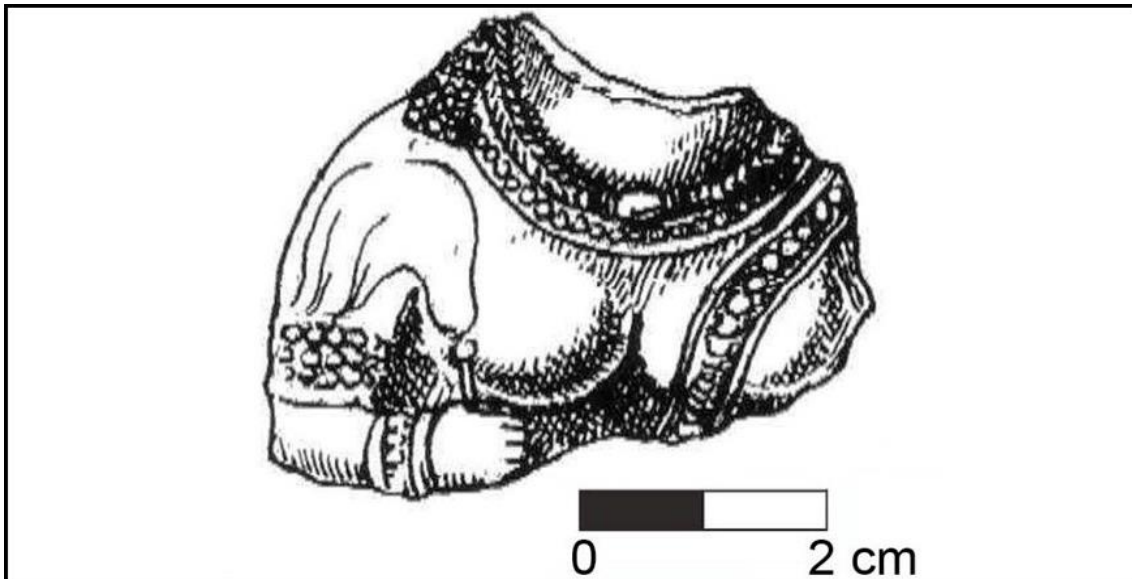


Figure 13: *Chauri* bearer from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016)

Another interesting finding is the evidence of three *chauri* bearers (*chamardharini*) female figurines from Adam (Nath 2016: 410) (Figure 13). All are broken but have ornamentation. The depiction of the *chauri* bearer is very common in the stone art

which are reported from various sites such as Pauni (Deo and Joshi 1972: 44-45), Mathura, Bharhut, Sanchi, Bhaja, and Jaggayyapeta (Quintanilla 2007: 19-20).



Figure 14: Female holding a bunch of mangoes in right hand and on the left hand the parrot is sitting (1) from Chandankheda and (2) Adam (After Nath 2016), Phase III

There are two plaques of *mithuna* and *dampati* from Adam. These are broken, double moulded and solid in nature. Both are ornate. The depiction of *mithuna* type figures in terracotta is typical in Ganga-Yamuna doab (Agrawala 1948). But their occurrence in Vidarbha region is relatively meagre. Though the religious significance is vague, some of the scholars have related these with the concept of ideal 'man-and-women' and *dampati* (husband-and-wife) besides counsellor companion and pupil (Nath 2016: 395).

The theme of female holding a bunch of mangoes in right hand and a parrot on the left hand is noticed in surface finding of kaolin female figurine from Pauni (Naranje 2013) (Figure 14.1). It is similar to the earlier reported from Ter and Paithan. Similar fragment of female figurine is found from the stratigraphical context from Adam (Nath 2016) (Figure 14.2). Such type of terracotta figurines is often noticed in Satavahana kaolin. This type of figurines is commonly depicted for female and rarely male.

The earliest example of terracotta female holding a parrot reported from Hastinapura of Mauryan period. During the Shunga period, this theme has been found from almost all the Shunga sites such as Farrukhabad, Ahichchhatra and Rajghat (Srivastava 1996: 82). A similar type of theme based female figurine holding a bunch of mangos in her right hand and a parrot sitting on the left hand has also been reported from Kausambi

and dated to 1st c. BCE (Kala 1950, pl. XXV-A; 1980). At the time of Kushan, even male figurine also hold parrot in their hand (Srivastava 1996: 177). It is mentioned in Mahabharata that birds are related to either as a food-item or as a source of recreation. In Sanskrit, parrot is called as *shuka*. Vatsyayana has mentioned *shuka-krida* or playing with the birds as one of the sixty-four *kalas*, forming an important pastime for women (Srivastava 1996: 82).

The Satavahanas were the contemporary to Kushan and ruling the Deccan region of India. Due to internal trade activity, this theme might have travelled from north to south and got more popular. Beautiful terracotta or kaolin male and female figurines holding bunch of mangoes in right hand and parrot sitting on left hand are found from a number of Satavahana sites. Such type of parallels can be found from Ter (Chapekar 1969: 88; fig 28.42) and Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76: 65; pl. XXIV, fig. 6 and Morwanchikar 1985; pl. XIII-d). Further, in Gupta period this theme was popular in north India but total absent in Deccan region.

A beautiful single moulded human head probably of a female is found at Adam. This figurine shows some foreign ethnic features. Such types of features are commonly seen in 1st c. CE to 3rd c. CE. In north India, it is assigned to Kushan period.

There are a large number of animal figurines reported from excavations which are more than in preceding phase. Majority of animal figurines are handmade and some of moulded. The occurrences of bull, horse, and elephant are more than any other animal. This could be because the bull is a symbol of power and strength and without the bull, agriculture cannot be imagined. This may be the reason we get a number of handmade bull figurines which are reported from various excavations. In this phase, several bull figurines are found from Adam (Nath 2016) whereas some of the figurines are reported from Pauni (Nath 1998) and Arni respectively. Single figurines of the humpless bull are found at Arni and Pauni. All bull figurines are simple, without any ornamentation.

Strikingly the evidence of perforated bulls is reported from Adam (Nath 2016) which could be the only example in entire Vidarbha. The horse is a fast animal which was constantly used in warfare throughout the history of mankind. In this phase, beautiful terracotta double mould horses with or without riders were made. Some of the horse figurines from Adam and Pauni have a flat pedestal, to give figurine a permanent support. Many double mould horse figurines were fully decorated whereas some of them were simply handmade. Apart from these, there are other handmade animals/birds/reptiles such as cow, buffalo, sheep, ram, pig, dog, lion, tiger, pigeon, tortoise and some of the unidentified figurines are reported from various excavated sites (Figure 15).

A variety of ornamental objects made of handmade, wheel made and double mould are also reported from this phase. The occurrences of types of ornamental objects like beads are more than any other objects. An arecanut type of bead is most common type in all terracotta beads and commonly found in all the excavated sites. Double mould

and other beads were also reported from different excavated sites like Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Pauni (Nath 1998), Kholapur (Deotare *et al.* 2013) and Adam (Nath 2016) (Figure 16). Quantities of bangles are very less; ear ornaments are recorded in decorated and simple variety (Figure 17). Pendants and amulets are found in different size and shape (Figure 18). They are handmade and moulded with simple and decorated. Playing objects are reported more in numbers (for more details see amusement section). In religious objects, mainly mother goddesses, votive tank, lamp and a *yaksha* figurine are reported (for more details see religious condition section). After the verification of the data, it comes to our knowledge that the *yaksha* figurine is first of its kind found from Adam (Nath 2016) of Vidarbha region.

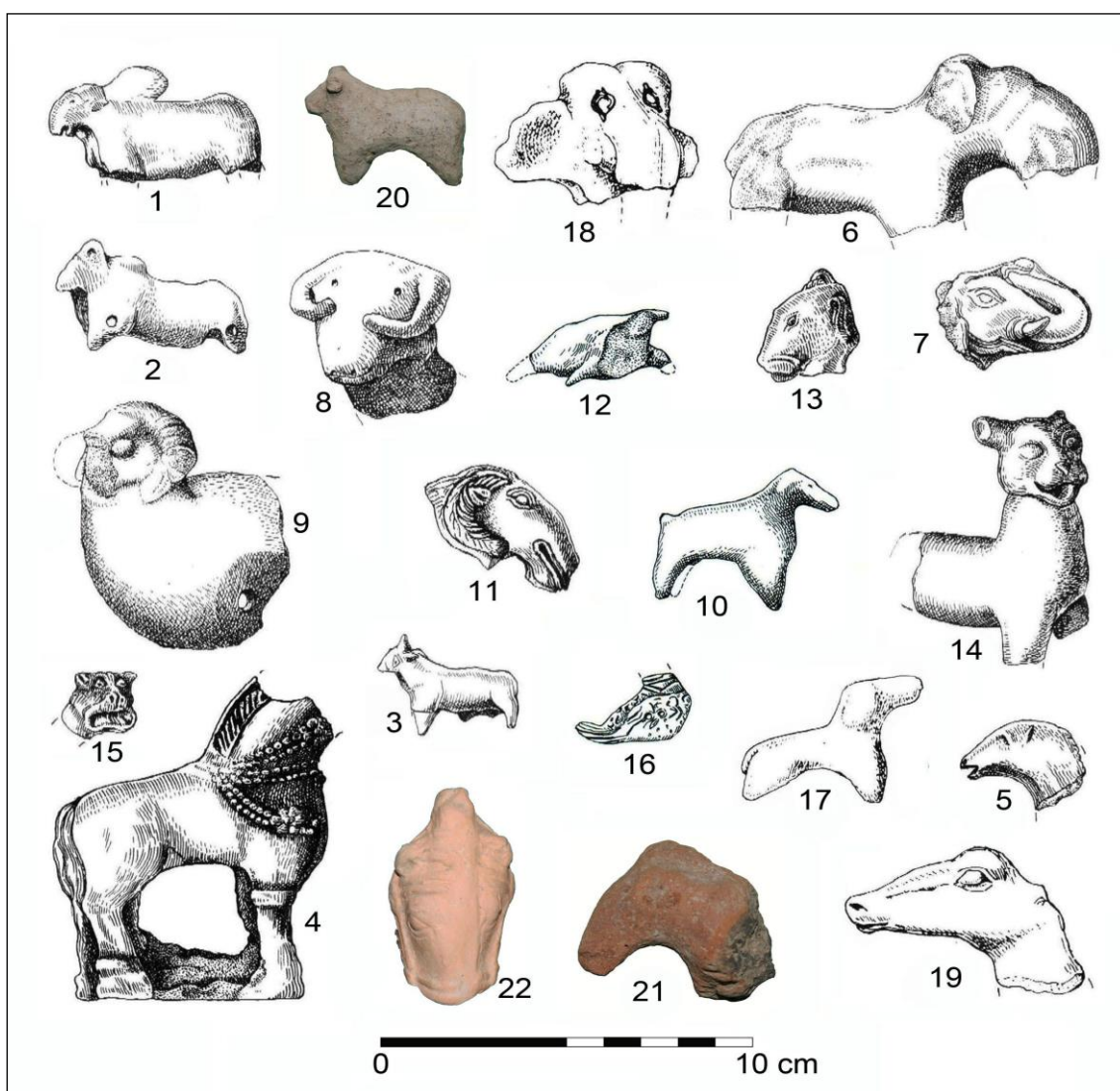


Figure 15: Animal figurines (1-2) bull, (3) cow, (4) horse, (5) pony, (6-7) elephant, (8-9) sheep, (10) dog, (11) buffalo, (12) tortoise, (13) pig, (14) lion, (15) tiger, (16) pigeon from Adam (After Nath 2016); (17) dog, (18) elephant, (19) horse from Pauni (After Nath 1998); (20) bull from Arni (Courtesy RTM, NU); (21) horse from Paunar (Courtesy RTM, NU) and (22) horse from Chandankheda (Courtesy MSDAM)

