

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETATION

OF

ROCK ART

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Rock art interpretation is particularly challenging since it constitutes an archaeological manifestation of symbolic behaviour which usually has multiplex references (Sperber 1975, Turner 1967). None of the interpretations can universally explain rock art. Instead, rock art interpretation will remain characterized by divergent interpretations of the same data. It is important to carry on research concerning rock art interpretation for it definitely fosters amongst archaeologists as well as the people a respect for a fragile but important cultural resource.

In the next section some of the paintings and engravings belonging to Indian rock art have been selected for description and interpretation. Some of the well documented uses of rock art include fertility, curing, totemistic, hunting magic, recording of astronomical events and several other rituals under supervision of shamans. Influences of mythology are also noticed in some rock art depictions. Interpretations are made along these lines. Altogether an attempt to sneak a look into the thought processes as well as the complex rituals that may have controlled the day to day lives of our forefathers. Here it needs mention that irrespective of interpretation part; the descriptive part always serves as an important database. The subject heads are as follows:

- (i) Geometric Figures**
- (ii) Hunting Scenes**
- (iii) Animal Figures**
- (iv) Human Figures**
- (v) Social groups: Gathering and Activities**
- (vi) Objects of transport**
- (vii) Plants and Flowers**

3.2 GEOMETRIC FIGURES



Fig. 3a.1 (Ref- Badkachar, Panchmarhi, Photo by author)



Fig. 3a.2 (Ref-Site-Badkachar, Panchmarhi, Photo by author)

In almost every region of the world wherever rock art is present, geometric symbols are found along with the figurative/representational paintings. Generally these geometric figures or pre-figurative rock art precedes figurative rock art, where the latter is found to be superimposed over the former (Fig 3a.1, 3a.2). Moreover as Robert Bednarik puts it that, basic elements of all rock art is constituted of curvilinear motifs such as concentric circles, spirals and their variations and intermediate forms including geometric motifs (Bednarik 1994). India's rock art is no exception to this widely accepted phenomenon. In Indian context it is believed, in the beginning that it was the intricate designs which were slowly replaced by geometric designs (Tyagi 1992:310, Pandey 1992:269). In general as per global trend, paintings consisting of geometric patterns or intricate designs form the most conspicuous feature of the earliest style (Neumayer 1993:43).

Some of the most striking stylistic features of Mesolithic rock art in India are the intricate labyrinthine designs, composed of rhombic meanders or honey comb patterns (Neumayer 1983). In this connection we must keep in mind the Upper Palaeolithic core at Chandravati, Rajasthan (Sonawane 1984, 61-63) which has engraved design on its patinated cortex resembling rhombus type spiral design. Furthermore, ostrich eggshells dated to be Upper Palaeolithic (Sankalia 1974: 227; Kumar and Narvare 1984:120-125) have a simple geometric design engraved on them. These evidences help us to understand that the intricate designs found in rock art all over, are the earliest. All these design patterns which mostly belong to the Upper Palaeolithic period are seen to cover large spaces on rock walls as surface decoration and also found later on as designs on animal and human bodies. These patterns are usually seen on female bodies. This is because they probably allowed more space for being square shaped in contrary to the male figures which were stick-like.

Interestingly there are plenty of examples where co-occurrence of geometric designs along with animal and at times human figures is represented in rock art from India. Infact this is a common feature noticed in global rock art. Tyagi speaks of a gradual evolution

from intricate designs to geometric signs and finally X-ray patterns (Tyagi 1992; 310). His observation was based on a study of superimposition. According to him the *earliest* of all were intricate designs which developed into *spiral* intricate patterns in the *second stage*. The colour used was mostly dark red ochre. This stage coincides with the presence of stick like human male figures and rectangular shaped female bodies. Animals with spiral infillings also belong to this stage. Animals within the designs are also infilled with the same patterns and have almost been camouflaged within the designs. The camouflage looks very natural and the patterns give an impression of foliage around them. Tyagi also adds that the camouflage paintings of animal figures could be the depiction of some mystical rite carried out by the hunters and gatherers before the hunt or food gathering. In the *third stage* the infilling designs are almost geometrical in the animal fillings, a combination of square and hexagonal in place of the spiral intricate designs of the earlier period. Next there comes a *transition phase* where paintings of a combination of both styles are seen and *finally* the X-ray paintings, similar to Australian X-ray style drawings have been found superimposed on the transitional phase of paintings. S.K Pandey in 'Central Indian Rock Art' (Pandey 1988, 269) while speaking on superimpositions has grouped them in the following manner: (a) Group of intricate designs belongs to prehistoric (b) Group of geometric designs belongs to protohistoric (c) Group of decorative designs belongs to historic. Regarding the co-occurrence of geometric patterns and animal figures according to David Lewis Williams it is 'one of the most baffling features of Upper Palaeolithic art' (Lewis Williams 2002a, 206). According to him in certain altered states the human nervous system produces both geometric and representational imagery. Therefore their intimate association in shamanistic art throughout the world is not surprising.

However in the Indian context, it is hard to believe that the purpose behind the depiction of these motifs was for mere decoration of animals and shelters (Pandey 1969:54; Mathpal 1984: 166; Wakankar and Brooks 1976: 68). These intricate patterns have also been interpreted as the remains of oversized animal paintings (Neumayer 1983) or the infilling of large figures which has been defaced by the ravages of time (Wakankar and Brooks 1976). However some scholars have felt that these designs were more than mere

decoration patterns (Tyagi 1992; 310, Pradhan 2001). Tyagi has talked about the mystic aspect of the designs, for he says that “the emergence of these spiral designs in such a developed style with no gradual evolution compels one to reflect on their mysterious aspect” (Tyagi 1992). He further adds that according to Woodhouse (Tyagi 1992; 312), these patterns are metaphors of “trance experience” of the shaman or experience of hallucination or signs executed by the shaman. They may have something to do with visual hallucinations experienced in physically stressful state, altered states of consciousness (drug induced or in a trance?). Their close associations with animal relationships or transformations were part of the belief system of that culture and an important vision of hunters, shamans or artists”. According to Tyagi ‘this is merely hypothetical in the absence of ethnographic data’ (Tyagi 1992; 312). Dr. A Sundara in his lecture titled ‘Pre historic art in Karnataka’ (on a website, Copyright IGNCA 2003) tells that regarding geometrical designs, certain types of what are known as *mandalas* prepared in *rangavalli* even today in religious performances are found in the paintings and engravings. Double lined two squares, obliquely intersecting with loops at the corners is the most common as found at Hire Benkal, Chik Rampur in painting, Sonda (Uttara Kannada dt.) and Gavali near Kundapura (Dakshina Kannada) in engraving. What is interesting is that such a design is attached to the bull’s legs, at the last two places. Also endless six knot design attached to three bulls’ legs in a row, a similar design in exclusion of bull/s is found on a loosely lying stone slab at Hire-Madapura. Enigmatically it is used by villagers to cure horn diseases of cattle even today. Thus it appears that such designs were believed to have some magical powers by rural folk especially the pastoralists even in the past.

The geometric designs and intricate patterns found in rock art all over the world probably opens up before us not only the cognitive development of the prehistoric societies but also their beliefs and a mystical world. Randall White while speaking about trends in the structure and patterning of Magdalenian/Epigravettian cave representations writes that geometric signs like rows of dots mark the entry to heavily painted sectors and also geometric elements appear alongside and are integrated into painted and engraved compositions(White 2003; 116). However he also adds that in places like Niaux (France)

for example geometric patterns appear in isolation with no obvious spatial relationship with animal images. In this regard we must remember that any interpretation for the purpose behind rock art is highly speculative. However repeated occurrence of certain motifs such as triangles, honeycombs, rhomboids and cupules convinces us that there were probably some functional, spiritual or ritualistic significance behind their making. In this regard it needs mention that even in the renowned tribal art called Warli paintings from Maharashtra in India basic geometric forms, dots, patches and primal designs are actually used to convey very profound meanings in simplest forms.

With the help of ethnographic data, available from south African San rock art (Lewis Williams 2002a; Lewis Williams & Dowson 1988), the rock art of the Cosos (Whitley 1987) and Huichol art (Central America: Berrin 1978) along with recent observations made by scholars and researchers, we will first see the relation between the geometric designs/intricate patterns with visual hallucinations according to the neuropsychological model. Even from India we have had example, in the form Saura art of Orissa which is characterized by a religious and ritual bias involving shamans. However this does not attempt to interpret all the geometric motifs seen in rock art of India as results of trance experience. The author keeps in mind that any rock art is characterized by regional peculiarities based on which interpretations have to be made. The mental imagery which is experienced in altered states is overwhelmingly (though not entirely) derived from memory and is hence culturally specific (Lewis Williams 2002a, 126). The visions and hallucinations of a person living in Canadian snowfields for example will be different from a person in India where the former will see polar bears and seals, while the latter may see bulls and cattle. Since geometric figures appear to be a very common feature of any rock art region therefore some of it can be explained by the neuropsychological model which is a testable hypothesis and is being used to interpret in a global context. Other probable interpretations will also be discussed during the course of the chapter. We must keep in mind the fact that in the iconography of each of the community's arts that are being taken as case studies, there are geometric motifs which are similar to the entoptic forms which are seen from stages one to three as graphic images during altered states of consciousness. According to J. Dronfield arts known independently to be

associated with shamanic altered states of consciousness are seen to display a complex set of features including geometric motifs that fits the set of features which are established by laboratory research on the mental imagery seen during altered states of consciousness. Interesting fact is that if the model is tested against an art not associated with altered states of consciousness, say Rembrandt's work, it will not fit (Dronfield 1994, 1995).

