

Some Important Terracotta Figurines of Pāṭaliputr

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Abstract- Pāṭaliputr was the legendary city of ancient India for nearly a millennium (450 BCE to 550 CE) and was the capital of Haryaṅk, Śiśunāg, Nand, Maurya, Śuṅg, Kaṇv, Mitr, Gupt, and Later Gupt. Various archaeological materials have been found in the city in the last couple of centuries, and terracotta objects are one of them. The city is highly prosperous in terms of terracotta objects, which have been recovered throughout the city. These are found in almost all periods from the 5th century BCE to the 5th century C.E. Terracotta figures and figurines are precious for understanding the ancient history of Pāṭaliputr. It is highly essential for a detailed understanding of religious and socio-cultural contexts. Terracotta figures are used for religious and plaything purposes, so they can be used to explore the religious beliefs of ancient Patna, i.e., Pāṭaliputr. The detailed study of dresses and ornaments of these antiquities helps in perceiving the dressing and ornamentation of the city from the earliest period. However, a thorough and collective study of these antiquities on various themes is yet to be done. So, aiming at the abovementioned themes, this research extracts unique and fresh information on the city's religious beliefs and socio-cultural practices. This research also discusses the fabricating techniques of terracotta objects of various periods.

Keywords: Pāṭaliputr, Patna, Kumrahār, Terracotta figurines, Naigameś, Mother Goddess.

Introduction (Figs. 9-13)

Patna is rich in terracotta objects. Plenty of terracotta objects have been recovered from many sites, like Kumrahār,¹ Bulandībāg,² Bhikhnā Pahārī, Bahādurpur, Jamunā Dīh³ (west of Patna Junction and east of Bihar Vidhan Sabha), Mahābīrghāt, Begum-kī-Hawelī, Gulzārbāg Press Playground, Śāh Kamāl Road,⁴ Bākarganj, Kadamkuān, Musallahpur, Golakpur, Patna University area,⁵ etc. Though all the sites yielded terracotta objects, very few revealed a continuous sequence from the pre-Maurya to the Gupta period. The majority of the sites unearthed terracotta objects of the pre-Mauryan, Mauryan, Śuṅg and Kuṣāṅ periods. Terracotta objects of the Gupt period are limited to only a few sites, Kumrahār being the primary site. The terracotta figurines of Patna have similarities with several proto-historic sites like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, and also from the sites of other countries such as Kish, Susa and Assur, Tall Asmar, Jamdat Nasr in Mesopotamia; Anan (Turkistan), Alisahr (Anatolia), Troy, Adalia, and other sites in Asia Minor and early Cycladic and Cretan terracotta works.⁶ They are classified into various categories: terracotta figures, beads, terracotta animals, toy animals with movable heads, bird chariots and carts, balls, cones with pointed tops, skin rubbers, ornaments, bricks, and others.

Terracotta figurines

Terracotta figurines are among the most common findings from all layers of the excavated sites of early historical periods across the subcontinent. They are both large and small; the latter could be playthings made by either potters or children themselves.⁷ Archaic figurines from the earliest levels or pre-Mauryan era displayed a lack of imagination among artists in the art of clay modelling. The ear, nose, and hair of human beings were shown by pinching out the clay, the mouth by a deep horizontal cut just above the chin, the legs and hands by the stump of the clay, and the

¹ Mukharji P. C., *A Report on the Excavations on the Ancient Sites of Pataliputra (1896-97)*, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p. 19.

² *ARASI*, 1926-27, p. 139.

³ Mukharji, *Op. cit.*, 1898, p. 23-26.

⁴ Sinha B. P. & Narain L. A., *Pataliputra Excavations (1955-56)*, The Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Bihar, Patna, 1970, pp. 41-47.

⁵ Gupta P. L. (ed.), *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities (Stone Sculptures, Metal Images, Terracottas and Minor Antiquities)*, Patna Museum, Patna, 1965, p. 175.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁷ Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *A Report on Kumrahar Excavations (1951-55)*, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1959, p. 108.

fingers by notches. In some cases, the nostrils were shown by two holes. The impressed circles over the body indicated the navel and the breast portions.⁸ The figurines of the Mauryan period project some creativity from the artists. The faces of the figurines were modelled beautifully, and other body parts, such as hair, ornaments, and ears, were displayed using the applique technique. The figurines of this period also were made in moulds.⁹ The post-Mauryan terracotta Figurines are handmade, though some references to moulded specimens are also reported.¹⁰ But at Kumrahār, most figurines of this period are made of mould.¹¹

Bulandībāg is a prosperous site for terracotta figures and figurines. These are found from the earliest level up to the Gupt period. A moulded terracotta head of a serpent-goddess with a smiling face is seen, perhaps belonging to the Mauryan period (Fig. 1 F). A pre-Mauryan female figurine is found, which is well ornamented with an earlobe, necklace, wristlets, and a girdle of two strings, along with well-dressed hair (Fig. 1 A).¹² Another figure projects an extraordinary costume with a sort of apron and voluminous coiffure (Fig. 1 B). A turbaned head of a child with a smiling face is a unique example of ancient modelling (Fig. 1 D).¹³

Innumerable terracotta figures and figurines have been recovered during the salvage at various parts of the city, viz., Bākarganj, Bhikhnā Pahārī, Golakpur, Kadamkuān, Musallahpur, etc. Antiquities found at these sites belong to the Maurya period. No Guptan antiquities and terracotta objects were reported at these sites, which could be due to the abandonment of these sites in the Gupt period. A nude figure of *yogī* found at a depth of 18 feet at Bhikhnā Pahārī, whose hands have been broken, wearing three ornaments on the neck and one waistband (Fig. 1 E), which Jayaswal identifies as Śiva. The same site yielded a head, which, for its primitiveness, may be compared with some of the Mohenjo-Daro figurines. A plaque of the Sun from Kadamkuān, measuring 3.5 inches, was found at a depth of 14 feet, which Jayaswal believes is an object of worship and compares it with the Sun-in-chariot at Bhaja and Bodh Gaya (Fig. 1 G). A head of the shaven monk with prominent Āryan features has been unearthed from a depth of 11 feet at Golakpur (Fig. 1 H). The most remarkable figure of a female torso (measuring 6.37") was found 14 feet 6 inches under the surface during the construction work near Golakpur. The figure is round, with perfect modelling, particularly on the right side and the back (Fig. 1 C).¹⁴

⁸ Sinha B. P. & Narain L. A., *Op. cit.*, 1970, p. 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹¹ Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *Op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹² *ARASI*, 1926-27, p. 139.

