

Two inscribed pots from Afghanistan

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In spring 2006 two newly discovered ceramic pots from private collections inscribed with Kharoṣṭhī texts were shown to the author.¹ According to their owners, both of them were recently found in the region around Jalalabad (Afghanistan). Although they are here dealt with together, their different technique of inscribing (ink-written vs. incised), size and function make them quite interesting representatives of two separate groups of ceramic pots which are variably attested in monuments from North-West Pakistan and North Afghanistan.

1. An inscribed jar from Radaṇa (Figs. 1-3)

The first pot belongs to the variety of „globular or nearly globular jars used for the carrying and storage of water and for domestic storage of a wide range of commodities“ (Raymond Allchin in Salomon 1999: 183-184). Similar objects are typical for Buddhist monasteries in the North-West of India from the Gandhāra region up to Kara-Tepe/Fayaz-Tepe in Northern Bactria (cf. Vertogradova 1995, Vertogradova 2004).² In the last decades these water pots became particularly famous for housing collections of Buddhist Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts. Thus, both the British Library collection and the Senior collection were found inside inscribed pots (cf. Salomon 1999, Salomon 2003).

In many cases these pots or their fragmentary remains bear inscriptions which are usually written with black ink around the neck of the vessel. Usually these inscriptions contain information about the donor and recipient of the gift arranged according to a full or abbreviated version of a formular which can be established with Richard Salomon in the following way (2002: 354):

¹ I would like to thank Harry Falk for reading and commenting the final draft of this paper and Andrea Schlosser for her support in image processing.

² A good survey of this kind of epigraphic material with exhaustive bibliographical references can be found in Salomon 1999: 183-247.

- „1. Description of the object, e.g., „this water-pot“.
2. The word *daṇamukha* („[This is] the gift [of]“), or a similar word.
3. The donor’s name in the genitive case.
4. The specification of the recipients, typically with the phrase „to the universal community, in the possession of the masters of the X school (*saghe caturdiśe acaryaṇa X-aṇa parigrahe*), or a similar expression
5. The geographical location of the recipients.
6. A statement of the benefit which the donor hopes to obtain as a result of the gift.“

These elements were treated quite deliberately in composing an inscription and different combinations of them can be observed.

The newly discovered pot from Peshawar is nearly 40 cm high with its neck broken. Below the neck one line of Kharoṣṭhī signs written with black ink is visible. The end of the line is faded and hardly legible.

Text

*saghe cadodi<śa>mi radaṇa acarya
dharmaudaka p(r)adigha[h]e [eva ca]
[dha]rma///*

„For the Buddhist order of the four directions, in the possession (of) the Dharmaguptaka teachers (at) Radaṇa and so ... of the Dharma (?) /// “

The syntax of the text with its missing case endings is rather unusual, but can be compared with one of the British Library potsherds where we read: */// ca(r)ya dharmāite pari ///* (Salomon 1999: 234-235). Either the writers of both texts did not much care for grammatical issues or they considered the words preceding *parigrahe* as parts of a large Tatpuruṣa compound.

The clearly readable *radaṇa* can be associated with the text of an inscribed jar from the Schøyen collection, which is said to be given to

the *dharmamūya(na)* teachers of that place: *saghe catur[ti]śami [ra]danami acaryana dharmamūyana pratigrahe* „[Gift] to the universal community, in the possession of the Dharmamūyana masters at Radana (?)“ (Salomon 2002: 352, plates XIX.1, XIX.2).

Salomon was not quite sure in the reading and interpretation of *radanami* and even suggested it to be a miscopied *viharami* (2002: 353 fn.2). Our new text, however, supports his supposed reading and allows to interpret *radana* as an abbreviated place-name beginning with Skt. *ratna* (cf. Skt. Ratnapura, Ratnākara, Ratnāpura). Moreover, not only the texts, but also the shapes of both pots and the ribbed pattern of their decoration are very similar and seem to suggest that both objects origin from the same place Radana°, whose identification, however, remains obscure. With regard to its general location, however, one may not only refer to the information given by the owners but also to the inscribed pot with a similar decoration from Haḍḍa published by Fussman in 1969. It seems thus highly probable that Radana° has to be looked for in the area near the modern Jalalabad.³

The clear association of both pots could also help to settle another problem connected with the Schøyen piece - the meaning of the word *dharmamūyana*.

