

Charisma of Terracotta Figurines from Gandhāra: An Analytical Study from the 4th century BCE to the 3rd century CE

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Antiquity of Terracottas in Pakistan

According to DH Gordon, “Terracottas formed the sculpture, sacred or profane, of the ordinary household” (Gordon 1944: 5).¹ It is also called as the poor man’s art because clay, from which this art has originated, is one of the cheapest but useful gifts of God to mankind. CL Fabri, a one-time Curator of the Lahore Museum, further elaborated Gordon’s idea. Usually made by potters rather than artists, the terracottas (1) reveal beliefs of the people, (2) appear more primitive than the contemporary sculpture and (3) preserve traditional features (Gordon 1938).

It was on this account that man, at the very threshold of civilization, started making both his household utensils and figures of deities in clay. In Pakistan, as also in other countries, this art constitutes one of the most interesting and important aspects of our cultural history—it is very old and it still continuous. It is also diversified in its regional distribution, in characteristics and contents as well as in technique. Besides, the history of the art of terracotta in Pakistan is the oldest in the whole of South Asia. In Pakistan, its history has been traced back to the 7th millennium BCE when we meet this art in a quite developed form at the site of Mehargarh, situated at the mouth of the Bolan Pass in Baluchistan (Jarrige et al 1992).

This is not the place to probe into the characteristics of the prehistoric terracottas of Pakistan. Suffice here to say that throughout the prehistoric period of our history the subject matter and technique of terracotta making generally remained unchanged throughout the length and breadth of the country. During historic periods, on the other hand, different regions and periods offer individual styles and various techniques. Terracottas of these later periods also reflect technical and cultural links with other societies and regions. Gandhāra terracottas offer one very good example of such cultural interaction.

Chronology of Gandhāra Terracottas

Gandhāra terracottas do form a significant aspect of this art, however, it still needs to be studied and understood properly. No doubt terracottas are poor men’s idols but it is necessary to know how the people of ancient Gandhāra solved their spiritual problems through these tiny figures. This art or craft, as some may prefer to call it, is one of the oldest, continuous and extensively spread out arts of the ancient world. Gandhāran terracottas particularly need to be studied in a wider geographical context extending from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris in Iraq to Sanchi, Bharhut and Pataliputra (modern Patna, Bihar) in India (Pls. 2-8). At one or another time, Gandhāran terracottas borrowed techniques, forms and spiritual and cultural inspirations from all these far flung areas.

¹ For similar studies by the same author see Gordon, 1932: 163 -171; 1934: 70; 1935: 129 and 1938: 85ff.

Our knowledge about clay and terracotta figures from ancient Gandhāra and the Punjab goes as far back as 1856. The ever-first discovered such piece of work is a clay head of a young man from some unrecorded site in the Punjab². This was given to the British Museum by Lady Rivett Carnac (Pl. 1; Zwalf 1996). Although this clay head was studied and reported in the last quarter of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th centuries (Burgess 1899: pl. 2.1; Burgess 1900; Foucher 1905: 8-20, fig. 310.). Serious studies of the subject, however, were initiated in the second quarter of the 20th century by scholars such as AK Coomaraswamy, Mlle Simone Corbiau, Col. DH Gordon, K de B Codrington, and others. A brilliant summary of these earlier studies of “Indian” terracottas was made in 1964 by Prof. AH Dani and published as a prelude to his studies of freshly excavated terracottas from Shaikhan Dheri (Dani 1965-66: 46-47). Quite interestingly, these early scholars held divergent views as regards their dating of this art ranging from the third millennium to the first century BCE. Situation has certainly improved since then. Although excavated settlement sites are still few and far between, yet some better studies of terracottas from city sites like Taxila, Bala Hisar, Shaikhan Dheri, Akra, Sar Dheri (or Sari Dheri), etc., are now available to us for analysis and synthesis purpose. A fresh review of these old and new reports and publications leave us in no doubt that the earliest terracottas in their iconographic form were started in Gandhāra in the 4th/3rd century BCE under the influence from Central and Eastern India (Pls. 2-8). But soon they came under the spell of new

technique, form and subject matter that reached Gandhāra in the company of Indo-Greeks and Phil-Hellenic Scythians and Parthians. Once the Hellenistic traditions were established, these dominated throughout the ensuing seven or eight hundred years of history of Gandhāra. With the ushering of Gandhāra art proper – the so-called Buddhist art of Gandhāra, the terracotta art also assumed a new form and along with its older forms started serving the cause of Buddhism and contemporary Hinduism. In this new guise the Gandhāran terracottas acquired new territorial jurisdiction much beyond its geographical limits and survived till the 11th century CE when due to the advent of Islam iconographic forms of Gandhāran terracottas – religious or profane, came almost to an end.

Functions and Role of Gandhāran Terracottas

Gandhāra art is primarily meant for the propagation of Buddhism. But it was not so in case of its terracottas. Contrary to the Gandhāran sculptures which are always found in association with Buddhist stupas and monasteries, terracottas are found mostly in settlement sites – inside houses and, rarely though, in temples other than the Buddhist stupas and monasteries. As far as their religious nature can be ascertained, these belong to the household cults whose precise nature is seldom known beyond speculations. So far not a single terracotta figure has been found in-situ, it is, therefore, not known as to how these figurines were exhibited in household shrines or in a drawing-room setting. So far, no workshop has been discovered in any part of Gandhāra and it seems that all terracottas were made locally of clay. In any case these were not meant for long distance trade or for export to other

² Till 1900 ancient territory of Gandhāra was part of the Punjab province. Today it is part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

regions except that some of these might have moved from one place to another as souvenirs. We are also not sure if among thousands of Gandhāran terracottas so far discovered there is any piece that can be considered as a genuine import from some distant country in the West or far in the South-East Asia (Pl. 21)³. Nevertheless a long-time influence from the Hellenistic world on a number of Gandhāran terracottas cannot be denied. Besides, with the exception of a few, Gandhāran terracotta figurines seldom reached the status of artwork. These were mostly the artisans' handiwork. These also lack a narrative quality. Early period terracottas are also marked for their rigidity and stillness (Pls. 3 & 4). Nevertheless, they reflect immense amount of ductility and plasticity. These are timeless and ageless.