¹³ Kuraishi M. H., "Lists of Ancient Monuments Protected under the Act VII of 1904 in the province of Bihar and Orissa", *Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. LI*, Government of India, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 108-09.

¹⁴ Jayaswal K. P., "Terra-cottas Dug out at Patna", *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Vol. III, No. 2*, (pp. 125-26), December 1935, p. 126.

Fig. 1: Terracotta Images Found at Bulandībāg, Bhikhnā Pahārī, Golakpur, and Kadamkuān





(A, B, D, F) from Bulandibāg; (E) Bhikhnā Pahārī; (F) Kadamkuān; (C, H) Golakpur
 Courtesy: (A) Ghosh, 1926-27; (F, H) Jayaswal 1935; (B, C, D, E, G) Myself

The creativity of artists is very well conceivable through figures found at Kumrahār. Therefore, Altekar says the artist follows different techniques with a fair amount of success and has left posterity a typical picture of contemporary society in these terracotta models.¹⁵ They can broadly be subdivided into gods, *naigameś* (male and female), male and female (worshippers and others), crude terracotta figurines, and mother and child. Several figures of Hindu and Buddhist deities, like Viṣṇu, Gaṇeś, Saptamātrikās, Nāgadev, Buddh and Bodhisattv, etc., are found from all sites, which shows that both religions were flourishing at Patna during the early historical period. They are found in all layers but dominant in the periods III and IV (c. 100-450 CE).

A 9" X 4.8" plaque of the Gupt period of Viṣṇu with four hands, standing on a pedestal wearing *mukūṭa*, *kuṇḍala* and *dhoṭī* is recovered at Kumrahār (Fig. 2 D). A portion of a standing Buddha in *Abhayamudrā* with a large halo behind the head is found, which is 2.6" long and pertains to the Gupt period (Fig. 2 A2). Another 4.5" long moulded figure of a Bodhisattva in *Abhayamudra* wearing dhoti and ornaments on the body from the Gupt period is found (Fig. 2 A1).¹⁶ Besides, several other gods and goddess figures and figurines are found. A seated Gaṇeś (Fig. 2 K4), a broken piece of seated Saptamātrikās (Fig. 2 K2), a bust of Cāmuṇḍā and the hood of Nāgadev¹⁷ (Fig. 2 C) are representatives of such figures. A head of *Varāh* (boar) was brought to light by Mukharji at the site.¹⁸ Some female terracotta figurines from Kumrahār, identified as Mother Goddess, have elaborate physical features and highly decorated ornaments. One among them is a female standing figure whose hair is adorned with a double pearl string terminated at the side in circular rings of pearls. The headdress comprises side rolls with a central boss stamped with a floral design. The figure wears a saree that folds down on the sides and is supported by a jewelled girdle whose faint traces are visible.

¹⁵ Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *Op. cit.*, p. 108.

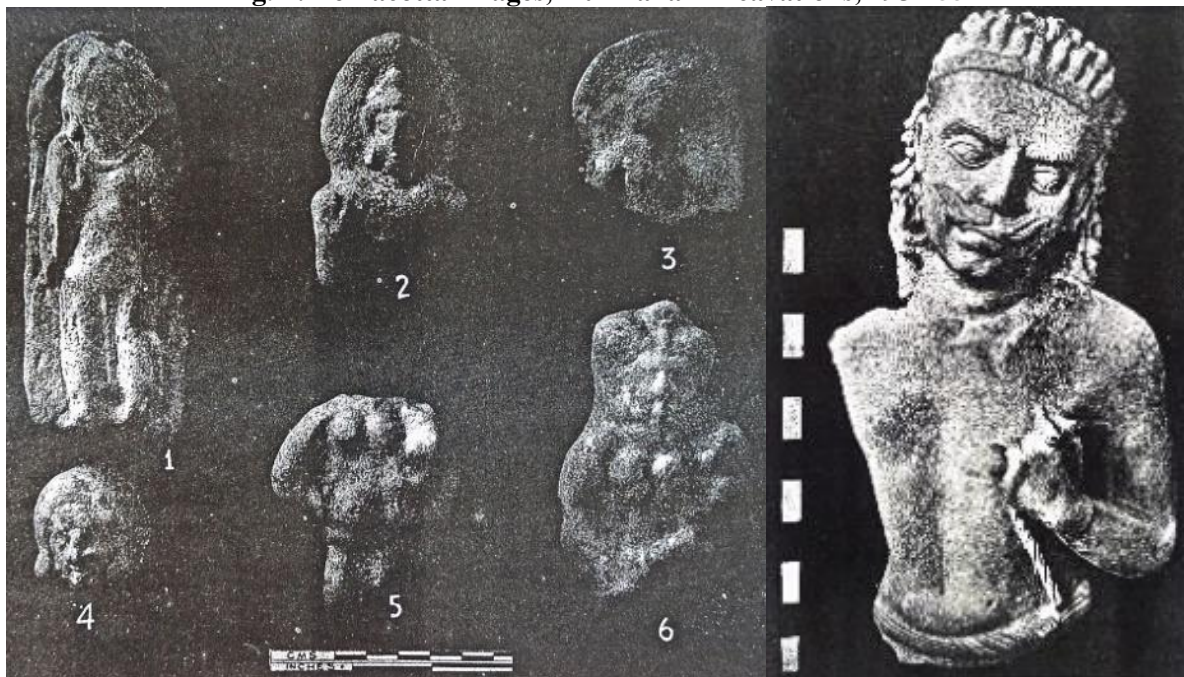
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-09.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁸ Mukharji P. C., *Op. cit.*, 1898, p. 19.

