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Male Gazing Hariti: An Introspective Study of Hariti Figures in Gandhāran Buddhist Art

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Abstract: Female representation within Gandhāran art is one of the least touched subjects in archaeological and Buddhist studies in Pakistan. This paper examines the most reverend deity, Hariti, in sculptural art of Gandhāra. It is aimed to deconstruct the already established significance and meanings associated with her image. By deviating away from androcentric modes of analysis, this paper employs 'gaze theory' to study the representation of her upper body. This paper utilizes Laura Mulvey's idea of "male gaze" to study the portrayal of her breasts, their exposure, presence of male figures and her facial expressions. The paper reveals that such impression of Hariti's upper body was meant to feed the scopophilic desire of the male devotees. It further explores that lascivious artistic impression of her body set an unattainable ideal body image for its female spectators. The paper concludes that the artistic fashioning of Hariti's body was primarily created by males, and for the pleasure of male audience.

Keywords: Gandhāran Art, Gender, Hariti, Male Gaze, Scopophilia.

Introduction

The ancient Gandhāra, as the modern Vale of Peshawar, not only served as a major node on connecting routes between India, Central Asia and China and beyond, but also stands as one of the richest sources of Buddhist art and civilization (Zwalf 1979). Geographically dwelled in North Western part of modern Pakistan (Behrendt 2007), the area has been a centre of attention of local and foreign excavators, archaeologists, historians and art-historians for almost two hundred years now. However, the investigation of Gandhāran art through feminist perspective is still foreign to archaeologists and art-historians of Pakistan. Due to adherence with outdated research paradigms and old theoretical approaches opted in Pakistan (Zahir 2020), female representation in sculptural art is either condoned or is addressed and analysed in benevolent and rather reserved manner (Anwar and Hameed 2022). Therefore, this paper presents a feministic reading of Hariti figures excavated from archaeological sites in Gandhāra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and presently displayed at the three Pakistani Museums, namely the Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (SSAQ Museum) at the University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Lahore Museum, and Peshawar Museum, Peshawar. The present paper investigates the corporal identifiers of three Hariti sculptures and scrutinizes their visual representation.

By studying the artistic portrayal of bodily proportions, facial expressions, of three different sculptures of Hariti and sons, this paper adduce lewd portraiture of upper body of Hariti as an erotic sight primarily created by and for male spectators. In addition to that, this paper questions the established ideal image of sacrificial motherhood of Hariti for women and derives out the implicit connotations for its female spectators. This study further encourages and draws attention towards other innovative ways to analyse the Hariti and female figures as represented within the artistic traditions of the Gandhāra Art.

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Archaeology and Gender

Archaeological studies have been androcentric for ages (Conkey and Spector 1984: 1-38) and the gender-oriented research in archaeology, for most of the times, is not implicitly feministic (Spencer-Wood 2007). Gender has been least touched subject in archaeology till this date (Bender 2016; Conkey & Gero 1991). The first paper dealing with gender overtly in archaeological studies appeared in 1984 (Conkey and Spector 1984: 1–38) and feminist approach held roots quite late in archaeology. Although feminist framework was opted for research, it focused upon highlighting the role of females in domestic (Clarke 1991; Walker 1983) and public lives (Havelock 1982; Kampen 1982). Females were mostly interpreted as subdued sexual and reproductive bodies (Conkey and Spector 1984: 3-13; Nelson 1990: 16) where sexuality and sexual identities remained untouched (Spencer-Wood: 2007). Thus, the only motive of feminist research was to make female figure visible (Engelstad 1991: 503). With that, a strange 'add women and stir' (Bunch 1987) style was adopted where conjugal roles and feminine presence was mentioned in male centric structures. Even if feminist lens was considered and adopted by analysts, still the theoretical approaches were not defined (Spencer-Wood 2007).

Similarly, art history, too, condoned interpretations of gender performance and studied art and artists in terms of style and technical methods (Boardman 1998). In ancient art, most of the gendered representation was conceived through burials, rock art, figurines, sculptures and paintings where people were mostly depicted as performing idealized gender roles (Brumfiel 2007). In research, gender was ignored because its role was assumed as obvious and same everywhere even in antiquity (Wylie 1991). However, in recent years Dyfri Williams studied art scenes of males and females performing simple activities on vases from Athens (Williams 1983). Instead of acknowledging women's presence in art and activities, she dealt with the conundrum of their representation in postmodern context (Williams 1983: 105). Following Williams, Sutton also analysed Athenian vase paintings from 4th to 6th centuries CE through female perception where they presented females as having power in relationships and wedding preparations (Sutton 1992: 7-21). It was concluded that paintings of naked bathers were essentially made for women (Sutton 1992: 21-4). Similarly, representation of nude female in Egyptian art was analysed as pleasurable for men (Meskell and Joyce 2003). Although feminist readings of art is in progress (Spencer-Wood 2007), and researchers are paying heed to portrayal of gender in various settings and environments such as in figurines, grand sculptures and in art for commoners (Brumfiel 1996; Joyce 2000) but most of the work has dealt with classical archaeology or in the west by western researchers while other parts of the world's history and artworks remained untouched, especially the Gandhāran Buddhist Art in Pakistan has not been addressed to the slightest by the Pakistani academics and practitioners. In fact, archaeological literature, by primarily male Pakistani archaeologists, is devoid of females and, hence, the past investigated, imagined, interpreted and recreated through archaeological evidence is without women, children and other genders.

Females in Buddhism

Since gender-based analysis remained untouched in classical and western art history for a long time (Conkey and Spector 1984; Spencer-Wood 2007; Wylie 1991), it received similar kind of treatment in Buddhist and Gandhāran art as well[2]. It is believed that there is no gender discrimination between males and females in Buddhism since Buddha granted permission to women to join monastic life and it is considered as a revolutionary and advanced step for its times (Chung 1999; Tsomo 2020: 5). In addition to that, Buddha regarded laywomen, more than monastic ladies, who provided food to him and monks, brought solace to ill people and treated others nicely on different occasions (Lang: 2019: 35). Moreover, the documented accounts of Ta Hui Tsung Kao (also known as Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163 CE) and the master of Chinese Rinzai Zin School of Buddhism), the *dharma* coparcener of Yüanwu K'och'in of the Lin Chi pedigree, showcase the equality and fair attitude towards both binary genders (Ch'iu-Kuei 1990: 63–74; Levering 1992:

139). However, Buddhist texts and teachings also reflect condescending tendencies towards females (Grünhagen 2011: 114; Paul 1985).

