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Animal Figurines in the Terracotta Art of Vidarbha: A Stylistic Study

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Keywords:	**Abstract:** The history of the relationship between animals and humans is quite old. Prehistoric people painted animal hunting scenes on rocks when they were still in the hunting and gathering phase. Most of the natural rock shelters of the world where the prehistoric human resided are painted with various animal hunting scenes. The advent of agriculture and the taming of animals were two significant developments that helped humans settle down. Animals were now being used for more than just food, including food production, agricultural work, transportation, hunting, and protection. In the socio-religious and economic lives of human communities, animals have begun to play a significant role. Humans began to worship animals as a result of their great reliance on them. For a variety of cultural reasons, humans also started making clay animal figurines. Several Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites on the Indian subcontinent have produced evidence of both baked and unbaked variety of animal clay figurines. The purpose of the current study is to better comprehend the terracotta animal figurines that have been found in Vidarbha, Maharashtra, including their gradual development, frequency, adornment, and stylistic analysis.
Vidarbha *Early Historic Period* *Terracotta Art* *Animal Figurines* *Centaur*	

Introduction

Terracotta art was one of the important parts of ancient Indian society. It gives a clue to understanding the political, social, economic and religious life of the ancient people of the country. Animal, bird, and reptile figurines are also a significant component of this, just like human figures. They have played an essential role in the history of humankind.

As an allegory of soul, behaviour, virtue, cunning and intelligence, animals have frequently found a place in the literature, art and religion of ancient India. In Indian art, various types of animals are depicted. Some are depicted as aspects of human life, while others are motifs evoking the artist's observation and study; both are equally fascinating (Biswas 1981: 98). While making figurines, the clay artist was very well aware of the anatomy of the birds and animals. These figures of animals, birds, and reptiles have religious significance in addition to social and political ones. Some of the *vahanas* (mounts) of various Hindu and Jain gods and goddesses are animals and birds. It confirms their significance in society. They made it in stone, metal, terracotta and other materials. Faunal depictions were the favourite subject of Indian terracotta art. But their contribution to the development of Indian art has barely been evaluated (Prakash 1985: 19).

The Vidarbha region (19°21′ N; 76° 80′ E) is the easternmost part of the Maharashtra state (Fig. 1). The Wardha River forms a natural dividing line that divides Vidarbha into two parts, i.e., Eastern and Western Vidarbha. It comprises a total of eleven districts, and for administrative purposes, it is divided into two divisions, i.e., Amravati and Nagpur. The Amravati division comes in Western Vidarbha and includes five districts, whereas the Nagpur division comes in Eastern Vidarbha, which includes six districts. The Western Vidarbha region is located between the Ajanta and Gavilgarh Hills. Except for the nuclear portion of the Purna Valley, the remaining territory has considerably high plains and hills. However, the Wardha-Wainganga plains and comparatively lowland
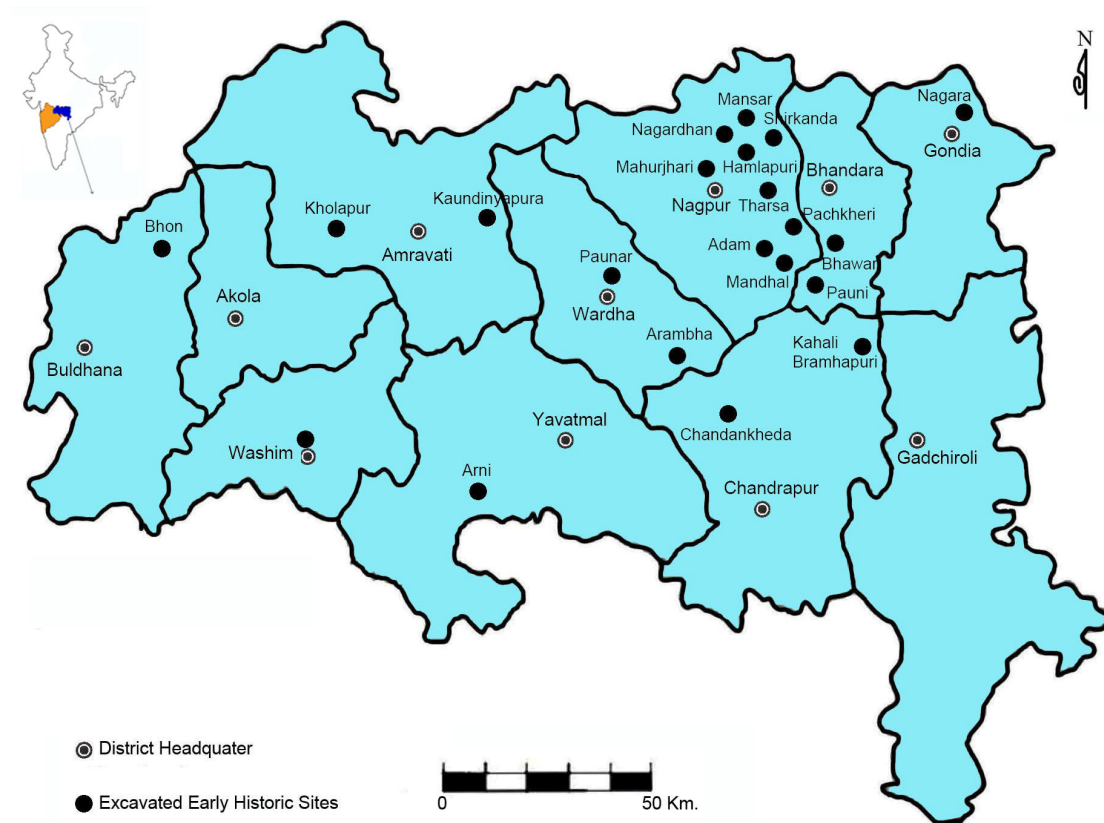

Fig. 1: Map of the Vidarbha region

relief with irregular hills and slow-moving streams can be found in the Eastern Vidarbha region (Singh 1971: 700; Deshpande 1971; Dikshit 1986).

Archaeologically, Vidarbha is one of the important and richest regions of the country. Several archaeological investigations have been carried out by individuals or various institutions/organisations in this region. Prehistoric, Chalcolithic, Early Iron Age, Early Historic, Late Historical, and Medieval cultural remains have been unearthed from this region. The study of terracotta art objects began in the post-independence era. The region of Vidarbha has witnessed multi-cultural complex processes. The available historical and archaeological research suggests that it has played a vital role as a cultural catalyst to pass the traditions of the north to the south and vice versa (Pardhi 2017). The art tradition of using terracotta started in the Chalcolithic period and grew stronger in the Early Historic period. It has continued since then.

Terracotta Animal Figurines of Vidarbha

In the Indian subcontinent, the first clay image of the animal was reported from the Period I of the Aceramic Neolithic (7000 BCE) at Mehrgarh, which was unbaked. The first evidence of baked clay animal figurines was found in Period III (5000 BCE) of Mehrgarh (Banerji 1994: 8-9; Jarrige 2008: 155-166). From the Pre-Harappan period, animal figurines are reported from Zhob, Kulli, Mehrgarh, Amri, Mundigak, Kalibangan, Balakot, Banawali and others (Dhavalikar 1977; Banerji 1994; Sant 1997; Jarrige 2008). Similarly, from the Harappan context, a large number of terracotta animal figurines are reported from Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Ropar, Lothal, Kalibangan, Banawali, Rakhigarhi and many others (Marshall 1931; Mackey 1938; Wheeler 1962; Rao 1962-63; Lal and Thapar 1967; Joshi 1972; Bisht 1991). However, terracotta animal figurines are reported in sporadic form from rural Chalcolithic cultures such as Kayatha, Ahar, Malwa, and Jorwe (Sankalia and Dhavalikar 1969; Dhavalikar et al. 1988; Sant 1997), Ochre Coloured Pottery, and Painted Grey Ware period (Joshi 1978; Dikshit 1979; Sant 1997; Desai 1986). During the Early Iron Age, terracotta animal figurines occurred in lesser numbers (Dasgupta 1961; Dhavalikar 1976) but were predominant in the Early Historic period (Agrawala 1948; Kala 1950; Gupta 1972; Narain and Agrawala 1978; Biswas 1981; Prakash 1985; Verma 1986; Dhavalikar 1977; Sant 1997).

The earliest evidence of terracotta art objects in the Vidarbha region is reported from Tuljapur-Garhi (Bopardikar 1996) and Adam (IAR 1988-89); both have yielded terracotta beads from the Chalcolithic horizon. During the Early Iron Age or Megalithic period, the first animal figurine was reported in the form of a lid with a finial of bird or animal forms made of terracotta. The black burnished lid/cover with the finial of a goat shape and conical lids surmounted by four bird finials are reported from the Mahurjhari burial No. 4 (Deo 1973: 28). Similar metal crafts are found as grave furniture in the Megaliths of this region. For example, 1) The Raipur Megalith-1 contains three or four copper geese-like birds perched face to face over the lid finials (Deglurkar and Lad 1992), 2) Peacock motif from the Raipur Megalithic-7 and Borgaon (IAR 1980-81), and 3) Mahurjhari's Megalithic-3 featured a tripod stand with three cast images of stags at the base, six perching birds on the vertical frame, and three fish near the top joint (Mohanty 2003a). Conical lids surmounted by bird finials made of copper were also found at Takalghat-Khapa (Deo 1970), Naikund (Deo and Jamkhedkar 1982) and Khairwada (IAR 1981-82).

It shows the importance of animals and birds in the life of the Megalithic people of the Vidarbha region.

The Early Historic Period of Vidarbha can be considered a significant period in terms of increasing terracotta animal figurines. Reshma Sawant (2012: 2) sees urbanisation as one of the reasons for the rise of such trends, especially at Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Adam (Nath 2016), Pauni (Nath 1998), Bhon (Deotare et al. 2007; Deotare 2008) and Chandankheda (Meshram et al. 2015). However, the archaeological remains witness the structural remains, manufacturing products, numismatic data, epigraphical evidence, and other cultural antiquities. Among them, terracotta art production has played an important role in determining the socio-economic and religious aspects of society. The Early Historic period of Vidarbha was under the political control of various dynasties such as the Mauryas, Sungas-Bhadra/Mitra, Satavahanas and Vakatakas. With the subsequent dynastic changes from the Mauryas to the Satavahanas, we see an increase in the production of terracotta animal figurines and a decrease during the Vakatakas, which continued into the Early Medieval and Medieval periods.

In the excavation of Early Historic period sites of the Vidarbha region, a number of animal/bird/reptile figurines have been unearthed from various sites such as Adam, Arni, Kahali-Brahmapuri, Kaundinyapura, Kholapur, Mahurjhari, Mandhal, Mansar, Paunar, Pauni, Tharsa, Washim, Chandankheda and Nagardhan. Apart from this, there are some excavated sites, such as Arambha, Bhawar, Hamalapuri, Nagara and Shirkhanda, where animal/bird/reptile figurines are not found. However, from Bhon, animal figurines can be seen in the form of amulets. Animal/bird/reptile figurines can be divided into sub-types such as bulls, cows, buffalo, sheep, rams, elephants, horses, pigs, dogs, lions, tigers, sparrows, pigeons, ducks, snakes, tortoises, fish, crocodile-headed spouts, and some unidentified fragments. Compared to human figurines, the occurrence of animal figurines is quite low. Only a few of these figurines are complete, and a large number of them are broken. Most of these are simple.

The majority of the figurines have coarse to medium fabric, and are medium to well-baked. There are very few bird and reptile figurines compared to animal figurines. The majority of figurines are handmade, whereas a few are partly wheel-made and partly handmade and double-moulded. Kaolin figurines are made in a double mould.

Apart from the excavated findings, there are a few explored sites, such as Kholapur, Nagardhan and Dahili, wherein animal figurines are reported. There are bird figurines from Chandankheda and Washim. One figurine, probably a duck, was found during surface exploration at Chandankheda with its head and wings broken.

In order to acquire a deeper comprehension of the terracotta animal figurines that were used in Vidarbha during the Early Historic period all the way up until the Medieval period, these figurines can be separated into five distinct phases according to the time period in which they were created. While figurines from other regions of India have been considered for comparison, the region of Vidarbha is the primary focus. The frequency of different figurines in Vidarbha has been listed in Table 1. This table shows the phase and site-wise distribution of the various animal/bird/reptile/fish figurines. The right symbol (√) has been used for sites where the figurines were recovered, but the exact sub-type of the same is not known. The symbol (-) has been used to show the non-

1: Frequency of different 'Animal/Bird/Reptiles/Fish' figurines from various archaeological sites in Vidarbha

Sr. No.	Name of the Site	Phase	Bull	Cow	Buffalo	Sheep	Ram	Elephant	Horse	Pig	Dog	Lion	Tiger	Sparrow	Pigeon	Snake	Tortoise	Fish	Duck	Unidentified
1	Kahali-Brahmapuri	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
2	Paunar	I	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Mahurjhari	II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
4	Pauni	II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Adam	III	18	2	1	4	-	7	13	1	2	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
6	Arni	III	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	Kaundinyapura	III	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	Kholapur	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
9	Mahurjhari	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
10	Mansar	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
11	Paunar	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Pauni	III	3	-	-	-	2	3	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
13	Tharsa	III	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Nagardhan	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
15	Mandhal	IV	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
16	Mansar	IV	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
17	Paunar	IV	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	Tharsa	IV	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	Washim	IV	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
20	Nagardhan	IV	3	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
21	Paunar	V	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22	Mandhal	V	P	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
23	Pachkheri	V	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
24	Chandankheda	V	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	Nagardhan	V	9	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	62
	Total		43	3	1	4	4	20	25	1	4	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	87

availability of those sub-types on that particular site. The symbol (P) has been used to show the presence of the animal, but the exact number is not available.

