

The Types of the Islamic Pottery Discovered in Saudi Arabia

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Summary:

Firstly: The Pottery-Types during the Prophetic and the Caliphate Periods:

There is no detailed accounts regarding the literature of the early Islamic pottery in general, however, during the Prophetic and the Caliphate periods in particular. It seems possible that the Sasanian and Byzantine types of pottery were commonly in use during that early stage of the Islamic era. Nevertheless, the most mentioned pottery types at that time are as follows:

- (1). The Yemeni Jars.
- (2). The Hajar Jars.
- (3). The Madhari Jars.

Secondly: The Umayyad Pottery-Types:

In fact, it seems true to say that the Umayyad's pottery-types, which are unearthed at the Islamic archaeological sites in Saudi Arabia, are scant, in comparison with Abbasid sum of discovered pottery-types. The following samples of Umayyad's pottery-types found in the archaeological site of al-Ikhdud, Najran region:

- (A). The Pottery-Type coated with *almighrah* substance.
- (B). The Pottery-Type decorated with grooved incisions.
- (C). The Pottery-Type of cooking-pots.
- (D). The Pottery-Type of oil-lamps.

Others pottery-types were found within the archaeological strata of the site of Darayah, Qasim region. They were classified as follows:

- (A). The Pottery-Type made of reddish/orange-clay.
- (B). The Pottery-Type made of light yellow-clay.

During the surface-survey of the archaeological site of Bada, situated in the north-west of Saudi Arabia, certain Umayyad unglazed pottery-types were discovered:

- (A). The Pottery-Type made of smoothed yellow-clay.
- (B). The Pottery-Type made of ribbed red-clay.
- (C). The Pottery-Type made of smoothed orangish-clay.
- (D). The Pottery-Type made of ribbed orangish-clay.
- (E). The Pottery-Type of black ribbed cooking-pots.
- (F). The Pottery-Type of oil-lamps made by mould.

Thirdly.The Abbasid Unglazed Pottery:

The most popular Abbasid pottery types which are discovered at the Islamic Archaeological sites in Saudi Arabia, viz.,

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of moulded/ added decorations, (barbotine-style).
- (2). The Pottery-Type of red, polished thin- clay.
- (3). The Pottery-Type with incised decorations.
- (4). The Pottery-Type of *alqilal*.
- (5). The Pottery-Type made of very thin-clay.

At some settlements located on the banks of wadi Hanifah, near Riyadh, a number of unglazed Abbasid pottery-types were picked up, such as:

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of very thin-clay.
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of medium thick-clay.
- (3). The Pottery-Type made of thick-clay.

On the Red coast where the Islamic archaeological sites of Aththar and al-Sharjah are located, Abbasid pottery-types were found:

- (1). The Pottery-Type(group) of ribbed jars characterised by small-sized and narrow nick.
- (2). The Pottery-Type of egg-shell.
- (3). The Pottery-Type adorned by scooped decorations.
- (4). The Pottery-Type made of blackish coarse-clay.
- (5). The Pottery-Type coated with asphalt.
- (6). The Pottery-Type made of mixed soap stones-clay.
- (7). The Pottery-Type of cooking-pots.
- (8). The African Pottery-Type.
- (9). The Pottery-Type adorned with coated decorations.
- (10). The Pottery-Type made of coarse-clay, adorned with small centred circles.

Along the Iraqi(Basra) pilgrim route, connecting Basra city with Makkah al-Mukkaramah, a certain number of Abbasid pottery- types were found at sites of pilgrimage-stations, viz.,

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of very thin-clay (Biscuit wares).
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of solid grey-clay.
- (3). The Pottery-Type made of light red-clay.

One of the pilgrimage-station, which is called Fayd and situated on the course of the Kufah pilgrim route. was partially excavated, and a number of the Abbasid unglazed sherds discovered at the same archaeological site:

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of greenish-clay, and paled yellow slip.
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of paled slip-clay.
- (3). The Pottery-Type made of paled yellowish-pink (salmon pink) clay, and paled yellow slip.
- (4). The Pottery-Type made of coarse grey-clay.
- (5). The Pottery-Type made of light red-clay.
- (6). The Pottery-Type made of dark gritted brown-clay.
- (7). The Pottery-Type made of orange-clay with paled yellow-slip.

Additionally, in the archaeological site of Dariyyah, in Qasim region, three specific unglazed Abbasid pottery-types were discovered:

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of white and thin -clay.
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of light red -clay.
- (3). The Pottery-Type made of yellow greenish- clay.

As a result of a comprehensive archaeological survey of some Islamic sites, such as Ramah, alAsiyyah, Al'Usajah, which are all located in the Qassim region, unglazed Abbasid pottery-type sherds were found:

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of coarse and intensive grits-clay.
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of grits-free clay.

The archaeological field-work executed in the Bada site, in Tabuk region, supplies us also with a certain number of the Abbasid unglazed pottery-types:

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of very thin-clay (Abbasid Biscuit ware).
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of yellow-clay, and decorated with incised lines-style.
- (3). The Pottery-Type made of red-clay and decorated with incised lines-style.
- (4). The Pottery-Type made of solid grey-clay.

As a result of the first season excavation of Qurh site, near alUla city in the west of Saudi Arabia, the Abbasid unglazed pottery-types were discovered within the sequence of the site's strata, which are as follows:

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of very thin-clay (Abbasid Biscuit ware).
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of rough-clay.
- (3). The Pottery-Type made of medium coarse-clay mixed with grits.
- (4). The Pottery-Type made of coarse and porous-clay.
- (5). The Pottery-Type made of thick, rough and porous -clay.