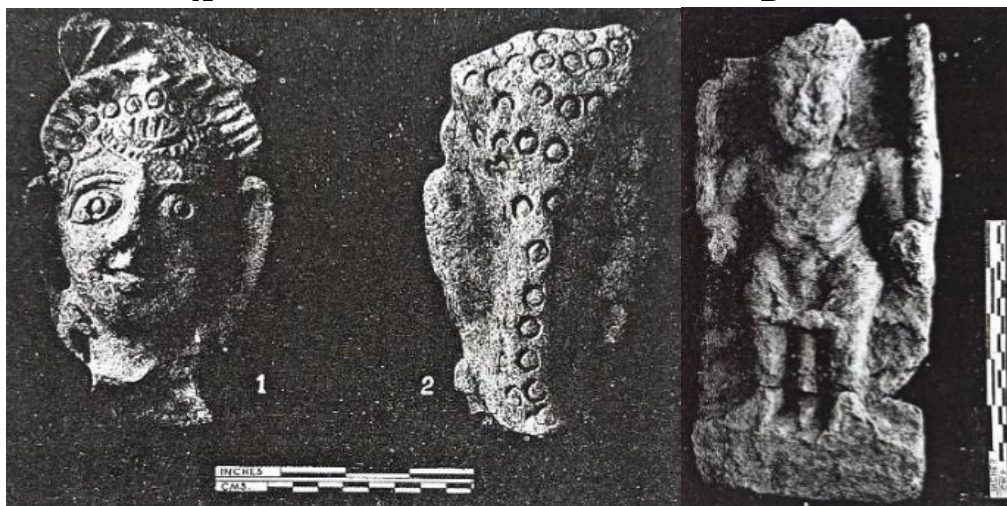
Bracelets, probably jewelled, on each hand; heavy and flat earrings. The face is oval, and hands are clasped in front.¹⁹
(Fig. 2 F)

Fig. 2: Terracotta Images, Kumrahār Excavations, 1951-55



A

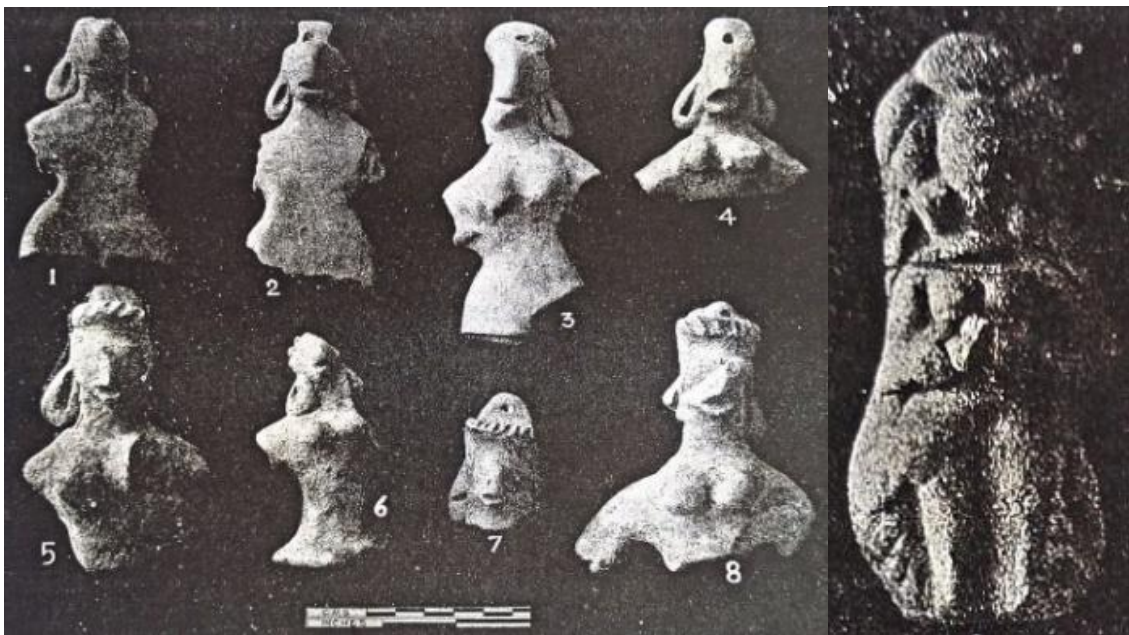
B



C

D

¹⁹ Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *Op. Cit.*, p. 112.