Salomon was completely right in hesitating to translate the given *dharmamūyana* as *dharmaguptakānām* „of the Dharmaguptakas“. But the position of the word in the formula and its clear resemblance to the name of the Dharmaguptaka school led him to the completely justified conclusion, that „despite several philological problems, it is most likely that this inscription does in fact record a dedication to the masters of the Dharmaguptaka school“ (2002: 353). The reading of our text *dharmamūyana* which is in agreement with other

attestations of this school designation (for references cf. Salomon 2002: 353) seems to support this conclusion presupposing that there was only one school at Radana. But the meaning of the term itself - *dharmamūyana* - remains obscure. Leaving aside the etymological suggestions made by Richard Salomon (2002: 353: „a hardly satisfactory explanation“) I would like to suggest another explanation of this term, which associates it with the expression *dharmamūyane* in the introductory stanza of the Khotan Dharmapada (KhDhP):

*budha-varmasa śamaṇasa
budhaṇadi-sa[r]dhavayarisa
ida dharmapadasa postaka
dharmamūyane likhida araṇi*

Brough is discussing this term and its relation to *dharmaguptaka* in a footnote and rejects their association (1962: 44 fn.3). Both the Loc. Sg. ending *e* and the missing representative of internal *tt* (< *pt*) forced him to understand this word as „the name of the *araṇya* in question: in the park (called) ‚Garden of Religion‘“ (1962: 177), deriving the second element from Skt. *udyāna*. It is hardly possible to deny the plausibility of Brough’s conclusion: Dharmadyāna is the designation of a Buddhist institution, most probably a monastery - not a park - (for the meaning of *raṇa/araṇa* cf. below), where the Khotan Dharmapada manuscript was copied. The term itself contains no indication of a school affiliation. But in the light of the newly discovered texts from Radana one might perhaps get somewhat beyond Brough’s interpretation.

It seems to me at least possible that both texts – the KhDhp and the Schøyen jar - contain the same word derived from Skt. *dharmamūyana*, once with and once without a sandhi-consonant *m* which is quite usual in Middle Indic. Thus we should understand the Schøyen jar’s text as „in the possession of the (inhabitants of) the Dharma garden“ (Skt. *dharmadyānā(nām) parigrahe*). The missing Gen. Pl. which seems to be required by the preceding *acaryana* is either an irregularity in syntax or can be explained by a haplographical miswriting. In

³ Another similar piece of unknown origin was published by Salomon 1996 (238-242). It is not more than a guess that the suggested place-name *radana*° has to be connected with the several *vihāras/stūpas* made from precious stones which are described by Fa Xian (Legge 1991: 36-38) and Xuan Zang (Beal 1884: 95-97) in their chapters on Hi-lo (Haḍḍa).

the latter case we would have to reconstruct the inscription's reading as:

saghe catur[ti]śami [ra]danami acaryana dharmamuyana<na> pratigrahe

In any case, the parallelity of both Radana texts allows to take Gāndhārī *dharmamuyana* (Skt. **dhārmodyāna*) here as an alternative designation of (adherents of) the Dharmaguptaka school.

If we extend this argumentation to the introductory verse of the KhDhp we can state that the *araṇa*, where this text was written, was called by a name – *dharmuyana*– which is probably also used to designate (members/institutions of) the Dharmaguptaka school. Possibly, this new intermediary evidence can support the suggested, but yet unproven Dharmaguptaka affiliation of the KhDhp.

The end of the line is hardly discernible. Either it contains the name of the donor being one of the usual Buddhist names beginning with Dharma° or it continues with a further conventional phrase introduced with *eva ca dharma*°. This would remind the text of the Tor Dherai potsherds which reads: *sarvastivadinam pratigrahe ito ca samaparityagato ...* (Konow 1929: 173-176).

p(r)adighahe is a somewhat unusual –but not impossible– spelling of *pratigrahe/paḍigrahe* or *parigrahe* which are found elsewhere (on the alternation of both variants see Salomon 1999: 193-194 and n. 11). The aspirated *gh* in this word is attested once more on a potsherd from Fayaz-Tepe.⁴

2. An earthenware reliquary dated (Kaniṣka Era) year 44 (Figs. 4-6)

Our second object is a pot with two small handles measuring only 20 cm in height and

⁴ Vertogradova 1995: 128, no. 23b: ...

pratigha, see the picture in Vorob'eva-Desyatovskaya 1983: 338, ris. 6.

originating according to its owner from Jalalabad in Afghanistan. Contrary to the first object the script is not carried out with ink but incised into the surface of the burned pot. This technique is quite rare with regard to inscriptions on pottery.

