



Article

Terracotta Statuettes from the Collection of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This study investigates the acquisition and significance of terracotta statuettes from ancient and medieval periods at the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan. Addressing a gap in the literature regarding the chronology and cultural relevance of these artifacts, the research employs historical-comparative analysis to trace the collection's formation and the representation of deities like Anahita. Findings reveal the statuettes' artistic, religious, and cultural roles, highlighting their local production and association with Zoroastrianism. These insights have implications for future museum curation strategies and the broader understanding of Central Asian material culture.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, museum of history, archaeological fund, acquisition, monument, terracotta, sculpture, statuette, craft, goddess Anahita.

1. Introduction

Terracotta figurines represent small-scale sculpture and are one of the sources for studying not only artistic culture but also for analyzing the development of local pottery craftsmanship. Terracottas provide insights into the everyday life and ideology of citizens, allowing us to trace which cults were the most widespread and which deities were primarily invoked in daily life.

The primary sources for this article include the Acquisition Books of the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan from various years, scientific and technical documentation from the archaeological fund (Inventory Books, card catalogs, lists); the exhibits themselves (terracotta figurines), as well as specialized literature related to terracotta figurines. In this context, it is important to mention the articles by M.V. Voronets, who as early as 1947 drew attention to some of the terracotta figurines housed in the museum; G.A. Dresvyanskaya, who described two terracottas from Afrasiab (the site of old Samarkand); and N.I. Krashennnikova, who provided a detailed description of a terracotta figurine depicting the Kashka goddess, discovered during archaeological excavations in the Kashkadarya region. V.A. Meshkeris studied terracotta musician figurines from the museum's collection. Some information about the acquisition of terracotta figurines in the museum can be found in the works of F.A. Zaslavskaya, S.B. Lunina, and V.S. Minasyants, though their data generally pertains only to individual pieces.

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2. Materials and Methods

The research methodology for this study is grounded in historical-comparative analysis, focusing on the terracotta statuettes from the collection of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan. The study utilized primary sources such as acquisition books, inventory cards, and catalog records from the museum's archaeological fund. These were complemented by scientific and technical documentation, as well as specialized literature on terracotta figurines, offering a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the statuettes' significance. Additionally, existing literature from notable scholars, including M.V. Voronets, G.A. Dresvyanskaya, and N.I. Krasheninnikova, provided valuable context on specific figurines, particularly those depicting deities like Anahita. The analysis was enriched by direct examination of the terracotta statuettes housed in the museum, focusing on their stylistic, technical, and thematic elements. The historical-comparative method facilitated the chronological reconstruction of the collection's development, allowing the study to trace its origins from the museum's founding in 1876 to its current state. The involvement of key scholars and regional researchers in shaping the collection further informed the methodological approach. Data were analyzed through cross-referencing museum records with findings from archaeological expeditions, highlighting patterns in the acquisition and cultural significance of the terracotta figurines. This approach ensured a holistic understanding of the figurines' artistic, religious, and sociocultural importance in ancient and medieval Central Asia. The results of this methodical examination provide a nuanced perspective on the statuettes' role in reflecting local craftsmanship, religious practices, and everyday life, contributing to a deeper understanding of the region's historical and cultural heritage.

3. Results

The chronological sequence of the creation of the terracotta figurine collection in the archaeological fund of the Museum of History has been reconstructed. It is shown that the collection began to take shape from the time the museum was founded and continues to be developed to this day. The involvement of many regional researchers and well-known scholars highlights the importance of studying this category of artifacts. Special attention is given to the terracotta figurines depicting one of the deities of the Zoroastrian pantheon—Anahita.

The foundation of the archaeological collection at the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan, which traces its origins to the Tashkent Public Museum established in 1876, was laid with items accumulated by private individuals—founders of the museum—as well as by certain institutions such as the Turkestan branch of the Society of Lovers of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography. Significant archaeological and numismatic collections, which later fully or partially entered the museum's archaeological fund, were formed in the 1870s-1890s. In this context, it is essential to mention names like E.F. Kall, A.L. Kun, I.T. Poslavsky, A.I. Dobrosmyslov, I.A. Kastanye, A.A. Polovtsev, S.F. Nikolai, and several others (Voronets M.E., 1951, p. 4).

Some data on the state of the archaeological collection of the Tashkent Museum and the objects it contained can be found in a report by Countess P.S. Uvarova, a Russian scholar, historian, and archaeologist, and the wife of A.S. Uvarov, who was at the forefront of organizing Russian archaeological science (Sobolevsky A.I., 1925, pp. 141-144). This report was prepared for the 7th Archaeological Congress in Yaroslavl in 1887. In the appendix, P.S. Uvarova describes the most interesting items, including terracotta figurines from Afrasiab near Samarkand (Proceedings..., 1897).

After the death of the tireless explorer of Central Asia, military engineer I.T. Poslavsky in 1914, part of his collection was transferred to the Turkestan Oriental Institute

and then from there to the Tashkent Museum. Among these items were terracotta figurines (coll. No. 17) (Lunin B.V., 1958, p. 77).

On December 11, 1895, the Turkestan Circle of Lovers of Archaeology was established in Tashkent, uniting the intelligentsia of Turkestan around a shared interest in the region's history. Among the members of the circle were many individuals deeply committed to and sincerely interested in archaeology. For more than 20 years, the members of the circle conducted archaeological surveys and excavations, collected various items, and studied ancient monuments in the region. On September 25, 1899, the circle's members decided to transfer their archaeological collection to the Tashkent Public Museum. As a result, the museum's archaeological department was enriched with a number of fascinating items (Lunin B.V., 1958, pp. 61-62). Among them was a small collection of terracotta figurines collected by TCLA members in various parts of Central Asia, including an expressive figure of a horseman found in Samarkand. The terracotta figurines from earlier acquisitions are recorded in coll. No. 17 (Inv. 1910, p. 52; Minasyants V.S., 1992, p. 14).

