HELLENISTIC AND POST-HELLENISTIC POTTERY FROM KOJTEPA

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The main aim of this report\textsuperscript{1} is to present some preliminary conclusions about the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic pottery coming from the excavation activities of the joint Uzbek-Italian Archaeological Mission\textsuperscript{2}, directed by Dr. Kazim Abdullaev of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan (hereafter IAASU) and Prof. Bruno Genito of the Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” (hereafter UNIOR) at Kojtepa\textsuperscript{3}. One will deal here exclusively with a typological study, not having at disposal, for the central-Asiatic sites, of any archaeometric data related to the fabric analysis. It would be, therefore, impossible to compare the results of the petrographic analysis, conducted on the Kojtepa potsherds in collaboration with the Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II”\textsuperscript{4}. The definition of “Hellenistic” and “post-Hellenistic” pottery is, furthermore, here based only on morphological

\textsuperscript{1} All the reports are published in the Newsletter Archeologia, CISA, Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” (Genito, Gricina et alii 2009; 2010; Abdullaev and Genito 2011; 2012; Genito and Raiano 2011; Raiano 2012; 2013; Genito et alii 2014 infra).

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\textsuperscript{3} The geographic coordinates of the site are 42N 300099.77 m E, 4386573.90 m N (UTM); the geo-referencing system is WGS84 42N. It consists of 9m high central tepe encircling by fortified walls and a moat. It is located in an area between the southern piedmont region of Karatyube chain and the northernmost extensive cultivated area, close to Chandyr village, in the Pastdargom district, about 27km south-west of the modern city of Samarkand.

\textsuperscript{4} I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. V. Morra and Dr A. De Bonis, of the department of Scienze della Terra, dell'Ambiente e delle Risorse dell’Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II” for the great availability and the great professionalism with which they have conducted petrographic analysis.
criteria, awaiting for the future availability of archaeometric data coming from other archaeological context in Central Asia.

**The Historical Background**

Following the victory of Alexander the Great on the last Achaemenid King Darius III (331 BC), a new era began in Sogdiana and in the whole Central Asia. Between the 329 and 327 BC, the nobles of Bactria and Sogdiana, under the leadership of Bessus first and then of Spitamenes, engaged Alexander and his troops in three-year war. Only with the death of Spitamenes in 328 BC, many Bactrian and Sogdian nobles agreed to recognize the authority of the Macedonian, but on the condition to preserve the privilege of sovereignty over their ancient territories. After the death of Alexander (323 BC), the famous “Wars of the Diadochi” took place: in the fight for the supremacy, Seleucus (311-281 BC), a noble of Macedonian origins and founder of the Seleucid dynasty (312 BC-63 AD), in 312 BC, emerged. Although the “real” Greek presence in Sogdiana lasted about 150 years, the influence of the Hellenistic traditions deeply changed the tradition of the ceramic production of the whole area. During the second half of the 3\(^{rd}\) century BC, a gradual breaking process involved the territories of Bactria and Sogdiana: as a result, the Seleucid satrap of Bactria-Sogdiana, Diodotus I, proclaimed himself king of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom (circa 250-130 BC). A new stage in the history of Sogdiana and Central Asia began during the second half of the 2\(^{nd}\) century BC with the invasion of nomadic peoples coming from the northern territories: Strabo (Geografía XI.8.2) called them Asioi, Pasianoí, Tocharoi and Sakaraukai; the Chinese sources Shiji, Hanshu and Hou Hanshu, called them Yuezhi, Kangju, Wusun and Xiongnu\(^5\).

**From “local” to “Hellenistic” pottery**

Before the “Greek” conquest (330 BC), the central-Asiatic pottery productions seem to have been characterized mainly by local features, awaiting for the future availability of archaeometric data coming from other archaeological context in Central Asia.

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\(^5\) One will not deal here with the problems and hypotheses related to the identification of such peoples, for whom, for instance, it is possible to refer to the works of Enoki 1998, Liu 2001, Thierry 2005.
differing from each other, most probably because of the absence of a sufficiently strong and centralized political power enable to impose a certain degree of uniformity in the material culture. Only from the 3rd century BC, one may observe a radical change with the introduction and spread of pottery of the Hellenistic tradition, and this did not immediately happen; in the previous period, pottery productions (6th-4th century BC), in fact, lasted a few more decades after the Macedonian control over Bactria and Sogdiana.