The small size of the pot prevents from interpreting it as a water-jar, but can be explained in the light of its function as a reliquary which will be discussed below.

Text

1 samvatśarae caducaparīśadima 20 20 4

interlinear: *[i]ḡamiga*

*2 budhapriyasa iyo raṃṇo pradīḥavavido
budadevasa zaṃdasarasa viharitva(=sva)mi
sagilasa bhatamuḍaya
3 budhavarma*

„In the fortyfourth year, 44, this⁵ grove was established by Buddhapriya, Budhadeva, Zaṃdasara, the lord of the monastery Sagila, Bhatamuḍaya and Budhavarma.
(Each of them acted) separately.“

The transaction and the function of the pot

The inscription records the establishment of an institution called *raṃṇo* (Skt. *araṇya*).

The main donor is Būdhapriya whose name is mentioned first. After the completion of the sentence some further names were added. This could be the reason for the slightly different direction the line takes after *pradīḥavavido*, an irregular writing with a superfluous syllable *va* for the ppp of *prati-sthā*, usually found as Gāndhārī *pradīḥavida*.

Whereas three of the actors are given in the Gen. Sg., two of them are mentioned simply in the Nom. case. Maybe the lack of space at the end of the line forced the writer to give up the correct spelling in favour of this abbreviation.

The obviously interlinear *[i]ḡamiga* can be understood as (Hybrid) Skt. *ekamekam* „one by

⁵ A reading *iśo* – like in several other texts of this type – cannot be excluded. Generally, in this inscription no difference in the writing of *śa* and *ya* is discernible.

one“ , indicating thus, that this was not a simple collective gift, but an individual one with the respective consequences regarding the merit resulting from this gift. The spelling can be compared with the word *igagamigami* (Skt. **ekaka-m-ekasmin*) on the new Wardak vase to be published by Harry Falk (forthcoming).

Interestingly, one *vihārasvāmin*, in the corrupt spelling *viharitvami*, was among the donors.⁶

Whereas in classical Skt. as well as in Pāli sources *araṇya/arañña* designates the wilderness in contrary to the inhabited place the Gāndhārī usage indicates a meaning close to Skt./P. *ārāma* „grove, park, garden“. Salomon is resuming in regard to the expression *kharavala-mahavane rañe* in the Utaraya inscription dated 157 (1995: 138):

The use of the term *ra(m)ña* (= Sanskrit *araṇya*-) „grove“ in reference to a Buddhist establishment is attested in several other Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, for example in the Kurram casket, *tanuakammi raṇṇammi*, „in his own grove“ (Konow 1929, 155. 1; my reading). The juxtaposition here of the more or less synonymous terms *vana* and *raña* could perhaps be explained by taking the latter as a general term, roughly equivalent to „monastery,“ and the former as part of the proper name of the establishment, „The great forest of Kharavala.“

It is noteworthy to add that the same relationship between a general *araña* and a proper name with a rather close meaning is met with in the introductory verse of the KhDhp (cf. above).

Summarizing the data contained in North-Western inscriptions it is clear that Buddhist communities of different school affiliations were living in these places: Sarvāstivādin: BL pot B (Salomon 1999: 200), Dharmaguptakas: inscribed potsherd (Sadakata 1996: 312 (d)).

They could house *vihāras* and *stūpas* (Kurram casket, Konow 1929: 152-155). In some cases,

⁶ For *viharasvāmins* in inscriptions cf. the study of Gregory Schopen (1996/2004: 219-259).

relics are said to be established either in one of these internal structures or in the (*a*)*raña* generally: Hiḍḍa (pot) inscription of the year 28 (Konow 1935-36): *pratisthapita śarira ramaramñami thubami*, Utaraya inscription dated 157 (Salomon 1995: 133-139): *pradiṭṭhava(ti*) bhaghava-(dha)tu kharavala-mahavane rañe*.

