CHAPTER VII

POTS AND THEIR DECORATION IN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. POTS AND THEIR DECORATION

Various types of pots are prepared according to their functional uses. These pots are generally decorated by various types of motifs, painted or engraved upon them. These decorations depend on the functional uses of the pots, and the tastes of the people who use them.

Generally, the cooking vessels (i.e., 'tavadi', 'handli', 'kathrot', etc.), the pots for extracting and keeping the liquor and 'tadi' (i.e., 'bhachra', 'goli', 'sidhni', etc.), pots for pickles, (i.e., 'burni') and pots for measurement (i.e., 'mapio'), which are invariably made in black colour, are either not decorated at all, or, scantily decorated. The pots which are used for milk and milk products (i.e., 'gori', 'ardhio', 'ulachia', etc.) are, only sometimes and at some places, decorated a little by engraving lines,
zig-zag or check designs on their shoulders or brim. Pots, which are used for eating and drinking purposes, and bear black colour, are decorated with incised designs. Such types of pots are mostly manufactured in Panchmahals, and sometimes at other places too. Similarly, the pots which are used as water-storing vessels and have black colour (i.e., black 'matla', 'batak', etc.) are also decorated with engraved designs. Some of the hand-made pots, (such as 'kothi', 'tharu' and terracottas) also sometimes bear engraved motifs. Besides these, some of the objects which are used for smoking tobacco, and are generally in black colour (though, 'cheelam' is found in red colour also) are also decorated with engraved motifs.

Pots which are manufactured in red ware, are generally painted with various types of motifs, using ochre for red and chalk or lime for white colours. Highly decorated pots are made in red ware for ceremonial purposes. Sometimes, these pots are painted even with oil paints. Other painted pots are 'matla', 'ghada', 'gagar' etc., used for storing water. Some of the redwares also do not bear paintings, or are only slightly painted on the shoulder or the rim portions.
The red wares which are highly decorated with various types of motifs, are mostly made and sold in tribal areas or in very interior villages, as the people in these areas have a preference for such types. Locally these highly painted pots are known as 'Bhilwadia Vasan', i.e., the vessels for the Bhils (a tribal people). But in cities and towns, the preference is for slightly decorated or plain pots.

It appears that an earthen pot for the poorer people in remote villages and tribal areas, is still considered to be an article of possession and display, and hence they would like it to be as beautiful as possible. It is noted earlier (in Chapter III) that quite often, an earthen pot is one of the articles of marriage gifts even among the potters. For the people in remote areas, the possession of a beautifully decorated earthen-ware may be as much a matter of pride as the possession of a beautiful China-ware for a high class urbanite. For urban people, the value of an earthen-ware is very little in comparison to the articles of modern ceramics and metal-wares. They use earthen wares only from a utilitarian point of view and for limited purposes, such as storing water, keeping pickles
etc. They like their pots to be plain, cheap, and hence, easily replaceable.

Pots which are sold through the contractors, bear very light decorative motifs, as these pots are generally sold in towns and cities.

2. MOTIFS OF DECORATION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Various motifs are painted or engraved on the present day ceramics as decorative elements. These motifs differ from place to place. The designs are generally painted on the neck and the belly portions of the red pots. But on black pots, only engraved and finger-typed designs are found on the necks and/or shoulders.

The common motifs used for painting the pots in this region, can be classified as:

(a) Linear, Loops and Circular Motifs,
(b) Floral Motif,
(c) Astronomical Motif,
(d) Faunal Motif, and
(e) Miscellaneous Motifs.
What follows is a detailed description of these motifs in an historical perspective.¹

(A) **Linear, Loops and Circular Motifs** (Fig. 1)

**Lines and Bands**

Lines and bands are the most common motifs in these districts. Most of the pots (say, about 75% of decorated pots) are decorated only by lines and bands. Usually, thin lines are painted on the upper most portions of the pots (above the shoulders), followed by thick lines and bands below. Generally, single lines and bands are drawn, but sometimes two or three lines or bands are also drawn on the upper portion of the pot. Many times, two lines or bands are drawn as a frame for executing other designs inbetween. The line is generally drawn on the rim and the neck of the pots, but sometimes it is also drawn on the belly. Thickness of the lines and bands, number of the bands on each pot, space between the bands etc., differ from place to place. Thickest bands (about 3 cms. in width) are drawn at some places like Vadu, Muwal, Dabhasa and Gavasad in Baroda, Dahod taluka in Panchmahals and Kavi and Jambusar in Broach district. Pots which are used by tribal people in Panchmahals,

¹ For the chronology of various excavated sites, referred to in this Chapter, please see Appendix 6.1 at the end of Chapter VI.
### Linear Motif

**Lines and Bands**

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**Wavy and Zig-Zag Lines and Bands**

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**Loops**

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**Wavy and Loops**

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**Finger Tipped and Lines (Lentoids)**

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**Circular**

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*Fig. 1*
Baroda and Broach districts, locally known as 'Bhilwadia Vasen', also bear thick bands.

