



The Nature of Cultural Depositions of Different Sites of OCP is Examined

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Abstract

The term “Ochre Coloured Pottery Culture” (henceforth called OCP) was coined by B.B Lal after he excavated the site Hastinapur in the year 1951-52. This culture was seemed to be concentrated in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab regions of Uttar Pradesh. But recently its presence sought in other States as well such as Haryana, Rajasthan, and Punjab. Apart from these above-mentioned regions it seems to have been traced in mid-Ganga regions also. However, regarding its authorship and identification any decisive consensus has not yet been reached. The feature of OCP comprising rolled or fragile potsherds is not uniform throughout its provenance. It is also quite clear that the concentration of this culture is not only the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. Some of the recent excavations suggest its prevalence beyond the Doab. Ceramic fabric of OCP has been found from Kurukshetra, Jind, and Ludhiana in Haryana. In Rajasthan it has been observed in Alwar, Tonk, Medha, and Mallahal. Such sherds have also been traced from Lucknow, Allahabad, Hardoi, Parihar and so forth. In many cases copper implements occur along with OCP. However, these implements often do not occur along with OCP in definite stratified contexts. Prof. B.B. Lal for the first-time associated Copper Hoard with OCP as a part and parcel of the same deposit, particularly after the excavation conducted by him at Bisauli and Rajpurparsu in 1951.

Keywords: *ocp, copper hoards, indus goblets, rolled or fragile sherds, anthropomorphs, barbed, harpoon, saipai,,ganga-yamuna doab, jodhpura-ganeshwara*

For any culture to evolve, develop and mature, their environments play a vital role for their settlement. People need to adjust themselves accordingly to the environment; they adapt themselves to living in such climatic conditions, natural vegetation and soil compositions. Some of the OCP sites of Upper Ganga-Yamuna Doab show strong influences

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with Late Harappan mainly because in this region are found Late Harappan sites such as Bara and Mitathal. Some of the OCP sites of Saharanpur District like Ambakheri, Bargaon, Bahadarabad also show affinities either with Harappan or Late Harappan or sites like Hulas. Ambakheri has an over 1 m thick OCP deposit. The pottery has a slip which has a tendency to peel off. The forms include a large trough, knobbed lid (bowl-shaped), ring stand, basin, and vase with splayed rim. There was no Harappan pottery but Harappan influences were evident in such forms as short stemmed dish-on stand, a flask with oval profile, high neck and flat base, a toy cart wheel and terracotta cakes, carnelian bead bull figurines and stone objects. Besides a brick kiln and a hearth were also found (IAR 1963-64).

In the Gangetic Doab, Bargaon is considered to be a Late Harappan site due to the numerous Harappan forms unearthed like Indus goblet, ring stand, and miniature pedestalled cup. Important antiquities were a fragmentary copper celt and rings, chert blades, and weight pieces, a pot with animal headed handle having a perforation in the middle, terracotta and faience bangles, cart wheels with central hub and terracotta cakes round and oblong in shape. No evidence of structures found. Alongside unslipped OCP was also recovered. The same was the case with Bahadarabad from where typical Harappan ceramics were found with OCP sherds (IAR 1963-64).

Katpalaon in Haryana has also been identified as an OCP site from where Harappan affiliated potteries have been recovered. Similarly, another site in Haryana, Kumkalam shows depositions of OCP along with Late Harappan Pottery (IAR 1976-77).

These sites in certain regions tend to lead us to believe that the OCP culture and Harappan or Late Harappan were more or less were affiliated or inter-related with each other in terms of imitating each other's fabric or shapes and designs. Interestingly, two sites in Bulandshahr must be mentioned here i.e. Manpura and Bhatpura, where there is no scope of Harappan or Late Harappan influences. However, excavations unearthed OCP with Harappan affinities like dish-on-stand, pedestalled bowl, ring vase or jar, basin with flanged rim and other types which have close parallels with the pottery from Bahadarabad (IAR 1960-61)

The feature of OCP comprising rolled or fragile potsherds is not uniform throughout its provenance. It is also quite clear that the concentration of this culture is not only the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. Some of the recent excavations suggest its prevalence beyond the Doab. Ceramic fabric of OCP has been found from Kurukshetra, Jind, and Ludhiana in Haryana. In Rajasthan it has been observed in Alwar, Tonk, Medha, and Mallahal. Such sherds have also been traced from Lucknow, Allahabad, Hardoi, Pariar and so forth. Some

sites show only OCP culture deposits and nothing else. These are Lal Qila, Daulatpur, Manpura, Bhatpura, Khanpur in Bulandshahr District; Alipura Bholani, Budhakhera, Jainpur, Mandla, Mandowala, Reri, Shaktal, Sikri and Tauli in Saharanpur District; Badal, Saket colony in Meerut District; Chandan, Sikarpur in Muzaffarnagar District; Helmana, Ramnagar, Karinkot in Alwar District; and Khambaltera in Kurukshetra.