There is one text – the Jamālgaṛhī inscription of the year 359 (Konow 1929: 110-113, plate XXII. 1) written on a rough stone block and datable to the Yoṇa era of 186/5 B.C., i.e. to 173 AD (Salomon 2005: 377) – where we even find reported the same transaction as on our pot: the establishment of a *raña*. The respective passage reads according to Heinrich Lüders who revised Konow’s edition in 1940 (17-20): *i[śe] rañe preṭṭhavidē dhamaṭṭeana parigrahe* „This grove was established in the possession of the Dharmaguptakas.“

In general, all these characteristics can also be observed in the case of Buddhist monasteries making the above cited conclusion of Salomon about the interpretation of *raña* generally applicable.

Although our inscription contains no direct information about the character of the *pratiṣṭhāpana* transaction and the role our inscribed vessel had to fulfil in it it is possible to cite numerous inscriptions referring to comparable acts. In most cases they are inscribed on objects related to relics - either on a reliquary itself or on a plate or scroll found inside a reliquary. Not only this external evidence but also the contents of the inscriptions clearly shows that the *pratiṣṭhāpana* was essentially associated with relics. Only their establishment made a formerly in Buddhist understanding „unsettled“ area (*apratisthitapūrvapradeśa*) a settled one (cf. for the meaning of this phrase Salomon/Schopen 1984: 115-118).⁷

⁷ Cf. also Salomon 2005: 364 who stresses that the act of establishing relics and the establishment of a *stūpa* practically „amount to more or less the same thing, since the establishment of a *stūpa*, the relics, and the reliquary containing them were essentially the same ritual procedure.“ This statement can be extended to

It is therefore highly probable that our pot was used as a reliquary in this ceremony of establishing the newly founded monastery.

The use of pots as reliquaries is not very usual in Gandhāra and the adjacent areas, although funereal vessels from earthenware are well documented (cf. Salomon 1999: 77-81). It was suggested by Richard Salomon „that some of the donated inscribed waterpots were secondarily used as funerary vessels or for related purposes“ (1999: 245). But due to its shape and size and the character of its inscription our pot can hardly be associated with these water-storing jars. Fortunately, there are some few objects which can be more satisfactorily related to it.

The best known of them is a pot from Haḍḍa which was found by Masson in tope 13 of the site (Wilson 1841: 60, 111, 258, plate opp. 262). It bears a complete long pen-written inscription dated into the year 28 and reporting the deposition of relics (*śarīra*) inside a stūpa (Konow 1929: 157-158, Konow 1935-36). According to this dedicatory text and its small size it was surely not used as a water-pot as suggested by Richard Salomon with regard to the other Haḍḍa pots⁸ (1999: 245). Masson describes it as a „small earthen jar“ (Wilson 1841:111) containing „a stone wrapped in tuz-leaves“.⁹

Other relic/funereal pots made from earthenware were found inside stūpa 3 and 9 in

the establishment of other Buddhist institutions like *vihāras* and *rañās*.

⁸ Salomon also admits with regard to this pot that „the vessel was presented as a reliquary and hence is not actually comparable, in terms of function, to the ones under discussion here“ (1999: 242 n.42). His reference some pages onwards to „the other inscribed Haḍḍa pot“ which is taken by him as a water-pot secondarily used as a reliquary (245), however, is somewhat confusing, since we know altogether three such pieces: the one of the year 28 from tope 13, the one illegible from the „mound behind the village of Haḍḍa“ and the pot published by Fussman (1969). Only the latter seems to be a water-pot.

⁹ Masson is not quite clear in his description but Salomon is surely right with his suggestion, that the inscribed pot is identical with that containing the seemingly uninscribed birch-bark (1999: 60-61).

Darunta (Wilson 1841: 94-95). A larger number came from a mound behind the village of Haḍḍa. Although they varied „much in size, from a depth of three feet to six inches“ (Wilson 1841: 112-113), the smaller of them can be compared to our piece. According to Wilson, „they contain merely ashes and bones in greater or less quantity... They have been deposited sometimes in regular succession, distinct indeed from each other, but resting on a common line of cement, seeming to show that such deposits are those of a family... On one an inscription was scratched ...“ (1841: 112-113). Unfortunately, the text as copied by Wilson and depicted in plate IX is not readable. But it seems undoubted that most of these vessels were used as funereal pots.

