Spring 2003

Foreign and Indigenous Ideological Influences on the Hellenistic Terracotta Figurine Tradition of Central Asia

Marie Langin-Hooper
University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.upenn.edu/anthro_seniortheses

Part of the Anthropology Commons

Recommended Citation

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/anthro_seniortheses/39
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.
Foreign and Indigenous Ideological Influences on the Hellenistic Terracotta Figurine Tradition of Central Asia

Disciplines
Anthropology

This thesis or dissertation is available at ScholarlyCommons: http://repository.upenn.edu/anthro_seniortheses/39
FOREIGN AND INDIGENOUS IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON THE HELLENISTIC TERRACOTTA FIGURINE TRADITION OF CENTRAL ASIA

By

Stephanie Marie Langin-Hooper

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

In

Anthropology

Submitted to the
Department of Anthropology
University of Pennsylvania

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Fredrik Hiebert

2003
Abstract

Anthropomorphic female terracotta figurines were the primary artifact of ritual and religious practice in the ancient cultures of western Central Asia. These figurines were fashioned manually and used in household shrines from their introduction in the Neolithic period until the Iron Age disappearance of all Central Asian material culture from the archaeological record. Terracotta figurines were not again discovered in the archaeological record until the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods. It has been theorized that foreign cultures, particularly the Greeks, reintroduced the concept and practice of the terracotta figurine tradition to the indigenous people of Central Asia. In so doing, the Greeks were thought to have imposed their own religious beliefs and traditions on the Central Asians, to the neglect or abandonment of the indigenous religions. However, through an analysis of the terracotta figurines created in Central Asia both before and after the Iron Age gap, this thesis attempts to demonstrate a clear iconographic and contextual continuity present in the terracotta figurine tradition. This continuity implies the survival and practice of indigenous rituals throughout the Iron Age gap and the subsequent political domination.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. i

Introduction............................................................................................................................ 1

1. Hypothesis and Methodology .......................................................................................... 4

2. Cultural Context and History ......................................................................................... 9

3. Approaches to the study of Figurines: Technology, Iconography, Context ................. 22

4. History of Central Asian Terracotta Figurines............................................................... 31

5. Greek Terracotta Figurines ......................................................................................... 48

6. Comparative Analyses .................................................................................................... 59

7. Conclusions ...................................................................................................................... 68

References Cited .................................................................................................................. 73

Appendix: Catalogue of Figurines ....................................................................................... 77
Introduction

My interest in studying the terracotta figurines of Central Asia began with my introduction to the artifacts from the Golden Hoard at Tillya Tepe. Included among this collection of material objects from Hellenistic era burials was a golden representation of a woman, shown in Figure 57. This woman, presumed to be a goddess, was depicted on an item of personal ornamentation or jewelry. The feature which attracted my attention to this object was its demonstration of a proposed confluence between Greek and South Asian styles of religious depiction. It was primarily theorized that this figure represented the domination of the Greek religion and religious art over the cultures of Central Asia (Sarianidi, 1985: 49). Additionally, it was thought that this figure demonstrated minor elements of South Asian religious influence - namely the apparent Buddhist urna, represented by a circular indentation on the forehead of the figure. The existence of this urna led to speculation concerning the date and location of the Greek influence on Buddhist art, which had been previously thought to have occurred at a later date (3rd century CE) and in the Gandhara region of northern India (Klimberg-Salter, 1989: 24).

I sought to further investigate these theories through an analysis of the Central Asian corpus of religious objects, specifically those representations of women or goddesses which could be compared on an iconographic and cultural level to the gold goddess of Tillya Tepe. However, discoveries of either gold objects or personal ornaments from Central Asia are relatively rare, and few examples existed with which to compare the artifact from the Golden Hoard.

I therefore turned my attention to female anthropomorphic terracotta figurines. These objects represented the primary form of religious expression throughout the history of Central
Asian cultures, including the Hellenistic period. Indeed, terracotta figurines were one of the most common and enduring forms of material culture in Central Asian society. It was therefore likely that any religious influence exerted by either the Greeks or Buddhists on Central Asian religious expression would be most thoroughly evidenced by changes in this figurine tradition. In addition, the prevalence of these artifacts in the archaeological record has resulted in substantial corresponding museum collections of terracotta figurines, which are available for study. The relatively low intrinsic value of terracotta figurines (as opposed to gold objects) also contributes to the accessibility of these objects for research purposes. I was therefore able to gain permission and access to study these female anthropomorphic terracotta figurines.

I researched, studied, and analyzed this genre of artifact, in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the religious and ritual confluence of Greek and South Asian cultures in Central Asia. While I began looking for iconographic traces of these two religious traditions on the figurines of Central Asia, I realized that there were many elements of these Hellenized figurines which were not derivative of either tradition. Indeed, it quickly became apparent that the theorized urna of Buddhism, present on the golden goddess representation and some terracotta figurines, was actually an indigenous Central Asian circular symbol which dated to an era prior to the origins of Buddhism.

The Greek influence on Central Asian terracotta figurines and their accompanying religious tradition was not so easily discounted. While several features of these figurines were clearly distinct from the Greek artistic tradition, the visual similarity between the Greek and Central Asian figurines prompted further investigation into the nature and extent of Greek religious influence on these objects. I therefore expanded my study to not only include Greek and Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines, but also those of the preceding periods in
Central Asian history. Through this study, it was my aim to determine which of the features depicted on Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines existed as a result of foreign religious influence and which were the result of a continuity in indigenous religious tradition. From this analysis of the iconographic origins of Hellenistic Central Asian figurines, I also wished to evaluate the religious impact of the Greek presence in Central Asia on the indigenous religions. It was my eventual aim to determine the Central Asian reaction to the Greek civilization, expressed through either through local religious conservatism or acceptance of foreign beliefs. The results of this determination could impact both our understanding of Central Asian religions as well as the nature of religious contact and influence throughout the ancient world.
Hypothesis and Methodology

In this thesis, I propose that some degree of cultural and ideological continuity existed throughout the history of the terracotta figurine tradition in Central Asia from the Neolithic era through the Hellenistic period. This theory is relatively unusual in the analysis of Central Asian artifacts. Indeed, the Iron Age gap, which will be further discussed, has been traditionally viewed by scholars as a period of strong cultural change in Central Asian material culture. While biological descendants of the Bronze Age oasis people survived through this time period, elements of their culture are thought to have disappeared. Therefore many material remains, including terracotta figurines, which appear in the archaeological record after the Bronze Age, are thought to have developed as a result of external influence.

The external influence theory has been strengthened by the fact that the Achaemenid and Hellenistic terracotta figurines represented a significant diversion from the previous terracotta figurine tradition in Central Asia. This was especially true in the realm of technology and visual elements. These differences have been well marked in the previous scholarly research and have been interpreted as indicating a shift in the indigenous religions and rituals associated with Central Asian terracotta figurines. The role of the Achaemenids in this reintroduction of material culture has been downplayed and largely ignored. Instead, scholars have primarily credited the Greeks with introducing and fostering the post-Iron Age culture of Central Asia (Schlumberger, 1961: 93). However, while this interpretation may indeed have been accurate, the assumptions behind this line of reasoning have frequently been misguided.
It is commonly thought that the Greeks not only introduced the single mould technology into Central Asia, but that they also reintroduced the concept of terracotta figurines (Bernard, 1992: 117). All post-Iron Age figurine styles have also been attributed to either the direct importation of Greek artwork or low-quality Central Asian imitations of Greek art. Indeed, it has been posited that the Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines differed from their Greek contemporaries only as a result of a lack of skill and talent on the part of the Central Asian artisans (Frye, 1998: 54).

As terracotta figurines constituted one of the primary forms of religious expression in Central Asia, such theories concerning the imposition of Greek material culture onto the indigenous people have also supposed that the Greeks inflicted their own religion on the Central Asians. While this theory is inconsistent with standard Greek colonial practices, in which the Greek colonists considered local pantheons as analogous with their own, this assumption has survived primarily because very little is known about ancient Central Asian religions due to the lack of a written record from this period in Central Asian history. The Iron Age gap, which resulted in a 1,000 year lapse in our knowledge of indigenous figurine creation, also contributed to the existence of these theories of Greek religious importation and imposition.

However, while these theories exist to explain the lack of Iron Age evidence, they fail to take into account more than a superficial analysis of what evidence does exist: the Achaemenid and Hellenistic figurines, and their early indigenous precursors. Indeed, preliminary investigations into this issue revealed that the previous theories were flawed for several reasons. For instance, the assumption that the Greeks invaders would impose their religious beliefs and traditions on the Central Asian peoples is inconsistent with
current knowledge about Greek colonial practices in areas such as Mesopotamia and Egypt (Thomas, 2000: xxiv). In all areas of Greek colonization, the Greeks identified their gods with those of the local pantheon. As such, the native peoples were allowed to continue their indigenous religious worship and rituals, as these were thought by the invaders as equivalent to paying homage to the Greek divinities. This theory of Greek cultural domination, in addition to its aforementioned flaws, also fails to account for the variety of figurine forms across the different Central Asian oases (Sidky, 1999: 9). If the Greeks were truly attempting to impose their religion on the local people, the material representations of this new belief system would have taken a more consistent form across the entire region, which is not the case as seen in this thesis.

These theories of Greek cultural domination also neglected to include the influences of the Achaemenid culture on the Central Asian terracotta figurine tradition. As will be discussed in greater detail, the Achaemenid period was an era of cultural, and specifically terracotta figurine, reemergence in Central Asia. This possible influence of the Achaemenids was, however, largely discounted, as was any indigenous iconographic or religious influence on the creation of the Hellenistic figurines in Central Asia. The exact nature of both of these influences has, in fact, almost never been studied.

As a result of this poor analysis and neglect of the available evidence surrounding the Hellenistic terracotta figurine tradition in Central Asia, I decided to undertake a review of the corpus of Central Asian terracotta figurines contained in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, and the British Museum, London. I hypothesized that the Greek influence on the iconography, technology, and context of Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines was minimal. Additionally, I hypothesized that features
of these terracotta figurines which were of particular importance to ritual activity and religious belief, as defined by comparison to contemporary cultures (specifically Mesopotamia and Greece), were continuous throughout Central Asian history and were present in their indigenous form in the Hellenistic figurines. Therefore, a cultural continuity existed throughout Central Asian history, which was represented by material culture and religious practice. Through the study of terracotta figurines, I further hypothesized that a greater understanding could be gained about both Central Asian ritual practices and the history of Central Asian cultures in general.

I therefore undertook the proposed study of the Central Asian terracotta figurine collections in the aforementioned institutions. I traveled to each institution and spent several days recording and studying their collections of terracotta figurines, which dated from the Neolithic to the Central Asian Hellenistic period. I described each figurine, noting traces of paint or slip, indentations or surface markings, shape, details, iconography, and evidence of technological means of creation. While conducting this visual analysis, I also recorded the presence or absence of certain iconographic elements, such as dots or circles, in order to determine the continuity of such features over time, space or culture. I also measured each figurine and inspected it for surface texture, color, signs of wear, and post-deposition damage. Finally, I photographed each figurine from multiple angles and with different color exposures to reveal the maximum amount of surface textures and variations. These photographs were supplemented by sketch drawings of important stylistic features on certain figurines. This processes enabled me to fully record the appearance of these terracotta figurines.
I also conversed with the scholars responsible for the excavation and analysis of all the figurines. These scholars included Dr. Valentine Shkoda, Dr. Alexander Nikitin, Dr. Vladimir Zavyalov, Dr. St John Simpson, and Dr. John Curtis. From these archaeologists, I collected information concerning the contexts and provenience, in addition to the iconography and technology, of the terracotta figurines in their collections.

In the British Museum, I also undertook a study of the Mesopotamian and Greek figurines housed in their collections, which were contemporary with the Central Asian Hellenistic period. My methodology was similar to that employed in my study of the Central Asian terracottas. I also undertook a survey of Greek marble sculpture of females, particularly goddesses, of that period which might have been viewed and used as models by Central Asian artisans. These figurines and sculptures were utilized to conduct a comparative analysis with the Hellenistic Central Asian figurines.
Cultural Context and History

The history of Central Asian figurine creation, possession, and possible religious association parallels the cultural history of the region. The western cultural area of the Central Asian geographical region (formerly “Soviet Central Asia”) has been traditionally defined as the area bounded by the Caspian and Aral Seas, the Kopet Dag and Pamir Mountains, and the Syr Darya River (Kohl, 1984: 81) (see map in Appendix, Figure 63). The land enclosed by these borders is characterized by continental extremes and striking contrasts in climate and geography (Knobloch, 1972: 9). The topography of the region is composed largely of an amalgam of mountains, rivers, deserts, and oases. The mountain ranges are primarily in the south (Kopet Dag) and west (Pamir). The mountains contained within these ranges are among the highest in the world, however it was possible for ancient peoples to traverse them. These mountains are bounded by an extensive region of foothills. This foothill area in the Kopet Dag Mountains was one of the most habitable regions in Central Asia, as the climate is relatively mild and many small rivers flow at regular geographical intervals throughout the hills. Such small rivers are easily accessible and facilitate the growth of a small number of crops without the need for irrigation. For this reason, the foothills were the initial areas of human occupation in Central Asia.

