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New approach to the ivory and bone artifacts from Tagar (Ter). Dist. Osmanabad, Maharashtra

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Abstract---Ivory is the hard creamy-white dentin that forms the tusks of some animals such as elephants, used to make decorative objects. Ivory is mainly used to make combs, ear rings, bangles, hair pins, antimony rods (*anjana or Kajjal shalaka*), seals, buttons, decoration pieces, boxes, dice, chessmen, furniture, ornaments, manuscript covers, mirror handles Etc. Ivory and bones are used for needles, arrow heads, from Prehistoric times. They are continued till modern period. Ter, i.e. Ancient Tagar Dist. Osmanabad, Maharashtra is an ancient major city of Satavahana period. In various excavations and surface collection many objects are revealed which are created from ivory and bone. Artifacts like decorative mirror handles in the form of beautiful lady, ivory combs, needles, antimony roads, and dolls are revealed. Some bone artifacts like female figurine are revealed. Mirror handles in the form of beautiful lady has having clothes on the backside are traditionally known as *Sakachha*. It resembles the nine-yard Sari wore in Maharashtrian style. Evidence of the observations regarding drapery, ornaments, hairstyles of the sculptural study show that the cultural flow continued from Satavahana era till recent past in Ter and surrounding area. Ancient Tagar having trade hub with export potential to the Hellenic world during that period.

Keywords---Ter, Mirror handle, Kajjal shalaka, Ivory, Artifacts, Satavahana.

Introduction

The dictionary meaning of Ivory is the hard creamy-white dentin that forms the tusks of some animals such as elephants, used to make decorative objects. There are many uses of Ivory and they have been changing time to time. In Africa it was found abundantly. Ivory is mainly used to make combs, ear rings, bangles, hair pins, antimony rods (*anjana or Kajjal shalaka*), seals, buttons, awls, decoration pieces, boxes, dice, chessmen, furniture, ornaments, manuscript covers, Mirror handles Etc. Ivory and bone are used for needles, arrow heads, and these are

yielded from various sites. Upper Paleolithic Bone Sculpture (Mother Goddess or Harpoon?) was reported from Lohandi, UP (Jain V.K. 2006, 54). The objects such as Arrow heads, awls, collegium rods, combs, gamesmen were found at chalcolithic sites. Excavations at Takshila have yielded some interesting bone and ivory figurines ranging in date from 2nd century BCE to early centuries of Common era including a splendid ivory comb decorated with figure of a reclined woman and some auspicious symbols, From Patliputra has come interesting headless figure of a soldier which could be dated back to the 2nd century BCE. Similarly the piece of a figured ivory comb in the collection of the Victoria and Albert museum, probably of Malwa region origin, could be dated to the 1st century BCE. The ivory and bone figures from the Deccan have not been very encouraging. A solitary piece from Kondapur shows the technical efficiency of ivory carver in the Deccan in the early centuries of the Common Era. (Moti Chandra 1962, 7)

According to Roy C. Craven one plaque which originally formed a decorative panel on a throne. Along with many other ivory fragments and luxury items, it was discovered in 1937 by a French expedition led by the Hackins in a cache at Begram in Afganistan. Begram lay on a major trade route to central Asia which joined the Chinese Silk road with Indian trade centers and sea ports in the Deccan. The plaque shows two bejeweled woman standing under a *torana* of the type noted at Bharhut and at Sanchi. The inscription on the South gate at Sanchi recording that it was created by the ivory-carvers. This ivory plaque is from Begram in Afganistan and it is kept in Kabul museum. The height of this plaque is 41 cm. (Craven R. C. 1991, 73). Ivory has also been used for handle of mirror, obviously these items with ivory handles must have been made for the use of a rich clientele. The ivory handles are well carved with figures and motifs. (Dwivedi V.P. 1976, 9)

Ter (76° 12' 30"N; 18° 19' 20" E) is one of the prominent Historical and well known archaeological site situated on the banks of Terna River in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. The present town is having 12 *vadis* (hamlets) located all around. The town is situated right over the ancient mounds. It is to be noted that the development of the modern settlement has taken place exactly in the direction in which the ancient habitations spread, possibly on indication of the live traditions which controlled the socio-economic set up of the ancient habitation. The archaeological and historical importance of the site is well discussed by foreign travelers, archaeologists, historians and laymen. Ter is associated with renowned Marathi Saint Gora Kumbhar. Thick habitation deposit spreading over an area of about 2.5 sq k.m. attests to the importance and significance of the site. When the habitants of Ter dig or plough the fields, they certainly get terracotta figurines or other antiquities; because this town is located on the ancient mound. From excavations, Satavahana antiquities & evidence of habitation were found. Lamture Museum is having these antiquities. Ter seems to have had links with the Hellenic world. Sherds of Megarian ware were reported from different excavations.