In the first quarter of the 20th century, part of the archaeological collection of I.A. Kastanye, a member of TCLA who traveled extensively in Turkestan, was transferred to the museum. This collection, mainly consisting of artifacts personally gathered by the collector between 1912-1916, was considered by experts to be one of the best in Tashkent. It contains over 500 items, which are now included in twenty-three collection inventories (100, 102-108, 110-119, 121-126). Collection 113 includes terracotta figurines gathered by I.A. Kastanye in 1913 at the Ahsikent site in the Fergana Valley.

In the early years following the events of 1917, the replenishment of the museum's archaeological collection continued to be somewhat haphazard. It appears that during these years, part of the large collection of I.T. Poslavsky, including terracotta figurines and other archaeological items gathered during his travels across the Turkestan region, was transferred to the museum's collection (Lunin B.V., 1974, p. 297). Among these items was a group of 18 small terracotta figurines depicting horsemen holding a mace or whip. F.A. Zaslavskaya, who studied them, tentatively identified them as representations of characters from the Turkic and Sogdian feudal nobility, categorized into four classes (Zaslavskaya F.A., 1956, p. 111).

Further development of the museum's archaeological collection is linked to the establishment and activities of government bodies responsible for the study and preservation of ancient monuments in Turkestan, including the Turkestan Committee for Museums and the Protection of Monuments of Antiquity, Art, and Nature (Turkomstaris) (1921-1925), (Umnyakov I.I., 1926, p. 46), the Central Asian Committee for Museums and the Protection of Monuments of Antiquity, Art, and Nature (Sredazkomstaris) (1925-1928), and the Uzbekistan Committee for Museums and the Protection of Monuments of Antiquity, Art, and Nature (Uzkomstaris) (1928-1934). These organizations were not only responsible for the protection and registration of monumental ancient monuments but also for organizing archaeological research in Central Asia. The scientific processing of archaeological material was concentrated in the museum, which at the end of 1921 was transferred to the jurisdiction of Turkomstaris under the new name "Central Asian Main Museum." Eminent scholars, such as Academician V.V. Bartold, Professor A.A. Semenov, Professor A.E. Schmidt, N.E. Vundtsettell, S.P. Pokrovsky, I.I. Umnyakov, I.A. Kastanye, M.E. Masson, and others, were involved in the research (Sadykova N.S., 1975, pp. 65-66).

From 1921-1924, the archaeological department of the museum was replenished by collecting archaeological items during the inspection of ancient monuments by Turkomstaris (Mironov A.M., 1926, pp. 27-28). Among these, one can note a terracotta figurine of a fertility goddess, discovered at Afrasiab in 1923 and acquired by M.E. Masson in Samarkand.

With the establishment of Uzkomstaris in 1928, field expedition activities intensified, leading to the further enrichment of the museum's archaeological department

with new materials. A collection of terracotta figurines was brought from Turkmenistan to the museum by Professor A.A. Semenov during a trip in 1928, organized by Uzkomstaris with the participation of the Turkmen Culture Institute to survey the ruins of Abiverd (Peshtak) and the Namazga site (coll. 134, 135).

Interesting archaeological items were obtained by L.N. Sokolov during the inspection of a monument in Karakalpakstan, particularly the Sharde-Aytakiya site (Mizdahkan) located south of Khodjeyli. Among them were terracotta figurines, including a fragment of an animal figure made of red clay with stone inclusions, well-fired, and others. The material was received by the museum in December 1929 (Umnyakov I.I., 1929, p. 24).

A valuable collection of terracotta figurines came from the excavations of A.I. Terenozhkin at Afrasiab in the 1930s.

Among the acquisitions of the 1940s, it is worth noting a terracotta figurine of a dog, purchased from Yakubbekov

4. Discussion

In 1945, exploratory work was carried out by the United Archaeological Expedition of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR at the Afrasiab site. On the eastern slope of the hills in the center of the site, facing the Samarkand-Tashkent highway, horizontally lying layers of clay and ash with cultural remains from an earlier period were discovered 5-6 meters below the summit, extending over a length of 100 meters. During an inspection of the exposure on a platform at the eastern junction of the third fortification wall with the second fortification wall, the head of a large terracotta figurine was found. At the ravine cliffs near the mausoleum of Khodja Daniyar, A.I. Terenozhkin examined pottery kilns, one of which was filled with waste from pottery production in the form of fragments of unfired clay vessels, rejects, and slags. Among them were several clay figurines, the most interesting of which was a figurine of a horseman. On the surface of the site near the mausoleum of Khodja Daniyar, female terracotta figurines and molds for their production were found. Among them, nine types of depictions of a female deity stand out, deeply rooted in local tradition. The figurines were made in a single-sided mold.



Molds (kalib) for casting terracotta figurines of the goddess Anahita. 2nd century BCE - 2nd century CE, Afrasiab (Samarkand).

They are dated from the 2nd century BCE to the 4th century CE. In the hands of the figures are attributes that symbolize the fertility of nature (pomegranate, grape, ear of wheat, flowers, buds of a water flower or tulip, etc.), which suggests that the figurines represent the goddess of fertility. The facial features, headwear, and neck ornaments of

some figurines are similar to those depicting the goddess Anahita. All the archaeological materials discovered as a result of the exploratory work at Afrasiab were transferred to the Museum of History in December 1948.

In 1948, A.I. Terenozhkin resumed work on the left bank of the ravine near the mausoleum of Khodja Daniyar, in the northern part of the Afrasiab site and to the east of the citadel. The excavated area consisted of layers from three cultural stages: the upper layers from the Muslim Middle Ages; the middle layers from the Turkic period; and the lower, more substantial layers from the turn of the Common Era. In the layer corresponding to the Turkic period, a small section of a room's floor was uncovered, where numerous terracotta figurines were found in various horizons of the ash pit. All of them are single-sided, stamped in molds. The female figurines, depicting Anahita, have a "Phrygian" cap with a curved top on their heads, a torc around their necks, and decorated long garments. Each holds a pomegranate in one hand. The male figurines hold nothing in their hands. Their attire consists of a short kaftan tied with a belt, and their footwear includes high boots. Figurines of horsemen on horses were also found. Particularly interesting is the head of a large figurine of a moose or deer with wide antlers.