It is, per contra, believed that toxicity towards females in Buddhism is borrowed from Brahmanism (Grünhagen 2011: 103-4; Rowan 2002: 118-122). Sponberg has pointed out four kinds of attitudes towards females in Buddhism that includes *Institutional Androcentrism* (Sponberg 1993: 13), *Ascetic Misogyny* (Sponberg 1993: 18) and *Soteriological Androgyny* (Sponberg 1993: 24) along with '*Soteriological Inclusiveness*' of females in earlier Buddhism where females had an equal access to religion as men (Sponberg 1993: 8). Paul states, "Like Judaism and Christianity, Buddhism is an overwhelmingly male-created institution dominated by a patriarchal power structure" (Paul 1985: xix). In *Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, the followers are warned of female obsession and her seducing capacity in harsh words (Bodhi 2012: 683) In Buddhist teachings female body is often compared with lavatory room (Kritzer 2014: 91; Lang 2003: 166) as can be seen in translation of Chandrakirti (a 7th century CE Indian Buddhist philosopher of the *Madhyamika* School of Buddhism) advice to travellers where he described female body in its horrid material reality (Lang 2003: 166).

The womb, an essential organ of female body, is described as "…putrid with semen, blood, filth and pus" (Kritzer 2014: 73).The accepted kind of female existence in Buddhism is presented in the form of mother but in many accounts even motherhood is enshrouded in suffering and impurity as the development of foetus is explained in sickly manner in *Garbhavakrantinirdesa Sūtra (an important Buddhist text in the Mahayana tradition)* (Lang 2003: 51-52) where the foetus is compared with 'intestinal worm' (Tsong kha pa 2000: 274) and mother's milk in *Garbhavakranti Sutra* (of Mahayana school of 3rd – 5th centuries CE) is defined as 'the filth of her own blood' (Langenberg 2017: 39, 68, 166) which differs from Brahmanic idea of mother (Grünhagen 2011: 100–114; Kawanami 2001: 140).

Furthermore, although females were allowed to be part of monastery, they had to follow the eight rules strictly in order to be part of the noble group. These rules wanted females to not question the holes in morality and lifestyle of male monks, not to be angry on them, and no matter how old a nun is she has to stand to greet monk and kneel before him (Paul 1985: 85–86). Gross analysed that the rules were "…placing all nuns lower in the hierarchy than any monks…" (Gross 1986: 46) and calls it "agenda of maintaining male control over women" (Gross 1993: 39). Though the female body was compared with repulsive imagery, still there has been detailed accounts praising feminine corporeal beauty in Buddhist texts which cannot be neglected[3]. Thus, one can reckon that, historically, female body in Buddhism has been of ambivalent kind where the fair attitude (Chung 1999: 29–125; Tsomo 2020: 5; Levering 1992: 139) towards females is intersected with the contempt towards her body (Lang 2003: 166; Grünhagen 2011; Bodhi 2012: 683). Thus, the abhorrent attitude towards female body was essentially maintained to inform people about the temporality of worldly pleasures, to discipline men of their worldly interests and to caution them to not subdue before their libidinal desires.

Female Representation in Gandhāran Art

Gandhāran art, besides known to be partially influenced by Graeco-Roman styles, is contingent on Buddhist religion (Luczanits 2008). A large portion of this artistic production belongs to the Kuṣaṇa period, whose rulers, though generally considered Śaivite or Zoroastrian, with the exception of Kaniṣka I, were notable patrons of Buddhism (Luczanits 2008; Stewart 2023). The art of Gandhāra is mostly comprised of adornments at stūpas, shrines and monasteries (Stewart 2023; Zwalf 1979) where Buddha, his life cycle and incarnations are the central images (Zwalf 1979). Although, females in Buddhism were not regarded as much, still the Gandhāran monasteries are adorned with the images and artwork of female figures.

The inclusion of female figures in Buddhism is either in the form of silent spectators, plebs, actors from Buddha's life, 'goddess' (Shaw 2015: 1), or in the form of '*Yakshini*' alternatively spelled as '*Yakshi*' known as tree spirits (Assomull 2013: 41-43). *Yakshi* is observed as an important part

of Buddhist monasteries. They are usually placed at the entrance or gates and the reason of their placement is to greet and attract the incomers. Although described as tree spirit, *Yakshinis* are portrayed, especially in the Mathuran Buddhist art, in female form with big curves and embellishments (Shaw 2015: 65). The reason of such portrayal is interpreted as to show 'the forces that renew and regenerate life' (Shaw 2015: 83). The placement of their tantalizing bodies at entrances is also studied as the portrayal of *yakshis* 'offering their homage to the greatness and glory of Buddha' (Dehejia 2009: 81). Although female figures were placed at the gates of monasteries, one of them earned her shrine inside the monastic setting and thus become an integral part of Buddhism and Buddhist monastic life (Dehejia 2009: 110). Unlike other deities and demons, who are seen standing and holding a tree or a branch, this *yakshi* differs in the artistic portrayal in a way that she is always surrounded by children and is worshiped by laity (Dehejia 2009: 112).

Hariti

The only deity with honoured and immutable position in Buddhism (Dehejia 2009: 117), Hariti, was a fierce cannibalistic *Yakshi* who converted to Buddhism and later become mother goddess (Sutherland 1991: 143). Her real name is documented as 'Abhirati' in *Samyukavastu* which is translated as 'joyful girl' (Shaw 2015: 111) or 'sensuous one' (Zahir 2016b: 10). Most of the examinations concentrate on her identification and categorization as Buddhist goddess and pre-Buddhist *Yakshi* (Lyons and Ingholt 1957: 145-147; Shaw 2015; Rowan 2002). There are various tales that tell the past life of Hariti and her inclusion into Buddhist religion where many of these accounts contradicts with one another. However, most reliable account is well detailed in chapter 31 of *Samyuktavastu, Mulasarvastivada Vinaya* (I-Tsing 1896: 37-8)[4].

In this text, she is known as 'Abhiratri' (I-Tsing 1896: 37-8), daughter of *yaksha* Sata, a demoness who would eat children of Rājagṛha. She couldn't live filial expectations even after her father's death and kept devouring children so her brother married her off to Panchika. She gave birth to five hundred sons and came down to Rājagṛha. The plebs, to end this atrocity, made offerings to unknown *yaksha*. When *yaksha* revealed to people that the monster who was devouring their sons was Abhiratri, they changed her name to 'Hariti' which means 'thief' (Shaw 2015: 112). They turned to Sakyamuni, the Buddha, to get rid of her. He listened to their pleadings and ensconced her youngest son 'Priyankara' to castigate her. Prostrate with grief, Hariti searched her son everywhere and thus reached Sakyamuni Buddha who made her realized of the pain of parents. She promised Buddha to never eat the children of common people ever. Impressed by her compliance to get rid of her cannibalistic habit, Buddha retuned her son, converted her and made her *Upasika* (I-Tsing 1896: 37; Shaw 2015: 112). She gifted all of her sons to Buddhist monastery and thus set an example for the Buddhist women (Shaw 2015: 112). To cater her monstrous appetite, Sakyamuni promised her that food will be provided to her at every mealtime and in return he demanded her to ensure the security of his monks and nuns (Shaw 2015: 112).