1. Phase I: c. Late fifth century BCE to c. Early second century BCE

This phase includes the Pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods. This was when second urbanisation was in full swing in North India; the urban cities and towns originated and developed, whereas the contrast can be seen in Vidarbha. The people of the Vidarbha region lived a village life. The second urbanisation process began late in Vidarbha (Sawant 2012; Nath 2016). Terracotta animal figurines found from this phase are very few. A handmade elephant figurine was reported from the Paunar excavations (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968). The trunk and legs are missing; the ears are appliqued; the tail and tusks are appliqued. Other facial details are absent (Fig. 2). There are two animal figurines reported from the excavation of Kahali-Brahmapuri (Sawant 2003: 17, 2012: 38-39) but detailed descriptions of the same, including their identifications, are unpublished.

2. Phase II: c. Early second century BCE to c. Late first century BCE

This phase is broadly categorised as the Pre-Satavahana period, under which Sunga and other local dynasties such as Bhadra and Mitra can be placed. In this phase, some animal figurines are reported at Mahurjhari (Mohanty 2003b), but the details are unpublished. A handmade dog figurine was found at Pauni (Nath 1998: 79). It is simple and has a projected jaw (Fig. 3.1). In Pauni, a handmade figurine of a ram was found. It has punching eyes and drooping horns and bears a series of notches (Fig. 3.2) (Nath 1998: 79). In the Ganga-Yamuna Valley, ram figurines are reported from Mathura, Rajghat and Ahichchhatra (Prakash 1985).

3. Phase III: c. Late first century BCE to c. Middle third century CE

In this phase, the Satavahana and Kshatrapa periods are included. This was the golden era for the terracotta animal figurines of Vidarbha. Large numbers of animal figurines are reported from the excavations. They were increased both in terms of number and variety, and the changes can be seen in the techniques also. Along with being handmade,

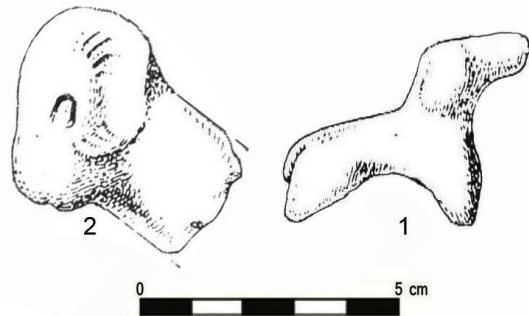Fig. 2: Elephant figurine from Paunar, Phase I (Courtesy: RTMNU)

Fig. 3: Dog (1) and ram (2) figurines from Pauni, Phase II (After Nath 1998)

they are also mould-made. The physical details are achieved through pinched, pressed and applique methods. The moulded animals are decorated. Important animals reported from this phase are: bull, elephant, cow, buffalo, sheep, ram, horse, pig, dog, lion, tiger, pigeon and tortoise. A detailed account of each of these animal categories of animal figurines is given as follows.

i). Bull

The bull is the symbolic form of power and agricultural fertility. Figurines of the bull are found in the excavations of Adam, Arni and Pauni. All the bull figurines of Adam are handmade and coarse in fabric with mica containing exterior texture. Some have horizontal perforation across the four legs, indicating that they were wheeled toys (Figs. 4.1-4.2) (Nath 2016). Along with this, another bull specimen has a hole in the forehead. This might be used to tie a thread that can be used to pull the wheel toy by a child. Earlier, these types of perforation were not observed on bull figurines in the Vidarbha region. For the first time, the manufacturing evidence of a toy bull on the wheel in the Early Historic context was reported from the Mathura excavation (Joshi and Margabandhu 1977: 23, pl. IV, fig 20.1). These figurines can be dated to the time frame of c. 150 BCE to c. 50 CE (Prakash 1985: 89). It has also been noticed in Rajghat Phase IB (Banerji 1994: 191). Earlier, it was reported from the Pre-Harappan site of Men-Damb. This site revealed the evidence of a bull figurine with stumpy legs pierced for wheels. A hole through the hump was probably for the tying of a string (Banerji 1988: 50).

Most of the Adam bulls have a heavy body and plump humps (Figs. 4.3-4.5), which can be compared with Nevasa (Sankalia et al. 1960: 388, 391, fig 176.10-14) and Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974: 150; fig 28.6) bull figurines. A specimen found from Adam has perforation below the hump (Fig. 4.6) (Nath 2016: 414). A similar type of perforation can be seen on the Nevasa bull specimen (Sankalia et al. 1960: fig 176.8), which is quite bigger than the Adam specimen. It can also be compared with Peddabankur bull figurines of the present Telangana state (earlier in Andhra Pradesh), which have a prominent hump and horns (Sastry 1979: 83, pl. XIII 23-25) and are dated to the early Satavahana period. Arni (Pardhi 2017; IAR 1978-79; 1984-85) and Pauni (Nath 1998: 79) figurines are completely handmade, crude in fabric, and stylistically similar. Both have a projected jaw with a round end and a round leg with a pointed end (Figs. 4.7-4.8). A bull figurine is reported in the exploration of Dahili (Pardhi and Vaidya 2016), which is handmade and has medium-baked coarse fabric. It is stylistically similar to the bull figurine reported from Pauni.

ii). Cow

While the cow figurines are absent in Phase I and Phase II, they are present in this phase. There are two cow figurines reported from Adam. Both are handmade and show the proper udder portion (Fig. 4.9) (Nath 2016: 414-415). In Maharashtra, Nevasa is the only site in the Early Historic period where three cow figurines are reported (Sankalia et al. 1960: fig 176.15-17). The Nevasa cow figurines come from Period V, which belongs to the Late Early Historic (Indo-Roman). Adam and Nevasa specimens are comparable; both are small in size, solid and handmade and come from a similar cultural phase.

Two cow figurines from the Mauryan period were discovered in Rajasthan at Rairh and Nagda; their udder and teat are prominently displayed (Sant 1997: 137-138). Similarly, another cow figurine has been reported from the Kshatrapa period in Eran (Sant 1997: 138). Apart from these, there are two handmade cow figurines from Peddabankur in Andhra Pradesh. These figurines have prominent udders and a small tail. These are from the early Satavahana period (Sastry 1979: 83, pl. XII 21-22).

iii). Buffalo

A terracotta fragment of a buffalo figurine found in the Adam excavation has twisted horns with grooves and a snouted mouth marked by a slit (Nath 2016: 414). It is the first example of terracotta buffalo (Fig. 4.10) found in the Early Historic period of the Vidarbha region and in Maharashtra. From north India, buffalo figurines have been reported from Period IC (second-third century BCE) and Period III (1st to 300th century CE) of Rajghat (Prakash 1985: 78, 115).

iv). Sheep

A total of four fragments of sheep figurines were found in the Adam excavation. Three of the figurines are handmade, and the fourth is made by using both a wheel and a hand.
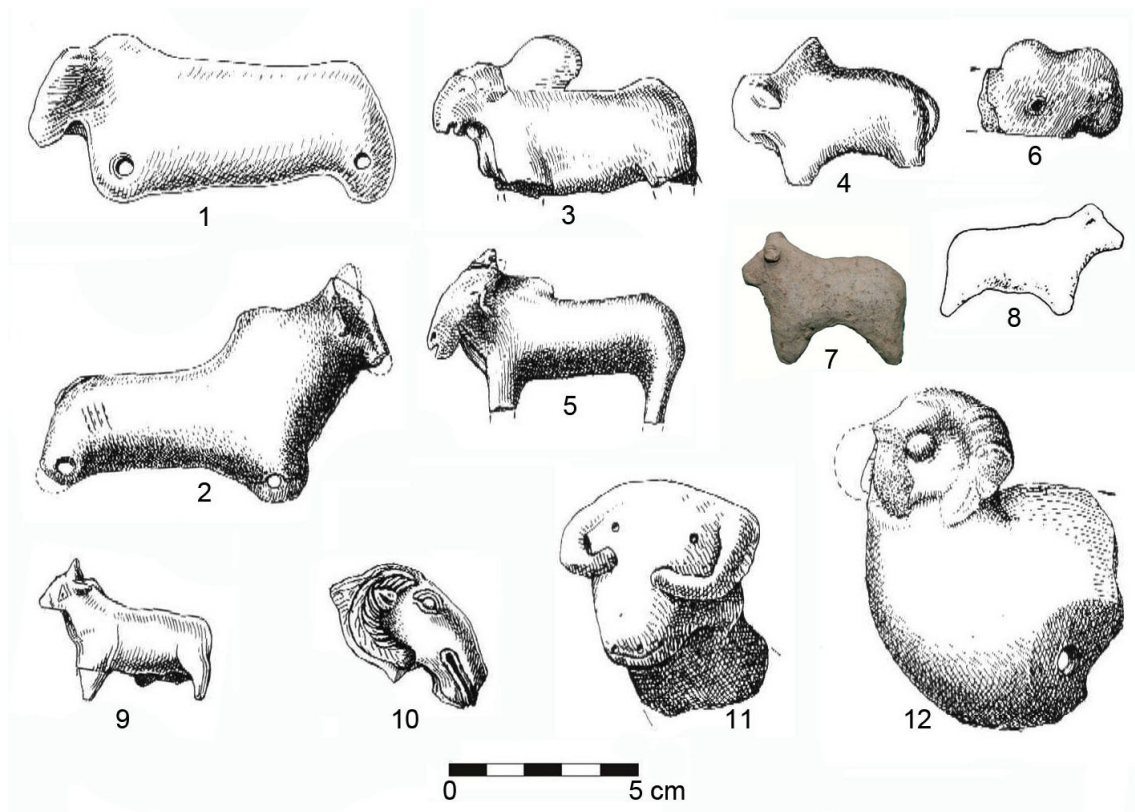

Fig. 4: Bull figurines (1-6) from Adam (After Nath 2016); (7) from Arni (Courtesy: RTMNU); (8) from Pauni (After Nath 1998); cow figurine (9) from Adam; buffalo figurine (10) from Adam; sheep figurines (11-12) from Adam (After Nath 2016), all from Phase III

The horns are drooping and prominent. The eyes and nostrils of one of the figurines are made through the piercing method (Figs. 4.11-4.12). All are coarse in fabric (Nath 2016: 414-415). However, Adam is the only site in the Vidarbha region where terracotta sheep figurines are found. It is very interesting to point out that from the fourth-fifth century BCE to the first century BCE, there was not a single sheep figurine found in the excavations of the Ganga Valley region. When it comes to the first century CE to the third century CE, a single terracotta sheep figurine found from the Vaishali excavation is also doubtful. It is not confirmed whether it is a sheep or a goat (Prakash 1985: 106). During the Gupta period, i.e., from the third century CE to the sixth century CE, a large number of sheep figurines were reported from Rajghat (Prakash 1985: 132). The figurines are handmade and have applique decorations.

v). Ram

The ram figurines have been unearthed at excavated sites such as Kaundinyapura and Pauni. As can be seen, the occurrence of ram figurines is less in Vidarbha, and only three specimens are known from different cultural levels of excavations. In Pauni, a single figurine was found at the Satavahana level. Likewise, the Kaundinyapura figurine was found on the upper horizon. According to M.G. Dikshit (1968: 106), based on its stylistic features, it might belong to the Satavahana level, which was discarded later.

All three ram figurines mentioned above are found in the form of fragmented heads, and the portions below the neck are missing in all the figurines. Therefore, it is difficult to know the detailed anatomy of these ram figurines. However, all are handmade, and coarse in fabric, and medium to well-fired. Two figurines, one each from Pauni and Kaundinyapura, have some perforations, and the other two are simple. According to the excavator, the ram figurine of Pauni might have been attached to the wheel as its turned globular body shows a perforation mark used for a wheeled toy (Nath 1998: 79) (Fig. 5.1). Similarly, one can see a vertical channel like perforation below the neck of the Kaundinyapura ram figurine. The excavator suggested that the object was movable and attached to the body by a suitable axle (Dikshit 1968). Nostrils are made through the fingertip pressing method; a mouth through incised lines; and the horns of the ram figurine were made drooping and decorated with horizontal pressing designs as well as a series of notches (Fig. 5.2). Other figurines are simple; eyes are made either by the incised method or the punched method.

Apart from Vidarbha, there are three sites in Maharashtra from where ram figurines are reported; nine from Nevasa (Sankalia et al. 1960), three from Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974: pl. XLI. 6, fig. 28.13) and one from Nashik (Sankalia and Deo 1955: pl. XXV.2). The design of the horn of the Kaudinyapura ram is similar to two Nevasa ram figurines (Sankalia et al. 1960: fig. 178.6-7); it has appliqued curved horns with pressed fingertip designs. The Bhokardan specimen comes from Period Ib of Satavahana-Kshatrapa (first century BCE to second century CE) (Deo and Gupte 1974), whereas in Nevasa there are two from Period IV (Early Historic, 150 BCE to 50 BCE) and seven from Period V (Late Early Historic, Indo-Roman, 50 BCE to 200 CE) (Sankalia et al. 1960). The Nashik specimen was found on the surface (Sankalia and Deo 1955).