This seems to occur both by the emergence of new decorations and/or changes in the traditional shapes, and through deep technological and functional transformations: i.e., the shift to more individual containers such as plates and bowls (testimony of a different use in the cooking and eating habits) and of specific forms such as craters and jugs.

During the Seleucid dynasty (312 BC-63 AD), therefore, the pottery productions underwent a process of “Hellenization” that completely overshadowed the “local” pottery traditions (Lyonnet 2010b, 34) with the appearance of typical shapes of Mediterranean origin, such as the fish-plates and craters, although with enough coarser shapes, undecorated and/or with a very limited repertoire.

Hellenistic Pottery according to typological comparisons

Up to now, after five seasons of archaeological fieldwork, no stratigraphic levels dated before the 4th-3rd century BC have been identified at Kojtepa. Whether or not this stage was actually “Hellenistic” is not possible to define in the absence of clear confirmations. As mentioned above, Hellenistic pottery in Kojtepa was defined on the basis of typological comparisons with the ceramic productions from different central-Asiatic sites.

Some shapes, compared with the Hellenistic materials found in the sites of Afrāsīāb (Lyonnet 2013a; 2013b) and Aī Khānum (Lyonnet 1997), present some features that might suggest an influence of Greek type, but, more critically, one tends to lean towards a possible later inheritance of those Greek elements.

Among the evidence of “Hellenistic” shapes in Kojtepa, noteworthy are two potsherds belonging to dishes with rounded rim and straight wall:
Inv. nos. 0123, 0124 (Fig. 1) of the type Ma3-2, characterized by a compact clay body, slightly rough in fracture, with low frequency of inclusions.

Similar shapes are attested to Aï Khânum (Lyonnet 1997, fig. 43, 1), in the Surkhân Dar‘ja valley at Termez, dated to 3rd-2nd century BC (Pidaev 1987, fig. 1, 14), Mirzankul’ Tepe between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD (Pidaev 1978, pl. IV, 6), Dal’verdžin Tepe between the end of the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD (Pugačenkova and Rtveladze 1978, fig. 101, 10).

In the Zeravšân valley, they are attested at Afrâsiâb between the end of the 4th to the 2nd century BC (Šiškina 1974, fig. 6, 19).

As far as the goblets is concerning, a useful element for their dating is the characteristic base: if the goblet stands on a flat bottom, on a disk - or ring-shaped base, it can be dated to the Hellenistic period (4th-3rd century BC); if, however, it stands on a stem, it is generally dated to the post-Hellenistic period (from the 2nd BC onwards).

At Kojtepa, the goblets of the series Mab1-3, with disc-shaped base (Figs. 2, 3, 4), are comparable with other Hellenistic exemplary dated from the 4th BC onward. In particular, the goblets with convex walls are attested in Bactria, at Aï Khânum (Lyonnet 1997, fig. 45, 1) and at Dil’berdžin (Kruglikova 1974, fig. 12) during the 4th-3rd BC. In the Surkhân Dar‘ja valley, the same shape appears during the so-called “Greco-Bactrian” period (250-130 BC) in the sites of Dal’verdžin Tepe (Pugačenkova and Rtveladze 1978, fig. 100, 1), Kampyr Tepe (Rtveladze 1987, pl. XX, 5) and Termez (Pidaev 1987, fig. 1, 1-2). In the Biškent valley (in today’s Tadžikistan), they are attested in the Tulkhar cemetery (Mandelštam 1966, pl. XXI, 11-17, pl. XXIV, 1, 2, 4-7, 9-11). They are attested also in the area of the middle Amu Dar‘ja, in the cemetery of Babašov (Mandelštam 1975, pl. XXII, 2-8) from the end of the 2nd century BC until the 3rd century AD. In the Zeravšân valley, this shape is attested to Afrâsiâb between the 3rd and the 2nd century BC (Kabanov 1969, figs. 3, 9), and from the 3rd century BC to the 1st century AD (Šiškina 1975, fig. 2; 1974, figs. 5, 17, 20, 21, 27).

From “Hellenistic” to post-Hellenistic pottery

If the incursion of nomadic peoples such as the Yuezhi, Xiongnu and the Kangju, had, therefore, led to the end of the Greek domination, this
“invasion” did not lead to the loss of the Hellenistic traditions in the pottery productions. Alongside the hand-modelled tableware, a new type of ware developed directly from the shapes attested during the final stage of Aï Khānum, for both the shapes and decorations: the transition from this stage in pottery production to the next, from the 1st to the 4th century AD, was direct and gradual.