Neurologically generated mental Imagery-

The entopic phenomenon:

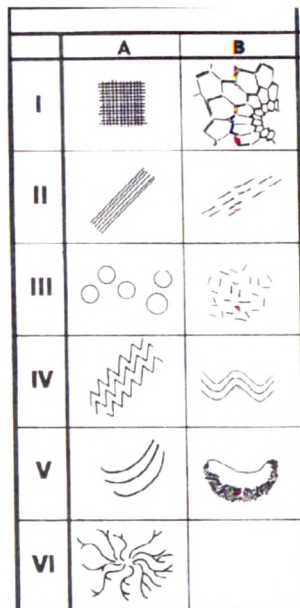


Fig 3a.3 (Ref- Lewis Williams; A cosmos in stone, from fig: 8.2)

The nervous system is a human universal and as Lewis Williams puts it that by the Upper Palaeolithic it was much the same as it is now (Lewis Williams 2002b, 176). During an altered state of consciousness which is completely controlled by the nervous system (not the culturally controlled ones) it was seen by neurologists and psychologists that under certain circumstances the visual system generates a range of luminous percepts that are independent of light from an external source (Kluver 1926, 1942: Horowitz 1964, Eichmeier and Hofer 1974, Siegel 1977). Their research showed that these visual

phenomenon, although complex and diverse, take geometric forms such as grids, zigzags, dots, spirals and catenary curves. All these percepts are experienced as incandescent, shimmering, moving, rotating and sometimes enlarging patterns; they also grade one into another and combine in a bewildering way (Kluver 1942, 176). As these percepts are from the human nervous system and all people who enter certain altered states of consciousness, no matter whatever their cultural background are liable to perceive them (Eichmeier and Hofer 1974). These visual percepts are referred to as the **entoptic phenomena** which means visual sensations derived from the structure of the optic system anywhere from the eyeball to the cortex. This term covers two classes of geometric percepts that appear to derive from different parts of the visual system called **phosphenes** and **form constants**. As mentioned in chapter II, **phosphenes** are entophthalmic that is, they originate within the eye (Lewis Williams 2002a and b) and can also be induced by physical stimulation. **Form constants** too originate in the optic system but beyond the eyeball. These two kinds of **entoptic phenomenon** are different from **hallucinations** which have no foundation in the actual structure of the optic system and occur under more emotionally charged (eye and brain) circumstances such as shamanistic or religious rituals where the individual experiences the altered state of consciousness. **Hallucinations** are responsible for the more complex iconic visions (Siegel 1977, 134).

Although there are numerous **entoptic forms**, certain types recur. Of these, the selected six of the commonest, from the range established by neurologists and psychologists (Kluver 1942: 172-77, Horowitz 1964, Eichmeier and Hofer 1974, Siegel 1977) are (I) a basic grid and its development in a lattice and expanding hexagonal pattern, (II) sets of parallel lines, (III) dots and short flecks, (IV) zigzag lines crossing the field of vision, (V) nested catenary curves and (VI) filigrees or thin meandering lines (see fig 3a.3). However according to Lewis Williams 'as these phenomena are mercurial, it is not supposed that these six categories are as rigid as the list seems to imply. ..We take the six entoptic types to be fundamental because they were established by abstracting redundant elements from a large number of reports' (Lewis Williams 2002b, 178).

According to the neuropsychological studies, the way in which subjects perceive both entoptic phenomenon and iconic hallucinations are many and varied. So, researchers have formulated seven basic principles that generally govern these perceptions. The first principle is **replication** which means entoptics perceived under this principle are unmistakable and seen in true form. Second principle is **fragmentation**, as in this section the entoptics are broken down into minimal components (Horowitz 1975, 178) for example a grid may be fragmented into a ladder like form. Next is **integration** which involves blending of images to build up complex patterns (Kluver 1942, 177, Siegel 1977, 134). For example a grid may blend with a series of zigzags. The next two stages are **superpositioning** and **juxtapositioning** where one entoptic form may be projected against another (Knoll et al. 1963, 205, 208, 214) or simply appear next to it. The next principle is **reduplication** in which what may start as a single image becomes a series of duplicated images such as a chain of catenary curves (Siegel 1977, 134) and finally entoptic phenomena **rotate** in the field of vision (Kluver 1942, 181, Knoll et al. 1963, 204-6). Although these principles are referred to only the entoptic phenomenon but they also apply to iconic hallucinations and in some cases link the two kind of percept (Lewis Williams 2002b, 179). In such an experience a grid, for example, may be integrated into an animal (see fig. 3a.14), or an animal may be blended with characteristic of some other species. These principles are just a simplification of the many distortions and alterations that many be experienced in mental imagery (Kluver 1942, 187). After identification of entoptic forms (which is stage I of neuropsychological model) we proceed further into the final stages of neuropsychological model, and examine the progression of mental imagery during altered states of consciousness.

In stage two subjects try to make sense of entoptic phenomena by elaborating them into iconic forms that is into objects that are familiar to them from their daily life (Lewis Williams 2002a, 127) and it is in stage three that the shift in iconic memory is accompanied by an increase in vividness. Subjects stop using similes to describe their experiences and assert that the images are indeed what they appear to be. They lose insight into the differences between literal and analogical meanings. Nevertheless in this

iconic stage entoptic phenomenon may persist (Lewis Williams 2002a, 129), and blend with each other (Fig 3a.4).

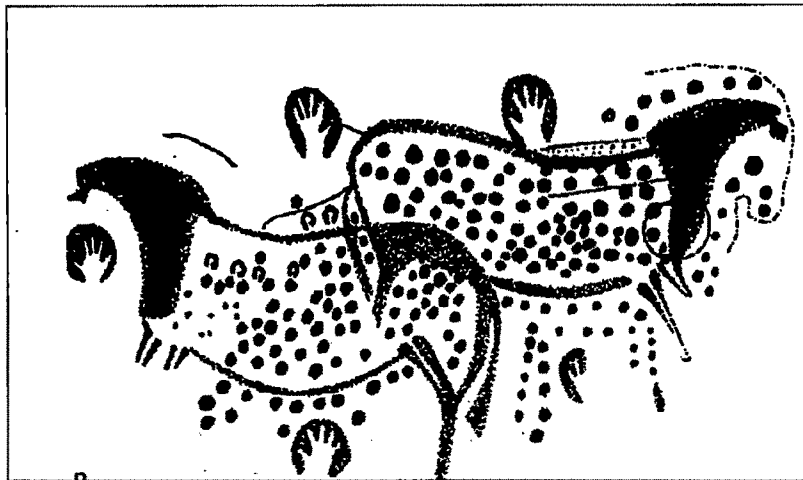


Fig 3a.4 (Ref- Lewis Williams; A cosmos in stone, fig: 8.1)

Common geometric signs found in rock art worldwide including India are spirals, triangles, zigzags, concentric circles and hexagonal patterns. Some can be identified as entoptic forms while others are of profound significance which will also be examined. For example 'triangles' have not been reported as an entoptic form but its widespread occurrence in rock art is amazing. Again **spirals** in rock art are found throughout the world (fig 3a.5). Tyagi has spoken about the mysteriousness of the spirals (Tyagi 1988, 50). Many North American Indian cultures associate counterclockwise spirals (starting from the center) with the concept of rising, and the clockwise spiral with the concept of descending. In some cases petroglyph spirals appear to be related with the summer or winter solstice (Marriner 1998; 42). In India, even to this day spiral formations of dancing men and women as well as concentric circular designs are a typical feature of the traditional 'Warli' paintings which are known to be symbolic of the circle of life. Moreover even though spiral or vortex are not included in list of the six most common entoptic forms (fig 3a.3) which Lewis Williams feel is an 'important omission' actually

‘deserves special treatment’ (Lewis Williams 2002b, 178). Infact neurologists and scientists have reported ‘spirals’ to be experienced as incandescent, shimmering, moving, rotating and sometimes enlarging patterns in a neurologically controlled altered state of consciousness (Kluver 1942, 176). Therefore some spiral depictions seen in rock art might be representations of entoptic forms.