Bands are usually made around the pot in straight line. At some places the line is turned at the end into a loop but on most of the pots, bands or lines do not coincide at the end. It is one of the very simple designs and hence very common.

Tradition of band design is found right from the prehistoric period. Broad bands ranging in width from one to three cms. are common in Kot Diji pottery. Broad bands, as thick as the height of the neck, are found from Kali-bangan also. But Harappans seem to have preferred bands that are not so thick. Sometimes bands are painted on the Harappan pots to emphasize the other designs or to use them as borders for other decorative elements. Harappans used their band designs as the main decorative motif, or sometimes along with other designs. On some pots of the Harappan period, great care is taken to draw a straight band with similar thickness around the pot. It is seen that the two ends usually coincide. These horizontal bands are used on Harappan pottery in a single line or in double lines. In

Rangpur II, horizontal bands have been found. Painting was normally confined to the upper half of the vessel surface but in a few instances the entire vessel surface was also painted with simple bands.

At Somnath painted decoration is mainly composed of bands. The main feature of this band motif is that bands are made as a border, and in between, many designs are made. In period I of Somnath band motif is found also on Prabhas-ware, but main feature of this band motif is that bands are made as a border, and in between, many designs are made. Some bowls have horizontal bands arranged in groups. In a few instances, single bands are drawn on the rims or on the shoulders of the pots. In period II of Somnath, lustrous red ware bowls bear horizontal band on rim as well as on body. In the first period of Jokha plain horizontal bands have been used along with other geometrical patterns. These painted potteries consist of bowls, pots and 'handlis'. In this period horizontal bands are drawn singly, but sometimes

double or triple bands have also been found. On some of the pots of this period, band has been drawn on the rim, and a design consisting of zig-zag lines bounded by a broad band has been made at the bottom.

Most of the pots at Shamalaji have horizontal band motifs. Red painted ware with black and white bands have been found from Timbarva. Here, carinations of the pots and their bellies are sometimes decorated with two bands and often they have been provided with irregular dots or oblique black lines.

At Vadnagar, black bands on the pots are very common. Sometimes horizontal band is supported with vertical bands, sometimes it is with oblique lines and loop. On some of the Vadnagar pots, eight black bands are found, and the space between two or three bands is filled to form a loop. At Baroda, bands are found on the pottery of historical period.

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7 Mehta, R.N., Excavation at Timbarva, M.S. University of Baroda, 1955, pp.7-17.
9 Subbarao, B.: Baroda Through the Ages, M.S. University of Baroda, 1953, pp.36-55.
It seems that tradition of band motif was continued even in the glazed ware of Muslim period. Many Islamic glazed pottery from Baroda bear different types of bands, and in most of the pots bands have been used as borders to enclose other designs.\textsuperscript{10}

The same tradition of bands on the glazed ware has also been noticed from Champaner. Here many glazed pottery pieces with band motif have been found and on some of the pieces, bands have been used as borders for other designs.\textsuperscript{11}

**Wavy and Zig-Zag Lines and Bands**

After the straight line and bands, wavy and zig-zag lines and bands are the most common designs in these districts. The reason may be that it is much easier to draw. Generally, wavy and zig-zag lines are often enclosed within thick or thin bands.

Thin wavy and zig-zag lines are found specially on the 'matla'. At some places, for depicting this design, two thin bands are drawn first and inbetween the bands a zig-zag line

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11} Excavation at Champaner, By the Department of Archaeology, M.S. University of Baroda, is in progress.
is drawn. The same pattern is repeated, sometimes with thick wavy lines. The aim of the repetition of the same design is to cover a large part of the pot with decorative motif. This motif is very common at almost all the places in these districts. Generally the zig-zag lines are made on very fine pots.

Pots having such designs are found mostly in interior villages. For example, such pots are very common in Dahod taluka of Panchmahals.

These wavy lines are sometimes interpreted to resemble a river, sometimes to a snake, sometimes to ropes and spiral etc. Such designs are usually found on the neck and the belly of the pots. Sometimes a combination of various designs, such as wavy lines, spiral designs etc., is depicted on the same pot. Wavy and zig-zag lines are thus used to create a variety of patterns. The most common pattern is a single wavy line. Next comes the pattern of two wavy lines running parallel to each other. The third pattern is a wavy line, bordered by two parallel straight lines. The fourth is one straight line between two thick wavy lines. The fifth is a single thick wavy band, and the sixth is a broad wavy band.
The seventh pattern is a wavy line having small dots in the grooves. Among the patterns mentioned above, the pattern of a wavy line bordered by two parallel straight lines is very common in this region. For making this pattern, two parallel straight lines are drawn on the belly of the pots first, and then a wavy line is drawn carefully between them. Care has to be taken that the wavy line does not touch the border lines.

