

Kondapur Series

No. 1.

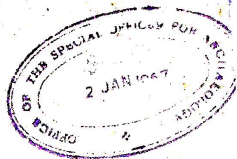
**INSCRIBED AND RIVETED POTTERY
FROM KONDAPUR**

(Cir. 200 B.C.—Cir. 200 A.D.)

BY

KHWAJA MUHAMMAD AHMAD, M.A., LL.B.,

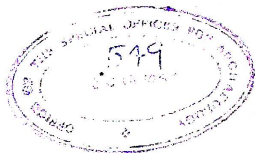
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Inscribed and Riveted Pottery from Kondapur Excavations

BY

KHWAJA MUHAMMAD AHMAD, M.A., LL.B.,
DIRECTOR OF ARCHÆOLOGOY.

EXCAVATIONS of an important nature have been conducted by me at Kondapur (Lat. $17^{\circ}-33'$, Long. $78^{\circ}-1'$) a village in Kalabgur Taluq, Sangareddy District of Hyderabad State.

The finds unearthed at this place belong to a period circa 300 B.C. to circa 300 A.D. The date has been fixed with the help of coins which consist of 13 punch-marked, about 5000 Andhra, 40 of Western Satraps, two of Mahisa Dynasty and 43 terra-cotta imitations of Roman coins belonging to first century A.D. Besides, a large number of terra-cotta figurines belonging to the Buddhist cult and structural remains of Chaitya Halls, Viharas, Cells and Stupas have been exposed. The site has also furnished us with valuable evidence of the existence of a highly developed Ceramic industry. The specimens recovered at Kondapur have opened new vistas in the history of Indian pottery and have supplied us with a comprehensive idea of the methods, techniques, ingredients and slips of the industry that flourished in the Hyderabad State during the Andhra period.

The 'Periplus' written in the last quarter of the 1st century after Christ mentions that porcelain was exported from the Port of Bargaza (modern Bharoach) which was at that time under the Andhras. As it is generally believed that porcelain was manufactured in ancient times only in China, the statement of the 'Periplus' was considered to mean that the porcelain objects passed through Peninsular India during the course of transit from China to Roman Empire. But as we have discovered at this site Buddhist figurines made of Kaolin, a pure white clay of which porcelain is made, the doubts which surrounded the statement of the Periplus have been dispelled. Besides Kaolin other clays have also been used. A variety highly lavigated, reddish in colour, seems to have been preferred for making thin pottery. Pots that were meant for common use were made of clay consisting of a considerable proportion of sand. Generally these have not been coated with a slip.

Even the pottery which was meant for common use was made of a good quality of clay that turned pink or light red in colour during the course of firing. The slip most commonly used on pottery is dark red and light red. In some cases it is cream coloured. It varies very much in thickness, from a mere wash through which the colour of the paste shows clearly to quite a thick layer which has in several cases peeled off.

The slip used is generally of red oxide. In some cases it had been darkened to a chocolate tint obtained by mixing a little manganese with the red oxide which renders the jars rather water proof. This paint has been applied mostly on larger jars meant for storage.

Some pieces have been painted black on the inside. The pigment is probably a manganiferous hæmatite which burns a warm or purplish black according to the amount of iron contained in it.

The designs on the pottery represent enormous varieties. The painted pottery generally shows geometric designs of check pattern. Pottery which is not coated with a slip bears a great variety of designs. The religious variety has a single or a double trident stamped on it. The trident was a religious symbol of the Buddhists and represents the Buddha, the Dharma or the Law and the Sangha or the order of the Monks. Some of the vessels have floral devices stamped upon them. These devices have been at a later age copied in shaping the capitals of pillars of the caves and decorating them.

The vessels which were made in moulds have a different kind of ornamentation. Some of them have a device of semi-lotus repeated along the neck or waist while others have flutings below the neck of the vessel running towards the base where they terminate in a small medallion.

Fragments of five inscribed vessels have been discovered and they have been described below :—

JAR NO. I.