Types of Gandhāran Terracottas

Gandhāran terracottas are found in several forms and shapes such as:

- Human figurines: both hand-made and moulded
- Terracotta plaques: with main design pressed on one side
- Designs stamped as emblemata: inside shallow Megarian bowls
- Terracotta masks
- Stamped pottery (other than terracotta figurines)
- Moulds
- Large clay heads: turned into terracotta by accidental fire (mostly Buddhist)

- Terracotta votive tanks: for household rituals, and
- Toy models: in the form of animal figurines as well as whistling birds, birds on wheels and miniature bullock carts – all invariably handmade.

It will be difficult to discuss all these types in a small paper like this. I shall therefore, confine my discussion to the human figurines with casual reference to other types, if necessary. Terracotta figurines of animals and birds—which constitute a big class in their own right, will regrettably be ignored altogether in this paper. Similarly, I will not discuss votive tanks because these require elaborate treatment for their complex problem of faith and functions.

Major Provenances

Terracotta figurines are found on all ancient settlement sites in Gandhāra. But collections of terracotta figurines from two sites at Taxila (Bhir Mound and Sirkap), two sites at Charsada (Bala Hisar and Shaikhan Dheri), one site each at Turlandhi in Swabi, Akra near Bannu, Pir Manakrai near Haripur and Sar Dheri or Sari Dheri near Charsada on Charsadda-Mardan Road, Ranigat, Thareli, etc., are well known. Among these the site of Sar Dheri (also written by some as Sari Dheri) has produced the most striking variety than any other site in Northern India and Pakistan. New excavations at Akra had to be abandoned because of unstable security conditions in the region and the results of excavation so far conducted have been published only briefly (Khan et al).

³. The Gorilla from Taxila (hollow cast) as shown in this plate is a local product of an imported "animal" or primate from Indonesia.

Characteristics of the earliest Terracottas from Gandhāra

It is almost certain now that the historic period terracotta figurines do not appear before the Muaryan period, the 4th century BCE. This has been fairly confirmed from excavations at Taxila, Bala Hissar and Shaikhan Dheri. Four or five main features can characterize the earliest Gandhāra terracotta figurines (Pls. 3-4, 9-12) namely:

- The whole figure is hand-made.
- Nose is pinched
- Mouth, eyes, breasts and ornaments are applied
- Breasts are small and invariably punctured and
- Waist band, anklets, etc., are shown by incised lines

These characteristic features need elaboration.

Besides a few solitary examples of flat terracotta female figures from some Gandhāra Graves at Timargarha in Dir (Pl. 2 (left); see Dani 1965-66: 47, fn. 1; 1967: 19), the earliest terracotta figurines of historic period have been reported from Sar Dheri near Charsada. Reportedly from pre-Greek levels, these X-shaped and spade-shaped figures and nicknamed as schematic figurines, are mainly known from Sar Dheri (Pl. 2: centre and right; Corbiau 1937: Pl. IV, 3, 4; Marshall 1951: Pl. 132, nos. 1, 2). But more prolific than the Schematic figurines are terracotta figures which were found in good number from stratified levels from Bala Hisar by Sir Mortimer Wheeler and named by him as Baroque Ladies (Wheeler 1962: 104-06, Pls. XX-XXII). These have prominent pinched nose, appliqué eyes with horizontally slashed slits, a conspicuously small mouth and, in case

of female figures, separately fixed small punched breasts. These figurines have their pudenda indicated by incised lines and arms are in the form of little stumps (Pls. 3-4). After a prolonged debate and erratic dating of these figures by AK Coomaraswamy, Simone Corbiau and DH Gordon, Wheeler finally settled the dating of these figures firmly between 250 to 100 BCE (Wheeler 1962: 105). The third century BCE dating for the appearance of this type further gets its confirmation from Dani's excavation at the nearby site of Shaikhan Dheri (ancient Pushkalavati), though Dani prefers to bring down the terminal date to the times of the Kushans. These figurines wear elaborate jewellery, but very little clothes. Only their girdles indicated by horizontal lines cover their hips. They wear one or more sets of earrings, large necklaces and a cross chain (*channavira*) across their upper bodies held together on the front and back below the level of breasts. Horizontal incised lines on the shanks between the knees and ankles, probably, indicate anklets. The headdress normally consists of a rosette on each side with a casually third one above in the centre (Pl. 3). Such figures have often been identified as that of a Mother Goddess like the little pipe-clay Venuses of the Western Roman World or the Iranian or Scythian goddess Anaitis or Anahita. These appear to have been produced in large quantities for the late proto-historic or early historic inhabitants of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (former North-West Frontier region).

These earliest terracotta figurines⁴ are usually 6-7 inches / 15-18 cm high and are found from

⁴ These earliest figurines also known by a few other names such as "Archaic Type", "Sar Dheri Type" and "Sahri Bahlol Type". However, today

sites west of the Indus River. Only a few are known from Bhira Mound, Taxila, (Marshall 1951: Pl. 132). As already referred to above, previously these figurines were given tentative dates, which correctly correspond to the presently assigned period to them, i.e., from 300 to 100 BCE. At Bala Hisar these have been discovered in association with the Northern Black Polished (NBP) Ware, the Lotus Bowls and Tulip Bowls. But at other sites, this type continued with ever-diminishing popularity through to the end of the Kushan rule in the third century CE. A large number of these human figurines have been found from Bala Hisar, Shaikhani Dheri, Sar Dheri, etc., sites west of the Indus, but only a few simpler varieties are known from Taxila, east of the Indus.