Much larger rivers flow through the desert, where their water is relatively inaccessible due to the steep gorges through which they flow and the speed of the currents. These desert rivers terminate in marshy delta oases which are natural filled with an overgrowth of bushes and reeds. This foliage could be cleared with simple tools.
After such clearings were made and irrigation systems were constructed, the oases comprised the richest agricultural region in Central Asia. Outside the mountains and the deltas of the oases, the remainder of the Central Asian region is primarily composed of arid desert.

Central Asia's geographical location has always lent the region towards utilization as a conduit for human migration. Even the earliest of humans utilized this area on a nomadic or periodic basis during the Paleolithic period—a practice which has never been completely abandoned (Davis, 1987: 130). However, substantial human settlement did not flourish in this region until the early Neolithic period (approximately 7000 BCE). During this time, dry land farming techniques were brought to Central Asia by settlers from Near Eastern communities (Harris and Gosden, 1996: 374). These people established the first permanent villages in Central Asia, building their towns in the foothills of the Kopet Dag mountains. These locations were chosen because of the small rivers abundant in the fertile interface between the mountains and the Kara Kum desert. These rivers were soon utilized by an irrigation farming technique “known as estuary or liman irrigation, in which crops were sown at the mouths of mountain streams” (Belenitsky, 1968: 29).

These earliest Central Asians brought with them their Near Eastern traditions, rituals, and material culture, along with their agricultural technology. These people lived a sedentary lifestyle and depended upon their farms and herds for sustenance. All of the animals and plants used for food in these settlements were domesticated and had been brought with the people from the Near East. This indicates that these people were not experiencing a transitional period between nomadic life and sedentism. The primary
crops grown in Central Asia were Near Eastern wheat and barley. Sheep and goats were the primary herd animals; domestic cattle were never introduced into Central Asia (Kasparov, 1994: 36).

The villages these farmers founded upon their arrival in Central Asia were of a Near Eastern style, composed of individual houses built of round blocks of sun-dried clay (Kohl, 1984: 69). The villagers occupied these towns year-round, distinguishing these newcomers from the formerly nomadic inhabitants. Pottery was also first introduced into Central Asia by these settlers from the Near East. The archaeological record indicates these and many other aspects of Central Asian settlements and culture remained of an essentially Near Eastern extraction throughout the Neolithic era.

The Neolithic Central Asian religion and religious artifacts appear to be derivative of the Near Eastern tradition, and most likely are not culturally linked with previous hunter-gatherer artifacts from the region. The earliest figurines discovered in Central Asia were found at the site of Djeitun, the location of the earliest "agro-pastoral settlements in the (Central Asian) region" (Harris & Gosden, 1996: 370). The Djeitun figurines are made of terracotta and date from approximately 6500 BCE. These figurines are very similar to their contemporary Near Eastern figurines, especially those from the site of Catal Hoyuk (Voigt, 2000: 259). Additionally, the figurines of both regions are similar in material, manufacturing technique, and adornment to Near Eastern pottery styles of the same time period.

The Chalcolithic period (4500-3000 BCE), which is typically divided into three periods (Namazga I – III), marked the origins of a truly Central Asian culture and village structure. Unlike the Near Eastern civilizations flourishing during this period in the
Iranian region, there is no evidence for the development of state-level society in Central Asia at this time (Kohl, 1984: 212-216). However, throughout the Namazga I and Namazga II eras (4500 – 3500 BCE), the Kopet Dag foothill villages grew and became firmly established, with a unity and continuity of culture across the foothills settlements. In the later periods of Namazga II, some local social hierarchy also developed between towns (Kohl, 1984: 81). Mud-bricks began to be used in building construction, eventually causing the towns to become situated on mounds as new structures were built on the remains of collapsed homes. This period also marked the first construction of multi-room, elaborate house plans, in addition to larger, possibly nonresidential, structures in the towns (Belenitsky, 1968: 31). The number of freestanding houses declined, as more homes were built with shared walls and common courtyards. It is likely that this new town structure fostered an organic village way of life, in which a community system developed outside of the family unit and kinship structure.

Unique innovations in agricultural technology, which greatly advanced and supported small scale agriculture, emerged during this period. Irrigation became widespread, using both gravity and minor river bank alteration. Dams were also created to control the flow of water in the small rivers (Lisitsina, 1969: 281). The wheat and barley grown during this period, which had puffier seeds than the original varieties introduced to Central Asia, were also evidence of a more advanced agricultural system (Miller, 1999: 13-19).

However, Chalcolithic changes in Central Asian civilization were not restricted to the realm of technology. Organized religion, which traditionally accompanies irrigation agriculture and complex village structure, was an additional cultural change which
developed during this period. Specialized "ritual rooms", associated with those first attempts at organized religion, have been discovered at the site of Ilgynli, a particularly sacred city in the Central Asian Chalcolithic culture (Masson, 1994: 3). Unlike most domestic structures, these rooms were built in a rounded shape, then plastered and painted. Plastered hearths, which were markedly different from the domestic hearths of the period, were a central feature of these ritual rooms and could possibly have functioned as altars (Masson, 1994: 3). Such rooms are the first Central Asian example of non-domestic religious activity and are evidence of the development of advanced cultural and ritual complexity.

In these ritual rooms, archaeologists also excavated stone anthropomorphic figurines (Figure 4) of heads and torsos (Masson, Berezkin, Solovyeva, 1994: 21). These figurines were large (25 cm high), schematic, and found exclusively in this religious context. Therefore the form, context, and iconography of these figures are very different from their terracotta contemporaries, which were smaller, more definitively female, and found in private homes. In spite of these differences, it is clear that material representations of a human body in the form of a figurine played an important (though yet undefined) role in formal ritual activity. Indeed, this evidence of a clear religious function of stone figurines could aid in the interpretation of domestic ritual activity involving terracotta figurines.

The Central Asian cultural transformations of the Namazga I and II periods were also expressed through changes in ceramic production. Although terracotta figurines were still created and used within the context of the home, the Central Asian ceramics of these periods underwent significant alterations in morphology and iconography. Pottery
styles changed dramatically from the first Central Asia examples at Djeitun, as the ware improved in quality and decorations based on textile designs and imprints began to be used. Both pottery and terracotta figurines were decorated by painted designs. As a result of these artistic and technological evolutions, these figurines and ceramic wares were no longer a derivative of a Near Eastern style, but rather material paradigms of a unique Central Asian culture.

Central Asian culture continued to evolve and diverge from the Near Eastern tradition throughout the substantial internal cultural changes, such as evolution in pottery styles and the first evidence of stamp seals, of the Namazga III period (3500-3100 BCE). These Central Asian cultures also established closer ties with neighboring cultures on the Iranian plateau to the south and south-west and in Baluchistan to the south-east. The development of these cultural changes has frequently been credited to the influence of migrants from Near Eastern cultures, however there is little evidence to indicate such a migration (Kircho, 1994: 43). Instead, foreign influence on the Central Asian cultures of this period was limited to cultural contact and trade. As has been common in the study of Central Asian cultural evolution, the acceptance of the assumption of migration has been "to the neglect of considering internal processes of development" (Kohl, 1984: 93). Indeed, the cultural history of Central Asia strongly suggests long-term continuous development.

The cultural changes of the early Namazga periods (I-III) were followed by an even more substantial development during the Namazga IV-V periods and the early Bronze Age (2700-2200 BCE). With this period came the origins of urbanism, as the villages of the Kopet Dag foothills changed in construction and increased in both
population and size (Kohl, 1984: 105-115). Social stratification emerged, as evidenced by a differentiation in burial goods along lines of socioeconomic class. Decorated stone vessels and ornaments began to be used, many of which featured symbolic scratchings.

The change in Central Asian city organization also accompanied the emergence of a societal division of labor. Occupations which had formerly been shared between members of a single household were now divided within society and performed by specialized laborers and artisans. While residential structures remained the primary type of building in these Central Asian cities, specialized areas were also established within the city as workplaces for these craftsmen. Particularly rich examples of such work areas have been excavated at Altyndedepe, Namazga depe, and several other sites (Hiebert, 1994: 95).

As a result of the social reorganization and division of labor, the task of figurine construction appears to have been removed from the household and taken over by professional potters, who also created the other ceramic ware used in these Central Asian cities. The quality and decoration of ceramic artifacts changed during this period, likely as a result of this social shift in manufacturing and technological development. The pottery produced became finer and thinner, and was now produced on a potter’s wheel in specialized potter’s quarters of the town (Masson, 1981: 141). Both the pottery and the terracotta figurines of this period were characterized by this high quality ware. The formerly elaborate painted decoration on the pottery was minimized and in most cases completely omitted. Terracotta figurines also underwent a change in form, however the complexity of their decoration was not reduced. As on pottery, decorations on the
terracotta figurines were no longer painted, but iconographic elements were rather
conveyed by incision or raised application on the surface of the figurines.

In spite of the apparent shift in the location of figurine creation, figurines were
still recovered from this period in primarily domestic contexts, with a few instances of
funerary contexts (Masson, 1981: 65). It therefore appears that figurines were acquired
by households and used in the same manner as in previous eras.

In the later Namazga V period (2200 – 2000 BCE), the civilizations of the Kopet
Dag began expanding to colonize the formerly uninhabited Central Asian oases (Hiebert,
1994: 172). Settlement on these oases was now possible due to technological
advancement, whereby "a skillfully regulated system of artificial irrigation, involving the
digging of an extensive network of water channels" was developed (Belenitsky, 1968:
30). In their efforts to establish functioning new cities, the oases residents imported
many elements of Central Asian architecture and material culture from the Kopet Dag
foothill region. These cultural imports included the terracotta figurine tradition, which
appears to have continued to hold the same societal function in oases civilizations such as
Margiana, as it held in the Kopet Dag cities, based on the forms of the terracotta figurines
and the location of the finds (Hiebert, 1994: 141).

These oases settlements remained very similar to and in frequent contact with the
cultures of their Kopet Dag origins for an extended period of time. However, with the
advent of the Namazga VI period, also known as the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological
Complex, in the late Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE), habitation in the Kopet Dag shifted
primarily to the Central Asian oases and the foothills cities were mostly abandoned. The
oasis settlements continued to comprise the entirety of Central Asian occupation through
the end of the Bronze Age. With this shift to large scale oasis settlements, several changes took place in Central Asian material culture, including an increase in city fortification and a new set of seals on metal, stone, and terracotta objects (Hiebert, 1994: 175). Among these was a possible cessation in the use of terracotta figurines, as few figurines have been discovered in archaeological excavations of this time period and archaeological complex (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 1996: 194).

This one thousand year lapse in the creation and use of terracotta figurines continued into the Iron Age, when in spite of continued Central Asian habitation, almost all types of material culture and remains disappeared entirely from the archaeological record. There are many theories which have been posited to explain this gap in the artifact record of Central Asia, including a lack of adequate excavation, climatic change which prevented the preservation of artifacts, and a societal shift to a nomadic style of material culture. In the specific case of the lack of figurines, there are also many hypothetical possibilities. A change in the indigenous religion or tradition of religious expression could have led to the possible cessation in the creation of terracotta figurines during that period. However, it is also conceivable that the religion or its material culture were not fundamentally altered, but rather that terracotta figurines were still created but no longer fired – a process which had previously preserved the figurines and prevented their decomposition after their deposition in the earth (Potts, 2001: 30-31). Such an explanation could account for the continuity in both iconographic elements and figurine deposition patterns across the Iron Age gap.

Without further excavation of Central Asian Iron Age sites, it will be difficult to determine which of these theories is more accurate. However, a comparison between the
artifacts and documented material culture from the periods immediately prior to and following the Iron Age could potentially indicate the degree of social, cultural, and religious continuity during the gap in the archaeological record.

The reemergence of artifacts, including terracotta figurines, in the archaeological record occurred during the Iron Age II period, was associated with the Achaemenid, or Persian, period in Iran (500 – 300 BCE). The founder and king of the Achaemenid empire, Cyrus II, campaigned extensively in Central Asia (Frumkin, 1970: 89). The Achaemenid armies met with substantial resistance, indicating that, despite the lack of data on early Iron Age cultures of Central Asia, the region was not depopulated during the Iron Age. It appears that the Achaemenid empire eventually triumphed and split the region into “three satrapies: Khorezm, Sogdian on the Zarafshan, and Bactria on the Oxus” (Knobloch, 1972: 19). Thus conquered and divided, at least some parts of Central Asia were ruled by Achaemenid empire for the next 200 years.

It is possible that the Achaemenid empire had a substantial impact on the indigenous cultures and technology of Central Asia. However, the royal Achaemenid style from Iran was not imposed on the empire’s provinces. The reemergence of societal styles and traditions in Central Asia appears to have instead been from indigenous origins. Evidence of Achaemenid material culture in Central Asia has been illusive and generally difficult to identify, however, figurines may provide new evidence of Achaemenid influence in the region. It is likely, for instance, that single mould figurine technology was brought by the Achaemenids from Iran to Central Asia. Other technological changes were introduced from Persia including columns, used to hold the roofs of public buildings, and advancements in irrigation techniques. The Achaemenids
also introduced the Aramaic writing system into Central Asia, and it is from this period in the Central Asian past that the oldest written historical accounts survive (Belenitsky, 1968: 51).