Fig3a.5 (Ref- Bhimbetka, photo by author)

Concentric circles are also an important geometric form seen in rock art all over. Besides being an entoptic form concentric circles are of profound significance. The Upper Palaeolithic archaeological find reported from Chandravati (India) is comprised of concentric circles on triangular shaped natural sandstone. It consists of parallel lines moving clockwise from the centre, forming two intertwining spiraling arms. Its parallel has been seen in rock paintings from India. These designs are often indicated as Labyrinthine and are composed of rhombic meanders and honeycomb patterns along with their multiple derivatives. In this regard it needs mention that mazes and labyrinths are one of the world’s most enduring symbols for it is found in many forms and in many countries (Westwood 1998, 106-111). Mazes and labyrinths may have been maps of the

Underworld which the departing soul must follow. As such they are believed to be symbolic to death. They may also have symbolized rebirth, for if the soul can wind into the heart of a labyrinth it can also follow the route out again (Westwood 1998). According to sculptor, writer and artist Michael Ayrton (1921-1975), who spent more than two years reconstructing the Cretan labyrinth out of brick and stone at Dry Brook in New York State's Catskill Mountains, 'Each man's life is a labyrinth at the centre of which lies his death, and even after death it may be that he passes through a final maze before it is all ended for him' (Westwood 1987, 108). The following information has been obtained from the article titled Mazes and Labyrinths: Symbols of the Soul in the book titled The Atlas of Mysterious Places, Edited by Jennifer Westwood. Certain maze rituals clearly indicate their link with death and rebirth. On the remote Pacific island of Malekula in the New Hebrides, a labyrinth named 'The Path' was traced in the sand and it was believed that the ghost of every dead man would travel the same journey to the land of the dead. In Europe maze rituals often took the form of dances and turf mazes were used during the spring festivals of Easter and May Day, both of which are important celebrations for rebirth. In Scandinavia some of the games played in the stone mazes are well remembered and they are clearly linked with the return of fertility in the springtime. In Finland and Sweden there are several mazes where the young men had to penetrate into the heart of the maze in order to rescue a girl from her prison. These mazes are sometimes called 'Jungfraudanser' or virgin dances. A wall painting in Sibbo church in Finland dating back to the 15th century shows a maze with a female figure at the centre. This theme which deals with women stuck inside a labyrinthine fortress has also been found in Mediterranean and in all these places they were closely linked with fertility rites. The Labyrinthine designs have also been used to bring in good luck and also as a protection against evil spirits or wolves. So, the spiritual significance attached to such kind of designs can be well understood.

Next, **zigzags** are also one of the entoptic forms experienced witnessed in early altered state of consciousness and originate from the human nervous system. They are reported to be one of the most common images of the 'entoptic phenomenon'. These images are also said to be luminous, pulsating, expanding, contracting or blending in nature (Lewis

Williams 2002a). In its elaborate form, the individual usually sees an outer arc characterized by iridescent flickering bars of light or zigzags.

In North America particularly Southern California, ethnography suggests that puberty ceremonies culminated to rock paintings (Lewis Williams 2002a, pl-11.) where under supervisions of the shamans in the final stages of the puberty rituals, images made by the girls comprised of geometric designs that included diamond chains and zigzags. The zigzags, closely associated with such rituals, probably derive from geometric imagery wired into the human brain and activated in altered states of consciousness (Lewis Williams 2002a, foot note of pl-11). So the zigzag patterns, seen in Indian rock art must have had much deeper significance.

Similarly regarding **hexagonal pattern**, which is also a common geometric form, we have seen that certain entoptic forms recur. Off them the basic grid formation and then its development into a lattice and expanding hexagonal pattern is a common occurrence. Hexagonal patterns are also a common occurrence in Indian rock art.

Regional Distribution of Geometric Patterns in Rock Art of India:

Orissa

The subject matter of rock art of Orissa is mainly non-figurative and non-thematic, comprising of a host of intricate and enigmatic geometric as well as non geometric patterns. Infact most of the rock art of this region is comprised of only geometric forms made of spiral lines, cross-hatches, zigzag lines and triangles (Pradhan 2001; 45). Engravings (mainly triangles) are a special feature of rock art of Orissa. Off the 55 rock shelters, 31 shelters document only engravings and nine shelters document paintings along with engravings (Pradhan 2001; 46). Since the subject matter here is non-figurative and non-thematic with more emphasis on abstract patterns and geometric shapes therefore rock art of Orissa occupies a high spot in the study of geometric figures.

In Vikramkhoh rock shelter a major portion of the engravings has already been eroded by rain water therefore a host of stokes, lines, dots and loops that remain are actually

remnants of the original engravings. Therefore it becomes difficult to interpret in this case. A host of triangles, double triangles, dots and two specimens of rectangular geometric designs are depicted here (Pradhan 2001; 28-29).

Rock art belonging to Ushakuthi and Lekhamoda group of rock shelters are also characterized by geometric and non-geometric patterns (Pradhan 2001).

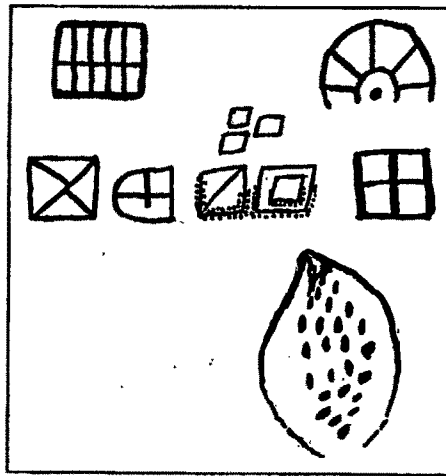


Fig 3a.6 (Ref-S. Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Gudahandi Rock Shelter; Fig: 3)

In Gudahandi rock shelter, paintings are executed in red, blue and black colour (Pradhan 2001). A number of squares and rectangles either empty or filled with straight and diagonal lines or with dots on the borders are seen. An Oval shape is also seen with dots executed within it which resembles a snake hood (Fig 3a.6). As we have already seen that off the six most common entoptic images the grid and its development into a lattice, recur the most (Kluver 1942, 172-77). Interestingly the 'squares' and rectangles at Gudahandi appear similar to the entoptic forms and can well be part of the grid probably in an expanded form. Moreover the dots that have been executed on the border of the square and within the oval shape further strengthen the supposition that these might be expressions of the entoptic phenomenon seen in India.

Rock paintings are seen at three shelters done in red colour at Pakhanpathar rock shelter near Jamda village in Mayurbhanj district (Pradhan 2001, 31). Off the three, the most interesting painting is seen facing North West direction. It is largest in size and at a

height of 7.26m (Pradhan 2001, 31). This composition is made of a series of roman 'S' like forms, along with dots and strokes, a pair of circles on top of another pair connected by semi circles and crescents .12 (approx). Small parallel lines are drawn horizontally. This painting, like others, too appear enigmatic to the viewer. Local people believe it to be some kind of writing on stone and they call it 'lekhapathar' (writing on stone) (Pradhan 2001; 31). However, I would like to add here that presence of parallel lines, dots and strokes, U-shapes are all suggestive of entoptic forms. Almost all the rock shelters which are spread over seven districts namely Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Nuapara, Sambalpur, Sundargarh and Suvarnapura contain either engravings or paintings of geometric patterns and motifs with criss-cross, wavy, straight, parallel lines and dots (Pradhan 2001).

As already mentioned, an interesting feature of rock art in Orissa region or the entire Mahanadi valley is the repeated occurrence of triangle shaped engravings which resembled vulva or 'Yonis' (female genital organ) (Pradhan 2001; 46). In Australian context the aborigines call it woman (Pradhan 2001: 46). Bisected triangles or triangles with a dot at the centre (Fig 3a.7) remain the hallmark of all representations both in paintings as well as engravings (Pradhan & Kumar 2005, 113). Infact presence of triangle shapes is a common feature of rock art in many parts of the world, which is a 'deliberate

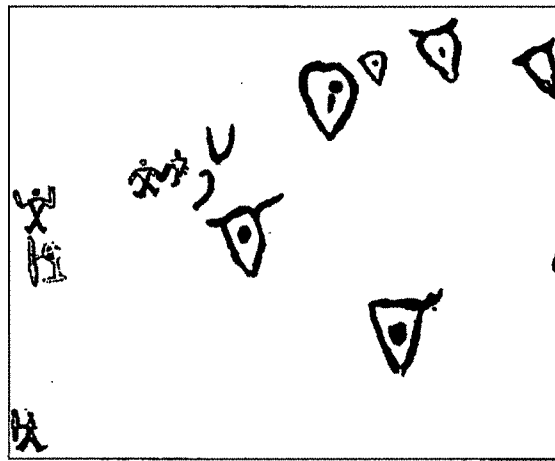


Fig 3a.7 (Ref- Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Lekhamoda VI; Fig: 17)