In the rest of the sub-Continent, terracotta figurines appear almost simultaneously, i.e., 4th-3rd centuries BCE during the reign of the Mauryas whose rule extended from Bengal to Gandhāra and parts of Afghanistan. But the terracotta figurines from eastern India display a totally different style. These reflect a much more advanced stage of development of this primitive art of terracotta. We have included here two examples, one from Bulandibagh near Patna (Mauryan Period, Pl. 6; see Harle 1986: fig. 39; Huntington 2006: fig. 8.3) and another of the 2nd-1st century BCE from Tamluk (ancient Tamralipti) near Kolkatta (Pl. 7; see Harle 1986: 39, fig. 24). Marshall has published one similar figurine from stratum II of Bhira Mound.⁵ A female terracotta plaque

from Mathura (Pl. 8; see Harle 1986: 59, fig. 23) reflects the same eastern Indian strains rather than those of Gandhāra. Incidentally, from Shaikhani Dheri we get from Period III (Early Kushan period of Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises) a fragment of a terracotta female figure with *tri-banga* pose (Pl. 5; Dani 1965-66: 61, Pl. XXIX, no. 3) of a *yakshi* or a tree spirit. Full size *yakshis* of this type, though always carved in stone, are well known from Mathura during the same period.⁶

Referring back to the Baroque Lady type, no doubt this type dominates among terracottas from Gandhāra but there were certainly a few other types as well that appeared contemporaneously though these are known comparatively in a small number. These include a female figurine with splayed legs; a female headless figurine with exaggerated hips and leg-ornaments up to the thighs; a fiddle-shaped figurine usually found in association with ritual votive tanks; a female holding a bird and tightly enveloping drapery; a male figure with head-dress knotted on left side; one clean shaven head and one bearded head both pegged for attachment; a seated figurine with left hand across the front and a fragment of a squatting male figurine a grotesque head with pointed skull; several figurines representing archers, etc.

Introduction of Mould

During the Indo-Greek period (2nd-1st century BCE) besides the Baroque or Archaic Type there also appeared moulded types of terracotta figurines as a result of direct impact of the contemporary Hellenistic Civilization.

the most popular sobriquet for this type is "Baroque Lady Type".

⁵ It is a votive plaque with a standing male figure that wears "a richly embroidered shawl, turban, heavy ear-pendent and necklace" (Marshall 1951: p. 448, pl. 132, no. 28).

⁶ For some complete figures of *Yakshis* in *tri-banga* pose from Mathura, 2nd-3rd century CE, now in Indian Museum, Kolkatta. (See Daheja, fig. 66).

From Shaikhan Dheri the new types are the double-moulded figures with solid body, dated to the 2nd century BCE (Pl. 20); double-moulded figurines with hollow bodies found in majority as compared to the other forms (Pls. 26, 30 and 31) dated in the 2nd/3rd century BCE; and single-moulded flat figurines (Pl. 32; see Dani 1965-66: Pls. XXIII, XXXIII, no. 4). Other moulded post Greek Period III terracotta figurines (Pl. 32; Lahore Museum No. G-330); emblemata figurines (Pls. 33, 34) from Shaikhan Dheri are dated in the first half of the 1st century (Lahore Museum no. G-303), while such type figurines from Pir Manakrai are dated to the first century CE and third-second century BCE respectively (Pls. 35 and 38). An interesting fragment of a terracotta figurine excavated from layer 1 of Pir Mankarai not cast in a mould, certainly belongs to the Greek mythology for its subject matter. It is a part-figure of a female centaur, here shown along with its reconstruction by the author (Pls. 36-37). It is a solid hand-finished figurine with some parts executed in appliqué.

There is no figurine discovered so far that is cast in a double-mould with solid body after the Indo-Greeks. However, the Hellenistic types are known throughout the Scytho-Parthian period (1st century BCE - 1st century CE) as well as the Kushan Period (2nd-3rd century CE). However, it was only in the Kushan period that the real Gandhāran terracotta type of heads – both figurines and sculpture started appearing (Pl. 24). Crowned Bodhisattva and a half-burnt clay head of a monk with clean shaven face from Kalawan Monastery, Taxila, also belong to the same period (3rd – 5th century CE).

We only have two examples of solid figurines cast in a double mould – both are dated to the Indo-Greek period from Shaikhan Dheri. One of them now in the Peshawar University Museum is almost a complete figurine in classical style. It is the figure of a nude cupid in round shape (Pl. 20). His feet are broken. He holds a bird with left hand and feeds it with right. His face is slightly tilted to right, the navel is shown with a dimple and his curly hair seem to have been applied later on (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXIII).

Greek Terracottas

Almost contemporary with the Cupid, just referred to above, there are three very interesting terracottas from an unknown site near Peshawar now in the Lahore Museum (Pls. 13-15)⁷. These sherds originally formed parts of some pots – probably Megarian bowls⁸. The sherds under our review have Hellenistic motifs moulded on the outer surface of well-burnt red colour terracotta. On the outer convex surface of one plaque (Pl. 13), a tall nude male figure is standing drunk in the middle whereas his two companions (wrongly identified as male figures in Museum record) – actually they are a man and a woman. The treatment of the three figures is typically Hellenistic. The scene probably represents some Greek drama in which the drunken Dionysus plays the central role. Gordon identifies the scene as a philosopher flanked by a male and female and dates it in

⁷ Marshall 1922: 646; Gordon 1944: 7 & Dar 2006: 211, pl. 25-26).

⁸ No complete example of a Megarian bowl has so far been discovered from Gandhara. But some fragmentary examples are known from Taxila (Bhir Mound; see Marshall 1951: 434, fn. 1), Shaikhan Dheri (Pls. 33 & 34) and Pir Manakrai (Pl. 35).

the 1st half of the 1st century (Gordon 1944: 7). Marshall has taken it to represent a scene from the Greek drama *Antigone* in which Haemon is shown supplicating to his father Creon for the life of his affianced bride (Dar 2006: 211, Pl. 25).

Another plaque (size 3x2 inches) oval in shape and with a relatively flat outer surface depicts a familiar scene “Mother-and-Child”, so popular in the Hellenistic times (Pl. 14). The two figures may also represent Psyche and the Cupid. The well-built lady facing left stands upright while holding a bunch of grapes in her extended left hand. The naked child is looking upward seemingly attempting to reach the bunch of grapes (Dar *Ibid*). The third terracotta plaque (Pl. 15) is smaller than the other two and is circular in shape. Within the roundel two busts of a male and a female, are shown in relief embracing each other. Scenes of such *mithuna* couples commonly occur in antiquity both in the West and the East.⁹ But the specimen from the Lahore Museum is certainly of Greek origin and workmanship of an earlier date, i.e., approximately the second century BCE.