The pattern using wavy and zig-zag lines is very common at Kot Diji where multiple wavy lines bordered by horizontal lines are found. This pattern is also found from Harappan site at Lothal, where wavy and zig-zag lines have been used on the pots. It is also found on the pottery of the later chalcolithic culture of Central and Western India. It is very common on Malwa ware where, along with zig-zag lines, circles and hooks are also attached above and below the line producing a very effective motif. At Amri we get a combined motif of wavy lines, straight lines and triangles which produce altogether a new pattern.

In the chalcolithic pottery of Gujarat and afterwards

12 Manchanda Omi: op.cit.
13 Rao, S.R.: 'Excavation at Lothal', Lalit Kala, Nos.3-4, April, 1956-57.
14 Manchanda, Omi: op.cit.
we get this motif in almost all periods. At Somnath\(^{15}\) this motif has been frequently used. Here the wavy lines and latticed designs have been depicted on the pots. These designs are suspended from the loops. On one of the pots from Somnath, a series of big dots on the rim has been painted and ten horizontal wavy line are drawn.

At Jokha\(^{16}\) wavy and zig-zag lines have been found on some of the pots. Here sometimes two horizontal bands and one wavy band or three horizontal bands and three wavy bands have been found. Such patterns have not been reported from Timbarva and Vadnagar.

At Dwarka also zig-zag lines have been depicted on the shoulder of the pot. Wavy lines enclosed with two horizontal lines have been noticed from Nagra.\(^{17}\) On another pot-sherd from Nagra, a combination of bands and zig-zag lines and a 'Z' shape motif is found. On the sherd, upper part is decorated with white band, and the lower part has a zig-zag line followed by three lines in 'Z' shape.\(^{18}\)

\(^{15}\) Nanavati, J.M. and others: Excavation at Somnath, op.cit.
\(^{16}\) Mehta, R.N. and others: Excavation at Jokha, op.cit.
\(^{18}\) Mehta, R.N.: Excavation at Nagra, M.S.University, Baroda, 1968.
Similar patterns are discovered on glazed ware from Baroda which belong to 4th and 5th period of Baroda. In this design, first two close parallel lines have been drawn. Then, after keeping the gap of about 2 cms. another parallel line has been drawn and between the two lower lines, a wavy line has been depicted. This type of design has been found from the medieval period of Champaner also.

**Loop Pattern**

There are three types of loop patterns found in this region:

1. single loop pattern,
2. double loop pattern, and
3. wavy loop pattern.

In the single loop pattern there are three variations:

a) loop on upper side,

b) loop on upper side with dots, and

c) loop on lower side.

Loops on the upper side of the pots are usually small. In the second variation, small loops are drawn and the base line is decorated with small dots. In the third variation

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19 Subbarao, B.: *Baroda Through the Ages*, op.cit.
loops are drawn on the lower side. Such loops are very big.

In the double loop pattern loops have been drawn on both the upper and the lower sides, and in between the loops, small dots have been put. In this pattern, loops are very small and close, and they resemble a spiral.

In the wavy loop pattern, each loop is separate, and it is surrounded by small dots. In another variant of the same design, two round loops are connected with each other and surrounded by dots. This type of loops are found on pottery from Nagara. In the third variant two big loops have been drawn in one line. Loops are not much coiled and they are also surrounded by small dots.

Yet another pattern is formed by breaking the chain of loops. In this design loops are drawn in groups of three, two loops on the base and one on the top.

Another pattern is formed by drawing a row of vertical curved lines resembling an elongated 'S'. This pattern has not been discovered from any of the excavated sites in this region. Another variant of this design is that one roughly drawn elongated 'S' is alternated with a cluster of circular dots. This too has not been noted in any of the excavations.
Omi Manctand who has examined the loop designs from Harappa, feels that the Harappans were very fond of loop designs. Generally this design is found in early phase of Harappa. At Mohenjodaro, loops were used as a primary motif. They were further embellished by dotting each loop, or by cross hatching. But in later period they used it as a secondary decorative motif, and used them as arches for enclosing the Sun motif. Loop also emerged as purely a geometrical motif at Lothal. But instead of the beautiful curve, they were given an angular shape. It was also used as a frame for enclosing the plant motifs. On most of the Harappan pots, we get downwards loops. Sometimes dots are also given.

Loop designs have also been found from almost all the chalcolithic, historical and mediaeval sites of Gujarat. Somnath potters had used intersecting loops and broad bands. Some of the dishes on stands have intersecting loops painted on them. On the pottery of Somnath, loop design has been used with a panel of many designs.

20 Manchanda Omi: A Study of Harappan Pottery, op. cit.
21 Nanavati, J.M. and others: Excavation at Somnath, op. cit.
Loop design is not much used on Jokha pottery. Only few pots having loop designs have been noticed. On one of the pots from Jokha a pattern of oblique lines with design of loops on outer side has been reported.