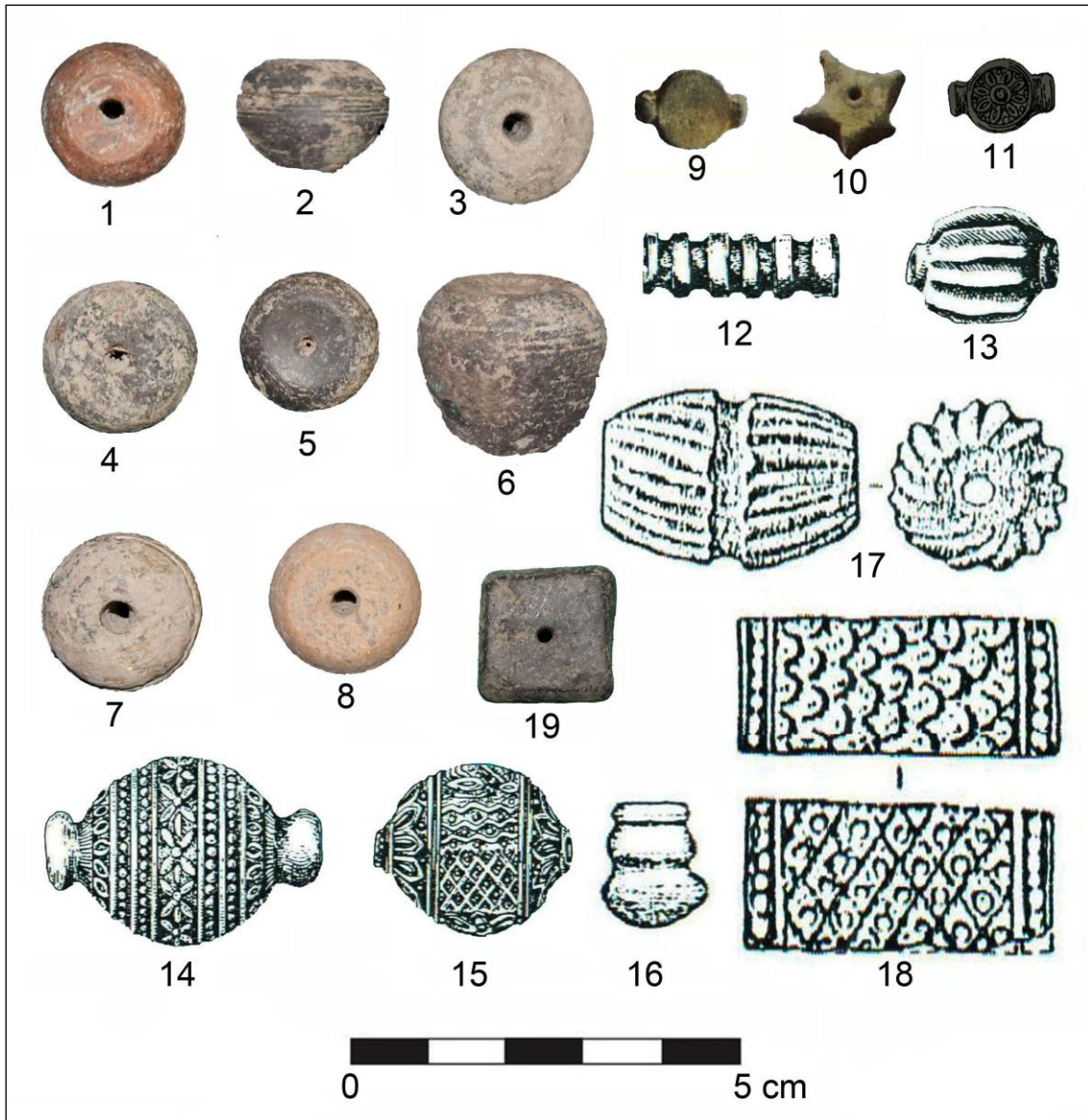


Figure 16: Various shapes of beads (1-8) arecanut beads from Chandankheda (Courtesy MSDAM); (9) collared and (10) star shape bead from Kholapur (After Deotare *et al.* 2013); (11) decorated collared bead, (12) segmented cylindrical bead, (13) barrel collared bead and (14-15) decorated moulded beads from Pauni (After Nath 1998); (16) barrel shape with multiple grooves, (17) barrel shape with central grooves and (18) moulded spacer bead from Adam (After Nath 2016); (19) rectangular bead from Arni (Courtesy RTM, NU), Phase III.

Apart from these, there are a number of terracotta seal and sealings and coin-moulds reported in this phase. All seal and sealings bear legend in Brahmi script. The languages used are Prakrit and Sanskrit. The legends run either clockwise or anticlockwise. Based on palaeography, these objects are placed under the time bracket of 1st c. BCE to 3rd c. CE. Through such seal and sealing, reported at Adam, we come to know about *Asika* Janapada (Figure 19). On the basis of these epigraphical data, we

get an evidence of donation of king or royal as well as common people. Besides these, there are no more details available on terracotta seal and sealings about common people; it also gives information of specific title of the royal person. There are a large number of tokens without legend found from Adam; these were probably used for trade or personal verification.

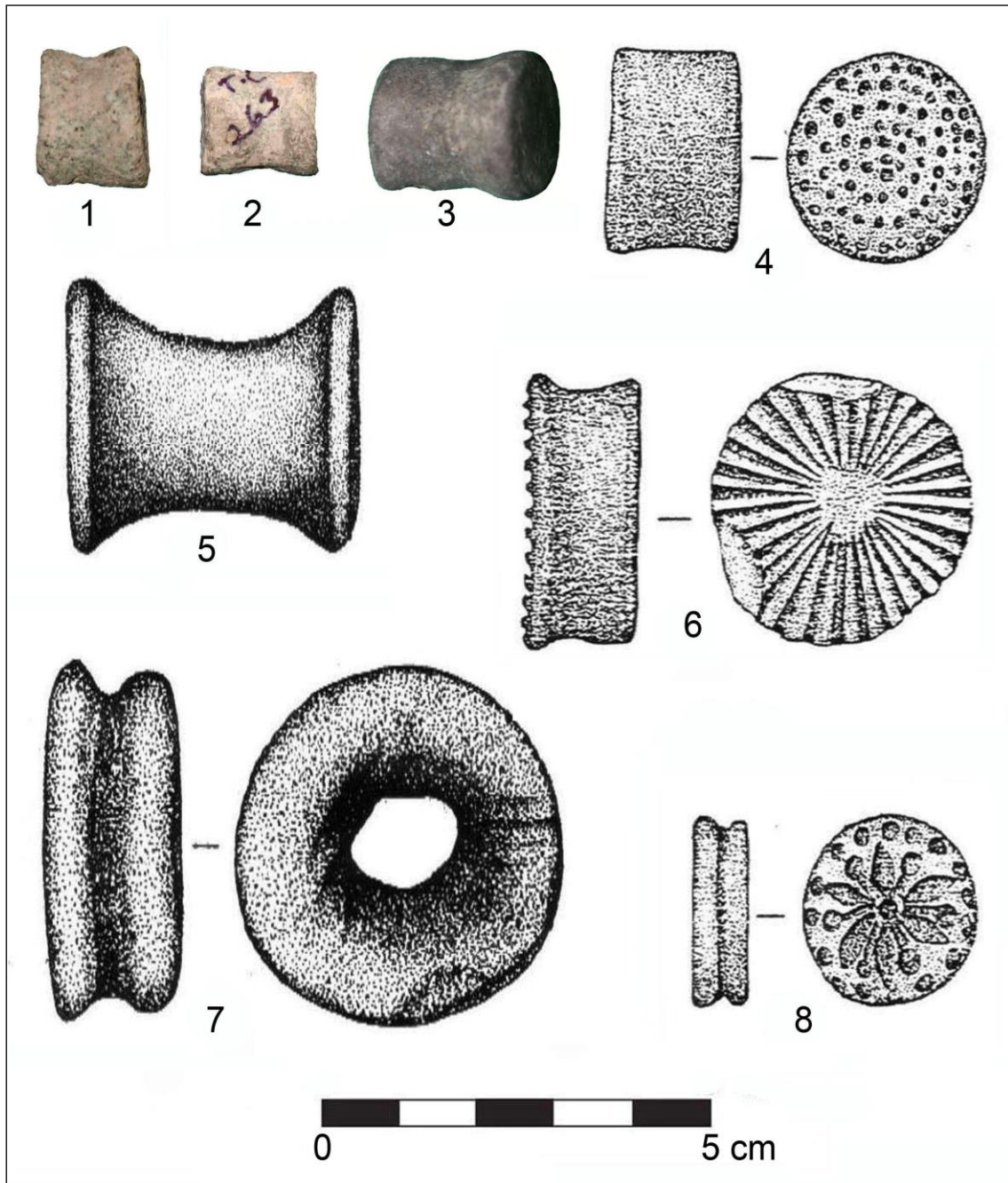


Figure 17: (1-2) Ear studs from Chandankheda (Courtesy MSDAM); (3) ear stud from Arni (Courtesy RTM, NU); (4) decorated ear stud, (5) *damaru* shape ear stud, (6) *tatankacakra* with pronounced rays, (7) ear stud with central hole, (8) ear stud with floral motif from Adam (After Nath 2016), Phase III

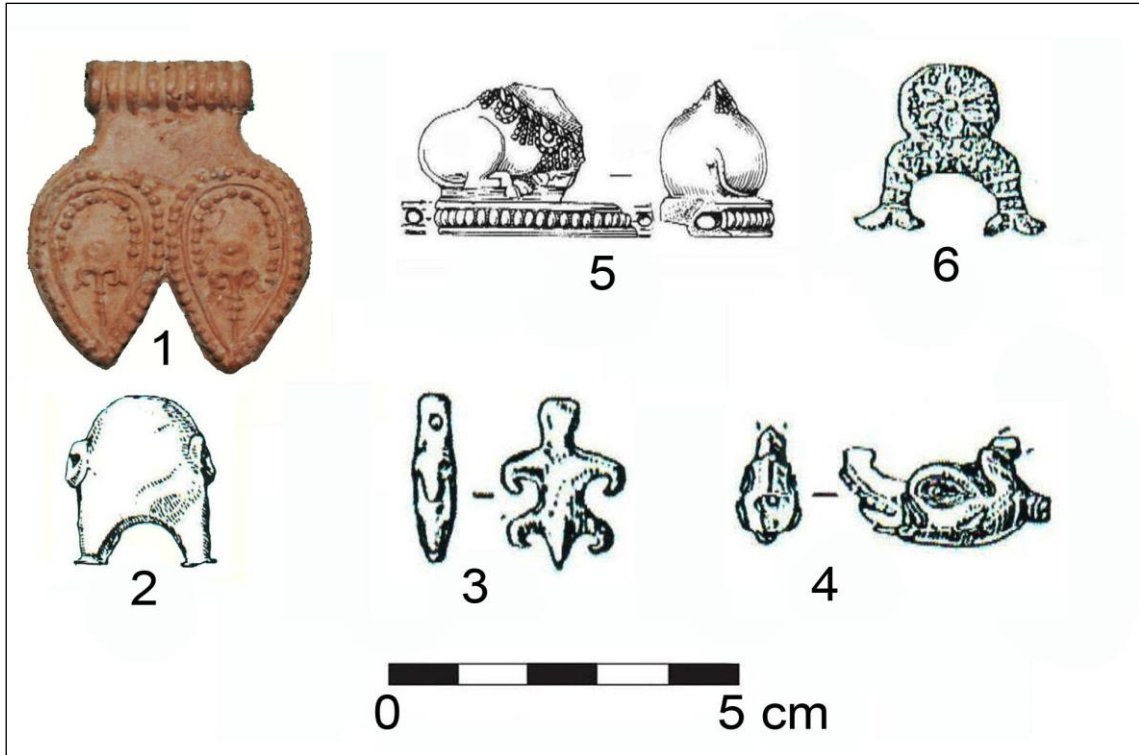


Figure 18: Pendants (1) leaf shape from Arni (Courtesy RTM, NU); (2) *nandipada* shape from Pauni (After Nath 1998); (3) *srivatsa* shape, (4) moulded *makaramukha* shape pendant from Adam (After Nath 2016); Amulets (5) *nandi* shape, (6) moulded *triratna* amulet from Adam (After Nath 2016), Phase III.

