

THIN SECTIONED RED WARE BOWLS — THE SO-CALLED 'FASHION WARE'

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The thin sectioned red ware bowls (Pls. I-II) were first found in some sizeable numbers at Damkot near Chakdara (District Dīr). Impressed by the fine quality of their painted designs and delicate fabric, the excavator referred to them as 'Fashion ware' suggesting apparently that the bowls were meant not so much for ordinary day to day use as objects of decoration.

Compared to the rough and rustic sherds found everywhere in great numbers on archaeological sites the red ware bowls would appear to be the prize pieces of the pottery industry and must therefore be considered as indicative of a fashion. Commenting upon the distinctive features of the red ware bowls, the excavation report of Damkot says "the hall-mark of this period (Period II dated from 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D.) is the delicate bowl having extremely thin profile of the sides, almost fringing upon 'egg shell' thickness. It was most probably not used as crockery and as such calls for further discussion. The ware is fast wheel made. The excellence and homogeneity of the paste selected for these specimens is abundantly demonstrated by the extremely thin walls adroitly obtained. Visibly the clay is of very small particle size with very little mica contents. Only a few sherds exhibit mottled surface resulting from illfiring. Generally the oxidation is complete. There is no trace of burnishing and the surface treatment consists of a thin coating of slip of which the colour ranges from deep red to pinkish and chocolate. ...Majority of the sherds is painted in black on red before firing...The motifs include peacock in a variety of forms, horizontal bands, sun flower, concentric circles, dots, oblique strokes alternating with dots, stylised floral designs, sigma and a curious stepped motif.

The sherds showing peacock are larger in number. The painted designs/patterns appear to be formal rather than natural. The most usual form is that of a small bowl with convex sides and slightly out turned rim. It is invariably provided with a hollow pedestal base".

Our survey of archaeological sites in Bājaur has yielded much greater number of these sherds as compared to those found at Damkot. In view of these recent discoveries it would be desirable to have a fresh look at the problem.

The Bājaur material shows five principal varieties.

These are as follow:

1. Flat based.
2. Ring based.
3. Handled or lugged.
4. Carinated.
5. Pedestal based.

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1. *Flat based variety:*

This variety is found in medium size showing convex sides, mild carination near the base and slightly out curved rims. Both painted and plain examples can be seen. The upper half of the vessel is often burnished and reserved for decoration. It may merely be a chance but it is worth noting that the number of sherds in this variety is comparatively smaller. A parallel example from Damkot is Fig. 27, No. 186 (Damkot Excavation Report).

2. *Ring based variety:*

This variety, represented by a much greater number of sherds, is characterised by convex sided bowls with slightly out curved rim, round base and concave neck. The size is comparatively smaller but the upper half as usual is reserved for painted designs. Some of the bowls in this variety are very small and may be called the 'miniature bowls'. Parallel examples from Damkot are Fig. 27, Nos. 187 and 194.

3. *Handled or lugged variety:*

Numerically this variety is represented by a very few sherds but quality wise the lugged bowls are much superior to other types. Their function is more like that of a 'jug'. They are characterised by a hemispherical shape of the lower body, internally receding concave neck and slightly out curved rim. The middle portion invariably shows a group of black horizontal bands with intervening bands of blobs or notches. The upper half of the bowls is richly decorated. This variety has come to light for the first time in Bājaur.

4. *Carinated Bowls*

Carinated bowls are the most delicate and show the thinnest section profile in the whole series of the red ware bowls. Numerically they are quite plentiful and were found on almost all the sites which yielded 'Fashion Ware Sherds'. They are characterised by small size, convex sides, straight rim and mild carination above the round base. This variety shows resemblance with Damkot (Fig. 27, Nos. 187, 88).

5. *Pedestalled bowls.*

In our collection the pedestalled bowls are represented by only three specimens. Of these two come from Dang-Ḥiṣār Māmūnd and one from Dang-Ḥiṣār Dheri. Quality wise however these are also very fine and compare well with the lugged variety.

Decoration

The decoration is executed in black on red. Most often the upper half of the bowls show painted designs whereas the lower half is plain. No decorative design is specified to any one particular type or shape. The main motifs are floral, faunal and geometric in nature, which are common to all the varieties. Faunal designs however do not occur on the flat based variety (variety I). But this may be due to the limited number of sherds at our disposal. It is not unlikely that a more intensive survey may change the position in future. The decoration is applied before firing and is evenly spread over the middle portion of the body. The colour is so fast that some of the sherds, even after the lapse of several centuries, still give a fresh look. The entire decorative scheme is aimed at producing something pleasing to the eyes. This has been achieved by the application of rich colour, burnishing and proportionate distribution of floral, faunal and geometrical designs. These are divided into the following categories.