Her significance and presence in Buddhist settings in India was first recorded in the 7th century CE by the Chinese pilgrim I-Tsing/ Yijing, where he documented that her images were placed in porches and dining rooms and food was offered to her after it was served to 'arhats' and priests (I-Tsing 1896: 37). She is known as mother of 500 sons at some places (Maheshwari 2009) while mother of one thousand sons at other places (Murray 1981). Considered as the most famous Buddhist deity (Zahir 2016b), Hariti's is one of the most studied Buddhist female figure present in China, Indonesia, Japan, India and Pakistan (Bivar 1970; Maheshwari 2009: 17; Zahir 2016b). Many of the research works called her as eternally 'hungry' who is pacified by the offerings of her devotees (Strong 2017: 36). She is also considered as more approachable deity for common people in Buddhism (Shaw 2015: 142). Hariti's representation and reception can be grouped into four distinct categories. She is analysed as goddess of fertility (Rowan 2002: 125), goddess of small pox (Joshi and Sharma 1969: 14; Lamotte 1988: 689; Shaw: 2015: 117),

goddess with cornucopia (Assomull 2013; Rowan: 2002: 59), and as a consort of Panchika (Ahuja 2016: 252; Dhirasekera: 1976; Rowan 2002: 52; Shaw 2015: 124, 127). As there are number of representations of Hariti, this paper will solely be dealing with her 'mother form'.

Research Context

A decent portion of research on Gandhāran art has dealt with Hariti[5], but almost no work deals with the critique of her artistic representation in relation to gender. Cohen, in his study, explored the inclusion and domestication of Hariti in the monasteries of Ajanta and declared it a way to localize Buddhism in that area. The deity was kept at peace by monks who would fulfil all of her needs (Cohen 1998: 389). Cohen declared her as deity of common people and a reason of localization of Buddhism. It was also suggested that monks were mediating agents between Buddhists of Ajanta and Hariti and it was the deity who helped to localize the religion in Ajanta (Cohen 1998: 389).

Another research aimed at finding the link between Hariti and Erukamma of Andhrapardesh by investigating the significance of former deity for common people (Padma 2011). By appraising three texts of the *Taishō Tripiṭaka*, authoritative body of Chinese Buddhist literature, they declared Kuei-tzu-mu, Karitei, Erukamma, and Parvati as different avatar of Hariti (Padma 2011: 15-16). Moreover, Padma pointed out that unlike the famous literature, *Tashio* text (no. 1261) instructed local people about the way to worship Hariti for their own benefits rather than telling monks to venerate her (Padma 2011: 15-16).

Furthermore, a recent study on Hariti looked into iconographic differences between her representation in Gandhāra and Mathura (Chaudhuri 2020). Sustaining the findings of preceding exploration, Chaudhuri (2020) also established portrayal of Hariti as a fusion of Egyptian and Graeco-Roman art. In similitude to former examinations, Michael Lockwood also studied her representation as influenced by art forms and religion practices of different cultures and also Judaism (Lockwood 2020). Similarly, Naman Parmeshwar Ahuja, through iconographic study of children, proposed Hariti's portrayal as a hybrid of not only Graeco- Roman art styles but also an amalgamation of Egyptian, Indian and Zoroastrian art and religious influences (Ahuja 2016).

Although Hariti is prominent deity of Buddhism and Gandhāra and is known to add a soft feminine face to Buddhism (Shaw 2015: 111), still a little work deals with reference to her gender. Rishika Vijay Assomull studied the female figures of Gandhāra where he explored the visual representations of Hariti as influenced by the goddesses of Mediterranean region, especially Greece. He posited the image of Hariti as an amalgamation of more than one culture (Assomull 2013: 100) and equated her with Aphrodite, Athena, Tyche, Tara and Ardoksho (Assomull 2013: 99). With that, he also maintained the portrayal of Hariti as '*femme fatale*' (Assomull 2013: 100) who, although borrowed western attributes, is fearful for males. Rowan has presented an in depth account of Hariti covering her representation in cultural, religious and historical contexts. She raised the point that cannibalistic quality of Hariti is fearful for patriarchy and intervention of Buddha in teaching her a lesson is actually symbolic of patriarchal authority in maintenance of patriarchal rule (Rowan 2002: 127).

Afore gathered data suggests that although the foregoing research has attempted to look into the representation of Hariti through the percipience of people, but most of the studies, by western intellectuals, have particularly dealt with the influence of other civilizations and its modification as per the customs and social behaviour of the region it is placed in (Assomull 2013; Chaudhuri 2020; Cohen 1998; Padma 2011). Besides Rowan (2002), none of the collected data has explored her portrayal within context of gender and sexual studies. The aspect of gender is touched (Assomull 2013; Rowan 2002), but no one has yet questioned her artistic representation in intersection with gender and sexuality.

Methodology

In light of afore-presented details, this paper raises question that what kind of possible interpretations can be given to Hariti if we deviate

from hegemonic gender ideals of viewership? As it is intended to study Hariti by drifting away from already established phallocentric interpretations of her representation, so it can be achieved by, first, examining the visual identifiers of Hariti figures as explored previously, then deconstructing the vantage point of her curators and spectators. By keeping pace with contemporary post-structural frames of gender studies, this paper has adopted 'gaze-theory' and will utilize Laura Mulvey's 'male gaze' to analyse and deconstruct the influence of masculine gaze on Hariti's viewership, representation and the meanings attached with her. This paper is an attempt to bring the condoned and neglected potential interpretations of the physical representation of deity in the Gandhāran art to the surface.