attempt for symbolic representation of the Venus, the primordial mother responsible for all Creations'. Fertility has been of supreme concern throughout the history of mankind for ensuring prosperity (Pradhan 2001, 2003). Concept of fertility can be expressed in many forms (1) the woman herself (2) depiction of Vulva-symbol of generative power of procreation and nourishment (3) depiction of copulation, (4) female puberty ritual etc. Fertility practices varied in different areas, but there has been a widespread consistency in the use of symbolic representation of the human vulva. Vulva motifs may take many forms, while still referring to the same basic concept, for continuation of life and maintenance of human fertility" (Pradhan 2001, 2003: 11). Even in the 'Bhagavat Gita' (Verse 19) we have references of 'Purusha' and 'Prakiti'. 'Prakiti' which means Nature, is feminine in gender and all 'Gunas' (Qualities) are believed to be born of Prakiti. So, the fittest expression of 'Sakti' (Mother Goddess) is the triangle or 'Bhairavi Yantra Yoni' (Singh Deo 2004). Singh Deo further adds in his article that according to Brhadyonitantra (Schotremen 1980, 23-24) three corners of the Yoni are 'Brahma', 'Vishnu', 'Maheshvara' (These are names of Gods from the Hindu Mythology); on the right side of the triangle the river Yamuna flows, on the left side river Sarasvati and on the top river Jahnavi or Ganges and in the centre of this triangle the abode of 'Kamakhyia' (famous temple in eastern India, in Assam) also known as 'Yonipitha' in India is situated, where 'Prakriti' (Nature) lies in the form of 'Kamrupa' (Goddess). So, we can see that the female Vulva (Yoni) is of great significance in Hindu mythologies as well as in Tantric background. Also according to the Vedas and Upanishads 'Yoni' worship had actually originated in the Central Mahanadi Valley but later shifted to North Eastern states of India (Nathan R.S 1986; 120). Interesting fact is that almost ten oval shaped naturally formed 'yoni' have been discovered in Nuapada district so far (Singh Deo 2004). It is believed that wherever the vulva of the mother Earth has been found those are the 'Sakti' sites of the Mahanadi valley. Two such triangular shapes have been found near Patalganga site and from sands of the Udanti River from Nuapada district of Orissa, respectively (Singh Deo 2004).

Another very interesting observation made by Jitamitra Singh Deo Prasad (Singh Deo 2004) is that based on Tantric ideology three 'Siva' temples have been built at Boud in a

triangle set up. However he adds that the mystery of the triangle set up of these three temples, has not yet been solved by any scholar. However the significance of the triangle is further strengthened in their subsequent manifestations in the various forms of Tantric Yantras (Dasgupta and Sonawane 2006). All these above parallels drawn from Hindu Mythologies, The Gita as well as Tantric philosophies definitely proves the fact that the triangle shapes observed in Orissa's rock paintings and engravings is of great significance and speaks a lot of the spiritual culture of the region. In this regard evidences obtained from Bhagor 1 (Son Valley, Madhya Pradesh, India) offer an important clue (Kenoyer et. al. 1983). Here, during the excavations, fragments of triangular- shaped natural sandstone with concentric laminations in the form of triangles were found on the slightly raised circular rubble platform. Even today the members of local Koli and Bhaiga tribes worship similar type of colourful natural stones as a symbol of the female principle or Mother Goddess called 'mai' in the local language (Sonawane 1997, 13-14). In this context it needs mention that the engraved core found from Chandravati (Rajasthan, India) also supports the symbolic representation of the Mother Goddess (Sonawane 1997, 11). The design as mentioned earlier consisting of a pair of parallel lines moving clockwise from the centre forming two interwinning spiraling arms, is somewhat resembling the ethnographic evidence obtained from Bhagor 1.

Related to the triangle shapes found in rock art, we can turn to an altogether different region where such shapes occurred and see what scholars have to say regarding their occurrence. The Empie's (Sunnie Empie and Hart W. Empie, are members of the Arizona Archaeology Society and American Rock Art Research Association) have done extensive research on vulva form paintings and engravings. According to Sunnie Empie (Empie 2001) symbolic representation of the vulva, is found in ancient cultures throughout the world from Upper Paleolithic time and has been reported at ancient rock art sites throughout North America as well as other parts of the world. The earliest vulva symbols are 30,000-year-old rock engravings near Dordogne, France (Gimbutas 1989), sometimes as simple as a circle with a single mark or slash dividing the circle, or a bisected oval motif (Giedion 1964). The symbol represents the fertility quality of the Earth and the productive and creative power of the Earth Mother. Natural formations as well as those

that are enhanced or entirely sculpted are considered sources of power and were used in fertility rituals (McGowan 1982). They are part of a universal system of symbols that persist through time and also a worldview shared by traditional cultures, visible signs that humankind has always celebrated birth, life, and regeneration.' They further add to the common belief that existed in the ancient cultures throughout the world, centered on a relationship with mother Earth with all living things. Empie's study tried to establish an interaction between presence of rock imagery including the vulvaforms with solstices and equinox. According to her when sunlight enters a symbol or enters caves it is remarkable that a hole or entry has been created to receive the Sun, the feature that appears to honour the procreative power of the sun. The sun enters the space, the womb of the earth, as well as vulva to symbolize rebirth and renewal. Empie further adds that it is very difficult to understand prehistoric cultures based on ethnographic data, however there is considerable information about the origin and the meaning of the vulva symbol. The native American Indians 'have based their social systems, however diverse, on ritual, spirit centered, woman-focused world views" (Allen 1992; 2, Empie 2001). What can be understood regarding the occurrence of the triangular shapes is that there existed a common belief in all the ancient cultures throughout the world centering round a relationship between Mother Earth and all other living things. Rock art remains the single most visible manifestation of prehistoric ritual (Whitley and Loendorf 1994, Empie 2001).

Based on the above studies we can conclude that the occurrence of triangle shapes in Orissa's as well as other parts of India was representations of the female Vulva or 'yoni' (In the Indian context). It was probably intended to symbolize the creative and productive power of Mother Earth. The sites wherever these signs occurred were probably used for ceremonies to enhance the fertility of women; a place for shamanistic activity or was the locale to honour the feminine life force of the universe (Empie 2001).

Kumaon Himalaya

The main theme of rock paintings in the Kumaon Himalaya is depiction of cultural activities where human figures constitute the main body of the painted motifs. However,

some designs based on geometric forms are found at Hatwalghora, Lakhu-Udyar, Petsal and Phalseema rock shelters. These include rectangles, squares, concentric semi-circles and circles (Mathpal 1995). On the ceiling of the main shelter at Lakhu-Udyar, dots have been made with finger at two places (Mathpal 1995; 47). Five maze patterns are also noticed on the ceiling at a considerable height. Added to these two parallel angular lines and six horizontal wavy lines are also seen at Lakhu-Udyar rock shelter (see fig 3d.5). Again, two M-shaped parallel lines measuring 38 centimeters have been identified in Kasardevi rock shelter (Mathpal 1995, 43). All these signs could be suggestive of the entoptic phenomenon.

Regarding the finger dots seen at Kumayoun region, we get similar parallels as well as some ideas to understand it, from other places as well. For example the caves of Gargas and Rouffignac France, (about 250 sq.m of finger markings) Pech Merle, France (120 sq.m of finger markings) and Altamira, Spain (Lorblanchet 1992, 451) contain finger markings. According to Lorblanchet, 'finger markings differ from other techniques of representation of rock art; "by the ease and rapidity of its execution and by far that it is a technique requiring direct physical contact with the wall and the cave. The absence of any medium, that is to say any intermediary, establishes an intimate relation between man and the cave, inspiring spontaneity and giving total liberty to the creator" (Lorblanchet 1992; 476). He also adds that finger marks are 'spontaneous tracings' and this drawing action (a fertility rite) allows a direct relation between the artist and the cave through which the artist becomes aware of his creative power, and through which he participates in the re-creation of the world, because this is probably a symbolic act. While speaking on finger markings, Ucko (Ucko, 1992, 158) has remarked that "it isinconceivable to us today to understand the nature of such action". David Lewis Williams on the other hand is somewhat of similar opinion like Lorblanchet. Williams puts forward in his own words a 'rather rational, if not absolutely precise, terms if it is to be believed that people who made rock art believed that the spirit world lay behind the thin membranous cave walls therefore the walls were not a meaningless support to them. In a variety of ways they touched, painted, respected, and ritually treated the cave walls for what actually lay behind their surfaces' (Lewis Williams 2002a, 220).

Mirzapur Region

In Mirzapur region (Uttar Pradesh), there are not much of geometric designs seen. However some linear designs are found belonging to the lowest phase for they have been superimposed by paintings of later phases as noticed in the hunting scene of Bhutahiya (Matahwa) and in Ghormangar rock shelters (Tiwari 1990, 33). They include simple curved and straight vertical lines in a square. These are again very similar to expressions of form constants and phosphenes that are witnessed in the beginning stages of mental imagery. However many circular, semi-circular, triangle, square as well as irregular designs that occur in the rock paintings have been compared to the alphabets of Ashokan Brahmi and symbols found on punch marked coins (Tiwari 1990, 33). The designs that were present in the early phases were not seen in the later phases except for various types of modern day 'alpana' (Tiwari 1990, 34) (floor designs done in Indian homes till date, for decoration purpose on any auspicious occasion) patterns consisting of circular, square or semicircular patterns.