1. FAUNAL

A. *Human figures*: The human figures, wearing upper garment/drapery covering the shoulders, are shown in profile facing to the right. The drapery represents very delicate folds in a descending manner from both shoulders. The eyes are ovate with a dot in the centre and the eye brow is represented by a single line. The figures, found both in seated and standing positions, usually have long curly hair falling on shoulders and hold flower in their outstretched right hands. They show slightly incurved nose and ridged eye brows.

B. *Antelope*: Antelope is represented by only one example and shows bent forelegs, beard, body hatched by vertical wavy lines. It is shown in outline and is looking behind. It also shows straight spiral horns, small ears and a short tail. The neck portion is hatched by oblique strokes whereas the eyes are circular in shape.

C. *Mountain goat*: Also shown in outline and running position. the mountain goat has straight spiral horns, ovate eyes, and small ears. The hind quarters are separated from the rest of the body by two semi circular lines. It shows slightly curved beard and a few strokes on the neck. Another example also shown in outlines is beardless.

D. *Bull*: The bull shows an elongated body and a prominent hump. The upper portion of the head and the horns make a crescent shape, below which are small ears. The whole body is shown by dotted lines, vertical strokes and double lines. Similar double lines can be seen marking the legs. The tail is missing. It has round eyes with a dot in centre.

E. *Peacock*: Peacock was probably the most favourite of the potters of Bājaur and shows the following varieties:

- i. Peacock with three erect tufts and a long tail and beautiful body.
- ii. Stylised peacock in outline with dots in the middle portion of the body and elongated tail.
- iii. With crest turned to the back.
- iv. Shown in seated position perhaps laying eggs.

F. *Pigeon*: Pigeon with dotted body is shown in outline.

G. *Parrot*: Parrot is shown in outline.

H. *Dragon*: Very dim and stylised.

I. *Wall Lizard*: Very dim and stylised.

J. *Flying bird*: Unidentified.

2. FLORAL DESIGNS

Floral designs comprise mainly of leaves, plant in flower-pot and flowers. These are as follows:

A-*Leaves*:

The following varieties have been noted:

1. Sagittate (arrow head) pipal leaf with acuminate (narrowing at the top) apex, parallel venation, uncostate (Single midrib) and even margin.

2. Cordat (heart shaped) pipal leaf with undulating margin, uncostate, and reticulate (conspicuous network of veins branching from the midrib) dentate margin.
3. Stylised leaf of wine with oblong shape and wavy margin and elongated leaf stalk.
4. Poppy like leaf with dentate margin, ovate in shape and stalkless.
5. The foiled leaf with lower leaves rounded and upper leaf lobed and blunt apex.
6. Stylised rectangular leaf of pipal with undulating stalk.
7. Wheat spike.

B-Plant in flower pot:

1. With two flanking leaves and two flowers with a central young flower can be seen a plant (unidentified) in a flower-pot.
2. Flowers arranged in a flower pot.

C-Flower:

1. Sun flower with two inner circles having 18 petals spreading from the second circle and reaching the wavy margin.
2. Sun flower with single circle in the middle and radiating petals of the same as above.
3. Lotus flower with small hollow circle in the centre and intermingled petals making undulating margin.
4. some flowers with three concentric circles and petals spreading from the central circle and reaching the even margin.
5. Rosettes-quaterfoiled with dots within each foil.
6. Cup shaped young sun flower with prominent stalk.
7. Femal flower of cyathium with fused carpels making a round pistal topped by tri carpelary with long stalk. This flower is closely in resemblance with Damkot Fig. 27. No. 190.

3. GEOMETRIC DESIGNS

A. *Lines.*

- i. Wavy lines.
- ii. Zigzag lines.
- iii. Concentric circle.

B. *Triangles.*

- i. Hatched.
- ii. Inverted Hatch.
- iii. Elongated with coiled terminals.