Callieri studied the functional diversity of pots as found in archaeological excavations in Swāt (1997). According to him the use as relic containers was one of their major functions. He writes that „comparison with reliquaries of carved stone, which are the most frequent type, as well as a consideration of the origin of the stūpa cult, following Bateau’s interpretation, suggest that here the bones are to be considered as relics rather than the mere content of a funerary urn.“

Although earthenware reliquaries are not very common in Swāt/Gandhāra, Callieri could list a number of instances from *stūpas* all over the region (423), e.g. Jauliā (Marshall 1951: 373) and Sahri Bahlol (Cunningham 1875: 44-45 + pl. xii, fig. 5: „but the interior < of the mound > was filled with rubble and earth, in the middle of which was found a small pot of red earthenware, only 3 inches in diameter filled with human bones. I conjecture that this mound was the remains of a small brick stupa, about 10 feet in diameter ...“).

Callieri concludes that „earthenware reliquaries, therefore, are a form of casket, used only after the third century A.D., less common than stone or metal reliquaries which have never been considered funerary urns“ (423). Whether his dating can be maintained in the light of the Haḍḍa pot (year 28) and our new pot (year 44) is, however, uncertain. Even if we take the dates as referring to the second century of the

Kaniṣka era we get dates well within the 3rd c. AD.

In the light of this evidence, there is no need to interpret our piece or the Haḍḍa pot as everyday pottery secondarily used as reliquaries. It is quite possible that both pieces were intentionally produced for this purpose. At least at the time of inscribing they were clearly perceived as relic containers. This makes them considerably different from the more usual inscribed water-pots.

The date

caducapariśadima: Skt. *catuṣcatvāriṃśa*. For the system of Gāndhārī ordinals cf. now Baums 2006. Baums is giving only one example for an ordinal in the forties: *ekacapar[iśa]ja*, showing the same phonological development of internal *tva* to *pa*. Whereas the form cited by Baums uses the suffix *a < ka* (cf. Baums 2006: 41), our ordinal is showing the ending *dima-* indicating a form **catuṣcatvāriṃśatima* and generalizing thereby a suffix which originated with cardinals ending in *-ti* like *viṃśati*, *triṃśati*, *saptati* etc.

In Middle Indic as well as in some late Sanskrit forms the ending *ma-* used instead of Skt. *tama-* was added to *ti-*stems: P. *vīśatima*, Skt. *triṃśatima* (Edgerton 1953: § 22.14, Baums 2006: 40). The resulting *(t)ima-*ending was taken over to non-*i-*stems as cited by Edgerton (1953: § 22.14): *pañcāśima*, *śatima* etc. Alternatively the cardinals ending in *at* could be transformed into a *ti-*ending form (Edgerton 1953: § 19.26) with the respective ordinals ending in *tima-*.

The obviously great diversity of possible ordinal forms also in later Buddhist Sanskrit is reflected by the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa where we observe in the chapter conclusions *ekonacatvāriṃśatima* beside regular forms like *-catvāriṃśattama* and *-catvāriṃśa*. The corresponding cardinal is found with *catvāriṃśati* beside classical *catvāriṃśat*.

Our Gāndhārī form *caducapariśadima < *catuṣcatvāriṃśatima* is thereby in complete agreement with the general pattern of Middle Indic and Buddhist Sanskrit.

The date must be interpreted in terms of the Kaniṣka era commencing in 127/128 AD. Whether we have to take its first or second century cannot be stated with certainty. The inscription on our pot must thus be dated into the year 171/172 AD or 271/272 AD.

The personal names

The names Budhapriya, Budadeva and Budhavarma represent typical Buddhist names with Buddha° as first member.¹⁰ The corrupt spelling *buda* in Budadeva is one of the numerous cases of deaspiration to be observed in certain varieties of Gāndhārī.

Another case of deaspiration is Sagila, which can be explained as an abbreviation of a name beginning in Saṃgha° (here deaspirated to *sa(m)ga*) by means of the popular *ila-*suffix. Names of this type are quite common in Gāndhārī. Among them are typical Buddhist names like Dhramila (reliquary of Kopsāka, Fussman 1984: 39) and Budhila (Mathurā Lion Capital, Konow 1929: 48) which make a Saṃghila most probable.