During A.I. Terenozhkin's excavations at Afrasiab from 1945 to 1948, a small group of terracotta figurines of musicians was discovered. The terracotta musicians are small stamped figurines (11 pieces) made of well-fired clay, 9-10 cm in height, mostly fragmentary, with essential attributes such as lute or flute-like musical instruments. The figurines were stamped in single-sided molds, which were quite massive and oval in shape. The molds, made from coarse orange clay and strongly fired, were intended for producing many figurines. The back side of the molds is flat, sometimes heavily deformed by deep indentations from the master's fingers. The figurines are covered with slip. They are divided into four groups. Figurines of one type differ from another in the instrument, clothing, and pattern of folds. The first type is a lutenist in a shirt. The second is a lutenist in a kaftan. The third is a musician with a knee-length flute and a hood. The fourth is a female flutist with a vertical flute and a scarf. A round-sectioned torc is an essential part of the costume. The figurines are dated to the 2nd-1st centuries BCE (Meshkeris V.A., 1954, pp. 89-92).

One of the first researchers of archaeological monuments in the Kashkadarya region was Sergey Kuzmich Kabanov. In 1948, he conducted excavations at the Erkurgan site, the largest ancient settlement in the Karshi oasis, where layers dating to the first centuries BCE were uncovered. A small excavation was made at the southeastern corner of the inner wall. A pottery kiln, potters' quarters, and a courtyard were uncovered. The kiln was intended for firing thin-walled ceramics from the 4th-5th centuries, which were found nearby in the debris. Among the ceramic fragments, an interesting terracotta tile was found, the upper part of which features a stamped image of a mountain goat with a sling-like trapping tool around its neck. The handle of the tool ends in a ring, and the forked part is connected by ropes. In the lower part of the tile, there are seven round stamped impressions depicting a hare. In addition to this tile, two other fragments of terracotta figurines were found in the excavation, depicting a human head and a horse's head.

In subsequent years, S.K. Kabanov conducted excavations at other sites in the Karshi oasis, with the most significant being at Shortepe, 3 km east of Karshi, in 1952-1953. As a result, the museum acquired a terracotta figurine depicting a man in a crown, likely a ruler. He is depicted in luxurious clothing, holding a sword. In the spring of 1954, small excavations were carried out at the relatively large site of Dagaytepa (140x105 m), located near the northeastern outskirts of Karshi. Here, while clearing a rubble layer from the 8th-9th centuries, a terracotta figurine from the 3rd-4th centuries was found – the head of a woman in a tall conical headdress that falls onto her forehead.

In the archaeological collection of the museum (Coll. 65), there is a terracotta head of a man from a site located within the city of Karshi, known as Kala Zahok-i Maron. S.K. Kabanov's examination of this ancient fortress with a central castle, along with the

materials collected there, allowed him to date its habitation from the first centuries BCE to the 3rd-5th centuries CE.

In 1949-1951, S.K. Kabanov conducted archaeological surveys and excavations in the Shakhrisabz oasis. The capital of the Shakhrisabz oasis was once located on the territory of Kitab. This site, Kalyandartepa (3rd century BCE - early centuries CE), had a citadel whose ruins remain as a large mound 17.5 meters high. Most of the settlement itself, however, is now under urban development. In 1951, a trench (3x2 m) was laid out on the site, and in the lower part of the cultural layer, a partially preserved terracotta image of a man was found – the head and upper chest with a fragment of an arm, presumably depicting Alexander the Great.

During his surveys, S.K. Kabanov often received information from local residents about accidental finds of archaeological objects. For example, in 1951, during the leveling of a field at the Agricultural College located north of Shakhrisabz, a mound was leveled. During its dismantling, a clay tile with a stamped image of a standing man holding a mace was found. The tile was handed over to S.K. Kabanov by G.R. Samedov, an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Uzbek SSR. The second terracotta was received by S.K. Kabanov during the 1951 field season from R.Sh. Riyatov, an employee of one of the institutions in Kitab. This terracotta, in the form of a male head of Caucasoid type, is wearing a headdress in the form of a ribbed bandage covering the forehead and ears. It was found in the village of Tupchak, Sivaz Rural Council, Kitab District, during the dismantling of a small mound while leveling a field. Both terracottas are now kept in the archaeological collection of the Museum of History.

In 1951, L.I. Albaum began excavations at the Zartepa site, located in the Jarkurgan district, 4 km south of Angora. A large number of terracotta figurines of people and animals from the first centuries BCE to the 7th century CE, as well as lion heads on vessels, were discovered on the site. In the fall of 1959, L.I. Albaum began excavations at the Kushan-Eftalite site of Karaultepa, a fortified settlement located near the Termez-Dushanbe highway, 20 km south of Shurchi, which was destroyed by Genghis Khan in the early 13th century. The excavation team included L.I. Albaum, K.A. Shakhurin, and T. Agzamkhojaev. On the surface of the site, terracotta figurines were found, including: a female head in an "Egyptian wig" from the 1st century CE, a figurine-tile of a seated goddess from the 3rd-4th centuries CE, a small statue of a seated Buddha, a figurine of a goddess in pleated garments from the early centuries CE, a figurine of a woman of Eftalite type from the 4th-5th centuries CE, and a very interesting stamp from the 1st century BCE or 1st-2nd centuries CE depicting a man and a woman standing next to a saddled horse.

Archaeological materials from Fayaztepa were later transferred to the museum collection by L.I. Albaum. In 1995, he handed over fragments of terracotta figurines and molds for their stamping.