South India

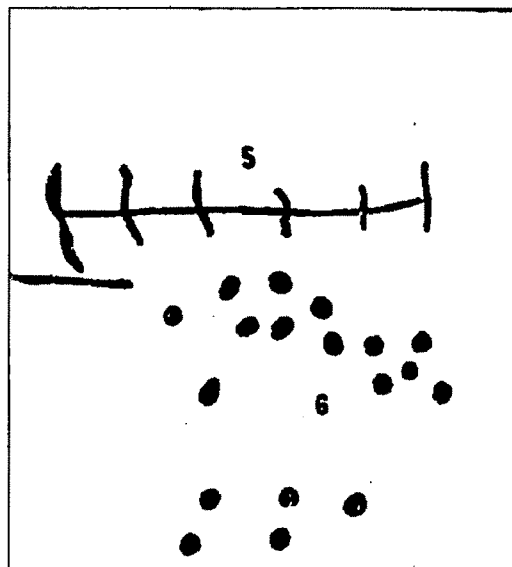


Fig 3a.8 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 10)



Fig 3a.9 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 10)

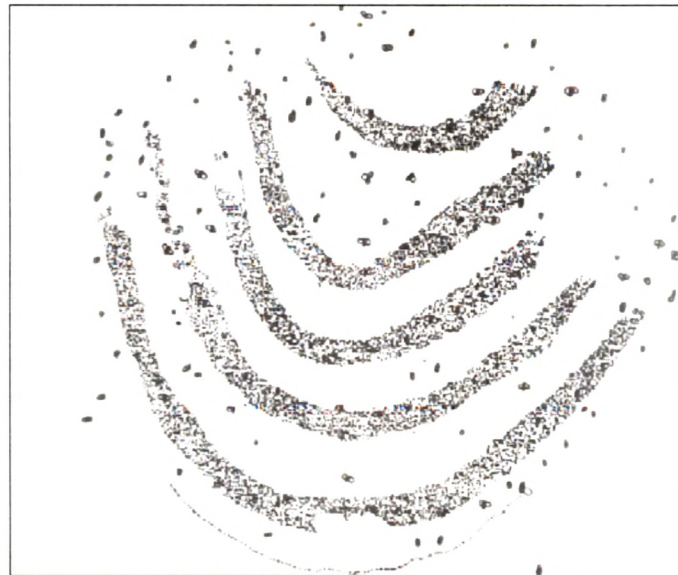


Fig 3a.10 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Cosmos in Stone, Fig: 7.3a)

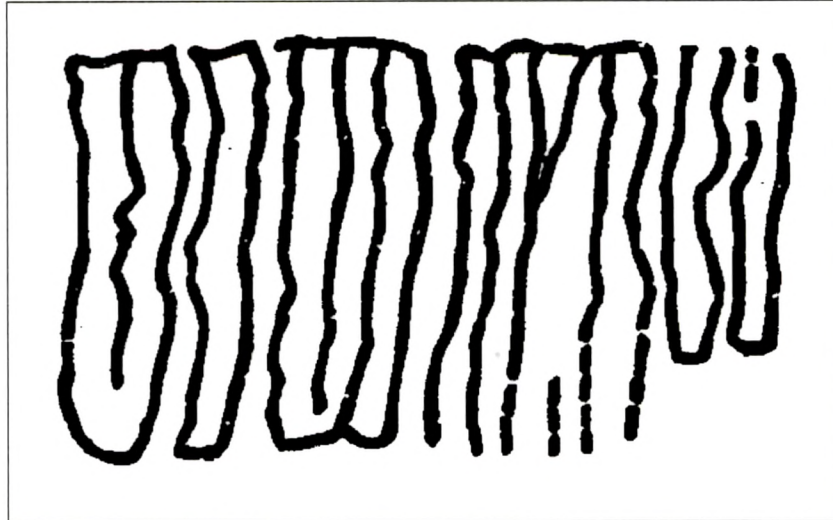


Fig 3a.11 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 11)

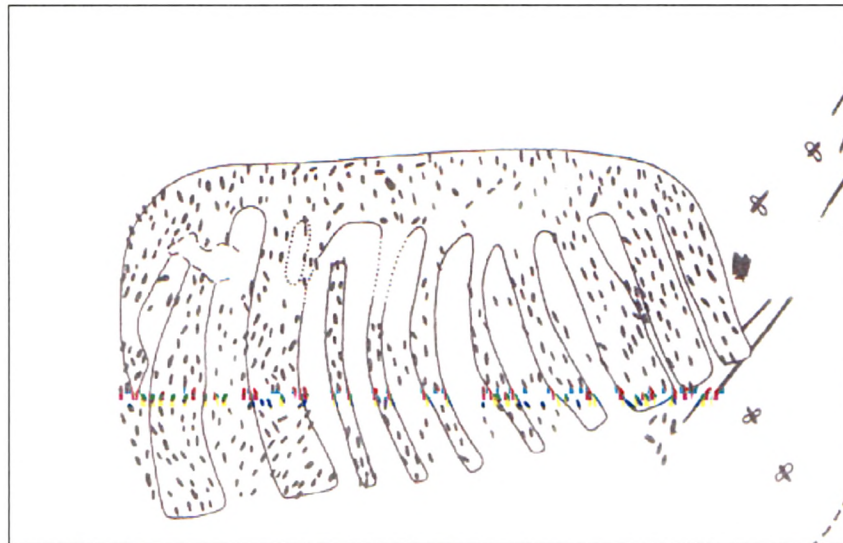


Fig 3a.12 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Cosmos in Stone, Fig: 7.3b)

Largest amount of rock art of south India consists of bruising belonging mostly to the Neolithic-Chalcolithic period and the main subject is cattle. Not much thematic variation is seen in South India's rock art. Few geometric designs are seen at places like Cuddapah

district of Andhra Pradesh, Badami and at Edakal rock caves at Wynad district of Kerala. In the paintings at Piklihal (Karnataka) geometric signs like square, circle along with symbols like cross and star are seen (Chandramouli 2002). Not much research work has been done in Tamil Nadu region. Some of the rock shelters near the megalithic burial sites contain rock paintings depicting symbols like star and square (Chandramouli 2002).

Coming to some of the important ones, at rock shelter 1 of Cuddappah district Andhra Pradesh, a geometric figure is made in which six short vertical lines are intersected by a single horizontal line (fig 3a.8). In the same shelter another very interesting large and complex geometric composition is also present. It is a combination of several abstract motifs, amidst which a pattern comprising of five 'U' shapes (fig 3a.9) piled one upon the other, is seen. The reason for separating out this pattern is that almost similar 'U' shapes are also seen in rock paintings from the Kwazulu –Natal Drakensberg (San art) which too exhibit 'U' shapes piled one over the other (fig 3a.10). According to scholars (Maggs and Sealy 1983, Sacks 1970; Richards 1971, Lewis Williams 2002a, 152) it is the most common and simplest form of entoptic phenomenon called **navicular**(boat shaped) **entoptic phenomenon**(Lewis Williams 2002b; 144), where an individual sees a set of nested catenary curves, as reported by laboratory subjects (see fig 3b.48a in next section). Again in Cuddappah district, in rock shelter number 2 an interesting painting (Fig 3a.11) is seen. Towards the right corner of the rock shelter at a height of 2m from the floor level a geometric drawing comprising of sets of thick vertical lines joined by horizontal lines in the top are seen (Chandramouli 2002). This too resembles (Fig 3a.12) the rock painting from Harrismith district, Africa (San painting) where a set of similar curves are joined at one end. However by citing these examples I do not intend to state that rock art belonging to completely two different areas to be of similar nature inspite of physical similarities. My only aim is to suggest some ideas which might provide a basis for further research, as there is no support of direct ethnography in India.

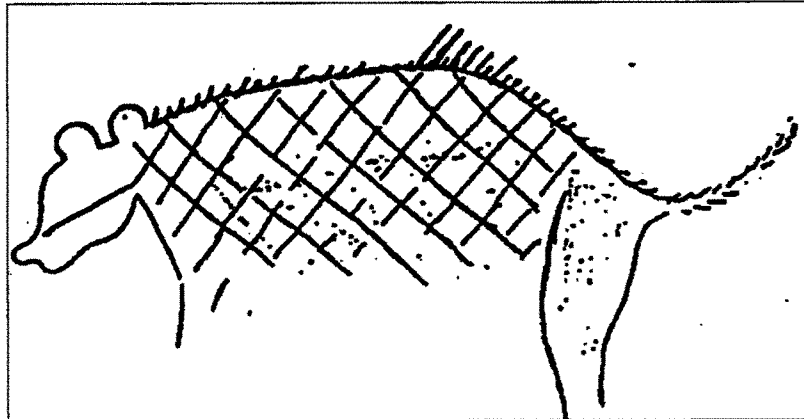


Fig 3a.13 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Settavaray; Fig: 304)

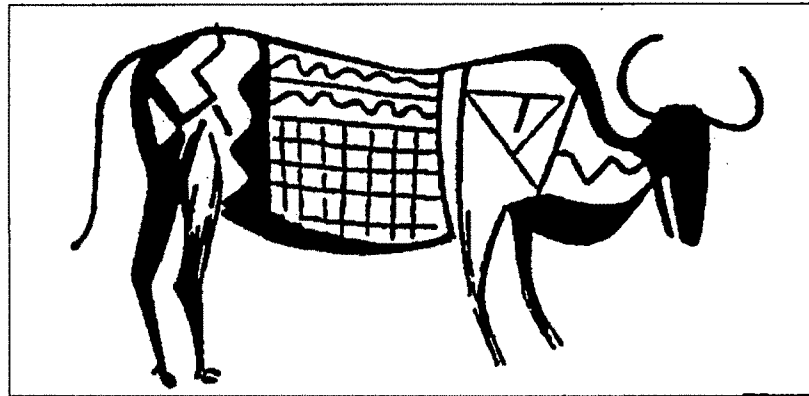


Fig 3a.14 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Badami; Fig: 310)

At Badami, in Karnataka (Fig 3a.13, Fig 3a.14) grid like designs are seen as body decoration on animal figures. As we have already seen that the grid occurs in common types of entoptic phenomenon. Regarding the co-occurrence of geometric motifs with images of animals some researchers think that the relation is same like that between text and diagrams in a book. Each says the same thing but by means of different conventions (Lewis Williams 2002a; 207). Some feel that representational imagery has evolved out of non-representational imagery (Lewis Williams 2002a; 206). Geometric signs are actually feeble early attempts at image making. However Lewis Williams opines that the answer to this co-occurrence is straightforward. According to him in certain altered states the human nervous system produces both geometric and representational imagery

(already discussed in neuropsychological model). During intensified altered stages these two types of images are experienced together. Therefore Williams concludes that their intimate association in shamanistic art throughout the world comes as no surprise (Lewis Williams 2002a; 207).