In the Ganga Valley, ram figurines started appearing during the 4th-3rd century BCE, but their frequency is low. From the 3rd century BCE to 50 CE, ram figurines were more

common. From 50 CE to the 3rd century CE, ram figurines were popular mostly in the eastern region of the Ganga-Yamuna Valley. The important ram figurine yielding sites are Prahladpur (Narain and Roy 1968), Buxar (IAR 1963-64: 8-9), Vaishali, Sonepur, Mathura, Ahichchhatra and Rajghat (Prakash 1985: 65, 93, 95, 97). Most of these figurines are handmade, and some of them have various designs. As compared to the Ganga Valley, the ram figurines of Vidarbha are simple, small in size, and fewer in number. Likewise, in Rajasthan, ram figurines are found in various excavated sites such as Rairh, Charsada, Rangmahal and Maheshwar (Sant 1997). Among all, the best example is a realistic wheeled toy ram figurine recovered from Rairh. This belongs to the Mauryan period (Sant 1997: 138).

vi). Elephant

The elephant figurines are found from Adam (Nath 2016), Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Pauni habitation (Nath 1998: 79) and from the unstratified context of Phase III of the Satavahana-Kshatrapa period of Pauni stupa excavation (Deo and Joshi 1972). Along with these, seven figurines are found on the surface at Pauni.

The figurine of Kaundinyapura came from the Late-Satavahana level. This is made on an irregular channel with applique parts of an elephant and the trunk is out-stretched; it is identified as *Gajamukha Pranali* (elephant-headed channel spout) and is a
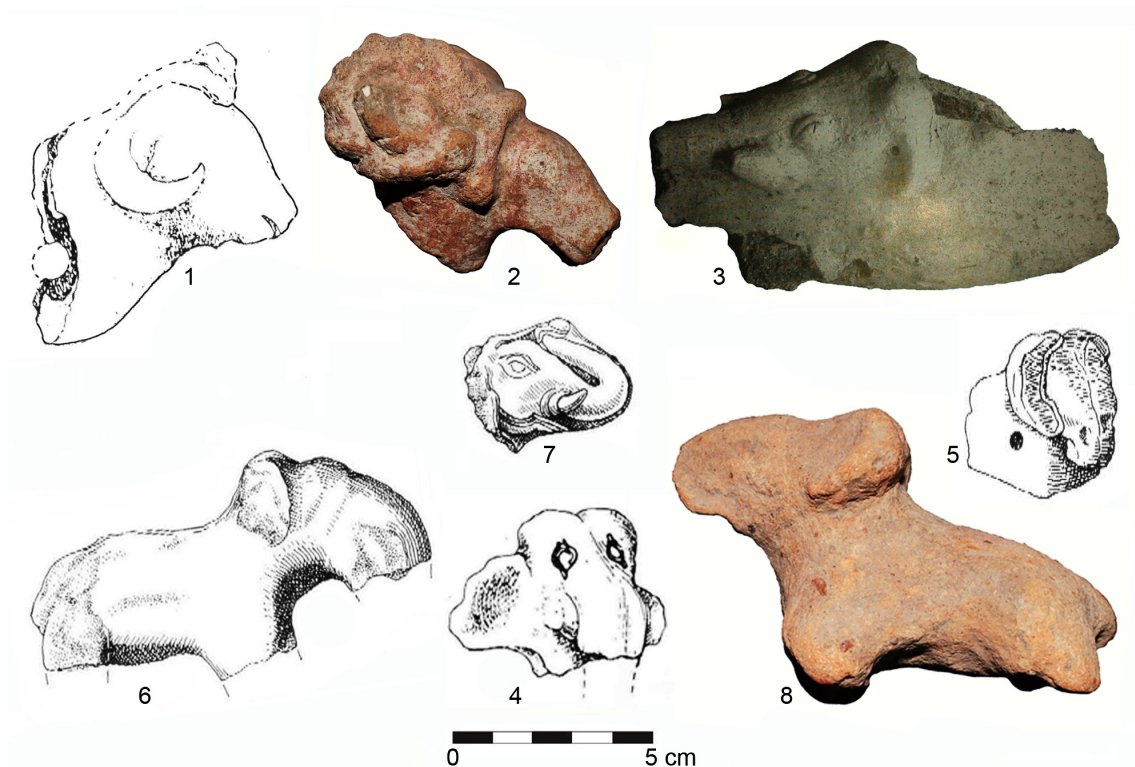

Fig. 5: Ram figurines (1) from Pauni (After Nath 1998); (2) from Kaundinyapura (Courtesy: MSDAM); elephant figurines (3) from Kaundinyapura (After Dikshit 1968); (4) from Pauni (After Nath 1998); (5-7) from Adam (After Nath 2016); (8) from Adam (Courtesy: M. Naranje); all are from Phase III

hollow object (Fig. 5.3). Three Pauni specimens come from the Satavahana level; they are mostly fragmented (Fig. 5.4).

All the figurines are handmade, except one from Kaundinyapura. They are coarse, medium to well-textured, and medium to well-baked. Stylistically, all elephant figurines are simple and similar except one, which is seated over a pedestal base with perforation across the body, found from Adam (Nath 2016: 414) (Fig. 5.5). Except for a miniature fragment of an elephant trunk holding a lotus and the lower tip bearing perforation for threading (Nath 2016: 414), there is no specimen with decoration over the body. A few unstratified elephant figurines of Pauni have the application of slip. Artists have taken a lump of clay and made heavy, bodily elephant figurines with the help of their fingers; few are lighter in weight. These have all the body details such as stumpy legs made through the pressing method; ears are applique and fan-shaped in size; tusk, trunk and tail are all made through the applique method. The mouth is shown with the incised pattern. For eyes, they used incised as well as applique eyeball or pellet patterns (Fig. 5.6). Apart from being handmade, a well-modelled forepart of the head of an elephant figure with an upraised trunk holding vegetables was found from Adam (Nath 2016: 411) (Fig. 5.7). Apart from excavated findings, an elephant figurine was found in surface exploration at Adam, which can be compared with an excavated specimen from the same site (Pardhi 2017) (Fig. 5.8). It is also handmade and stylistically similar to those mentioned above. Apart from Vidarbha, the elephant figurines were also found from the Early Historic period of Maharashtra. There are five figurines, two each found from Nevasa (Sankalia et al. 1960) and Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974), and one from Nashik (Sankalia and Deo 1955).

The occurrence of elephant figurines started in the sixth to third centuries BCE in the Ganga Valley as the evidence comes from Rajghat and other excavated sites. Gradually, their number increased, and these were abundantly found all over the Ganga-Yamuna Valley in the succeeding period (i.e., third century BCE to 50 CE) (Prakash 1985: 63, 79). It was one of the most popular animals in this period and was profusely decorated. These have been reported from various sites such as Ahichchhatra, Mathura, Rajghat, Bhita, Kausambi, Hastinapur, Sravasti, Ayodhya and Prahladpur (Prakash 1985: 79-80; Sant 1997: 137). From c. 50 CE to the 3rd century CE, the number of elephant figurines increased. The provision of a pedestal base for the rider is an interesting feature of these figurines. This feature was absent in the specimens from other sites (Prakash 1985: 104). In Vidarbha, from Adam, a pedestal elephant was found (Nath 2016) but without a rider. Apart from these, it has also been reported from Rajasthan in sites like Nagari, Rairh and Ahar. Among these sites, there are hollow specimens of an elephant at Rairh, showing fine examples of the modeller's art (Sant 1997: 137).

vii). Horse

From the Vidarbha region, horse figurines are reported from the excavation of various early historic sites such as Adam, Kaundinyapura, Paunar, Pauni and Tharsa. Along with these, it has also been found in surface exploration from Chandankheda.

The distribution frequency of horses from excavated sites is thirteen from Adam (Nath 2016), one each from Kaundinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968) and Tharsa and three from Pauni (Nath 1998). Based on making technique and

stylistic features, the two specimens reported from surface exploration at Chandankheda, can also be designated to Phase III. According to the cultural distribution of horse figurines, production of horse figurines was greater during Phase III compared to other periods, as more than 80% of horse figurines are reported from this phase only. The evidence from the site of Adam gives more authenticity to the above statement. All terracotta horses from Adam come from the Satavahana period (Phase III), and the majority are made in the double mould (Nath 2016: 411).

The horses were handmade and double moulded. Handmade horse figurines are reported from Adam, Tharsa, Paunar, Kaundinyapura and Pauni. The fabric of the horses is coarse to medium and medium to fine with medium-baked, well to over burned. Most handmade horses have a high curved neck with a projected jaw; sometimes the mane is shown with the pinched method or deeply incised lines, whereas eyes are made either with applique eyeballs or incised elongated shapes or sometimes with hollow cylindrical tube or stick. All handmade figurines are found in the form of fragmented heads, and body parts are missing. Both the ears and the mane are in applique, whereas some of the figurines have a mouth made through the pinched method (Figs. 6.1-6.4).

There are 14 decorated double-moulded horse figurines: 10 from Adam and two each from Pauni and Chandankheda. However, the double-moulded horse figurine is a characteristic feature of the Satavahana period. It was either made of kaolin or simple clay. From Adam, ten fragments of caparisoned horses have been discovered, one of which is well preserved and standing on a pedestal, while the others are mostly heads and all are decorated (Nath 2016) (Figs. 6.5-6.6). A complete caparisoned horse was found in Pauni (Nath 1998: 79). The horse figurine is completely decorated and majestically stands on a flat platform. Another figurine is also known from the same site, and this has only the rear portion, which is standing on a flat base. A similar fragment of a fully decorated kaolin made horse head was found during surface exploration at Chandankheda. The artist has failed to join two moulds in proper proportion; hence the facial details are misplaced (Fig. 6.7). Another rear portion of the decorated horse was also found at Chandankheda.

The fully decorated (caparisoned) horses are generally made in kaolin or simple clay material and pressed in a double mould. This type of horse is either found single or sometimes with a male or male-female rider together placed well on the back of the terracotta horses. A similar type of decorated horse was earlier found in various Satavahana sites of the Deccan, i.e., from Kondapur (Yazdani 1941), Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76: 69; Morwanchikar 1985), Ter (Deshpande 1999: 477), Yelleswaram (Khan 1963: 47) and Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974).

Another horse figurine found from Adam appears partly wheel-made and partly handmade. The body is made by wheel and hollow, whereas the head is made by hand; the rear portion is broken. The front portion below the body bears a perforation indicating its function as a wheeled toy (Fig. 6.8) (Nath 2016: 418). This type of exclusive wheel toy horse is the earliest example found in the Vidarbha region and has not yet been reported from other parts of Maharashtra. Apart from Vidarbha, five specimens were found from Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974) and two from Nevasa (Sankalia et al. 1960). All are handmade, have coarse to medium fabric, and are medium-baked.

From the Ganga Valley, the earliest horse figurines are reported between the sixth century BCE to the third century BCE, and the frequency is less, whereas in late-NBP (third century BCE to 50 CE) the frequency of horse figurines has a slight increase. During the post-NBP period (from 50 CE to the third century CE), the frequency of horse figurines in the Ganga-Yamuna Valley slightly increased, and it was one of the prominent animals in terracotta art (Prakash 1985: 63-64, 81). The sites are Kausambi, Bhita, Atranjikhera, Prahladpur, Mathura, Ahichchhatra, Rajghat, Vaishali, Kumrahar and Ayodhya, where horse figurines are reported from excavation (Prakash 1985; Banerji 1994: 193). Similar evidence is also noticed in Rajasthan, where the number of horse occurrences increased during the post-NBP period. There are two general forms, i.e., (i) the archaic and (ii) the stylised, reported respectively from Noh and Rairh (Sant 1997: 150).

The same phenomena are seen even in Maharashtra in general and Vidarbha in particular, where the frequency of horses significantly increased during the post-NBP period. During this period, the use of animals in wars probably increased, and horses

Fig. 6: Horse figurines (1) from Tharsa (Courtesy: RTMNU); (2) from Pauni (After Nath 1998); (3) from Kaundinyapura (Courtesy: MSDAM); (4) Paunar (Courtesy: RTMNU); (5-6) from Adam (After Nath 2016); (7) from Chandankheda (Courtesy: RTMNU and MSDAM); (8) from Adam (After Nath 2016); all are from Phase III

played a crucial role in the war. Consequently, the popularity of horse figurines has also increased. Another reason may be related to foreigners continuously coming from Central Asia (Prakash 1985: 104). It can also be stated that due to the Indo-Roman trade, a new technique was introduced in India, i.e., a double mould, which was very easy and convenient to fashion an object (Dhavalikar 1977).

viii). Pig

A single figurine of a pig was found in Phase III of the Adam excavation. It is absent in other phases. It has a snout with a projected canine and clearly marked ears and eyes (Nath 2016: 418) (Fig. 7.1). It is the only specimen found so far in the Vidarbha region. The pig figurines are completely absent in the rest of Maharashtra. In the Ganga Valley, the pig figurine comes from the 3rd century BCE to 50 CE for the first time, which was reported from Bhita from the Mauryan period (Prakash 1985: 81). There is another specimen made very neatly in a double mould found in Ahichchhatra (Prakash 1985: 106).

ix). Dog

A total of three dog figurines have been reported from archaeological sites: two from Adam (Nath 2016) and one from Pauni (Nath 1998). Adam specimens are roughly handmade. One has an elongated body with stumpy legs (Nath 2016: 415) (Fig. 7.2), and another has a projected muzzle portion. The Pauni specimen is broken. Apart from Adam and Pauni, the dog figurine is absent in other excavated sites of Vidarbha as well as the rest of Maharashtra.