Belonging to the same period again, we have two other examples of a different kind. These do not represent independent figures, but are certainly good examples of a single mould casting affixed to a vessel. One piece is from Bhir Mound, Taxila (Pl. 16) whereas the other from Bala Hisar, Charsada (Pl. 17). The latter one is an example of hard grey ware while the former is a sample of Greek Black Ware. Both represent the same subject, i.e., a moulded

head of Hercules. The Bala Hisar piece, in particular, represents a youthful face surmounted by a lion’s mask making it possible to identify the figure as Alexander the Great in the guise of Hercules. The head in both cases was fixed at the base of the handle of a jug or an amphora or a large mixing bowl called *krater*. These pieces are also datable in the early years of the second century BCE.

A very rare example of this class (double mould with hollow body) is the head and shoulder of a gorilla-like-figure belonging to an *orangutan* or *ban-manas* originally found in the jungles of Sumatra in Indonesia (Pl. 21). It comes from the Greek levels of Sirkap city at Taxila dated to the second century BCE (Marshall 1951: 451, no. 53; Pl. 134, no. 35. Also see Dar 2006: 212, Pl. 32). The figure is round with a wide-open mouth and wrinkled forehead with traces of white paint. It is a modelled piece, too fine to be a toy. The presence of such a piece at Taxila indicates a long-distance trade of rare animals, birds and other beings between the Far-East Asia and the West which might have passed through this city located on the *Uttarapatha*—the Northern Trade Route.

Greek-inspired Terracottas

The double-moulded hollow figurines, both male and female, are also very interesting. These figurines appeared mostly in the Scytho-Parthian period (1st century BCE - 1st century CE). The figures shown in round are the product of two moulds, back and front, the body being either solid (Pl. 20) or hollow (Pls. 26, 30 & 31). The last two female figures, as seen in the plates 30 & 31, like their male counterpart, are completely nude. It shows that these moulds were used for producing large number of casts—the earlier ones showing

⁹. For an Indian *mithuna* couple on a Buddhist stupa railing from Kankali Tila, Mathura, 2nd-3rd century CE, see Vidya Daheja, *Indian Art*, p.94, fig 66.

excellent modelling while the latter copies showing considerable deterioration. These seemingly reflect a falling standard in production. But in reality this reflects increased demand for cheaper copies rather than fall of standard of art. The bodies of these figurines are hollow and show a natural depth. The heads are invariably solid even in moderately large examples and were produced by "the back moulded-portion being impressed on the clay cone and the moulded face-mask being fitted to the front of this cone and the joint worked over". According to Col. DH Gordon: "The bodies of these figurines are beautifully modelled displaying a restraint and accuracy which has nothing of contemporary Indian exuberance". A few examples also show solid well-modelled feet with clearly defined toes. Heads of these figurines are seldom found fitted on to the body. Detached heads show beautiful modelling of face usually of Roman type with ornamental hair-doing on the forehead and single braid hanging behind the head. Over the head is usually shown a heavy rolled wreath (Pls. 26, 27 & 29). For comparison, the author is adding here a terracotta head of a figurine of the Kushan period from Shaikhan Dheri (Pl. 23). Also produced in a double mould, hollow inside, this head wears no wreath. Instead it has an oval bun with a braid behind. The head shows incised lines suggesting backswept combed hair (Dani 19-66: Pl. VIII, nos. 4, 10, 3, 6). Three other similar heads are illustrated here (Pl. 25 from Shaikhan Dheri; Pl. 26 from Sar Dheri).

A definitely Hellenistic type of terracotta is called emblemata. In this type, motifs in low relief are embossed on the inner side of a bowl with the help of a stamp or a mould. Technically, first the base was made

separately with the figure or figures embossed on it and then it was joined to the body of the bowl. The bowls are usually shallow and in a few cases are flat based. In the West these emblemata are found embossed inside the Megarian bowls. So far no complete bowl of this type has been discovered in Gandhāra, although fragments of such bowls are known from several sites in Gandhāra. DH Gordon knew about such emblemata since 1944 who referred to them as examples of Hellenism in South-Asia but he has not specified their provenance (Gordon 1944: 7, 8). Two of such pieces excavated from Shaikhan Dheri in 1964-65, are in red ware and are now lying in the Lahore Museum. Each of these fragments represents a bust of a lady holding a drinking cup (Pls. 33-34). These are safely dated in the first half of the first century CE. More recently some more examples have been excavated at Pir Manakrai (Pl. 35).

No true example of a Megarian Bowl or a fragment thereof has been reported from Taxila. A few examples of similarly stamped and embossed ware, certainly of Hellenistic period, from Bhir Mound in Taxila have been described by Marshall as "second cousin to the well-known Megarian, Arretine and Campanian wares which derived from a common Hellenistic parentage and came to be much imitated in Asia Minor, Africa, Gaul, Belgium, Germany, England, etc." (Marshall 1951: 43, fn. 1). Here the author is tempted to add another example of a Greek-inspired motif not in the form of a figurine but stamped on the outer convex surface of red ware pot. It is certainly of Indo-Greek derivation. Such a scene on a convex surface of a ceramic pot could have been produced only with the help of a mould or a stamp. Of this class some fine examples from Taxila have already been

reported (Marshall 1951: 437, Pl. 128). But the one shown here is a fresh discovery from Bhir Mound and is being published here with the courtesy of the Curator of Taxila Museum (Pl. 38). Another example illustrated here in line drawing by the author along with the example from Taxila is from the 1999 excavation of Pir Manakrai. Here on the convex side of the thin red potsherd has been stamped or moulded a vine plant overladen with branches and bunches of grapes. On the left side of the plant a gazelle is trying to reach a bunch of grapes hanging over his head.