In the mid-1950s, the construction of the Chimkurgan Reservoir on the Kashkadarya River (approximately 65 km upstream from the city of Karshi) was planned, and a large number of archaeological sites were expected to fall within the flood zone. To study these sites during the planning phase of the reservoir, a small Chimkurgan Archaeological Team from the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, including S.K. Kabanov, V.D. Zhukov, M. Korzukhina, and L. Matveeva, conducted work in the area from 1955 to 1957. The main focus of the expedition's archaeologist, V.D. Zhukov, was Kindaklitepa, where excavations were carried out in 1955 and 1957. These excavations yielded an extensive collection of materials from the 1st-6th centuries, predominantly pottery, among which were fragments of terracotta figurines of animals, a terracotta seal-stamp with a schematic image of a quadruped, and more.

In subsequent years, items from the Kashkadarya region were donated to the museum by the Department of Archaeology of TashGU (NUU named after Mirzo Ulugbek). The department's employees, S.B. Lunina and Z.I. Usmanova, conducted archaeological excavations there between 1967-1969 and in the years that followed.

Among the artifacts were terracotta items from the ruins of Saryktepa in the Yakkabog district of the Kashkadarya region. These included a tile-icon found in 1988 with the image of a warrior, a terracotta head of a woman wearing a high conical headdress, a terracotta head of a deva, and a series of horse figurines, some showing traces of saddles, possibly of a cult nature (the cult of the horse in the early Middle Ages, the period to which the finds are attributed, was one of the oldest, deeply rooted, and widespread). A terracotta figurine found in the Kitab district of the Kashkadarya region depicts a young woman holding an ear of corn, with two large snakes coiled around her torso, their heads resting on her stomach above the ear of corn. This type of figurine was found in Sogd for the first time. According to N.I. Krasheninnikova, it represents a female deity of Southern Sogd, from the circle of fertility goddesses, or perhaps one of the manifestations of a multifunctional deity. The figurine is dated to the late 5th-6th centuries (Krasheninnikova N.I. 1992, p. 118).

In 1956, a collection of items from the excavations of the Kzil-Kyr castle and burial mound (Bukhara region), carried out by Ya.G. Gulyamov and the Makhandarya Archaeological Team under his scientific supervision since 1953, was donated to the museum. Among them were terracotta female figurines. From the finds at Kzil-Kyr (3rd-2nd centuries BCE - turn of the era), a terracotta figurine of a standing man with hands folded on his stomach is of particular interest. The head is large with prominent curls, with a halo or headgear with through holes. The eyebrows are straight and long, depicted with ridges, and the nose is narrow. The cheekbones and chin are prominent. The torso is shown with grains and vertical ridges depicting folds of clothing. The back of the figurine is strongly concave due to the stamp impression. The height of the figurine is 11.8 cm (coll. № 265/24).

In the 1950s-1960s, Ya.G. Gulyamov conducted archaeological excavations at the Bronze Age site of Gudgejli, and the settlement and burial ground of Zamanbaba-P (Karakul district, Bukhara region). In one of the burials, a flat terracotta figurine of a woman was found. The head and neck are depicted as a small elongated peg placed on broad shoulders; the arms are barely distinguished, and the torso smoothly transitions into a narrowed waist and shortened legs. The figurine is dated to the 3rd-2nd millennium BCE and could represent a fertility goddess.

Among the items donated to the museum by the Institute of Art Studies, materials from the excavations of G.A. Pugachenkova at Khalchayan, conducted in 1963 (coll. № 168), are of particular value. These include terracotta figurines, among which several male figures stand out. One is a figurine of a naked man in a strictly frontal pose with arms pressed against the torso, with well-proportioned features (broad shoulders, slender forms, and properly generalized musculature); it was made by impressing on a thick clay tablet, smoothed on the back and sides, very dense, reddish, with a dark red engobe. A figurine of a rider is particularly interesting: the facial features are marked by pinching, with a sharp chin; the torso is depicted with generalized volume, the arms are down along the torso, and the legs are spread in an arc. For several other figurines, the facial features are also marked by pinching, conveying the hollowness of the eye sockets, with the eyes emphasized by small round appliques, and a sharp, bird-like nose.

One figurine has a headgear in the form of two pointed caps (one is preserved). The lower half of a male figurine is preserved: the figurine is stamped with the back and base of the legs cut. The pose is frontal, with a wide, stocky torso. The clothing consists of a knee-length coat or shirt, cinched at the waist with a prominently detailed belt. The arms are pressed above the waist, with an object in the right hand that is bent and runs along the torso. Another male figurine's clothing consists of a draped knee-length shirt.

In connection with the planned construction of the Chimkurgan Reservoir on the Kashkadarya River (approximately 65 km upstream from the city of Karshi) in the mid-1950s, a significant number of archaeological sites were expected to fall within the flooding zone. To study these sites during the reservoir's design phase, a small

archaeological team from the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, consisting of S.K. Kabanov, V.D. Zhukov, M. Korzukhina, and L. Matveeva, worked in the future construction area from 1955 to 1957. The main focus of archaeologist V.D. Zhukov was the Kindaklitepa site, where excavations took place in 1955 and 1957. The excavations yielded an extensive collection of artifacts dating from the 1st to the 6th centuries, primarily pottery, including fragments of terracotta animal figurines, a terracotta stamp-seal with a schematic image of a quadruped, and other items.

In subsequent years, artifacts from Kashkadarya were acquired by the museum through the Archaeology Department of Tashkent State University (now the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek). The department's staff, including S.B. Lunina and Z.I. Usmanova, conducted archaeological excavations in the region from 1967 to 1969 and in the following years. Among the finds are terracotta items from the ruins of Sariktepa in the Yakkabag district of the Kashkadarya region. These include a tile-icon found in 1988 with the image of a male warrior, a terracotta female head wearing a tall conical headdress, a terracotta head of a demon (deva), and a series of horse figurines, some showing traces of saddles, possibly of cult significance (the horse cult, rooted deeply and widely spread, was one of the most ancient in the early medieval period, to which these finds are attributed). A terracotta figurine found in the Kitab district of Kashkadarya depicts a young woman holding an ear of wheat, with two large snakes coiled around her body, their heads resting on her stomach above the ear of wheat. A similar figurine had not been found in Sogdiana before. According to N.I. Krashennnikova, this is a female deity from Southern Sogdiana related to the circle of fertility goddesses, or possibly one of the manifestations of a multifunctional deity. The figurine is dated to the late 5th or early 6th century (Krashennnikova N.I. 1992, p.118).