Ter (Ancient Tagar) is an ancient major city of Satavahana period. In the various excavations and surface collections many Ivory and bone objects are revealed. In the Satavahana regime Ter was a large hub and a workshop of ivory and bone

carving. Ivory artifacts like decorative Mirror handles in the form of lady, ivory combs, needles, antimony rods, and dolls are revealed.

Objectives

Objective of this paper is to study ivory and bone decorative antiquities found in the Ter minutely. Few ivory antiquities are studied by scholars. But to create new approach for these artifacts is the main objective.

Methodology

Field survey method is adopted for this research. Visited Ter and studied all ivory and bone antiquities minutely with measurements. Compared these with other ivory and bone antiquities. For example Tagar Sundari (Doll from Ter, a Mirror handle) compared with beautiful ivory sculpture (mirror handle) from Pompeii, which is kept in Museo Nazionale, Naples, Italy.

1) Tagar Sundari (Beauty from Tagar) [Ivory Mirror Handle]





Tagar Sundari (Beauty from Tagar)

Place: In the personal Custody of Shri. Revansiddhaappa Lamture, Ter.

Sculpture of beautiful female measuring 12.5 centimeter made from ivory is a handle of a mirror. She is standing in *dwibhanga* position which means she is bending at the waste and knee level. Her right hand is playing with her ear and left hand is on her lap holding and lifting a bit her *adhovastra* (lower garment). Her face is oval shaped and beautiful. Eye brows are bow shaped and below that her eyes are fish shaped with bluish gray colour pupils (it won't be out of place to say that it is impact of Roman culture). Her nose is straight and lips are thin. She is very slim lady who is wearing *Chudamani* in the hair partition. Along both sides of *Chudamani*, she has tied hair band. She is wearing big and beautiful earrings and a long necklace running over her breast. She has *Keyur* (armlet) on her both arms. Different types of bangles from her wrist to arm add to her beauty. Those include *toda*, nine bangles and one *patli*. Now a days in Maharashtra female wear such types of bangles. She is wearing *sari* below navel. She has *Mekhala* on her waist. Bending at waist she is standing in her own style. Her clothes are muslin and are so delicate and transparent that her body is visible. Her knee joints are prominently seen. However, this tiny sculpture is broken below the knees.

The backside of this ivory sculpture is equally beautiful. The hairs are arranged in *triveni* (triple plated and knot at the end). At the top of *triveni*, she is wearing a golden fan like flower. Traditionally these ornaments were seen on Maharashtrian women just three decades before. Many scholars have described this as fan like hairstyle. But I don't agree with this. It must be a golden flower and below that is *Triveni* tied with each other at the end. The clothes on the backside are traditionally known as *Sakachha*. It resembles the nine yard Sari wore in

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Maharashtrian style. This leads to the conclusion that this is a young Maharashtrian girl.

Period- 100 BCE- 100 CE

2) **Ivory Comb**



An ivory comb found in the *Kunda*(tank), when Department of Archaeology and Museum, Maharashtra state, excavated this part of Ter. Ivory comb locally known as '*Fani*', is decorated from both the sides. On one side a female is shown seated with one leg extended over cushion, and attended by two elephants, each on either side with trunks coiled at the end. This reveals that the figure is of *Gaja Laxmi*. On the other side a royal couple is attended by two females. The carving is very much similar to Amravati style.

Period- 200 BCE- 100

Ivory Figurine



Place: Late Ramlingappa Lamture Museum, Government of Maharashtra, Ter

Measurement: - 1) Length 9.70 cm. 2) Width 03.02 cm

Material: - Ivory

Description: Another broken ivory figure was being used as a mirror handle. She is wearing *Chudamani* in the hair partition. Along both sides of *Chudamani*, she has tied hair band. Her left breast and the parts below waist are broken. Her left hand is in straight position. The right hand is holding *Kundala*. She has put one lower garment (*adhovastra*) and *Mekhala* on her waist. She looks quite similar to that of the ivory figurine found at Ter. She is wearing a necklace.

Period: 1st - 2nd century onwards

Ivory figurine



This figurine is also in the personal custody of Shri Lamture. Looks like an adolescent Western girl. She is wearing a necklace. Hairs are tied at the top of head. There is no other traditional ornament. She has long slender hands and legs. There is no drapery.