Besides, these single culture OCP sites, some sites are multicultural in nature from where along with OCP other cultural materials have been recovered. Sites where OCP is found along with two or more cultural deposits are Hastinapur, Kaseri from Meerut district; Atranjikhhera, Jakhera from Etah district; Badhaikalan, Sikrera, Khanjahanpur, Kulheri, Pipalsa, Toda from Muzaffarnagar district; Ahichchhatra from Bareilly district; Kauriagarh, Morthal from Aligarh district; Akrabas, Chandpur from Bulandshahar district); Noh, Au from Bharatpur district); Gulariya Sirsa Ther from Badaun district; Dhansa from Delhi; Pariar from Unnao district); Moradabad from Moradabad district.

The sites of Saharanpur are unique. Here, OCP is found along with other cultural materials, either with Mature Harappan or PGW. Thus sites of Saharanpur are mostly bicultural in nature like Baundki, Bakaraka Mound, Bazipur, Chhajapur, Chilhera, Chunethi Sekh, Daudpur, Fatehpur Jat, Ghana Khandi, Kabirpur, Kailashpur, Khatauli, Krindhni, Matki Jharauli, Mohiuddinpur, Nirpapur, Pinjaura, Salepur Bhokri, Sherpur and Tahirpur. Other bicultural sites in which OCP is a prominent culture with either Copper Hoard or PGW or Late Harappan are Deevlakhara, Bhatpura, Manpura, Kiratpur from Bulandshahar district; Jhinhana, Kudana, Ladava, Mahmoodpur, Shamli Shamlala from Muzaffarnagar district; Sarola from Kurukshetra district; Pahalwan from Jind district; Malyali (Sikar); Kamalpur & Mujahidpur (Hardoi); Deoti (Lucknow); Amroha, Madarpur from Moradabad district); Bidhuna (Auriya); Dandia (Alwar); Sakatpur (Tonk); Sanauli (Bhagpat).

The entire area of Aligarh- Bulandshahr is now being considered as a rich concentration OCP. Broadly speaking, some single OCP sites like Daulatpur, Bhatpur, Manpur, Sikarpur, Chandaukha, Keshavpur are lying not far away from the site Lal Qila. These sites are within a radius of about 25 km and appear to be cluster of OCP sites. The pottery complex recovered from those sites resembled with the pottery of Atranjikhhera, Jodhpura I C, Bahadarabad, Ahichchhatra, Ambakhera, Saipai and Noh. Similarly (Khera, Tappal, Pipalgaon, Baroodkhera, Pora, Gadrana, Jalali, Ogar, Chandoli, Sankara, Mudhakhera) are more found clustering around the Lal Qila sites (Ramjit and Abid 2001-02). Unlike Lal Qila, none of the sites have been excavated.

There are certain points which need further clarification.

1. The nature of pottery in large number if recovered from these above-mentioned sites should be compared with the Lal Qila pottery complex.
2. Do these clusters of OCP sites have concrete structural and constructional activities?
3. Only in one of the OCP clusters near Lal Qila has a single site (Kiratpur) revealed a Copper Hoard.
4. So far, these sites are found on the banks of rivers or besides lakes. This seems to have been necessary for their habitation.
5. In terms of associating OCP with Copper Hoard as has been evidenced from Saipai and Madarpur, are there any sites of this nature in the vicinity of the above-mentioned cluster of OCP sites?

Future extensive excavations to the above-mentioned clusters of OCP sites around Aligarh-Bulandshahar will provide a great breakthrough to solve the ambiguity or enigmatic nature of OCP in general and habitation in particular. Besides, the above mentioned OCP sites in terms of the cultural sequence and occurrence of OCP has been established.

In many cases copper implements occur along with OCP. However, these implements often do not occur along with OCP in definite stratified contexts. Prof. B.B. Lal for the first-time associated Copper Hoard with OCP as a part and parcel of the same deposit, particularly after the excavation conducted by him at Bisauli and Rajpurparsu in 1951. B.B. Lal's speculation regarding associating OCP with Copper Hoards became even more possible after an excavation at Saipai was conducted by L.M. Wahal in 1971-72. This site produced evidence of a typical Copper Hoard i.e. hooked spearhead and harpoon which were unearthed from the same stratum from where sherds of OCP were found.