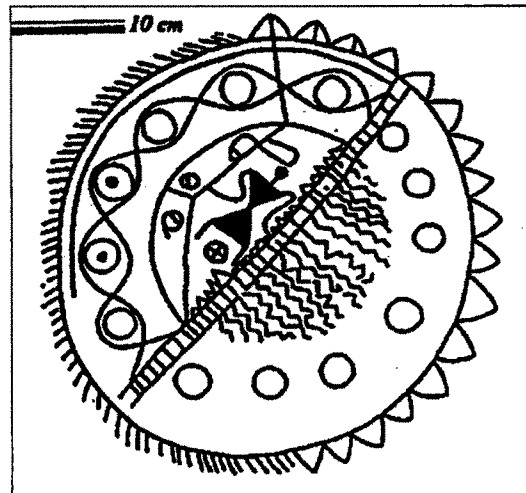


Fig 3a.15 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Benekal Forest; Fig: 506)

Another very interesting figure from Rampura near Anegondi in Karnataka (Sundara 1987) needs mention (Fig 3a.15). In this painting we see a circle which is parted into two halves by two parallel lines. On the outer periphery, there are triangles on one half and small lines on the other. Within the compartments various geometric figures like zigzags, circles, semicircles and spirals are made. A human figure is also seen within a semicircle. This painting has been interpreted to be related to burial practices. According to Neumayer 'this painting in the Kishkinda region near the ancient city of Anegondi might show the placing of a deceased person between the burial inventory in a stone circle' (Neumayer 1993, 191). He also adds that 'this painting shows the placement of a person along with funeral goods into a compartmented grave chamber. The smaller circles surrounding the chamber might indicate a "stone circle", one of the most common megalithic grave monuments available in the southern Deccan (Neumayer 1993, 191). However the other half of the circle contains zigzags which are very enigmatic, but at the same time much like the entoptic forms. As we have discussed that according to

shamanistic belief a person is believed to die when in an altered state of consciousness. Similar type of paintings (burial scenes) has been reported from Tamil Nadu in a stone circle (Rajan 1991, Fig 15).

In Cuddappah district, Andhra Pradesh, finger prints are reported from rock shelter number 1. Interpretations and parallels for 'fingerprints' have already been discussed in the previous section of this chapter (Kumaon Himalaya).

An exciting interpretation provided by Dr. Sundara (Sundara 2002) on certain geometrical designs in rock art of Karnataka needs mention. In rock art from Karnataka there are certain geometric designs which are of ritual significance. For example intersecting squares, single or double lined with loops at the corner. This occurs both in painting and engraving. They are found at Gaavali and Sonda. Double lined two obliquely intersecting squares with loops at the corners are also reported from Hire Benkal and Chik Rampur (two nos.) and three rows of dots of three each connected by diagonal lines (Sundara 2006, 45). Another design is the endless six loop design from Sonda. Regarding these designs Prof. Sundara suggests, that in the religious tradition of the historic period, two intersecting squares with nine loops signify Navagraha mandala and Svastiks, the Astadikpalas probably for the protection of people and the land respectively. A Kannada work on astrology compiled from ancient traditions describes two intersecting squares without loops with bijaskara ram in each of the eight triangular parts and in between them on the outside, is believed to be effective for curing fever. The four square design is meant for curing teeth grinding during sleep and also for curing partial headaches. In this manner there are hundreds of basic geometrical designs with slightly varying marks as well as 'bijaksaras' that serve as 'yamtras' for numerous purposes with psychic significance and approach. Even deities are represented by geometrical designs known as 'mandalas' for example Ganesha mandala which is two overlapping equilateral triangles in opposite directions. Regarding the endless six knot design as narrated by local people there is a magical significance. Occasionally oxen working in the field get some diseases affecting their horns which become loose and start dangling. This disease is believed to be owing to the crossing of a certain bird while

flying right over the cattle. Such afflicted cattle are brought to the spot where the rectangular slab with the engraving of the six knot design in the village is located. Three iron rings and an iron bar are heated to a certain degree. Both the rings as well as the iron bars are placed over the three loops of the design one at a time and are immediately pressed gently on the rear as well as front side of the horns of the cattle. The animal gets cured of the illness. It appears that geometric designs seen in rock art discussed above supports the fact that mostly it was made to serve specific purposes amongst which one aspect was definitely connected with popular beliefs related to the health and prosperity of the people, their cattle and the land.

Central India (Bhopal and Panchmarhi)

This is the richest area of rock art in India, and we get to see a wide range in terms of theme and styles. All types of geometric patterns generally seen in rock art, are found here. We will select some unique ones and try to analyse them.



Fig 3a.16 (Ref- Maradeo, Panchmarhi, Photo by author)

Starting with Panchmarhi region, several geometric figures are seen in Maradeo rock shelter. A very interesting painting (Fig 3a.16), which is comprised of two parallel lines of small triangles, intersecting each other in the centre thereby forming a cross shape. Scholars (Pandey 1993, 227) have interpreted this to be a symbol for worship. According to Pandey 'among the symbols found in the Indian rock art, Cross-worship seems to be the earliest, and this worship was widely prevalent among cave dwellers'(Pandey 1993, 227). In several places the association of trident with cross symbol has lead to such a conclusion by scholars.



Fig 3a.17 (Ref- Badkachar, Panchmarhi, Photo by author)

Another painting from (fig 3a.17) Panchmarhi shows a big rectangle formed by parallel lines. The periphery of this rectangle is laced with several small semi circles. Here too like the previous picture, the rectangle is crossed within, by two intersecting lines. The intersecting lines are also adorned with semi circles on their periphery. This kind of mat/carpet like designs are quite common all over central India, however no logical meaning can be ascertained as to the purpose behind these depictions.



Fig 3a.18 (Ref- Photo by author)

Maradeo rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3a.18)

Here again three triangle like shapes have been depicted which has been joined by a straight line on the left hand side. Interpretations related to triangle shapes have been discussed thoroughly in Orissa section of this same segment. However we must keep in mind that there are possibilities of regional influences on a particular motif no matter how universal it might appear. Generally seen, triangular motifs in rock art all over are usually associated with vulva and fertility concepts.



Fig 3a.19 (Ref- Bhimbetka, Photo by author)

Another painting from rock shelter 19 at Bhimbetka (Fig 3a.19) is of a similar kind like the burial scene of Rampura, Karnataka. Here, instead of a circle two to three human like figures are placed within a parallel lined rectangle. The rectangular area is lined with semi circles within, as well as on the outer periphery. Apparently this figure resembles modern day floor designs (called 'rangoli', 'alpana') done in Indian homes on auspicious occasions. However the above depiction is definitely not for decorative purpose. The human figure in the centre along with the semi circles (entoptic forms) is suggestive of the neuropsychological model. But unfortunately this cannot be ascertained due to lack of ethnographic support.