Kushan Period Terracottas and afterwards

Before we close this discussion some space must be allocated to the terracottas of the Kushan Period. It may be interesting to note that so far no true Kushan city has been properly excavated in Gandhāra. We do not have a single terracotta figurine from the limited excavations of the Kushan city of Sirsukh at Taxila. However, the art of making terracotta and clay figures continued at Taxila as elsewhere until the fifth century CE. Despite some borrowings from Hellenistic motifs the terracotta art of this period in its own way was just as original, forceful and independent as the Gupta Art of Hindustan and more so than the contemporary Byzantine art in the West. Slip casting—that is the use of crushed stone and clay to make terracotta figures was introduced for the first time at Taxila and became popular throughout the Kushan period.

The Kushan craftsmen inherited the art of making figurines in terracotta or clay from their predecessors the Mauryas, Indo-Greeks, Scythians and Parthians. Their figurines included human, animal and other toy models. The figurines were either hand-made or wheel

turned to make a hollow body that was later moulded by hand to a human or animal shape. Figures were also cast in single as well as double moulds. Sometimes faces were moulded and fixed to hand-made bodies. As already mentioned above almost all these types began with the Indo-Greeks and continued through the Parthian period up to the end of the Kushans. According to the real Gandhāra terracotta human figurines with well-formed heads and beautiful faces were evolved during the Middle Kushan period (Dani 1965-66: 47). Among animal figurines, their bodies were either solid or hollow.

Masks and Moulds

Masks were an essential part of Greek drama. Was any such mask prepared in Gandhāra during the early days of Hellenistic influence in the region? Very few terracotta masks are known from Gandhāra. Examples of two masks both found in the vicinity of Swabi, probably from the site of Turlandhi, from where a collection of beautiful jewellery and a lot of terracotta figurines have already been reported (Gordon 1944: 7). These are like the tragic masks of the type found at Seleucia in Syria. Some fifty years back, a Japanese Team excavated from a domed shrine in the main Stupa Court of Thareli near Jamal Garhi a very interesting terra-cotta mask (Pl. 39). This mask, made of fine clay of red brown colour and measuring 14x11 cm, is of a human face with almond-shaped eyes with pupils represented by round holes. It has very heavy eyebrows, a high long nose and very long protruding front incisor teeth. To a fragment of the ear belonging to this mask was attached a large round earplug or earring. This mask has been dated in the florescent Kushan period, i.e., 144-207 CE. What use of this

mask was put in the Buddhist monastery at Thareli? We are not sure. Probably it was worn by a monk who acted as a demon in a ritual. No other genuine terracotta mask like this has been found in Gandhāra. However, from debris of Dharmarajika Stupa at Taxila was discovered in 1915 a terracotta mask perhaps of the Buddha head. It is 3.25 inches or some 8 cm high (Pl. 19; Marshall: 1951: 42)¹⁰. During last few years a more beautiful and complicated terracotta mould was discovered from Bhir Mound excavation conducted by Pakistani archaeologists. It presents a hunting scene (Pl. 18)¹¹ - a scene rarely met in Gandhara art.

Conclusion

The earliest terracottas in Gandhāra, usually called Baroque or Archaic Type, were produced about 300 BCE under the influence of the Mauryas and the Shungas. They were handmade: their nose was pinched; mouth, eyes, breasts and ornaments were applied separately; breasts were punctured and waistband, anklets, etc., were shown in incised lines. There were, in addition to these terracottas, more local votive plaques with moulded faces and elaborate dress, jewellery and baroque headgear (Pls. 6-8). In the last quarter of the 4th century BCE there ensued an era of cultural interaction between Gandhāra and the Western World. The new culture and its arts and crafts were heavily pregnant with Hellenistic spirit and forms. Among other things the art of terracotta was completely

transformed from the second Century BCE onward. The basic changes that were introduced during this period were the new ideal of human beauty and new technique to present it. The figurines were now made closer to nature in form and proportion and above all the technique of moulding was introduced for preparing copies of the prototypes. A variety of combinations of handmade and mould-cast techniques were experimented. Both single and double moulds were used for preparing casts with solid and hollow bodies. The technique of slip-cast was also used for preparing casts with only front properly moulded and the back being left flat. Moulds were also used for preparing emblemata on the inside of shallow bowls and for stamping designs on the outer side of pottery vessels. The subjects for such scenes were taken from the rich repertoire of the Greek mythology. Examples of this period are known from several excavations and can be seen in the collections of several museums of the country. Some of these works are fine examples of pure Hellenistic themes and true Greek workmanship on the soil of Gandhāra.

The climax of the Hellenistic impact on local art and crafts was reached only during the Phil-Hellenic dynasties of Scythians and the Parthians. Now, quite frequently, art objects of Hellenic and Hellenistic themes and techniques are met more frequently along with the specimens of art productions of local imports. Kushan terracottas show greater variety than their predecessors. With Kushans what was previously only the art of terracotta figurines now became the sculptural art in malleable material like stucco, clay and terracotta. Besides, function of this art was transformed from mere household cult object providing setting for visual items of worship

¹⁰. Marshall 1951: 42, no. 147, pl. 13, k. Also *Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of India*, 1915, pl. III, d.

¹¹. The report of this discovery is yet expected but the mould under reference is on display in Taxila Museum and is being published here with the courtesy of the Curator, Taxila Museum.

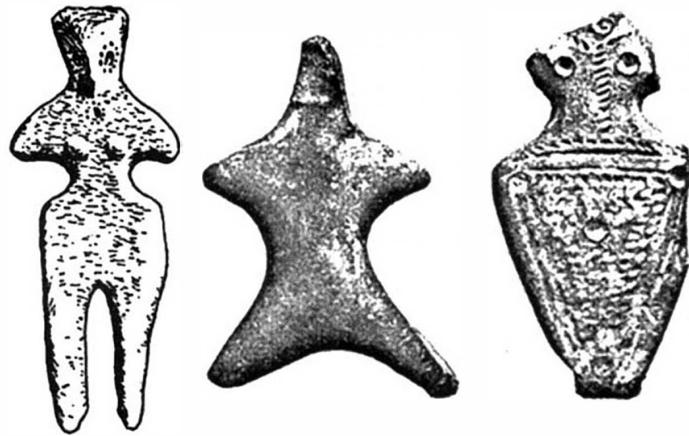
by masses in public places of worship – stupas and monasteries (Pl. 40) or simply as drawing room accessories. Continuity of these traditions can be seen well up to the times of Gupta period in the mainland India and then more so in Kashmir at sites like Akhnur, Ushkar and Avantipura as late as the tenth or even eleventh century. With that came to an end the iconographic art of terracotta in Gandhāra.