Later on, subsequent excavations at Bargaon, Nasirpur, and Bahadarabad took place. Some scholars after examining copper implements categorized them broadly into two groups according to the regions in which they were found.

1. Jodhpura-Ganeshwara Copper Hoard
2. Ganga-Yamuna Doab Copper Hoard

The copper implements of Ganeshwara-Jodhpura are said to show differences with that of the Ganga-Yamuna doab. The Ganeshwar-Jodhpura copper implements comprised of celts, arrowheads, spearheads beads, bangles, fishhooks, rings, and balls. In contrast, the Ganga-Yamuna Doab copper hoards comprised of typical anthropomorphs, barbed harpoons, hooked sword, antennae sword, hooked spearheads, celts, rings etc.

Apart from these discrepancies, some concordances could be established between both regions. Some scholars believe that the genesis of OCP is sought to have been traced from Ganeshwara. The site of Ganeshwara yielded not only a hoard of copper implements from its Phase II but along with these implements were found a small number of potsherds. These potsherds were made of well-levigated fine clay were well-fired and sturdy with an ochre-coloured core. The pottery forms included narrow and wide mouthed cylindrical pot; and miniature bowl like form. Some of the pots bear incised designs like groups of straight or wavy lines, chevrons, and criss-cross markings. The copper implements recovered from this phase were limited which included five arrowheads, three fish hooks, one spearhead and one owl (Hooja, 1995).

As far as Copper Hoards are concerned, these are mostly chance discoveries and have mainly been found from the surface from where later trial excavations brought to light OCP sherds. OCP along with the Copper Hoard occur in the doab regions at the site of Rajpurparsu, Bisauli, Moradabad, Kiratpur, Saipai, Baheria, Madarpur, Bidhuna etc. At the single culture site of Madarpur near Moradabad around 31 copper anthropomorphs have been reported and documented by V.N. Prabhakar. The site from where the anthropomorphs were recovered shows contemporary deposits of red ware or OCP pottery at the same exact location. Moreover, adjoining portions of the area were dug subsequently under the supervision of D.V. Sharma. These show regular layers containing OCP visible in exposed sections at the site. The OCP sherds were found scattered all around within the area approx. 100 x 75 m. The sediments show flood like activities over the OCP settlement at least on two or three occasions. Some of the pottery shapes of OCP and its associated coarse red ware that have been made mainly dish, bowl, basin, handi, vase, storage jar miniature pot, lota, lid, bowl with ring base and dish-on-stand (Sharma, D.V 2001-02).

Sanauli (29° 28'; 77° 01') is situated in Baghpat District in Western Uttar Pradesh and was excavated under the supervision of D.V. Sharma assisted by K.C. Nauriyal and V.N. Prabhakar in 2005-06. This site is extremely important not only for providing number of burials but is important because it produced a number of antiquities such as copper sheath, stylized copper objects of 28 tiny paper-thin flattened and stylized objects, steatite inlay pieces, gold objects of star-shaped, ornaments made by spiraling of thin gold wire round two thick copper wires, gold cap like object and many semi-precious stones. But unfortunately, pottery with discernible shapes could not be unearthed from here. Thus, until more evidence

comes to light from further excavations the author has labeled it as “Sanauli complex” or “Harappan-OCP combine complex” (Sharma, D.V 2005-06).

OCP-Copper Hoard sites in terms of their deposition are ephemeral but are important. At Bithuna in Auriya District, some copper made implements in hoards have been discovered accidentally. Implements displayed typical Western Uttar Pradesh forms like harpoon, anthropomorphs, flat axes, etc. Trial trenching revealed red ware sherds some of which were finely slipped.

Earlier, it has been mentioned that the Copper Hoard implements from Rajasthan differ from those of the Ganga-Yamuna Doab region. However, both these regions show similarities in terms of ceramic fabric. Moreover, at Ganeshwar indentation marks such as star on their implements are similar to celts with star marks found from Copper Hoard sites of Western Uttar Pradesh such as Kiratpur in Bulandshahr District.

Conclusions:

Thus, on this basis some scholars believe that there could be a possibility of establishing a relation between OCP and Copper Hoards. Since then, scholars have tried to examine the nature of the findings of both OCP and Copper Hoards. There are some common striking similarities between the OCP and Copper Hoards.

1. Both the cultures are devoid of certain features of habitation like hearth, flooring, cemetery, charcoal, ash marks etc.
2. Both the cultures are densely concentrated in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab regions with typical copper implements like harpoon, hooked sword, antennae sword, anthropomorphs etc.
3. Occurrence of their material assemblages more or less at the same sites.

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