The other two names are not entirely clear. The first member of the name Zaṃdasara has been discussed in some detail by Falk (2003: 576-577). Although its meaning cannot be established with absolute certainty, the initial *za* seems to indicate a non-Indian, probably Iranian, origin which can be interpreted as one of the Kharoṣṭhī spellings of Iranian *zād* „born (of), son“. Possibly, the anusvāra in *zaṃda* indicates the long quality of the vowel, expressed by its nasalization.¹¹ But it is equally possible that the spelling represents one of the many inconsistent usages of the anusvāra. At least we can observe a quite similar use of the non-nasalized *zada*.

¹⁰ For Buddhadeva cf. Jauliā no. 2 *budhadevasa* (Konow 1929: 94), for Budhavarma Saidu Sharif inscription no. 1 *budhavarmasa* (Fussman 1989b: 225), for Budhapriya cf. Mamāne Ḍherī pedestal inscription *budhapriasa* (Konow 1929: 171-172). Other Buddhist names ending in *-priya* are e.g. Dharmapriya in the same text (Konow 1929: 171-172) and Sa(m)ghapriya on British Library pot A and pot sherd 2 (Salomon 1999: 191-199, 225).

¹¹ Cf. for this Problem Fussman 1989a: 478.

In Iranian languages *zād* is usually found as a final member of a name compound. This usage can also be observed in some Gāndhārī names like e.g. in Arazamda on a square copper seal from Taxila (Konow 1929: 101), in the female Greek-Iranian composite name Theuzamda in the Senavarma inscription (Falk 2003: 576-577) or in the name Avakhazada from one of the Charsadda relic-caskets (Majumdar 1937: 10). Equally common in Gāndhārī, however, is its initial position like in Zamdanama which is incised on one of the silver sieves from Taxila (Konow 1929: 99), or in names like Zadamitra in one of the Avadāna texts from the British Library Collection (Salomon 1999: 145) or the abbreviated form Zadila (Falk 2003: 577). In discussing the name Zadamitra Salomon

offered two solutions for this different usage. Either the initial *zād* has to be regarded with Justi as an abbreviated *āzād* „well-born, free, noble“ or the forms must be taken as „Umkehr-Namen“ where the order of the compound members has been changed (1999: 145 fn. 6). In both cases the connection with the Iranian root *zan* and the supposed common source of Kharoṣṭhī *zamda* and *zada* are not affected. The second element of the name – *sara-* could be associated with Iranian *sar* „head“.

The name Bhatamuḍaya or Bhatamuḍaśa remains obscure, even if we connect its first element with Skt. *bhakta*.

