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Brief Remarks on the Finds

Part III of this volume presents five specialist reports on the artefactual evidence from the excavations (pottery, coins, glass, small finds) along with notes on related material from the Balasaheb Patil Government Museum at Paithan.

A key aim of the present project was to use a systematic approach to collection and a quantified approach to the study of all materials. This included sieving all excavated earth and the collection and counting of all finds. Although such approaches are generally regarded as having become standard practice with the advent of the 'new' or 'processual' archaeology of the 1960s, they are still rarely applied to the study of Early Historic and Medieval material from India. Most published excavation reports, such as those of Early Historic sites listed in Chapter 3, simply present a selection of material that is regarded by the excavator as being representative of the periods and phases that were defined at the site. Whilst this approach has a certain validity, it fails to make the most of the information contained within the material and it also makes inter-site comparisons difficult and less meaningful than they might be, thereby discouraging regional synthesis. Some may find the approach taken here, especially that taken in the pottery study (Chapter 7), quite a marked step away from the more traditional pottery

studies, but it is hoped that the value of a more precise definition of wares and types and a full presentation of the quantified occurrence of each through the excavated sequence will be clear. It is also hoped that such an approach, if more widely adopted, will encourage and facilitate inter-site comparisons and regional synthesis of archaeological evidence, which is an aspect of archaeological analysis that is still relatively under-developed in Early Historic India.

The finds from the first two (1996 and 1997) seasons were not fully studied due to the way in which the project had to be organized at that time. Chapter 10 deals with the most important finds from these seasons, whilst Chapter 11 presents material from the private antiquity collection of the late Sri. Balasaheb Patil, who was a prominent local dignitary and collector of archaeological objects. Although none of this material can be attributed to Paithan with absolute certainty because the circumstances of its acquisition are not recorded, it seems likely that most of it was found at or close to Paithan and thereby provides a useful illustration of the type of material that is turned up in this locality by farming and construction work.

The key results of the studies presented in this part of the volume are further discussed and contextualised in the conclusions (Chapter 14).