On Nagara pottery various types of loops have been found. Here, sometimes it is depicted as a primary motif and sometimes with a panel of various other designs. On some of the sherds, loops have been attached downwards with a band and sometimes loops are separate from the band, as it is found at present also. Sometimes loops have been enclosed by a band of white colour on either side. Sometimes a combination of loops and straight lines has also been painted.

On Dwarka pottery, loop design has not been used separately as primary motif, but has been used with other motifs. On some of the pots, various designs have been painted along with the loop design. On one pot at Dwarka a combination of decorative bands zig-zag left slant lines,

23 Mehta, R.N. and others: Excavation at Jokha, op.cit.
24 Mehta, R.N., Excavation at Nagara, op.cit.
hatched lozenges and hanging loops or inverted loops have been found.

From Shamalaji also loop design in paint has not been found much except on a few sherds. On one of the pots, a design of loop with black and white bands has been painted. On most of the Shamalaji pottery loop designs are engraved on the pots.

At Vadnagar loop design on the pottery has been found, but it is also combined with horizontal black bands, a few slightly oblique lines and floral patterns.

Loop design is also found on glazed pottery of mediaeval period of Baroda. Here also loop design is not used as a primary motif, but as a secondary decorative element combined with straight lines and bands. On glazed pottery of Champaner also, loops are enclosed by straight lines.

Tradition of loop design has been there right from the Harappan period. Harappan potters, in early phases, used it as a primary decorative motif. But in later period it was

27 Subbarao, B.: Baroda Through the Ages, op.cit.
used as a secondary decorative element. Even Lothal potters used it in the same way. But this tradition has continued through almost all the periods in Gujarat. Everywhere in Gujarat, it was used as a secondary decorative element along with lines, bands or oblique designs. This tradition continued to be used on the glazed pottery from Baroda and Champaner. The tradition of glazed potter almost ended in Gujarat by the beginning of 19th century A.D. However, the tradition of this motif has continued till the present time. It appears that this tradition has been largely preserved by those families whose ancestors were producing glazed ware during the hey-day of Champaner. This motif is most common among Gurjar potters who claim to have emigrated from Champaner. Glazed ware has gone out of fashion now, and yet the motif continues to be used on other pots. Some potters of other groups have also adopted this motif.

**Finger-Tipped Designs**

A design made by thumb or finger impression is one of the common motifs found in these districts. This finger tipped motif is also known as lentoids. Various types of lentoid patterns have been developed in this region.
The First type consists of very small lentoids made by pressing fingers on a wet pot. The second type is slightly bigger but it has irregular shapes. The third type is bigger than the second and it has a wavy line on the right side. The fourth type is very big, and it is slightly conical. In the fifth variety, small lentoids are made, and below the lentoids a thick wavy band is drawn with a brush to serve as a border. In the sixth type, lentoids are bordered by thick bands on either side.

This motif seems to have been very popular during pre-Harappan and Harappan period, as many sherds of pots bearing this motif have been found from these sites. This motif has been noticed from Kalibangar where it is depicted separately, but it is suspended with double lines. At Amrialso a similar motif has been found.²⁸

This finger-tipped motif has been reported from sites of Gujarat as well such as Devnimori²⁹, Nagara³⁰ etc. But

²⁸ Manchanda Omi: A Study of Harappan Pottery, op.cit.
³⁰ Mehta, R.N.: Excavation at Nagara, op.cit.
this motif has not been reported for mediaeval period potter, though at present it is very common in these districts.

**Circular Motif**

In this motif coiled circles have been shown. There are four variants in this design. First motif has a loop. Second motif is a composite unit of three loops. The third motif has two circles. In their centre a design of dot with curved end is drawn. This motif is very common in almost all these districts.

We find this type of motif even in Harappan period. They used the circular motif and further elaborated it by putting a dot or many dots in a circle. In the later phase of Harappan culture at Lothal it merely degenerated into quarter foiled contiguous circle.\(^{31}\) After Lothal, this type of circular motif is generally not found in Gujarat.

Few sherd pieces from Dwarka bear double circle motif and a pair of horizontal bands between them. However, this motif is not painted but incised.\(^{32}\)

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31 Manchanda Omi: A Study of Harappan Pottery, op.cit.
Some pots from Baroda of medieval period bear circular motif, and sometimes circles enclosed with dots have also been found. This type of motif has not been found in Champaner so far.

It seems that tradition of circular motif was not very common in Gujarat. Its use in earlier periods has been rare, though it is used quite often now.

(B) Floral Motifs

Flowers (Fig. 2)

Many types of floral patterns are depicted on the present day pottery in this region. The patterns are different from place to place. But some patterns in floral motif are very common to almost all the places in these districts.

The floral patterns used in this region are usually of the following types:

i) Ovate flower
ii) Round flower
iii) Flower with joint petals
iv) Flower with petals and stalk.

33 Subbarao, B.: Baroda through the Ages, op. cit.
FLOWER MOTIF

OVATE FLOWER

ROUND FLOWER

FLOWER WITH JOINT PETALS

FLOWER WITH PETALS AND STALK

Fig. 2
(i) **Ovate flower**: As the name indicates, this flower has an oval shape. Even in this pattern many designs are used for decorating the inside part of the flower.