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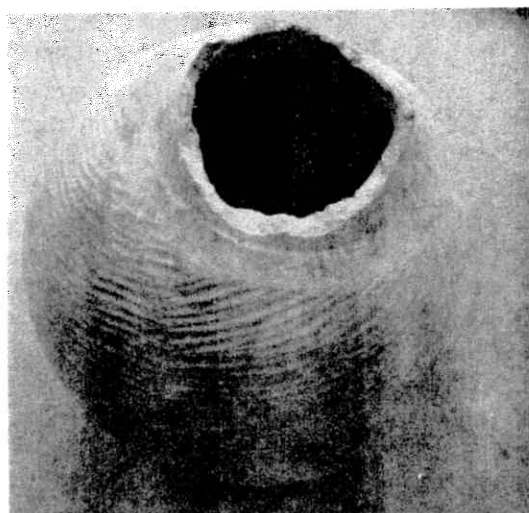
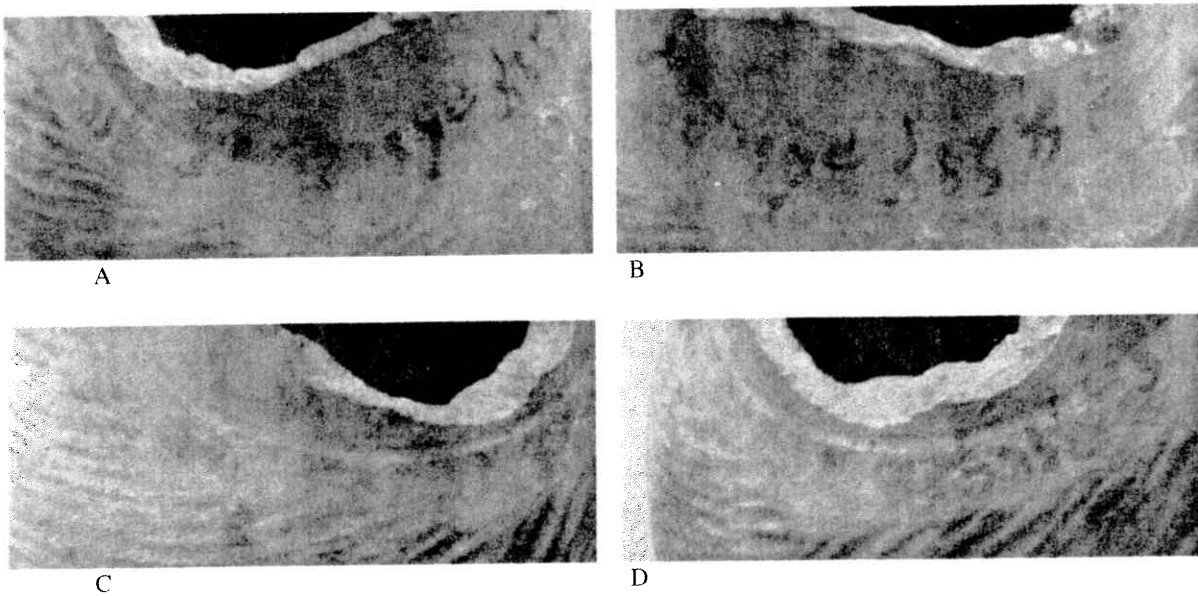


Fig. 1. General view



Figs. 2-5. Text of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription

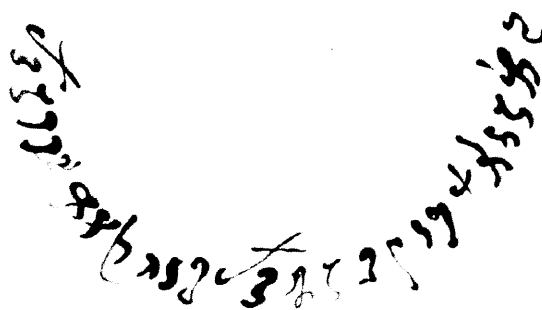
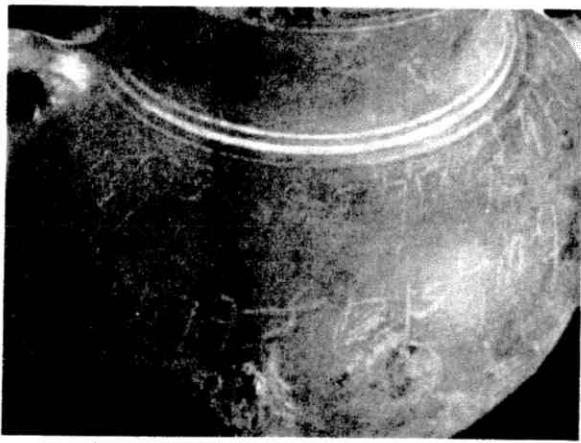