However, in spite of these changes ushered in by the Achaemenids, many features of indigenous Central Asian culture appear to have survived or reemerged after the Iron Age. Through an analysis of the archaeological evidence, it was discovered that oases settlements comprised the occupation region during the Achaemenid period. Indeed, large urban centers appear to have been reestablished in the oases during the Achaemenid period (Frye, 1998: 86). These oases cities and villages were occupied by settled, farming peoples, who bore cultural and tribal affiliations to the oases in which they resided. The reemergent wheel-thrown pottery, a Bronze Age innovation of Central Asia and evidence of a “highly developed craft industry,” was one of the most common artifacts found from this period (Belenitsky, 1968: 56).

The Achaemenid empire’s control over Central Asia ended with the conquest of the area by Alexander the Great in 329-327 BCE (Knobloch, 1972: 19). As a result of this invasion, Greek civilization established a cultural and political presence in Central Asia. Direct Greek control was relatively short lived, lasting only until about 250 BCE, however the kingdom of Graeco-Bactria was established immediately after its demise. This new kingdom was founded on the same cultural and political traditions as Greek colonial rule, and many of the immigrant Greek colonists and nobles were directly involved in the new government (Holt, 1988: 99). These two periods of Greek and Graeco-Bactrian rule are therefore regarded together as comprising the Hellenistic period.
During the Hellenistic period, Greek colonists were the major oasis landowners, and controlled almost all of the political and governmental offices of the kingdom. Some indigenous Central Asians were allowed to take up official posts, indicating that “the Greek colonists had managed to achieve a certain symbiosis with the local population, however the highest positions were never occupied by people of local origins” (Bernard, 1992: 105). This separation between the Greek colonists and the people they ruled extended, in some cases, into a cultural divide. At Ai Khanum, a city founded by the Greeks and a major center of Greek government, stele were erected in the Greek tradition to ensure the city’s protection by Greek deities and to acknowledge the people’s Greek heritage. The inscription on the stele, which comprised the Greek moral and civil code, was written only in Greek - making it inaccessible to the indigenous population.

The number and size of all Central Asian oasis cities increased dramatically during the Hellenistic period. Palaces, public spaces (such as baths), and governmental buildings were constructed in a few of these cities, utilizing a unique hybrid of Central Asian materials and floor plan combined with Greek technology and style. Indeed, the incorporation of Greek architecture into Central Asian buildings was one of the most substantial Greek influences on the region, and included the traditional Greek columns and marble statues (Belenitsky, 1968: 78).

Domestic architecture, even of the Greek officials’ homes, also became partially influenced by Central Asian architectural conventions. However, it is most interesting to note that “the architecture of the temples discovered at Ai Khanum owed nothing to the Greek tradition” (Bernard, 1992: 115). Not only did these temples not physically resemble Greek places of worship, but they also lacked the deity statues which were a
crucial element of native Greek temples (although one temple does feature a painted image of a Greek god, which may be an example of Greek gods being identified with local deities). In fact, these temples more closely resembled Iranian religious sites of the period, or perhaps, the original, indigenous Central Asian places of worship.

Material culture of the Hellenistic period varied substantially in style. The Greek colonists primarily used objects with which they were familiar, and many Greek homes contained implements of agriculture, sundials, ink wells, precious jewelry, and other Greek items. The local people retained many of their indigenous styles in the creation of objects for everyday usage. Pottery in particular remained of Central Asian extraction, with minimal influence by the forms of traditional Greek ware. It is unknown to what degree Greek culture might have influenced other aspects of indigenous culture, however it appears from this evidence that the impact of Greek colonization was relatively minimal.

Greek control over Central Asia began to decline at around 100 BCE. It has been hypothesized that during this period, indigenous people began to take control of their own government and society. This state of affairs continued until approximately 200 CE, when the Kushan empire conquered Central Asia (Frumkin, 1970: 52). The Kushan empire inaugurated a new era in Central Asian society. In particular, this era witnessed the widespread dissemination of Buddhism throughout the region and the subsequent conversion of most of the Central Asian people to this new religion. However, this period lies outside the realm of this discussion and will not be further mentioned.
Approaches to the study of figurines: Technology, Iconography, Context

Direct knowledge concerning the terracotta figurine tradition in Central Asia has been primarily garnered from excavations of sites in which terracotta figurines have been found and analysis of the artifacts themselves. Although limited by the extent of excavations to date, our knowledge of the sites in which figurines were both made and deposited is significantly more comprehensive than our understanding of the cultural beliefs and traditions underlying the terracotta figurine phenomenon. In order to better understand these traditions, a more thorough analysis of both the archaeological sites and the figurines of each era of Central Asian cultural evolution must be undertaken.

There are three primary types of information which should be analyzed in a study of terracotta figurines: iconography, technology, and context. Each of these perspectives and types of information were utilized in this study to fully investigate aspects of the figurine tradition. The division and definition of distinct areas of figurine analysis also allowed for the study and comparison of one aspect of the terracotta figurine tradition across space, time, and cultures. The resulting analyses were also synthesized in an attempt to more fully understand the terracotta figurine tradition as a whole.

Iconography

Of all the aspects of Central Asian figurines, iconography has been considered by scholarship to be the most crucial in understanding the nature of the figurine tradition. However, little effort has been made to quantify this analysis of iconographic elements, or indeed, even to describe and categorize their variation. In analyzing the visual appearance of terracotta figurines
it is crucial to distinguish between the various types of form and iconographic elements. Distinctions must primarily be made between the shape, details, and symbolic elements of the figurine. While the boundaries separating these categories must necessarily be permeable, as many visual elements of a figurine serve more than one purpose, some general definitions may be applied.

The primary distinguishing element of a figurine over other terracotta artifacts is the moulding of a body shape (confined, for the purposes of this study, to the human female form). Shape is specifically important for the distinguishing a figurine from a child’s toy: “the fact that fragile clay figurines such as... a human with extended arms remain intact indicates disposal without much handling, perhaps soon after manufacture, thus eliminating interpretation as toys” (Voigt, 2000: 277). Objects are identified as figurines based on these aspects of shape, which include some features of the human female form, although these are frequently stylized and are rarely anatomically proportioned. Throughout the history of terracotta figurine production in Central Asia, many different styles were utilized in the creation of terracotta representations of the human female body. This variation is present to a great extent in the shape elements of terracotta figurines.

The shape of a figurine is defined as the general form of the figure itself, individual features and limbs, and items external to the human body being represented. To be considered a shape element, a feature must be either two- or three-dimensional. Shape elements may have painted surfaces, but the painting must not constitute the entirety of the element (such as in a symbol or design). Additionally, a shape element must be a dominant and crucial determinant of the general appearance of the figurine.
These shape elements include the presence or absence of limbs, torso, breasts, and head; depictions (either incised or raised) of external bodily features, such as hair, pubic hair/region, fingernails, and joint creases; and depictions (either incised or added) of facial and neck features. Few elements of a figurine which are designed to be external to the body of the depicted figure are substantial or dominant enough to be considered aspects of shape. There are two exceptions to this in Central Asian figurines: the crown and possible skirt (lower triangle/base) of the Bronze Age terracotta figurines, and the clothing of the Hellenistic period figurines.

Shape elements may also contain detail or symbolic elements. It is important to note that the classification as a shape element does not categorize the entirety of a physical feature, only its size, shape, and general form. Even so, the category of body shape blends in many instances into the category of details. This is especially true at the level of the smaller body shape features, as the difference between the two categories is largely a matter of degree. The categorization of details encompasses the visual elements of terracotta figurines which are not dominant enough to be part of the overall shape of the figure, but depict smaller aspects of a figure’s body shape, features, or external items. This is not a determination of element importance, but rather of the size or prevalence of a feature over other features and the figurine as a whole. As mentioned above, details may also be present on or an aspect of shape elements, such as the detailed depiction of fingers, jewelry, and clothing on the shape element of the arm.

Detail elements include small or hard to depict bodily features, jewelry, clothing, crowns, hair ornamentation, and other small surface features. They may be incised into the terracotta, raised through the addition of extra terracotta material onto the surface of the figurine, or painted onto the surface of the figurine. Not all details are easily identifiable; indeed, some detail elements may include unidentifiable markings or features on the surface of a figurine. Many
factors contribute to our inability to identify certain figurine details, such as the preservation state of the figurine and cultural unfamiliarity with symbols, objects, or ornamentation. It is important to consider that these features, while unfamiliar to us, may have been common elements of female appearance or depiction in Central Asian society.

Alternately, unidentifiable details or features depicted on terracotta figurines might have had emblematic import. Symbolic elements of terracotta figurines include these unidentified markings, in addition to objects and jewelry that traditional scholarship has considered to be of “ritual significance”. Many of these figurine features are the same as those considered mere details; indeed, the distinction between details and iconography is difficult to define. However, while details are generally considered to be aspects of normal human dress and appearance, symbolic elements are features that scholarship does not believe to have been part of standard female appearance in Central Asian society. In spite of this distinction, it is still unknown whether these markings actually held symbolic meaning. It is possible that they were merely decorative elements. It is additionally plausible that some elements were decorative, while others held some symbolic meaning.

The categories defined above are used in the remainder of this thesis to illustrate and categorize the visual elements of figurines. This is done in order to facilitate further study of these figurines, particularly the comparison of certain elements across time periods and cultures. It is also crucial to note, however, that these definitions are entirely of a scholarly, and not an indigenous cultural, origin. It is uncertain how the ancient Central Asians would have classified, distinguished between, and valued the various elements of figurine form and iconography. However, it is doubtless that all elements of Central Asian style and iconography were both intentional and purposeful. “The general standard of (Central Asian) craftsmanship is high” and,
as such, it cannot be assumed (as has been frequently done in the scholarly study of Central Asian terracotta figurines) that the form or depiction of stylistic elements was due to or constrained by a lack of skill in Central Asian artisans (Bernard, 1992: 118).

**Technology**

Two primary forms of technological methodology were employed to create figurines by members of ancient Central Asian cultures. The older of these was the method of hand shaping, in which figurines were moulded out of terracotta by manual manipulation. There is no evidence that tools of any sort were used to help create this type of figurine, other than possibly a thin pointed implement used to incise lines, symbols, and other decorative elements. While the same hand shaping technology was employed in the creation of Central Asian terracotta figurines for thousands of years, these figures varied substantially in form and shape through different eras. It is therefore plausible to assume that ideological or conceptual ideas concerning figurines could change even as the techniques used in their creation remained the same.

The second method used to create terracotta figurines in Central Asia was the single mould technique. The use of this technology first required the shaping of an inverse image mould, like that of Figure 56. Lines incised into this image formed the details of the eventual figurine. After mould preparation, a positive figure would be formed by pressing terracotta into the inverse mould. After the removal of the figurine from the mould, excess terracotta was trimmed from the sides of the figure to complete the shape.

Single moulds were the only type of mould used in ancient Central Asia. Unlike double moulds, which could create detail on both halves of a figure, single moulds could only be used to create a detailed, shaped form on one half of the figurine. As a result, only the front (or in rare
instances, the side) of a figure would contain details of form and iconography; the other half (usually the back) would be manually pressed flat or rounded to approximate a human body shape during the moulding process.

These two techniques differed temporally in their Central Asian usage. Hand shaping technology was employed from the first incidence of figurine manufacture in the region until the Bronze Age. If figurines were manufactured during the Iron Age, it is unknown which technology was utilized during that period. It is possible that the single mould technique was introduced into Central Asia at this time, an assumption which would be consistent with the diffusion of this technology from Mesopotamia to Greece and other regions at the beginning of the first millennium BCE (Karvonen-Kannas, 1995: 28). Alternately, it is possible that the single mould technique was introduced into Central Asia by either the Achaemenids or the Greeks during the Hellenistic period. Such a technological introduction by the Greeks was less likely, as the Greeks had invented double moulds and began using this new technology exclusively prior to Alexander the Great’s conquest of Central Asia and areas of the Near East. In spite of this possible technological influence, neither of these conquered cultures ever employed double moulds in the creation of their terracotta figurines. In either event, the reemergence of terracotta figurines in the Hellenistic era archaeological record provides definitive evidence that hand shaping was replaced by single mould technology in that period, if not before.

It has been thought that this change in the technological aspect of figurine creation could either have been due to an internal cultural development or external influence. Either possibility necessitates the question of indigenous cultural motivation, either for technological development or assimilation. The use of the single mould drastically changed the appearance and form of
Central Asian figurines, in addition to the manner in which certain iconographic elements could be depicted. As a result, change in the usage of technology might have been for reasons of greater ideological significance.

It is possible, however, that this change in figurine creation technique was due only to the availability of a new technology. Any change in figurine form could have been viewed merely as an unfortunate, or even irrelevant, side effect of the new process. Just as figurine form, and so possibly ideology, changed while the hand shaping technology used to create it remained the same, it is equally possible that figurine ideology remained the same while the techniques used to create the figurines changed.

Context

An analysis of the archaeological context of terracotta figurines is crucial in determining the broader position these artifacts held in Central Asian culture. However, this data is frequently more difficult to obtain, as cultural context information can only be reliably gained from archaeological sites which were excavated and recorded in a systematic and scientific fashion. Unfortunately, not all terracotta figurines were unearthed in such a manner, and so much of the data concerning their cultural context has been lost. However, all Central Asian terracotta figurines for which archaeological excavation information is available have been recovered from either domestic or manufacturing contexts. This contextual association is consistent throughout all time periods and Central Asian geographic regions in which terracotta figurines have been found.