In 1956, the museum received a collection of items from the excavations of the Kzyl-Kyr fortress and cemetery (Bukhara region) conducted by Ya.G. Gulyamov and the Makhanda Archaeological Team under his scientific supervision since 1953. Among the finds were female terracotta figurines. One of the most interesting finds from Kzyl-Kyr (3rd-1st centuries BCE – turn of the era) is a terracotta figurine of a standing man with his hands folded on his stomach. The head is large with prominent curls of hair, and the head is topped with a halo or a headdress with through holes. The eyebrows are straight and long, with a narrow nose indicated by ridges. The cheekbones and chin are prominent. The clothing folds are depicted with dots and vertical ridges. The back of the figurine is strongly concave, formed by a stamp. The height of the figurine is 11.8 cm (collection no. 265/24).

In the 1950s-1960s, Ya.G. Gulyamov conducted archaeological excavations at the Bronze Age site of Gudjayli and the settlement and cemetery of Zamanbaba-P (Karakul district of Bukhara region). In one of the burials, a flat terracotta figurine of a woman was found. The head and neck are depicted as a small elongated peg mounted on broad shoulders, with the arms barely distinguished, and the body smoothly transitioning from the shoulders to an elongated waist and then into shortened legs. The figurine is dated to the 3rd-2nd millennium BCE and could represent a fertility goddess.

Among the items transferred to the museum by the Institute of Art Studies, particularly valuable are materials from the excavations at Khalchayan conducted by G.A. Pugachenkova in 1963 (collection no. 168). These include terracotta figurines, among them several male ones. One such figurine is of a naked man in a strictly frontal pose with arms pressed against the body, featuring well-proportioned body shapes (broad shoulders, slender forms, and a well-sculpted musculature); it was made by impressing on a thick clay pad, smoothed on the back and sides, and is very dense with a reddish hue, covered with dark red slip. Another interesting find is a figurine of a rider: the facial features are indicated by pinches, with a sharp chin, and the torso is conveyed as a generalized volume, with the arms lowered along the body and the legs bent in an arc. Several other

figurines also have facial features marked by pinches, indicating sunken eye sockets, with the eyes highlighted by small round appliques, and a sharp, bird-like nose.

Alongside the male figurines, fragments of several female terracotta figurines were found. One of them is dressed in a thick outer garment with long sleeves or a cloak edge falling to the knees, with flowing folds of a dress hiding the legs beneath. Another female figurine was made in a mold, with knife-finished back and sides. The high relief depicts a naked woman with broad shoulders, strongly modeled bulges of the chest, abdomen, and knees. The pose is strictly frontal, with the legs together and the arms pressed against the thighs. The hands are adorned with double bracelets. A female figurine impressed on a flat clay pad, trimmed on the back and sides, is naked, with sculpturally emphasized small breasts, a slender waist, curvy hips, short legs, and arms stretched along the body. Some of the female figurines have preserved heads. The face of one of the heads has a tapering oval shape, an eagle profile with a steep line of the forehead and nose, and eyebrows slanting towards the temples. A slightly smiling mouth and slightly slanted eyes in relief eyelids give the face a mysterious and languid expression. Two raised moles on the cheeks and a dimple on the chin add further details. The headdress is in the shape of a kokoshnik with an applique band in the form of a triangle on the forehead and spiral reliefs on the wide upper semicircle. Tassels hang down to the temples, cut straight at the edge. Almond-shaped earrings are in the ears. Another figurine's face is round with bulging eyes. The hair is parted and styled into voluminous strands above the forehead and temples. Earrings are in the ears. The left arm is bent, with the hand resting on the waist, while the right arm is tightly pressed against the body. The clothing fits the figure snugly, forming a triangular neckline at the neck, possibly adorned with a necklace. The face of a terracotta female figurine, also impressed on a thick clay pad with a knife-finished stamp, is expressive. The face is round, framed either by smoothly arranged hair or a headdress. Large almond-shaped eyes without a visible pupil are beneath steeply arched relief eyebrows, with a low, rounded forehead, a straight flattened nose, and a protruding chin. Over the lower dress or shirt with a round neckline, a dense outer garment falling to the ankles is thrown on, with a triangular neckline, a relief edging at the hem, and long narrow sleeves falling to the knees.

Also worth mentioning is a fragment of an incense burner made of reddish clay with traces of brownish-crimson slip. The base is flared, hollow inside, with notches on the rim, transitioning into an almost cylindrical stem decorated with a wavy line. From there, it broadens biconically, followed by a neck indentation leading to the reservoir, of which only the bottom part and the beginning of the widening walls remain. Before firing, three seated modeled human figures were attached to the base, with the lower protrusions forming three legs of the vessel. One of the figures was knocked off along with part of the bottom, leaving a trace of its attachment; only the lower part of the second figure remains; the third figure is preserved intact. The figure depicts a very schematically executed idol with its right hand pressed to its chest, resting on the vessel's bottom with its left hand. The pointed head supports the upper widening of the stand. The face is grotesque, with a bird-like nose, a sharp chin, and applied eyes.

Several fragments of horse figurines with traces of rider attachments were also found. The horse heads are made in a generalized manner: one has a well-defined heavy muzzle, a mane cut evenly with a fold above the forehead, pointed ears, and the eye sockets are shown as indentations; another has eyes depicted as appliqued disks with a pronounced pupil; a third has eyes represented by dot-like depressions, with the bridle details outlined on the head and neck before firing, including decorative circles on the forehead. The fourth has a ribbed mane slightly bending over the forehead, eyes as cut-out rounded projections, a mouth depicted as a slit, and pointed ears.