(PLATE I a, VI)

Fragments of this big storage jar (No. KR/ 3097) were discovered in Site H, Block 20, at a depth of $3\frac{1}{2}'$ in 1357 F. It is characterized by thick ware, and a heavy rolled rim. It has a height of $3' 2''$ and the diameter of the rim on the outside is $21.5''$. The thickness of the wall is about $.7''$. The maximum circumference at the bulged portion is $8' 8''$. The clay is extremely soft grained but mixed with a certain portion of sand. The exterior is *red with gray core*, treated with bright red slip on the outside which has disappeared at several places. The inscription consists of 4 letters inscribed nearly at right angles to each other below the rim on the outside, the height of the letters being between $2''$ and $3''$. The letters appear to have been incised after the vessel was taken out of the oven. The inscription has been read as follows :—

TEXT

(PLATE I b)

TRANSLITERATION

Mo—Cha—ka—sa

TRANSLATION.

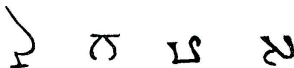
OF MOCHAKA.

JAR NO. 2.

(PLATE II *a* & VII)

Fragments of this big storage jar (No. KR/3098) were discovered in Site H, Block 20, depth 6½'. It is much the same as the above jar but slightly smaller in size. Its height is 3' and the diameter on the outside of the rim 2' 2". The thickness of the wall is about 8". The greatest circumference at the bulged portion is 8' 5". The clay is extremely soft grained and highly lavigated but mixed with certain proportion of sand. It is coated with bright red slip which has gone off mostly towards the top and the bottom. The inscription consists of four letters inscribed at nearly right angles to each other below the rim on the outside at a distance of 4" below the ridge of the rim, the height of the letters being between 3" and 4". The letters appear to have been incised with a pointed instrument after the vessel was taken off the oven. It has three successive pieces of iron joints riveted in a line below the letter (sa) at a distance of 26" from the neck. It has a pale brown slip on the interior. The inscription has been read as follows:—

TEXT

(PLATE II *b*)

TRANSLITERATION

Ni—go—ha—sa

TRANSLATION

OF NIGOHA.

JAR NO. 3.

(PLATE III *a* & VIII *b*)

A fragment of a jar (KR/3003) was discovered in Site H, Block 20, at a depth of 3½', in 1357 F., covering a portion of rim, neck, and the lower side. It has a line of ornamentation made by thumb-impression just under the neck. The thumb was covered with a piece of cloth while impressions were made, is evident from the marks of the texture to be noticed in the impressions. Fortunately, it preserves the whole of the inscription in which all the letters have been inscribed together within a range of 4" which is the total length of the sherd. From this fragment it is evident that the diameter of the rim on the outside was 2' 4½", it is the biggest inscribed jar yet discovered at Kondapur. The jar has been made of fine and well lavigated clay with a certain amount of sand mixed in it, and it has been coated with bright brown slip

on the inside and the outside. The letters appear to have been marked with a hard fibre brush before being kiln-fired. The marks of the fibre being visible in grooves of the letters. The inscription has been read as follows :—

TEXT

(PLATE III *a* & VIII *b*)


TRANSLITERATION

Pa—ma—ka—sa

TRANSLATION.

OF PAMAKA.

JAR NO. 4.

(PLATE III *b* & VIII *c*)

A fragment (No. KR/3195) which belonged to the rim of a jar was discovered in Site H, Block 20, at a depth of $3\frac{1}{2}$ ', in 1357 F., from which it appears that the circumference of the bulged portion must have had a diameter of at least $27\frac{1}{2}$ ". The diameter of the rim on the outside is 25". The thickness of the wall is about .5". It is painted with red slip on the outside and brown colour inside. The remaining portion of the jar is missing. Two Brahmi letters have been inscribed at some distance from one another. They are deeply cut with a sharp instrument. It might have been used for storing Sesame according to the tentative reading of it. It has thick and round roll rim, and bulging sides. The reading of the inscription is as follows :—

TEXT

(PLATE III *b* & VIII *c*)


TRANSLITERATION

Ti—la

TRANSLATION.

SESAME.

