

RESEARCH TOPIC: A STUDY OF POTTERY AS THE SYMBOL OF CRAFT AND TRADE COMMODITY FROM 200 BC TO 300 AD

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Abstract: In this paper, I have study and analyze the different varieties of pottery which belonged to the period of 200 BC to 300 AD. I have focused the pottery which itself speak as a symbol of craft and trade article.

Sources: For reconstructing the pottery of our area of study, there exists a large number of contemporary and near contemporary literary sources as well as archaeological findings along with both primary and secondary sources. We have reports of ASI, journals like *puravattava* and *Ancient India*. They also mention the foreign pottery which was found in India show the cultural and economic contacts between India and the western world. We have also found some references in the literary sources such as *The Periplus of Erythean Sea*, *Jatakas*, *Mahavastu*, *Milindapanho*, and *inscriptions* which give valuable information about the ceramic industry.

Pottery is one of the oldest art and craft of people in the history of civilization. It was the symbol of culture. It was used for the storage of water and grains. Clay, water and wood were used for making pottery. It was in the earlier stages of human society the pottery were made by hand and later it was Egyptians who first started developed pottery on wheels. In India it was during the stage of Neolithic, the people used to made both handmade and wheel-thrown pottery and continued till present*. The class of potters who were organized into the guilds of potters known as *Kularikas* and were specialized in the manufacturing of their pottery and they were also helped by labourers†. The period 200 BC to 300 AD was known for the development of potter's

*. Gurcharan Singh, *Pottery in India*, Vikas publishing House, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 01, 13, 14, 17, 24.

†. Kameshwar Prasad, *Cities, Crafts and Commerce under the Kushanas*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1984, p.105.

crafts. *Milindapanho* mentions the broken pottery which were obtained from the grounds[‡]. *Mahavastu* also informs us about a potter who lived in the village named Verudinga whose name was Ghatikar[§], it further mentions the workshop where pottery were manufactured by potters^{**}. *Jatakas* also mentioned the potman^{††} There is also a reference in the Nasik cave inscription that the money was invested by the guild of potters for the aesthetic class and they were called *Kularikas*^{‡‡}.

Pottery from Achhithra site. Achhithra site is located in barrellie district of up. The stratum IV and vii belonged our area of study. Stratum vii belonged to 2nd century BC and Ist century AD. It was in this stratum we find grey pottery with heavy wares and sometimes with slip were found not decorated. This stratum indicates that this was the last phase of grey color pottery culture in the site of Achhithra. The grey wares were not large in size and shape. It was at the lower part of vessel black slip was commonly found. A storage jar which has blackish in color with buff surface and distinctive jar with a pronounced lip and a deeply grooved neck^{§§}. The potscard first time occurs in this stratum^{***}. Cooking pans with loop handles and small lug ears on their rims were found. Jars of gritty fabric with no well- defined neck were found. Flat horizontal rim was the feature of the small jars. A bellied jar with a small bottle neck and rounded base is a type of rare occurrence^{†††}. It was in the stratum of VI probably belonged to the Kushana period not earlier than than 4th century A.D. It was in this stratum we find carinated and waisted jars of rare occurances. The basic features of bowls we find in this period nearby flat base, minimum diameter gradually increasing upwards to an in- turned rim. This type of pottery we find in Maholi near Muttra belonged to kushana period^{†††}. The lug-handles handles were found on rims of the shallow troughs. Jars of smaller types generally with flat horizontal rims sometimes with grooves immediately below were found. Bottle- necked jars with flaring lip as well as globular

[‡]. *The Question of King Milindapanho*, tr. T.W.Rhys Davids, Part-I, Vol.XXXV, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1890, p.53.

[§]. *The Mahavastu*, tr. J.J.Jones, Vol. I, London, 1949, p.267.

^{**}. *Ibid*, pp.275-76.

^{††}. *The Jataka*, tr. by Robert Chalmers, Vol.I, Cambridge, 1895, p.120.

^{‡‡}. *Epigraphy Indica*, ed. by E.Hultzsch, Vol.viii, p.89.

^{§§}. A. Ghosh and K.C. Panigrahi, *The Pottery of Achchhatra*, District Bareilly, *Ancient India- Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 1946, p.45.

^{***}. *Ibid*.

^{†††}. *Ibid*.

^{†††}. A. Ghosh and K.C. Panigrahi, *The Pottery of Achchhatra*, 46.

body with rounded base and vertical neck were also found^{§§§}. Sherds of pottery were marked by stamps, designs and symbols such as naga symbol, svastika and twin fish^{****}.