Selection of Hariti Images

The first image of Hariti in Pakistan was seen on a pendant from Taxila (Ward 1954; Fig. 1). In Pakistan, six Hariti figures in total were marked by Ingholt (Bivar 1970; Lyons and Ingholt 1957), an Englishman, in his book. Another colonial archaeologist pointed out twenty-one Hariti figures in the Peshawar Museum (Hargreaves 1930: 44), later on Pakistani scholars marked only thirteen sculptures of Hariti in the same collection (Ali and Jan 2011). One figure was excavated by Pakistani excavators in the mid-1960s at the Shaikhan Dheri site in Charsadda, the ancient capital of Gandhāra (Rowan 2002: 58). Recently, one more terracotta figurine found in Chitral was identified as Hariti by the correspondent author of this paper (Zahir 2016b).

Despite owning so many portraitures of deity, the present scholars have generally settled for the older knowledge and heavily relied on the pre-established stories about her without challenging or deconstructing it. Most of the scholarship deals only with mythical stories associated with her (Dhirasekera 1976; Maheshwari 2009; Shaw 2015) and her identification (Chaudhuri 2020; Cohen 1998; Zahir 2016b). Not a single analytical work in Pakistan's archaeology has studied or interpreted those figures critically.

Keeping in view the afore-presented conditions, the authors of this paper have selected three Hariti figures excavated and displayed in three different museums of Pakistan. The reason of the selection of these figures, firstly, ensures easy access to art pieces for observation of her features at any time during analysis; secondly it is done with the intention of bringing and applying the modern literary, artistic and archaeological theoretical and philosophical frameworks on Gandhāran art in Pakistan. The third reason of this selection was to narrow down the geographical contexts as these were recovered during excavations from the core of Gandhāra that is from the middle of the Vale of Peshawar. The fourth reason is established due to the chronological proximity of these figures, primarily belonging to the second to third centuries CE contexts.



Figure 1. Shaikhan Dheri Hariti, Charsadda at SSAQ Museum's Collections; (Image courtesy of Muhammad Waqar)

The first image selected for analysis is of Hariti from Shaikhan Dheri, District Charsadda, displayed at SSAQ Museum (Ahuja 2016: 249; Fig. 1). Shaikhan Dheri, located about a kilometre north-eastern side of the famous archaeological settlement site of Bala Hisar (Saeed 2020), is one of the two parts of the ancient Puṣkalāvatī (Wheeler 1962: 3), the considered first capital of Gandhāra (Samad 2011: 39), presently known as modern Charsadda. The site was extensively investigated by a team of archaeologists from University of Peshawar, under the supervision of Ahmad Hassan Dani (Naik 2019; Dani 1965). Shaikhan Dheri is known to be capital of the Kuṣaṇa dynasty under the rule of Vasudeva I (Dani 1965) and it remained capital of Gandhāra under the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians (Samad 2011: 122). The site is known to have yielded four hundred and seventy-five coins from the beginning of the third century CE (Dani 1965: 24, 35). The sculpture portrays a female figure sitting or almost balancing herself on a small stool with a bag/purse of riches or a bunch of berries, presumed as grapes (Ahuja 2016: 249; Rowan 2002: 90) in right hand, and cradling a small body in left arm that is pulling her neck jewellery. There are four smaller figures in a comfortable interaction with her while other two are sitting in her feet looking up at her (Ahuja 2016: 249). She seems to be covered in a loose-fitting outfit which does not obscure the silhouette of her upper body. This figure as mentioned earlier comes from rather new excavation in 1963-64 (Rowan 2002: 58)[6].

The second sculpture of Hariti belongs to the Kuṣaṇa period (Shaw 2015: 125; Fig. 2), excavated at the site of Sikri, District Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is now displayed at the Lahore Museum, Lahore. Sikri, located in north of Mardan (Srinivasan 2006: 259), was first excavated in 1889 by Lt. Col. Sir Harold Arthur Deane. Unfortunately, most of the artefacts from this site lost their contextual information ('Sikri Stupa — Digital Gandhāra' 2019). However, this site is famous for its stūpa, a few reliefs of which are displayed at the Lahore Museum (Srinivasan 2006: 251) while one of these is also installed at Chandigarh Museum, India (Srinivasan 2006: 260). Sikri's Hariti is shown as wearing an outfit of some translucent fabric fully covering her body yet revealing upper part in risqué manner with right breast exposed. Following the pattern of former statuette, this figure is also depicted in presence of three small figures clinging to her while the third one reaches out her exposed breast. The outfit of the Sikri Hariti is formerly analysed as repercussion of Iranian and Greek amalgamation (Rowan 2002).



Figure 2. Hariti from Sikri, District Mardan at Lahore Museum's Collection, Lahore (Image courtesy of Dr. Saif ur Rehman Dar and Prof. Dr. Rifaat Dar)

The third sculpture is from the site of Sahri Bahlol, District Mardan and now displayed at the Peshawar Museum, Peshawar. Earlier data identified it as from Shah-ji-ki-Dheri (Lyons and Ingholt 1957; Rowan 2002: 57; Fig. 3) which seems to be incorrect. Sahri Bahlol is known to be one of the most significant archaeological sites for Gandhāran art and Buddhist civilization (Samad 2011: 137). It is located about 12 kilometres from north-eastern side of Mardan (Samad 2011; Saeed 2020). It is geographically located in the north-western edge of the Vale of Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Zahir 2016a: 4), Sahri Bahlol was excavated and studied by David Brainerd Spooner in 1907 and in 1915 by Sir Aurel Stein (Saeed 2020). More than three hundred art pieces were excavated from this site alone (Samad 2011: 148) and most of these excavated artefacts are displayed at the Peshawar Museum (Saeed 2020). Hariti from this site is depicted in the company of an adult male figure by her right side who is supposedly her spouse, 'Panchika' (Ali and Qazi 2008: 244; Hargreaves 1930: 44; Rowan 2002: 327-28). Furthermore, she is holding something unrecognizable, supposedly some kind of fruit (Ali and Qazi 2008: 244; Lyons and Ingholt 1957: 147) in her right hand. However, it could be a bag/purse of riches. In similar fashion to the preceding figures, this Hariti is also cradling a small child in left arm that is pulling her neck jewellery and two small figures are clinging to each of her shoulders. The fourth figure stands or is taking support of her right leg. All small figures visible with the couple are nude (Ali and Qazi 2008: 243-244). Here, Hariti is wearing a long skirt, or an Indian *dhoti*, like loose dress on lower body, but her upper body, although clothed, is explicitly exposed and precisely detailed.