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Pl. 1. The earliest-known clay image of a smiling youth from some unknown sites in the Punjab (and ancient Gandhara). Presented to the British Museum, London in 1856 (Zwalf 1996).



Pl. 2 (Left). Flat bodied female terracotta figure from a Gandhara Grave, Timargarha (Dir). Early Iron Age (Dani 1967). (Centre and Right). The so-called fiddled-shaped or Schematic Ladies from Sar Dheri on Mardan-Charsadda Road. Excavated from Pre-Greek levels (Simon Corbiau 1937).



Pl. 3. The so-called Mother Goddess. Mauryan Period. Probably from Gandhara region. Musee Guimet, Paris (Daneck 1971).



Pl. 4. Baroque Lady or Mother Goddess from Charsadda area. Mauryan Period. Lahore Museum (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXV-3).



Pl. 5. Fragment of terracotta female figure in *shalabanjika* pose from Shaikhan Dheri. Early Kushan Period (Dani 1965-66: Cf. Harle 1986: Fig. 39 and Huntington, Fig. 8.3).



Pl. 6. Terracotta female figure from Bulandibagh, Patna, ancient Pataliputra. Mauryan Period 3rd c. BCE. Patna Museum (Huntington 2006: 55, Fig. 4.14).



Pl. 7. Terracotta Yakshi from Tamluk, ancient Tamrlipti, near Kolkatta, 2nd – 1st c. BCE. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Harle 1986: 39, Fig. 24).



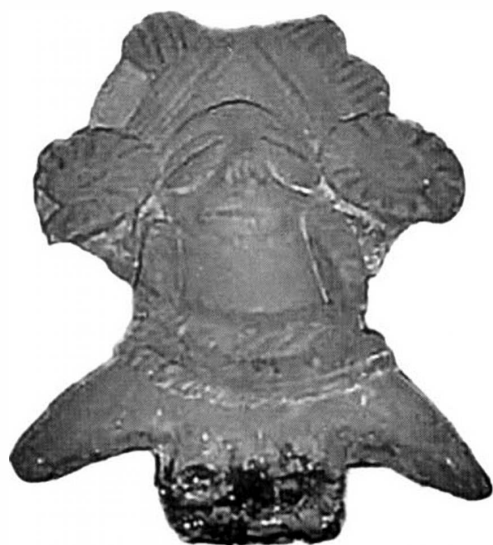
Pl. 8. Stamped plaque showing a lady in her full attire, 200 – 100 BCE. Mathura Museum (Harle 1986: 59, Fig. 23).



Pl. 9. A Complete terracotta figure of a Baroque Lady from Shaikhan Dheri (Pushkalavati), 4th c. BCE. Lahore Museum No. G. 539. (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXIV).



Pl. 10. Two busts of Baroque Ladies from Bala Hisar, Charsadda, 4th-2nd c. BCE (Wheeler 1962).



Pl. 11. Head and body of a lady from Shaikhan Dheri, 4th-2nd c. BCE (Dani 1965-66: 50, 19, Pl. XXVI-4).



Pl. 12. Terracotta female head with two stumps of arms from Shaikha Dheri, 4th-2nd c. BCE (Dani 1965-66: 48 (1), Pl. XXV-1).



Pl. 13. Baked clay moulded plaque presenting a scene of a Greek drama Antigone in which Haemon is pleading his father Creon to supplicate the life of his fiancé. From an unknown site in the neighbourhood of Peshawar, 200 – 100 BCE, Lahore Museum No. G. 351 (Dar 2006; Gordon 1944: 7 & Marshall 1922).



Pl. 14. Oval-shaped moulded plaque with mother and child scene. From an unknown site in the neighbourhood of Peshawar, 200 – 100 BCE. Lahore Museum No. G. 340. (Dar 2006; Gordon 1944: 7 & Marshall 1922).



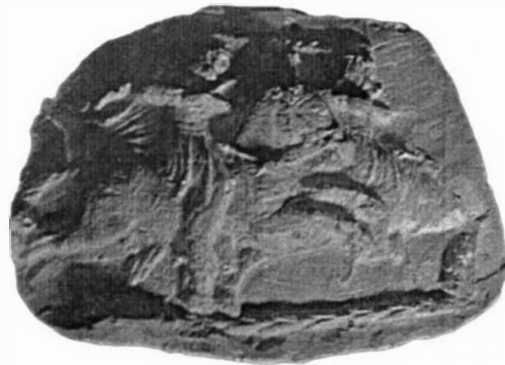
Pl. 15. A disc of red baked clay with upper bodies of a young couple (Cupid and Psyche) in close embrace of each other. From an unknown site in the neighbourhood of Peshawar, 200 – 100 BCE. Lahore Museum No. G. 335 (Dar 2006; Gordon 1944: 7 & Marshall 1922).



Pl. 16. Moulded head of Alexander in relief in the guise of Hercules at the bottom of the handle of a mixing bowl called Krater. Greek black ware, 2nd century BCE. Reported from top layers at Bhira Mound, Taxila Museum (Marshall 1951: 433[226], pl. 130 (226-b)).



Pl. 17. Moulded head of Alexander in the guise of Hercules at the base of the handle of an Amphora or Krater of hard grey ware. From Bala Hisar, Charsada. It was certainly made in the Greek world and one is tempted to date it in the 2nd c. BCE (Wheeler 1962: 115, Pl. XXXVIb).



Pl. 18. A terracotta mould from recent excavation at Bhir Mound, Taxila (left) and its cast (right) showing a hunting scene from horseback. Taxila Museum (unpublished; courtesy, Curator Taxila Museum).