From the Ganga Valley, in the early NBPW period, roughly made figurines of dogs with certain decorations, like carved with punched circlets for eyes, have come from Rajghat, Kausambi, Shravasti and Vaishali (Banerji 1994: 194). It was more popular in the middle Ganga Valley (Prakash 1985: 65). The Late-NBPW period dog figurines are reported only from Mathura (Prakash 1985: 93). Apart from the Ganga-Yamuna Valley, there are some excavated sites in Rajasthan where terracotta dog figurines are reported. A barking dog is reported from Hati-Bada, Nagari. A dog figurine, in recumbent posture but alert, modelled realistically, was found in Charsada (Sant 1997: 138). Similarly, an interesting well-baked figurine of a dog with applied punched circlets eyes, pinholes nostril and slit mouth, was found from Rangmahal. A crude handmade dog with its tail upturned depicted in running posture looks very much like a hound with its pointed nozzle was found from Rairh (Sant 1997: 151).

x). Lion

Lion figurines are rare; only one specimen each was found from the Adam (Nath 2016) and Pauni (Nath 1998) excavations. The Adam specimen is handmade; the head is turned to the right in growling mode with the hind portion damaged (Nath 2016: 414) (Fig. 7.3). The Pauni specimen is a fragmented head and made of double mould, and it was found in period IV of the Satavahana-Kshatrapa level. It is stylised, heavily maned and has a robust face. It has a perforation across below the neck, suggesting either a

wheeled toy or a movable object (Fig. 7.4) (Nath 1998: 79). It is absent in other sites of Vidarbha as well as the rest of Maharashtra.

A small fragment of a lion mask is applied on the surface of a pot found in the Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968: 91). A similar type of mask was earlier reported from Taxila and Nevasa in the Indo-Roman levels (Sankalia et al. 1960).

In the Ganga Valley, lion figurines were introduced during the first century CE to the third century CE for the first time and have been reported from various sites such as Rajghat, Bhita, Mathura, Kaushambi, Vaishali, Ahichchhatra and Kumrahar sites. They are handmade and double-moulded lion figurines (Prakash 1985: 104, 106, 111). Apart from these, there is a winged lion figurine found in Sravasti that is quite different from the Adam specimen. Lions are generally shown with a broad mouth, long ears and mane, indicated by incised lines (Prakash 1985: 106). The earlier depiction of a lion in terracotta comes from the early Common Era; it is possible to correlate with the representation of this animal on the Kushan coins. A female deity is shown seated on a lion found on one of the popular types of Kushan coins (Prakash 1985: 104), which was continued on coins as well as in the terracotta art of the succeeding period. Similarly, an example of a lion in a couchant position was found in Sambhar and dated to the Kushan period (Sant 1997: 149).

xi). Tiger

A specimen of a tiger figurine was found from the Adam excavation. It has a fragmented head, probably handmade, with well-marked facial features and a growling countenance (Fig. 7.5) (Nath 2016: 414). It is the only example of a tiger figurine reported from the Vidarbha region and is absent in the rest of Maharashtra. In the Ganga Valley, a tiger figurine was first reported between the first century CE to the third century CE at Kumrahar, which has a wide mouth and long ears (Prakash 1985: 106). In Rajasthan, several crude handmade tiger figurines were found in Rairh. Except for one, which is complete, the others are fragments. They are shown with wide-open mouths, which is probably indicative of roaring. They are decorated with applique and incised decorations (Sant 1997: 149).

xii). Pigeon

One fragment of a bird found from Adam is highly ornamented with two perforations across the central part of the body, possibly serving as a spacer bead or amulet (Nath 2016: 415). The head is missing, but based on its anatomical body proportion, it can be identified as a pigeon (Fig. 7.6). At Nevasa, some fragments of birds were found, but excavators are in doubt whether some of them are pigeons or not (Sankalia et al. 1960: 395). From Bhokardan, a specimen was found from Period Ib (first century BCE to second-third century CE), which has a perforation in the centre of its back to keep the toy hanging (Deo and Gupte 1974: 152, pl. XLI). Both the specimens of Adam and Bhokardan come from almost the same Satavahana horizon and have perforations suggesting the use of pigeons as hanging toys in the house. In Rajasthan, remarkable toy pigeon figurines have been reported from Sambhar (200-100 BCE) and Maheshwar (200-500 CE) (Sant 1997: 151).
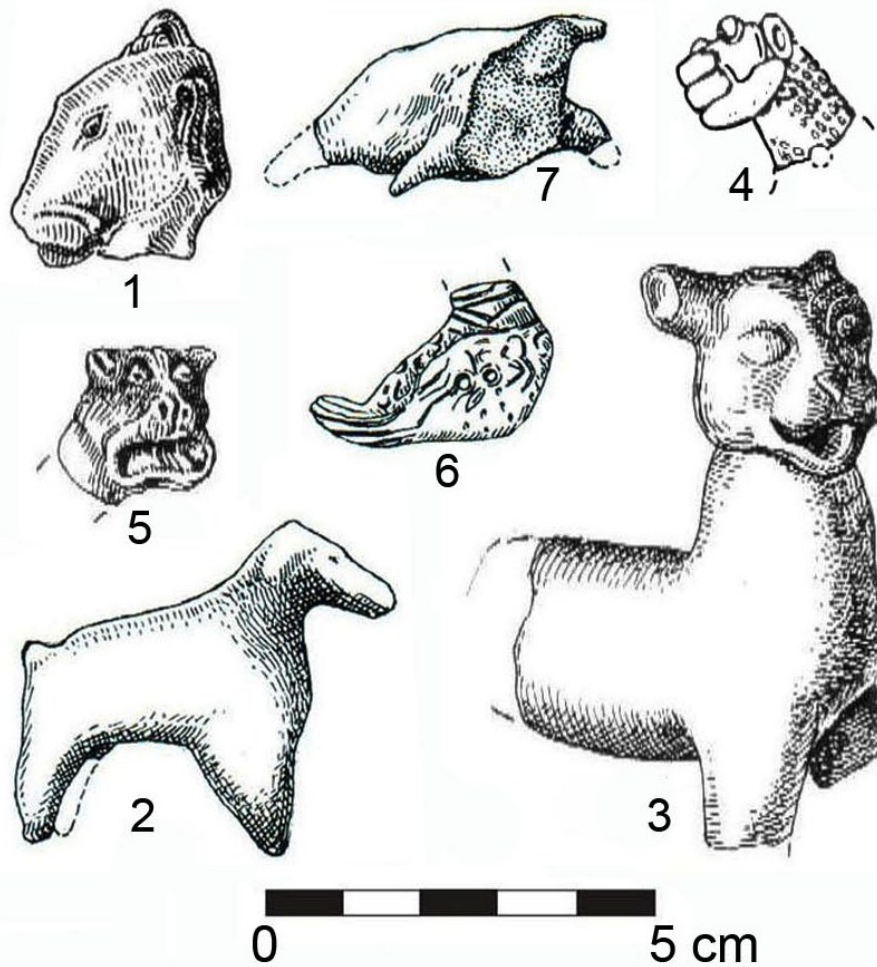
Fig. 7: Animal figurines (1) pig; (2) dog; (3) lion; (5) tiger; (6) pigeon; (7) tortoise; all from Adam (After Nath 2016); (4) lion from Pauni (After Nath 1998); all are from Phase III

xiii). Tortoise

The tortoise figurine reported from Adam is handmade; the face is turned to the left side (Nath 2016: 415) (Fig. 7.7). Apart from Vidarbha, in the rest of Maharashtra, it was reported from Ter but in the form of the bead and made of faience (Chapekar 1969: 92). A tortoise figurine was first reported from Vaishali in the Ganga Valley. It is depicted on the profile of a pot, and its eyes are indicated by punched circlets. It comes from the third century BCE to 50 CE (Prakash 1985: 82). In the succeeding period, a fragmented tortoise figurine was found at Rajghat (Prakash 1985: 115).

xiii). Unidentified animals

Four unidentified fragments of animals were reported from the excavations. Among all, two were found from Adam, and one each from Mansar and Pauni. Animal figurines were found in the Kholapur excavation (Deotare et al. 2012: 50-59), but the type of animal was not specified in the published text.

4. Phase IV: c. Middle third century CE to c. Late fifth century CE

In this phase, the Vidarbha region witnessed the political dominance of the Vakataka period. After the downfall of the Satavahana dynasty, Vakataka emerged as one of the powerful rulers in the Vidarbha region. They had matrimonial alliances with the Guptas, who were powerful rulers during this period in north India. The terracotta art of the Gupta period reached its zenith. Along with human figurines, animal figurines were also made in large numbers. At the same time, in Vidarbha, terracotta art is noticed in a very crude and artistically stagnant form. The quality of the fabric was also coarse. Vakataka artists did not pay much attention to the preparation of clay. This was the period in which Vidarbha terracotta faunal remains decreased compared to the previous period.

In this phase, a number of animal figurines were reported from various excavated sites. The sites include Washim, Tharsa (Pardhi 2017), Mansar (Sharma and Joshi 2015), and Nagardhan (Sontakke et al. 2016; Pardhi 2020). Important terracotta animal figurines are: bull, cow, ram, elephant, horse, monkey, sparrow, pigeon, snake, tortoise, fish, crocodile-headed spout, and other unidentified fragments. The following is a detailed description of the same.

i). Bull

Several bull figurines are reported from the excavations. Two figurines were found from Tharsa, three from Nagardhan and one from Mansar. The Mansar figurine, identified as a horse by an excavator (Sharma and Joshi 2015: 161-162), is actually a bull figurine. It has two horns and a perforated nose with an applique chain that goes above the forehead and around the neck (Fig. 8.1). Among two bull figurines from Tharsa, one is solid, and the other is hollow, suggesting the use of both wheel-made and (partly) handmade techniques. The bull heads are heavily ornamented in a similar style. Both have decorated neck chains; one is decorated with applique dots, whereas the other is applique, but with finger pinched as well as fingertip pressed designs made on it. Both have eyes made of applique clay balls; the ears are applique and round. Over the forehead of both, there is an applique chain passing horizontally and joining both ears; the vertical applique decorated chain comes from the forehead and joins to the applique bridle near the nostril (Fig. 8.2). These common decorative patterns are seen dominantly in the Vakataka period. The present figurines are also reported from the same level.

From Nagardhan, the heads of bull figurines were found. A fragment of a bull's head has an applique eyeball with an incised border around it. The horns, muzzle and left ear are missing. It has a prominent hump with a simple applique bell chain over it. The body is made from the wheel technique, whereas the head is handmade (Fig. 8.3). The fabric is coarse to medium and ill to medium-fired. Another bull head of a dull red colour is prepared by a wheel technique found from the same period. It is hollow inside, its facial features are abraded, and its horns and muzzle are broken. A fragment of an incomplete perforated muzzle of a bull with the application of red slip was also found. It has an incised mouth, and it has an applique bridle over it. The fabric of the last two is coarse to medium and ill to medium-fired (Pardhi 2020). The perforated muzzle types of bulls were first noticed in the Vakataka period and continued until the Medieval period.

This type of decorative pattern can be seen in earlier periods also and has been reported from different sites in Maharashtra in general and Vidarbha in particular. This type of decorative pattern is not only found in bull figurines from Pauni (Deo and Joshi 1972) and Kondapur (Yazdani 1941) but also on the bull amulet from Nevasa (Sankalia et al. 1960), Ter (Chapekar 1969), and Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76). During the early NBPW period in north India, the archaic bull figurines were decorated with applique bands or chains on the neck, forehead and tail portion (Banerji 1994: 191).

ii). Ram

A ram figurine was reported from Washim. It is a fragmented head, the neck is missing, and the facial features are eroded. It is handmade, coarse in fabric, and medium-fired (Fig. 8.4). In the same cultural phase of other parts of Vidarbha and Maharashtra, ram figurines are not found.

iii). Elephant

A total of five elephant figurines were reported from excavations. One figurine each comes from Mansar and Paunar, and three from Nagardhan. A stylistic head of an elephant with a trunk raised upwards was found in Mansar (Sharma and Joshi 2015: 162). It looks like *Gajapranal,* which is generally seen in the temples. The Paunar figurine was found in the form of a fragmented head (Fig. 8.5) (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968).
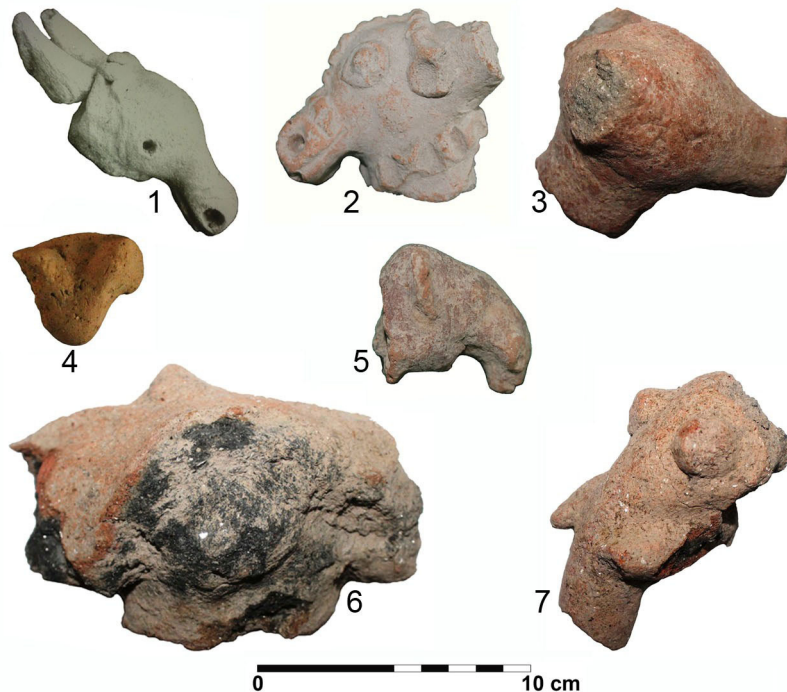