E

F



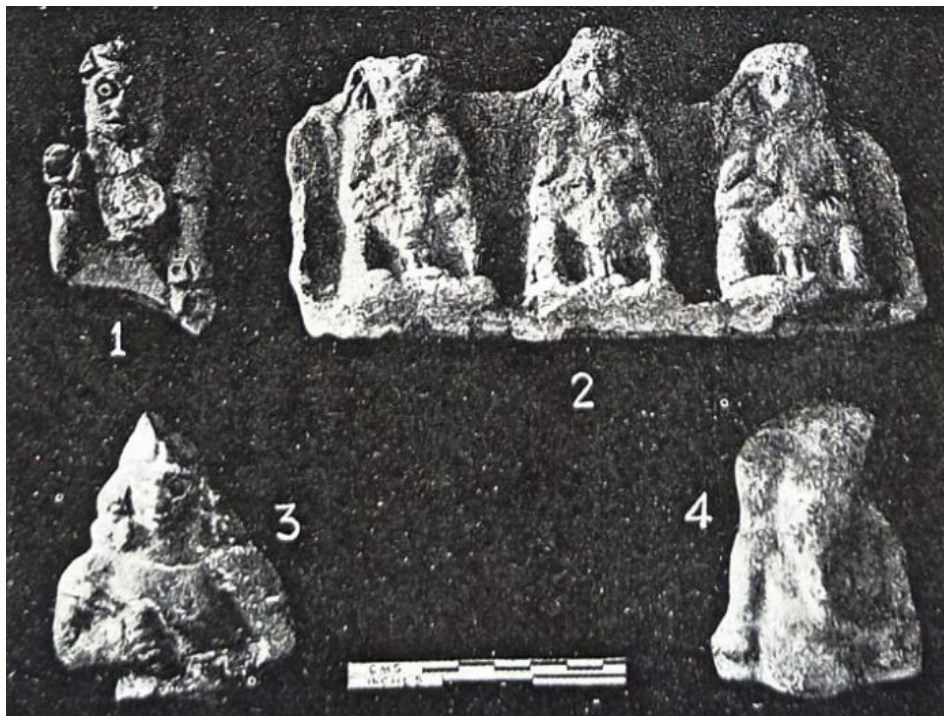
G

H



I

J



K



L

M

Courtesy: Altekar & Mishra, 1959

Another group of figures represent *naigameś*, who has a goat's head and a human's torso. Many such figures are unearthed from Kumrahār (Fig. 2 E), Mahābīrghāt, Begum-kī-Hawelī, Gulzārbāg Press Playground, Śāh Kamāl Road, etc. Naigameś or Naigameya was the name of a much-dreaded follower of Kartikeya; a person possessed by him showed symptoms of foaming and vomiting and used to talk at random.²⁰ Therefore, the deity became popular among the masses to prevent evil attention and soon transformed into the presiding deity over childbirth. Traditionally, *naigameś* is referred to as a male, but in some female terracotta figures, they were also envisaged as females. These figurines were entirely hand-modelled.²¹ Many such figures are found from the early centuries of the Common Era up to the 5th century. C.E. Hooked nose (sometimes pointed nose), hair-crest on the head with a suspension hole, slit and open mouth, and long bored ears are some of the common features of male and female *naigameś* figurines. Male figurines of the Kuṣāṇ period have a horn on their head. Female figurines have special characteristics like prominent breasts, pierced ears, long dangling ears, narrow waists and wide hips.²²

Male and female figurines of the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods are found at Mahābīrghāt, Begum-kī-Hawelī, Gulzārbāg Press Playground and Śāh Kamāl Road (Fig. 3 A). Male figures of this period are generally found in

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

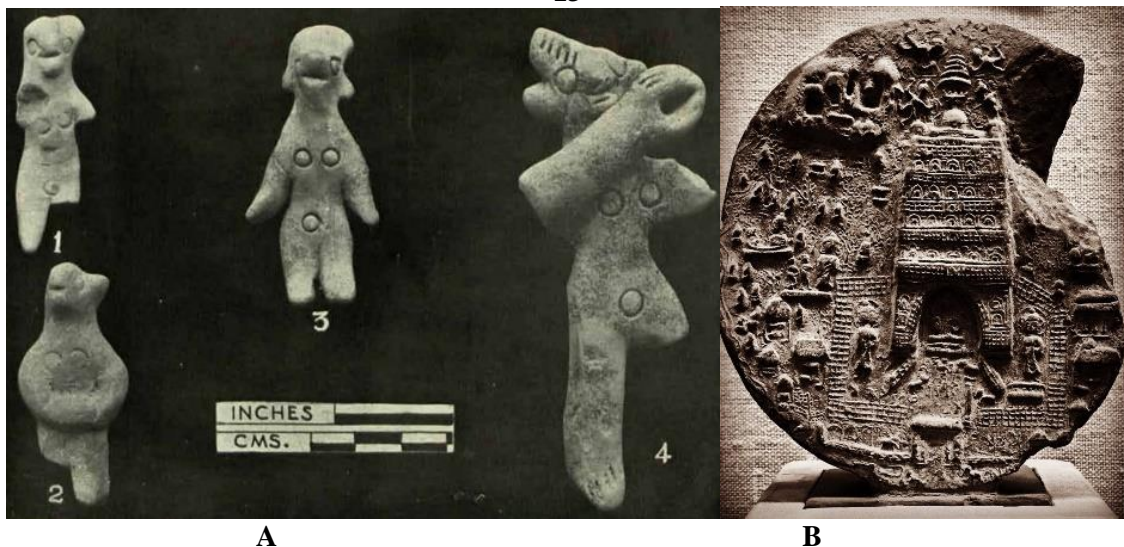
²¹ Sinha B. P. & Narain L. A., *Op. cit.*, 1970, p. 41.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 143; Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *Op. cit.*, pp. 110-11.

standing posture with animal-like faces and have deep horizontal cuts just below the nose to display the mouth and circlets or ringlets over the body to indicate the eyes, breast, and navel portion. Some of them have pinched heads and ears. A male figurine from Śāh Kamāl Road is treated with red wash. Female figurines of the period have diverse physical appearances, ornaments, and dressing, but most are depicted on a plaque, have heavy headdresses with various styles, and are ornamented with multiple kinds of necklaces and earrings. These ornaments are plain as well as heavy. The round smiley face is also a common feature of those figurines. A specimen from Mahābīrghāt shows a beautiful woman with a headdress resembling a turban, probably tied with a pearls-string just near the right ear. She is wearing a bead necklace around her neck and is probably holding an antimony rod in her right hand.

Terracotta male and female figures of the Śuṅg-Kuṣāṇ period were made of red clay and slipped with red ochre generally or by grey in a few cases. A high or broad forehead, clearly visible pupils, thick lips, and applique ears are the general features of both male and female figurines, while oval eyes and decorated and well-dressed hair are some common characteristics of female figurines.²³ All terracotta human figures of the Śuṅg-Kuṣāṇ era found at Kumrahār are moulded. A plaque of a female figure in between the couple is found, which is correlated with the *apanaks* scene (Fig. 2 L). Such scenes are also found in Bhārhut Stūpa. A lower part of the human figurine found at Kumrahār shows the artistic skill of the period. The navel is prominent, and the waistband has been erected by an incision around the waist, wherefrom saree hanging down, whose folds explore the artistic skill. The figure holds a *vīṇā* in the left hand (Fig. 2 M).²⁴

Fig. 3: Terracotta Objects, Pāṭaliputra Excavations, 1955-56; Terracotta Replica of Mahābodhi temple, 1912-13



