CHAPTER IX

Minor Arts

India is one of the most colourful countries of the world. This aspect is remarkably reflected in the beads which have been dug out in profusion from the ruins of ancient cities. Beadmaking was undoubtedly a flourishing industry in ancient India. Stones of various varieties were cut and shaped by proficient artists. Beads have been excavated from the Harappan sites and also from the historic sites. The industry appears to have dwindled sometime after the Gupta period.

The inhabitants of Kausambi used a wide variety of beads. These were made of terracotta, agate, faience carnelian, jasper, ivory, bone, white stone, crystal and other materials. The glass beads are in black, green or red colour. Agate beads of delicately banded variety were very popular. The etched beads are also known from Kausambi.

Beads are cut or shaped in disc, barrel, cylindrical, oval, biconical, square and globular, pear, and tubular shapes. Several unperforated beads, stone chips and pieces have been found at Kausambi. This clearly indicates that beads were manufactured in the city of Kausambi. The excavation at Kausambi have brought to light about 3,000 beads. These include triangular barrel beads
of agate, collared beads, beads with yellow matrix triratna, pear-shaped and toggle beads. These seem to have been quite popular both with the males and females.

Besides these a number of pendants in different material were prepared at Kausambi. The pendants are usually cut into the shapes of moon, dagger, tooth and spear. One etched bead decorated with a chwaja, published by Dr. S.C. Kalia, is very interesting (I).

Human, bird and animal shaped amulets in different material have been found at several places in the Allahabad district. These amulets have been cut with great care. They also reflect the proficiency attained by the contemporary craftsmen. The most popular animals used for amulets are bulls, tortoises, frogs, elephants, fish, squirrel and dog. A crystal head and two miniature human figures in terracotta served as pendants.

The significance of these animal and bird shaped amulets is not known. Some of these are associated with the deities of the Hindu pantheon. Such amulets have been found in Egypt and also in Mesopotamia. Animal shaped amulets have been discovered in several ancient sites of India but in variety and quality Kausambi distinctly ranks superior.

A complete bangle in bluish agate from Kausambi is exhibited in the Allahabad Museum (2). Fragments of bangles made in artificial stuff are also available from Kausambi. Clay beads used by the poor class have been found in profusion from the sites of the Allahabad district.
Some very interesting copper objects have been found in the Allahabad district. They do not belong to any specific group or centre. These were possibly imports from the adjoining foreign countries.

One of the important copper objects from Lachchhagir shows the bust of a male (Ht. 4.5 x 2.5 c.m.) having long moustache twisted at the end. He places his left hand on his waist. A scarf with a pendant in the middle is wrapped around head. A sacred thread also crosses his chest. The figure probably represents a foreigner. The bust belongs to the Kusana period (3).

The bronze figure of a lionheaded female deity (8 x 3 c.m.) seated on a stool or tripod is a unique find. Her legs are lowered and rest on a flat board. Her right hand is lifted, the left holds an animal, possibly a cat. She wears a thick torque and a sari supported by a waistband. Her breasts are heavy. The identity of this goddess is not known. She may represent a Yakshi. From the style it can be concluded that the figure belongs to the Kusana period (4).

Figure of Tara (10.7 x 3.5 c.m.) is another rare find from Kausambi. It can be assigned to 7th-8th century A.D. The goddess stands erect, wears a sari and holds a lotus in her left hand. She probably represents white Tara. The folds of the sari of the deity are reminiscent of the Gupta apparel (5).
A small rectangular piece, much weatherworn, depicts a standing female figure. She has exaggerated hips and short legs. Her hands are lowered and rest on the hip. This piece is on the pattern of the figurine on a gold plaque discovered at Lauriya Naniangarh by Bloch and is datable to 2nd century B.C.

Some featureless nude male figurines have also been discovered at Kausambi (6). Since some of these have holes at the head point, I presume that they had amuletic significance and were worn on the body to ward off the evil. A fish (7) and a taurine (8) capping a pole, part of a toycart, copper figure of a lion, Namilinda symbols and top of a miniature stick containing the figure of a stag, are other interesting finds from the ruins of Kausambi.

A hollow copper object (lt. 7 c.m.) which must have served as a handle of a sword or staff, from Kausambi, is the only known example of its kind in Indian archaeology (9). On the obverse is depicted a female, wearing a close fitting sari. Both of her hands are lowered to the sides. Her headdress is composed of two rolls from which hung a fillet on either side of her face. There is a running horse with a rider on its back on either side of her face. There is also a nagamahra and taurine symbol in the field. The reverse side shows a pole topping a fish. On the left and right side, of the pole there stands a man holding a bow in his hand. Evidently the fish on pole was an object of veneration and the bowmen are guarding it. The symbols on this piece are also found on some of the early Indian cast coins (10). On stylistic
grounds the object can be assigned to the 2nd century B.C.