Pl. 19. A terracotta mould (back-side) with its cast (probably face of the Buddha). Discovered from debris in the compound of Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila. Taxila Museum. (Marshall 1951: 462, No. 147, Pl. 136, k.). For two terracotta moulds from Bhir Mound of earlier period, see Marshall 1951: 449, Pl. 133, Nos. 35 and P. 40, No. 44, Pl. 133, Nos. 3 & 44. Also see *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 1915: Pl. III-d).



Pl. 20. Three views of the Cupid figure. Solid cast out of a double mould from Shaikhan Dheri, Greek level of 2nd c. BCE. SSAQ Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Peshawar University (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXIII).



Pl. 21. Head and shoulders of a gorilla-like figure (Orang-utan) of Simidai family, from Sirkap (Taxila). The fine piece of modelling is too good to be a toy, 2nd c. BCE, Taxila Museum. (Marshall 1951: 451 [53], Pl.134 (53)).



Pl. 22. Moulded terracotta female head from Sulai Dheri near Sar Dheri. Excavated from upper layers that yielded a figure of a Baroque Lady (Corbiau 1937: Pl. II-4).



Pl. 23. Head of a lady with robust face from Shaikhhan Dheri (Pushkalavati). Lahore Museum No. G. 324. (Dani 1965-66: 61(127), Pl. XXVIII).



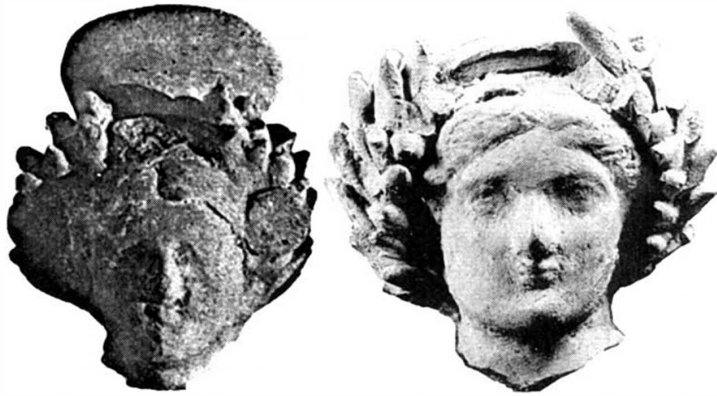
Pl. 24. Two heads - one of a young man and the other of a young girl with robust faces. From Shaikhhan Dheri, Period II (Dani 1965-66: Pls. XXXIII-5 & XXVII-6).



Pl. 25. Moulded female figure of Greek Period from Sar Dheri (Goron 1938: Pl. VIII-8).



Pl. 26. Upper half of a female figurine in terracotta of grey colour. The cast is hollow from a double mould; Shaikhhan Dheri, 2nd c. BCE. Lahore Museum No. G. 328. (Dani 1965-66: 58 (99), Pl. XXVIII-10).



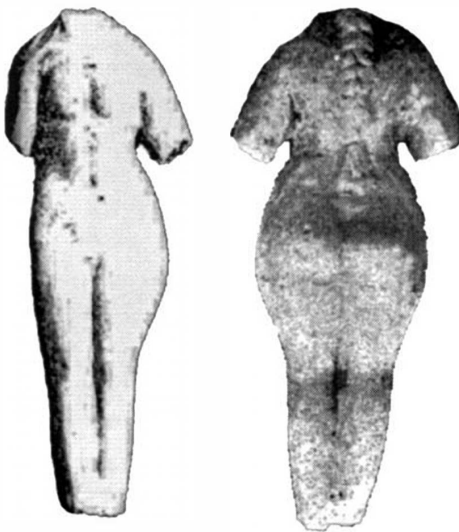
Pl. 27. Female head with a wreath from Akra, near Bannu. Greek Period, Peshawar Museum. (Ingholt: Pl. 512). Smaller picture of a similar terracotta figure on the left is from Sirkap, Taxila. It has a small vent on top of the head (Marshall 1951: 451 [46], Pl. 133 [46]).



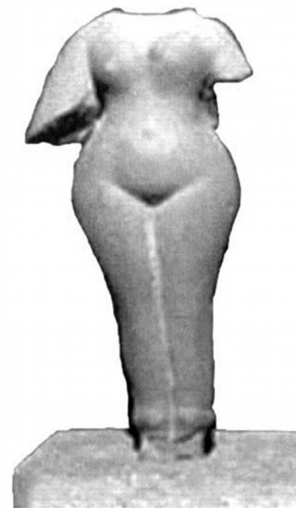
Pl. 28. Female head with a broad face and a wreath of three circular discs. From Shaikhan Dheri, 2nd c. BCE. Lahore Museum No. G. 32 (Dani 1965-66: 9 [102], Pl. XXVIII-3).



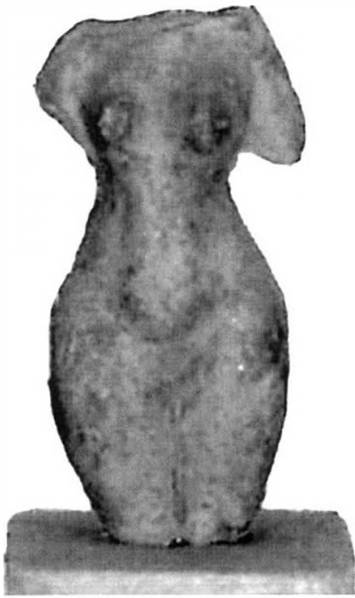
Pl. 29. A moulded terracotta female head with Roman type of face. The colouring is modern; Shaikhan Dheri, 2nd c. BCE. Lahore Museum No. G. 334 (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXVIII-7).



Pl. 30. Headless standing female figures (front and back views) with hollow body and long legs with fat thighs. Cast is out of a double mould; Shaikhan Dheri, 2nd c. BCE. (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXIX-1, 1a).



Pl. 31. Headless nude female figurine with tall legs and heavy thighs. It is cast from a double mould; Shaikhan Dheri, 2nd c. BCE. Lahore Museum No. G. 323 (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXIX-2).