VESSEL NO. 5.

(PLATE IV *a* & VIII *a*)

This is a fragment of a dish (No. KR/1783) with an inverted beaked rim and rounded sides and probably with a flat base, the curvilinear walls being about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in height, and the base had a diameter of 9" while the diameter of the bulged portion of the wall

from outside is 10½". The clay is extremely close grained and highly lavigated without any mixture of sand. The thickness of the wall is about '1" at the base corner and '2" at the bulged portion. The slip on the exterior and the interior is brown. It appears to be of Roman manufacture.

TEXT

(PLATE IV *a* & VIII *a*)

ह ४

TRANSLITERATION

Ti—ma

TRANSLATION.

(It is difficult to say what these letters mean. They may be abbreviations.)

The language of all these inscriptions is Sanskrit and the script is Brahmi belonging to about 2nd century A.D. I am extremely grateful to Dr. N. P. Chakravarti, O.B.E., Director-General of Archæology in India, for his generous help in giving me the correct transcription and translations of the inscriptions. It appears that some of these pieces of pottery were very costly or they were held in great regard for their religious or other associations. This is evident from the fact that many of these pieces when they broke or cracked, iron joints with rivets were applied to them. The holes were bored in the broken pieces with considerable skill, then the joints were placed on both the sides of the fragments and nails were carefully riveted (PLATES IV *b*, V *a* & *b*, IX & X). In one case it appears that joints were riveted in order to check the further progress of a crack. So far as I know Kondapur alone has presented this novel feature of ancient pottery. The iron joints, though considerably disintegrated in some cases, still preserve their original shape and size. Wherever they have disappeared, we can clearly see the holes which must have been skilfully bored with a sharp iron drill.



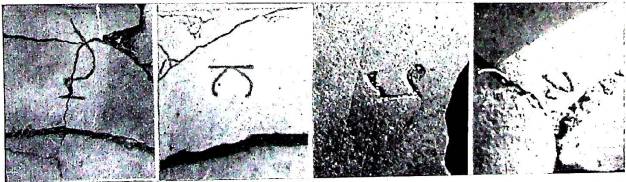
(a) Jar No. 1



(b) Inscription on Jar No. 1



(a) Jar No. 2



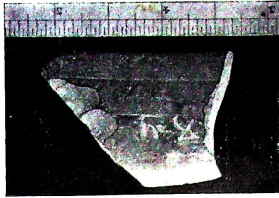
(b) Inscription on Jar No. 2



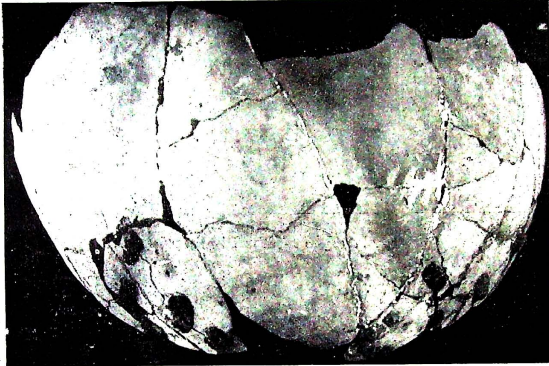
(a) Inscribed fragment of Jar No. 3



(b) Inscribed fragment of Jar No. 4

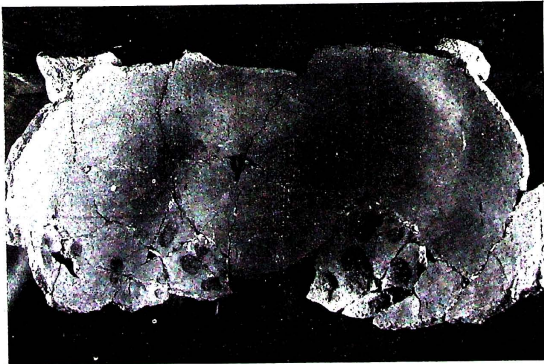


(a) Inscribed fragment of Vessel No. 5

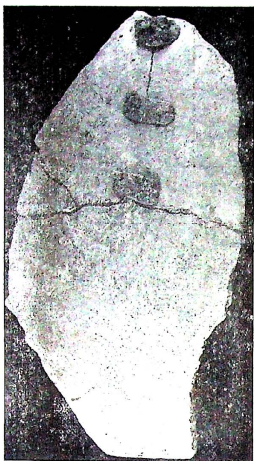


(OBVERSE)

(b) Fragments of pottery showing iron joints with rivets.