Figure 3. Hariti from Sahri Bahlol, Mardan (Peshawar Museum's Collections; Image courtesy of Dr. Zarawar Khan)

Visual Representation of Hariti

If visual identifiers are considered then the sole way to recognize Hariti is from the presence of little figures, deciphered as her children, clinging to her body (Ahuja 2016: 248; Rowan 2002: 52-53) especially a child reaching her left breast (Chaudhuri 2020; Maheshwari 2009). In addition, fruits, cornucopia, and lotus are depicted to represent her as a goddess of abundance (Rowan 2002:53). On the basis of above-mentioned identifiers all three sculptures under study are marking the presence of ubiquitous attributes, as small children are there in all three statuettes. With that, Sahri Bahlol and Shaikhan Dheri's Hariti figures are carrying a bag/purse of plenty or some fruit in right hand. In addition to implied markers, most of the children with Hariti are without clothes as can be seen in Shaikhan Dheri and Sikri figures. However, one child on left shoulder of Hariti is covered in drapery while the clothes or nakedness of the children of Sahri Bahlol Hariti figure is difficult to identify.

Apart from previously mentioned identifiers, the most prominent and consistently recurring feature of Hariti is an explicit depiction of breasts, notwithstanding the fact that her upper body is usually covered in some kind of translucent drapery which has already been analysed as having links with Roman and Greek styled clothing (Assomull 2013; Chaudhuri 2020). In sculptures under study, thick pleats of cloth fail to obscure silhouette of breasts; rather emphasize areolas which seem to be a very deliberately carved detail. Such clothing style, previously, was studied as 'wet drapery effect' (Assomull 2013: 65; Rowan 2002: 57), also called as 'Sari-like' (Assomull 2013: 58), in link to foreign fashion styles and sculptures such as Tellus of Rome (Lyons and Ingholt 1957: 146). Her full breasts are seen as unquestioned indicators of 'lush maternity' (Rowan 2002: 64) or characterize her as 'prosperous matron' (Shaw 2015: 130), and the exposed breast of Sikri's Hariti is identified as bared for the maternal reason of breast feeding (Chaudhuri 2020). Another study mentioned the emphasis on breast through clothing but discussed the clothing style in relation to culture and Hatran style (Dobbins 1967). The perverse display of female art at Buddhist sites is often excused as a result of Hindu influence or as a portrayal of the *yakṣhī* form of goddesses (Coomaraswamy 1993: 83). Moreover, their placement is maintained to add a 'feminine touch' (Assomull 2013: 48) to monasteries while ignoring other potential interpretations and raises the question that what kind of 'feminine touch' was desired.

Naked Breast in Art History

The naked breast is widely recurred and highly debated motif in classical art (Bieber 1977; Bonfante 1997). It is observed as an indicator of the power (Bonfante 1997: 187), sign of goddess' protection (Bonfante 1997: 187), defeat (Cohen 1997: 74), and loss of power too as in rape scenes (Cohen 1997: 74). Other times, it is interpreted as befuddling and frightening (Bonfante 1997: 175). Hence forth, it is called as 'well-known Greek motif' (Bieber 1977:59) in art. In Gandhāran art as well, the artistic representation of *yakṣīṇī* depicts upper part of their bodies completely nude with heavy emphasis on chest (Shaw 2015: 65).

To be *au fait* with the rendition of exposed breast of Hariti, it is necessary to understand the ways in which it is portrayed in selected images. In Shaikhan Dheri sculpture, the outfit is designed in a way to reveal the bosom through the transparent clothing. In Sikri sculpture there is an intentional divesting of right breast for the rest of the body is covered in cloth while the Sahri Bahlol's Hariti despite wearing a garment seems to be explicitly naked, so the nudity is intentional. The previous literature describes bared breasts as a maternal essence (Chaudhuri 2020; Rowan 2002: 64) but this paper attempts to present other plausible reasons behind this artistic motif.

Analysis and Discussion

Before studying the selected art pieces, first it is necessary to understand the term 'gaze'. The overt meaning of 'gaze' as a noun is 'the fixed intent look' ('Gaze' 2019). For Jean Paul Sartre, that 'gaze' is seldom even handed as he introduced the term in *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1999). Lacan, initially believed in dominating power of gaze but later avouched on the importance of the

look that comes from the object that is being gazed (McGowan 2003; Wollen 2007). Berger, for the first time utilized the term 'gaze' and studied the portrayal of western females as passive and meant to be viewed by males. Moreover, Faure proposes that 'gaze' of human is "always already informed by words, discourse-discursive thought…" (Faure 1998: 787).

This suggests that our interpretation, and feelings towards visual art is pre-instructed and audience are obligated to look at these portraits and sculptures with already taught viewpoints (Berger 1972: 8; Faure 1998: 787). With that, Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" argues that the perspective of a heteronormative male "controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle" (Mulvey 1975: 200). This implies that the dominant 'gaze' is attributed to the masculine gender. Hariti is always seen as either mother or demon (Assomull 2013: 57) till this date. Women in ancient times were described in terms of their 'reproductive' and seducing functions as defined by dominant male perspective (Bem 1993: 42). Likewise, female bodies were interpreted as dangerous, foul, deadly and seducing entities in Buddhism (Pali Text Society 1973: III. 56).

Transparent clothing and emphasis on bosom seem ironic if physical appearance of Hariti is analysed in relation to the teachings of Buddhist religion where not only female body, but also her presence was not readily admired and was used as an example of profane, unspiritual, and earth-bound vice (Grünhagen 2011: 105). Monks and men were required to seek protection from lewd thoughts and feelings by staying away from female body, and female nuns were demanded to spare themselves from feminine markers that includes getting shunned off head hair, and wearing formless clothes in order to acquire place in reverend class of religious Buddhists (Grünhagen: 112; Kawanami 2001: 137; Lang 1982). Even the parturition and gravidity were seen as filthy and unclean (Kawanami 2001: 138-41 My Hanh 1995: 126). Attitude towards female body in Buddhism do not align with the portrayal of Hariti to the slightest; in fact, her depiction can be seen in complete retrospect to pre told narrative. Hariti's corporal aesthetic raises number of questions about the intention of artists behind making the artwork, donors sponsoring it, and the targeted audience. It also makes one think of the purpose of placing her explicitly carved body in inner part of monasteries that if female body was abhorred by reverend Buddhist men and that it was not required in the actual place of worship, that is on or around the stūpa structures then why was it set in predominantly masculine setting

For Clark, the nude art must invoke libidinous feelings in its spectator (1984: 8) while Berger directly confronts men by saying that they intentionally paint the naked woman for they 'enjoy looking at her' (Berger 1972: 51). The placement of hyper feminine art in Buddhist monastic spaces has been speculated as a tactic to tempt people towards religious space (Shaw 2015: 65). So, Berger's (1972: 51) argument becomes relatable as the suggestive female body was utilized in luring people to spend time in the religious setting. Furthermore, the ritualistic touching of breasts and groin of female sculptures is inferred as a common practice among devotees to attain blessings (Battaglia 2019: 195). Considering the touching of female nether parts and reasons of displaying sexually enticing feminine bodies on gateways, the detailing of raunchy curves of Hariti and her place inside the monastery could not simply be adjudged as matronly only.