In the Islamic site of al-Bataliyyah, which is situated in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia, a large quantity of Abbasid unglazed pottery-types were collected. They have been casted as follows:

- (1). The Pottery-Type made of very thin-clay (Abbasid Biscuit ware).
- (2). The Pottery-Type made of rough-clay.

Along the coastal-sandy strip of the Red Sea (Tihamah), an archaeological survey was conducted. The results of which are the following Abbasid unglazed pottery-types:

- (1). The Pottery-Type adorned with a single grooved-wavy incised-line with wide-wave.
- (2). The Pottery-Type adorned with parallel deep-grooves.
- (3). The Pottery-Type adorned with crossed-deep incised-lines formed geometric shapes(units).
- (4). The Pottery-Type adorned with vertical, curved and combed-style(combing).
- (5). The Pottery-Type adorned with nail-style(nailing).
- (6). The Pottery-Type adorned with double, deep and parallel incised-wavy lines.

Fourthly. Abbasid Glazed Pottery:

(1). The Pottery-Type of Monochrome/alkaline colour(blue-green): this type of pottery is quite popular and was found in many Islamic archaeological sites across Saudi Arabia such as the following ones: stations of the Iraqi pilgrim routes(Basra and Kufa), in the sites of: alHawra, alJar, Qurh, alSirrayyan and 'Aththar which are all located in the west of Saudi Arabia. The same type is also discovered in the following sites: alRabadhah, Fayd, Dhariyyah and wadi Hanifah which are situated in the central of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, its presence was detected in the east region, at alBataliyyah site, and in the south region, at alKhudud site, of Saudi Arabia.

(2). The Pottery-Type adorned with multi- different colours under/above glazed surface: this brand was noticed in a number of pilgrimage-stations located along the Kufah-Makkah route, like: Fayd, alQa' and Zubalah. It is, moreover, was found in the following sites of alMabiyyat and Aththar in the west-south of Saudi Arabia.

(3). The Pottery-Type adorned with splashed/striped forms: the archaeological excavations carried out at the sites of alRabadhah, Áththar and alIkhdud revealed that a number of sherds relating to this pottery-type were found within the archaeological soil-layers.

(4). The Pottery-Type of tin-glazed (decorated and undecorated wares): the mono-and multi colours tin-glazed wares were discovered in the both sites of Áththar and alSharjah in the south-west of Saudi Arabia. The same pottery-type, including the white tin-glazed type, was presence within the archaeological strata of the sites of alRabadhah, Fayd and Dariyyah.

(5). The Pottery-Type of scratched-ware(sgraffito): this pottery-type is commonly found in a number of sites such as: alQa' and Zubalah which are located along the Kufah pilgrim route. In addition, it was discovered in the sites of Qurh(alMabiyyat), alMalqatah and Bada. In the south and south-west of Saudi Arabia, sherds of this type were noticed at the sites of: alSharjah and alManar.

(6). The Pottery-Type of (mono/multi-colours) lustre-wares: recent studies show that this pottery-type, along with its two branches, was presence at a certain sites, among which are: alRabadhah, Fayd, Diriyyah, alNuqrah and Qurh. It also was found in Bada site in the north of Saudi Arabia. In the south and south-west of Saudi Arabia, where the sites of alSirayyan and Aththar are situated, lustre-ware was also discovered.

(7). The Pottery-Type of lead-glazed wares: a large number of sherds belonging to this type of pottery were picked up from Islamic sites in Saudi Arabia. The majority of which showed within the archaeological strata sequence of the excavated sites of alRabadhah and Dariyyah. The same type was, moreover, noticed on the surface-level of some sites such as: alJar, alHawra and Bada.

(8). The Pottery-Type of Haysi glazed wares: the Haysi pottery-type, which is named after the Yemeni town of Hays, is limited in its distribution. It is noted on the surface-level of certain sites in the south-west of Saudi Arabia, such as: Hamdanah and "Ulayb.

(9). The Pottery-Type of glazed blue-Tihamah: this type of pottery is also limited, and it is connected historically with the Yemeni town of Zabi. In Saudi Arabia the results of the archaeological comprehensive survey shows that the glazed blue-Tihamah wares were found on the surface-level of the following sites of alSharjah, Hamdanah and Haly.

(10). The Pottery and Ceramic Types of imported Chinese-wares: the long commercial relationship between China and Arabian Peninsula was fruitful. Consequently, that activities reflected clearly in finding certain imported types of pottery in the surface-level and within archaeological-strata of the coastal towns such as "Aththar, alSiryyan and Qurh which are situated in the south and south-west of Saudi Arabia. These imported pottery-types are as follows:

(10/1). The Ceramic-Type of glazed and unglazed-wares(Seldon):

(10/2). The Ceramic-Type of Porcelain(plain white, blue, white).

(10/3). The Pottery-Type of stone-ware.

(10/4). The Pottery-Type of Annamese ware.

(11). The Mamluki and Ottomani Pottery-Types:the results of the recent archaeological survey indicate that the finding of the Mamluki and Ottomani's pottery and ceramic is very limited,indeed. However, some samples were found on the surface-level of the sites located on the west of Saudi Arabia,like:alAznam, alAkhadar and alSharjah.It is noticed that the Ottoman pottery-type is concentrated near the location of the fortress.In addition to Makkah and alMadinah,both types were also found in the central region of Saudi Arabia

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