In addition to the horse figurines, a fragment (head) of a large animal figurine (ram or bull) was found. The eyes are shown as small pits made with a sharp tool, and the neck has scale-like indentations. The right side of the figurine is broken off.

From 1971, the archaeological team of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan, known as the Tuyabuguz Expedition, conducted stationary excavations at the ancient-medieval settlement of Kindyktepa (Tashkent Sea area). The work was led by Senior Researcher, Candidate of Historical Sciences V.I. Sprishevsky. During the excavations at the settlement and the remnants of the citadel, ceramics from the 5th-6th centuries and the 13th-14th centuries, terracotta figurines, and other artifacts were found and delivered to the museum. The influx of items from Kindyktepa continued into the 1980s. Mostly, this material was collected from the surface. The terracotta figurines received by the museum depict animals such as a ram, deer, and horse, with varying degrees of preservation.

Among the finds are:

- A terracotta ram figurine with the head and both right legs broken off.
- Another figurine depicting the torso of a horse, with an applied saddle and harness details; the legs, tail, head, and neck are broken off, with a flat base.
- An animal figurine with broad horns (the left horn is broken), showing the branching of the horns with notches (possibly a deer). The ears are depicted in relief, the nose with small punctures, and the mouth is wide and asymmetrical.
- A rough animal head resembling a dragon, with a well-defined mouth, round eyes set close together, nostrils as two slit-like incisions, and a massive neck. The clay is black at the break, indicating poor firing, with a porous texture and sand admixture. The figurine is covered with a clay-colored slip (5.5x3.8 cm).
- An elongated fish image with double notches on the surface, and the mouth and eyes scratched in (2.7x1.9x0.7 cm).
- A pointed-beak bird with a split comb and serrated edges, covered with slip (height – 3.5 cm).
- A dog head with expressive eyes and straight ears, where the eyes are depicted as if seen from above and the side, with chamotte admixture (height – 2.5 cm).
- A rattle in the shape of an animal's head, with ear-like projections with rounded edges (length – 2.5 cm).
- A head of a bird or horse with a flat nose, applied ears, long neck, and a brown slip on the broken skull (height – 7 cm).
- A horse head with harness details, applied eyes, bridle, harness, and straps on the head, with some nose and ear tips broken off.
- An animal figurine with applied eyes and a hole at the back, with the legs, muzzle, and ears broken off (height – 5.8 cm, length – 5.5 cm).
- An animal torso figurine with the head, legs, and tail broken off, decorated with diagonal stripes on the back, with a brown broken skull and chamotte admixture (length – 6 cm).
- A female head fragment with an oval face, protruding strips instead of eyebrows and eyes, a nose with small holes, and puckered lips (like a bow), with a flat back and a light yellow broken skull (6.6x5 cm).
- A fragment of the back of a terracotta figurine, with part of the torso, a flat leg, and a tail (possibly a horse); the work is rough.
- A fragment of an animal figurine, with clearly defined foot and knee, highlighted fingers with stripes, with an orange skull and sand admixture (height of the leg – 6 cm, length of the foot – 4 cm).
- A rough animal head figurine resembling a dragon, with a slit showing a mouth with an exaggerated grin, round eyes set close together, nostrils as two cut strips, a massive neck, and a black broken skull (poor firing), with a sand admixture and porous texture, covered with a clay-colored slip (5.5x3.8 cm).

In one of the excavations, a coarsely fired ceramic stand for kebabs was found, with a stylized image of paired ram protomes. The heads are represented as pointed projections, with horns shaped like applied rollers and wool depicted with notches. Such kebab stands are characteristic of Chacha from the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE. The items from the Kindyktepa settlement continued to arrive at the museum in subsequent years (collection no. 208).

A terracotta horse figurine was found in one of the rooms during the excavation of the Kanika settlement, one of the largest centers of urban culture in the Tashkent region. It is dated to the 11th century.

In 1975, archaeological material from the collection of hydrogeologist I.A. Anboev arrived at the museum—fragments of terracotta figurines.

In 1984, items collected from a necropolis located 60 km north of Navoi by archaeologist N. Darvina, as part of a geological expedition, were received by the museum. The material is dated to the early centuries CE and is cataloged as collection no. 292. The total number of items is 16, including several small fragments of terracotta horse figurines.

In 1985, the museum received a terracotta head wearing a pointed cap, found during earthworks at the Afrasiyab settlement (Samarkand).

In 1989, Associate Professor G.Y. Drevnyanskaya and Professor S.B. Lunina from the Department of Archaeology at Tashkent State University transferred eight terracotta figurines and their fragments to the museum. These were discovered between 1968 and the 1970s at the Afrasiyab settlement at excavation site 32 (west of the eastern mosque) and at the ruins of Saryktepa in the Yakkabag district of the Kashkadarya region during the Department of Archaeology's work in 1987-1988 (collection no. 306). The figurines depict a horse with a rider, a rider on a horse, a goat or deer with a rider, a primitively sculpted human head, a head in a pointed helmet with longitudinal grooves, and a pack camel with cargo between its humps represented by rectangular appliqués simulating sacks (Drevnyanskaya G.Y., 1992, pp. 104-105). Two fragments are terracotta tiles with bas-relief images: one depicts a human figure with a sash across the chest; the other shows a male figure standing under an arch with a spear or dart in hand. The head has a crown with relief brackets and a ball, the outfit is closely fitted with a sash across the chest, the arch is pointed and decorated with a complex relief on the sides. The figurines are dated to the 6th century CE (Lunina S.B., 1992, pp. 107-109).