Fig. 8: Bull figurines (1) from Mansar (After Sharma and Joshi 2015); (2) from Tharsa (Courtesy: RTMNU), (3) from Nagardhan (Courtesy: MSDAM and DC); Ram figurine (4) from Washim (Courtesy: MSDAM); elephant figurines (5) from Paunar (Courtesy: RTMNU); (6-7) from Nagardhan (Courtesy: MSDAM and DC); all are from Phase IV

Among the Nagardhan specimens, a huge elephant head with fan-like big ears and a dull red colour is remarkable. The eyes are applique and the trunk is partly broken; the applique right tusk is present, whereas the left is missing. The top portion is partially broken. The head is handmade, and a body portion is missing, probably made from the wheel technique. The mica particles are prominently seen on the exterior surface. The fabric is coarse and ill to medium-fired. The other two fragments of elephant heads have a dull red colour, crude fabric and are ill-fired. Both are handmade, the trunk and tusk of one of them are completely missing, whereas in the other one, they are partially missing, and the eyes are appliqued (Figs. 8.6-8.7) (Pardhi 2020). The quantity of elephant figurines is reduced in this phase.

iv). Horse

A total of three horse figurines were reported from excavations, one each from Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Mansar, and Nagardhan. The fabric of the horses is coarse to medium, and these are medium-baked. The horse figurine of Paunar was over-burned and appeared crude but complete in shape (Fig. 9.1). From Mansar, a handmade fragment of a saddle horse was found; the eyes, ears and saddle are made by the applique technique. The legs and tails are short and sturdy. The left front leg and right rear leg are broken (Fig. 9.2). A graceful double-moulded, red-coloured horse figurine with a back side and with all four legs broken was reported from Nagardhan. The mane is shown prominently; the chain joints at the nose and goes behind the neck. The two solid moulds fit together. The ears are round, and the eyes are abraded (Fig. 9.3). It can be assigned at the end of the Satavahana period and towards the beginning of the Vakataka period. The fabric is coarse to medium and ill to medium-fired (Pardhi 2020).

v). Monkey

A head fragment of a monkey figurine was found in the surface collection at Paunar (Fig. 9.4). The mouth is broad and shown with an incised line; the eyes are made with the pinhole method. It is handmade, has a medium fabric, medium to well-fired, and coated with lime slip., In the rest of Maharashtra, besides Vidarbha, the monkey figurine has been found only at Bhokardan from period II (third century CE onwards) (Deo and Gupte 1974: 152, pl. XLI, 8).

In the Ganga-Yamuna Valley, the monkey figurine has been reported between the third century BCE to 50 CE from various sites such as Mathura (Pd. II) and Vaishali (Pd. III) (Prakash 1985: 82). The Mathura monkey figurines are represented in almost all moods, betraying humour, but they brilliantly represent the central idea of fun, crude in modelling (Joshi and Margabandhu 1977: 22).

vi). Sparrow

The occurrence of figurines of the sparrow is less. One such bird specimen has been reported from the Vakataka level at Washim. However, it is handmade, very crude in fabric and workmanship, and ill-fired. It has a flat pedestal, and both conical rear portions are partially broken. It has applique wings, but both are broken in half (Fig. 9.5).

Sparrow figurines have been reported from other sites of Maharashtra, such as Ter (Chapekar 1969: 81) and Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974: 152), but stylistically none of them matches with present Washim bird specimen.

vii). Snake

A specimen has been reported from the Vakataka level at Mandhal in Vidarbha. It is folded with a prominent hood, but the top portion is broken and has a coating of chocolate slip (Fig. 9.6). However, it is medium in fabric and medium to well-fired. It is very interesting to note that the snake figurine is absent in other early historic sites of Vidarbha and the rest of Maharashtra, whereas a similar type of folded snake hood has been found in stone on the same site at Mandhal. It is very difficult to say whether it was worshipped during the Vakataka period or just used as a toy object.

The snake or *naga* figure is an ancient depiction in terracotta icons, and it was worshipped in the *naga* cult. It has a strong association with the Shaiva cult, and people regard it as an evil spirit (Verma 1986: 70). They are reported from the Ganga Valley during the early NBPW period as a distinctive stylized human body combined with a tapering, pointed, raised snake-hood to serve as its head portion, and over the front side

Fig. 9: Horse figurines (1) from Paunar (Courtesy: RTMNU); (2) from Mansar (After Sharma and Joshi 2015); (3) from Nagardhan (Courtesy: MSDAM and DC); monkey (4) from Paunar (Courtesy: RTMNU); sparrow (5) from Washim (Courtesy: MSDAM); snake (6) from Mandhal (Courtesy: MSDAM); fish (7) from Nagardhan (Courtesy: MSDAM and DC)

have the decoration of circlets and horizontal incised lines. They have been reportedly found on various sites such as Pataliputra, Vaishali, Champa and Sonpur (in Bihar), Ahichchhattra, Mathura, Kausambi and Rajghat (in Uttar Pradesh) with different features (Prakash 1985: 64; Verma 1986; Banerji 1994: 186; Nagar 2008). The *naga* figures continued to be reported from the excavations in succeeding periods (Prakash 1985). In Rajasthan, a terracotta hooded snake figurine was found from the Mauryan level during the temple excavation of Bairat (Sant 1997: 138).

viii). Tortoise

A tortoise figurine was found in the Mansar excavation, but its detail is unpublished (IAR 1994-95).

ix). Fish

One figurine of a fish has been reported from the site of Nagardhan. This figurine has an abraded body surface, applique eyes, and a dull red colour. The right eye is chipped off and has an open mouth. It has a groove around its head, which is called the operculum (gill cover), and both pectoral fins are broken. On the rear side, over the top, is another fin called an adipose fin. Incised scales cover the entire exterior body (Fig. 9.7). The fabric is coarse to medium and ill to medium-fired (Pardhi 2020).

5. Phase V: c. Sixth century CE to c. Late Seventeenth century CE

The time frame of this phase is very vast because after the Gupta-Vakataka period, there was no continuity seen in the cultural materials all over the country. The archaeological excavation yielded meagre cultural material, which is insufficient to understand the cultural dynamics of the society of the post-Gupta period. Some of the terracotta faunal remains, based on stylistic and stratigraphical grounds, can be placed in the Early Medieval and Medieval periods. The important excavated sites of this phase are Paunar (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968), Mandhal (Singh and Trivedi 2019), Pachkheri (IAR 1992-93), Chandankheda (Pardhi et al. 2017) and Nagardhan (Pardhi 2020). The important animal figurines are bull, cow, horse, elephant, sparrow, duck and pigeon, as reported from the excavations and surface explorations. The details are given as follows.

i). Bull

A bull's head was found from the Early Medieval period at the site of Nagardhan. It is dull red in colour and has applique eyes with incised lines over the eyeballs. The fabric is coarse and ill-fired. A total of eight bull figurines were found from the Medieval period at Nagardhan; most are fragments of the head portions, whereas only a single specimen was found with both a head and the body portion. Most of the bull figurines are partially wheel-made and partially handmade. The body portion is hollow inside. It is prepared by wheel technique, whereas the legs and heads are solid and handmade. They are mostly red in colour, and a few are black. The mica particles are seen on the exterior surface. Some of the bulls have applique bell chains around the neck as well as simple

chains and prominent humps. The fabric of all ranges from coarse to medium and is fired from ill to medium (Fig. 10.1).

Superlative evidence of a terracotta toy wheel bull was also found from the Medieval period at Nagardhan. This bull is preserved with its head, right leg and upper body portion. The body is prepared by wheel technique, whereas the head and legs are handmade. It has a perforated nose, applique eyes and round ears. The nose has a bridle, and a simple applique chain is seen around the neck. It has a prominent hump. The forehead has a horizontal applique chain which is attached to the ears. A complete right leg with a perforated end could have been used as a toy wheel (Fig. 10.2). This type of perforated leg is more commonly discovered in excavations (Pardhi 2020; Sontakke et al. 2016).

Similarly, there are three bull figurines reported from Paunar whose bodies are painted in red ochre and over lime wash. All of these are the head portions. All are handmade and solid. All have applique eyes and chains around the neck and over the head. All belong to the Medieval period (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968: 91). The nostrils are perforated (Fig. 10.3).

There are a good number of handmade figurines of the heads of the bulls reported from the Mandhal excavations. The fabric and firing are good. The facial details are achieved through the applique technique. There is no clarity about dating. As in the report, all these bull figurines are stylistically compared with Paunar, Pauni and Tharsa

Fig. 10: Bull figurines (1-2) from Nagardhan (Courtesy: MSDAM and DC); (3) from Paunar (Courtesy: RTMNU); (4) from Chandankheda (Courtesy: RTMNU and MSDAM); cow figurine (5) from Mandhal (Courtesy: RTMNU); elephant figurine (6), horse figurines (7-8), sparrow (9) and duck (10); all are from Nagardhan (Courtesy: MSDAM and DC), and all are from Phase V

specimens (Singh and Trivedi 2019: 169). Another point is that these bull figurines are not illustrated in the report. Based on its description, it can be dated between the Early Medieval to Medieval period.

Three handmade bull figurines were reported from the Chandankheda excavation and are dated to the Medieval period. All bull figurines are fragmented, have a coarse to medium fabric, and are ill-fired. Of the three, one has a prominent hump, while the head and both front legs are missing (Fig. 10.4). Another bull figurine has pointed stumpy legs, while both horns, along with the muzzle, and half the rear body, are missing. The hump is achieved through the pinching technique. Likewise, a fragment of the muzzle portion of a bull with a perforated nose and an applique circle around the nostril suggests its use as a toy, to be played with by knotting the thread. It has a coating of red slip. All the bull figurines belong to the Medieval period (Pardhi et al. 2017: 829). There are three other figurines found during the surface exploration at Chandankheda. All are handmade, and have a coarse to medium fabric, and ill to medium-fired. Among these, two are stylistically similar to above mentioned figurines and can be placed in the Medieval period. The head of the third figurine is missing and crude in fabric. Animal figurines were reported from the Medieval period of Pachkheri (IAR 1992-93), but details are unpublished.

Similarly, a few bull figurines were reported on the surface from Rithi Vayphal (Pardhi and Vaidya 2016: 51) and Wedi Rith (Pardhi and Pendam 2014-15: 77-80). Both are handmade and have applique chains, and the figurine from Rithi Vayphal has perforated nostrils. The fabric is coarse to medium and ill to medium-fired. Based on stylistic similarity, these also belong to the Medieval period.

ii). Cow

A cow figurine was reported from Mandhal. It is made of red medium fabric clay mixed with mica particles (Singh and Trivedi 2019: 169). The Mandhal cow figurine is made using partly wheel-made and partly handmade techniques. The legs are solid, the body is hollow, and the applique udder has four raised teats. Eyes are made by the applique method and decorations are absent. In the preceding period, cow figurines were reported from Adam and Nevasa. The Adam and Nevasa specimens are comparable; both are small in size, solid and handmade, whereas the Mandhal specimen is bigger in size and hollow inside (Fig. 10.5). On a stylistic and technological basis, Mandhal figurine can be assigned to the Medieval period.

iii). Elephant

Two fragments of elephant figurines were reported from the Early Medieval period at Nagardhan. A handmade elephant head with applique eyeballs is dull red in colour. It has fan-shaped ears; the right one is missing, whereas the left one has incised horizontal lines. Over the forehead, there are two shallow depressions, which were probably made before firing. The trunk is broken. The right tusk is missing, and the left is well preserved; the fabric is crude and ill-fired. From the Medieval period at Nagardhan, a handmade fragment of an elephant head (Fig. 10.6) was also yielded, which is coarse in fabric and ill-fired (Pardhi 2020).

iv). Horse

A broken head fragment, probably of a horse, was found in the early medieval deposit at Nagardhan. Its muzzle portion is broken. It has standing ears and an applique mane; the eyes are appliqued with an eyeball in the centre prepared by the pinhole method. Other facial features are abraded; the fabric is crude and ill-fired (Fig. 10.7). It is dull red in colour (Pardhi 2020).

