

**An archaeological investigation of Bairat (Jaipur, Rajasthan):
A new perspective**

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Bairat, which is also known as *Viratpura*, the capital of Virata, king of the Matsya country, during the Mahabharata period. Five Pandavas and their spouse Draupadi passed in concealment the 13th year of their exile. M. Renaud identified Bairat with *Po-le-ye-to-lo* of the Chinese pilgrim Hieun-Tsang. But lastly, the excavator of the site Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahani had not been agreed with this statement. A unique Buddhist temple or *Chaitya* was constructed here during Mauryan Empire by Ashoka. A Rock edit has also been recovered from here during Ashokan period presently it is in Kolkata museum, called Bhabru-Vairat rock edict, Bhabru being the name of a village at some distance to the west of Bairat, mentioned with: - (i)The Magadha king Priyadarsin, having saluted the Samgha hopes they are both well and comfortable. (ii) It is known to you sir, how great is my reverence and faith in the Buddha, the Dhama (and) the Samgha, etc. The script for this edict is in *Bramhi*. The geographical importance of this region was very important, from here every part of Malwa plateau is easily accessible. From Bairat one can pass through the Jaipur area to reach Tonk, Bundi and the ancient city of *Madhyamika* or Nagari between Chitor and Kota. From the Kota area, Mandor in Madhya Pradesh is also easily accessible. The tie-up of Bairat is with the Delhi sector, and through Bairat one can take a direct route to Malwa. Presently Bairat is situated at a distance of approximately 80 km from Jaipur, on Delhi-Jaipur national highway. From archaeological perspective, the ancient remains of Bairat were visited by Cunnigham in the year 1864-65 and by his assistant Mr. Carllyle in 1871-72. In the year 1909-10, Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar visited the remains of Bairat. They have left vivid accounts concerning what they saw at Bairat, which stands amid a valley and surrounded by ranges of hills. The site Bairat was excavated in 1935 by Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahani and it was re-examined in 1962-63 by N. R. Banerjee (North-Western Circle of the Survey) for re-assistance of the proper cultural sequence of the site. The excavation revealed a succession of four periods ranging in date from the late phase of painted grey through northern black polished ware to the medieval age. (*IAR-1962-63*) Period I- Painted grey ware and its associates merged imperceptibly into the next with an overlap, Period II- Northern Black Polished ware along with its associated miscellany of finds, Period II- Ceramic belongs to the historical period, Period IV- Glazed ware of the medieval period.

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