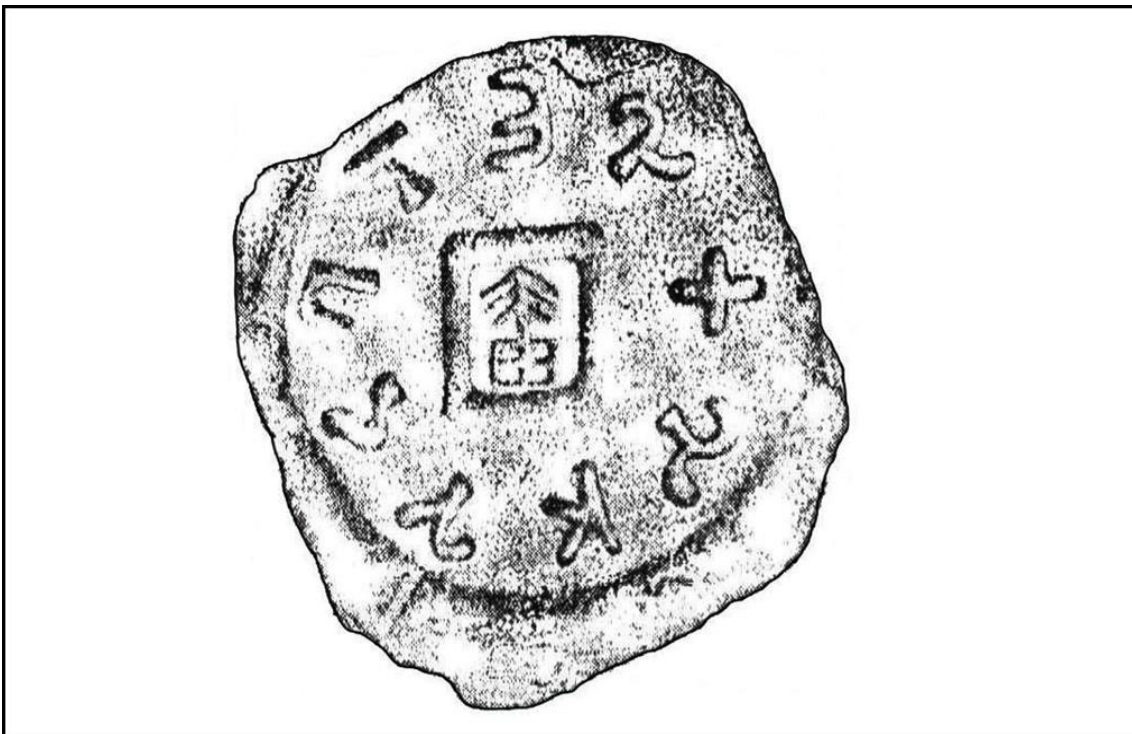


Figure 19: Sealing of Asika janapada (After Nath 2016), Phase III

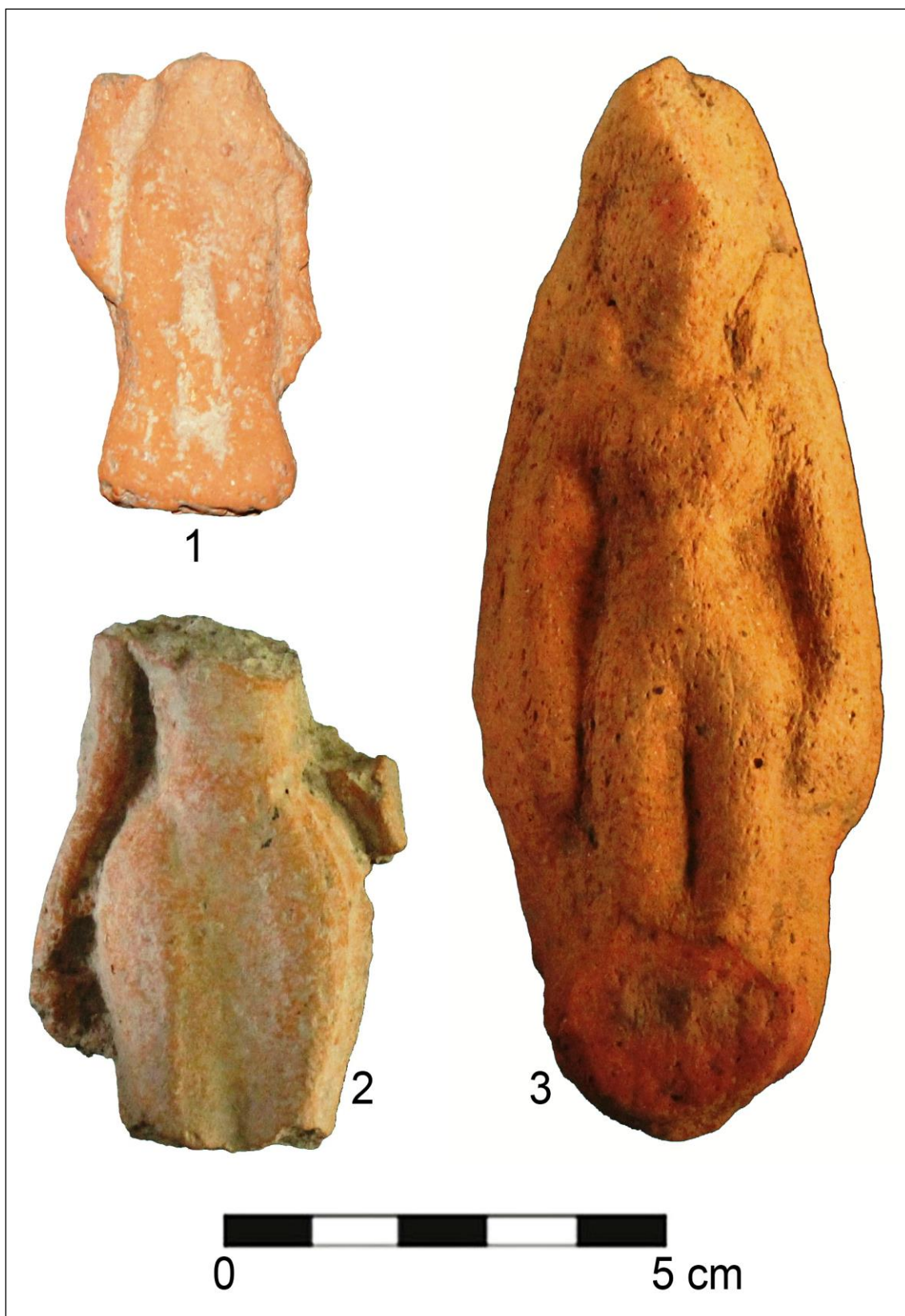


Figure 20: Unidentified figurine (1) from Washim; Female figurines, (2) from Washim, (3) from Mandhal (Courtesy MSDAM), Phase IV

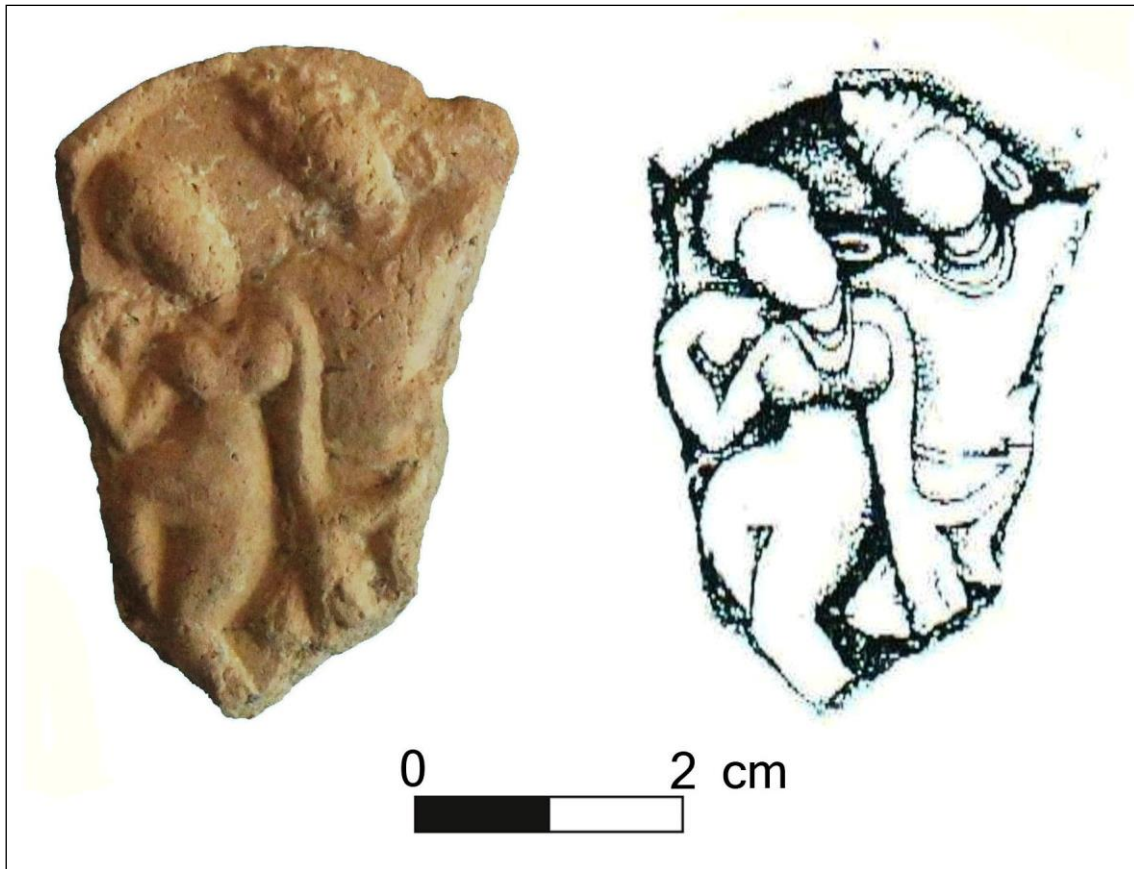


Figure 21: Picture and line drawing of *mithuna* or *dampati* plaque from Chandankheda (Courtesy MSDAM), Phase IV

Phase IV: c. Middle Third Century CE to c. Late Fifth Century CE: The phase IV in Vidarbha region witnessed the political dominance of Vakataka. After the downfall of the Satavahana dynasty, Vakataka emerged as one of the powerful rulers in Vidarbha region. They had the matrimonial alliance with Guptas who were powerful rulers during this period in North India. The terracotta art of Gupta period reached in its zenith. There are two distinct types of terracotta arts seen in this period. The first consists of molded small figurines and plaques used for individuals for household decoration or religious purposes. Whereas, second includes large-size figures and plaques used for the decoration of temples and monasteries (Desai 1986: 40). At the same time in Vidarbha, terracotta art is noticed in very crude and artistically stagnant. It is observed that some terracotta art objects of Vidarbha had stylistical and typological influence of Gupta terracotta art. But the difference can be seen in fabric. The Gupta terracotta fabric is fine. Whereas it is being examined that the Vakataka artist didn't pay much attention towards the preparation of clay. Because of this, the fabric is coarse and specimens appear crude. The reason could be related to the construction of temples which were made of stone and bricks. Bringing the soil from Ganga-Yamuna plain would have been economically expensive. Consequently, the artist and guilds of this period exploited the locally available material i.e. fine red

sandstone. This argument can be testified through the number of religious as well as secular sculptures made on red sand stone reported from Mandhal, Mansar, Paunar, and Nagardhan and can also be seen in Ramtek temples.

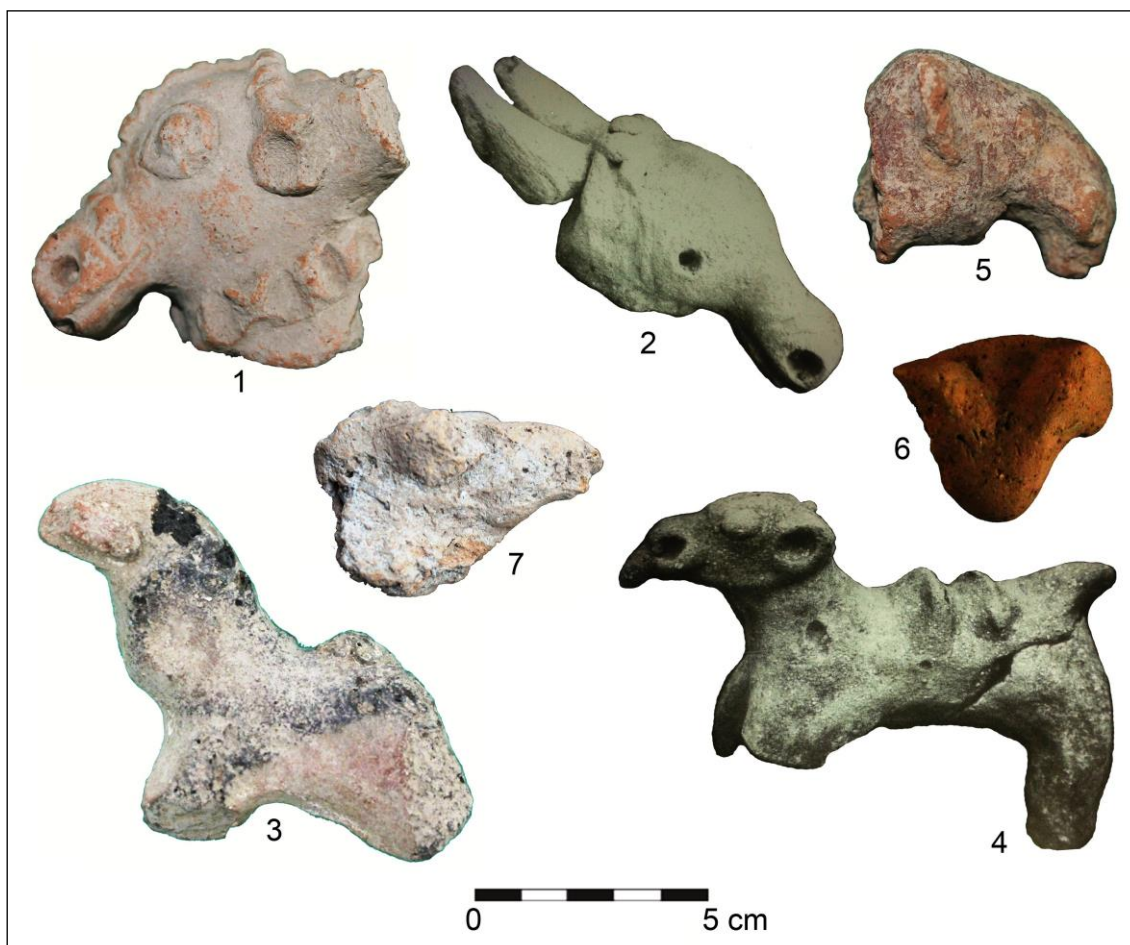


Figure 22: Bull (1) from Tharsa (Courtesy RTM, NU), (2) from Mansar (After Sharma & Joshi 2015); Horse (3) from Paunar (After Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), (4) from Mansar (After Sharma & Joshi 2015); Elephant (5) from Paunar (After Deo and Dhavalikar 1968); Ram (6) and Sparrow (7) from Washim, (Courtesy MSDAM), Phase IV

The terracotta art objects are found from various sites such as Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Pauni (Nath 1998), Mandhal, Arni, Tharsa and Washim (Pardhi 2017), Arambha (IAR 1991-92), Mansar (Sharma and Joshi 2015), Mahurjhari (Mohanty 2003b), Hamrapuri (Sali 1998) and Nagardhan (Sontakke *et al.* 2016; Pardhi *et al.* 2019). All these sites have sporadic occurrences except Washim, where large numbers of terracotta art objects are reported. A few fragments of human figurines do occur in excavation but it is very difficult to identify whether it is of a male or female (Figure 20.1). A female figurine with broken above portion from breast, hand and legs are also broken with narrow waist (Figure 20.2). There are some female figurines reported from Vakataka period. Some of handmade and few are moulded. All reported from Washim, Mandhal, Paunar and Nagara. A figurine reported at

Mandhal is single moulded, flat from the rear side and eroded (Figure 20.3). All are crude in appearance.