Courtesy: (A) Sinha and Narain, 1970; (B) Spooner, 1912-13

Male and female figurines from the Gupt period (c. 300-600 CE) were mould-made. Female figurines dominate during the period. The main features of female figurines are the prominent breasts along with a narrow waist wearing a *saree*, though a few of them have been shown in *ghāghrā* or frock. Hair is shown by incision and tied in *juḍā* style. Some are fashioned with earrings of various types, bracelets, anklets, and bangles in hand. A necklace at the neck and a girdle at the waist are also standard features of female terracotta figurines. Male figurines also have narrow waists, and fingers are exposed well. *Dhotī* and earrings also feature some of the male figurines. One of the most remarkable arts of the site is a bust of a male who seems to be a *viṭ* (the gay follower of a hero). The image has a broad forehead with a ribbon going around, hair above the head raised upwards and matted in several groups. Eyebrows are prominent; hair is shown by incisions; the eyeball is circular with a hole in the centre. Prominent nose with clearly visible nostrils. Moustaches are busty and unraised. Lip closed. Broad and muscular chest.²⁵ The figure wears a *dhotī* and waistband under the navel (Fig. 2 B).

A good number of large terracotta artistic plaques have been unearthed from Kumrahār, mostly from *Ārogyavihār* by Altekar, which shows the instinct of the potter-artist in giving some of the minute details of the human anatomy. They belong to the Gupt period. A large plaque of *Vidyādhār* in flying posture, dressed in *dhotī* and *uttariya*, is found (Fig. 2 G). The head of a female devotee is also an important artistic work. Eyes are depicted in a semi-closed posture in a very peaceful mood, and hair, which is projected by incision, is arranged in a honeycomb pattern and tied into *jūḍā*

²³ Sinha B. P. & Narain L. A., *Op. cit.*, 1970, pp. 41-42.

²⁴ Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 112-13.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-14.

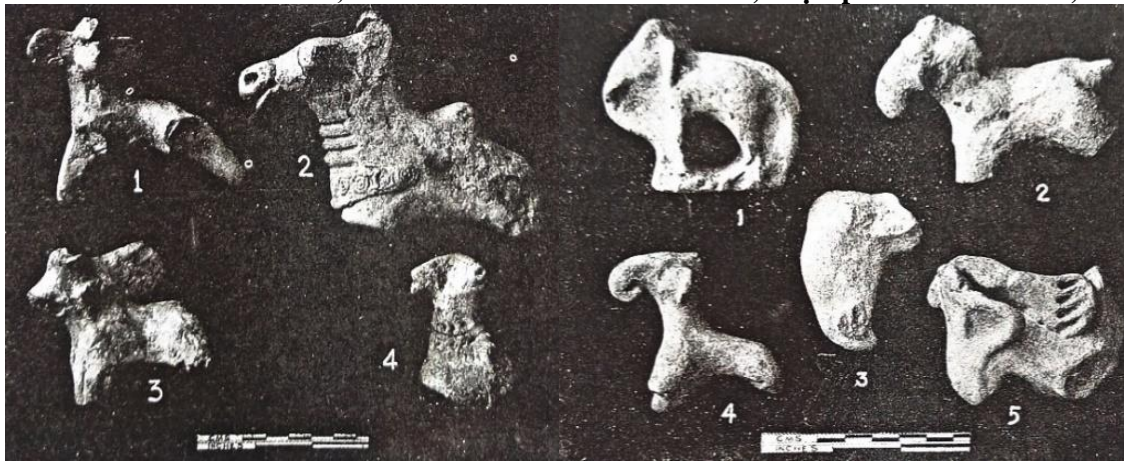
(Fig. 2 I). Another broken figure of a woman holding a pitcher on her head is found, whose head and left arm only have survived. (Fig. 2 H)

Some small-size terracotta figurines displaying excellent artistry were also recovered. A small terracotta male figurine seated in *lalitāsan* style wore *dhotī* and some ornaments like a *keyur* on the arm, necklace on the neck and girdle on the waist (Fig. 2 J1). In another terracotta figurine, a male is shown in dhoti whose *yajnopavit* is explicitly visible (Fig. 2 J3). An attractive terracotta figurine of a winged female, whose breasts and nipple are displayed prominently, hair is tied in a *juḍā* style and ornamented with earrings and necklace (Fig. 2 J2). A few crude handmade terracotta figurines are discovered, whose general features are the pinched nose, open mouth, eyes indicated by sunken hollows, and outstretched arms.²⁶ One of the most notable terracotta objects found at Patna is a terracotta plaque (5" long oval-shaped), which has an image of the Bodh Gaya temple. Buddha is seated inside the temple and in front of a Pillar along with the elephant capital (probably Aśokan) is depicted (Fig. 3 B).²⁷

Ghosh recovers several terracotta figures and figurines at Bulandībāg. He believes these are the earlier terracotta figurines than those found at Kumrahār by Spooner. His belief was based on the peculiarities of ornaments and dresses, quite distinct from those credited to the Mauryas. Therefore, he annotates, "*the terracotta figurines, of which some 5 or 6 varieties are found quite different in style from those found by late Dr Spooner, exhibit a much earlier development of art than that which characterises those of the Mauryan period. The ornament and dress of these newly recovered figurines are peculiar to them and reveal a state of culture quite distinct from that of the Mauryas.*"²⁸ Another group of unique figurines are small terracotta heads wearing curious headdresses folded square and draped around the cheeks, which surprisingly project an Egyptian appearance.²⁹

A large number of terracotta figures of animals and birds, such as bull, elephant, lion, tiger, monkey; horse, camel, ram, dog, crow, cock, fish, snake, tortoise, etc., are recovered from the pre-Mauryan period up to the Gupt period (Fig. 4 A-H). Bull is the dominant terracotta animal among them and is generally found at all sites in good numbers. They are found with and without the humped. Plenty of animal figures are found at Mahābīrghāt, Begum-kī-Hawelī, Gulzārbāg Press Playground and Śāh Kamāl Road from the pre-Mauryan period, whereas at Kumrahār 97 animal figurines are reported, whose antiquity may go back to the Śuṅg period. Animal figurines of the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods are handmade and decorated with circles and incised lines showing ears, eyes, mouths, and manes. Holes were often made in the legs of these animals for fitting wheels, which indicate their being as playthings. They are generally made from red clay comprised of red wash or slip. Some of the terracotta objects have a black slip.³⁰