The domestic contexts of terracotta figurines include family residences/houses, courtyards between houses, and trash deposits associated with houses. No further direct evidence has been
found which would indicate the purpose figurines served within a household. However, the
“occurrence of household shrines would account for the widespread dispersal of figurines...rather
than clustered around temples” (Hiebert, 1994: 95-96). Additionally, comparisons with similar
practices in other ancient cultures (including the Near Eastern cultures from which the Central
Asian terracotta figurine tradition was originally derived) indicate that the domestic usage of
terracotta figurines in the ancient world was almost exclusively in household shrines and family
altars. It is therefore likely that this was also the primary utilization and purpose of terracotta
figurines in ancient Central Asian cultures.

Terracotta figurine discoveries in manufacturing contexts were confined to specific
periods, during which all ceramic production became the task of specialized artisans operating in
a section of the city designated for craft production. It is believed that the pottery and terracotta
figurines used by a household would have been purchased from these artisans, but that the
function of these objects within society would have been unchanged from the periods during
which the artifacts were manufactured within individual households (Knobloch, 1972: 147). It
is important to note that the existence of these pottery workshops or artisan areas are not
equivalent to and do not indicate a mass production of terracotta figurines in Central Asia.
Indeed, the emergence of distinctive Central Asian styles might have been due in part to the
system of intense information flow between pottery workshops, which operated in place of mass
production or the importation of styles (Hiebert, 1994: 72). It is therefore crucial to consider the
exclusive manufacture of either homemade or pottery workshop produced terracotta figurines as
an important element of both the cultural tradition and figurine iconography.

While our current data indicates that Central Asian terracotta figurines were used in an
almost exclusively domestic context throughout the temporal duration of the tradition, the
possibility always exists that evidence of an alternate usage has yet to be discovered. In the
interim, however, comparisons between the terracotta traditions of Central Asia and other ancient
cultures must operate under the premise of an exclusively domestic utilization of Central Asian
terracotta figurines.
History of Central Asian Terracotta Figurines

Terracotta figurines were first introduced into Central Asia from the Ancient Near East during the Neolithic period, in approximately 6500 BCE, where it is believed that they constituted a crucial element of ritual activity and belief. The earliest examples of these figurines in Central Asia were discovered at the site of Djeitun. The figurine construction techniques practiced at Djeitun were very similar to those employed in the creation of Near Eastern pottery of the same period. These figurines were fashioned by hand, utilizing relatively simple manual shaping techniques which produced schematic forms, and were lightly fired. They were constructed out of the local clays of the region, which were not refined prior to use and often contained impurities.

The Djeitun terracotta figurines were also very similar in iconography, technology, and context to their Near Eastern contemporaries, especially the terracotta figurines from the site of Catal Hoyuk. Both types are small (approximately 4 inches high), consist of an “L” shaped body “with blocky bases and pinched heads,” and exhibit exaggerated sexual characteristics (Voigt, 2000: 259). The iconography included on both types of figurines consisted almost exclusively of a grouping of small dots indented into the clay of the figure. These dots appear to be randomly dispersed across both the front and back of the figurine, but only occur below the waist or hip region.

The first distinctly Central Asian style terracotta figurines were created during the Chalcolithic period, at approximately 4500 BCE. With the general movement towards cultural distinctiveness during this era, all ceramics, including terracotta figurines, diverged from the Near Eastern tradition. Pottery of this period was highly decorated and
elaborately painted, in many cases with designs reminiscent of textile patterns. Likewise, the terracotta figurines of the Central Asian Chalcolithic were also painted, usually with zoomorphic or geometric iconography. Dots inscribed in painted circular rings were a particularly common motif. Such dotted indentations can be observed in Figures 1 and 3.

Early (Namazga I) female terracotta figurines from this era shared a general morphology, most frequently consisting of “bent legs usually tapered together, the so-called sitting figurines, and with highly stylized features and emphasis on the sexual organs, thighs, buttocks, and breasts” (Kohl, 1984: 87). An example of such exaggerated sexual features can be seen in the large breasts of Figure 3. The terracotta figurines of this era also exhibited deep, circular mouth and eye indentations on a beaked face and relatively small head. Figurines alternately exhibited short arms, such as those found at Ilginli-tcpe (Figure 2), or small triangular projections (Figure 1). Iconography consisted primarily of circles either painted or indented on the figurines, usually depicting double banded necklaces. Figure 1 also exhibits indented dots on the top of the head and in vertical lines extending down from the buttocks. Solid lines were also occasionally painted on the shoulders and arms, probably representing clothing patterns (Masson, Berezkin, Solovyeva, 1994: 25).

Later in the Chalcolithic period, during the Namazga II era, figurine morphology was again slightly altered. In one example of this new figurine type (Figure 5), the shape morphology consisted of an upright or standing torso with the very upper portions of the arms and legs. The figurine is broken and the rest of the figurine is missing, so it is unknown to what extent an entire human body shape was represented. In its broken state, this figurine stood approximately 2-3 inches high. The figure showed correct anatomical
proportions excepting enlarged buttocks, slightly enlarged breasts with central circular indentations, and a deeply indented navel. The iconography of this figurine consisted of a banded necklace (brown, painted) with two painted, brown bands continuing vertically down the back of the figurine from the neck to the waist. There are slight traces of the same brown paint on the upper thighs of this figurine, possibly indicating the existence of other decorations or iconographic symbols. Other figurines of this type were sometimes painted with a series of two “V”s on each upper thigh (Hiebert, 2003: 97).

During these early periods, terracotta figurines were found almost exclusively in domestic contexts. The first evidence of a funerary context for terracotta figurines occurred during the Namazga III era, possibly indicating a slight shift in the rituals and beliefs surrounding terracotta figurines. However, the majority of the terracotta figurines of this era continue to be found in their domestic contexts.

Terracotta figurines also underwent a significant evolution in form and iconography during the Namazga III period (see Figure 6), demonstrating a further cultural shift away from the Ancient Near Eastern origins of the terracotta figurine tradition. The general shape, body angle (in a reclining or seated position), tapered legs, and facial features of these figurines still resembled their Namazga I predecessors (particularly Figure 2). However, Namazga III figurines were larger (approximately 11 inches), more schematic, and did not include arms. Their sexual features were even more enhanced, with proportionally larger breasts and the first clear depictions of a pubic region. The iconographic elements of these figurines were no longer indented, but rather entirely painted. This could indicate a minor change in the techniques of figurine creation. The clay used during this period was also finer and the finished figure was
covered in slip to smooth the exterior texture and enhance its appearance. Details and iconographic features could have been more easily and accurately painted over the fine slip than the rougher clay of the earlier periods.

The types of iconographic elements depicted also changed in the Namazga III period. Figure 6, for example, features black painted eyebrows, four bands of a beaded necklace, a triangular pubic region, and several dots within circles. These large circular symbols are considered the distinguishing feature of the Namazga III figurines and have been interpreted by some to be solar designs. Examples of these solar symbols can be seen in Figure 6 along the legs and buttocks. Note that along the buttocks and left leg of the figurine, the dots are contained by only one circle, whereas those dots on the right leg are enclosed by two circles.

Terracotta figurines, along with the entirety of Central Asian material culture, were dramatically altered with the onset of the early Bronze Age (Namazga IV-V periods). One of the greatest changes in the figurine tradition occurred with the societal division of labor. As a result of this social reorganization, terracotta figurines were no longer produced by the family or individual who used them, but rather by specialized potters. It is even possible that figurines were created by coroplasts, an occupation devoted entirely to the fashioning of terracottas, however there is no direct evidence for the existence of this profession in Central Asia. In either case, the process of creating figurines was removed from the home and placed in the public sphere. However, terracotta figurines are still recovered from the same domestic (with rare instances of burial) contexts as their forbearers, indicating that these figurines were still used in the same ritual fashion.
It is possible, however, that this shift in production was responsible for the drastic change in shape exhibited by the Bronze Age terracotta figurines. All the figurines prior to this era were shaped in almost lifelike proportion, with rounded bodies approximating the human form. Bronze Age figurines, however, were almost entirely flat and uniformly thin, with a 90 degree bend at the base to support the upright figure (see Figure 8, side view). Such a flat shape would have been difficult to obtain without a flat surface and some sort of rolling device. While such implements might not have been readily available in a domestic setting, these would have constituted important tools for professional potters. Indeed, the process of rolling clay into a thin slab is still performed on clay prior to wheel throwing as it eliminates the small internal air bubbles which cause ceramics to crack and break during the firing process. The utilization of this technique in the creation of terracotta figurines, in addition to the reduced thickness of these objects, would have allowed Bronze Age craftsmen to fire figurines at higher temperatures. These temperatures, such as those produced by the kilns first invented in Central Asia during this period, would have destroyed earlier figurines. However, the Bronze Age figurines not only survived this new firing process, but also attained a higher level of quality (finer and smoother surface texture) as a result.

This new process of preparing the clay and creating the figurine would have required that all extra detail elements or protruding body parts (such as breasts) be fashioned separately and added after the initial flattening of the main figure. All detail and iconographic elements included on these figurines were, indeed, either indented into the clay or formed separately and added on after the primary shape was created. This dramatically altered the manner in which many of these iconographic elements were
depicted. This distinguished these figurines from their predecessors, which were formed at one time from a single mass of raw material.

However, in spite of the possible technological or social reasons behind the Bronze Age change in terracotta figurine shape, the iconographic importance and possible implications of these modifications should not be overlooked. Terracotta figurines were drastically changed in shape, as well as altered at the level of detail and iconographic elements. Unlike the pottery of the period, which transitioned to an almost completely unadorned state, terracotta figurines exhibited an increase in the number and complexity of details and iconography they depicted. The distinctive figurines which emerged in this era have several defining visual elements. As demonstrated by Figures 7-9, these elements include a violin shape (characterized by wide hips and a pointed, triangular base), elongated heads and necks, clear depictions of hair, coffee bean eyes, triangular arms, circular breasts, and a variety of inscribed symbols. In addition to these common characteristics, Bronze Age terracotta figurines also exhibited some variation in the other types of symbolic elements depicted.

Iconographic elements included on Figure 7 include several added and inscribed features. A crown or headdress, which appears to have been added after initial figurine shaping, rests on top of the head and is inscribed with diagonal lines which continue into the hair (possibly braided) which hangs down the figure’s back. The face is composed of the coffee bean eyes and a beaked nose. Circular ringlets of hair or another circular symbol were added to the front of the figure’s face and neck, ending between the breasts (Figures 8 and 9 have wavy bands of hair which stretch from the top of the head to between the breasts). The continuity of these ringlets is broken by a double banded
necklace. The figure's arms are triangular projections, each of which feature the identical unidentified iconographic element. This symbol is repeated twice on the buttock region of the figurine. A vertical line extends downward from between the two breasts to the triangular base. This line is adorned with many small accessory lines, which give the entire symbol a resemblance to a plant or leaf. Three horizontal lines are inscribed across the bottom of the hip region, immediately above the triangular base. This base is almost completely occupied by a large inscribed triangle, which contains numerous, randomly placed dots.

Of these symbolic iconographic elements featured on Figure 7 (symbol on arms and buttocks, plant line, 3 horizontal lines, and base triangle), each is also present on Figures 8 and 9. Note that Figure 9 is missing the crown, and also includes an additional and unique symbol on the buttocks, located between the original two. It is important to notice that all three of these figurines exhibited almost identical forms of what otherwise would appear to be purely decorative or stylistic elements. It is possible that some of these represented stylized body parts. The base triangle, for instance, could have represented the figurine's pubic region. However, the fact that all these iconographic elements were so closely shared indicates that these symbols might have held ritual or religious significance.

It was this distinctive Bronze Age type of figurine that was taken with the migrants out of the Kopet Dag foothills and into the first sustained Central Asian oasis settlements during the Namazga V era. These figurines were created and utilized in these urbanized oasis for a sustained period. However, their usage eventually declined just prior to the disappearance of all traces of these Central Asian oasis cultures from the
archaeological record. This gap in the material record continued for the entirety of the Iron Age. As such, the Iron Age constitutes the first major break in the continuity of the terracotta figurine tradition. While it is logical to conclude that terracotta figurines were not made or used in Central Asia during this time, it is also possible that the terracotta figurine tradition was continued throughout the Iron Age. The gap in the material record could have been due to an Iron Age alteration of the tradition, wherein terracotta figurines were created and used, but no longer fired. Indeed, it has been posited that the earliest Central Asian figurines were only fired accidentally and that unbaked clay figurines were always utilized alongside their fired contemporaries. Alternately, the gap in the archaeological record could be due to a gross sampling error or to geological forces exerted during that period of which modern archaeologists are unaware. In any event, no direct evidence exists for the continued existence and practice of the terracotta figurine tradition during the Iron Age.

The material remains of western Central Asian cultures are once again found in the archaeological record during the Achaemenid period, in approximately 500 BCE. In this era, all forms of material culture traditional to Central Asia, including terracotta figurines, were once again made and utilized in the region. This reemergent figurine tradition contained elements of both the original indigenous material culture as well as the immigrant Achaemenid culture. As a result, the terracotta figurines of this era were again significantly altered, yet also retained several stylistic and contextual aspects of their predecessors.