Figure 23: Beads (1-4) from Mandhal and (5) from Washim (Courtesy MSDAM); Pendants (6) from Washim (Courtesy MSDAM) and (10-11) from Paunar (After Deo and Dhavalikar 1968); Ear ornaments (7-9) from Washim (Courtesy MSDAM); Bangle (12) from Washim (Courtesy MSDAM), Phase IV.

There is a small *mithuna* plaque found on the surface from Chandankheda (Figure 21). The orientation of male and female can be compared with Ajanta couples or *dampati* sculptures. The headdress or crown of the male is comparable with Ajanta paintings and sculptures. Stylistically this plaque can be kept in Phase IV.

Animal/reptile figurines reported from this phase include bull, horse, ram, elephant, sparrow (Figure 22) and snake. Some of these are handmade and some partly wheel made and partly handmade. They are reported from the sites of Tharsa, Mansar, Washim and Mandhal. Some of the figurines are crude in appearance. From Tharsa

excavation, two bull heads are found. Both are handmade but the missing body was probably wheel made. They have applique chain around the neck and hump, on muzzle portion and above the forehead. The bull figurine from Tharsa and Mansar has perforation across the nose, suggesting it was made only for decoration purposes.

The ornamentation of animal figurines is very common right from Harappan, rural Chalcolithic and also Early Historic in Ganga valley. In Vidarbha, this tradition was seen right from Phase III, as surface finding of one specimen from Dahili (Pardhi and Vaidya 2016) has simple applique chain but when coming to Phase IV, the decoration of chains can be seen on animal figurines. The tradition of partly wheel made and partly handmade animal figurines starts from Phase III as a single evidence of horse is reported from Adam. But it was properly seen in Phase IV. The animal figurines especially bull of earlier phases is small and simple in nature but in Phase IV, it was fully or partly decorated. But horses of Phase IV are simple and handmade.

Ornamental objects were also reported from the excavations of this phase. They are mainly various shapes of beads, ear ornaments, pendants and bangles (Figure 23). Most of them are handmade; some of them are wheel made. Apart from them some of play objects includes hopscotches, balls and wheels are also reported from this phase.

Religious Objects

There are a number of ancient religious evidences in the form of stupa, sculptures, caves, temples and terracotta objects noticed in Vidarbha region. This indicated that people of this region followed certain religion. The people of Vidarbha followed various religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, and Vaishnavism. Along with these, there were also local beliefs practiced by Vidarbha people. There are number of religious objects which are reported from the various excavation of Vidarbha region. Among these objects, one of the significant indicators is the presence of terracotta objects.

The terracotta religious objects suggest worshiping of mother goddess, *Gajalakshmi*, *Ganesh*, *yaksha* figurines and also votive offerings in the form of tanks. The lamps might have been used for lighting shrine. Along with these, there are some objects also found which had some religious symbolic importance. They are mainly *srivatsa*, *triratna* and *ankusha*. Some of the seal and sealings give either direct reference of religious name or symbols.

The occurrence of mother goddess is a worldwide phenomenon and reported from various sites of different countries. During the pre-historic period, man worshiped mother goddess; during Proto-historic and Early historic period a large number of terracotta mother goddess was made which was found in numerous excavations throughout India. According to scholars, the purpose of these terracotta figurines was not confined only for the amusement of children but it could have some relation with the cult-worship (Verma 1986: 61; Srivastava 1996: 68; Nagar 2008: 136). The scholars

have tried to trace the genesis of the mother goddess cited in early literary tradition. There are various names of primordial mother mentioned such as *Aditi*, *Prithvi*, *Vac* and others (Dhavalikar 1977: 17).

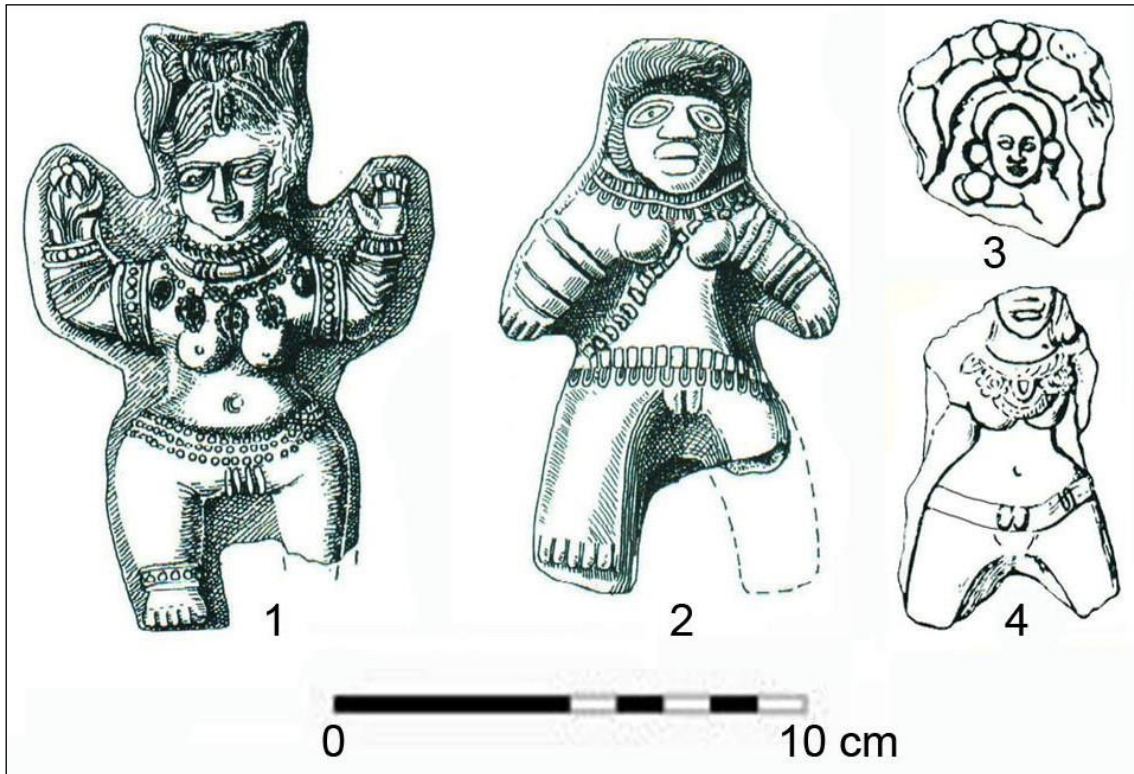


Figure 24: Mother goddesses (1-2) from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016); (3-4) from Pauni (After Nath 1998), Phase II-III

To identify the mother goddess, scholars have fixed some parameters. According to scholars, the artist who made these clay specimens definitely attempted to give expression to a formula comprising certain well-defined features must be readily conceded. The features must be bird or animal like face as well as human face, prominent breasts, broad hips, deep navel, triple-rosette head-dress, collar, applique necklace, heavy ornaments and conspicuous girdle, female figurine associated with a child and some other aspects like ageless archaic patterns (Agrawala 1985: 3; Dhavalikar 1977; Srivastava 1996: 69; Nagar 2008). Some of the clay figurines carry an ageless and traditional meaning and which doesn't change their shape to be properly understood and used by generations to generations (Kramrisch 1939: 92).

From Vidarbha region, there are some decorated as well as ageless archaic figurine of mother goddess reported from the excavated sites of Adam (Nath 2016), Pauni (Nath 1998) (Figure 24) and Arni (Pardhi 2017). There are other interesting evidences of emersion of deity in the water after performance of certain rituals reported at the site of Adam. During the clearance of the well, a couple of right and left portion of legs below knee of mother goddess are recovered (Nath 2016: 410). This evidence indicates that

the people of Vidarbha region were well aware with the worship of mother goddess. It is testified through the archaeological evidence where they used to perform the rituals before the emersion of the deity in water. Similar type of evidence earlier reported from water tank of Sringaverapura excavation (Lal 1993: 108). This age-old tradition is still continuing in across the country.

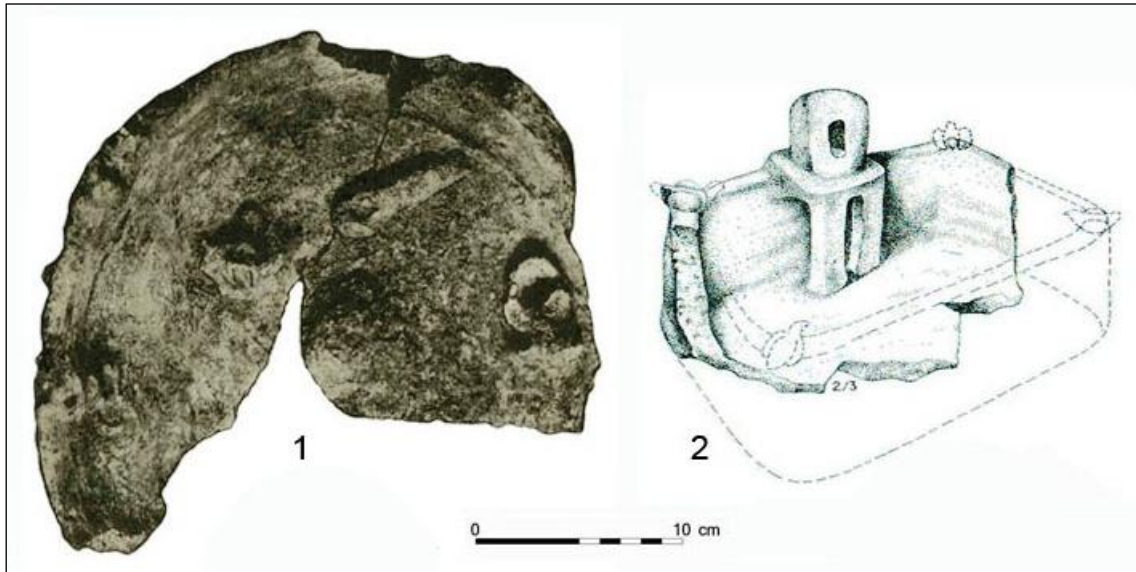


Figure 25: Votive tanks (1) circular from Paunar (After Deo and Dhavalikar 1968); (2) Rectangular from Adam, (After Nath 2016), Phase III

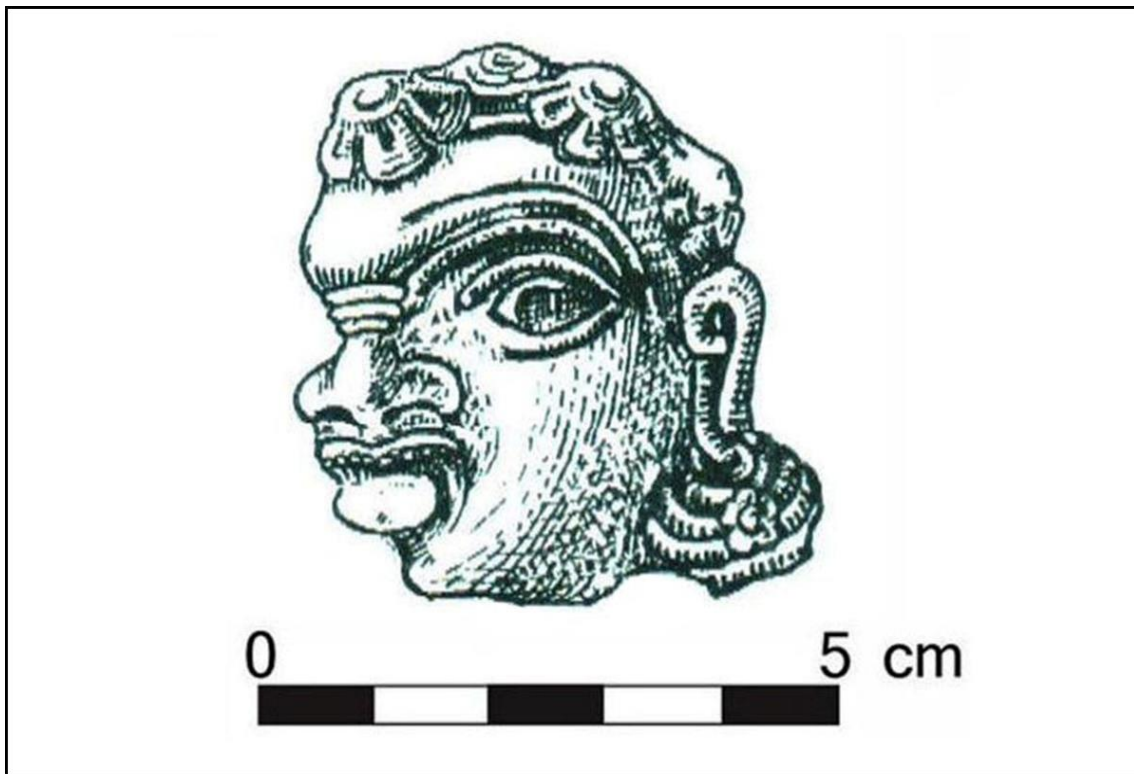


Figure 26: Yaksha figurine from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016)



Figure 27: Snake figurine from Mandhal, Phase IV (Courtesy MSDAM)

The occurrence of *Gajalakshmi* in applique form on storage jar of grains indicates the cult of fertility. There must be a certain notion behind this practice. She is nothing but the form of *Shri-lakshmi*, continuously depicted in stone art as well as terracotta art. She is a consort of Lord Vishnu one of the powerful gods of the Hindu Trinity. Due to this, later on she is respected by Indians of all religious creeds. She is also considered as one of the goddesses of beauty and good fortune or luck, which brings in blissful prosperity in abundance (Nagar 2008: 24). This belief pattern was familiar to all over the country. Because of said belief patterns Vidarbha people also worshiped her. And the evidence of *Gajalakshmi* reported at Adam (Nath 2016) in the form of applied on grain storage jar indicates their strong faith associated with her.