From the Medieval period at Nagardhan, a fragment of a horse figurine was found, which was partially handmade and partially wheel made. It has standing ears; the mane is shown between two ears. The eyes are appliqued in the form of the pallet, with a perforated nose and an incised mouth. On its back, there is some projected broken part which may be a rider (Fig. 10.8). The mica dust appears on the exterior surface. It has coarse to medium fabric and is ill to medium-fired (Pardhi 2020). A single fragment of a horse figurine was found in the Mandhal excavation. Ears, eyes, nostrils, and bands are appliqued, and the mouth is incised. The head and body are separate (Singh and Trivedi 2019: 169). Based on their descriptions, these figurines can be dated between the Early Medieval to the Medieval period.

v). Sparrow

A figurine of a bird, probably of a sparrow with a missing tail portion, was found from the Early Medieval period at Nagardhan. The body is prepared by the wheel and it is twisted using a hand to give the present shape. It has abraded facial details; the beak is prominently made; and the bottom has a big hole and is hollow inside (Fig. 10.9). The fabric is coarse, ill to medium-fired, and red in colour (Pardhi 2020).

vi). Duck

A handmade figurine, probably of a duck with a long neck and pointed beak, was found at Nagardhan. The bottom portion, the right wing and the rear tail are broken. It is dull red in colour; the fabric is crude and ill-fired. The mica particles are seen on the surface (Fig. 10.10). It is found in the pit. But based on its fabric, it can be placed in the Early Medieval to Medieval period (Pardhi 2020).

vii). Pigeon

A fragmented head of a bird, probably of a pigeon with a pointed beak and abraded facial features, was yielded from the Early Medieval period at the site of Nagardhan. It is handmade; the fabric is coarse and ill to medium-fired (Pardhi 2020).

viii). Fish/Tortoise

A solitary fragment with the head of the aquatic creature was reported from the Mandhal excavation. In the excavation report, it was mentioned as a fish or tortoise figurine (Singh and Trivedi 2019: 169). It is not illustrated in the report.

Animal Depictions on Other Terracotta Objects

There are other depictions of animals on various terracotta objects, in addition to the figurines that have already been highlighted. The phase and site-wise distribution of the various animal/bird/reptile/aquatic depictions on other terracotta objects has been listed in Table 2. The available number of the same sub-types excavated from different sites has also been given. The symbol (-) has been used to show the non-availability of those sub-types on that particular site. The following provides a condensed discussion of the same topic.

1. Animal/Bird Plaques

A variety of animal plaques were discovered over the course of the excavations. The specifics are listed below.

i). Horse-Rider Plaque

A plaque depiction a horse and rider was found at Adam. The horse-rider plaque of Adam is oval and appears to be marching to the left side, within a frame of the corresponding shape. Likewise, the horse is in a standing posture with good relief and all exuberance. It is an undecorated horse with rhythmic and masculine vigour (Nath 2016: 421). The rider is very thin, shown holding the reins and bent forwards and partially compressed within the frame of the plaque. However, the rider has worn an unclear turban-like headgear with a protuberance in the centre and *patra-kuṇḍala* (Fig. 11.1). According to the excavator, stylistically, the overall portrayal of the rider does not seem to belong to the Satavahana terracotta art. The theme represented on the plaque is indicative either of some extra-mundane narratives or secular games (Nath 1995:157-158). This specimen can be placed in Phase III.

The horse-rider is a common subject seen in the Satavahana terracotta pantheon, made in kaolin. A number of kaolin horse-riders are reported from Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76) and Ter (Deshpande 1999) excavations. Apart from terracotta, the horse-rider can be seen in the sculptural art of the Karle caves of the late first century CE (Dhavalikar 1977: 32). The horse-rider theme was also popular in North Indian terracotta art. Such horse-riders made of triangular flesh-rubbers were reported from Kausambi. For example, in one of the specimens, a soldier is riding a horse. He holds the whip in one hand and reins in the other. A hanging sword is also tied with his waist (Kala 1972: 28). Even in eastern India, the depictions of horse on plaques are reported from Chandraketugarh of West Bengal and dated to 100 to 300 CE (Sengupta et al. 2007: 252, 255).

ii). Elephant-Rider Plaque

A small fragment of the elephant-rider plaque depicting two human riders was recovered from the site of Adam (Nath 2016: 414). One rider is sitting near the head and another is a little far back on the back of the elephant. The riders' mouth, trunk, leg portion from the lower joint, and upper portion from their legs are missing. A fan-

Table 2: The phase and site-wise distribution of the various animal/bird/reptile/aquatic depictions on other terracotta objects

Sr. No.	Name of the Site	Phase	Animal/Bird/Reptile/Aquatic Depiction on Other Terracotta Objects					
			Plaque	Knob-cum-Lid	Votive Tank	Ornamental Objects (Pendants/Amulets/Ear ornaments)	Female with Parrot	Seals and Sealings
1	Paunar	I	-	Bird-headed (1)	-	-	-	-
2	Bhon	II	-	-	-	Centaur amulet (1)	-	-
		II	-	-	-	Yaksha holding Deer Amulet (1)	-	-
3	Adam	III	Horse-Rider (1)	-	Bird motif (1)	*Makarmukha* pendant (1)	(1)	Bull (3)
		III	Elephant-Rider (1)	-	-	Cow pendants (2)	-	Lion (1)
		III	-	-	-	Bull or *nandi* amulet (1)	-	-
4	Tharsa	III	-	-	-	Bull or *nandi* amulet (1)	-	-
		III	-	-	Snake (1)	-	-	-
5	Chandankheda	II-III	-	-	-	Lion on ear ornament (1)	-	-
6	Pauni	III	-	-	-	-	(1)	-
7	Kaundinyapura	III	-	-	-	-	-	Cock (1)
8	Nagardhan	IV	Tiger (1)	-	-	-	-	-
		IV	Peacock (1)	-	-	-	-	-
	Total		**04**	**01**	**02**	**08**	**02**	**05**

shaped right ear and a probable bell can also be seen on the elephant's neck (Fig. 11.2). It is the only terracotta elephant-rider plaque so far recovered from Vidarbha and can be placed in Phase III. The small plaques of elephant-riders were reported from a number of early historic sites in north and east India, such as sites like Kaushambi dated to the second century BCE (Kala 1980: 58-59; fig. 146), Chandraketugarh dated to the first century BCE to the first century CE (Bautze 1995: 36; pl. XXXVb) and Harinarayanpur dated to the first century CE to the third century CE (Sengupta et al. 2007: 207).

iii). Tiger Plaque

A miniature plaque of a tiger, circular in shape and red in colour, was recovered from the site of Nagardhan. It appears to run towards the left side but looks back to the right side. It is single- moulded; the rear side is plain and has a shallow depression. It has medium to fine fabric and is medium to well-fired. It belongs to Phase IV (Fig. 11.3) (Pardhi 2020).

iv). Peacock Plaque

A miniature plaque of peacock, oval in shape and red in colour, was recovered from the site of Nagardhan. A peacock is beautifully depicted on the plaque in a standing pose looking toward the right. The eyes and beak are finely marked. The front portion of the body is broken. Around its body it has an oval plain line with oblique lines showing the feathers of the peacock. It is single-moulded; the rear side is plain and has a shallow depression (Fig. 11.4). The fabric is medium to fine, and medium to well-fired. It belongs to Phase IV (Pardhi 2020).
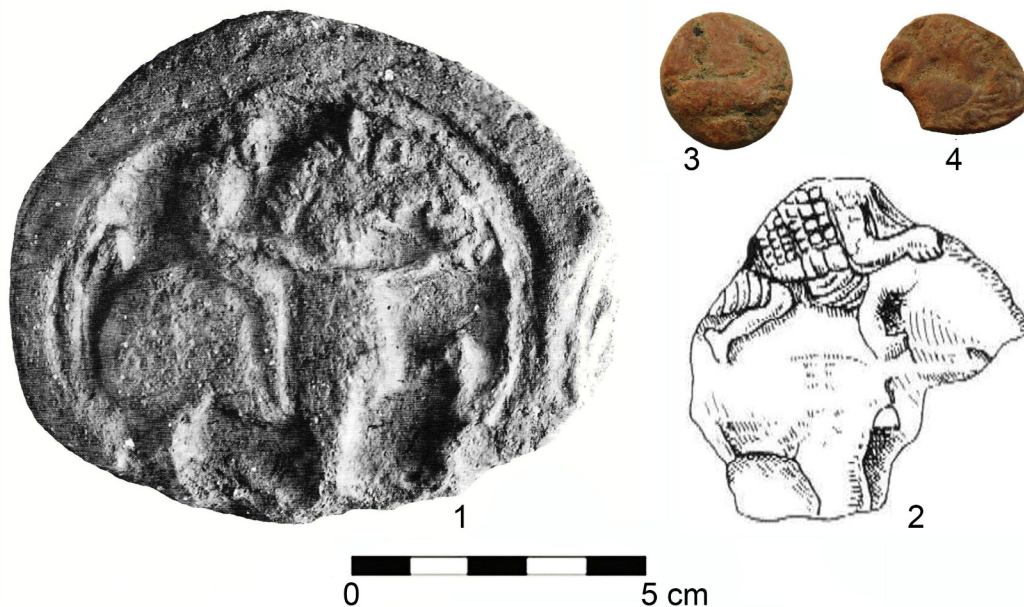

Fig. 11: Animal/bird plaques, (1) horse rider and (2) Elephant rider from Adam; both from Phase III (After Nath 1995, 2016); (3) tiger and (4) peacock from Nagardhan; both from Phase IV (Courtesy: MSDAM and DC)

2. Animal/Bird Headed Knob-cum-Lid

The evidence of decorated lids with a finial of birds as well as animal motifs in terracotta and metals has been reported from the Early Iron Age culture of the Vidarbha region. It is enigmatic that from the Early Historic period of the region, such decorated knob-cum-lids of bird or animal motifs made in terracotta or metal are not seen. At the site of Paunar, one terracotta fragment of the lid with a bird-headed knob was found during excavation. This can be dated to Phase I. Both eyes have perforation and decoration of incised horizontal lines by nails over the head, and the jaw is projected and round at the end (Fig.12.1). Another specimen of the lid with a bird-head like knob was reported from the surface collection at the same site (Deo and Dhavalikar 1968: 89-90). It has tapering sides, is simple in nature, and has a beak and head (Fig. 12.2). Both birds are unidentified.

Several sites in India have the occurrence of lid-cum-knob, but mostly it has a simple domical top and rarely appears with the animal-headed or bird-headed knob. Sometimes it is decorated with lotus and other leaf designs. Based on the knob, no evolutionary or chronological order could be found (Margabandhu 1985: 128-129).

3. Animals Depicted on Votive Tanks

A fragment of a rectangular votive tank was reported from the surface at Chandankheda. On the bottom surface of the tank is an aquatic or reptile animal, probably a snake with its face broken (Fig. 13.1), which may belong to Phase III (Pardhi 2017: 133).

Adam's rectangular votive tank fragments show thick walls and rounded corners. The corners of the tank are adorned with bird motifs. It is unevenly fired with coarse fabric and is red in colour. It belongs to Phase III (Fig. 13.2) (Nath 2016: 458).

Fig. 12: Bird-headed knob (1-2) from Paunar (Courtesy: RTMNU)

4. Animal Depicted on Ornamental Objects

Some of the ornamental objects like pendants, amulets and ear ornaments have depictions of animal figurines. These depictions of ornamental objects either have magico-religious significance or as might have been simply used for fashion. The details are as follows.

a). Pendants

Pendants are generally found in simple and conventional shapes and were used in the setting of necklaces (Margabandhu 1985; Deo 2000). They were reported from various excavations in India. It is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether a particular pendant has an amuletic value or is used for artistic convenience (Margabandhu 1985: 209). Two *makarmukha* or crocodile and cow-shaped animal pendants were reported from the Adam excavations.

i). *Makarmukha*

The *Makarmukha* terracotta pendant was first reported from Adam in the Vidarbha region, whereas in the rest of Maharashtra, it was reported from Nevasa and Bhokardan. The Adam specimen is a single and broken jaw found from Period V (150 BCE to 250 CE) (Fig. 14.1). The excavator identified this specimen as a pendant (Nath 2016: 340), whereas generally, *makarmukha* is identified as an amulet. This specimen belongs to Phase III.

 The Nevasa (100 BCE to 200 CE) (Deo 1966: 164-166; Margabandhu 1985: 225) and Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974: 140, fig. 25.181) specimens are made of double mould and consist of a pair of addorsed *makara* with an open mouth and perforation made in the centre. The Bhokardan specimen has been reported from Period II (from the third century CE onwards) (Deo and Gupte 1974). However, from Paithan, a *makarmukha* mould made of slate stone was found, which has each head on either side (Morwanchikar 1985: 142, pl. VIIIe). Along with these, two double mould pieces were
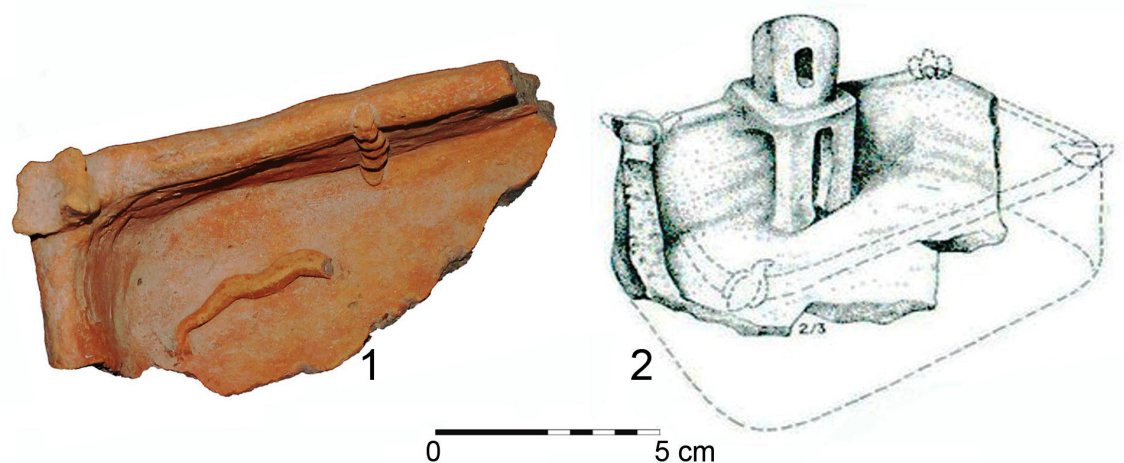

Fig. 13: Votive tanks, (1) snake figurine from Chandankheda (Courtesy RTMNU and MSDAM); (2) bird figurines from Adam (After Nath 2016); both are from Phase III

found from Kondapur. One of them is the face of makara, and the other is the other side of the pillar-like strut (Margabandhu 1985: 225).