In its simplest form, an oval-shaped flower is made, and thick lines are drawn inside it. In the second type, an oval is drawn, and a wavy line is drawn inside the oval. Another oval is drawn which is fitted with two thick lines, and dots are given in between these two lines.

In the third type, first a slightly wavy oval is drawn in which small petal-like symbols are shown on the base line and a crescentic line is shown in the middle.

In the fourth type an oval-shaped flower is drawn in which petals are shown in wavy small loops filled with dots. Sometimes small thick and round lines are also shown inside.

The ovate flower motif is one of the most common motifs in these districts.

(ii) **Round flower**: Another very common and popular motif is a round flower. This type of flower is depicted on the pots at various places with little variations in the pattern.
In its simplest form, a small round circle is drawn inside which a simple wavy line is depicted.

Another type has a bigger round circle with small symbols for petals. Sometimes a wavy line, symbolizing petals, is also drawn inside the circle.

Yet another pattern is to fill in the circle with dots or curves or yet another circle full of dots.

(iii) Flower with joint petals: Some of the flowers are depicted in such a manner that petals are joined with one-another. In this type also there are variations. Differences are due to the number, style and position of petals on the flower and the size of the flower.

In its simplest form one small flower is shown in which only four petals from one side are clear and other petals are not clear. It is a crude form of flower.

In the other type the flower is bigger than in the first type. It has six clear petals, and inside the flower some dots are painted.

Yet another type depicts a bigger flower in which a few petals are clearly shown and almost all the petals are
attached with one another. Some dots with slightly wavy lines are shown inside the petals.

(iv) **Flower with petals and stalk**: Some flowers are shown in a very nice and artistic manner, with beautiful petals and stalk. But this motif is very rare and is found only at some places. Potters of Shivrajpur in Panchmahals paint such types of flowers.

Tradition of flower motif is very old and is found right from the pre-Harappan period of Kalibangan. There, a variety of flower motifs have been found but they are all individual motifs, dominated by stylised lotus bud. On Harappan pottery this type of floral motifs are rare. There, mostly it is found in the form of leaves etc.

In Gujarat right from the Harappan period we get floral motifs. In Lothal B, the conventional floral motif, i.e., long curving leaves enclosing a dot tipped rosette was very common. Besides the Harappan sites, only few other historical sites reveal such motifs in Gujarat. A pot having semicircular design with flower of three lines has been found at Shamalaji, Devnimori pottery also bears flower.

Mancbanda Omi: *A Study of Harappan Pottery*, op.cit.
motifs.\textsuperscript{35} On one of the pot from Devnimori one flower
creeper with flowers having six rhomboid petals have been
found. It seems that in that period this type of design was
quite common in Devnimori. After that period, rarely we
get floral motif on the pottery. Tradition of flower motif
again revived in mediaeval period and mostly it was used
for decorating the glazed pottery.\textsuperscript{36} Glazed ware of Baroda
and Champaner give a fine idea about the floral motifs
during that period. A flower with stalk has been found on a
 glazed ware from Baroda. Below the flower, two double lines
filled with oblique patterns have been drawn. Many glazed
ware pots bearing flower motif have been found from Champaner. On one of the sherds from Champaner a flower has been
shown with many petals and three leaves. In another design, a flower with many petals has been shown attached to a
creeper having beautiful leaves. On some of the pots, a
bunch of three small flowers with very small petals have
been shown. But the glazed ware from Calico Mills, Ahmedabad, has not revealed any such motif.\textsuperscript{37}

It seems that floral motif was in use right from the
pre-Harappan period, and later it was used in Chalcolithic

\textsuperscript{35} Mehta, R.N. and others: \textit{Excavation at Devnimori}, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{36} Subbarao, B.: \textit{Baroda Through the Ages}, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{37} Mehta, R.N.: \textit{Excavation at Calico Mills, Ahmedabad},
Unpublished Report, Department of Archaeology and Ancient
History, M.S. University of Baroda, 1976.
period. But after early historical period this motif was rarely used. Again tradition of flower motif started from mediaeval period and it was used by the potters for their glazed wares. In the earlier period this motif has been depicted in a symbolic form without taking much care about the finishing, but in mediaeval period it was painted in a natural and artistic way. Tradition of mediaeval period still continues at some places in these districts.

Leaves and Trees Motif (Fig. 3)

The tradition of painting the pots with leaves and trees motif is found in the interior areas of these districts. Leaves are generally painted along with big trees or bushes.

