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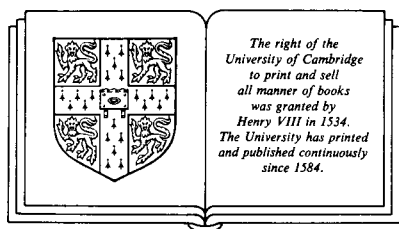
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Artefacts as categories

A study of ceramic variability
in Central India

DANIEL MILLER

*Department of Anthropology,
University College London*



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PREFACE

My interest in the specific problems that form the core of this study stemmed from two main influences during my undergraduate and post-graduate studies at the University of Cambridge. My initial interest in the importance of artefactual variability for the interpretation of archaeological remains was inspired by the enthusiastic teaching of the late David Clarke, and to this was added the impact of structuralism, then the dominant influence in the Anthropology Department. Since then, I have been able to develop these interests at University College, London, where the Department of Anthropology has for many years taught courses under the title of Material Culture, within which prehistoric and contemporary materials are freely interchanged.

The research described in this volume derived from my experience as an archaeologist dealing with the minutiae of prehistoric pottery and my feeling that such studies could contribute towards more general anthropological goals, precisely because of this peculiar focus on the object world. I hoped that such studies might, therefore, contribute to both disciplines, but in particular to the increasing interest in material culture itself as a neglected source of evidence in the social sciences. As with so many people working in South Asia, I rapidly became an Indophile and this academic study forms part of a larger desire to understand that complex and fascinating society. An underlying reference has also been to the extreme diversity of the material culture of my own society, and to the nature of objectification and alienation this engenders.

The claim has often been made that the goal of archaeology is to use the often boring and curious collections of objects it uncovers in an attempt to understand past societies. It is my belief that archaeologists have on occasion fulfilled this pledge with extraordinary ability, and my hope that material culture studies might assist in this highly problematic task of translating objects into peoples, by acknowledging, but also where possible by overcoming, the difficulties encountered.

The fieldwork which forms the basis for this volume was carried out

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Preface

during a three-year studentship from the Department of Education and Science. I should like to express my gratitude to Vishnu Wakankar of Ujjain University for his support throughout, and to my two research assistants, Kailash and Rajveer. During my stay in India I also received support from members of the Department of Archaeology, Deccan College, Pune. In particular, I wish to thank the six pottery-producing households who daily bore the brunt of endless and apparently absurd enquiries, though my gratitude extends to every household in the village, none of whom entirely escaped having to provide time and attention to an outsider who could offer little in the way of recompense. I apologise to them for any misrepresentation they may feel has occurred.

This volume is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation. An article similar to Chapter 7 has appeared in a monograph edited by J. Picton on potteries from Asia and Africa, published by the Percival David Foundation for Chinese Art and Archaeology. Raymond Allchin, my thesis supervisor, has provided continual encouragement and support. During the course of the research I have received vital advice, criticism and general encouragement from a large number of people, in particular Barbara Bender, Roger Blench, Mary Braithwaite, Fred Brett, Phil Burnham, Mary Searle-Chatterjee, Linda Donley, Ian Hodder, Adrian Mayer, Ann Maclarnon, Jonathan Parry, Mike Rowlands, Colin Shell, Debbie Swallow and Chris Tilley. My greatest debt for sustained critical comment and support is, however, to Rickie Burman.

D.M.

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REFERENCE LIST OF POTTERY AND COMMON METAL VESSELS

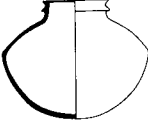


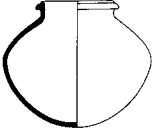

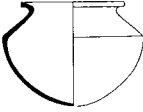
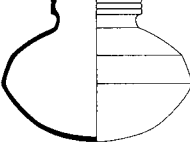

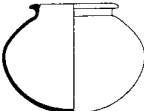

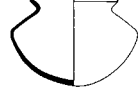


Key

Name of vessel

Usual form of decoration / Type of metal

Most common use

Scale 1:12.5

	<i>Akhatij gagra</i> Painted red Carrying water		<i>Bujhara</i> Painted red Lid
	<i>Anar</i> Unfired Firework		<i>Cauri pot</i> Painted red Weddings
	<i>Barnai</i> Black Cooking		<i>Chayra dohni</i> Black Cooking
	<i>Batloi</i> Red Carrying water		<i>Chhapa</i> Red Stamp
	<i>Bhartiya</i> Black Boiling milk		<i>Damru</i> Painted red Ritual
	<i>Brahman dohni</i> Red and buff Ritual		<i>Dhakan</i> Painted red Lid
			<i>Dhakni</i> Black Lid