- C. *Bands.*
- i. Horizontal concentric.
 - ii. Vertical.
 - iii. Bands of blobs.
 - iv. Bands of notches.
- D. *Columns.*
- i. Vertical Hatched.
 - ii. Hatched by wavy lines.
 - iii. Hatched by crisscross pattern.
- E. *Tiny dots enclosed by circles.*
- F. *Chain.*
1. Horizontal chain pattern.
 2. Vertical chain enclosed by bands.
- G. *Mono winged pattern.*
- H. *Criss Cross pattern.*

DATING

The Bājaur material is numerically superior to that of Damkot and shows the entire range of the 'Fashion Ware' in plain as well as painted varieties. Since the sherds under discussion were picked up from the surface with out conducting proper excavations it is difficult to put them in firm chronological framework, without invoking the help of external evidence. At Damkot the thin sectioned red ware bowls occur in period II, as referred to above, datable from 1st Century B.C. to 1st Century A.D. The Bājaur material is almost exactly the same except that it has a broader range and shows more varieties. On the basis of our present information one may suggest that Bājaur was the home of the 'Fashion Ware' from where it spread to different directions, particularly on the trade routes. Damkot, situated on the river crossing, must have been a halting station for caravans carrying camel loads of earthen crockery meant to be transported to Swāt, Mālākand and Mardān-Chārsadda plains. Some evidence of this ware was found by Wheeler during his excavation at BālāḤiṣār. Wheeler's 2nd century A.D. date suggests either late arrival or continuation of this pottery tradition for some centuries.

BĀJAUR: FREQUENCY CHART OF THE THIN SECTIONED
REDWARE BOWLS

S. No.	The Site name	Collected pot sherds
1.	Dang-Ḥiṣār Māmūnd	50
2.	Dang-Ḥiṣār Dherai	38
3.	Ghozāno Sar	13
4.	Jarando Kamar	55
5.	Serai	80
6.	<u>Shinkote</u> Māmūnd	45
7.	<u>Shinkote</u> Māndal	10
8.	Juragai	35
9.	Pātak	13
10.	Tapur	5
11.	Tangai	20
12.	Tarika	3
13.	Tarakai Khwar	25
G. Total:		292

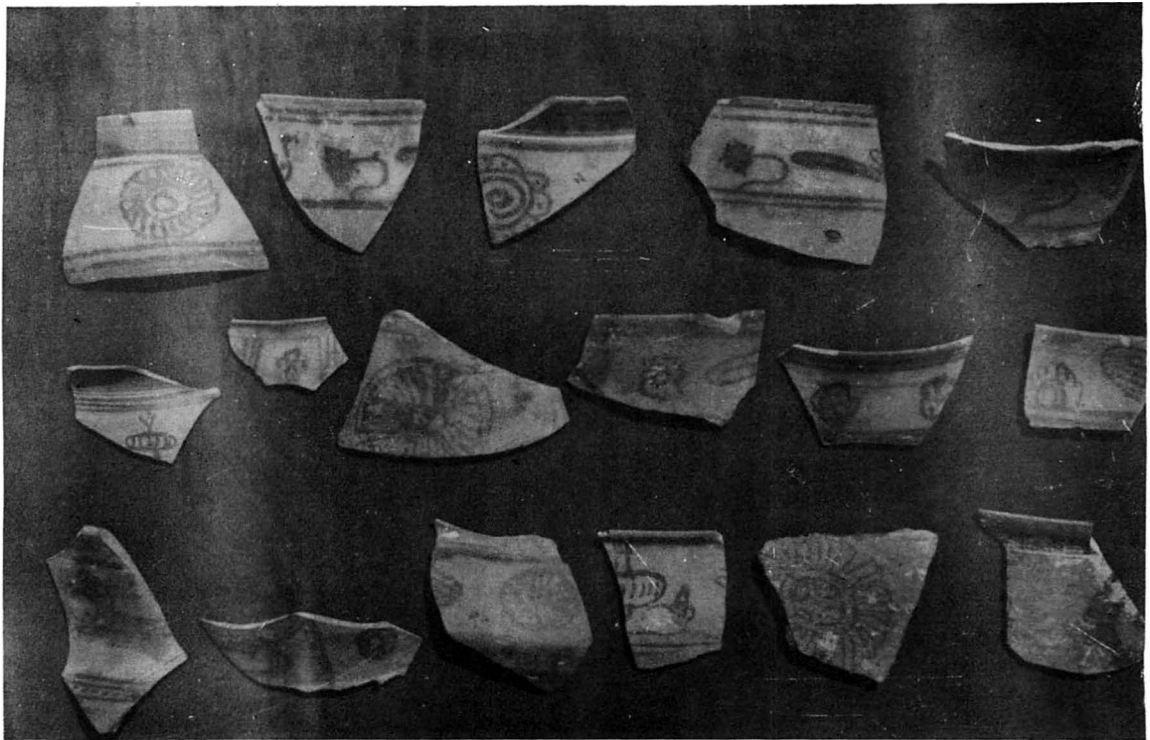


Pl. Ia



Pl. Ib

Bājaur: Showing faunal designs



Pl. IIa



Pl. IIb

Bājaur: Showing floral designs