The makara is a huge animal that lives in water. It is often used in Indian architecture and as decoration on headdresses, amulets, earrings, and beads, as well as in gargoyles (Margabandhu 1985: 225; Deo 2000: 86). In many of the Indian stone images, the motif of *makara* is used in jewellery and is well-known by the name of *Makarakundalas* (Deo 2000: 86). The Bodhisattva figure from the Gandhara School of art wears a hara with a pendant made of horned or non-horned makaras on either side of jewels (Suran 1976: 292). Apart from terracotta, it has also been found in stones like agate from north Indian sites such as Rajghat and a specimen made of banded agate is preserved in Allahabad Museum (Deo 2000: 86).

ii). Cow

Two cow pendants were reported from Adam (Nath 2016), but a detailed description is absent. Both of These specimens belongs to Phase III.

b). Amulets

Several archaeological excavations and research projects have shed light on the ornamented amulets (Margabandhu 1972: 270-279). The English word 'amulet' is derived from the Arabic word 'Hamulet', which means freight, burden, and things carried. An amulet is an object worn on the neck as a part of a necklace by a person for some magico-religious reason or for magical benefits or magical powers (Margabandhu 1985; Deo 2000). The early Vedic and Brahmanical literature tells us about these rituals and witchcraft and also mentions that the amulet became a very valuable antiquity in ancient times (Deo 2000). People must have used amulets for different purposes, such as to protect the family from evil or ghosts; to cure disease; to gain luck; to counter-charms; to give strength; for general protection to the possessor; or to defend one from specified dangers or misfortunes (Budge 1978; Margabandhu 1985; Deo 2000).

Amulets have been unearthed in the excavations of various sites in the Vidarbha region. The specimens are found in various shapes, like human, centaur (animal and human), and bull or *Nandi*. A *nandi*/bull amulet each was found from Adam and Tharsa, whereas two human and centaur types were found from Bhon.

i). *Nandi*/Bull

The bull or *nandi* amulet was one of the important and popular motifs during ancient times. It is sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists. The early Vedic literature mentions the bull as a symbol of power and virility. Whereas, in Buddhism, it stands for the asterism Taurus, in which Buddha was born (Margabandhu 1985; Deo 2000). It was used as a part of the necklace.

From the Vidarbha region, two specimens were found in the Adam and Tharsa excavations. Based on decoration pattern and manufacturing technique, both have been assigned to Phase III. The Adam specimen is highly decorated and in a sitting posture with a beaded base and perforation across the long axis (Fig. 14.2) (Nath 2016: 415).

Tharsa *nandi* is featureless and miniature, with a sitting posture and flat bottom. The head is round from the side, and there is a deeper straight-line groove, dividing it into two parts (Fig. 14.3). This might have been used to tie the amulet with thread.

The early historic sites adjacent to Vidarbha, like Kondapur (Dikshit 1952b), Nevasa (Sankalia et al. 1960), Ter (Chapekar 1969), Bhokardan (Deo and Gupte 1974) and Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76; Morwanchikar 1985: 143, pl. IXc) have also thrown light on such specimens. All these Deccan specimens have similar stylistic features, such as being in a seated position with a decorated or without a decorated pedestal. It has a high hump and two, or sometimes single, chains. One is passed from behind the hump and the second is around the neck. The bull or *nandi* are generally made in kaolin as well as simple clay, and pressed in the double mould technique (Dikshit 1952b; Sankalia et al. 1960; Chapekar 1969; Deo and Gupte 1974; Dhavalikar 1975-76; Morwanchikar 1985). The Nevasa specimen from Period IV of Early Historic (150 BCE to 50 BCE) (Sankalia et al. 1960), Ter specimen from Period II of Indo-Roman (first century CE - third century CE) (Chapekar 1969), and Bhokardan from Period II of Post-Satavahana-early Medieval (third c. CE onwards) (Deo and Gupte 1974) were found. The occurrence of bull amulets

Fig. 14: Pendant (1) Makarmukha and amulet (2) Nandi from Adam (After Nath 2016); both are from Phase III; (3) Nandi from Tharsa, Phase III (Courtesy: RTMNU); (4) Centaur from Bhon, Phase II (After Deotare et al. 2007)

in the Deccan region began to appear in the Pre-Satavahana period, became popular during the Satavahana period, and even continued further. Bull amulets from Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76; Morwanchikar 1985) were discovered on the surface. They are both stylistically and technically similar to the specimens found at Nevasa, Kondapur and Ter, which suggests that these can also belong to the Satavahana period.

Outside the Deccan, sites like Bhir mound of Taxila (Beck 1941), Kaushambi (Deo 2000) and Vaishali (IAR 1958-59) have also produced evidence of the same, but none of these is in terracotta; all are made either of stone or metal. All the specimens on the above sites are made of carnelian, as well as crystal and gold, respectively. The period of the Taxila (Beck 1941) specimens is 300 BCE to 200 BCE, whereas the Vaishali specimen belongs to the Kushan-Gupta period (IAR 1958-59).

ii). Centaur (Therianthropomorphic)

In ancient Indian art, the depiction of therianthropomorphic, i.e., a combination of animal and human forms, 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). The representation of a horse body with the human torso of a male or female and carrying a male or female rider has been identified as *kinnara-mithuna*, a pair of the centaur (Agrawala 1936: 32, 1941: 5; Krishnadasa 1942: 43-44; Srivastava 1983: 127). There are two types of *kinnaras* mentioned in the *Visnudharmottara*: one with the human head joined to a horse body and the other with the horse head joined to a human body (Srivastava 1991: 14-17; Srivastava 1996: 104; Jose 1999: 114). Both forms are available in Indian art.

A specimen of the centaur of *kinnara-mithuna* was reported from the Vidarbha region at Bhon (Deotare 2007; Deotare et al. 2007) excavations from Phase II in the form of a double mould amulet. It is a uniquely decorated amulet of the *kinnara-mithuna* type, in which an animal is shown in sitting posture and a female bust with the male rider. The head of the female is missing. The excavator identified the animal of Bhon as a lion (Deotare et al. 2007: 184), but the animal's hoof appears like an elephant. On the hindquarter of the animal is a depiction of a flower or rosette (Fig. 14.4), which can be compared typologically with the Rajghat terracotta *kinnara-mithuna* plaque and the Mathura specimen carved on stone (Krishnadasa 1942: 43-44, pl. II, fig. 3). On the back of the Bhon animal, there is a saddle (*paryanapatta*) fastened by a broad double striped band. The saddle probably has a beaded border, which can be seen in the form of a descending order.

The female specimen from Bhon wears a beaded necklace and a decorated diamond-shaped lower garment, probably secured at the waist by a beaded girdle with a circular rosette in the centre. Similarly, seven circular discs like beads attached to the two-string necklace of the male rider can be compared with the Rajghat *kinnara-mithuna* female girdle and necklace of both (Agrawala 1936: 32). The Bhon male rider wears a *dhoti* or *kachchha* secured on the waist by a broad *kamarbanda* with circular ear ornaments.

The earliest evidence of a centaur figure in material form was found in the Sirkap mound of Taxila and can be dated to the fourth-fifth century BCE. It is depicted on the oval- shaped seal made of milk-white glass. The figure is in profile, rendered as running to the right side and endowed with a pair of wings too. In this figure, a male torso is

attached to the horse's body, but the head is missing (Marshall 1951: 681, pl. 207. 14; Jose 1999: 115). Similar centaur figures are depicted in the sculptures of Sanchi Stupas. The railing pillar of Stupa No. 2 depicts a horse body with a female torso and is carrying a male rider on her back. In another part of the same railing, there is a representation of a centaur or a couple, having similarities like above. The only difference is that here the position is reversed, and a male torso is attached to the horse's body, whereas the female is riding on his back (Marshall and Foucher 1940, pl. 75, 89, figs. 7b, 81b; Krishnadasa 1942: 43, pl. 1, figs. 1-2; Srivastava 1983: 127, fig. 42.1-2). It has also been observed in the stone slab of the Mathura Museum (Krishnadasa 1942: 43). Apart from these, a horse body and human torso but without a rider, centaurs are observed on the railing of the Bodhgaya and also *toraṇa* architecture from Kankali Tila, Mathura dated to the mid of the second century BCE to the first century BCE (Chakravarty 1997, pl. 26, 41).

The earliest terracotta centaur or *kinnara-mithuna* types of figurines were reported from Mathura and Rajghat. Both are circular plaques (Agrawala 1936: 32, fig. 37, 1941: 5, pl. IV, fig. 13), and both are partially broken. The Mathura specimen is depicted in the circular plaque with a beaded border and *kinnara* and *kinnari* in an *alingana* pose (i.e., both are putting their hands on each other's shoulders). Both are profusely decorated with ornaments. There is a depiction of the dwarfish figure near the hind legs of the horse and below the legs of the *kinnara* (Agrawala 1936: 32; Srivastava 1996: 105). Similarly, the Rajghat specimen has also depicted the *kinnara-mithuna*, a pair of centaurs in the hollow circular plaque, which appears like a flattened casket closed with a beaded border on all sides. The male is riding on the horse and the bust of the female is shown. The male is holding a bunch of leaves and fruit in his right hand, whereas his left hand is hidden behind the female. Both the hands of the female *kinnari* are folded in *namaskarmudra*. Both are profusely decorated with ornaments and headgear (Agrawala 1941: 5; Srivastava 1996: 104). The centaurs of Mathura are riding towards the right side, whereas the Rajghat one towards the left side. A square-shaped plaque of a centaur or *kinnara-mithuna* was reported from Ahichchhatra. In this, both are profusely ornamented with elaborate headdresses. However, a male is holding a bow in his left hand and his right hand is fondling the chin of the female. On the hindquarter of the horse is the side-girth (*kakshyabandha*), adorned by a medallion (*chakraka*) (Agrawala 1948: 170). All specimens of Mathura, Rajghat and Sanchi can be dated to the first century BCE to the first century CE, whereas the Ahichchhatra specimen can be dated to the third century CE to the fifth-sixth century CE (Agrawala 1948; Srivastava 1983; Srivastava 1996: 104-105).

A similar *kinnara-mithuna* plaque, made in terracotta, found in an unknown place in Uttar Pradesh was observed in the collection of the National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome and, based on style, is dated to the first century BCE (Srivastava 1996: 105). This unidentified centaur has a horse body with a female torso and a male rider on her back; the female is shown turning to a male and offering a bowl (Jose 1999: 31, fig. 2.h).

A double-moulded *kinnara-mithuna* round plaque was found at Lakha-Dhora, Ganganagar district, Rajasthan. It has a horse body and a female head with the male rider on her back, and behind the centaur, there is a standing male devotee in *anjali-mudra*. On the plaque's reverse is a decoration with a square diamond design and a border with a bead design. Both are ornamented. Based on treatment and expression, this can be dated to the fifth century CE (Saran 1980-81: 166-168; pl.I; Sant 1997, pl. LV).

The depiction of such figurines in amulets must be a religious or related to mythological motif or belief (Margabandhu 1985: 221).

iii). Yaksha Holding Animal

A complete terracotta amulet of a standing human figure was reported from Bhon. It is perforated through the shoulders, wears somewhat different lower garments which are simply worn around the loins, possibly a *kachchha*. However, it is short and ends well near the knees. The eyes are wide and bulging; the nose is broad and flat; and he wears a beaded necklace. His facial features are somewhat gruesome and because of that excavator identified it as a *yaksha* (Deotare et al. 2007: 184). The legs are slightly bent and have a flat pedestal; both hands are folded and holding an animal, probably a deer, over the belly. The deer is in a sitting posture and has a long neck. The deer is looking forward and both front legs are folded back (Fig 15.1). Other details are not clear. The present specimen can be assigned to Phase II.

A similar type of facial feature is seen in terracotta *yaksha* specimens from Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76: 68). Stylistically, the Nevasa specimens' bending position and folded hands are similar to the Bhon specimen except for holding the animal over the belly, whereas Nevasa specimen is holding a round object (Sankalia et al. 1960: 367). The Nevasa and Bhon specimens are *yaksha* amulets and have perforation through the shoulders. Both wear loose tunic (*kurta*) like upper garments with folds that can be seen on both hands of figurines. There is another human-shaped amulet or pendant, which is in a seated posture with upraised hands, found at Brahmapuri but made in lapis lazuli (Sankalia and Dikshit 1952: 91). Another dwarfish *yaksha* figurine made in copper was found from Adam. His headrest over the shoulder and facial features are unclear. He has a similar bending position like the above and he wears a *dhoti*, his hands below the elbow are not defined. No ornamentation and ears are marked prominently. It has no perforation and is found in Period IV (Nath 2016: 500-501, fig. 13.8.5) of Phase I.