The sculptures of Hariti were placed in areas, i.e. kitchens and dining rooms, where monks, who were mostly males, had an easy access (Quagliotti 2008: 128). In one of the introspections of Hariti's paintings, it was suggested that "[t]he monks live with Hariti and care for her physical needs; she not only agrees to peaceably coexist with them, but even gives her children to the monks for safe-keeping" (Cohen 1998: 390). It means that she as placed in the setting which was male centred. The female body that was considered as evil and deadly in some Buddhist scriptures (Pali Text Society 1973: iii. 56; Grünhagen 2011) was ironically taken cared by male monks. Hence the intentions of lascivious portrayal of Hariti and her locality indicate the purpose of the satiation of erotic needs of its otherwise celibate monks. Thenceforth, the figures become materialized apotheosis of the fantasy of male viewer and artist.

As it is previously mentioned that bared breast of Hariti is analysed as a marker of motherhood (Chaudhuri 2020; Rowan 2002). However, if observed closely, Hariti from Shaikhan Dheri and Sikri share a teasing effect towards their audience, where the bosom is not in explicit view. Upper part is covered with obvious cloth material which is transparent enough to give a peek of nipples.

Furthermore, in Sikri's Hariti one of the children precisely covers the areola of bared breast. Such style indicates towards voyeuristic pleasure where the spectator gets the view of body which he is not allowed to look at for "delectation" (Phillips 2010: 55). This attitude towards sexualizing female body projects the male 'fears' of castration (Mulvey 1975). In previous researches, the cannibalistic tendency of feminine deities is equated with sexually ravishing characteristics and thus interpreted as a source of terror for male humans in terms of power shift (Rowan 2002: 121). With that, Hariti's anthropophagous impulses are parallelized with abrogation of patriarchal rule (Rowan 2002: 126), but the sight of her semi-nude body enfeebles her ferocity, diminishes the fears, creates sexual tension, provides enticing pleasure to viewer, and a sense of sexual authority to the spectators of Hariti

Portrayal of children on her body in all three figures defines the maternal side of goddess (Ali and Qazi 2008; Rowan 2002; Shaw 2015). Specifically, the depiction of children on her breast is regarded as "one of the purest forms of benevolence and nurture in human experience" (Shaw 2015: 141). However, it also conveys different meaning if this context of motherhood is put aside for a while. "[s]eeing comes before words" (Berger 1972: 7), but "[t]he way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe" (Berger 1972: 8). If her sculptures are studied without pre-established viewpoints then the children in all three figures may be interpreted as male posers in each art piece. In Shaikhan Dheri's Hariti, they look like adults (Kalantari 2021: 308). Their centre of attention is Hariti. In Sikri sculpture one of them is fully clothed while another holds her breast. In Sahri Bahlol image, they all are reaching for her body except for one who clings with Panchika's leg. It seems that Panchika is also looking at her, so the focus of interest becomes Hariti or she is the centre of the canvas for the artist(s), the participants and the audience.

Not to mention that all children are obviously male, the portrayal of above listed figures postulates an effect where the spectators imagine themselves as male figures in artwork (Berger 1972: 56; Mulvey 1975). So, it can be inferred that the spectators identify themselves with "sons" fondling her body. The clothed male child in Sikri figure also adds to the vulnerability of female which increases the erotic pleasure of the gazer (Berger 1972: 90). So, the male ravishing side is shadowed with an erotic sight behind the salacious view of her body. Hence the artefact becomes a fetishistic device that abates the fear of castration of male viewers. Hariti is often analysed as an emblem of duality in the form of nurturer and ravisher (Ahuja 2016: 258) and also as a fusion of South Asian, Western (i.e. Greek and Roman) and Iranian artistic styles (Ahuja 2016: 258). Assomull (2002) and Rowan (2002) mentioned in their works that her human-eating side is taken over by her maternal powers (Assomull 2013: 99; Rowan 2002: 125; Shaw 2015). Howbeit, it can also be viewed that shift is there but her terrorizing image transforms into an object of scopophilic pleasure for male eye whereas the maternal image is mere façade regularized by the androcentric narrative to camouflage the hidden instincts of male viewer keeping the celebrated attribute of duality (Ahuja 2016) in her representation fluid.

Nakedness in real life is a part of an ongoing action rather than a stationary pose (Berger 1972: 51). If the portrayal of Sikri Hariti in figure 2 is observed closely then the explained phenomenon is clearly evident. The whole art piece feels as if some action in process is frozen. The sculpture, as described in previous part shows one of the children placing his hand on areola. This, for the modern spectator, may communicate an attempt of sculptor to make the artwork relatively modest for its past viewers. Nevertheless, if this image is studied as a part of a continued action, then this makes it easy to visualize as an observer that the nipple was bare a moment ago and that the

breast was completely exposed at some point and child placed his hand on it for just that moment. Moreover, the hand is placed in a manner that gives sneak peek of areola and somehow nipple is visible. Thus, the effigy exhibits two varying phenomena. First that it excites scopophilic excitement in its viewer and the second that it reflects the subjective experience of the sculptor maker. He holds the authority over the art and only exposed the part that he wanted his viewers to see. The sculptor himself enjoyed the exposed body but kept the pleasure to himself. Thus, the art becomes an object of desire and possession of the artist. Though the hand on areola may reflect an attempt in ensuring modesty, but since the completely nude female disinterests the attention of man (Weininger 1906: 241) so it can be inferred that hiding some of the nipple from the viewer could be a trick to keep up the desire of devotes in imagining her as fully naked and in result would ensure the attendance of devotees in the monastery.

Nakedness is an embarrassing deprivation of clothes while "nude" is the confident display of body (Clark 1984: 5). Direction of eyes can be useful in determining the feeling of the one being surveyed. In all three portraits, the eyes of Hariti are neither directed towards children nor towards the spectators. She seems to be looking out of the scene. This portrayal frees her from the obligation to be aware of being looked at by her spectators which is considered as an important parameter to abate the sexual desire of naked female (Berger 1972). In fact, her eyes radiate a self-affirming energy while her face shows a restricted smile as if she is content with being surveyed but not letting her spectators know about it.