(REVERSE)

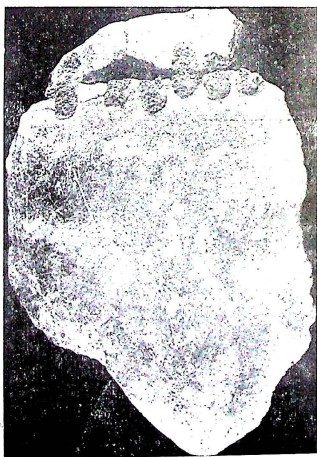


(OBVERSE)

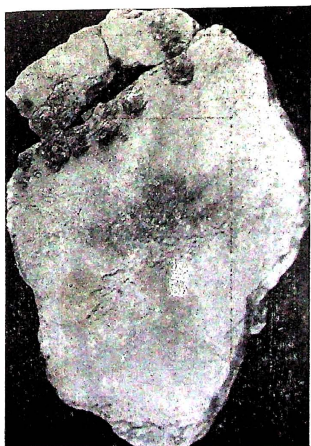


(REVERSE)

(a) Fragments of pottery showing iron joints with rivets.

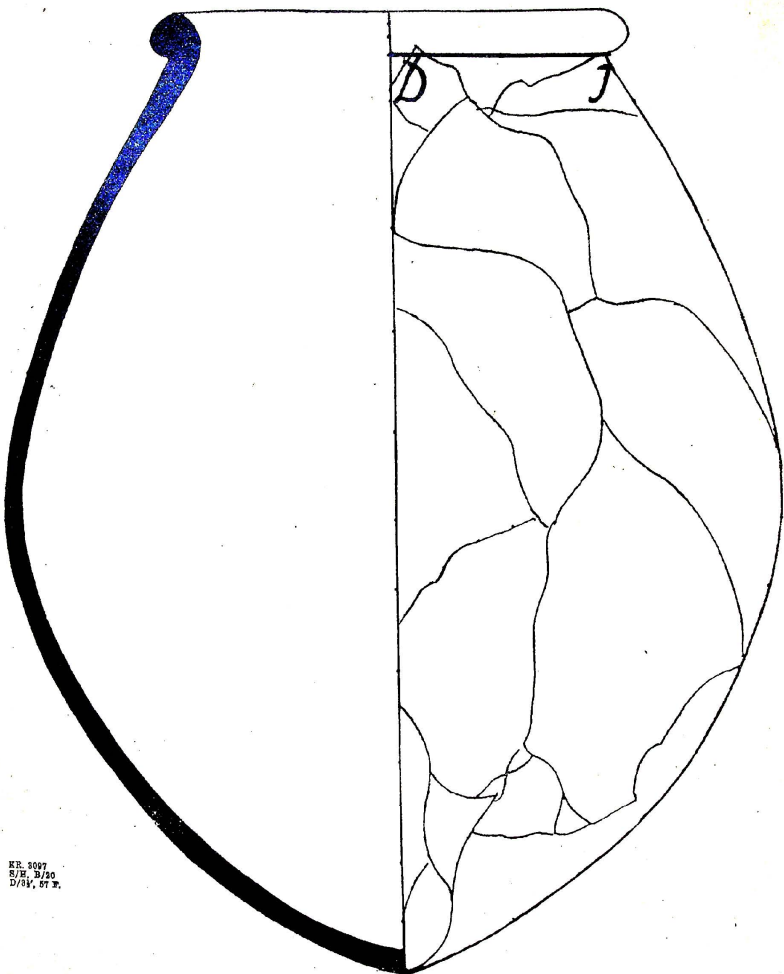


(OBVERSE)