Only at a few places paintings of leaves without trees or bushes on the pots are found. At Rajpipla in Broach district, potters use leaf pattern for decorating the pots. Here, generally leaves are shown with a creeper. On some of the pots leaves alone are also painted and these resemble the rose leaves. At other places in these districts leaf alone is rarely painted.
LEAF AND TREE MOTIF

LEAVES

TREES

BANANA MOTIF

Fig. 3
At some places it has been found that a single big motif covering almost all the parts of the pot is painted. Such motifs are found in Godhara, Devagadh Baria and Dahod talukas of Panchmahals district. The pots on which such big motifs are painted, are known as "Bhilwadia Vasan" or "Gamadia Vasan", i.e., the pots used by tribal people.

This type of design is known as 'Jhada', i.e., plant design. It is a composite motif having many different components. First the base or the ground is shown by drawing three horizontal lines close to each other. Above the base, the tree trunk with many small branches is painted all with linear strokes. Three dots each on either side of the trunk below the pail are shown, and below the base line, wavy lines and loops having small dots inside are shown which resemble roots inside the earth.

In another plant motif, three branches are shown, the first going parallel to the earth, the second going upwards upto some height, and the third one in the middle going very high and changing into the shape of a 'saro' tree.

Painting leaves and trees on the pots is a very old tradition. Right from the Amri culture, we get such type of
paintings on the pots. Stylised leaves are found on the Amri ware in the later phase. Here only one type of conventional leaf was depicted, that was pipal leaf. It was painted vertically, bifurcated in the centre and two lobes of the leaf were hatched obliquely.

During the Harappan period, the potters had attempted to represent the trees realistically with swinging boughs and curving trunks. They tried to paint palm tree, neem tree, 'acacia' (or 'babul'), banana or some other trees with broad leaves, and above all the pipal tree (ficus religiosa). Some conventional plants with stylised leaves were also painted. They further made the birds frolic among the branches, peacock peck at the leaves, fish tug at the aquatic weeds and simple plants sprout from the pots to make them as representational as possible. At Lothal, they painted the tree placing there-upon a bird with a fish in the beaks. But simple pipal leaf had lost its shape getting mixed with other kinds of tree leaves.

From the other excavated sites of Gujarat, this motif is rare. Only few sites have revealed such motifs.

38 Manchanda Omi: A Study of Harappan Pottery, op.cit.
39 Ibid.
At Dwarka a leaf painted on burnished red surface has been found. From Dwarka a shoulder part of a pot decorated with impressed tree design has been found.\textsuperscript{40} It shows that the tradition of depicting trees on the pots was there but instead of painting, they were made by impressing.

At Devnimori leaves and trees have not been found but a pot sherd with a stamped flower, leaves and a line of raised dots below the design has been found.\textsuperscript{41}

This motif is also found on Muslim glazed ware of mediaeval period. Excavation of Baroda has revealed a few pieces with leaf design on glazed ware.\textsuperscript{42} From Champaner we get various types of leaves (e.g., leaves like rosette, other flower leaves with stalk and various other types of plant leaves), painted on glazed pottery.

It seems that on Harappan pottery this motif was used as a primary element but after that this design was used in Gujarat as a secondary element along with other decorative elements. It was during the mediaeval period when this design was again renewed, and from then on it continues to be

\textsuperscript{40} Ansari, Z.A.: \textit{Excavation at Dwarka}, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{41} Mehta, R.N. and others: \textit{Excavation at Devnimori}, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{42} Subbarao, B.: \textit{Baroda Through the Ages}, op.cit.
used as a decorative element of the pots. But the naturality and the finish that we find on the glazed ware of mediaeval period, is not found at the present time.

**Banana Motif (Fig. 3)**

This motif has some similarity with banana and locally it is known as 'kera' design (i.e.e, banana design). Various types of banana motifs are painted at various places, and it is very common motif in Baroda. In one of the designs, a banana is shown and it is filled with dots, loops and wavy lines. In another design it is filled by wavy lines only. In the third type, the shape resembles a banana and the stalk part of the fruit is also shown.

On the Harappan pottery banana trees with leaves have been depicted, but we do not find banana motif from any other site in Gujarat. It seems this motif is a new tradition.

**(C) Faunal Motif (Fig.4)**

The faunal motifs prevalent in these districts, variously describe insects, (like, scorpion, gross hopper

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43 Manchanda, Omi: *A Study of Harappan Pottery*, op.cit.
FAUNAL MOTIF

SCORPION

GARASSHPER

FISH

SPARROW

PEACOCK

HUMAN BEING

Fig. 4
etc.) fishes and birds (like peacock and sparrow).

**Scorpion**: Among all the faunal motifs scorpion ('bichhi') is the most common motif depicted on the pots. It is found at many places in Panchmanals and Baroda district. But there are differences in the shape and size. The following variants of scorpions have been found from these districts:

(i) The scorpion is about 12 cms. long. The abdomen of the scorpion is in a triangular form and the tail is coiled with the help of two lines, and inbetween, wavy lines have been drawn. The head of the scorpion has been shown having two auxiliary arms, and the front part of the scorpion is surrounded by dots.

(ii) This motif is slightly smaller than the first one. Here only the head and the tail portions are prominent, and two auxiliary arms and the head part are also shown. The scorpion is surrounded by dots. It seems that it is an improvement of the first design.