Votive tanks itself indicates as offering objects. During the time of 2nd-1st c. BCE, this religious object is abundantly noticed in India and continued till 2nd-3rd c. CE. It is basically a tank, used for votive offering purpose along with associated rituals. However, even today in West Bengal similar kind of miniature tanks are dedicated

under the name of *Yama-Pukur-Vrata* observed by maidens (Dhavalikar 1977: 37; Margabandhu 1985: 95; Nagar 2008: 130-131; Nath 1998a). The *Yama* is a God of death suggesting a hoary past of the ritual which may be derived from the above inferences that the rituals had an indigenous origin (Nath 2016: 455).

Similarly, earlier J. H. Marshall (1915) suggested that the votive tanks have been occasionally found together with idols which are of purely Indian type. It is made in various shape and sizes and reported from various early historic sites in India in general and Vidarbha in particular. In Vidarbha region, votive tanks (Figure 25) were found in various excavated site such as Adam (Nath 2016: 458-459), Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968: 108), Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Pauni (Nath 1998: 81), Pachkheri (IAR 1992-93) and Kholapur (Deotare *et al.* 2012; 2013). Along with excavation, they are also found during surface exploration at Chandankheda (Pardhi 2017) and Deulgaon-Raja (IAR 1981-82). They are varying in shape, mostly rectangular; some of squarish and round.

The *yaksha* cult was a folk religion of the widest distribution which has continued from the R̥gvedic times, and was accepted as much by the Buddhist, Jainas and Brahmanis. The belief is that *yaksha* reside in sacred trees located outskirts of villages or near the burial grounds. The villagers often came to hang garlands on the branches of the tree to gain the favors of the *yakshas*. They also sprinkled the trunk with sugared water, milk and honey. In true sense, *yakshas* played the part of supporters in all kinds of situation where their attitude is one of friendly service (Sinha 1983: 62-64). Wealth and immortality or long life was the two human factors which made *yaksha* worship of irresistible appeal to the folk mind. Religion, literature and art all testify to the importance of this ancient cult (Agrawala 1965: 118).

According to V. S. Agrawala (1965: 118), it is certain that the tradition of folk art had an independent style of greater vitality than even the court art of the Mauryan times. Also stone images of *yakshas* may belong to the fourth-third centuries but iconographic idiom was of much greater antiquity, and rendered through the medium of clay, a feature surviving to our own times. We find two equally strong traditions in regard to *yaksha* images, viz. an iconic form continuing up to now and the dominant sized images (Sinha 1983: 68). Perhaps no other cult is as ancient, widespread and deeply ingrained in the lives of the people as the *yaksha* cult (Agrawala 1965: 114). *Yaksha* cult is more mysterious and more powerful than the cult of the Naga. Some time they appear as a *dwarapalas* in the Buddhist monuments. In Jaina text, they are often referred to as *Devas*. Mathura was one of the important centers of *yaksha* worship. A large number of *yaksha* images are reported from Mathura (Sinha 1983: 63, 71-73).

The occurrence of *yaksha* in terracotta object shows its wider popularity among the Indian society during Early Historic period. Initially, it was considered a village god who protected the villagers from bad spirits. However, later on, it even started fining space in the urban centers of north India. As stated above, it was considered a semi-god by all religions in India. The representation of *yaksha* in stone sculptural tradition

is very common but rarely noticed in terracotta art. From Vidarbha, a single fragmentary specimen of *yaksha* figurine is reported from Adam (Figure 26). This might be made for symbolic worship or performing a certain ritual.

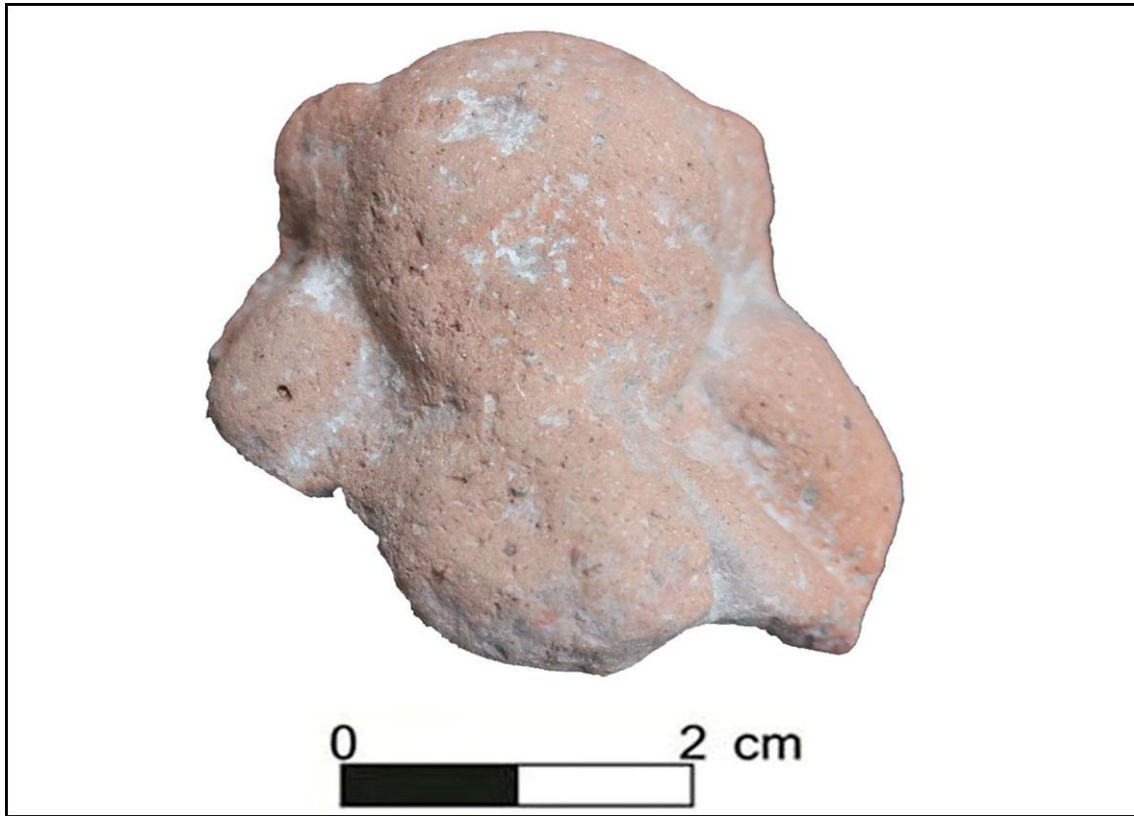


Figure 28: Ganesh figurine from Washim, Phase IV (Courtesy MSDAM)

Serpant worship is one of the most ancient forms of religion in India. The *naga panchami* is a famous festival of serpent worship observed throughout the whole country. It is believed that serpent worship is especially resorted for prosperity and offspring's. It has prominent place in literature, folk lore and art of India. It is commonly seen in all religion viz. Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanic. There is a popular belief that dropping off the skin by the serpents symbolizes the liberating itself from the cycle of rebirths. During the time of Kushan, Mathura was one of the important centers of *naga* worship (Sinha 1983: 56-61).

However, in Vidarbha, *naga* for the first time is reported in the terracotta object in Phase IV and can be assigned to Vakataka period. There are two small folded snake figurines found from Mandhal in terracotta (Figure 27) as well as in stone. It is difficult to understand the main purpose of this figurine as a serpent god or goddess or any symbolic representation.

The representations of *srivatsa*, *triratna*, and *ankusha* are observed in the form of ornamentation of objects either on pendant or amulet of divine and semi-divine images. During the Early Historic period, these symbols frequently appeared on stone

images of Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical religious as well as secular images of stone and terracotta as part of ornamentation. It is also noticed on number of Buddhist stupa and cave sites (Cunningham 1879; Srivastava 1979; Margabandhu 1985; Bhadouria 1995; Deo 2000; Sengupta *et al.* 2007; Bautze 1995). A single specimen of *srivatsa* is reported from Adam in a form of pendant.

It is interesting to note that in Vidarbha most of the *triratna* pendant or amulets are reported from Adam and Bhon. Both are associated with Buddhist stupa sites. Apart from these, stupa at Pauni has a depiction of *triratna* seen on railing. It was also noticed in the form of a Buddhist worshipping plaque made in red-sand stone associated with other motifs noticed at Chandankheda which is profusely decorated (Meshram 2014: 23-24). The association of *triratna* mainly with Buddhist sites suggests that during Phase II and Phase III (2nd c. BCE to 2nd c. CE) in Vidarbha, Buddhism was a prominent religion. It is also depicted on double leaf pendant recovered from Arni (Pardhi 2017) and Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968) which indicates its prominent auspiciousness. This symbol was not only produced in the form of an object but also depicted as stamp on pottery which is reported from the sites of Adam (Nath 2016) and Pachkheri (IAR 1992-93: 70). The depictions of *triratna* on ceramics suggest that the importance of the same was deeply rooted in the cultural tradition of the Vidarbha.

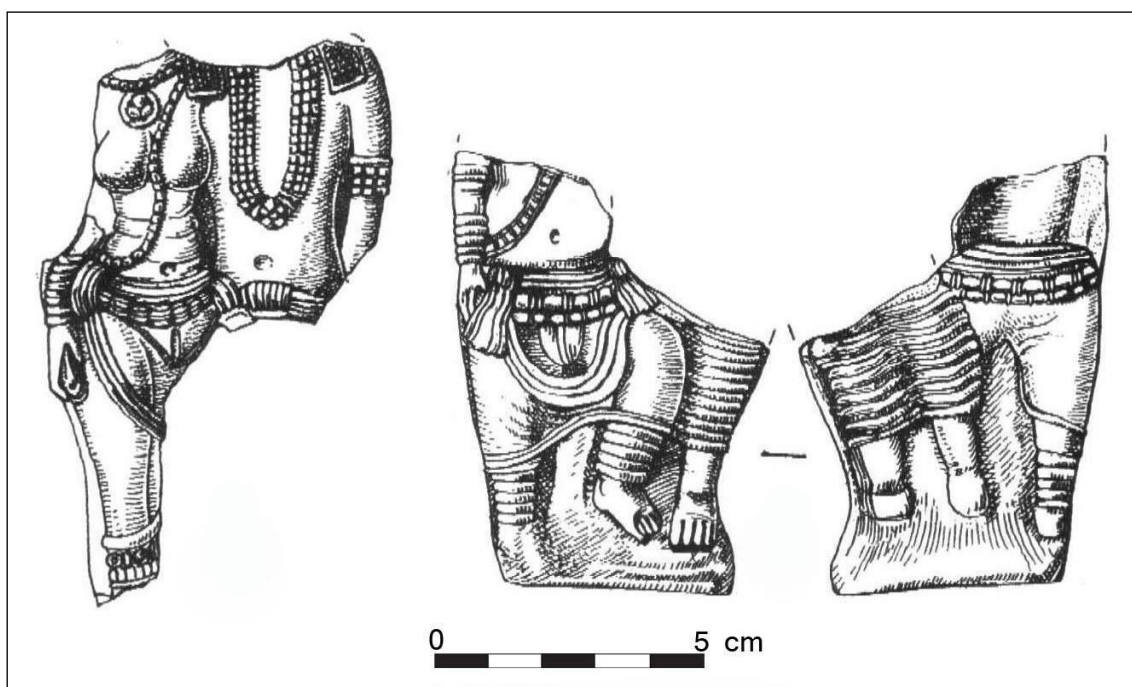


Figure 29: *Mithuna* or *dampati* plaques from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016)

Ankusha is a sacred symbol venerated in Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism. It also can have non-religious affinity. The object is familiar to the Indian society as elephant-goat (Deo 2000). A single specimen has been reported from Kaundinyapura of Vidarbha (Dikshit 1968). There are a number of religious and secular terracotta single plaques of females depicting *ankusha* as elaborated hairpins reported from West Bengal

and Uttar Pradesh. The *ankusha* has a religious symbolic importance. At the same time, it was also used as an ornamental object.

Due to religious importance or auspicious characteristic of these symbols, the demand from the society might have increased. To fulfill the demand, artists had begun to make it in the clay to produce the same in more quantity. This may be a reason that they had applied the double mould technique. The careful observation of the objects suggests that in earlier phase these symbols were used as fortune purpose and later as symbol of fashion. In Early Historic period these auspicious symbols are spread all over India which is reflected in the contemporary art, architectures and material cultural of that same period.

Apart from these, there are a number of seal and sealings that are reported from excavation. Among all, some of them have depiction of religious symbols as well as name of individuals. All reported seal and sealings can be dated between 2nd c. BCE to 5th-6th c. CE. Hence these can be placed from Phase-II to Phase-IV. Seal and sealings are important source to know the religious, social, political as well as economical life of any region. It is considered as one of the most authentic markers of ancient period (Thaplyal 1972).