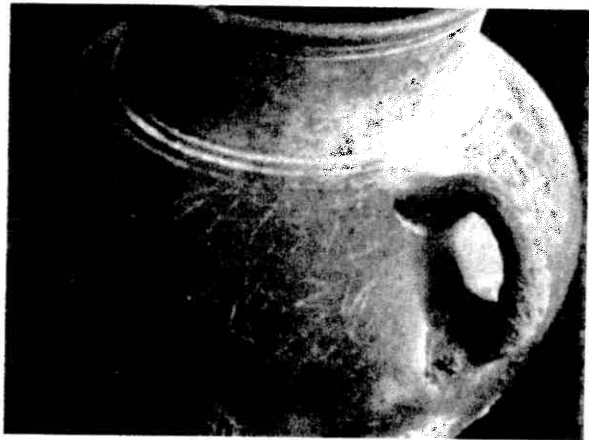
Fig. 3. Drawing of the inscription



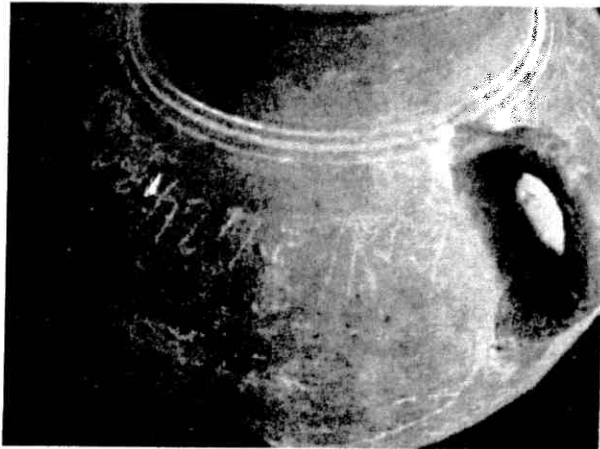
Fig. 4. General view – whole dated



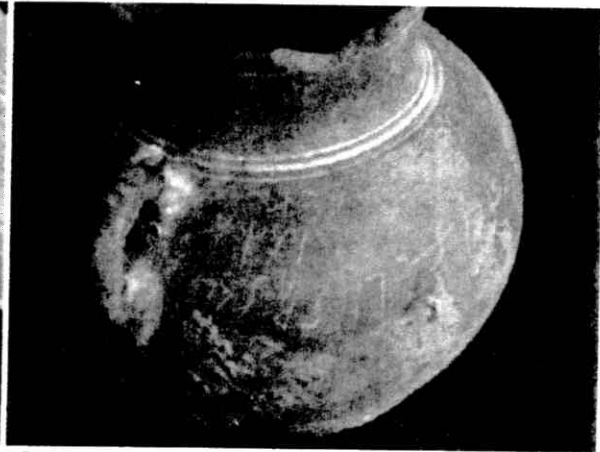
A



B



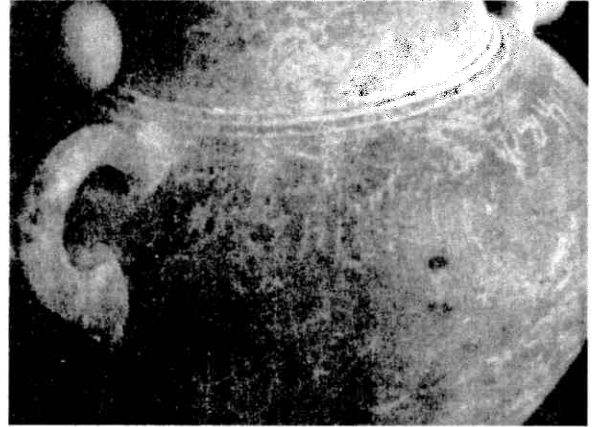
C



D



E



F

Fig. 5: A-F. Deatil of fig. 4

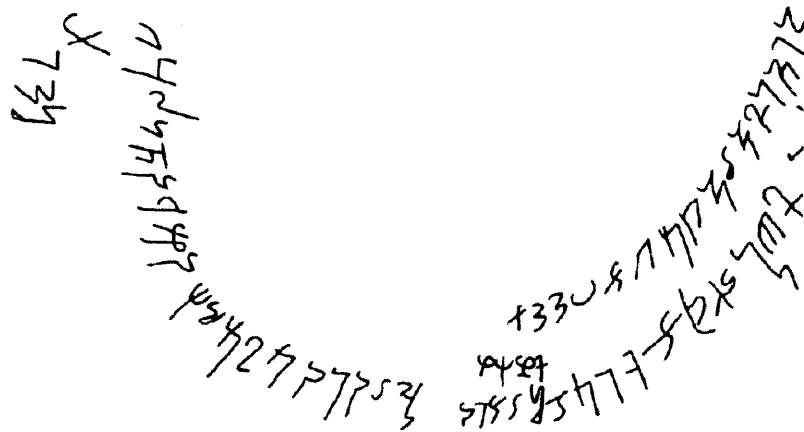


Fig. 6. Drawing of the Inscription

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