(iii) This design is very small having 5 cms of length. Here small coiled tail is shown with abdomen which is not prominent. Two auxiliary arms with mouth have been shown on the head side. The leg portion is also shown and the whole figure is surrounded by dots.
(iv) This design is very small having about 4 cms of length. In this figure the tail portion is not much coiled. The abdomen portion is also very prominent and at front side, two auxiliary arms have been shown. It is quite an improved form of scorpion. This figure is also surrounded by dots.

At present scorpion motif is also found on Rajasthan pottery.\textsuperscript{44} This motif has not been traced on the pottery found from the excavation of this region.

\textbf{Fish (Pisces)}: Though, depicting fishes on pottery is a very old tradition, at present this motif is not very common in this region. Only at one place, called vejalvar in Panchmahals district, this motif has been found to be in use. Here a small fish is depicted on the pot, in a very natural form with small gills, body, tail and wings. Scales are also shown on the body. This fish is quite similar to 'rohu' fish (Labeo rohita).

Fish motif has not been found from the excavated sites in this region. As far as the Harappan pottery is concerned, some pottery having fish motif is known, but that is also rare. Fish motif was rare at Mohenjodaro but not at other

\textsuperscript{44} Baidyanath Saraswati and Nabkishore Behura: \textit{Pottery Techniques in Peasant India}. Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, 1964, p.142.
centres. At Chanhudaro a fish was shown as tugging away a water reed and they were conventionally arranged around the mouth of a small pot as was done even at Harappa.45

'Titighoda' (Grass hopper) : Another motif which is very common on the present day pottery is that of a grass hopper (poecilocerus). It is locally known as 'titighoda'. This is a green coloured small insect which is mostly seen during rainy season in this area. This insect has been shown with small tail, small trunk portion with impression of four legs. Head is separately shown with neck joints. It is surrounded by dots. This motif also seems to have been of a later origin, because we do not get such motif from any excavated site of this region.

Bird Motif

Peacock : It is also an interesting bird which is found depicted on the pots of Panchmahals district, specially in the taluka Jhalod. Peacock is depicted in a very rough style. This peacock has a triangular body with a long and thin neck and a crown. Tail part of the peacock is shown by three pairs of wavy lines going downwards. Legs are not

45 Manchanda, Omi : A Study of Harappan Pottery; op.cit.
shown but many round dots have been put below the base.

Painting of peacock is a very old tradition. On Harappan pottery, it was beautifully shown with its long crest and spreading plumes in various stances. Sometimes it was represented as pecking the leaves or looking fondly at its young one sitting on the nest. At many occasions it is shown with a leaf or snake in its beak. From Rangpur II B, a peacock painted on a bowl has been found which has a thin neck with crown on the head, long body and four wavy lines as plumes or tail. On the front side two legs have also been shown. It is very similar to the peacock painted now-a-days in Jhalod taluka of Panchmahals district.

Peacock motif has not been found so far from any other excavated site in Gujarat. Even the mediaeval painted glazed potteries of Champaner and Ahmedabad have not revealed this type of motif.

Sparrow motif ('Chakali'): Sparrow which is locally known as 'Chakali' has been noticed from few villages of Baroda district. Sparrow is a small bird which is very

46 Ibid.
common in this region. Sparrow motif is also found on the pottery of Rajasthan.\textsuperscript{48}

But this motif has not been found from any excavated sites of this region.

We find that bird motif is very common on Indian pottery right from the Harappan period. Harappan sites of Kalibangan, Harappa itself and Lothal have revealed many types of bird-motifs. The common bird motifs on Harappan pottery are peacock, swan, crow, duck, hen etc.\textsuperscript{49}

Bird motif is not very common on the historic period pottery. But in mediaeval period this motif seems to have been very common. Mediaeval pottery of Champaner also has revealed bird motif. On one of the pots of Champaner, a bird has been shown in flying position, and probably it is a swan.

Human Motif

Human motif is very rare on the pots. This motif has been found only at one place in Panchmahals. Locally, this motif is known as 'Chhokari' or girl. The figure of a

\textsuperscript{48} Baidyanath Saraswati and Nabkishore Behura: \textit{Pottery Technique in Peasant India}, op.cit.

\textsuperscript{49} Manchanda, Omi: \textit{A Study of Harappan Pottery}, op.cit.
girl has been shown in standing position, wearing a skirt. Her head, neck, legs and hands have been shown in a crude form.

Human motif is rare in ancient periods as well. Only a few sherds bearing human motifs have been found from Harappan sites. One of the sherds shows a fisherman carrying two nets suspended from a pole across his shoulder. He is preceded by another man whose arm alone is visible at the extreme right and is followed by a quadruped, of which very little could be seen.\(^50\)

Human motif has not been found from any historic or mediaeval sites of this region.