A seal found on surface at Paunar has a name which reads '*nama purushottama*'. *Purushottama* is one of the names of Lord Vishnu. Therefore, it seems that the seal has some religious importance and can be considered Pre-Vakataka in Vidarbha with an existence of Vishnu cult (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968). Apart from this, there is a sealing reported from Adam which has depiction of *Sankha* and *chakra* (Nath 2016). The *Sankha* and *chakra* are the attribute of Lord Vishnu make the above statement precise. These are the important seals to understand the early phase of Vaisnavism. Paleographically, these seals are as early as 1st c. CE. Apart from these, there are a number of individuals issued as a token, having a depiction of bulls along with various auspicious symbols. These auspicious symbols include *swastika*, triangle headed standard, *srivatsa* and *triratna*. The depictions of bulls and auspicious symbols have some religious significance.

From the excavation at Kaundinyapura, a seal is reported which bears a legend '*dhanapatisa*'. Along with this, there are other motifs depicted on it. It has a depiction of a majestic cock in aggressive posture. Cock is an important attribute of 'Skanda'. The deity Skanda is referred to as the god Kartikeya who is the son of Lord Shiva. It also has a depiction of *trishula*, one of the important attributes of Lord Shiva. The depiction of *trishula* on seal suggests that this seal has religious importance and can be associated with Shaivism. Palaeography of the inscription can be placed in 2nd c. CE Brahmi letters (Dikshit 1968).

There is a sealing found from Mansar having a legend of *Pravareshvarasya* which means it belongs to god *Pravareshvara*. According to Ajay Mitra Shastri (2002: 176), this might be attached to some consignment sent from the shrine of god *Pravereshvara*. The word

Pravereshvara, might have been addressed here to Shiva, a deity of Paunar of Wardha district, Maharashtra (Shastri 2002: 176). If we consider the present seal addresses to Lord Shiva, then it can be said that before the reign of Vakataka, Shaivism was existing in Vidarbha. To make this argument stronger, one can look at other evidences noticed in the same region. At Adam, one sealing of *Mahasenapati* has been reported which has a depiction of three auspicious symbols viz. twelve spoked *chakras* in the upper part, squatting *vrishabha* in center and *Shankha* on the lower portion. These symbols are perhaps indicating the religio-political status of *Mahasenapati* Janasiri (Nath 2016). The depiction of *nandi* or *vrishabha* is a cognizance of Lord Shiva whereas *Shankha* and *chakra* are the attributes of lord Vishnu. It can be said that the *Mahasenapati* Janasiri was follower of both the religious tradition or he may have been trying to unify them through the symbolic representation at one place. It can also be called as a synchronization of Shiva and Vishnu in symbolic form (Nath 2016).

Along with these, a small *Ganesh* figurine is also reported from Washim (Fig. 28). The earliest depiction of *Ganesh* figurine in terracotta object is reported from Pal village of Aurangabad district of Maharashtra and dated between 1st and 2nd c. CE (Kumar 2004-05: 89-91). Before that the evidence comes from Akra an ancient site located in the North-West Frontier Province in present Pakistan which is on a bas-relief and can be dated to 2nd c. BCE (Dhavalikar 1997: 49-68; Nagar 2008: 84). *Ganesh* is one of the most popular and widely worshipped deities. He is considered as the remover of obstacles and his grace is the prerequisite for success in all undertakings. He is regarded as the eldest son of Shiva and *Parvati*. *Ganesh* is the Hindu god of prudence and is represented with an elephant's head. Elephant is a symbol of sagacity (Sinha 1983: 151-153).

There are a number of evidences related to the Shaivism from various excavations of Vidarbha region. They are mainly temples and loose sculptures (Mansar, Mandhal and Nagara), *Ganesh* figurine (Washim) and some seal and sealings related to Lord Shiva found from Mansar. All belong to 4th-5th c. CE of Vakataka period. Above evidences clearly indicate that Vakataka rulers were follower of Shaivism and this religion was spread over the Vidarbha.

Social Conditions

Terracotta art is one of the important sources to understand the social condition of the ancient as well as contemporary culture of any society. During the ancient time, the fashion which were familiar in that time and living pattern of the people of all strata of society were depicted by artists in the form of clay art. There are a number of Early Historic sites excavated all over India and a large amount of terracotta art objects are recovered especially in Ganga-Yamuna doab of north India. Along with these, Vidarbha region has also yielded a number of terracotta art objects from the excavations of Early Historic period. On the basis of dresses, ornaments, playing objects and other objects, one can easily postulate the social life of early historic people of Vidarbha region.

All the human figurines of male, female and also the plaque have shown three types of dress patterns in Vidarbha region. In first type, human figurines are completely bare or having no dress. In second, the figurines have bare upper body while the lower body was clothed, and in the third type, the figurines are fully clothed. All above types may represent three classes of people living in the society. Along with these, it also reveals changes in art which can be noticed first by the dress, head dress, hair arrangement and also ornaments (forehead and ear ornaments, necklace, wristlet, armlets, girdle, bangles and anklets). Dresses or costumes can be called the barometer of the changing fashions of a society. It is one of the unique inventions of human being marching towards civilization and therefore its importance can never be overemphasized (Dhavalikar 1977). The dress includes lower and upper garments whereas coiffure and head-dresses are seen in various types.

During Phase I, human figurines are reported from the site of Adam only. All male figurines of Adam are bare and none of them have dress. All are crude in workmanship. Only one male figurine has applique chain or necklace across the drooping shoulder. The contrast can be seen between Vidarbha terracotta and north Indian terracotta art of human figurines. In north India, human figurines are of archaic nature, fine round body with various dresses and ornamented male figurines are reported. However, in Vidarbha all are found in archaic nature without any beautification.

However, the situation is little different as far as female figurines are concerned. All female figurines are archaic in nature. There is no dress or headdress seen but most of these have applique ornamentation. Some of the female figurines are decorated with simple or designed applique necklace, girdle, armlet and wristlet. Few female figurines are simple in nature. The human figurines of this period are very simple because this was the initial period of early historic Vidarbha. The urbanization was just in process and the people were living village life. The cities and towns cultures were yet to begin in this Phase.

In Phase II, the remains of human figurines are very less. There are a total of three male figurines reported; they all are handmade and without any dress and decoration except one from Tharsa which has a band like decoration on head. But all are in archaic nature. The female figurines are only two in numbers; one is handmade, found from Arni; it is simple and crude in appearance. The other female figurine is from Pauni having a head and below portion from the knees is missing; fully decorated with closed beaded *kanthahara* and lotus shaped wristlet. She wears a broad plaited scarf which covers both the shoulders and lower garment probably a *sari*. The scarf is so long that she holds the folds in her right hand. It is doubtful whether she wear upper garment.

It is interesting to note here that in this phase for the first time one *mithuna* plaque and another *Gajalakshmi* figure are found which are comparable to Shunga idioms of north India. The fragment of *mithuna* plaque found from Pauni has only female counterpart

remaining, she wears elaborate coiffure which is almost similar with those found in the Shunga period in north India. The present specimen is also found from Shunga period at Pauni. She also wears armlets; wristlets and long necklace all are simple in nature. During the time of Shunga period in north India, *Gajalakshmi* was more popular and often depicted in stone and terracotta art. Especially, terracotta plaques of *Gajalakshmi* are found more from Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The *Gajalakshmi* is considered as one of the auspicious goddesses and frequently depicted in terracottas. From Vidarbha, a single applique *Gajalakshmi* figurine is found from grain storage jar from Adam. She is wearing a lower garment of *sari* and the upper garment is not clear. She wears two round ear ornaments and two thick anklets. The girdle and bangles are shown with incised lines. There are remains of necklace but is not clear. Hair style is shown through incised lines, parted in two sides from centre.

Likewise, there are three human shaped amulets recovered from Bhon. The use of human in pendant and amulets may be auspicious and worn as fashion. The warrior is wearing a short *dhoti* as a lower garment whereas the upper garment is in doubt. His *dhoti* appears to be tied with girdle. The folds of *dhoti* are shown very beautifully. His head is missing. He has worn armlet in his right arm. A *yaksha* amulet figure is wearing a skirt like lower garments and tunic (*kurta*) as upper garment which folds near the wrist of both hands. He is wearing a beaded necklace and whole mass of hair falls freely over his back.

A beautiful double moulded terracotta amulet of centaur (Therianthropomorphic) or *kinnara-mithuna* is found from Bhon. It has a composite body of animal in seating posture and face of a torso of female (head missing) with male rider. Female wears beaded necklace and lower waistline is with a beaded girdle. Probably the depiction of the girdle is used to serve as securing belt of the garment. The male rider is wearing a lower cloth probably a *dhoti* that is secured around the waist by broad *kamarabandha*. Whether he wears upper garments is in doubt. Along with this, he also wears round ear ornaments and the necklace.

The wig-like head-dress appears of Roman origin. It indicates that due to Indo-Roman trade activities, the Roman art influenced the Indian art which is also reflected in terracotta art. There are various decorated double moulded terracotta beads found from Bhon which are frequently depicted in the stupa art of Bharhut, Sanchi and other stone art. On the basis of artistic representation of terracotta art, one can understand that in this period the social life of the people was better than the earlier period.

Phase III was one of the most important phase of Vidarbha region mainly due to political stability and Indo-Roman trade which flourished during this Phase. There are a number of fortified towns which developed and gained prosperity resulting in the development of the number of craftsmanship, and the source of earning increased. The living standard of the people rose which is reflected from the terracotta art objects of this phase. During the time of Satavahana, a new technique was introduced in Deccan region which is called double mould. The artist of this region made round beautiful

double moulded terracotta human as well as animal figurines. The kaolin (pure clay) is used for making terracotta art objects. The ornamentation, dress pattern as well as hair style and coiffure were totally different than what we seen in earlier phase. The upper body part of most of the human figurines is bare. Few male figurines are shown with lower garment of *dhoti*. There are few female figurines from Pauni which has covering of head with bigger scarf from rear side. The scarf goes from top of the head to below up till the feet. Front upper and lower portion are bare, and have no evidence of cloth. The human figurines of this period are more sophisticated, decorated and highly ornamented.

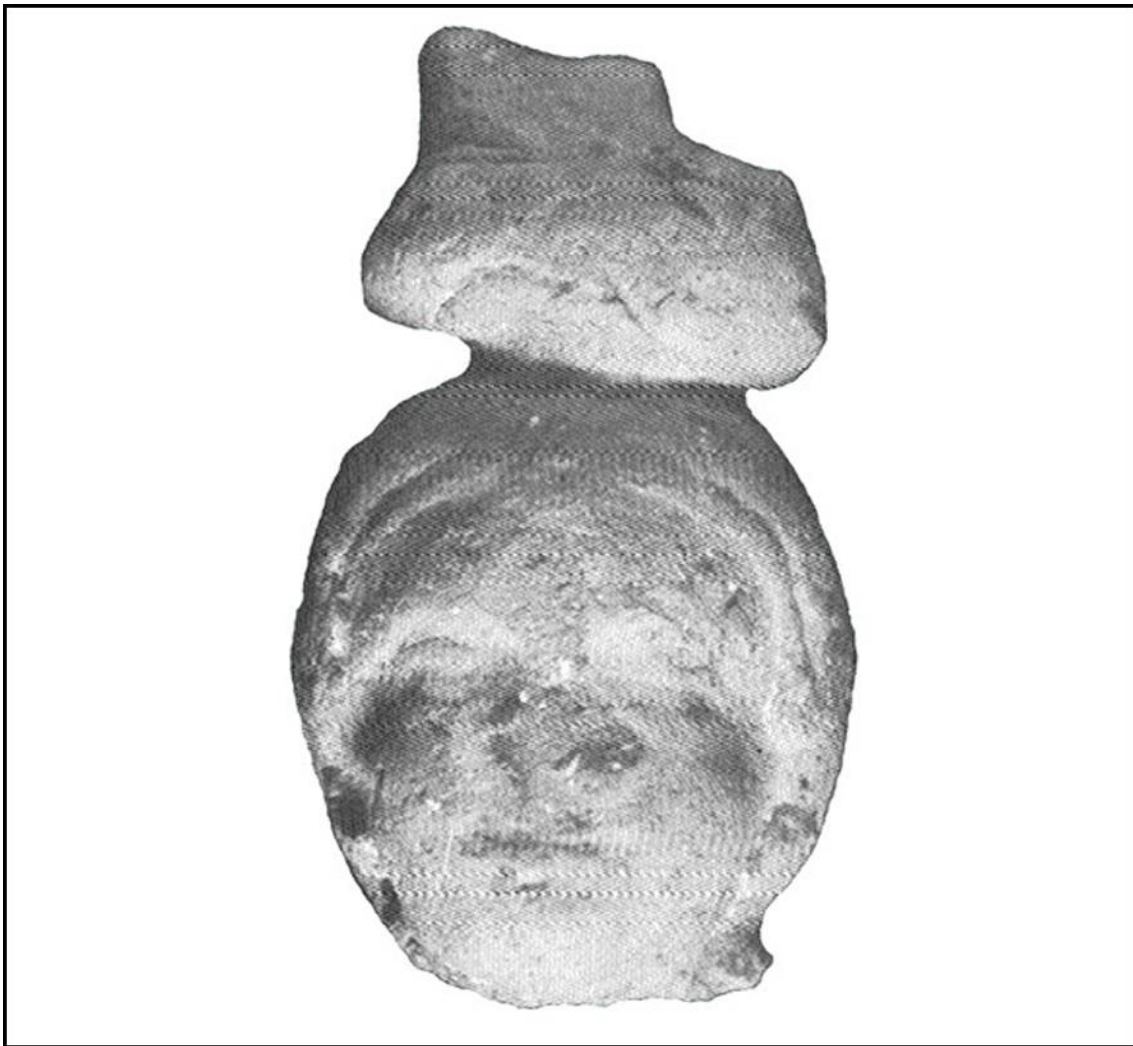


Figure 30: Female head found from Mahurjhari, Phase IV (After Mohanty 2003b)

Some of male heads found from Adam have Graeco-Roman influence. The facial features have curly hair arranged over the forehead, wide open eyes with large pupils. The noses are long and blunt. Lips parted and chin round. Due to the Indo-Roman contact Indian artist depicted Graeco-Roman features in the terracotta art. Terracotta human figurines of this phase are found from Adam, Pauni, Tharsa, Mansar, Kahali-

Bramhapuri and Kholapur. Most of the male-female figurines are found in the form of double moulded heads. The male headdresses are more elaborated. The hairs are coiled up on the top of the head into projecting knot. The turban is seen tied over the forehead with jewel setting on either side. Some of the male hair are coiled and tied into a bun on the left fastened by band of pearl strings bound intermittently by single or double stranded strings. There is one male head from Pauni wearing closely fitted headdress whereas another has *jata-mukuta* type of broad coiffure. Another has simple knot of hair at the top, fastened by a five tiered turban, tied to a knot on the right side. A single specimen has remains of beaded necklace and bejeweled ear ornament.