Period: 2nd century onwards

Bone Figurine



Place: Late Ramlingappa Lamture Museum, Government of Maharashtra.

Measurement: - 1) Height 9.05 cm. 2) Width 04.4cm

Material: -Bone

Description:-This figure has oval face and is made up of bone having hole in the head. The hands are smaller compared to the body. She is touching earring by her left hand having many bangles. She is wearing a long necklace. The *Chudamani* or *bindi* is prominently visible at the hair partition. Nose is straight, lips are thin and big eyes are the salient features. Large square *Kundala* (earrings) are quite attractive. She is wearing *Mekhala* and *Kativastra*.

Period:-1st-2nd century onwards

Bone figurine :-



Place: In the personal custody of Shri Lamture

Material: Bone

Description: This bone figurine is not so finely carved and seems unusual. She has bulgy eyes, flat nose and thick lips. There is hairband on head. She is wearing different shaped earrings. In the right ear it is round shaped (*Chakrakar*) and in the left ear it is leaf shaped (*Patrakar Kundala*). She is also wearing necklace (*Graiveyaka*). Her hands are broken. Breasts and abdomen are prominent. The belly shape shows that she is a mother. Lower part of legs are broken. Waist garment (*Adhovastra*) is tied by a cloth with a knot below naval and plated end is left hanging between the two legs. On the backside, the hairs are arranged in *triveni* (triple plated and knot at the end). Upper side of the hair is not carved properly.

Period:-1st-2nd century onward

Bone Figurine



Place: This figurine is in the personal custody of Shri Lamture.

Material: Bone

Description: It's relief work and is carved on one side only. The eyes are prominent, nose is straight and flat. Face is oval shaped. She is wearing earrings and her belly is flat. Left hand is folded and the palm is near ear. The legs are long, slender and the diaphanous cloth (*Adhovastra*) is on waist. The *Paad Valayas* are prominently carved in six layers. It is similar to a sculpture at Amaravati.

Period:-1st-2nd century onward.

One beautiful ivory sculpture (mirror handle) from Pompeii is kept in Museo Nazionale, Naples, Italy. This figurine was carved in India but was recovered from the volcanic ashes of Pompeii. It is revealed that this figurine was transported to Italy before 79 C.E., when Vesuvius erupted. It is very similar to the figurine which was revealed in Bhokardhan excavation, District Aurangabad, Maharashtra, however only lower portion below the waist is available. The ivory figurines from Pompeii, Naples and Bhokardhan, Aurangabad are like twins. The Bhokardhan figurine is in broken condition and only lower portion below the waist is available. In both the figurines the lady is standing in *Ardha Samapad* (one leg ahead and other in back side) position. Both the figurines have two assistants helping her for her makeup. They are holding some box in their hands. Both are wearing multilayered *Pada Valaya* and heavy *todas*. These *Pad Valayas* and *todas* are also seen on the legs of sculptures carved in Karla caves. The ivory figurine recovered at Ter is quite different from these two figurines.

But according to Barrett, Ter was a market town and that consequently the ivory need not be carved locally, the Ter ivory has much more in common with art in

Sanchi and North Western Deccan than the early phase in Andhradesha. It is at any rate the object of greatest importance in the early history of Indian art. (Margabandhu1985;81)

Discussion and Conclusion

The study of the Ivory and Bone artifacts from Tagar (Ter). Dist. Osmanabad, Maharashtra reveals that the Ivory and bone art was at its peak during Satavahana regime. Ivory was import from Karnataka, because lot of herds of elephants are located from ancient period till the date. Evidence of the observations regarding drapery, ornaments, hairstyles of the sculptural study show that the cultural flow continued from Satavahana era till recent past in Ter and surrounding area. It can be concluded beyond doubt that ancient Tagar or Ter had a vibrant economy having a trade hub with export potential to the Hellenic world during that period.

At Pompeii very fine and beautiful ivory statue of a female was found. It is from India. At Bhokardan also beautiful but broken female figurine of ivory were found. They are highly ornamented. It should be noted that some ivory carvers are maybe from Ter. These Ivory from pompii and Ter were belonging to the early Satavahana time that is 100 BCE -100CE. Yakshis of Bharahut and Sanchi and Mathura are the same school of ivory carving. In the 1st 2nd CE Ter (ancient Tagar) is a great hub of the art & Culture in the regime of the Satavahana.

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