Fig. 15: Amulet (1) Yaksha holding animal from Bhon, Phase II (After Sawant 2012); ear ornament (2) sitting lion depicted on karnaveshtana from Chandankheda, Phase II-III (Courtesy RTMNU and MSDAM)

Apart from Vidarbha and the rest of Maharashtra, it has also been reported in many other excavated sites such as Taxila (Beck 1941), Ahichchhatra (Dikshit 1952a), Vaishali (IAR 1958-59), Ujjain (IAR 1956-57), Bhita (Marshall 1915), Sonpur (Sinha and Verma 1977), Nagda (IAR 1955-56) and Prabhas Patan (IAR 1956-57). The human-shaped amulets of a male or female are made much less in terracotta, whereas they are found more in stones and some in ivory, bone, shell and gold (Margabandhu 1985; Deo 2000). The occurrences of human-shaped amulets start from the sixth-fifth century BCE and continued till the third century CE (Deo 2000).

c) Ear Ornaments

A beautiful terracotta ear ornament was found during a surface exploration at the site of Chandankheda. This type of ear ornament has been associated with the *karnaveshtana* and is mentioned in the *Ramayana* (Sivaramamurti 1956: 109). It appears as a clay roll twisted into two trapezoidal parts shaped into two square ends. It is moulded and red in colour; the surface is coarse and has some cracks; the fabric is coarse to medium and well-baked. It has numerous symbols. Among all, there is a depiction of a seated lion on both sides with a robust body and a shaggy mane; and looking towards the front with both the legs stretched forward and the tail lifted upward. The facial features are not clearly visible, and both the ears are in a raised fashion and round in shape. The minute details of the legs are shown clearly. The mouth was opened and probably in a roaring stance; the lower jaw is broken, whereas the upper jaw is well preserved. It is enclosed with a border of a single beaded or dotted line (Fig. 15.2). On the left side, along with the male figure, there is a similar seated lion, but most of the portions are chipped off. Only the rear portion, lifted tail, and left ear are visible. It is also similar to the seated lion on the right side and enclosed within a border of a single beaded or dotted line (Pardhi et al. 2018: 858). Based on the stylistic ground, the present specimens can be assigned between Phase II and Phase III.

A similar depiction of a lion on one side and an elephant on the other can be seen in the gold specimen of the Metropolitan Museum, USA; they are in standing posture and fully decorated. It was found in Andhra Pradesh and made of gold using the repousse technique, which is the classical technique used for making such jewellery and objects light in weight (Postel 1989: 34-35). A depiction of a lion on this ear ornament symbolises power. The Buddha is reckoned as 'The Lion of the Sakya race' (*sakya-Simha*). In the *Kunala Jataka* (No. 536), a queen is described as wearing *Kundalas* (ear-ring) in the shape of lion heads (Deo 2000: 84).

5. Female with Parrot

A fragment of a female figurine shown with a parrot was found at Adam. A parrot sits on her left hand, looking towards her left breast; the parrot is shown with a beaded necklace, and the rear portion is broken. The parrot has a prominent pointed and curved beak and eye (Nath 2016: 410) (Fig. 16). A similar figurine was found in the exploration of Pauni and is currently in the personal collection of a villager. The female figurine is made by using a double mould and has the same depiction. The parrot is in the left hand and a bunch of mango-like fruits are in the right hand. The portion below the waist is not

clear because the villager has applied cement over it (Naranje 2013: 364; Pardhi 2017: 263-264).

It is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* that birds are related to either as a food item or as a source of recreation. In Sanskrit, the parrot is called *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). These references indicate that in ancient India, ladies used to sport with the birds. The earliest example of a terracotta female holding a parrot was reported in the Mauryan period from Hastinapura. During the Sunga period, this theme was found in almost all the Sunga 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 in her left hand has also been reported from Kausambi and dated to the 1st century BCE (Kala 1950: pl. XXV-A, 1980).

Even male figurines held parrots during the Kushan periods (Srivastava 1996: 177). The Satavahanas were contemporary with the Kushans and ruled the Deccan region of India. Due to trade activity, this theme travelled from north to south and got more popular. Beautiful terracotta or kaolin male and female figurines holding a bunch of mangoes in the right hand and a parrot sitting in the left hand were found at a number of the Satavahana sites. Such parallels can be found in Ter (Chapekar 1969: 88; fig 28.42) and Paithan (Dhavalikar 1975-76: 65; pl. XXIV, fig. 6; Morwanchikar 1985: pl. XIII-d).

6. Animal/Bird depictions on Seals and Sealings

Some seals and sealings were reported from excavated sites like Adam, Kaundinyapura and Mansar. They bear animal motifs along with legends that have religious significance.

Many terracotta seals and sealings from the Adam excavations bear animal motifs among. A bull is commonly seen on all sealings except one, which has the depiction of a lion. A partially damaged hemispherical shaped sealing has a standing bull showing the front portion of the head in the centre of the device; the portion below the snout is damaged, and the legend is not clear (Fig. 17.1). According to the excavator, this type of bull arrangement can be seen on later Kshatrapa coins and also on the coins of central India. But, based on fragmented legend and its palaeography, the sealing may not be attributed to the Kshatrapas (Nath 2016: 605). A well-preserved sealing made of medium-fine clay and burnt to red was found at Adam. It is embellished with Prakrit legend, and in the middle, a couchant *nandi* is depicted to the right, whose snout is secured by a cord (Nath 2016: 612-614). A sitting humped bull with unclear facial features is looking towards the front (Fig. 17.2). Another interesting sealing of *Mahasenapati* has been reported, which has a depiction of three auspicious symbols, viz., twelve spoked *chakras* in the upper part, a squatting *vrshabha* in the centre, a *shankha* on lower portion, and a legend arranged outwardly (Fig. 17.3) (Nath 2016: 605-607). An oval clay lump bears the circular incuse sealing of Skanda (shri) Amatya Putra. The legend is arranged inwardly, and the central device represents a prancing lion on the right side (Nath 2016: 612). The lion has a saggy mane with a tail lifted upwards in a round posture. The facial details are not clear (Fig. 17.4).

A terracotta seal was found from Kaundinyapura, which bears the legend '*Dhanapatisa*' along with the figurine of a majestic cock in an aggressive posture. In front

of it has a *dhvajastambha* topped by a *trishula* (Fig. 17.5). However, the cock is a symbol of '*Skanda*' and is variously portrayed on Indian seals; it is dated to the second century CE (Phase III) and has Brahmi script written on it. The seal is made of dark black clay; the edges are cracked, as it is not well levigated and is ill-fired (Dikshit 1968). The deity Skanda is called Kartikeya, 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 the seal suggests this seal has religious importance and can be associated with Shaivism.

At the base of the northern row of the shrines of the Vakataka (275 CE to 550 CE) level at Mansar, there was a finding of a factory site for sealings during excavation. Most sealings recovered during excavation are semi-baked and in different stages of preparation. The script used for the legend is box-headed Brahmi letters, and some portions of the sealings bear a symbol of an elephant, which probably shows great importance to the eastern Vakatakas. Among them, several clay sealings bear the legends '*Pravareshwarasya*' and '*Shri Jaivirdhi*' and some have animal figurines (Joshi and Sharma 2000: 130). All of them belong to Phase IV. But detailed descriptions are unpublished.

Concluding Remarks

The observations suggest that a wide variety of animals were depicted in the terracotta medium in the Early Historic period of Vidarbha. Some regular specimens have been continuously reported from the third century BCE to the sixth century CE. They are bull, elephant and horse figurines. However, the occurrence of elephant and horse is more concentrated in Phase III. The frequency is very low before and after Phase III, whereas bulls and horses are seen more or less throughout the Early Historic period. The representation of the bull in terracotta throughout the Early Historic period suggests
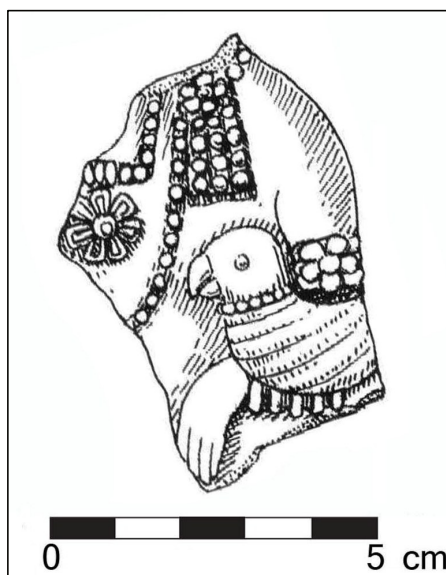

Fig. 16: Parrot sitting on the left hand of female from Adam, Phase III (After Nath 2016)

Fig. 17: Animal depictions on the seal and sealings (1-3) Nandi and (4) lion from Adam (After Nath 2016); (5) cock from Kaundinyapura (After Dikshit 1968); all are from Phase III

that it was employed in agricultural operations and was basic to the necessities of life (see Table 1).

Before the third century BCE, the occurrence of animal figurines was very low, but later it increased, and from the first century BCE onwards, a variety of animal forms were produced. Animal forms such as buffalo, ram, dog, pig, sheep, cow, monkey, lion, tiger, sparrow, pigeon, duck, snake, fish and tortoise were first reported from the various excavations of the Vidarbha region. The fabric of all these figurines is mostly coarse to medium, and very few specimens show medium to well type of fabric. Compared to Phases I, IV and V, the fabric of Phases II and III is superior. The double-mould figurines of Phase III are made of kaolin, which is pure clay. During Phases VI and V, the impurities in the fabric increased. Artists did not pay enough attention in the preparation of clay, resulting in figurines being coarse in appearance.

Most of the early historic handmade animal figurines reported from the excavations of the Vidarbha region are archaic in appearance. Even after the introduction of the double mould technique in Phase III for producing the human figurine, the animal figurines, except for horses and elephants, were produced by hand. A good number of double-moulded horse figurines were reported from the Adam, Pauni and Chandankheda excavations. A few moulded fragments of elephant figurines were reported from Adam. They are all of high artistic merit. But at the same time, artists continued to produce handmade horse and elephant figurines. The only reason behind these archaic looking animal forms probably represents some specific needs of society. They could have been socio-religious. At the same time, moulded animal figurines were probably used for house decoration and as toys for children's amusement. Some bull figurines with perforations on their legs indicate their use as wheeled toys by children.

An example of a partly wheel and partly handmade horse figurine was reported from Adam, where the body is hollow and made on a wheel while the head is handmade. There are perforations below the body. Another small elephant with a pedestal has perforations suggesting that other animals were also used as wheel toys along with the bull. The number of terracotta wheels reported from the excavations also suggests their use as wheel toys. During the Early Medieval and Medieval periods, a number of partly wheel-made and partly handmade bull, horse and elephant figurines were reported from the various excavations. Among all, an example of a bull figurine with a hollow body and a handmade leg with perforation was reported from the Nagardhan excavation. Based on this evidence, it is clearly understood that the use of these perforated animals was as wheeled toys. Apart from this, other examples come from the same horizon with the handmade head, and wheel-made body and legs. This can indicate their religious use. Even today, in eastern Vidarbha, these types of animal figurines with the same techniques are made in terracotta and worshipped by the tribal communities. The ornamentation of these present animal figurines is done through applique methods comparable to those used for the ornamentation of ancient animals. It shows that the age-old tradition has continued in the Vidarbha region.

Likewise, some other terracotta animal figurines were reported from the Paunar excavations. The horse figurines of Phase III and IV are lime coated and red washed, whereas the bull figurines of Phase V are lime coated, and over it has a red ochre coating, suggesting their religious use. Even today, in Vidarbha, bull festivals, locally called *'Pola'*, are celebrated by the farmers of Maharashtra in general and Vidarbha in

particular. During this festival, painted clay bulls are made and worshipped by the farmers. The painted horse is still made of clay in both baked and unbaked varieties and is worshipped by the tribal community in this region.

The depiction of animals on ornamental objects suggested purity and religious importance as well as their popularity in society. The depiction of yaksha image with animal and centaur of therianthropomorphic, i.e., a combination of animal and the human form can be assigned to religious or mythological motif or belief or an imaginary realm or a world of fantasy.

Seals and sealings having animal figurines indicate the symbolic representation of political as well as religious importance. As previously mentioned, three auspicious symbols—a squatting *vrishabha* in the centre, a cluster of twelve spoked chakras in the upper half, and a shankha in the lower part—are depicted on one of *Mahasenapati*'s sealings, recovered from the site of Adam. These symbols might be used to convey *Mahasenapati* Janasiri's position in terms of religion and politics. The depiction of *nandi* or *vrshabha* is cognisance of Lord Shiva whereas *shankha* and *chakra* are the attributes of Lord Vishnu. It can be said that the *Mahasenapati* Janasiri was a follower of both the religious traditions, or he may have been trying to unify them through symbolic representation in one place.

A specimen of the snake indicates that serpent worship is one of the most ancient forms of religion in India. The *nagapanchami* is a famous serpent worship festival observed throughout the country. It is believed that serpent worship is especially carried out for prosperity and offspring. It has a prominent place in the literature, folklore and art of India.

From the Mauryan period to the Satavahana/Kushan period, the depiction of a parrot with a lady is a popular subject in terracotta art. It was one of the pastime sports of the ladies. During ancient times, a lady holding a bunch of fruits in her right hand and a parrot sitting in her left hand was a popular theme all over the country. In the Deccan, during Phase III, it was more popular, but in Phase IV, it was completely absent. At the same time, in Phase IV, it was popular in North India and reported from several excavations.

The overall discussion suggests that terracotta animal figurines played an important role during the Early Historic period in Vidarbha and further continued more or less in this region. The phase-wise distribution of the animal figurines suggested significant variations over time and space.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

RTMNU: Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj, Nagpur University
MSDAM: Maharashtra State Department of Archaeology and Museum
DC: Deccan College

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