Pottery from Arkimedu site: It is one of the main trading station of the Romans in the Ist and 2nd century AD. It was excavated in 1945. It holds important position in the history of economic relations of India with outside world^{††††}. In this site we found arretine ware (red glazed ware). It belonged to the class of ware known as terra sigillata (Stamped pottery). This kind of pottery basically belonged to Eastern Mediterreian, which emerged probably in the 2nd century BC^{‡‡‡‡}. Another foreign pottery which was found in Arkimedu was amphorae sherds were imported from the Medetterrian world were of a pink fabric with yellow slip^{§§§§}. Another imported pottery from the Medetterrian world was Rouletted black wares found in all stratas of Arkimedu were smooth, brittle and well-burnt and almost metallic ring. This rouletted black ware of burned-grey, grayish pink black slip inside and outside. In some cases, it was highly polished and interior surface was often burnished while its exterior received great attention^{*****}. Rouletted wares have also been found at Nasik, Sispulgarh, Andhra^{†††††}. So, we found the foreign pottery in South-India which Romans exported to India in terms of trade^{‡‡‡‡‡}.

Local pottery: In Arkimedu, we have found local pottery made by local potters. It was turned on wheel. We have storage-jars, ring- wells, portable ovens and conical jars. The materials used for the pottery were husk, grit, mica, straw. Slips were fairly common. The fabric was usually clay with sand. The colors of pottery were pink, grayish red, grayish black. The pottery was plain and utilitarian character. The small percentage of pottery were subjected to inverted firing^{§§§§§}.

§§§. *Ibid.*

****. *Ibid.*

††††. R.E.M. Wheeler, Arikamedu: An Indo-Roman trading station on the east coast of India, *Ancient India-Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No.02, July 1946, p.17.

‡‡‡‡. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

§§§§. *Ibid.*, p.41; see also, The importing of Medetterrian pottery also mentioned by the Periplus; *The Periplus of Erythean Sea*, tr. by Lionel Casson, Princeton University press, New Jersey, 1989,p.228.

*****. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

†††††. Mortimer Wheeler, *Rome Behind The imperial frontiers*, London, 1954, pp.151.

‡‡‡‡‡. Gurcharan Singh, *Pottery in India*, p.17.

§§§§§. Gurcharan Singh, *Pottery in India*, pp. 49-50.

Pottery from Gandhar: In India art of wine cups are depicted in profusion. They appear in shunga, satvahana and kushana art^{*****}. It was in the region of Gandhar we find pottery with different fashions belonged our area of study is given below:

Goblets. Goblets were found in the Gandhar region belonged to the Parthian levels. They were used them as wine cups. They have carinated bodies, deeply flared mouths, horizontal flutings and pedestal bases. They resembled with Greek goblet holmose^{†††††}.

Drinking horn: The drinking horn has a wide mouth with the sides tapering towards the bottom were used for drinking purpose. Romans borrowed this art from Greeks^{†††††}.

Mugs. Mug has Hellenistic origin. It is cylindrical in shape with multi-ribbed exterior. It has a big handle luted to the brim of the rim and profile. The base is flat. It is made of some metals. The similar types of mugs were found in Kashmir^{§§§§§}.

Amphorae. It has a vertical neck, globular body and pedestal base. It is also provided with two handles. They are luted to rim and body. It was used to keep oil, honey and especially wine^{*****}.

Surahi. They have long neck, globular body and flat base. Indian imitated them from Romans. They were used to keep water and wine. They were found in the western Indian and Deccan^{†††††}. **Spouted vessels.** They have vertical neck, globular body, pedestal base or ring base. They were found in the sculptures of Baharuth, Amravati and Nagarjunakonda similarly as were found in Gandhar^{†††††}.

Pottery from Alagankulam: It was an Indo-Roman trading station or port. It was situated on the mouth of the Vaigai river^{§§§§§}. Pottery was found in this site sherds of arretine ware, amphorae

*****.K. Krishna Murthy, The Domestic Art Delineated in the Gandhara Reliefs, *Purattava- Bulletin of the India Archaeological Society*, No. 07, 1974, p.98.

†††††. *Ibid.*

†††††. *Ibid.*

§§§§§. *Ibid.*

*****. K. Krishna Murthy, The Domestic Art Delineated in the Gandhara Reliefs, p.98 ; see also, Mortimer Wheeler, *Rome Behind The imperial frontiers*, London, 1954, pp.148-49.

†††††. *Purattava*, No.7, p.99

†††††. *Ibid.*

§§§§§. K.S. Ramachandran, Alagankulam an Indo-Roman Port: A Critique, *Puravattava-Bulletin of Archaeological Society of India*, No.27, 1996-97, p.19.

pieces and sherds of Tamil-Brahmi origin^{*****}. Begley argues that amphorae were imported from Rome but the rouletted ware made in India as the local craftsmen learnt from Roman craftsmen who had settled in Arkimedu^{††††††††}.