In 1988-1989, museum staff member P. Gendelman, as part of the Uzbekistan Art Expedition of the Hamza Institute of Art Studies, conducted excavations at the citadel of the Shurob-kurgan settlement in the Gagarin district of the Surkhandarya region. The museum received toy whistles in the shape of animal and bird figurines and terracotta horse figurines. One terracotta figurine features a saddle with serrated edges and a girth represented by wavy appliqué bands on the horse's rump, with a ribbed mane and round appliqué eyes with indentations.

In 1991, G.I. Bogomolov, head of the Kanka expedition of the Chach-Ustrushan Archaeological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, transferred around 120 items from archaeological excavations conducted at the Kanka settlement from 1981 to 1990 to the museum, now part of collection 308. Of interest is a fragment of a ceramic toy rattle in the shape of a pear with a rounded broken handle, hollow inside. Also found was a fragment of a terracotta horse figurine with a saddle on the rump, represented by transverse ribbed appliqués, and a curved pointed tail hanging down. The figurine served as a rattle with a ball inside that makes noise when shaken.

In 2007, the museum's archaeological fund was supplemented with items from various sources, including those provided by employees of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan's Institute of Archaeology. G.I. Bogomolov contributed fragmented terracotta figurines, a small human figure, and other burial items from excavations in the Tashkent region. Isamidov provided fragments of terracotta figurines depicting humans and

animals from archaeological sites in the Surkhandarya region. K. Akhunbabaev contributed fragments of terracotta figurines from excavations at Old Merv (Turkmenistan).

In 2010, Tashkent resident A.V. Kuznetsov donated to the museum fragments of a terracotta figurine depicting a head with hair styled high and cascading over the ears, with the hair shown as longitudinal lines, a small face with clearly defined nose, eyebrows, eyes, and closed lips; and a fragment of a terracotta figurine depicting an animal head with a pointed muzzle, eyes shown as hemispherical appliqués, and visible cutting marks on the neck.

In 2011, Sh.R. Pidaev, Director of the Institute of Art Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, transferred over 90 items to the museum, found during archaeological excavations in Uzbekistan. During excavations in Pap, Namangan region, a terracotta figurine depicting a woman's face from the 5th-6th centuries was discovered. At the Yerkurgan settlement (ancient Karshi, 5th-6th centuries), two figurines were found: one, made of gray clay, depicts a man in a caftan with a sword and lamp; the other, a ceramic figurine of a warrior in a caftan and armored cuirass with a sword and lamp. It is possible that the first figurine is an incomplete prototype of the same image for subsequent firing. A ceramic mold found here was used in the 3rd-4th centuries for casting lion images. Also discovered were a ceramic female bust (applied on some vessel) from the 3rd-4th centuries, a male terracotta figurine head from the 5th-6th centuries, and a matrix fragment for casting female figurines (3rd-4th centuries). A terracotta representation of a female deity was found at the Jandavlattepa site, dating to the 3rd-4th centuries.

In the same year, 2015, the collection was supplemented with the following items. In 2009, a resident of the Mangit village in the Kamashin district of the Kashkadarya region, G. Rakhmonova, discovered a terracotta figurine near Kiyiktepa. The figurine is molded in an open one-sided mold, made of dark clay up to the waist, with a cut below the waist. The clay is dark brown to almost black at the break. The surface of the figurine is black, with a relief front and a smooth back. Facial features and details are roughly rendered; the facial features are archaic with large eyes, an amorphous, rough nose widening downward, brows in the form of rough ridges with barely distinguishable dots between them. The neck is high with a large, massive mane. The breasts are asymmetrically placed. The arms are folded on the stomach, with hands rendered roughly and schematically. The details suggest the figure represents a mother goddess or fertility goddess from the Achaemenid and early Hellenistic period, second half of the 1st millennium BCE. Sogdian terracotta is distinctive but likely represents a Near Eastern fertility goddess similar to Ishtar. This new type of small sculpture is unusual in that it is made from dark clay, which is atypical for such figurines (description by PhD Musaikayeva A.).

In 2016, the museum received a fragment of a figurine "Goddess in Chiton" from the Khorezm Academy of Ma'mun through S.R. Baratov. The fragment dates to the 5th century BCE, made of clay, and measures 4x6 cm.

In 2016, senior researcher G.I. Bogomolov from the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan delivered a terracotta anthropomorphic idol figurine to the museum. The head is square-shaped, massive, and disproportionately large. The face is clearly outlined with a narrow ridge, expanded in the lower cheek area. The nose is narrow and long, with long, relief eyebrows, large almond-shaped eyes, and a small mouth shown as a deep horizontal indentation. The neck is thick, leading to a small torso, with a flat base (height - 10.5 cm). It is also dated to the 4th-6th centuries CE. G.I. Bogomolov suggested that this idol figurine, dating to the early medieval period, likely served as an object of worship. The museum has only one similar figurine, making this the second.

In 2016, G. Rakhmonova, a resident of the Mangit mahalla in the Kamashin district of the Kashkadarya region, donated several ceramic items to the museum, discovered during earthworks. The museum's terracotta collection was supplemented with a figurine of a "lyre player" (5.8x4 cm), holding a four-stringed lyre. The figurine is flattened, made using a stamp, and covered with a brick-red slip.

J. Asilbaev from the Akkurgan district of the Tashkent region donated several items found at the Kanka settlement (Tashkent region) to the museum, including a terracotta rider figurine, presumably from the early medieval period. Sh. Abulkasymov, a resident of the Shovon village in the Kushrabad district of the Samarkand region, donated a terracotta figurine found during earthworks. The figurine is molded in shape with a flat back. The head is large, with an elongated face and a headdress adorned with applied projections. The nose is elongated, the eyes are almond-shaped, and the lips are relief, with a small mouth. The arms are folded on the stomach, with a necklace (?) on the chest and a belt depicted as a relief line. The figurine is covered with a light slip (height - 9 cm).

In October 2019, the museum received 170 archaeological items, confiscated by the court decision of the Tashkent region from Tashkent resident Y. Gulomov and by the expert council of



Tashkent on September 25, 2019. Among the earliest items are 12 female ornaments from the 6th-13th centuries CE, including a terracotta figurine of a Bactrian camel and 19 fragments of hollow terracotta items in the shape of stylized animal heads and bodies, some with saddle marks.