Fig. 4: Terracotta Animals and Birds, Kumrahār Excavations 1951-55; Pāṭaliputra Excavations, 1955-56



A

B

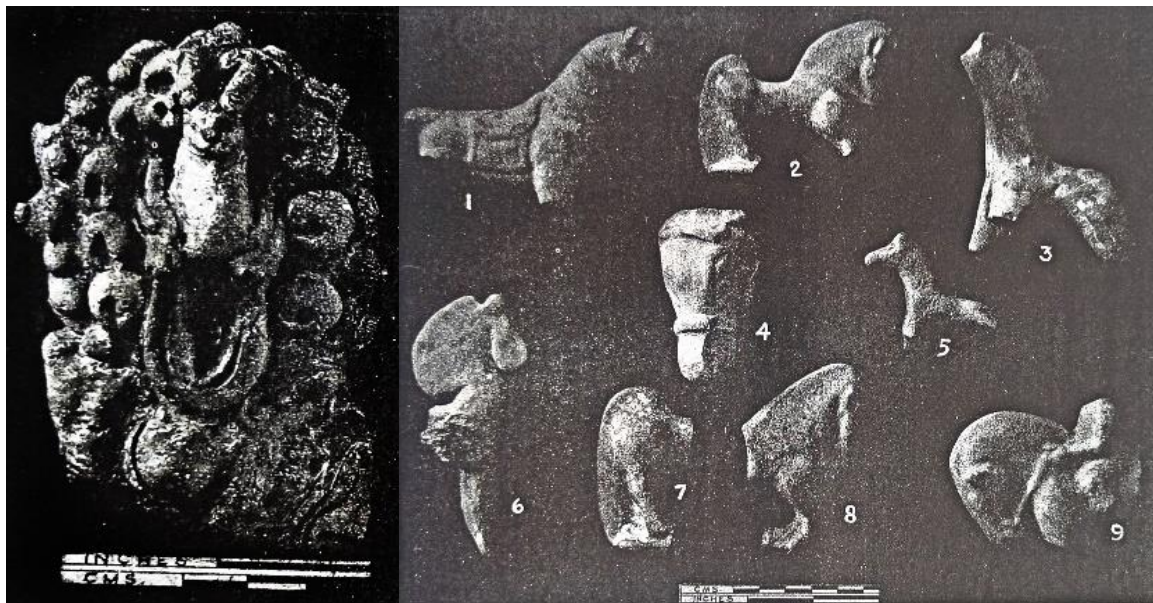
²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-15.

²⁷ Kuraishi M. H., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 108-09.

²⁸ *ARASI*, 1926-27, p. 140.

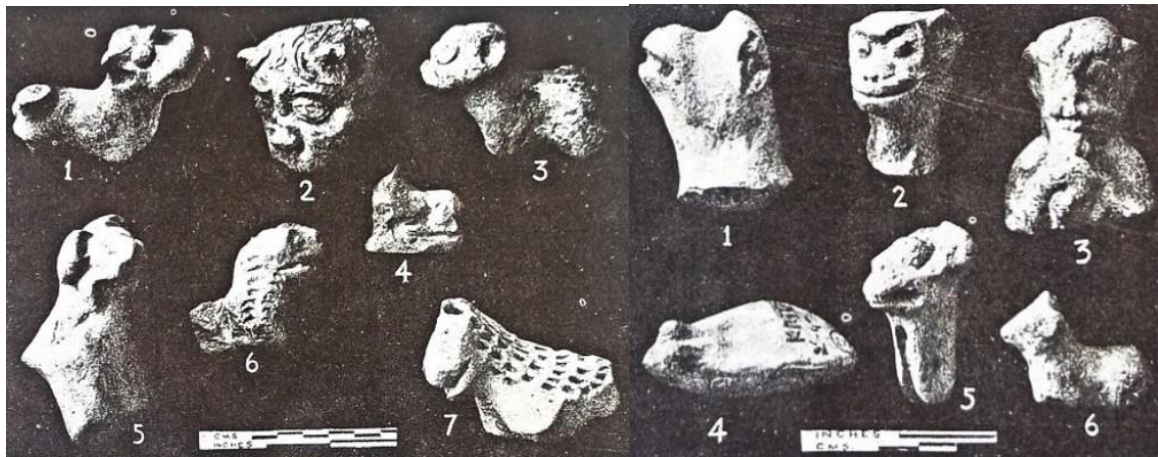
²⁹ Kuraishi M. H., *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

³⁰ Sinha B. P. & Narain L. A., *Op. cit.*, 1970, pp. 43-44.



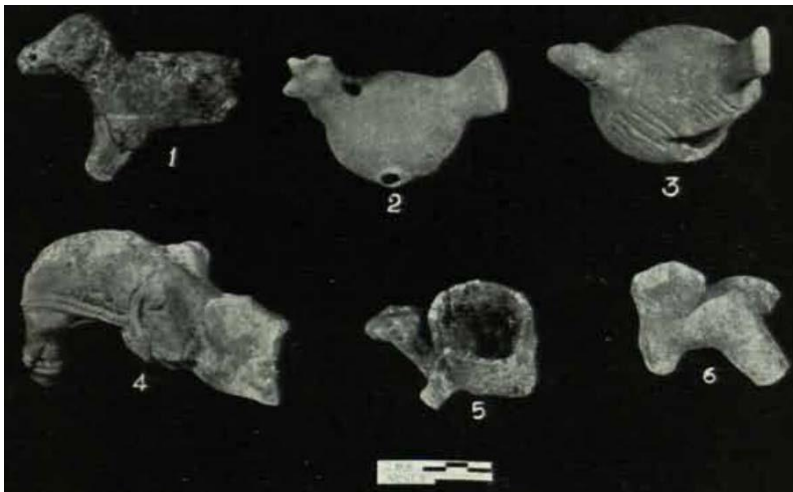
C

D



E

F



G



H

Courtesy: (A, B, C, & D) Altekar & Mishra, 1959; (E, F, G, & H) Sinha & Narain, 1970