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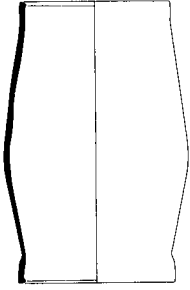
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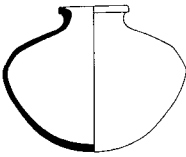
Dhatri
Black
Dough



Dhol
Red
Drum



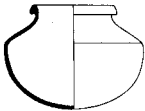
Dhupana
Red
Incense



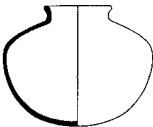
Divali matka
Painted red
Carrying water



Divaniya
Buff
Oil lamp



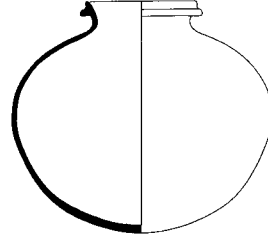
Dohni
Black
Cooking



Gagra
Painted red
Carrying water



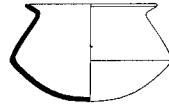
Galla
Black
Money



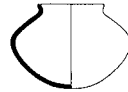
Goli
Painted red
Water



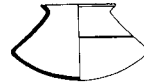
Harawla
Black
Eating



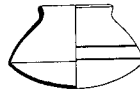
Jhawaliya
Black
Cooking



Kalash/chuklya
Painted red
Ritual/water



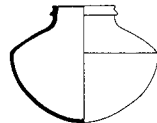
Karela
Black
Cooking



Kareli
Black
Cooking



Katwa
Red and buff
Wedding



Keliya
Black
Ritual

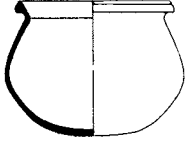
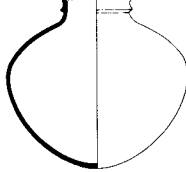
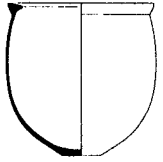
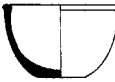
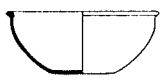
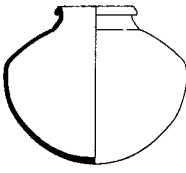




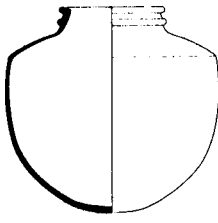
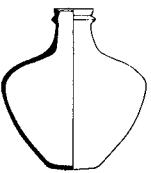


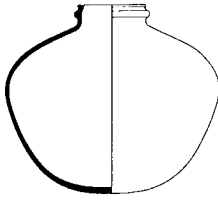

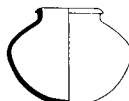

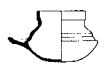



Kulhra
Black
Food



Kulhri
Buff
Ritual

Reference list of pottery

	<i>Kunda</i> Red and buff Water		<i>Matka</i> Painted red Water
	<i>Jhar ka kunda</i> Red Growing trees		<i>Nagara</i> Painted red Drum
	<i>Musulman ka kunda</i> Black Muslim use		<i>Patya</i> Red and buff Wedding
	<i>Kundali</i> Black Tobacco		<i>Pawanda</i> Red and buff Slip and paint
	<i>Gorni ki kundi</i> Painted red Funeral		<i>Paya</i> Red Toy wheel
	<i>Kundi</i> Black Flour		<i>Surahi</i> Red Water
	<i>Lota</i> Black Water		<i>Tapeli</i> Black Cooking
	<i>Maman</i> Black Water		<i>Tolro</i> Red and buff Wedding
	<i>Mamatla</i> Painted red Wedding		<i>Turbana</i> Red and buff Ritual
			<i>Wari</i> Red and buff Wedding
			<i>Wariya</i> Black Food

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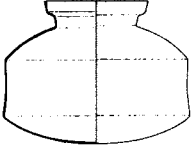
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Reference list of common metal vessels

Batloi
Copper/brass
Water



Katora
Steel
Bowl



Lota
Copper/brass
Water



Bhandia
Aluminium
Cooking



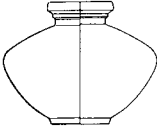
Parat
Copper/brass
Dish



Dabba
Copper/brass
Cooked *roti*



Tapeli
Copper/brass
Cooking



Gagra
Copper/brass
Water