Faunal motifs are very rare on the present day potteries. It is used only at some places. Among the faunal motifs, figures of grassopper scorpion, birds and fishes are found. Quadrupeds or horned animals are not to be found anywhere on the present day pottery. It could be due to religious traditions. Since pots are painted before firing, some of the potters consider the painting of animal motifs on the pots as equivalent to burning a living animal in the kiln.

\(^{50}\) Manchanda, Omi: A Study of Harappan Pottery, op.cit.
Muslim potters of Broach consider it highly irreligious to paint any living object. These reasons for not painting animal motifs on the pots are not true only for this region, but also for many other places in India. And this had been true historically as well which explains rare finds of faunal motifs from excavated sites.

Besides the above reason, another reason may be, that painting of faunal motifs takes more time and labour and it needs more skill than is needed for floral or geometrical motifs. On the other hand, all the pots, irrespective of the designs on them, fetch more or less the same price. Therefore, it is not profitable to paint such motifs.

If we compare the faunal motifs on early and mediaeval period pottery with present day pottery we find that these motifs in the earlier periods were painted in a very artistic manner, and with maximum care. So they look very beautiful. But at present time, generally these motifs are depicted in a crude and rough manner.

Thus, with the passage of time, there seems to be a tendency of deterioration in the tradition of decorating the pots in general, and of painting the faunal motifs and other delicate patterns in particular.
Astronomical Motifs (Fig. 5)

The importance of the sun, the moon and the stars is known to the man from the very beginning. These have been considered as objects of beauty and sources of power and have been worshipped. Painters and craftsmen have depicted these natural objects on their works of arts and crafts.

On present day pottery these motifs are commonly found in various forms. In the first form half moon and one star is shown. The moon is usually depicted in a very simple way. In another variant, half moon has been shown with three stars. In the third type 3/4th part of the moon is shown and it is surrounded by the halo of the moon. In the fourth form, half moon has been shown which is surrounded by a thick band, and the shape is slightly horizontal.

In yet another form, a small circle representing the moon is shown, and this is surrounded by small dots which represent stars.

Sun motif was very common at Amri. It was represented by a very simple dot within a circle, surrounded by radiating strokes. This pattern is also noticed at other important
ASTRONOMICAL MOTIF

MOON AND STARS

Fig. 5
centres of Harappan culture. Another interesting form was the simple sun motif surrounded by radiating strokes ending in leaves. In India, it was first found at Pre-Harappan site of Kalibangan (stratigraphically) and then at Chanhu-daro and Harappa. At Lothal it was represented in the same way but was shown in its simplest form.

After the Harappan period, the motif of rising sun and star is seldom noticed on Gujarat pottery. One piece bearing semicircular ladder and a rising sun has been found from Jokha. From the excavation at Baroda, one sherd has been found which also has a sun like motif. Besides these, it has not been reported from any other site of Gujarat.

At present the potters in this region depict the motif of moon and stars only. It seems that it is a new tradition which cannot be linked with older traditions in India.

(E) Miscellaneous Motifs (Fig.6)

A Composite Motif

On some of the pots of the present day pottery, a typical pattern is made with the combination of various individual

51 Manchanda, Omi: A Study of Harappan Pottery, op.cit.
52 Mehta, R.N. and others: Excavation at Jokha, op.cit.
53 Subbarao, B.: Baroda Through the Ages, op.cit.
MISCELLANEOUS MOTIFS

Fig. 6
motifs, such as lines, loops, circles, dots, leaves and flowers. These motifs are arranged in such a way that sometimes the combination represents a 'border design', sometimes a leaf or a flower, but at other times it has no identifiable shape. This type of composite motif is very common on the pots like 'matli', 'matla' and such other pots which are generally termed as "Bhilwadia Vasan", mostly manufactured in Panchmahals. Composite motif is also found sometimes in Baroda district, but it is not very common.

Among the composite motifs, border design is the most common. First a broad band is formed by two parallel straight lines. Then the band is filled in with a combination of wavy lines, zig-zag lines, flowers and dots.

Other patterns in the composite motif are created by a combination of linear strokes, curves, loops and dots.

Border design has a very old tradition. Right from the pre-Harappan period we get different types of motifs enclosed with two parallel straight lines or bands, and these have been discussed already under the section "Linear, Loops and Circular motifs". Among the other composite motifs, none of the patterns found in this region at present (Fig.6) exactly
matches with any of those found from the excavated sites. Most of these appear to be free-hand designs.

One may conclude from the foregoing discussion that the tradition of decorating the pots with various motifs is very old, going back to pre-Harappan period, though, the tradition is on the decline now under the influence of modern urbanization. However, decoration of pots is still popular in the interior villages and particularly with the tribal people. Most of the linear and circular motifs, which are the most common among various motifs, have a very old tradition. Some of the floral and faunal motifs also have old tradition, and they have continued till now more or less, in the same form. During the earlier periods, and particularly during the mediaeval period, these designs were executed on the pots with great care and sophistry. But the present day designs are rather crude, and only symbolic in some cases.