The post-Mauryan terracotta objects are inferior in artistic skill and artistry. They were also ill-burnt and free of any surface treatment. Many of them are solid, though some hollow specimens were also found. A unique winged deer of the Gupta period is recovered from Kumrahār (Fig. 4 C).³¹

Some toy animals with movable heads are found at Kumrahār, which are unique among the terracotta objects. These terracotta quadrupeds have two neck holes for a movable head. A movable head of a monkey is found, with two holes on the neck; the upper one is from front to back, and the lower is sidewise. Several bird chariots are also found, most

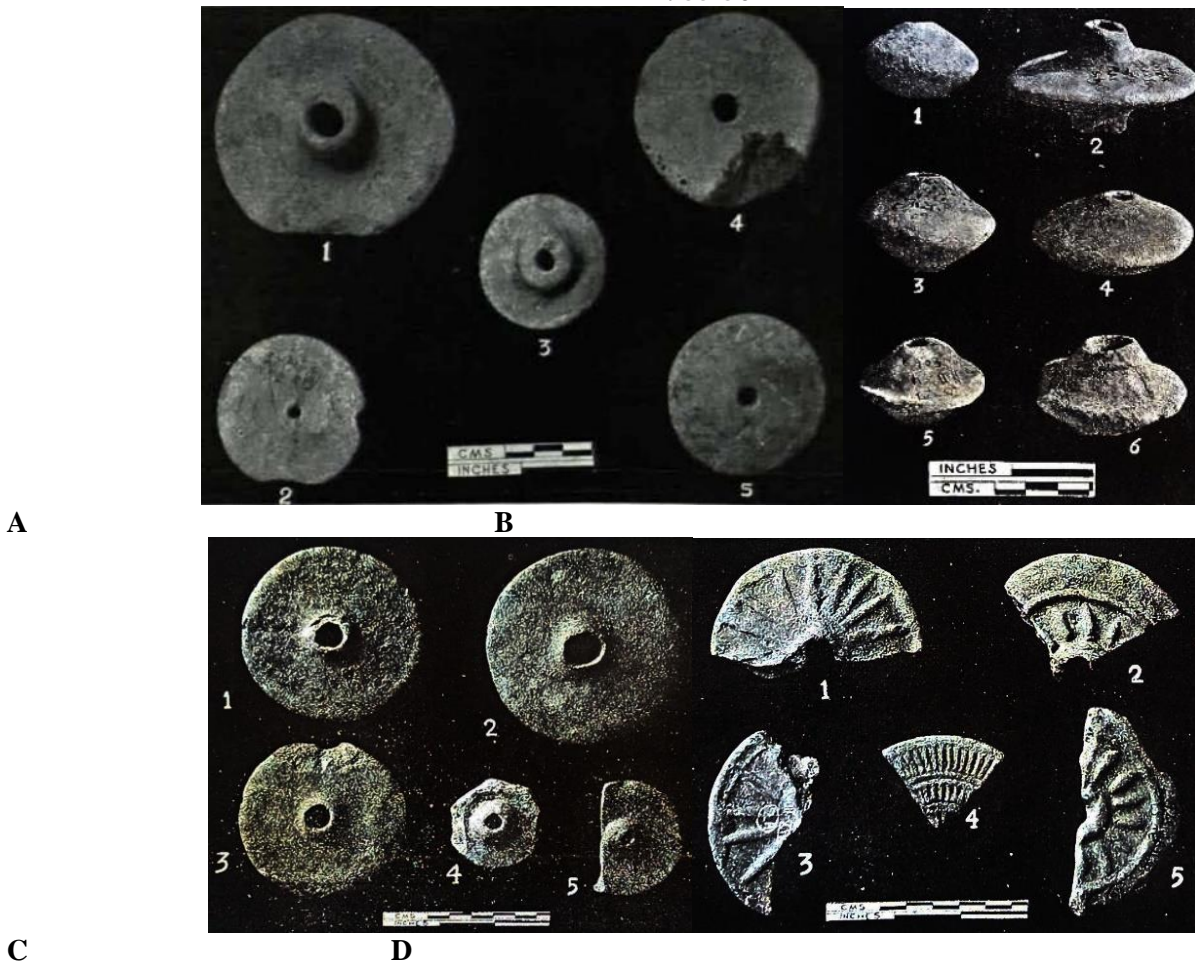
³¹ Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *Op. cit.*, p. 119.

belonging to the Kuṣāṇ period. All bird chariots from Kumrahār have two wheels only; however, four-wheeled birds are found commonly in other places. Most of these bird chariots are with hollow bodies.³² Play carts and terracotta wheels are also recovered (Fig. 5 A-D). Plenty of terracotta wheels (31 from Kumrahār) have been found, which are generally wheel-made, but handmade ones are also found. Four types of wheels have been found; the first represents the Sumerian type, wherein hubs are used to protect both sides of the wheel (Fig. 5 B). Another wheel type is the Mohenjo-Daro type, whose hub projected only one side (Fig. 5 C). The third wheel type has no hub (Fig. 5 A), and the fourth type is decorated (Fig. 5 D). Wheels recovered from Kumrahār mainly belong to the Gupt period; however, a few were of the pre-Gupt era. Some terracotta wheels found from Mahābīrhāt are related to the pre-Maurya and Mauryan periods (Fig. 5 A2 & A4).³³

Skin rubbers, which are called *Jhāmā* or *Jhāvā* in Bihar and U.P., are found in various shapes, like circular, square, oblong, rectangular, parallelogram, and trapezium (Fig. 5 E). They are found mainly from the Gupt period.³⁴ Some terracotta ornaments were also discovered in all the excavated sites, viz., thirty wheel-made terracotta earlobes from the early period up to 5th c. C.E. They are made of red and black ware. Nineteen moulded terracotta pendants in grey, black, and wares are unearthed. These are reported from the Śuṅg-Kuṣāṇ period.³⁵

Eighty-eight terracotta balls have been reported from Kumrahār, which were used as pebbles or pellets for sling or sling bow. They are generally plain and well-rounded (Fig. 5 F). Such balls have been found in ancient civilisations like Sumerian, Egyptian, Indus Valley civilisation and other places. These balls are solid, handmade, and red without any surface treatment. They are found in good numbers from the earliest period up to the Gupt era. The dimensions of these balls varied in diameter between 0.33 to 1.52 inches.