From Jhusi comes a small copper seal with an exquisitely
carved scene on it (11). On the top surface there is a chaitya
recollecting the early chaitya types of south India. A king is seen
close the chaitya. Perhaps he is going away after making offerin-
gs. In the second compartment below, the king is shown riding a
chariot drawn by horses and proceeding to his palace. It is proba-
bly a Buddhist subject. Curiously enough the site of Jhusi has
not yielded a single Buddhist object so far. It is possible that
the seal was imported to Jhusi from some Buddhist centre. It is
datable to the 2nd century B.C. (Pl. XXXII. F3 III).

An ivory plaque from Jhusi has an added importance. No
ancient ivory plaques were found in North India prior to this
discovery. The plaque, though weathered, shows a couple on the
obverse and a female in profile on the reverse. The female on the
reverse wears a thick torque, a necklace hanging in between her
breasts, a girdle and a jewel (Cudamani) on her forehead (12).

Another plaque in bone from Jhusi is also a rare find. On
its obverse are shown a female and an attenant. On the reverse
is depicted a standing female figure. She was probably touching
her earring with her left hand (13).

A good number of fragments of ringstones datable to the 3rd
century B.C. have been found at Kausambi. They are all artistic
examples of perfect chiselling. On the top surface of a ringstone
fragment there are depicted lizards and a sphinx in clockwise
direction (14). In a second example the inner wall of the stone
is decorated with a honey suckle motif and two birds (one peacock)
on branches and facing one another (15). It is not known whether
there were any female figures on the lost portion. In a third
example, there is a nude female goddess in between the palm
trees (16). In addition to these, there is a fourth example in
which the nude goddess is seen holding the creepers in both of
her hands (17). A fragment of a disc from Jhusi, also assignable
to the 3rd century B.C. shows an unusual decoration on its inner
side. The space has been divided by beaded rows into six compart-
ments. Each one of them is filled with granules (18). (PL.XXXIII.Fig.3)

A mould with the figure of a rhinoceros from Kausambi shows
the animal running in a swift movement (19). Another interesting
object is a round disc decorated with complex honeysuckle motif
(20). The carving of this piece is simply superb and reflects
the high artistry of the Mauryan times. (PL.XXXIII.Fig.1)

A clay bulle depicting the head of some Indo-Greek king (21)
from Kausambi and another from Bhita, showing a female bust (22)
are interesting finds from the Allahabad region (23). Similar
bulles have been found at Sisupalgarh and Kolnapur and they were
used as pendants.

A round bone object, possibly the tip of a ring has a dhavaja
on it (24). Another an oval crystal piece shows two birds, possi-
tly ducks, seated face to face (25). There is also a gem containing the figure of a Greek personage (26). It may be mentioned that such gems have been found in large numbers at Taxila. The gem from Kaushambi is an important one. There are also objects of semi-precious stones cut in the shape of a taurine, tooth of a tiger, dagger, goad, as well as miniature car. The exact use of these articles is not known, but they must have had some totemic or religious significance. It is a well-known fact that symbols played a dominant role in Indian archaeology.

Huen-Inshang, who visited Kaushambi in the 7th century A.D., says that the people of Kaushambi were fond of arts.

This observation of the Chinese traveller is fully corroborated by the artistic objects found in the ruins of the ancient city of Kaushambi round about. The tradition of making quality objects continued from 3rd century B.C. to the 7th century A.D.

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CHAPTER IX

FOOT NOTES


2- Allahabad Museum H.O.R: Mise: object No.3

3- Allahabad Museum H.O.R: Miniature Metal object No.22

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...Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India No.12 (1973), P.49, fig-18.
4- Allahabad Museum M.O.R. Miniature Metal No. 23-
Ibid, P. 48, figs. 17 a & b.

5- Allahabad Museum M.O.R. Miniature Metal object No. 42
Ibid, P. 49.

6- Allahabad Museum M.O.R. Miniature Metal object Nos. 1 & 2
Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India-
No. 12, (1973), P. 49, figs. 19 and 20.

7- Allahabad Museum M.O.R. Miniature Metal object No. 29
Ibid, P. 50, fig. 23.

8- Allahabad Museum M.O.R. Miniature Metal object No. 44.

9- Allahabad Museum M.O.R. Miniature Metal object No. 41-
Also see, Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of
Western India, No. 12 (1973), P. 51, figs. 25 a & b.


12- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Ivory objects-No. 14-See;
Kala J. C., some Interesting objects in the Allahabad
Museum - bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum Western
India, No. 12, (1973), P. 52, Figs. 26 a & b.

13- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Ivory objects-No. 15-Ibid,
figs. 27 a & b.
14- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Soft stone object. No. 22
15- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Soft stone object. No. 26
16- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Soft stone object. No. 25
17- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Soft stone object. No. 23
See- Journal of Indian Museums Vol. XIV-XVI, 1958-60
P.8, Pl. 5 b.

19- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Soft stone object No. 16
20- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Soft stone object No. 12.
23- From the ancient site of Jhusi also a clay bulle containing the bust of some Indo-Greek King has been discovered.
Allahabad Museum seals and sealings Reg. No. 513.

24- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Misc. objects- No. 15.
26- Allahabad Museum M.O.R.- Misc. objects- No. 18.