Furthermore, in Sahri Bahlol's figure, an active adult viewer in the form of Panchika is present. Although he is looking at her, but instead of looking back at him she seems to look in another direction. In Shaikhan Dheri's figures, all children reach for her body, but she does not look at them. The male figures seem to be desperate for her attention and that she is holding back the attention mindfully. This expression gives her a kind of sexual power over male posers and owners of the portrait. One may reckon that she is purposefully not making eye contact with the posers; however, her smile shows that she, herself, is enjoying being looked at by the opposite gender which makes her presence active rather than passive. Shaikhan Dheri's figure holding a bag/purse of plenty or bunch of grapes and looking in space indicates that she is offering it to someone else, supposedly to her spectator. Secondly, the direction of her eyes in all three portraits could be a deliberately carved detail of sculptor which gives her viewer an opportunity to have a good look at her body without the guilt of being noticed by her. Hariti's lack of interest in masculine posing figures again strengthens the reason of such portrayal to serve the scopophilic desire of pious monks and laity.

The symbol of patriarchy has always been the phallus (Freud 1993). The fear of castration is the primary phobia and the female body lacking penis is already a threat for males (Freud 1924; Mulvey 1975). Furthermore, the power in a society is maintained by the body with 'phallus' (Lacan 2006). This phallus according to Lacan has nothing to do with the actual penis (Rine 2010), but the one with symbolic penis gets power over others (Lacan 2006). In sculptures under study, some of the children are entirely naked with genitals on display that confirms their sex as male. The fear of castration and losing power, thus, becomes real in the selected images as Hariti surrounds herself with the materialized symbol of patriarchy and the bearer of phallic symbol depends on her to be fed. Combining that with her legend of eating sons (Maheshwari 2009: 24) makes her a threat for patriarchal order as consuming a male suggests consuming phallus and consequently symbolizes the matriarchal authority. On the other hand, she, being the mother of sons makes her an owner of penis as sons "brings the longed for penis with him" (Freud 1933: 113) for the otherwise naturally incomplete female. It seems that in order to diminish the fear of matron superiority of deity in Buddhist monastery Hariti's upper body is strategically kept semi-nude to direct the focus of devotees on her breasts and not on sons. This approach is studied as natural among masculine folks as they eroticize the source of their castration fears, the female, into a sight of pleasure and make it "reassuring

rather than dangerous" (Mulvey 1975).

It has been suggested that men decide the ideal erotic figures in a certain society (Nochlin 1972), so the art reflects the brain of artist who is man (Weininger 1906: 248). The sexually stirring images are known as only "erotic for men" (Nochlin 1972: 10) and woman's image is designed to pleasure him (Berger 1972: 64). It is evident from above discussion that the figure of Hariti is made for the pleasure of male devotees and to invoke scopophilic pleasure for them but since a society is made of men and women, so all the art gets across women as well. Overtly for females, Hariti is known to be an ideal figure of motherhood to follow (Shaw 2015: 112) as dubbed by Mitra:

> [I]t is this motherhood that glorifies her—the mother who is totally at a loss at the disappearance of one child of five hundred; the mother who realizes the suffering of others in the process; the mother who is anxious for the nourishment of the children. (Mitra 1990: 32)

It is also argued that archaeological research accepts gender binary readily (Moen 2019) where male experiences are focused while females are entirely diminished (Bem 1993). The figures of Hariti may carry sexual importance for male spectator, the significance for females cannot be neglected just as well. It is difficult to trace any sexual connotations of Hariti figure for females since their sexuality is not much discussed (Langenberg 2019), but one should not remain oblivious of the presence of women in monasteries too (Grünhagen 2011). The figures must be having some kind of function for females apart from teaching them to accept their inferiority to the phallocentric hierarchy as Buddha defeated and pacified Hariti to ensure the rule of man (Rowan 2002: 127).

The Buddhist canonical works have portrayed feminine beauty with big unnatural curves for example, in the second volume of the religious text, *The Mahavastu*, the "noble sight" of beautiful women showed by King Suddhodana to Gautama to seek pleasure had "full breasts" (Jones 1952: 142). Another Sanskrit epic, a poetical account of Gautama's life, *Aśvaghoṣa Buddhacarita*, also defined "magnificent" women's beauty in terms of their breasts and derriere so heavy that they could not walk fast (Johnston 1992: 35), while the females in the whole epic are depicted with the emphasis on the shape and size of their breasts as if it was an only distinctive quality worthy to denote them (Johnston 1992: 48, 50, 71, 109). Clark (1984) establishes that female nudity in real world is humiliating due to unpleasant phenomena of skin and natural body. For this reason, he stresses on the significance of female erotic art for male which is not similar to real nude body and becomes a model of ideal body that is to be achieved (Clark 1984).

The canonical obsession with the female breast especially with its risqué side makes the portrayal of Hariti not only a sight of sexual pleasure for male viewer but also presents an ideal body image for women to achieve. All of three sculptures are designed with full breasts and lean body with no fat on other parts which is an odd portrayal of the body of a "mother" in the east. Although, shapeless clothes and getting rid of female features was prerequisite of becoming a part of Buddhist *sangha* (Grünhagen 2011), still the emphasis on ideal size of breasts in didactic texts, and the placement of female body with nudity in monasteries provides the model of an ideally desired figure to be attained for females. Before presenting themselves to males, females are required to see themselves with the same masculine eye (Battisti 2021; Berger 1972) because it is the man only who has "an instinct for beauty" (Weininger 1906: 250). Hence, the lean body of Hariti with fuller and perky breasts presents the ideal figure, set in stone, of a female mother to acquire for Buddhist and non-Buddhist women for eternity.

The viewer of art is always presumed to be male (Berger 1972: 64). If the notion of creation of art for the entertainment of men is decentred for a while, then one can raise question on the effect of male children touching female body for female viewer as well. It was suggested earlier in the paper that male viewers imagine themselves as the poser sons with Hariti. The same suggestion can be made in context of deity as well. Since the

presence of females in monasteries (Grünhagen 2011) confirms that they were also spectators of these images, and if male spectator can identify himself with male poser (Berger 1972: 56) then female spectators may also identify themselves with female poser and the sight of the sculpture could be serving sensual pleasure to women devotees as well.

Phallocentricism has become an unavoidable part of our lives. Male/female binary is widely accepted and practiced framework in archaeological research, and it is blindly followed by researchers in their interpretation of ancient art (Moen 2019). As a result, further possibilities that do not stay within gender binary framework remain neglected and unexplored (Moen 2019). Our interpretations are hued with androcentric colours due to which "gynocentric" views are debilitated. Furthermore, the prevailing male dialogue has reduced the agency of female figure to the role of being a child reproducing and passive agent in history (Conkey and Spector 1984; Nelson 1990).