One of the most significant ways in which the terracotta figurine tradition was changed by the arrival of the Achaemenids was in the technology used for figurine
creation. Whereas all figurines created and used in Central Asia prior to the Iron Age gap were manually fashioned, terracotta figurines were created using single moulds during and after the Achaemenid period. Indeed, it is most likely that the single mould technology was introduced to Central Asia by the Achaemenids, as the technology originated in and spread from the Near East during this era (Karvonen-Kannas, 1995: 28).

As previously discussed, this shift in figurine moulding technology caused a dramatic alteration in the appearance of the figurines and the manner in which shape, details, and iconography could be depicted. Moulds were essentially two-dimensional and allowed for only small projecting features (such as breasts, but not extended arms) to be depicted. As a result, the tradition of iconographic depiction developed to accommodate these new material capabilities and limitations. All features became compressed into this two-dimensional plane, and the differences between major shape elements and details were vastly reduced. However, small details and iconographic elements could easily be depicted as variations in the surface of the figurine using the mould technology. As a result, figurine creators could depict iconographic motifs in the base material, rather than relying on painted additions.

Examples of these changed elements can be observed in Figure 10. This figurine is approximately 3 inches high, single mould made, and possibly covered with a slip. It has a crown or elaborate hairstyle positioned on the top of its head. This crown is decorated with several vertical ridged lines and a central vertical row of three protruding dots, ending with a fourth slightly larger raised dot between the eyebrows. All of the figurine’s facial features are raised and disproportionately massive: the eyebrows are heavy, and the eyes, nose, and mouth are thick and circular. The chin is slightly
prominent. Lines from the headdress extend down on both sides of the face and possibly represent hair. A small dot earring is depicted on both sides of the face. This figurine experienced breakage at the neck, and as a result, the head is separated from the body. The body shape is linear, with little variation in width from neck to base. At the top portion of the body section is a thickly banded necklace. Directly below the necklace are positioned two small, round breasts, which protrude slightly from the body. Two arms are shown to be held close to the body, bent at 90 degree angles at the elbows. This positioning of the arms was one of the greatest changes in figurine shape necessitated by single mould technology. The double hem of a dress or other clothing is visible as two incised lines at the knee level. The edge of the mould is visible along the entire right side of the body. The edge of the mould can be seen surrounding the entire figurine in Figure 12.

Variations existed in the size, details, iconographic elements depicted on Achaemenid period terracotta figurines. The existence of these variations could have been due, in part, to the cultural and social division of the oases into separate satrapies by the Achaemenid governing structure. However, the styles and types of elements depicted are much the same across the oases. An additional style of the headdress is shown on Figure 11, as are more defined facial features, a beaded necklace (both a band and beaded necklaces are depicted on Figure 14), and a further example of the small breasts and arms tightly pressed to the front of the body. Alternate means of depicting arms can be seen in Figures 13, 14, and 15, wherein arms are shown across the waist, held under the breast, hanging at the side, and braced akimbo from the body. However, it should be noted that in all body positions, the arms of these figurines remain within the 2-dimensional plane of
the body. The arms held akimbo, shown in Figures 13 and 15, remain firmly attached to
the rest of the moulded figurine through a slightly recessed layer of clay. Note that such a
recess, which gives the illusion of separation but which does not actually separate the
limb or weaken the structure of the figurine, was used to depict separated legs in Figures
15 and 16. In many cases this recess gives the illusion of clothing, as does the edge of the
figurine mould, which can appear to represent a cloak. Some of these terracotta figurines
do show elements of clothing, such as represented by the fabric folds around the breasts
in Figure 17. Clothing was easily depicted as such folds and lines on mould made
figurines, but had been previously difficult to depict and might have been represented by
paint on manually formed figurines. However, it is not necessarily accurate to assume
that all mould made figurines were originally intended to be clothed.

The main iconographic elements depicted on these Achaemenid figurines include
the crown or headdress, the row of dots on the forehead, jewelry (including earrings and
bracelets), banded necklaces, beaded necklaces, and clothing. Figure 14 includes a row
of vertical lines in the pubic region which could have been intended to accentuate female
sexual attributes. A similar triangular region filled with raised dots occurs on another
figurine from Khorezm (Meshkeris, 1977: Appendix). In addition, many figurines of this
period are depicted holding objects (balls, musical instruments, or unidentified) in one of
their hands. This is the first instance of figurines holding any type of object, which could
have been related to the material capabilities gained through the technological transition.
In all cases of these iconographic depictions, the elements are shown to be as three-
dimensional as any other body element. This is in contrast to the iconographic depictions
of previous eras, wherein elements were painted onto the surface of the figurine. This
could mean that the objects shown on the Achaemenid figurines are merely three-dimensional representations of the previously painted objects.

In all of these cases, it is difficult to determine to what degree technology influenced the form of Achaemenid figurines. It is possible that terracotta figurine iconographic styles evolved, along with Central Asian culture, during the Iron Age gap. The validity of this possibility is difficult to ascertain, however it is worth noting that many of the iconographic symbols depicted on Central Asian figurines throughout their cultural history, such as the raised dots or circles and banded necklaces, remained an integral feature of figurines during the Achaemenid period. Additionally, the context in which terracotta figurines have been recovered from the Achaemenid period has been identical to the pre-Iron Age contexts of figurines - implying that Achaemenid figurines were utilized in the same manner and had the same ritual significance as their predecessors.

The Achaemenid period was brought to a close with the arrival of Alexander the Great and the subsequent formation of the Greek, and later Graeco-Bactrian, kingdoms. Terracotta figurines continued to be produced during this era as well. Indeed, the contexts in which the terracotta figurines were created and utilized remained almost entirely domestic, as in previous periods in Central Asia, in spite of the presence of Greek constructed temples. A pattern of stylistic variation across the Central Asian cases emerged, as in the Achaemenid period. However, the form of these terracotta figurines was again changed from the preceding period. The creators of Hellenistic terracotta figurines continued to utilize the single-mould technology first introduced during the Achaemenid period. The quality of the figurines made using this technique was
improved, however, as their creators were more careful to trim the excess clay from the sides of the completed figurine and more delicately carve the facial features into the inverse mould. This improvement could have been due to the years of practice and resulting enhanced familiarity of the local Central Asian craftsmen with the single mould technology. Alternately, Hellenistic craftsmen could have introduced refinements in the moulding technique to Central Asia.

In addition to this slight improvement in technique, Central Asian terracotta figurines experienced other alterations during the Hellenistic period. Their size increased slightly, with the average Hellenistic figurine standing at a height of 5 to 7 inches and measuring 2 inches across. The depth of the figurines varies from about a half an inch to an inch deep, but as with Achaemenid figurines, the Hellenistic terracottas are almost all visually two-dimensional, with flat or slightly rounded backs. The general shape and form of the Hellenistic terracotta figurines was also very similar to those of the Achaemenid period. The variation between the oases was substantial during this period, and a number of mould patterns developed which featured slightly different iconographic and visual elements. In general, however, Hellenistic terracotta figurines included more iconographic symbols than can be distinguished on the forms of Achaemenid figurines.

Variations existed in the stylistic forms of the terracotta figurines from the four major Central Asian oases. The majority of the figurines available for study were from the oases of Khorezm and Sogdia, however a few examples from Bactria and Margiana were also included in this analysis. While the figurines from these different oases do present visual differences, the major iconographic, contextual, and technological elements are shared among all the figurines of the Hellenistic Central Asian oases.
One of the earlier Hellenistic figurine styles is characterized by Figure 21. This figurine is approximately 6 inches high and 2 inches wide. It bears traces of a dark reddish slip which originally covered the entirety of the figurine. A knotted hair arrangement crowns the head and the face is also surrounded by a band of ridged hair. The face itself is very round. The facial features are raised, including the eyebrows, prominent eyelids, and pupils. The eyes are a slanted, oval shape. The nose is thin and the lips are thin and protruding. The figurine is broken at the neck. The body of the figurine is vertically linear, as in many Achaemenid figurines. Hellenistic figurines, however, bear distinct elements of clothing. This figurine is shown wearing a cloak, a ridged or wrinkled dress, and similarly ridged pants on the lower legs. The upper torso features a banded necklace and two small round breasts. A diamond shaped object is positioned between the breasts and is supported by the left hand. The arms of the figurine are held close to the body, bent at 90 degree angles. The right hand is positioned below the left, and holds a smaller, round object. The body of this figurine is relatively worn, and it is difficult to distinguish the nature of the carried objects, or any other iconographic features.

The most common iconographic features of the Hellenistic terracotta figurines, which appeared consistently across the oases and time periods of the Hellenistic era, can be seen in Figure 23. One of these was the series of circular indentations decorating the hems of the cloak, dress, and pants of this figurine. These dots are also shown on the breasts, as well as the raised line which extends vertically from the diamond object to the base of the dress. This dot motif comprises the primary iconographic symbol of the Hellenistic figurines. It is most commonly found along the hems of clothing, central
points of the breasts, and in a vertical line down the center of the figurine. A larger variation of the same dot pattern can be seen in Figure 29. Two vertical lines, one extending below each breast, can be seen in Figure 31.

The knotted headdress was a feature common to several figurines, although it was only common during the earlier periods of Hellenism (prior to the 1st century CE). Further examples of this elaborate hairstyle depiction can be seen in Figures 24, 30, 31, 32, and 33. In some cases, a smaller, finer layer of hair can be seen closely surrounding the face, indicating that the complex, knotted hairstyle was actually meant to be viewed as a wig or a type of crown. The finer layer of hair can be especially well distinguished in Figures 32 and 33, in which the outer, headdress layer is very deeply grooved.

The banded necklace was depicted on almost all of the Hellenistic figurines, although circular beaded necklaces were also common. Clothing was frequently depicted on Hellenistic figurines, and was usually layered in a traditional Central Asian style of dress. Slightly raised patterns approximating woven textiles can be seen on several of the figurines.

Objects held in the hands or between the breasts were also a common feature of Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines. Some of these objects are unidentifiable, however, balls, plants, flowers, and fruits can be distinguished on some figurines. Figure 30 features a clear plant and flower depiction which appears directly beneath the opened left hand, as if dropped. This open, resting hand motif can also be seen in Figure 34, without the accompanying iconographic element.

Throughout the later periods of Hellenistic influence in Central Asia, between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE, most of these iconographic motifs continued. Some
experienced minor development and alteration, as the variety of mould types and styles expanded. The knotted headdress, for instance, was evolved into a large variety of other head coverings. These include a band with leaf shaped crown (Figure 35), a Central Asian nomadic sakkos cap (Figures 36 and 39), a bare head or hair (Figures 37, 38, and 55), a low crown or headdress with central ornament (Figures 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 54), a wide braid of hair with central ornament (Figure 47), a turban-like head covering (Figures 49 and 50), a wide low crown or soft hat (Figures 51 and 53), and a triangular pointed crown (Figure 52). The significance of these different head coverings is unknown and cannot be correlated with either oasis or year of creation. Along with this diversification in head coverings came a similar expansion in the types of clothing and jewelry depicted on the terracotta figurines. However, the banded necklace remained a universal feature among all the Hellenistic era figurines.

Another iconographic element which was constant in Hellenistic terracotta figurines was the dot or circle motif. As in the earlier Hellenistic period, this motif can be found on the clothing hems of the later figurines (such as in Figure 36), as well as in vertical linear patterns (Figure 45). Such linear patterns occurred not only in a single, central location, but also in several rows down the body of the figurine (Figure 55). Additional circle locations also included bands of sash material and the banded necklace, such as in Figure 40. An alternate hem pattern occurs only in Figure 41. A single raised dot can also be found in the center of the forehead, between the eyebrows, in a few instances (Figure 42). One circular indentation on each cheek was also a rare, but documented, usage of the motif (Figures 46 and 47). In a single instance, the dot motif was used across the entire body of a figurine in a random fashion (Figure 54).
Objects held in the hand continued to be a common element in later Hellenistic period terracotta figurines. Balls or circles were particularly common, although they could have originally depicted other distinct objects which are now unidentifiable. Floral or plant motifs were also a commonly held object. Some of these plant depictions were moulded with high degrees of delicacy and attention to detail, such as in Figures 44 and 45.

While the exact manner and style of depiction of several of these iconographic elements varied through the Hellenistic period, the dominant motifs remained largely unchanged throughout the era. It is therefore reasonable to compare all Hellenistic terracotta figurines to those of other eras without reservations based on minor stylistic variations within the period.

Further data on each individual figurine can be accessed in the figurine catalogue, in the Appendix.
Greek Terracotta Figurines

In order to more fully understand the impact of the possible Greek religious influence on Central Asia during the Hellenistic period, it is necessary to analyze the nature of the terracotta figurine tradition as it was practiced within the Greek culture. Terracotta figurines in Greece, as in Central Asia, constituted a primary artifact of religious devotion and ritual practice. As a result of this religious importance, Greek terracotta figurines were made and used throughout ancient Greek history. While their usage and importance was continual, these figurines experienced evolutions in form, style, and iconography, as the methods and technologies used to create terracotta figurines varied with internal changes in Greek culture. A comprehension of the nature of this native Greek evolution in material culture can facilitate an understanding of the internal cultural processes responsible for a similar, indigenous Central Asian evolution in the terracotta figurine tradition.