In December 2019, the museum received 95 archaeological items from PhD, archaeologist A.S. Rostvortsev, an employee of the Historical-Archaeological Museum Complex "Sulaiman Too" (Kyrgyzstan) after an exhibition organized by this museum at the Museum of History of Uzbekistan. Among them are: 7 fragments of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic terracotta figurines (figures of people and animals), with techniques including carving, modeling, and stamping (CATƏ - 1976, Altyntepa, Kashkadarya region).

In 2021, academician E.V. Rtveladze donated to the museum six fragments of terracotta horse figurines collected during excavations at the Kampyrtepa settlement (Surkhandarya region) from 2003 to 2008.

Among the numerous reconstructed human terracotta figurines, most were dedicated to goddesses. Notable among the female terracotta figurines are those depicting one of the deities of the Zoroastrian pantheon, Anahita. Anahita is "The Untainted," "The Pure," and another epithet is "The One Dressed in White." She was a goddess of prosperity

and well-being, embodying the life-giving forces of nature (Rapoport, 1971, pp. 104-106). The bird associated with Anahita was the dove. Over time, Anahita became a collective image of many local goddesses from the Avestan circle, such as Ashi, Khayravatat, and others. Research has revealed regional differences in these depictions. The goddess is shown in a long dress with a head covering. In her hands, she holds fruits and grains—symbols of fertility. The figurines vary in costume details, headdresses, attributes, and facial features (Safarov, 2024).

A terracotta figurine of the goddess Anahita from the Turkish period was found during excavations by A.I. Terenozhkin at Afrasiab in 1948. In Samarkand, Anahita is depicted as a young woman, whereas in Bukhara, she is portrayed as a mature woman. The production of such terracotta figurines was widespread, as evidenced by the found molds, one of which, discovered at the Shortepa settlement in the Termez district of the Surkhandarya region, is housed in the Museum of History. It represents a woman in a light dress with a draped shoulder cover.

One of the Anahita figurines was found at the Kindyktepa settlement (Tashmore). This figurine was made without using a mold. The arms are folded on the stomach, with small clay appliqués on the wrists simulating bracelets. The breasts are prominently outlined with three appliqués on the chest and elongated appliqués on the sides, imitating braids. The figurine is depicted down to the knees, with a flat, disc-shaped base and a drilled hole. The preserved height is 12.9 cm, and the width at the shoulders is 8.6 cm. Circular holes are made below the clavicles, and the head is broken (collection 208/2131). A head of a woman was also found here: the face is oval with raised strips instead of eyebrows and eyes, a nose with small holes, and protruding lips (in the shape of a bow), with a flat back. The broken skull is light yellow (6.6x5 cm) (collection 208/2276).

5. Conclusion

The collection of terracotta figurines at the Museum of History began with the museum's establishment in 1876. The activities of the Turkestan Archaeological Society (TKLA), founded in Tashkent in 1895, played a significant role. This society united the intelligentsia of Turkestan in the interest of local history and conducted excavations and collections in the Turkestan region for 20 years before transferring the findings to the museum. Further collection efforts were linked to the establishment and activities of state agencies for the study and preservation of ancient monuments in Turkestan—Turkomstaris, Sredazkomstaris, Uzkomstaris. Subsequent additions came from archaeological expeditions by the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, the Museum of History, conducted both jointly with the Institute of Archaeology and separately. Several terracotta figurines were donated by the Archaeology Department of Tashkent State University (NUU named after M. Ulughbek). There are also individual, random contributions.

Thus, over the museum's existence, several hundred terracotta figurines from the antique and early medieval periods and their fragments have been collected. These terracottas were found during archaeological excavations at Afrasiab (Samarkand) (mostly), Varakhsha (Bukhara), Zartepa (Surkhandarya), and other sites. All of them are of local production. A significant portion consists of human figurines and heads, differing in style, technique, subject, and characteristic ethnic features (Voronets M.E., 1947, p. 20). N.I. Veselovsky, who conducted excavations at Afrasiab in 1885, claimed that "the face type (terracotta) is varied: Greek, Persian, and close to the Mongolian race" (Veselovsky N.N., 1887). V.L. Vyatkin also spoke of three ethnic groups: Greek, Sassanian, and Turkic (Vyatkin V.L., 1926). Despite the diversity of ethnic types represented in the terracottas, the majority undoubtedly reflect the ethnic type of the local population (Meshkeris V.A., 1954, p. 94). Most of them have a cultic character. The appearance of female figurines was initially associated with the cult of the mother goddess. The revival of mother goddess iconography occurred during the Hellenistic period in Central Asia, when terracotta

figurines appeared around the same time in various regions of Bactria, Margiana, Sogdiana, and Khorezm. Notable are figurines depicting one of the deities of the Zoroastrian pantheon, Anahita. Anahita was the goddess of prosperity and well-being, embodying the life-giving forces of nature.

Terracotta figurines depicting various animals (such as horses, bulls, birds, etc.) differ in their ritual and secular significance. The group of genre terracottas mainly includes fragments depicting horses, including those with riders. With the advent of Islam in Central Asia, the number of genre terracotta figurines initially decreased and their cultic role was forgotten. However, they continued to be used as toys, though in some cases retaining sacred functions, especially in the forms of horses and camels (Dresvyanetskaya G.A., 1991, p. 107).

Terracotta figurines from each region had their own specific characteristics, noticeable in the treatment of the figures, faces, clothing, and other attributes. Undoubtedly, a significant portion of these finds may have been used in the domestic shrines of the ancient inhabitants.

I propose to use the display of terracotta figurines more extensively in museum exhibitions and to focus on their scientific study. Terracotta sculpture, as a phenomenon of ancient material culture, is often the only mass source reflecting the religious and ideological aspects of society's culture.

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