B. Lyonnet (1997, 157-172) identified three distinct groups each one linked, at least in general, to a specific nomadic group inside the repertory of “new” shapes:

1. bottle-shaped vessels spread over Aï Khānum, the Hissar river valley, in the cemeteries of the Kizilsu and Ferghana valleys;
2. goblets on the stem attested in the cemetery close to Aï Khānum, in the plain of Bactra along the left bank of the Kunduz river, in the cemetery of Hissar, Kafirnigan and Biškent valleys, and in the Zeravšān valley;
3. tripod base vessels, found at Aï Khānum, in the plain of Bactra along the left bank of the river Kunduz, in the valleys of rivers Surkhān Dar’ja, Hissar, Kafirnigan, Biškent, Vakhš and Zeravšān.

**Post-Hellenistic Pottery according to typological comparisons**

At Kojtepa, no potsherds of bottle-shaped vessels have been found.

On the basis of comparisons and of the stratigraphic provenance of the potsherds, the goblets on stem of the series Ma1 (Figs. 5, 6) and goblets bases of the type Mab1 (Figs. 7, 8) seems to be dated to the post-Hellenistic period (from 2nd century BC onward), according to comparisons with those coming from Aï Khānum (Lyonnet 1997, fig. 48, 7-11; 2001, fig. 4).

In the Bactrian plain, goblets on stem were found in the tomb no 3 of Tillja Tepe (Sarianidi 1989, 69, 82) and dated to the 1st century AD according with the presence of an *aureus* of the Emperor Tiberius. Some exemplary of this type in the site of Dil’berdžin have been dated between the 1st BC - 1st AD (Kruglikova and Pugačenkova 1977, fig. 16, 1-12), others to the 1st AD (Kruglikova and Pugačenkova 1977, fig. 20, 11-12),
and still others to the so-called “period of Great Kushans”6 (Pugačenkova 1984, fig. 12b, 3-8).

In the Surkhān Dar’ja valley, this shape is attested to Kalčajan (Pugačenkova 1966, fig. 15) during a long period from the 2nd BC to the beginning of the 4th AD. At Dal’verdžin Tepe (Pugačenkova and Rtveladze 1978, 101, 3-4) this type of goblets are dated from the late 2nd BC to the 1st AD. At Kampyr Tepe, they are dated between the 1st BC and the 1st AD (Rtveladze 1987, pl. XX, figs. 11, 29; figs. 13, 1). In the Kafirnigan and Biškent valleys, they are attested in the Tulkhar cemeteries (Mandel’stam 1966, pl. XX, 6, 10-11; pl. XXI, 11-15) and Kokkum cemeteries (Mandel’stam, 1975, pl. X, 1) and dated between the 2nd BC and the 1st AD.

At Kojtepa, one potsherd of tripod base vessel was found (series Ccb1-3, Inv. 0295 (Fig. 9).

This type is found at Aï Khānum (Lyonnet 1997, fig. 48, 4-6), in the Bactrian plain, in the site of Bactra itself (Gardin 1957, fig. 4, a) dating from the 1st BC to the beginning of the 3rd AD. At Dil’berdžin, they are dated to the 1st BC (Kruglikova and Pugačenkova 1977, fig. 21, IV).

In the Surkhān Dar’ja valley, they were found in the cemetery of Aïrtam (Turgunov 1973, fig. 14) and in the site of Kalčajan (Pugačenkova 1966, fig. 16) dated to 1st-2nd BC; in the site of Dal’verdžin Tepe (Pugačenkova and Rtveladze 1978, fig. 100, 31) and Termez (Pidaev 1987, 90) dated from the end of the 2nd BC to the 1st AD.

6 The so-called “period of Great Kushans” is that one of the reign of the kings Kaniška I, Huviška and Vasudeva I (approx. between 127 and 225 AD).
In the Zeravšān valley, they are attested in the site of Kumiškent Tepe (Pugačenkova and Baljaeva 1987, fig. 7, 10) and in the Orlat area (Pugačenkova 1989, fig. 17) between the 1st BC and the 1st AD.