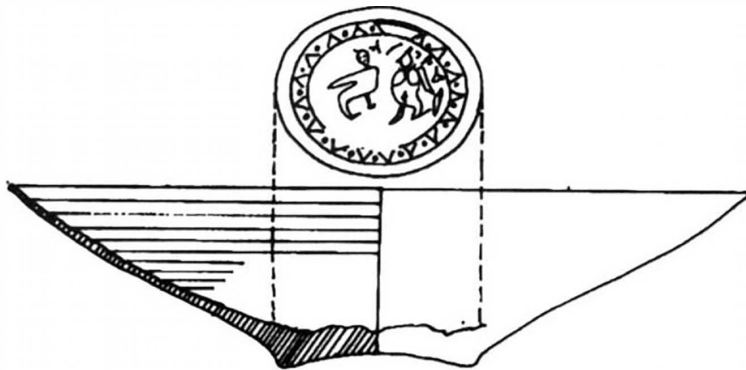
Pl. 32. Headless nude female figurine with heavy thighs, feet are missing. From Shaikhhan Dheri; dated to the Post Greek Period III. Lahore Museum No. G. G. 330 (Dani 1965-66: Pl. XXX-4).



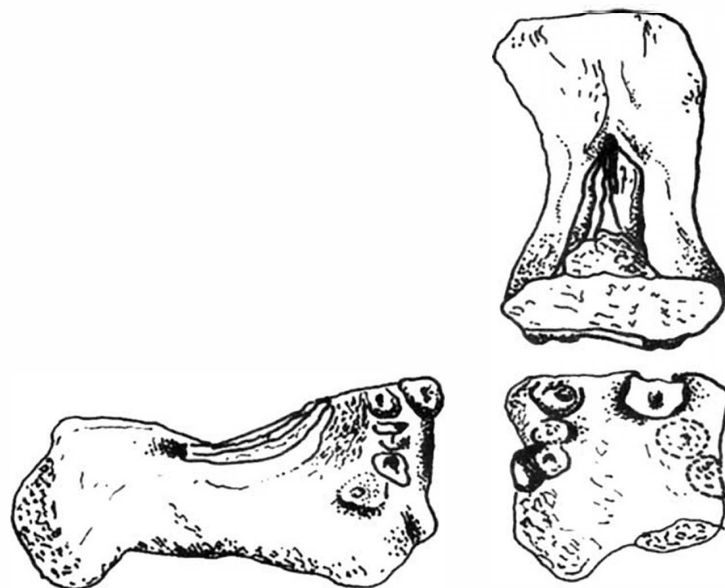
Pl. 33. An emblemata in the form of a female bust wearing a laurel wreath stamped with a mould inside a Megarian bowl (red ware), Shaikhhan Dheri. Lahore Museum No. G. 303. (Dani 1965-66: 65 (166), Pl. XXXI-).



Pl. 34. Emblemata in the form of a female bust wearing a laurel wreath stamped with a mould inside Megarian bowl (red ware). From Shaikhhan Dheri, first half of the 1st c. CE. Lahore Museum No. G. 304 (Dani 1965-66: 65 [167], Pl. XXXI-2).



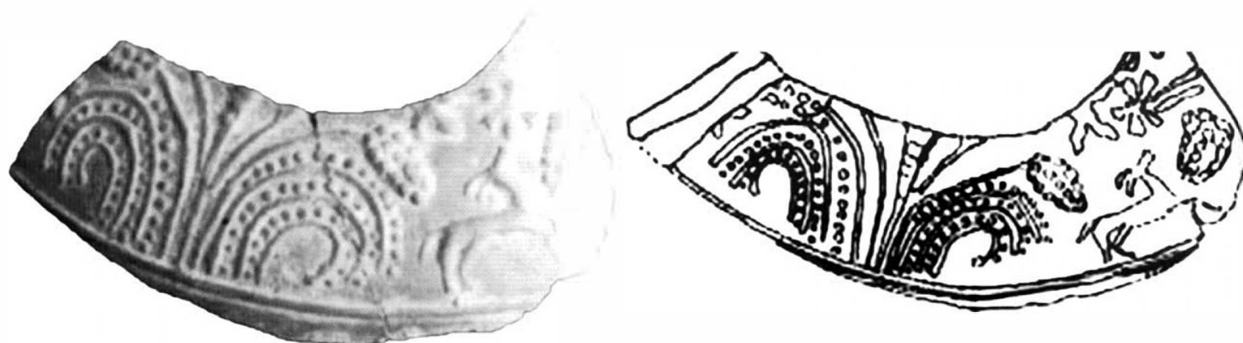
Pl. 35. An emblemata showing mythical couple with human faces but bodies of duck stamped with mould inside a Megarian bowl (red ware). Found at layer 9, Pir Manakrai in 1999 (drawing from the original by the author). Courtesy, National Heritage Foundation.



Pl. 36. Three views of terracotta figurine of a female Centaur, a Greek mythological character. Excavated from layer I, Pir Manakrai 1999 (drawing from the original by the author). Courtesy, National Heritage Foundation.



Pl. 37. Hypothetical reconstruction of the terracotta figurine of a female Centaur as shown in Pl. 36. (Drawing by the author).



Pl. 38. Red coloured Greek potsherd stamped with branches of vine and a roaming deer. Unearthed from recent excavations at Bhir Mound. On the right side is the drawing of a similar potsherd from Pir Manakrai (1999). It is stamped with a similar scene (drawing from the original potsherd by the author). Courtesy, Curator Taxila Museum.



Pl. 39. Terracotta mask from a domed shrine in the Main Stupa Court at Thareli near Sikri site. Kushan Period, 2nd c. CE (Mizuno 1978: Pl. 136, No. 4).



Pl. 40. Standing female figure, holding an oil lamp with both hands. Body is hollow and base is broken; wears a veil falling from head over her shoulders. Reported from Dharmarajika, 4 feet below the surface (Marshall 1951: 422, No. 141, Pl. 125, 129 [no. 141]).