Fig. 5: Terracotta Wheels, Skin-rubbers and Balls, Kumrahār Excavations 1951-55; Pāṭaliputra Excavations, 1955-56

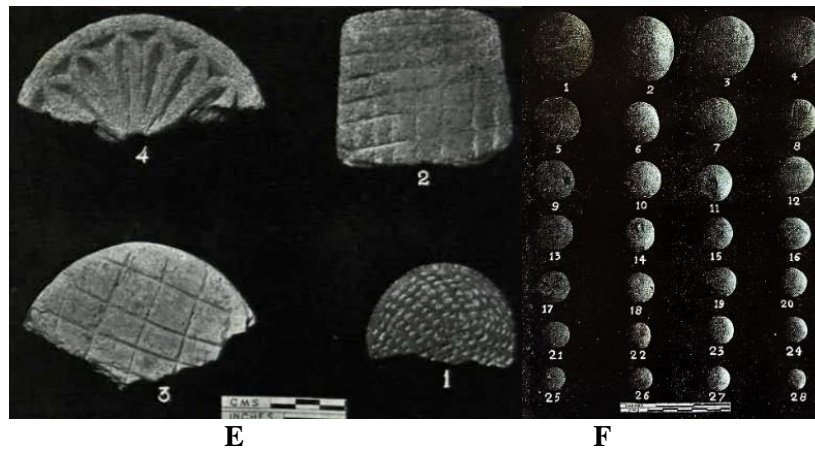


³² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

³³ Sinha B. P. & Narain L. A., *Op. cit.*, 1970, p. 47.

³⁴ Altekar A. S. & Mishra V., *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

³⁵ Sinha B. P. & Narain L. A., *Op. cit.*, 1970, pp. 46-47.



Courtesy: (A & E) Sinha & Narain, 1970; (B, C, D, & F) Altekar & Mishra, 1959

Conclusion

Patna is highly prosperous in terracotta objects, which produce terracotta figures and figurines throughout the city, but very few revealed a continuous sequence from the pre-Maurya to the Gupta period. Most sites unearthed terracotta antiquities belong to the pre-Mauryan, Mauryan, Śuṅg and Kuṣāṇ periods, while terracotta objects of the Gupt period are limited to only a few sites. The western sites of the city, which are rich in Mauryan and post-Mauryan terracotta objects, do not produce Guptan terracotta objects and other antiquities, indicating that a significant portion of Western Pāṭaliputr was deserted in the Gupt period. The terracotta of Patna has similarities with several proto-historic sites like Harappan and others situated in West Asia, Asia Minor, Central Asia, and Greece. The similarity in the traditional art might indicate the migration of cultural groups during the proto-historical period.

The terracotta art of the pre-Mauryan era displayed a lack of imagination among artists in the art of clay modelling. The ear, nose, and hair of human beings were shown by pinching out the clay, the mouth by a deep horizontal cut just above the chin, the legs and hands by the stump of the clay, and the fingers by notches. The figurines of the Mauryan period project some creativity from the artists. The faces of the figurines were modelled beautifully, and other body parts, such as hair, ornaments, and ears, were displayed using the applique technique. The figurines of this period also were made in moulds. The post-Mauryan terracotta figurines are handmade, though moulded specimens are also reported prominently from Kumrahār.

Terracotta figures and figurines can be broadly subdivided into heavenly and worldly. Many gods and goddesses come in heavenly, while *naigameś* (male and female), male and female (worshippers and others), crude terracotta figurines, and mother and child come under worldly. Interestingly, the plenteousness of the worldly figurines is dominant from the pre-Mauryan period to the post-Mauryan period, while the heavenly figurines were growing from the Kuṣāṇ period and its plurality was more increased in the Gupt period, which indicates that the terracotta art was not very much involved in religious affairs from the earliest period of the city till the post-Mauryan period and mainly was represent the social life. The abundance of gods' and goddesses' images indicates the thematic changes in terracotta art, and its religious projection has become the most prominent theme. The use of terracotta figures for representing gods and goddesses was also connected with idol worshipping, which became popular in the post-Maurya period, while terracotta seemed to represent minor versions of stone images and, due to affordable price, could be easily accessible to the masses.

Images of Brāhmaṇical deities indicate that the religion was popularising in Pāṭaliputr in the post-Mauryan period, and till the Gupt period, Brāhmaṇical religion was competing with Buddhism, which was the most popular religion since its foundation. Finding stone stools and female terracotta figurines which were identified as Mother Goddess from the Kuṣāṇ era reveals that the concept of Mother Goddesses and female divinities or Śākt cult was developing and the domination of female figurines over male figurines in the Gupt period manifests that the till the Gupt the Śākt cult was well established in the Gupt period. Transforming the *naigameś* figurines into female form also indicates the development of female divinity. The availability of snake hoods from the Mauryan period indicates that non-Āryan religious practices were popular in the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods.

Large terracotta artistic plaques found from *Ārogyavihār* (hospital) of Kumrahār show the instinct of the potter-artist in giving some of the minute details of the human anatomy, revealing the development of medical science during the Gupt period.

Animal figurines of the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods are handmade and decorated with circles and incised lines showing ears, eyes, mouths, and manes. The post-Mauryan terracotta objects are inferior in artistic skill and artistry. They were also ill-burnt and free of any surface treatment. Many of them are solid, though some hollow specimens were also found.