Through a comparison of the Greek and Hellenistic Central Asian figurine traditions, we can additionally gain insight into the aspects of Greek religious practice which might have been adopted by indigenous Central Asian cultures. As has been prevalent in the study of Central Asian terracotta figurines, theories regarding the nature of the Greek figurine tradition have focused primarily on iconography to determine the purposes of and distinctions between Greek figurines through time. However, contextual and technological data, in addition to these iconographic variations, can be utilized in an analysis of the Greek female terracotta tradition, in order to better illuminate the symbolic meanings and practical purposes of the terracotta tradition in ancient Greece.
Terracotta figurines were used as instruments of worship and items of sacrifice throughout the span of ancient Greek history. These small, clay statuettes also functioned as funerary goods, and have been recovered from the archaeological excavations conducted in every geographical area of the ancient Greek world. The prevalence and enduring nature of this tradition suggests its integral role in ancient Greek religious practices. Figurines were created in a multitude of styles, varying substantially in subject matter and mode of depiction, and these figurine typologies were subject to geographic variation.

Greek terracotta figurines were originally hand modeled, using a inverse mold only to create the detailed features of the face and head. Moulds consisted of a fired clay inverse of the figure and image desired. Clay would be carefully pressed into this mold to create the positive image. During the Classical period (500 - 300 BCE), figurine creation was shifted to entirely mould-based technological system. These moulds constituted two technological typologies: the single mold, which created intricate detail on the front of the figurine, but which left the back smooth; and the double mold, which was used to fashion figures with sculptural depth, which were meant to be seen from all angles. Usage of the single mold was eventually abandoned during the later Hellenistic period, in favor of the exclusive utilization of the double mold technology. After firing, most figurines were painted, which added further detail to the clothes, jewelry and faces of the people represented.

Terracotta figurine creation, including mold creation, clay modeling, firing, and ornamentation, lay within the realm of the Greek professional coroplast. These specialized craftsmen were both artists and entrepreneurs, utilizing their skills to create high quality figurine moulds as well as to employ these moulds to make as many figurines as possible. After the coroplast created this plethora of figurines, the multitude would then have been sold to members
of the public. Coroplasts “worked in shops near shrines and temples, selling pre-made votives to customers” (Kingsley, 1976: 3). Figurines purchased from coroplasts were then deposited by their owners in one of a variety of locations. Most recovered terracotta figurines have been excavated from religious contexts, primarily temples and shrines. Thousands of figurines were placed in a single ritual location over the centuries, presumably donated by worshippers. Similar caches of figurines have also been recovered from the graves of specific sites. In funerary contexts, however, the dedication of figurines is inconsistent, as some burials have a multitude of terracottas while others are completely devoid of them.

“Unlike votives with intrinsic value, which could have been offered at any shrine for the sake of the material, regardless of iconography, terracotta figurines have value mainly in the subjects they represent” (Merker, 2000: 325). As a result, the form and iconography of a figurine was of crucial importance, and was careful chosen by its donator to accurately reflect his or her desired goals for the religious act. Greek terracotta figurines varied substantially in both iconography and style, however these forms can be grouped into genres based on both mode and subject of depiction. Throughout Greek history, the primary subjects of terracotta figurines were draped women or goddesses. Indeed, these terracottas are also the most well-represented type of figurine in ancient Greece, having been recovered from all excavations of Greek sites with known terracotta figurine deposits. Figurines of this genre were generally votive offerings, associated with temple, shrine, and some funerary contexts.

Temple Contexts

The shrine or temple was the primary context in which the figurine tradition and the beliefs surrounding it were expressed. During the Archaic period (700 - 500 BCE), temples were
the only site of figurine dedication. Although the type and number of figurines dedicated to a particular shrine varied, temples and shrines remained the primary contexts of the practice of the terracotta tradition throughout ancient Greek history. The dedication of these figurines was practiced primarily by women. Devotion of figurines was not, however, restricted by class, and although figurines ranged in quality (and therefore, expense), figurines of some sort were given to temples by both rich and poor. The “devotion of a figurine to a deity was a primary act of worship” in the ancient Greek world, and as a result, almost all “terracottas are found as votive offerings deposited in sanctuaries” (Bell, 1990: 65). Evidence both for the importance and manner of votive terracotta dedication is reinforced by terracotta representations of worshippers in the act of offering a figurine in a shrine. After such figurines were dedicated, they “could be prominently displayed as tangible monuments of devotion or used as part of the cult apparatus of sacrifice” by the temple in which they were dedicated (Ammerman, 1990: 42).

The highest percentage of temple figurine dedication took place at various sanctuaries to Demeter and Persephone. This was evidence of the close ties between the shrine and funerary figurine traditions, as both of these goddesses were strongly associated with the underworld. The largest temple dedicated to these two deities was the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore (Persephone) in Corinth. This site was perhaps at the core of the figurine tradition and myriad dedications were continued here even as such religious participation waned in other Greek temples during the later Hellenistic periods. The terracotta figurines dedicated here were almost exclusively female and while the typologies did vary according to the traditions commonly practiced in other regions of the Greek world, there was a strong sense of typological conservatism in the figurines actually manufactured in Corinth.
Most of the figurines dedicated in Corinth were of representations of goddesses - especially, though not exclusively, Demeter and Kore themselves. Many of the early Archaic period figurines dedicated throughout Greece were also identified as pantheonic and lesser deities, and were often easily identifiable by the signature items or iconography included in the depiction. Representations of Persephone, for instance, include her underworld torch and baskets of fruit, whereas Aphrodite figures appear nude, with an identifying crowns and “Venus rings” around their necks (Kingsley, 1976: 7; Vafopoulou-Richardson, 1981: 41). The selection of the goddess depicted by these votive offerings was made in order to secure the blessings and aid of a particular deity. Demeter, for instance, was commonly worshipped by mothers and farmers, desirous of both happy lives for their offspring and fertility for their crops.

However, “after the Archaic period, the pace of change of figurine types quickened” and over time, the popularity of the goddess figurine declined (Merker, 2000: 326). By the Hellenistic period (300 - 100 BCE), the instances of their occurrence had declined across most of the Greek world. Their place was largely filled by the development of the Tanagra type figurine - a standing, draped women with an introspective gaze and a posture suggestive of movement (Figures 58 - 61). This is not to imply that the Tanagra type figurine became the exclusive style of female terracotta figurine, however the popularity and pervasiveness of the type was unprecedented. The Tanagra type terracotta figurine, named after the city in which it was first discovered by archaeologists, was developed during the Hellenistic period and its usage spread rapidly throughout Greece and its associated states. Indeed, the excavations of the ancient cities of Tanagra and Cyrenaica in central Greece, in addition to the Sanctuary of the Underworld Deities at Knidos, reveal an almost exclusive presence of the “standing, draped female figure,
who has no special attributes or distinguishing characteristics that would identify her as a goddess” (Burn and Higgins, 2001: 20).

The Tanagra type figurine has been the most commonly discovered, collected, and analyzed Greek terracotta figurine. Throughout their analyses, scholars have attached great ideological and political importance to this type of figurine. Indeed, these figurines have been hailed as “a marker for the start of a different, more worldly Hellenistic attitude,” which included an increasing trend toward rationalism and naturalist depiction in all genres of sculpture (Merker, 1990: 54). The significance of this figurine type has been presumed for a number of reasons, which include, but are not limited to, its widespread occurrence and popularity. Indeed, these terracottas were dedicated en masse to temples and shrines, in addition to being placed in tombs. While they were not as readily adopted in some of the major religious centers of ancient Greece, this could have been due to a variety of other reasons. At Corinth, for instance, all incoming ideas “would have been filtered through an existing religious sensibility” and conservative tradition - a process which would have lessened the influence of many new traditions, not just the Tanagra figurines (Merker, 1990: 54). Even at Corinth, however, the use of the Tanagra figurine was eventually adopted, although the movement-oriented stance and coy demeanor of the figures was somewhat reduced.

A final consideration concerning the transition from mythological subject matter to the Tanagra type figurine tradition is the possibility that the presumably undifferentiated female figurines could actually be representations of goddesses. Indeed, even at Corinth, a religious center dedicated to the worship of goddesses (specifically Demeter and Persephone), “goddesses were not easily distinguished from mortals” in their terracotta incarnations” (Merker, 1990: 55). Such a theory provides a ready explanation for the demise of the traditional goddess figurine in
favor of the Tanagra type. Although there is admittedly little direct evidence for this possibility, it has not been extensively researched, and so, should not be discounted.

Several theories exist which attempt to explain the functions of figurines in Ancient Greece. One primary theory is that the female terracotta figurine, especially the generic draped Tanagra woman, represented the person who dedicated it. As women were the primary human participants in the terracotta figurine rituals, they all could have physically identified with the generalized figurine woman. In a temple or shrine context, this figurine would have served as a replacement worshipper, a symbol of the donator’s devotion to the god or goddess long after the individual herself had departed (Burn and Higgins, 2001: 21). In the consideration of this theory, however, one must question who the desired audience of this dedication was thought to have been. It is possible that the societal peers of the dedicator were supposed to observe the act of purchasing and donating the figure, and so such actions were pursued for the social prestige involved. Such a theory could account for the variations in quality (and therefore, expense) among the figurines donated in a consistent location, context, or time period. Alternatively, the Greek gods or goddesses might have been the intended audience for the act of dedicating a figurine to a temple. The patron deities of the shrine would have additionally been the recipients of its symbolic worship function as an ever-present replacement for its human dedicator.

Funerary Contexts

Female terracotta figurines are also well represented in funerary context excavations from across the ancient Greek world. Some of the largest caches of funerary figurines have been discovered in the excavations at Myrina and Samothrace. The tombs of Myrina, in addition to containing the god and goddess figurines common in funerary contexts, also contained many
examples of the Tanagra type figurines. The standing, draped female figurines discovered in these Hellenistic graves might have been an additional example of the use of this particular type of figurine to symbolize an absent worshipper. This theory would account for the presence of figurines in graves, as they would have represented devotees of the underworld deities. The funerary figurine might also have functioned in a different representational capacity, symbolizing the continued presence of a mourning and comforting friend to the deceased after burial, in addition to expressing a desire to be reunited with the deceased.

Funerary terracottas might also have functioned as gifts which the deceased could offer to the divine beings of the underworld or as representations of the deceased individuals themselves. Draped female figurines were not found in the tombs of all members of society. Most female figurines were found in the tombs of women, and the exact form of the figurine varied with the age of the deceased. Younger woman were buried with correspondingly younger looking figurines, whereas older matrons were entombed with more mature looking figurines. The inclusion of “peers” in the tomb of a woman might also have represented the desire of the living to either accompany their departed friend into the afterlife or at least wish that she might have companionship in the underworld. Alternatively, these women could have functioned as servants to the deceased, ensuring that their existence in the afterlife would be as comfortable as possible. In this capacity, these figurines would have replaced early Archaic types, which clearly depicted servants who were destined to aid the deceased in the afterlife.

The inclusion of the Tanagra type figurine in tombs might also have functioned as a monument to the deceased. The first introductions of this figurine genre into a funerary context, which had been traditionally dominated by representations of gods and goddesses, occurred immediately after the “anti-luxury decree of 317 BCE” (Uhlenbrock, 1990: 51). This edict
banned the erection of elaborate marble gravestones. Prior to the ban, the subjects of these sculptural monuments had frequently been women very similar in form to the Tanagra type figurines. Once the decree was enacted, it is probable that such representations, which were no longer allowed to be placed above ground, were copied and placed below ground in miniaturized form.

The corpus of funerary terracotta figurines from any ancient Greek time period included secular figurines of various types, including the Tanagra women. However the primary genre of funerary figurines were those which symbolically represented a god or goddess. The site of Corinth, for example, included not only one of the largest sanctuaries dedicated to a deity, but also multiple examples of divine terracottas found in a funerary context. Apart from simple worship by imitation, these deity figurines could have expressed wishes and desires from the living, for the deceased as he or she entered the afterlife. Unlike most of the contents of graves, the figurines contained in tombs were not chosen by the grave’s owners prior to their deaths. Rather, the terracotta figurines were chosen by the family at the time of interment. As a result, it is possible that they most accurately reflect the emotions of the bereaved and their subsequent reliance on the comforts of religion and ritual tradition. The figurines chosen by those who just suffered such a traumatic loss are of two varieties: images of deities associated with the underworld and figurines which were symbolic of a happy afterlife.

Images of Demeter and Persephone were among the most common figurines to be dedicated throughout ancient Greek history. In addition to the myriad of these figurines present at the many temples and shrines devoted to them throughout the Greek world, Demeter and Persephone figurines are also the most common type of funerary terracottas to be recovered from excavations. These figurines could have represented the worship of the queen of the underworld,
who would have been a more sympathetic and accessible deity to the deceased than her traditionally feared husband. Images of Persephone could also have symbolized the deceased herself, as these figurines have been most commonly found in the burials of young women of marriageable age. Demeter figurines, representations of Persephone’s mother, would have been a figure of commiseration with the living, as both the goddess and the living family members shared the common experience of losing a loved one. Demeter was often depicted as an old and haggard woman, both in the throes of mourning and desperately seeking to be reunited with her child. Indeed, the representation of these two goddesses suggested the hope and desire that the living might someday be reunited with the deceased.