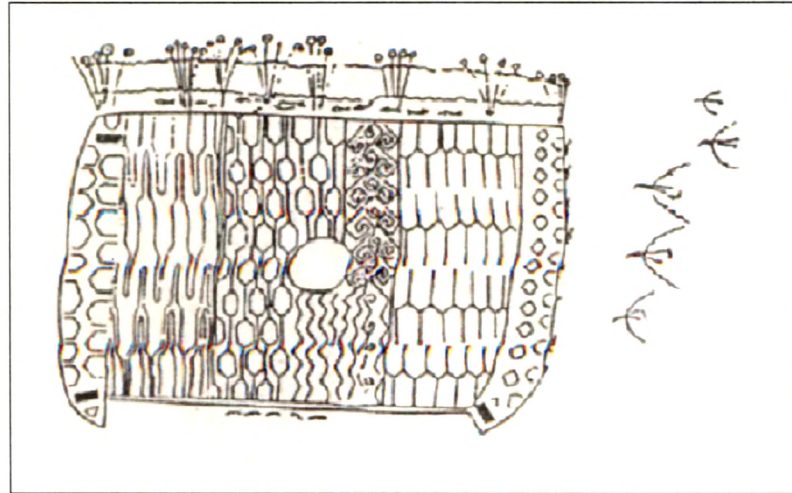


Fig 3a.20 (Ref- Erwin Neumayer; Lines on Stone, Jaora; Fig: 120)

A very interesting figure (3a.20), from Jaora in the Betwa river region (Neumayer 1992) shows a rectangle divided into several stripes, of which each one is decorated with a variety of design patterns. The centre of the space is indicated by a circle. According to Neumayer, 'on the upper periphery of the rectangle are shown fish between reeds or lotus stems with buds (?). Beside the rectangle is four flying birds' (Neumayer 1993; 66). He also adds that this whole composition looks as if the Mesolithic artist wanted to represent the cosmos, the rectangle forming the earth: with water indicated by fish and reeds and the regions of the space by flying birds. The theme that is reflected in this Jaora painting is difficult to comprehend, which I will not dare to do. However in this connection some study of rather similar scenes depicted in different cultures, which has ethnographic support can prove beneficial. It is amazing to know that in southern Africa, ethnographic accounts confirm, that the San religion revolves around a 'tiered cosmos' which means that the Heaven exists above, Hell below and the level of anxious humanity in between appear in one form or another, across the globe (Lewis Williams 2002a; 144). Infact, their art is a result of a complex relation between cosmos-society, mind, metaphor and image. Not only the San, almost all (shamanistic) societies throughout the world, believe in a realm above and another below the surface of the world in which they live, exist (Lewis Williams 2002a).

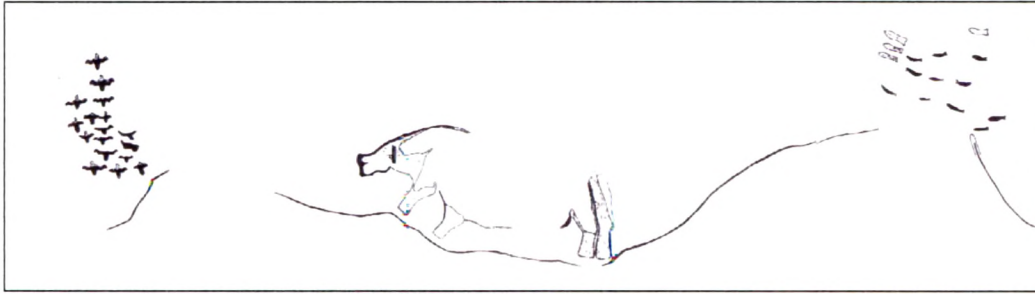


Fig 3a.21 (Ref- Lewis Williams, *The Mind in the Cave*, Fig: 32)

As we have already discussed in chapter II that a person who is usually a shaman encounters altered states of consciousness as part of their rituals, during which they go through widely reported mental experiences. As subjects move into stage three of deeply altered consciousness his/her experiences fall into two categories: those that relate to an underworld, a sensation of passing through a vortex or tunnel, a feeling of passing underground to a subterranean realm. The subject often experiences sensations of breathlessness, distorted vision, sounds in the ears, difficulty in moving, weightlessness and a sense of being underwater. Both underwater and underground travels are widely reported in shamanistic experiences, details of which are not being discussed here (Lewis Williams 2002a; 145). The second type of feeling that occurs to the individual is that of weightlessness, a sensation of rising up that is often associated with attenuation. Subjects feel that their limbs and bodies are exceedingly long. Throughout the world, these experiences are rationalized as **floating** and **flying**. Shamanistic flight is widely reported as their underground journeys. Human like figures with wings and flying, are seen in rock art globally quite similar to the above depiction (See fig 3b6 & 3b7). The themes that have been depicted in the Jaora painting is also reflected in a San rock painting (fig 3a.21), where fishes and birds are seen together, and as per the San interpretation these are figures symbolizing a shaman's journey from underwater to the sky during trance. The above study might help us to understand the Jaora painting in a different manner.

So these are examples of some of the basic geometric signs which recur frequently in rock art of India. Besides the above mentioned ones, there are plenty of other rock shelters in Central India and elsewhere where geometric figures are seen. These are either

depicted individually or found superimposed on animal and human bodies (fig 3a.22, fig. 3a.23). Owing their large numbers it is not feasible to discuss them separately.

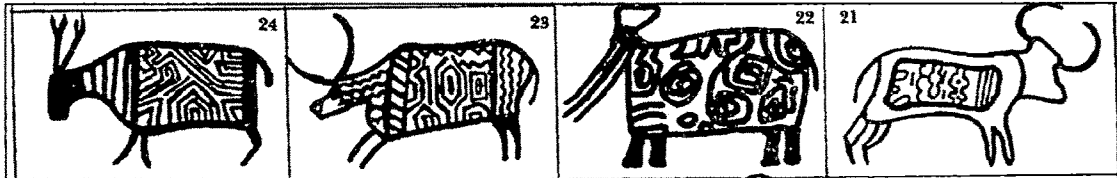


Fig 3a.22 (Ref-Michel Lorblanchet (Ed), Rock Art in the Old World; Fig: 3)



Fig 3a.23 (Ref-Michel Lorblanchet (Ed), Rock Art in the Old World; Fig: 1)



3.3 HUNTING SCENES

Within India, the spectrum of rock art is extremely varied in thematic content. The following chapter attempts to describe pictures showing the activity of 'hunting' in rock art of India.

Hunting constitutes the pivotal position of subject matter of rock art almost all over the world. Research work so far carried out by scholars have established the fact that 'hunting pictures' primarily belong to a society where hunting was the main activity, therefore chronologically they can be attributed basically to the Upper Palaeolithic and subsequent periods. By now we already know that rock art provided tangible clues which not only tells us a lot about the basic lifestyle of the prehistoric societies but also gives an insight into their profound and complex religious life. As discussed thoroughly in chapter II ethnographic evidences have supported the fact that ancient people used to turn to the supernatural power for survival and ensured future. Out of their various anxieties such as success in the hunt, abundance as well as location of the game animals, bringing fat animals into the range of their spears and into the folds of their trap nets, healing the wounds and sickness of the hunters, probably constituted pivotal position, for the society was based on hunting and gathering. Therefore they had to call the supernatural forces to intervene in their lives led by the shamans (J.W Sharp 2001 in website titled: The Desert Archaic Indians: Spiritual Quest- DesertUSA.htm). In this regard the following example provided by ethnographic sources from the Desert Archaic Indians will help us understand the mystic aspect as well as the spiritual connection usually associated with the hunting images found in rock art. According to Jay W. Sharp (who has worked on the Desert Archaic Indians) 'I know a grotto, formed by fallen boulders in a mountain range of western Texas, where an image painted on stone portrays a Desert Archaic hunter, who is dancing to celebrate his success in driving his spear home, killing a mountain sheep. Each year, during the morning of the summer solstice, sunlight steals through a shaft to illuminate that image' (Sharp, website, 2001).

Beginning from, Kumaon Himalayas and Mirzapur area in the north, Orissa in the east, Vindhyan region in the centre and finally Southern India, it was rock paintings belonging to the Mesolithic period that primarily depict hunting scenes, except few pictures belonging to the Upper Palaeolithic period. In northern India, especially in the **Kumaon** Himalaya region, presence of hunting scenes is not that regular. Men as hunters are illustrated at Gwarkhya-Udyar, Kimani, Phalseema and Lakhu-Udyar sites. Here it is indeed very difficult to identify all the pictures showing men and animals together as the hunting scenes (Mathpal 1995). However in **Mirzapur** region 'hunting' is the second most important activity illustrated in the rock paintings. Almost seventy paintings (Tewari 1990) depicting hunting activity have been reported from this area. For the purpose of study only a selected few will be discussed. It needs mention here that hunting theme has also been reported from Ladakh and Zaskar Valley region. A hunting-like scene engraved on a stone slab was found during the excavation of Neolithic site at Burzahom in the Kashmir Valley. It shows hunting of a deer by two human figures one with bow and arrow and the other one is seen with a spear (Fig -3b.1).

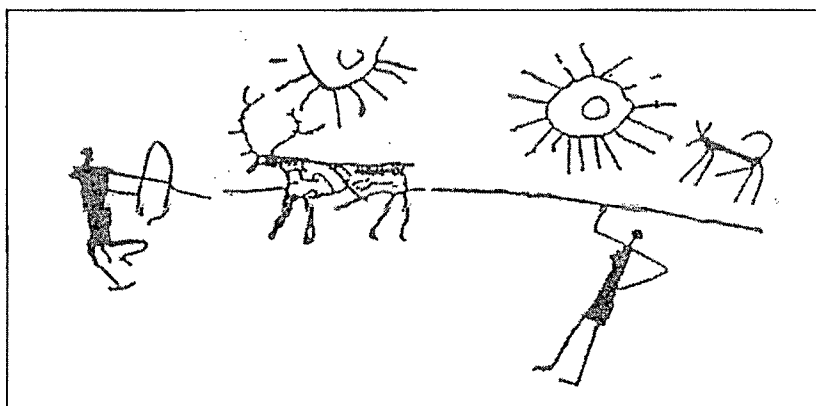


Fig 3b.1 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 32)

As discussed in the previous segment in **Orissa**, the subject matter of the rock paintings are non –figurative abstract motifs and a few animal forms. There are no hunting pictures here. Mesolithic rock paintings in Andhra Pradesh too have no hunting pictures, although there are plenty of paintings depicting game animals. Infact rock art of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu offer almost no cases of realistic hunting activity. Therefore we see that almost whole of **south India** is lacking in depiction of hunting as a theme in rock art. It is the vast Mesolithic rock art corpus of central India spreading all over the Vindhyan hills

that display the most vibrant and realistic hunting and gathering scenes which has no parallels elsewhere. Infact in **central India** we get to see the best thematic and stylistic variety of rock art (Chandramouli 2002).