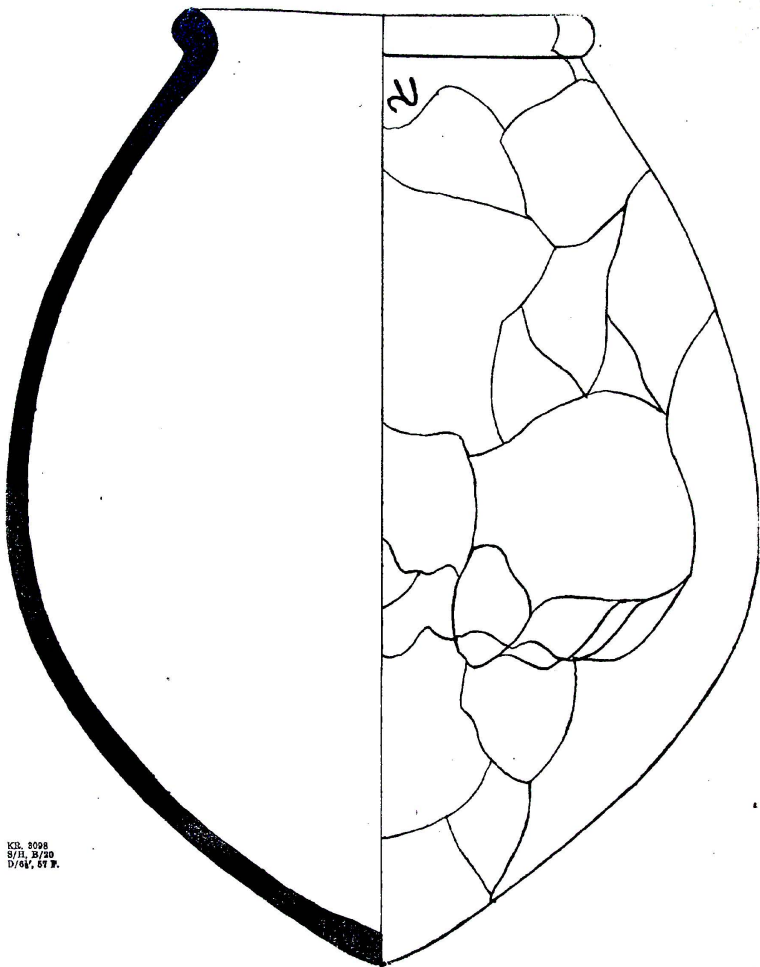
(REVERSE)

(b) Fragments of pottery showing iron joints with rivets.



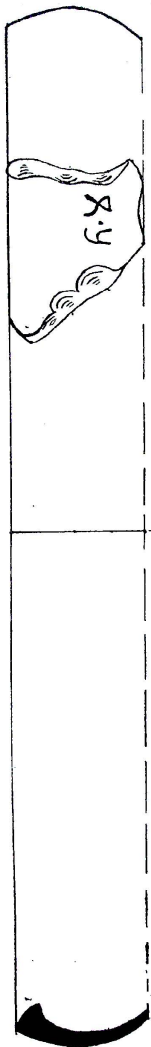
KR. 3097
S.F. B/20
D/84, CT T.

Jar No. 1 (Scale .25)



KB. 8098
S/H. B/20
D/64, 67 F.

Jar No. 2 (Scale .25)



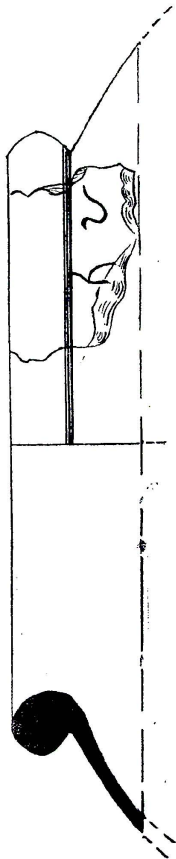
(a) Inscribed fragment of Vessel No. 5 (Actual size)