From this research and analysis conducted on the available Greek terracotta figurine sample, it can be concluded that terracotta figurines represented a primary and important means of worship in ancient Greece. The terracotta figurine tradition spanned the temporal duration of the ancient Greek civilization and was represented across the Greek mainland and associated islands. However, in spite of their widespread geographical nature, Greek Hellenistic terracotta figurines were placed exclusively in temples and graves. From an analysis of these specific contexts, it is apparent that the Greek terracotta figurine tradition played set of clearly defined roles within Greek culture and Greek religious practice. These roles were centered around the key act of Greek religious worship: figurine dedication.

It is therefore crucial that in any analysis of Greek religious influence, facilitated by the terracotta figurine tradition, that the dedication role of Greek figurines be primarily taken into account. While the Greek terracotta figurine tradition experienced significant alterations in iconography and technology throughout the 600 year period described above, the primary contexts of terracotta figurine deposition remained unchanged. It is therefore likely that this
dedicatory role of terracotta figurines was the most crucial aspect of the tradition to Greek religious practice. As such, any Greek religious conversions of conquered peoples, including the cultures of Central Asia, would have been primarily evidenced not by a change in figurine iconography but rather by a shift in the depositional patterns of terracotta figurines.
Comparative Analyses

Through the course of this investigation of Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines, three bodies of information have been examined: the cultural context of Central Asia, the history of the terracotta figurine tradition of Central Asia, and the terracotta figurine tradition of Greece. The information garnered from this study holds the potential for illuminating the problems of Central Asian cultural continuity through the Iron Age and the nature of Greek religious influences on the Central Asian Hellenistic period. In order to more completely understand these issues, this information concerning the Central Asian terracotta figurine tradition must be analyzed at a technological, contextual, and iconographic level.

Technological Analysis

Two different technologies were used to create the terracotta figurines of Central Asia. The first of these was the technique of manually shaping the form of the figurine. This was done from the Neolithic period until the end of the Bronze Age. It may have been additionally used throughout the Iron Age gap to create terracotta figurines which have not been preserved in the archaeological record. With the advent of the Achaemenid period, a second type of terracotta figurine creation technology, single moulds, emerged in Central Asia. It is possible that this technology was invented and developed by Central Asians, either in the Achaemenid period or during the Iron Age. Alternately, it is possible that the Achaemenids introduced the technology, which was originally invented in the Near East. This single mould technology was utilized throughout the period of Greek domination in creating the Hellenistic Central Asian figurines.
The theory of single mould introduction by the Achaemenids is supported by the material evidence. As previously discussed, the terracotta figurines of the Achaemenid period are both of poorer quality and smaller than the later Hellenistic figurines. This is consistent with the introduction and importation of actual moulds from the Near East into Central Asia. After single moulds were used repeatedly, they had to be re-carved in order to retain important details (such as facial features) in the figurines the mould created (Kingsley, 1976: 3). This was a difficult process and, even when done by an experienced artisan, could lead to the creation of thick, blocky features in the resulting figurines. Such features gave the impression of poor artistry.

Secondly, as moulds were worn to the point of uselessness, an attempt was often made to create a replacement mould without having to completely refashion the original. Therefore, a new mould was shaped from a finished figurine of the original. However, due to the shrinkage of the clay, this new mould would have been up to ten percent smaller than the original. This would have resulted in the creation of smaller figurines.

It is therefore likely that the Achaemenids physically brought single moulds into Central Asia. As the moulds were worn, Central Asian artisans, unfamiliar with the technology, might have attempted to re-carve the moulds. They might also have attempted to create new moulds when the originals became useless. Not yet adept at creating their own moulds, these artisans would have conserved the original pattern of the figurine by recasting the same design.

During the period of Hellenistic rule, terracotta figurines were both larger and of finer quality than their Achaemenid predecessors. This improvement could have been the result of an increased familiarity of Central Asian artisans with the single mould technology, as the local craftspeople began creating their own versions of single moulds. As the techniques used to create the figurines became adopted into the indigenous culture, the local iconography originally
depicted on figurines might have resurfaced as well. The number of iconographic features and symbols depicted on terracotta figurines increased dramatically during the Hellenistic period, implying a return to a set of culturally meaningful motifs and icons which would not have been depicted on the Achaemenid moulds imported directly from the Near East.

As mentioned, the single mould fell out of use in Greece hundreds of years prior to Alexander the Great’s invasion of Central Asia. If the Greeks, therefore, had attempted to introduce their figurine creation technology into the region, it would have been in the form of the double mould. The double mould, however, was never used in Central Asia and there is no record of any such moulds ever existing there. It would seem, therefore, that either double mould technology was never introduced or it was never adopted in Central Asia. This is especially telling, as the double mould represented a clear advancement over single mould technology. With the double mould, figurines could once again have been depicted in three dimensions, and could have included the extended arms and legs common to figurines in the Central Asian Bronze Age and earlier periods. The fact that these double moulds were not adopted could indicate that the exact positioning of the arms and legs of the figurine was of no ritualistic or religious importance.

Contextual Analysis

An analysis of the contexts from which terracotta figurines have been recovered reveals possibly the clearest indication of the purpose of these artifacts. Terracotta figurines from all ancient cultures have been associated with temple, funerary, and domestic contexts. Their prevalence in these three locations has helped to establish our understanding of figurines as ritual
and religious objects. The exact ritual purpose of figurines, however, varied with the context in which they were used.

Terracotta figurines from Central Asia have been recovered almost exclusively from domestic contexts. It is therefore likely that they were displayed in household shrines and used as objects of personal worship or devotion. It is possible that they represented deities closely associated with the home, motherhood, or domestic life. Although this study does not include the analysis of terracotta figurines which did not represent human females, it is important to note that a far greater number of these figurines were found in domestic contexts than any other type of Central Asian terracotta.

The usage of these female terracotta figurines in the home continued throughout the entire history of their existence in Central Asia. This tradition continued during Greek occupation, even though the Greeks did not traditionally keep figurines in their homes. Greek customs, had they been prevalent in Central Asia during the Hellenistic period, would have dictated that figurines be deposited in shrines and temples, as the primary Greek religious act was figurine devotion. Such dedications would not have been possible within the framework of an exclusively domestic context. This fact, in addition to the continuity of the domestic context for Central Asian figurines during the Hellenistic period, is perhaps the strongest evidence for the survival and active practice of indigenous Central Asian traditions, as opposed to a theorized Greek cultural domination.

Iconographic Analysis

In interpreting the many symbols, motifs, and iconographic features depicted on Hellenistic Central Asian figurines, it is primarily important to distinguish between those
elements of ritual significance and those of merely decorative importance. While we do not possess definitive knowledge of the ritualistic symbol base of Central Asian religions, some features of iconographic motifs suggest that they were of particular ritual importance. For instance, those elements shared across a large number of figurines representing different oases were likely to have been of import. This is especially true in the cases of shared iconography among terracotta figurines depicted wearing different styles of clothing and headdresses. On the other hand, features which varied widely among figurines, such as the types of head adornment, were unlikely to have been of religious significance. Therefore, the primary iconographic elements of Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines included the band necklace, dot or circle motif, objects held in hands, and the plant or flower motif. The early Hellenistic knotted hair arrangement could also be considered of symbolic importance.

The meaning of these symbols is still unknown, however a determination of their origin and usages on other terracotta figurines can yield information about their relationship to Central Asian religions. To this end, a comparison and analysis follows of each of these iconographic features across space, time, and culture.

The band necklace was a prominent element on almost all of the Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines. It was also one of the most enduring indigenous iconographic motifs throughout Central Asian history. This element alone constituted almost the entire iconographic adornment of the early Chalcolithic terracotta figurines. Banded necklaces continued to occur, in slightly varied forms, in the later Namazga and Bronze Age figurines as well. In these instances, the banded necklace was either painted or included as a raised strip of clay. The banded necklace was one of the first Central Asian motifs to reemerge on the Achaemenid terracotta figurines, where it was again included on almost all examples of the style. Unlike the majority of the other
elements of ritual significance and those of merely decorative importance. While we do not possess definitive knowledge of the ritualistic symbol base of Central Asian religions, some features of iconographic motifs suggest that they were of particular ritual importance. For instance, those elements shared across a large number of figurines representing different oases were likely to have been of import. This is especially true in the cases of shared iconography among terracotta figurines depicted wearing different styles of clothing and headdresses. On the other hand, features which varied widely among figurines, such as the types of head adornment, were unlikely to have been of religious significance. Therefore, the primary iconographic elements of Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines included the band necklace, dot or circle motif, objects held in hands, and the plant or flower motif. The early Hellenistic knotted hair arrangement could also be considered of symbolic importance.

The meaning of these symbols is still unknown, however a determination of their origin and usages on other terracotta figurines can yield information about their relationship to Central Asian religions. To this end, a comparison and analysis follows of each of these iconographic features across space, time, and culture.

The band necklace was a prominent element on almost all of the Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurines. It was also one of the most enduring indigenous iconographic motifs throughout Central Asian history. This element alone constituted almost the entire iconographic adornment of the early Chalcolithic terracotta figurines. Banded necklaces continued to occur, in slightly varied forms, in the later Namazga and Bronze Age figurines as well. In these instances, the banded necklace was either painted or included as a raised strip of clay. The banded necklace was one of the first Central Asian motifs to reemerge on the Achaemenid terracotta figurines, where it was again included on almost all examples of the style. Unlike the majority of the other
iconographic elements, banded necklaces are more difficult to interpret, as they possibly constituted no more than a representation of daily life in Central Asia. Such types of banded necklaces might have been a common jewelry item among Central Asian women and, as such, were included in the terracotta representations of women. However, even if this is the case, the inclusion of this feature over such a long period of time indicates that cultural continuity did exist – even if only in the realm of personal adornment.

The dot or circular motif was another almost universal iconographic element throughout the history of Central Asian terracotta figurines. This motif first appeared in the Neolithic period, when it might have represented hair in figurine adornment. Such an explanation could account for the appearance of the dots primarily in the pubic regions, which would have served to accentuate the figurine's sexual features. However, even if this was the original significance of the dot motif, this iconographic element took on a far more symbolic role in the later periods of figurine creation. For instance, the Namazga III figurines included large dot-within-circle motifs ("solar symbols"), which were depicted on the upper thighs and remained distinct from the pubic region adornment. In the Bronze Age, dots again took on the role of depicting a possible pubic region on the triangular base of the figurines.

The dot-within-circle motif again emerged in Hellenistic period, and was among the most common iconographic symbols depicted during this era. These circles were primarily shown on the hems of clothing and in vertical lines on the front of the figurine. In Figure 55, this figurine from Margiana is shown to be decorated with several vertical lines of the circle motif. It is particularly important to note that these dots were included in the Hellenistic figurines as indented circles, in spite of the fact that such dots would have been difficult to create utilizing single mould technology - due to the nature of the inverse mould, such dots would necessarily
have been carved as raised rings of clay. Taking this difficulty into account, it is alternately possible that the indented circles were added to the figurines after moulding. While this might have been done by the artisan himself, it could have been accomplished by the individual who purchased the figurine, potentially as part of a ritual. Such an explanation would account for the entirely random placement of circular indentations on the surface of the figurine in Figure 54.

It is possible that the dot and the dot-within-circle motifs are actually two separate iconographic entities. This might account for the former's use as a means of depicting hair and highlighting sexual features of the figurines, whereas the latter appears to be have been used primarily in an symbolic nature. If this is indeed the case, both elements have been important Central Asian motifs throughout the history of terracotta figurines.

An interpretation of the objects held in the hands of the Hellenistic figurines is plagued by an inability to precisely determine the nature of those objects. It is commonly believed that the ball-shaped objects were meant to depict fruit, specifically a pomegranate of the Greek goddess Persephone, and that these figurines demonstrated clear Greek influence. Persephone was indeed one of the goddesses commonly represented in the Greek terracotta figurine tradition, however her images were associated exclusively with either her temples or burials of young women. The Central Asian Hellenistic figurines have not been recovered from either context. Additionally, the objects held in the hands of these Central Asian figurines were not always round. In some of the earlier instances, the object was diamond shaped, indicating a possible connection with the spearheads of the nomadic hunters.

Despite the exact item depicted, the existence of Achaemenid figurines holding objects precludes the assumption that this motif was of purely Hellenistic extraction. It is indeed possible that this figurine type evolved in form from early Near Eastern figurines, where women
were depicted supporting one or both of their breasts from below with a cupped hand.

Alternately, the objects held by the Hellenistic figurines might have been included on the Bronze Age or Chalcolithic figurines as painted symbols, as small clay objects would have been delicate and difficult to attach to handmade figurines.

The plant or flower motif represents one such instance in which an originally engraved motif was depicted later as an object held in the hand. Vertical plant motifs were depicted on all of the Bronze Age examples of terracotta figurines analyzed. In these instances, the plant was represented by a vertical, inscribed line, which was further defined by a series of small, accessory lines. This gave the illusion of a plant or leaf. This is the first known occurrence of this motif in Central Asia and might have been associated with a Bronze Age expansion of the role of terracotta figurines to represent agricultural deities. The depiction of this iconographic element was continued during the Hellenistic period, as an actual plant or flower held in the hand of the terracotta figurine. Representations of this plant vary, but are included in several figurines. The function of this symbol is also unknown.