However, if androcentric lens is decentred, then one can derive a number of hints that Hariti images convey, which fall in entirely different dimension. Although women are noted as homosexual in Buddhist texts (Cabezón 2017) still no further research is done on it (Langenberg 2019). It is already discussed that females had to acquire non feminine appearances (Grünhagen 2011) and had to hide away their "reproductive" needs to become nun (Langenberg 2019). One can question the reason of readily sacrificing feminine markers of heterosexuality besides for religion. The religious texts forbade monks from making relations with females and vice versa (Cabezón 2017; Grünhagen 2011). However, homosexuality remained of lesser concern (Cabezón 1993: 82; Zwilling 1992: 207) and Buddhist nuns are documented as engaged in "autoerotic" and sexual relations with other nuns (Cabezón 1993). Thus, the figure of Hariti could be a sight of eroticism for defeminized nuns as well. Such dialogue can be extended only if modern frameworks are put to work and "essentialist gender stereotypes" are decentred.

Conclusions

The masculine infatuation with big female breasts and female obsession with attaining, maintaining and displaying the desired size of chest is an anthropological obsession (Cole et al., 1998). As it was proposed to study Hariti figures against the grain of established androcentric interpretation of her motherly portrayal and presence in Buddhist spaces in Gandhāra, this paper presented that the depiction of naked/ semi-nude breasts of deity and her placement in monastic settings was meant to serve the inner erotic desire of male viewers. It was established in previous interpretations that her presence "drew laypersons to the monasteries, knowing they could find there not only spiritual guidance but also emotional comfort and hope for more immediate benefits of progeny, prosperity, good health, and success in worldly undertakings" (Shaw 2015: 121).

This paper successfully presented that the type of comfort Hariti figures brings to its viewers, primarily the monks, nuns and students in the monasteries, is scopophilic and not necessarily nurturing or maternal which makes the morality and devotion of laity questionable. It is also worth noticing that her placement in the area where the male monks used to eat food symbolically makes her a deliberate "meal" to satiate the sexual hunger of male members. Although the Buddhist religious canon used female body to display the foul side of material world (Bodhi 2012; Kritzer 2014; Tsong kha pa 2000), still the depiction of temporal beauty with the central focus on shapes and fullness of breasts, and repetitive citing of women with the varying breast shapes[7] brandishes the palpable erotic obsession of men with female chest. In that light, the artistic representation of Hariti figures even in motherly form seems to be sculpted to quench the thirst of male gaze.

This paper also attempted to find the importance of sculptures under study for female viewers as Hariti figure is celebrated as an archetypal ideal of motherhood for them (Shaw 2015: 121). Although, her maternal instincts and sacrifice is sustained as an ideal example to be followed, but the same figures also provide females an ideal body image to be acquired which in real life is nearly unattainable for a mother. As

body standards of female beauty are set by men and (Weininger 1906: 248, 250) and the body with big breasts has already been presented as the most seducing view in the canonical texts of Buddhism. So, the rule of masculine gaze in portrayal, viewership, and interpretation of Hariti figures is evident which also confirms the value of masculine validation in female existence.

It has been argued that the art maker uses body of female only as a tool to express his own mind (Weininger 1906: 248) which in this case became libidinous and not as moralistic as it has been celebrated. Hariti's body conveying the desired and acceptable figure to attain becomes her only acceptable form that the other possibilities of her physical presence are condoned altogether. The flat chested Hariti figure at Los Angeles County Museum is interpreted as artistic altering of some male bodhisattva figure into Hariti (Ahuja 2016: 250) while other Hariti sculptures, not following the ideal blue print of female body, are generally neglected in research. This study presents an enigma to ruminate on that what encourages people to come to the place of worship. Were the teachings of Buddha not enough to attract people that the organized Buddhism had to take aid of sexualised female bodies to invite them? Is the religion not powerful enough to keep people faithful to god? If man comes to sacred space to see nude female art, then whom does he pay allegiance to? The salacious sculpture or the enlightened teacher?

Since, the present paper dealt with the bodily representation of Hariti's specified and nurturing incarnation, the authors of this paper also extend the prospect of drawing comparison with her demonic or pre-Buddhist form which fortunately is also present in Pakistan. Moreover, the paper invites to extend the argument by analysing the gender of donors of Hariti sculptures and its possible link with the unique portrayal of her body. As described, it is also desired to study the portrayal of Hariti in link to the geographical contexts and spaces of her excavations not only in Pakistan, but also comparison can be made with her portrayal in other regions and countries especially with Mathuran and Indonesian Hariti. The authors of present paper also intend to study the portrayal of other *yakshini* figures in Gandhāran and Mathuran art through feminist lens. With that, hope is maintained to investigate the more Pakistani sculptures of Hariti from not only feminist but also from queer perspectives.

Disclosure Statement

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Notes

1. See Brumfiel 1996; Hollimon 2000; Joyce 2000; Sutton Jr. 1992; Williams 1983.
2. It must be noted that this paper is emphasizing on the lack of gender oriented research on Gandharan art work in Pakistan and not Buddhist religion. Pakistan is blessed with a treasure of female art sculptures but due to certain cultural reasons, Pakistani researchers are reluctant to study them and hesitate to utilize feminist frameworks to study artworks.
3. Referring to the translation of Jones (1952) The harem in *The Mahavastu* Volume 2 described women decorated with the beautiful breasts, hair and jewelry.
4. The summarized story in this paper is taken from Takakusu's translation of I-Tsing/I-Ching/Yijing's paraphrased version mentioned in chapter XI of his document, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago*. A particularized story of Hariti can also be seen in Shaw 2015: 111-115.
5. See Anwar and Hameed: 2022; Assomull

2013; Bivar 1970; Chaudhuri 2020; Cohen 1998; Dhirasekera 1979; Kalantari 2021; Lockwood 2020; Murray 1981; Padma 2011.

6. This figure was stolen from museum collection and later retrieved from Germany by Prof. Farzand Ali Durrani. The head of the child on left shoulder was added by the antiquity dealer trying to sell the sculpture in Germany and has been retained since.

7. The reason behind mentioning women characteristic of their breast sizes in *Aśvaghoṣa Buddhacarita* is to show discipline of Buddha in resisting his sexual urges though the women even "touched him with their firm, rounded, close-set, charming breasts" but Gautama remained steadfast. However, this account displays the cultural fixation on the sexually arousing, and not so maternal characteristic of breast.

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