Pottery from Mathura: Mathura was important trade route linking Taxila and Bharukachcha passed via Mathura. Marthura was important settlement for Kushanas in India^{††††††††}. In many kushan sites of Mathura such as saur, Arha, jabra, Sonai, Gotha, Anama we found Red color pottery, grey ware sherds with thick fabric along the shunga period bowls with incurved rim^{§§§§§§§§}.

Pottery from Junnar: It was one of the important site belonged to the Satvahana period located in the district of Pune^{*****}. Roman red pottery polished ware, Black ware which has green glazed on its surface and Small quantities of green glazed pottery fragments were found^{††††††††}. Green glazed pottery might have been imported from Persian-Gulf^{††††††††}.

Pottery from Dhannchinchani: It was also one of the main site belonged to the Satvahana period. Black and red color pottery mainly dishes, bowls, drinking cups were found. Fine-grained mica could be seen in the fine variety of the Black and red ware could have been brought from Northern India^{§§§§§§§§}.

Pottery from Tilpi: It is located in the state of West-Bengal belonged to 2nd BC to 3rd century AD. Red wares including dull-red, buff-red and ill-fired were found. Grey wares including dark-grey and grey with red patches are common varieties. Black slipped wares and black and red wares were also found there. Graffiti mark like Brahmi ka was found on the pottery sherds^{*****}.

***** . *Ibid*, pp.20-21.

†††††††† . *Ibid*, p. 22.

†††††††† . Vinay Kumar Gupta, Archaeological Explorations in trans-Yamuna region of Mathura, *Puravattava-Bulletin of Archaeological Society of India*, No.43, 2013, p.216.

§§§§§§§§ . *Ibid*, pp.218-229.

***** . *Indian Archaeology*, 2006-07, A Review, published by director of ASI, New Delhi, 2016, pp.06-07.

†††††††† . *Indian Archaeology*, 2006-07, A Review, published by director of ASI, New Delhi, 2016, p.43.

†††††††† . *Ibid*, p.43.

†††††††† . *Ibid*.

§§§§§§§§ . *Ibid*, pp.51-52.

***** . *Ibid*, pp.135-136.

Pottery from Ambar site: Ambar site is located in the state of Assam. Ceramic industry was well developed and dominated in this area. The pottery which were found in this site was red ware, buff-ware and few grey-ware. Both handmade and wheel made pottery were found there. The texture of the pottery varies from fine to coarse and the fabrics varies from medium to thick. Besides, arretine ware and roulette ware were found in this site^{††††††††††}.

Pottery from Tibba Name Shah: It is located in the state of Jammu and Kashmir falls in the Jammu district. Period 3rd of this site belonged to the Kushan period. The red ware pottery were recovered from this this site included vases, bowls, pots, storage-jars, lids, dishes etc^{††††††††††}. These are distinguished by stamped designs and geometrical patterns with black painting on the surface^{§§§§§§§§§§}.

Pottery from Bangarh: Period 3rd of this site belonged to the Shunga-Satvahana phase. Red ware, grey ware fragments of black and red ware pottery were noticed in this period. The important shapes are bowls, dishes, vases, miniature pots etc were recovered from this site^{*****}.

Pottery from Azhakankulam. It was a Pandya port, a village at the mouth of Vaigai river. Amphora ware, rouletted ware along with the red ware with Tamil-Brahmi letters have been reported from this site^{††††††††††}.

Pottery from Vasavasamudram. It is a small village probably on the erstwhile mouth of the Palar river in the Kanchipuram district. The archaeological findings which have been reported from this site were amphorae, rouletted ware, red ware, red and black slipped wares which suggested the Indian links with the Medeterrian world^{††††††††††}.

Conclusion. At last we can conclude that we find pottery of varied shape, colors, texture, designs in our area of study. We find the extent of Indo-Greek, Sakas, Parthians, Satvahnas and shunga-Kushanas rule and diversity of cultures through the study of pottery. The pottery of this period

^{††††††††††}. *Indian Archaeology*, 2008-09- A Review, published by director of ASI, New Delhi, 2015, p.17.

^{††††††††††}. *Ibid*, pp.68-69.

^{§§§§§§§§§§}. *Ibid*.

^{*****}. *Ibid.*, p.88.

^{††††††††††}. Rajan Gurukkal, *Rethinking Classical Indo-Roman trade; Political economy of Eastern Medeterrian Exchange relations*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p.34.

^{††††††††††}. *Ibid*.

showed the art and craft development along with the richness of the Cultures and economic prosperity of People. The pottery also showed the India trade relations with other countries like Rome, Iran and South-East Asian countries and the aesthetic taste of the elite Indian people who used amphora for wine.