Female figurines are more decorated than male figurines. The coiffures of females are elaborated. One female has hair coiled up on the top and some hair are let loose at the back. She wears a three-tiered pearl diadem; fastened by an oblong two-tiered ornate buckle at the back of the head, bedecked with rosettes. Another has ornamental headdress having a broad forehead band bedecked with a crest on the left and a fan shaped projection on the top of the head. It is embellished with pearl strings, the middle one continues down till the forehead to suspend a *lalatika*. Some of the figurines have simple coiffure form of a bun over the forehead fastened at the base by a ribbon and *chudamani* suspended by beaded band/string either single or more on the forehead at the centre. Some of them have rosette like jewel set in the centre. Coiffure of two of female figurines are parted in two sides and centre embellished with a jewel. Another female figurine has low hair tied bun in the centre a jewel is bedecked by two pearl bands over the forehead along with another jewel on the left side. There is single female figurine from Pauni which has elaborated coiffure of flower motifs with two jewels on either side. She has three tattoo-marks on the centre of the forehead. They wear ear ornament but a very few of them are present. One has disc-like pearl earrings and necklace of *kanthahara* with an amulet.

Apart from these, there are three other female figurines from Pauni having complete coiled armlets, bracelets, and thick round bangles. They have necklaces of beaded *kanthahara*. Girdle is of beaded as well as simple belt form are worn. There are a few human fragments having depiction of cross belt running across the right shoulders from Adam and Pauni. This could be a sacred thread because there is another female figurine found on surface from Pauni having sacred thread running across the left shoulder. She wears decorated armlets, ear ornaments and necklaces. These depictions of head dresses, coiffure, and ornaments are very much common in Satavahana terracotta human figurines especially those made of kaolin.

Along with these, male and female parts are found in the form of fragments which are also adorned with various ornaments. Some of figurines have single or double string necklaces of pearls or bedecked with lotus medallion or without. They have *upavita* or sacred thread across the left shoulder, most of the ear ornaments has pearls tassels. Some of necklaces have pendants of leaf shape on either side of the central amulets. The armlets have simple and beaded string. They also have beaded or pearl bangles or

wristlets. Girdles are simple or beaded. The anklets comprises of trinkets fastened by beaded bands, few of anklets are with central rosette motifs.

Some of the *mithuna* and *dampati* plaque are with lower garments whereas upper body is bare. The male wear *dhoti* and female wear *sari*, all are fastened with beaded as well as simple *kamarabandha* or girdle. A male *mithuna* plaque is seen with long necklace of four beaded strings with lotus jewel in centre. Female *mithuna* plaque have beaded necklace with amulet in the centre, wears *upavita* or sacred thread running across left shoulder. In her right hand has coiled wristlet or set of bangles and anklet. The male wears pearl tassels of ear ornament. In *damapti* plaque upper portion of female is missing from thigh. Male is seen wearing *upavita* or sacred thread running across the left side; having coiled armlet, wristlets and anklets (Figure 29). These types of *mithuna* or *dampati* plaques are reported from Adam (Nath 2016: 407). All above dress patterns and ornaments can be traced to cave stone sculptures of Deccan region.

Apart from this there are some mother goddesses who wear a number of ornaments with elaborated coiffures and bare body. One of the mother goddess have neatly combed hair done into a braid at the back with fan shaped headdress, having two bosses resting on the temple and a pearl bead placed over the parting hair. She wears three necklaces; one is short and simple beaded *ekavali*, another is longer with a central pendant and third one is of two beaded strings having jeweled leaf shaped pendants. She wears a three-pearl stringed *mekhala* or girdle, armlets comprising of pearl bands and a set of four bangles, wristlets with anklet. Another mother goddess has elaborated hairdo parted in the centre and puffed on either side, further tied by a hair bun bedecked with jewel in the centre. She also wears elaborated ear ornaments, necklaces, armlets, bangles, girdles and anklets. A less ornamented mother goddess from Adam has grotesque facial features. The hair is rolled up into a low bun and let loose at the back. The base of the bun has *kesantarekha*, a pearl band with a crest jewel on forehead. She also wears necklace, *upavita*, armlet, wristlet and *mekhala*.

The various beads, ear ornaments and pendants found from the excavations suggest that people of this phase wore various kinds ornaments. Especially *triratna* pendants or amulet are found from a number of sites which are made in terracotta and has a religious significance. The people also wore auspicious pendants or amulets as a piece of fashion.

All above evidences suggests that the people of this phase paid attention towards the ornamentation of their body. Especially, woman for beautification; we seen female figurines of this phase are profusely decorated with various hair dresses, coiffure and ornaments. All these inferences suggest that this phase was economically good and people lived a luxurious life.

There are a very few human figurines found from Phase IV of various sites like Paunar, Mandhal, Washim and Mahurjhari. There are two female figurines reported from Mandhal, of which one is in archaic nature with bare body, and no ornamentation.

Another one is in standing posture, but due to eroded nature the front portion of the figure is not recognisable as it sheen wearing upper or lower garment, but the rear portion has depiction of hanging hooded garment. During this phase in north India transparency of the dresses is a most remarkable feature. She also wears a *karna kundala* and necklace.

Another female head found from Mahurjhari (Mohanty 2003b), has her hair dressed in a simple thick curls which falls on either side and near the ear it gets around, on the top of head is an projected portion which may be a pot (Figure 30). Slightly similar type of feature is also reported from Rajghat excavation, placed in Gupta period. This object is described as female carrying a pot on veiled head (Narain and Agrawala 1978). It shows that during the time of 3rd-4th c. CE women are brought water in pot from certain distance for drinking as well as for household purposes. Even today Indian women bring water from certain distance within a village or from outside of village. A simple archaic female fragment found from Paunar with bare body has remains of white coating with red slip. It may have been used for some ritualistic purpose or some other. There are two female figurines reported from Washim, one has head without any ornamentation whereas another one has only torso. The upper body is bare whereas below portion has incised marks on left thigh which is probably indicating a transparent *sari* like garment.

A miniature *mithuna* plaque found on surface from Chandankheda is of a female standing on right side of male. Both having worn different headdress, she is wearing a simple domical *turban* and he is wearing a crown resembling with *kirit-mukuta* familiar to the Gupta-Vakataka period. Male wears a lower garment of *dhoti* whereas female has worn *sari* which are in a diaphanous form. Upper body portion of male and female are bare. Both wear simple necklace and big earrings for their left ears and a girdle secures the *dhoti* of the male. A scarf of male is coming from left side and is held by female in her left hand.

Along with this there are ornamental beads, pendants and amulets also found. A square shape spacer bead is found from Washim, this bead is very much common in earlier period. It is observed as a part of necklaces of stone sculpture reliefs of Shunga period and kaolin female figurines of Satavahana period. The evidence of toilet objects of terracotta skin rubber and head scratcher from various phases suggests that people were very much conscious about the cleanliness of their own body.

Economic Aspects

Adam, Pauni, Kaundinyapura, Bhon, Paunar and Chandankheda are some of the important urban centers of Vidarbha. An above all mentioned site has bigger in size and rich in cultural materials. Adam and Chandankheda are fortified cities. The presence of fortification indicated the various political as well as economical activities of these sites. To make above statement strong a single terracotta squarish sealing found at Chandankheda (Thakur 2005) which bears four line legends, in Brahmi script,

dated to Satavahana period. In the 30th year of king Satakarni, the *Sarvatobhadra* a chief of four hundred villages used to collect due tax in the form of cotton in this area. In short, there were local taxes paid in loads of cotton (it's cut or spun fibres) (Falk 2009: 200).

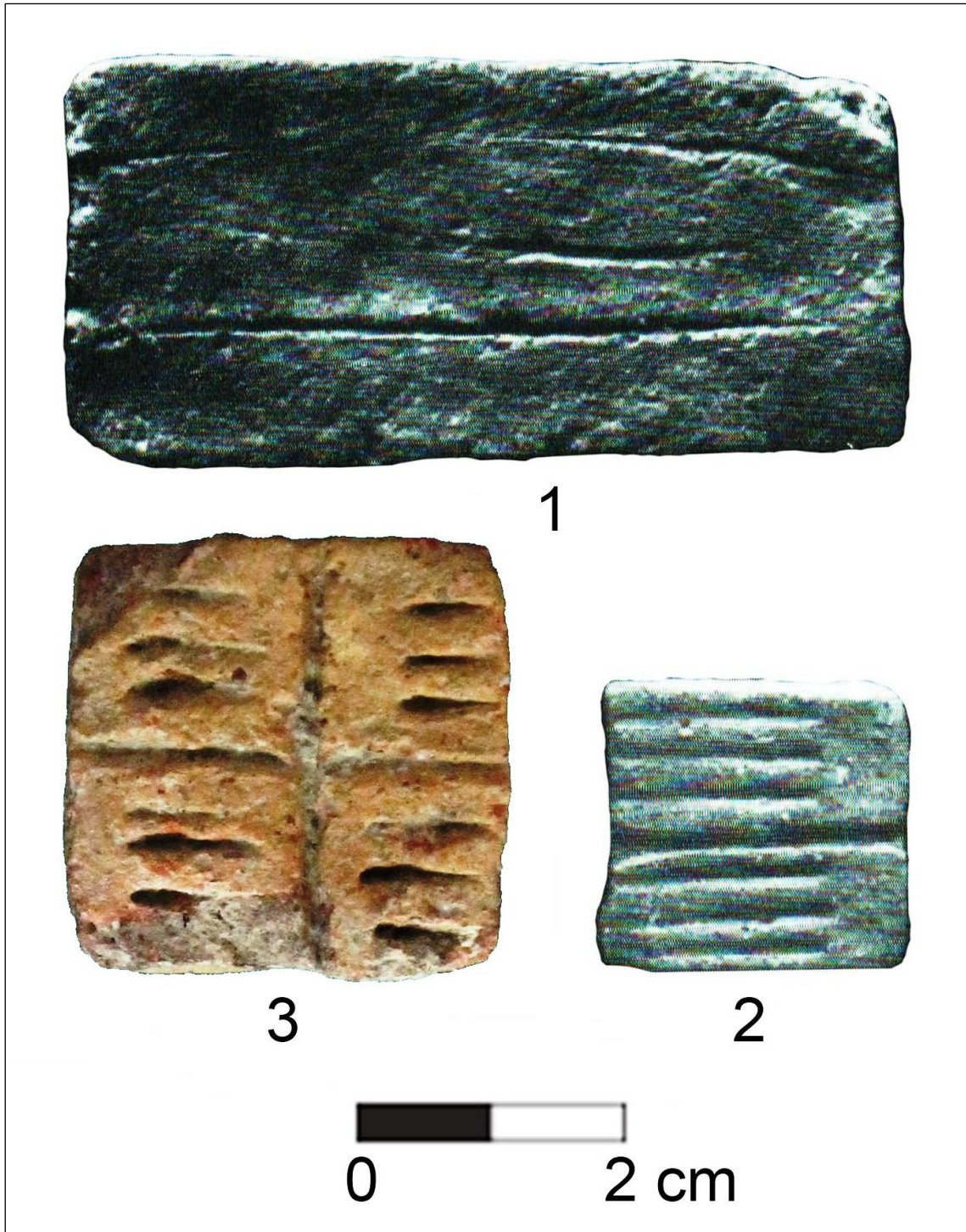


Figure 31: Weights (1-2) from Adam (After Nath 2016); (3) from Chandankheda (Courtesy MSDAM), Phase III.

