

2.2.b.95.9

INDIAN GODS AND GODDESSES

Vol. 1

**The Early Deities from Chalcolithic
to Beginning of Historical Period**

Shantilal Nagar



B.R. Publishing Corporation

(A Division of BRPC (India) Ltd.)

Delhi-110052



1990

V. HUMAN WITH HORNS

There is a difference of opinion as to the sanctity attached to the horns making them divine for deities adorned with such horns. This aspect had its origin, no doubt in primitive animal worship, the horns alone being retained when the animal god assumed human shape and afterwards becoming a badge, as it were, of super-human prowess which might be transformed to any other deity or hero or demon, whether of animal origin or not. The custom, however, was so worldwide that it might have been developed independently in many other countries; and, even as regards India and Mesopotamia.

A copper tablet from Mohenjodaro depicts a human figure with two horns, a tail and holding a bow in his right hand and a roundish object in the left (Pl. 41). In this connection Mackay¹⁶ has observed as follows:-

“The inscription on the reverse of this very interesting tablet is in a better state of preservation than was the case with another tablet published before.¹⁷ It will be seen that the human figure is quite similar, wearing horns or feathers on the head and carrying a bow. A tail is quite clearly represented on the tablet, whereas, though also shown on the earlier found tablet, it is far from clear. Whether this figure represents a hunter, disguised in the skin of some animal, or a deity, half human-half beast, it is difficult to say, but a man-bull is certainly represented in one of the seals and is also portrayed in the round.” (Pl. 40).

There are other instances of horned¹⁸ human figurines in the terracottas too, one such specimen has been defined thus: Pottery once coated with a red slip. The eyes are usual flat, elongated pillets, the mouth an incised strip of clay set in a deep cut. A short necklet, from which four ornaments hang in front, appears to represent two strings of beads. The long scarf round the neck with its two ends apparently fastened by a brooch, hangs so loosely that it must represent¹⁹ some kind of woven material. This figurine, obviously that of a male, wears the horn of a bull. There are no ears and though the figure was evidently carefully made, there is general absence of details. Another human head with the horns of a bull has been described as the hollow mask of human head surmounted by a pair of horns, now badly broken.²⁰ Evidently, it is made in a mould as the back is very roughly finished. Two holes at the edge of this mask below the horns possibly served to fasten or sew it to something.

VI. TIGER-LEOPARD AND RHINOCEROS

Marshall has reported a composite animal form from Mohenjodaro, displayed on a tablet (Vs.-3590) having hind-quarters of a rhinoceros and the fore-quarters of a leopard or a tiger. It also has unicorn's horn and a manger stands before it.²¹

Another composite animal depicted (Seal No. IK 4209; Pl. XCIII-9) has an antelope's head at each end of a body which could be of a cow or of a rhino. This curious beast, the like of which was never seen at Mohenjodaro, indeed existed in the imagination of the people living there and therefore its portrayal had perhaps a magical value.

References

1. Marshall, John, *Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization*, III, Pls. cxvi-29; cxviii-11.
2. Benerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 161.
3. Marshall, John; *op. cit.*, p. 68.
4. *Ibid.*, Pl. XIII-17.
5. Mackay, F.J.H., *op. cit.*, p. 339.
6. *Ibid.*,
7. *Ibid.*, p. 333
8. *Ibid.*, p. 334.
9. Marshall, John, *op. cit.*, I, p. 66
10. Mackay, F.J.H., *Chanhudaro Excavations*, p. 158, Pl. LVI-1.
11. Mackay, F.J.H., *op. cit.*, (*F.E.M.*), pp. 332-333.
12. Marshall, John, *op. cit.*, (*M.I.C.*) I, p. 66, Pl. C-7, 9.
13. *Ibid.*, I, p. 67.
14. *Ibid.*, I, Pl. XIII-24.
15. *Ibid.*, I, Pl. XIII, 25, seal 383.
16. Mackay, F.J.H., *op.cit.*, I, (*F.E.M*) pp. 366-367.
17. Marshall, John; *op. cit.*, Pl. CXVII-16.
18. Mackay, F.J.H., *op. cit.*, (*F.E.M.*), p. 271.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 271, Pl. LXXII-7.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 273, Pl. LXXII-21.
21. Marshall, John, *op. cit.*, (*M.I.C.*), p. 399, Pl. CXVII-16.