KR. 1763



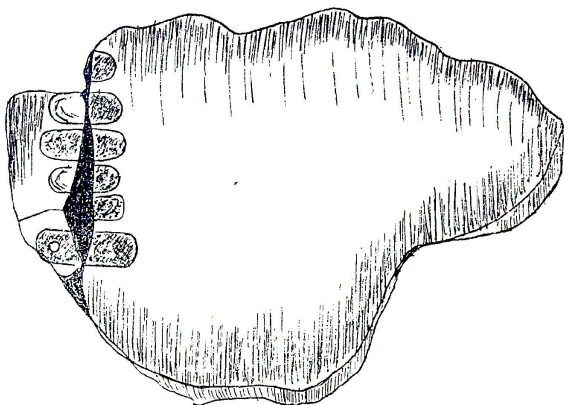
(b) Inscribed fragment of Jar No. 3 (Scale .25)

KR. 3003
S/H. B/20
D/31' 57 E.



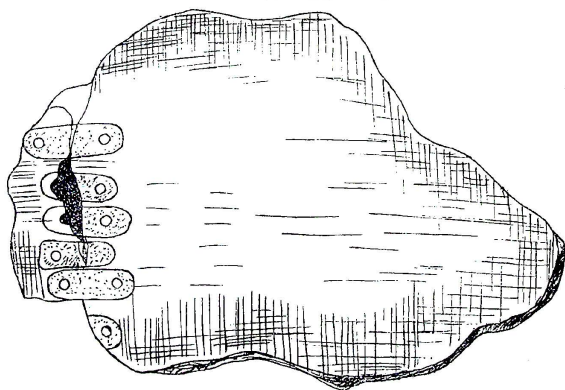
(c) Inscribed fragment of Jar No. 4 (Scale .25)

KR. 3195
S/H. B/20
D/31' 57 E.



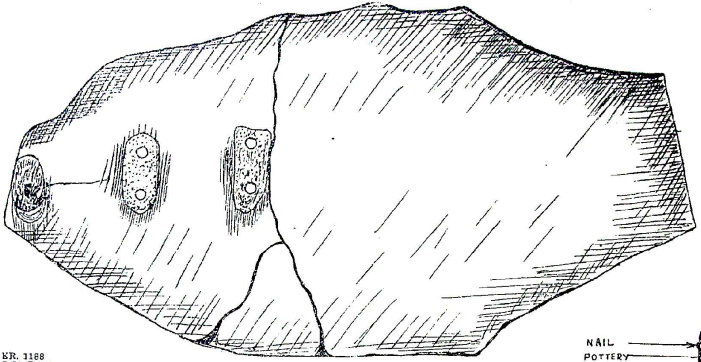
KR. 1187
S/H. B/10
D/23' 57 P.

(OBERSE) 024



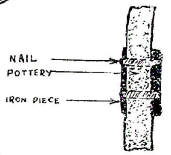
(REVERSE)

Fragments of pottery showing iron joints with rivets (Scale .2)

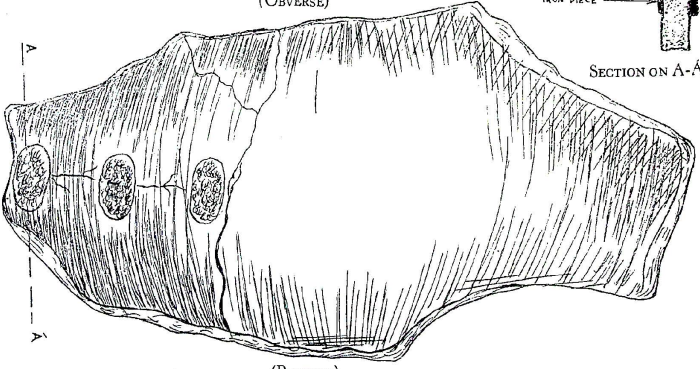


ER. 1166
S/W. B/10
D/21. 57 F.

(OBVERSE)



SECTION ON A-A



(REVERSE)

Fragments of pottery showing iron joints with rivets (Scale .2)



12