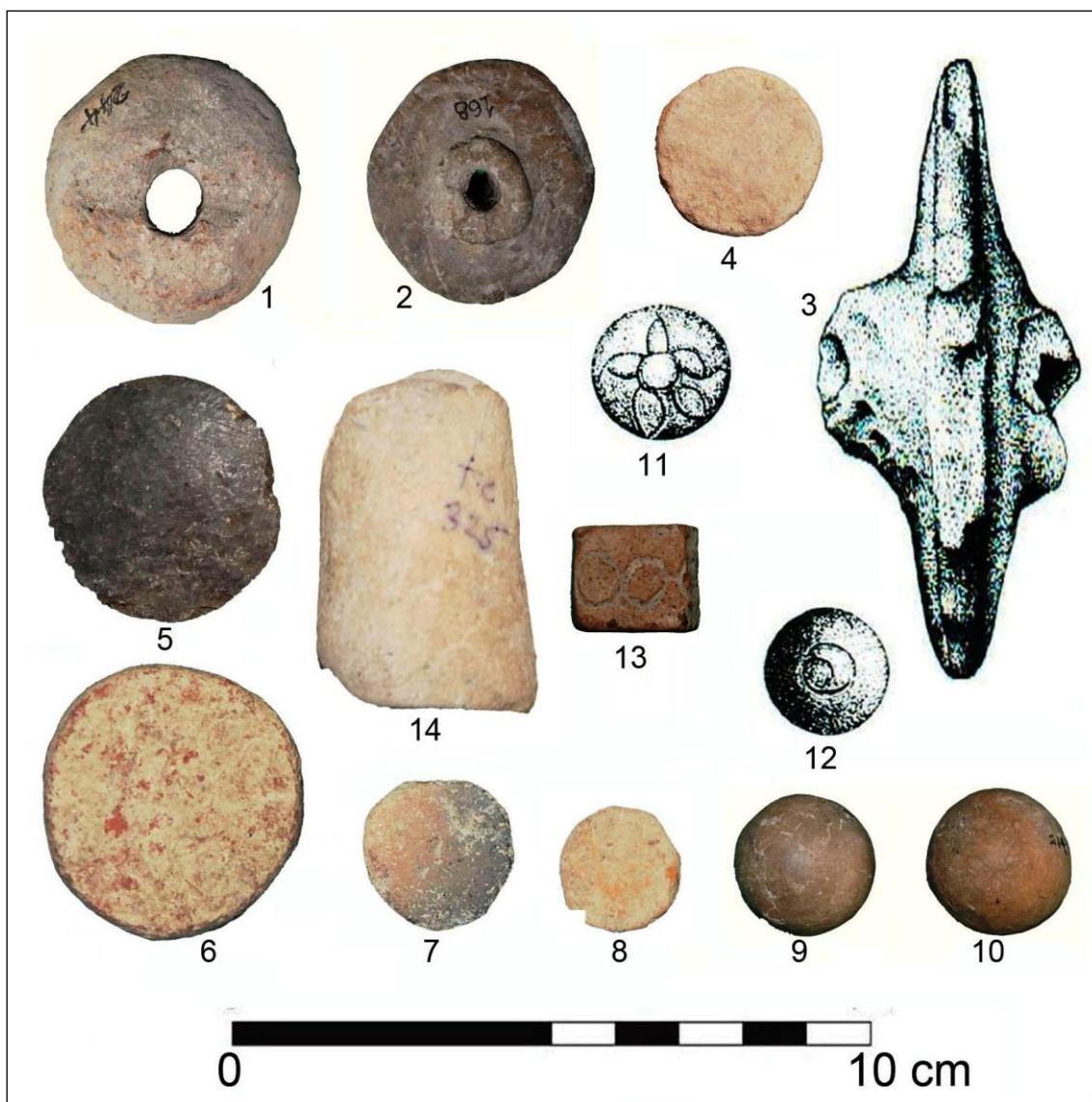


Figure 32: Wheels (1-2) from Tharsa, Phase III (Courtesy RTM, NU), (3) from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016); Hopscotches (4) from Nagara, Phase IV (Courtesy MSDAM), (5-8) from Chandankheda, Phase II to IV (Courtesy MSDAM); Balls (9-10) from Tharsa, Phase III (Courtesy RTM, NU), (11-12) from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016); Dice (13) from Paunar, surface (After Deo and Dhavalikar 1968); Gamesman (14) from Chandankheda, Phase III (Courtesy MSDAM)

There are squarish and rectangular terracotta tablets reported at Adam (Nath 2016). Most of the tablets are divided into four compartments and each of have either three incised straight line or half nail in crescent shape incised design and some other designs (Figure 31.1-2). These types of tables are reported from all over India and scholars have identified them as weights (Marshall 1915; Handa 1970; Margabandhu 1976; Lal 1993). Apart from Adam, it is also reported from Nagardhan (Sontakke *et al.* 2016) and single specimen reported on surface from Chandankheda (Pardhi *et al.* 2017) (Figure 31.3). The Adam tablet are has 11.01 gram and 5.57 gram weight whereas

Chandankheda specimen is 18 grams which are slightly heavier and bigger in shape. A variation in weight suggesting some kind of unite standard in the weights system. The present evidence from Vidarbha region suggests that this region may have played important role in trade and commerce during the above said period and it connected to the north-south and east-west trade route because of that this terracotta weight system is seen in the further south.

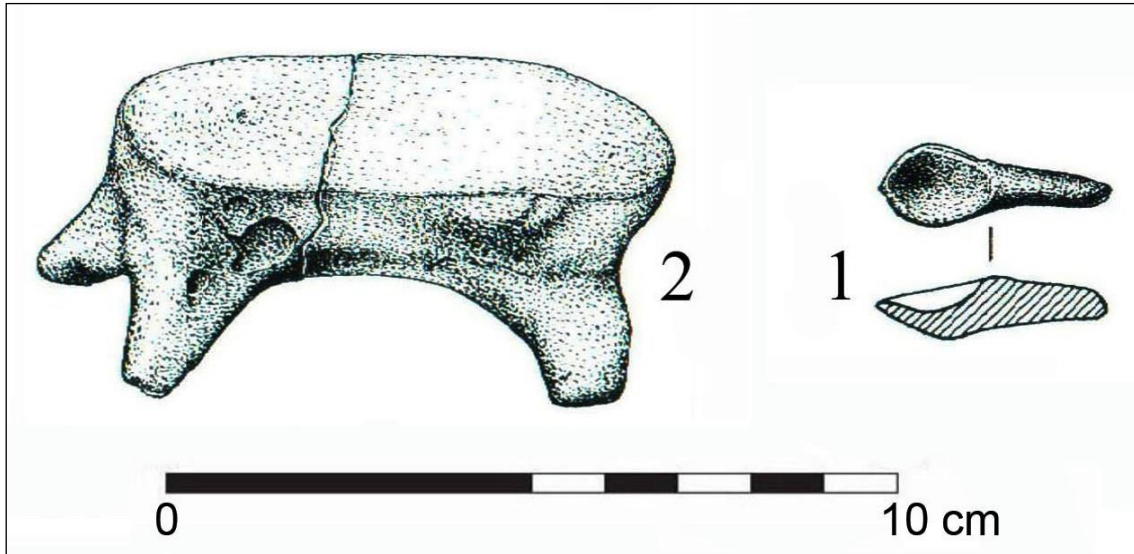


Figure 33: Miniature (1) ladle and (2) legged quern from Adam, Phase III
(After Nath 2016)

There are number of terracotta objects such as net sinkers, spindle whorls, weights were reported from Adam, Pauni, Chandankheda and Kaundinyapura. Availability of such objects in terracotta has thrown light on some kind of economical activities in Vidarbha. Net sinkers suggests fishing activities whereas spindle whorls for spinning activities. From Adam, large number of spindle whorl reported from excavation which suggests the spinning activity at the site complementing the activity of textile industry. An evidence of dying vats found from a couple of structures (structure no. 33 and 34) make above statement stronger (Nath 2016: 435). Terracotta coin-moulds are reported from Adam (Nath 2016), Arambha (Nath 1992b) and Mansar (IAR 1994-95). They are mainly disc or circular, rectangular, pyramidal and portrait type throw light on economical aspects of Vidarbha region.

Amusements

Right from Harappan time till today man is entertaining himself with many ways of games and these game objects and toys are not only objects of recreational value, but are also of wider importance (Sant 1997: 219). What is the actual mode of entertainment during ancient time of Vidarbha people? We don't have any literary records but there are a number of terracotta art objects which have occurred from the several excavations which indicates that the people of Vidarbha region used various types of terracotta objects to amuse themselves.

There are a number of terracotta toy objects which are reported from the excavations. They are mainly animal toys, hopscotches, toy wheels, gamesmen, balls and dice (Figure 32). All these objects are supposedly used for entertaining purpose. Animal toy, hopscotches, toy wheels and balls were probably used as gaming objects by children's whereas gamesmen and dice was perhaps used by elders. Presently also hopscotches, toy wheels and ball are used as pastime for children of the villages.

There are various animal figurines such as bull, cow, horse, elephant, ram, sheep, buffalo and others are reported. From Adam (Nath 2016) there are some bull figurines, elephant and sheep having perforation across the body which suggests that they all were used as toys attached with wheels. Some of the horse have pedestal and one has perforation across the body suggesting that they were used as toy objects by children.

Apart from this evidence of horse riders and elephant riders indicate that those who were rich or elite in society like animal riding. Even today the animal riding is a game of elite class. From Vidarbha region evidence of bullock-cart is not reported from excavations, it does not mean that the people of Vidarbha region were not aware about it. We have a large amount of terracotta wheels coming from excavation suggesting that there must be some of them which were used for bullock-carts. There are miniature legged querns and spoon or ladle (Figure 33) found from Adam (Nath 2016) which suggests it was used by children for playing. A few net sinkers are found from the excavations suggesting that fishing can also be mode of pass time by adults.

Conclusion

During the Chalcolithic and Early Iron Age, the number of the terracotta objects is meager. However, in the Early Historic period, one notices a good number of such artefacts. On the basis of evidences, it can be postulated that in the beginning of Phase I of Early Historic period the handmade technique was prominently used in the terracotta art making of Vidarbha. The archaic form of human figurines was made which are commonly seen in all over northern India. The decorations on human figurines were done through incised and applique methods. During Phase II, the advanced moulded technique gradually evolved and developed. Some of the single moulded terracotta objects are reported. In Phase III, due to Indo-Roman trade, double moulded technique got popularity and beautiful human and animal objects started to appear as the evidence from Adam, Pauni and Chandankheda suggest. There are few Greco-Roman facial features of human heads reported from Adam. The presence of the Greco-Roman affinity indicated that Adam was one of the important Indo-roman trade centers. Greco-Roman traders must have visited Adam for trade and artisans of Vidarbha must have seen them and tried to depict their facial features in terracotta art. In Phase IV, both handmade and single mould figurines are continued to get produced but less than the preceding phase.

On the basis of stylistic features, Vidarbha terracotta art objects can be compared with other regions of the country. Some of the handmade fan shape headgear female figurines from Adam are reported from Peddabankur of Telangana state. Both are

related to the Mauryan period. Similarly, the traditions of violin shaped mother goddesses are continuously reported right from Late Harappan period to Early Historic period throughout north India with some changes. Centaur from Bhon, *Gajalakshmi* from Adam and mithuna plaque from Pauni all show a similar artistic trend as that of Shunga period. A female with parrot was popular theme right from Mauryan period to Gupta period in North India. It was very much popular during Satavahana period in Deccan. A beautiful female or male holding a bunch of mangoes in one hand and parrot sitting on another hand made in kaolin as well as simple clay. All these similarities show that the fashion of artistic parameter was familiar to all over the country throughout the Early Historic phase and this was possible due to extensive internal trade and commerce.

However, at the same time, there was regional identity which is reflected in the terracotta art objects of Vidarbha region. Especially, fabric of the terracotta objects of Vidarbha has presence of mica particles which is not seen elsewhere. The presence of mica is a common phenomenon in the soil of Vidarbha. Most of the human and animal figurines of Vidarbha are coarse in fabric and some are crude in appearance. In animal figurines, mostly bull, horse and elephants are found from the excavations. During the time of 3rd-4th c. CE, some of partly wheel made and partly handmade figurines started to get made and the tradition still continued in this region. The general use of these figurines is both for worship as well as playing purposes. There are number of sites like Paunar, Chandankheda and Nagardhan which have reported partly wheel made and partly handmade animal figurines, and some of them have application of red slip and some have lime coating. Some of animal figurines of Adam, Kaundinyapura and Nagardhan have perforation at their bases which were used probably as a wheel toy.

The seal and sealings, coin-mould, weight and spindle whorl helps to understand the economic condition of this region. The amusement objects especially wheels and recreation objects like hopscotch show the popularity of this game throughout the country in general and Vidarbha in particular.

On the basis of various evidences of religious terracotta objects during Early Historic period in Vidarbha especially from 5th-4th c. BCE to 3rd c. BCE, it can be postulated that people were worshipping mother goddess and votive tanks. But later on, after the introduction of Buddhism in 3rd c. BCE, people started following Buddhism. Initially, during 1st-2nd c. CE, Shaivism and Vaishnavism also gained popularity and people started following them in symbolic form. Later on during 3rd-4th c. CE, some remains in the form of temple of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu are found from various sites in Vidarbha. It shows that the Early Historic people were having faith in different religion but lived together.

From the Indian archaeological point of view, Vidarbha is strategically located in the centre of the country. It was a catalyst venture of the north-south and east-west trade route. If we talk about north-south trade-route, we see that sites like Adam, Pauni and

Chandankheda are situated in this route. Whereas on east-west trade route, Bhon, Kholapur, Kaundinyapura and Paunar are situated which emerged as important trade centers during Early Historic period? They all are inter-connected through internal trade as well as Indo-Roman trade. Apart from trade, they were also inter-connected religiously as Bhon, Adam and Pauni were important Buddhist stupa sites. The Buddhist sites of Bharhut, Sanchi, Pauni, Amravati, Nagarjunakonda and Kanaganahalli indicated similar trend of artistic parameters. This was again probably due to trade and commerce from north to south via Vidarbha region.

All these terracotta art objects are useful to know varied dimensions of early historical cultural processes of Vidarbha. It exhibits the esthetic sense of the early historical society of this region and their cultural communication with rest of the country and world.

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