The early Hellenistic Central Asian headdress depiction of elaborately knotted hair was not an indigenous motif. Such hairstyles were also not features of Greek or Near Eastern figurines. The only other known occurrences of this hairstyle are similar depictions on Greek marble statues (Figure 62). The hairstyle was shown only on statues of goddesses, and was used to indicate the woman's status as a divine being. As marble statues, not female terracotta figurines, were the major Greek artistic import to Central Asia, it is likely that they constituted the source of any Hellenistic influence on the indigenous figurine tradition. As such, the hairstyle of the Greek goddess was adopted into the depictions of Central Asian figurines. It is very likely that this indicates that the Central Asians believed that the terracotta figurines
represented their own goddesses. They therefore included in their depictions a marker of divinity which they observed the Greek's deities to possess. The successful adoption of this divine symbol indicates that terracotta figurines remained an important part of Central Asian religions during the Hellenistic period, and that these religions were allowed to practice, thrive, and in so doing, borrow from the Greeks' own symbolic repertoire. Such an occurrence does not indicate that the Greeks were forcing their own beliefs on the local people or that they had any qualms about the practice of indigenous religion.

From this analysis, it appears that the vast majority of Hellenistic Central Asian terracotta figurine features were of historic Central Asian extraction. This indicates a continuity of culture, particularly ritual and religion, across time. Indeed, the internal processes of cultural development and conservatism have frequently been ignored in the study of Central Asian figurines (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 1996: 52). It is possible that indigenous cultural evolution was responsible for every change in the visual form of terracotta figurines across time, including the lack of figurines during the Iron Age gap and their reappearance in the Achaemenid period. Alternately, the usage of Bronze Age motifs could have been resurrected after the Iron Age in an attempt to reclaim a cultural identity after a period of upheaval (Zavyalov, personal communication). However, even if outside influences were at work, the effect of the native culture should not be discounted.
Conclusions

It has been the aim of this thesis to evaluate the extent of Greek ideological and iconographic influence on the indigenous religious traditions of Central Asia. In an attempt to so analyze the nature of this foreign impact, I have thoroughly reviewed the accessible corpus of Central Asian female anthropomorphic terracotta figurines. My examination of these figurines has encompassed the history of their creation and usage in Central Asia, from 6500 BCE through the end of the Hellenistic period in 200 CE. For the purposes of comparison, I have additionally analyzed the female terracotta figurines created and utilized in Greece which were contemporary to those of the Central Asian Hellenistic period.

My research of this corpus has resulted in three primary conclusions. The conclusion which I first reached through my analyses was of the existence of a definite continuity in the terracotta figurine tradition, and as such, the ritual practices of the indigenous Central Asian cultures. Terracotta figurines have been a primary component of Central Asian material culture throughout history. These objects were not only consistently created, but important elements of their form and iconography, such as the circle and dot motif, were preserved across long periods of time. This long term continuity suggests that terracotta figurines performed an important function in Central Asian culture. As these objects were of demonstrated ritual and religious significance, such continuity in the material culture suggests a similar sustained religious function of these figurines in their cultures of origin. It is therefore possible that the terracotta
figurine tradition represented the existence of an ideological and religious continuity in Central Asian culture throughout history.

The creation and usage of terracotta figurines in the religious traditions of Central Asia persisted through time, in spite of certain gaps in the material record. Reasons for these gaps include a cessation of the terracotta figurine tradition, the alteration of the tradition such that the figurines were no longer preserved, and a sampling bias in the archaeological excavations to date. However, regardless of the reason for these gaps, the terracotta figurine tradition was consistently revived in the Central Asian cultural periods which followed the gaps in the archaeological record.

Terracotta figurines also remained a consistent element of Central Asian cultures during periods of migration and foreign influence on the region. As previously mentioned, Central Asia was the site of almost continual cultural contact and migration throughout prehistory and ancient times. Such contact often impacted elements of Central Asian society and material culture, especially in the realm of technological advancement.

However, even during eras of substantial direct foreign impact and the introduction of technological improvements, such as during the Achaemenid and Hellenistic political dominations over Central Asia, the indigenous people continued to create and utilize terracotta figurines in accordance with their own traditions. The perseverance of this native tradition implies that the local ritual and religious practices of Central Asia also remained intact in spite of foreign influences from global religious traditions. It is possible that the figurine tradition, and its accompanying myths, rituals, and religious beliefs, served as a way in which Central Asian peoples could maintain a
sense of cultural identity in the face of almost constant contact and influence from the outside world.

My second conclusion reached as a result of this terracotta figurine analysis is that terracotta figurines represent a unique and important avenue through which to investigate the role and importance of ritual in Central Asian cultures. Excluding written sources, which do not exist in the ancient Central Asian past, there are few types of tangible evidence which document ritual behavior and religious beliefs in ancient cultures. The terracotta figurine tradition represents one of those few elements of material culture which can be utilized to document both the nature of ritual activity in ancient Central Asia and the evolution of those rituals through time.

It has become apparent through this analysis of the terracotta figurine tradition in Central Asia that the primary context in which these objects were utilized was domestic. Indeed, the usage of these figurines almost exclusively in the home persisted in spite of changes in almost all other facets of the figurine tradition, such as the location of figurine production sites and technology of figurine creation, and Central Asian society and economy in general. This domestic context and usage of terracotta figurines was as continuous throughout Central Asian history as the practice of the tradition itself.

Such stability in the usage of terracotta figurines has substantial implications for the role of ritual and religion in Central Asian cultures. It is most likely that the ritual activity associated with terracotta figurines was centered around the home. It is possible that the home served as the ritual and mythological center in Central Asian society. As temples did not play a large role in the religious practice of ancient Central Asians and terracotta figurines represented the primary religious artifacts in the region, it is even
more likely that the domestic context of these objects implied a primary structuring of ritual activity and religious belief around the home.

As the home was the traditional realm of women in ancient cultures, it has been additionally supposed that women were the primary participants in ritual activity in ancient Central Asia. This theory account for the high proportion of female anthropomorphic representations among terracotta figurines. However, it is not possible to accurately determine the role of women in ancient Central Asian societies from the data currently available. Therefore, while such theories concerning gender roles in ritual practice are supported by the results of this thesis, their substantiation requires the collection and evaluation of further archaeological evidence.

The third primary conclusion to result from my analysis of these terracotta figurines is the importance of this tradition to the study of the long term cultural history of Central Asia. Terracotta figurines, along with many other aspects of Central Asian material culture, emerged from the Near Eastern cultural tradition which was brought to Central Asia by the earliest permanent settlers in the region. Over time, however, the material culture of Central Asia diverged from the Iranian tradition and evolved into a form unique to the region. The nature of this new culture, along with the traditions, ideals, and daily practices in encompassed, has not been completely identified. Indeed, many aspects of ancient Central Asian cultures, including the native religion, are still unknown to scholars. As a result, the existence of a tradition in the material record, such as that of terracotta figurines, which has clear associations with daily cultural practices can yield valuable insight into the nature of Central Asian cultures.
Additionally, many scholars have theorized that Central Asia was the site of early religious evolution in the ancient world. It is thought that the founding texts of both the South Asian and Near Eastern religions (the Rg Veda and the Avesta, respectively) were originally created in Central Asia and subsequently were spread to their respective regions. It is additionally possible that the ancient languages of Iran, which replaced Sumerian and are foreign to the region, originated in Central Asia. As terracotta figurines were important elements of religious practice in all the religions of the ancient world, it is additionally possible that the tradition of terracotta figurine creation and use originated in Central Asia. Such a theory could account for the continued importance of terracotta figurines in Central Asia through time. This theory could also explain the resistance of Central Asian ritual and terracotta figurines to influence from foreign cultures.

It is in this area that further research is most required to fully evaluate the issues at hand. However, it is likely that an analysis of the role of the terracotta figurine tradition and the rituals it represented will substantially influence our understanding of these and many other questions concerning the ancient cultures of Central Asia.
References Cited


References Cited


Kohl, P. "The Middle Aeneolithic or Namazga II period", "The Late Aeneolithic or Namazga III period", *Central Asia: Paleolithic Beginnings to the Iron Age*, Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1984. pp. 69, 81, 87, 93, 105-115, 212-216


Miller, N.F. “Agricultural development in western Central Asia in the Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages”, *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany*, 1999. v. 8, pp. 13-19


Appendix:

Catalogue of Figurines

Figures 1 - 63
Chalcolithic Figurines

Figures 1 - 6
Figure 1

Terracotta figurine. Female head and torso, with triangular arms. Chalcolithic, Southern Turkmenia. Front and rear views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 2

Terracotta figurine. Female torso, head, and limbs, with short arms. Chalcolithic, mid 4th millennium BCE, Ilginli-Depe (Turkmenistan). Front, side, and rear views.

Adapted from: Masson, Berezkin, and Solovyeva (1994: 22)
Figure 3

Terracotta figurine. Female torso and enlarged breasts. Chalcolithic, Southern Turkmenia. Front and rear views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 4


Adapted from: Masson, Berezkin, and Solovyeva (1994: 24)
Figure 5

Terracotta figurine. Female torso. Chalcolithic period (Namazga II style), 3300 BCE, Southern Turkmenia. Front, side, and rear views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 6

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, and legs. Chalcolithic period (Namazga III), Southern Turkmenia. Front and rear views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 6 (continued)

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, and legs. Chalcolithic period (Namazga III), Southern Turkmenia. Lower left side view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 6 (continued)

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, and legs. Chalcolithic period (Namazga III), Southern Turkmenia. Lower right side view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Bronze Age Figurines

Figures 7 - 9
Figure 7

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, arms, and triangular base. Bronze Age (Namazga IV), Altyn-depe, Southern Turkmenia. Front and rear views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 8

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, arms, and triangular base. Bronze Age (Namazga IV), Altyn-depe, Southern Turkmenia. Front and side views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 9

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, arms, and triangular base. Bronze Age (Namazga IV), Altyn-depe, Southern Turkmenia. Front, back, and lower back views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Achaemenid Figurines

Figures 10 - 20
Achaemenid Figurines

Figures 10 - 20
Figure 10

Terracotta figurine. Female head (broken at neck); body and arms. Achaemenid period, 4th-3rd century BCE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 11

Terracotta figurine. Female head, upper torso, and arms. Achaemenid period, 4th-3rd century BCE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 12
Terracotta figurine. Female torso, arms, and legs. Achaemenid period, 4th-3rd century BCE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 13

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 14


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 15


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 16

Terracotta figurine. Female torso, arms, and legs (seated). Achaemenid period, 4th-3rd century BCE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 17

Terracotta figurine. Female torso, arms, and legs. Achaemenid period, 4th-3rd century BCE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 18

Terracotta figurine. Female torso, arms, and legs. Achaemenid period, 4th-3rd century BCE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 19


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 20


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Hellenistic Figurines

Figures 21 - 56
Figure 21

Terracotta figurine. Female head, arms, and body. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Head and body front views.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
**Figure 22**

Terracotta figurine. Female head, arms, and upper torso. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 23

Terracotta figurine. Female arms, body, and legs. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 24

Terracotta figurine. Female head and upper torso. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 25

Terracotta figurine. Female head, upper torso, and arms. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 26

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 27

Terracotta figurine. Female head, body, arms, and legs. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 28


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 29

Terracotta figurine. Female head, body, and arms. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 1st century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 30

Terracotta figurine. Female head, body, and arms. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 1st century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 31

Terracotta figurine. Female head, body, and arms. Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE - 1st century CE, Sogdia or Khorezm. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 32


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 33


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 34


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 35

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 36

Terracotta figurine. Female head, arms, body, and feet. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
**Figure 37**

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 38

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
**Figure 39**

Terracotta figurine. Female head, arms, body, and feet. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Front view.

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 40

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female torso and arms. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 41
Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female torso and arms. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
**Figure 42**

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, arms, and legs. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 43

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head with architectural element. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 44

Terracotta figurine. Female head, arms, and body. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 45

Terracotta figurine. Female head, arms, and body. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 46


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 47

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 48

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 49

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
**Figure 50**

Terracotta figurine. (Presumed) Female head. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 51

Terracotta figurine. Female head, arms, and body. Hellenistic period, 1st - 3rd century CE, Sogdia. Two front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 52


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 53


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 54


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 55

Terracotta figurine. Female head, torso, arms, and legs. Hellenistic period, 3rd century CE, Margiana. Front angled and front views (alternate color exposure).

Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Figure 56


Collections of: The State Hermitage Museum
Hellenistic Gold Ornament

Figure 57
Hellenistic Gold Ornament

Figure 57
Figure 57


Adapted from: V. Sarianidi, 1985: 156-157
Greek Figurines and Statue

Figures 58 - 62
Figure 58


Collections of: The British Museum
Figure 58 (continued)


Collections of: The British Museum
Figure 59


Collections of: The British Museum
**Figure 60**


Collections of: The British Museum
Figure 61


Collections of: The British Museum
Figure 62

Marble statue, life size. Female head, torso, arms, and legs. Hellenistic period, Greece. Front view.

Collections of: The British Museum
Map of the Ancient World

Figure 63
Central Asia and Surrounding Regions