The so-called *mustahara*\(^7\) flasks (Fig. 10), lying on one side and with asymmetric profile (Mc2-3 type), at Aï Khānum are dated to the Hellenistic period. Shapes of this type are attested in the Bactrian plain, in the site of Dil’berdžin (Kruglikova 1986, fig. 26, 12) and dated at the beginning of Kushan period (1st AD).

In the Surkhān Dar’ja valley, they were found in the cemetery of Aïrtam and dated between 2nd-1st BC up to the 1st AD (Turgunov 1973, 66).

In the Zeravšān valley, they are attested in the oasis of Bukhara and Ustrušana (Muhammedžjanov *et alii* 1982, fig. 2; Košelenko, 1985, figs. 135, 144) between the 1st BC and the 1st AD, in the site of Afrāśīāb (Kabanov 1973, 63) between 3rd-1st BC and 2nd-3rd AD; they are also attested in the site of Kojtepa (Rapin *et alii* 2001, fig. 8) and in the cemetery of Orlat area (Pugačenkova 1989, figs. 54, 64).

**Conclusions**

Up to now, the studies and analyses conducted on the ceramic materials from Kojtepa, have allowed us to identify as the earliest period documented on the site the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic phases: the Hellenistic, dating from the late 4th to the 2nd BC, corresponds to the stratigraphic levels so far achieved in Trench no 5 (central *tepe*); the post-Hellenistic, starting from the 2nd BC and probably until the 1st AD, corresponds mainly to the lower layers of Trench no 6.

\(^7\) Typical flasks, with hemispherical shape imitating leather wineskins.
### SHAPES (KOJTEPA) | SITES (COMPARISONS) | CHRONOLOGY | REFERENCES
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Ma3-2 | Aï Khânum | 3rd BC | Lyonnet 1997: fig. 43, 1
Termez | 3rd-2nd BC | Pidaev 1987: fig. 1, 14
Mirzankul’ Tepe | 1st BC-1st AD. | Pidaev 1978: tav. IV, 6
Dal’verdžin Tepe | 2nd BC-1st AD | Pugačenkova, Rtveladze 1978: fig. 101, 10
Afräståb | 4th-2nd BC | Šiškina 1974: fig. 6, 19
Ma1-3 | Aï Khânum | 4th-3rd BC | Lyonnet 1997: fig. 45, 1
Dil’berdžin | 4th-3rd BC. | Kruglikova 1974: fig. 12
Dal’verdžin Tepe | Greco-Bactrian Period (250 - 130 BC) | Pugačenkova, Rtveladze 1978: fig. 100, 1
Kampyr Tepe | Greco-Bactrian Period (250 - 130 BC) | Rtveladze 1987a: tav. XX, 5
Termez | Greco-Bactrian Period (250 - 130 BC) | Pidaev 1987: fig. 1, 1-2
Tulkhar | end of 2nd BC-3rd AD | Mandel’štam 1966: tav. XXI, 11-17; tav. XXIV, 1, 2, 4-7, 9-11
Babašov | end of 2nd BC-3rd AD | Mandel’štam 1975: tav. XXII, 2-8
Afräståb | 3rd-2nd BC; 3rd BC-1st AD | Kabanov 1969: fig. 3, 9; Šiškina 1975: fig. 2; 1974: fig. 5, 17, 20, 21, 27
Ma1-1, Ma1-2, Ma1-3, Ma1-4 | Tillja Tepe | 1st AD | Sarianidi 1989:69, 82
Dil’berdžin | 1st BC-1st AD | Kruglikova, Pugačenkova 1977: fig. 16, 1-12, fig. 20, 11-12
Kalčajan | 2nd BC- beginning of 4th AD | Pugačenkova 1966: fig. 15
Dal’verdžin Tepe | End of 2nd BC-1st AD | Pugačenkova, Rtveladze 1978:101, 3-4
Kampyr Tepe | 1st BC-1st AD | Rtveladze 1987: tav. XX, fig. 11, 29; fig. 13, 1
Tulkhar | 2nd BC-1st AD | Mandel’štam 1966: tav. XX, 6, 10-11; tav. XXI, fig. 11-15
Kokkum | 2nd BC-1st AD | Mandel’štam 1975: tav. X, fig. 1
West area of Varakšā | 1st BC-1st AD | Šiškin 1963: fig. 68, 4-6
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