For the convenience of study I have grouped the paintings depicting 'hunting' on regional basis. They will be subdivided under **Mirzapur region, central India** and **south India**. Rock paintings in India where hunting scenes have been portrayed show a major difference between the portrayal of human and animal figures. Animal figures have been natural renditions where as depictions of human figures are extremely minimalist in style. In several pictures it has been reduced to mere stick-like figures. However even if these figures have been executed by lines only, still they beautifully portray 'movement' like running, jumping which is amazing to modern day viewers. The artist has been able to express the message even by use of few lines, in an excellent manner. Female figures present in these hunting episodes are seen with a fuller body compared to their male counterpoints. Lance points with several barbs of stone triangles, bone pointed arrows, bone harpoons, stone-tipped lances and arrows were the usual hunting tools (Wakankar 1992, 332). Barbed arrows fitted with ovals, triangles, lunates, and bone points were often used for various types of hunting (Wakankar 1992, 332). Bows also had different shapes: archoid, trapezoid, semi-circular etc. At times they were very big in size. Traps were used for entangling animals.

While exploring 'hunting' theme in rock art of India we must have a global vision on the topic. This is required because of the absence of directly relevant ethnography to guide the interpretation for rock art of India. Out of the various ways that researchers have tried to interpret the purpose behind rock art, one prominent theory put forward was 'hunting magic'. At the beginning of the twentieth century we see European researcher Tylor (1832-1917) in 1865 sensed an affinity between magic and prehistoric art (Lewis Williams 2002a, 45). Later Salmon Reinach (1858-1932) concluded that the animals depicted in the European caves were the ones that the Upper Palaeolithic people wished, would multiply in number (Lewis Williams 2002a, 45). He came to this conclusion with support of ethnography provided by Australian aboriginals called 'Arunta' who used to

paint the pictures of certain creatures with a belief that their actions would cause the depicted species to breed. Later Abbe Henri Breuil and others extended this hypothesis to hunting magic (Details will be discussed later in this section). They argued that the images were intended to give hunters power over their prey (Breuil, H 1952). Similar point has been mentioned in the Indian context by Wakankar and Brooks (Wakankar & Brooks 1976) while discussing the motivation behind the paintings made by Stone Age people. According to them "In hundreds of paintings men armed with barbed harpoons, spears, or bows and arrows, attack, surround or dance around an evidently doomed animal. These paintings may, of course simply record the events of a successful hunt. But if an inference can be drawn from reports of recently primitive societies, the pictures may represent ceremonial magic before the hunt, invoking a successful outcome' (Wakankar & Brooks 1976, 62).

Today, one thing that can be concluded to some extent is the fact that hunting was a very important activity of the Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic times and therefore its reflection in rock art had definitely some deeper connotations. What we understand now from various ethnographic sources is that there was a very close relationship between art and religion in early cultures. It is for sure that the enigma behind rock art, at times hidden deep within the caves, not in the areas used for daily living, makes them something apart from everyday world, suggesting great importance. The hunting pictures may have served ritualistic purposes, in which capturing the essence or spirit of the animal, empowered the hunter (who may or may not have been the artist) total control. As mentioned earlier, Abbe Henri Breuil's theory of 'hunting magic' corroborates this idea (Breuil 1952). He argued that the hunting images were intended to give powers to the hunter over their prey. He claimed that many pictures had spears or arrows sticking into them. Perhaps, he thought that the act of painting these weapons affected the death of a real animal. Meroc and Mazet (Meroc & Mazet 1977, 36) argue that the wounded animal depictions have been for conflict over territory in which the images having been made and ritually pierced prior to a real fight between competing communities. By far most of the scenes depicting hunting activity in India show hunters stalking their prey with spears and bow and arrow. We can infer from this that the use of spears and of bow

and arrow is evident from the earliest period. For convenience as well as systematic study each painting will be described as well as studied separately. As there are practically no ethnographic reports in India to support interpretation therefore I had to fall back on a comparative study, keeping in mind the cultural differences that influence rituals and art. We know that rock art is a universal occurrence, and the striking and surprising similarities which are noticed are probably due to the neurologically generated commonalities. Therefore any particular motif or peculiarity observed in Indian context will be studied with reference to similar aspects noticed in rock art in other parts of the world along with the interpretations made by researchers. By following this process though we might not get to the actual meaning and cause behind each and specific rock art within India, at least it will increase our awareness of first hand ethnographic accounts available for rock art study. So, while drawing analogies I have kept in mind that even if rock art is neurologically generated everywhere; the experiences are culture specific and therefore vary from society to society. Researchers emphasize (Weil 1986, 29) the importance of “set” (individual expectations and personality) and “setting” (the physical and social environment) in determining how the neurological happenings are experienced.

Owing to the huge volume of the paintings available within depicting hunting like activity, it will be plausible to discuss only some of them. The paintings has been chosen in such a manner that it covers some of the significant specimens that has been depicted in Indian rock art and will be able to capture the overall essence of the cognitive development of humans in India.

Mirzapur Region

Hunting is the most commonly depicted subject of rock paintings of Mirzapur. About seventy hunting scenes (Tewari 1990, 20) have been reported from various parts of the district. Animals are seen with spears, harpoons or arrows embedded in their chest. The hunters are depicted with weapons, aimed or touching the bodies of the animals. Weapons mainly consist of barbed spears, bow and arrows. Besides the usual animals a porcupine-hunt is noticed at Dhonkwa-maharani and a peacock- hunt scene has been

found in the rock shelter of Jhandi-Pahar near Bhanwan village (Tewari 1990, 26-27). Fishing scenes has also been reported from Kauva-khoh, Gochara, Kerwa and Matahwa rock shelters. Some of the salient features of the hunting scenes of Mirzapur rock art include preponderance of the Iguana (Tewari 1990, 26) hunt scenes and depiction of extreme pain on the animals face (wounded deer at Sitakund rock shelter, Mirzapur) caused due to embedded weapons. Maximum number of solitary hunting scenes instead of group/ mass hunts is a typical feature of rock art belonging to this region (Tewari 1990, 29). In some depictions in which wounded animals are shown, hunters are conspicuous by their absence (Tewari 1990, 28). Hunting scenes showing animals being pursued, surrounded and killed are similar to those seen in central India. A parallel between the rhino hunt scene of Mirzapur with that of Bhimbetka, deer hunt scene of Kerwa with Narsingharh, Dharampuri, Imlikhoh and bison hunt scene of Kuava-Khoh with Kathotia has been reported by a host of scholars (Gupta 1967; Plate 1X: Fig.1 Plate X; Wakankar & Brooks 1976; Neumayer 1983: Fig 22-24, Tewari 1990). In most of these scenes scholars have noticed a unique uniformity in the portrayal of an angry and wounded animal fleeing away (Tewari 1990).



Fig 3b.2 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate II)

Matahwa Rock shelter (Fig 3b.2)

In this painting, found in the ceiling of Matahwa rock shelter, hunting of two animals, by hunters, armed with barbed spears and harpoon has been portrayed (Tewari 1990). Out of the two animal figures one can be very clearly identified as a rhino, done partially in flatwash while the other animal is an outline drawing. Three to four hunters (not very clear) are seen to approach the animal at great speed, so much so that one of them almost looks as if flying in the air. He is definitely not standing on the ground. Although done in a simplistic manner the human figures portray great movement. One of them also sports an elaborate headdress. In this context, I would like to refer to a hunting scene, in the Shaft at Lascaux in France, which is one of the best known and most debated Upper Paleolithic cave paintings (See in 'Animal figures' fig 3c.42). The painting consists of a rhinoceros with raised tail, the outline figure of a man, a wounded bison and an outline bird on top of a stick like object. Usually this picture has been interpreted to be a tragic incident (Breuil H 1952), where the man is a hunter who is hunting a bison and because he wounded the animal therefore the animal has turned on to run through him. However according to Demorest Davenport and Michael Jochim (Davenport & Jochim 1988) it is impossible that the image depicts a historical event and they stressed on the significance of the four fingered hands and their parallel in bird's feet. They concluded that the figure is bird from the waist up and human from waist down. They further identified the species to be a Black Grouse or Capercaillie, and then compared it with Siberian shaman's spirit helper 'ongon' which is also a grouse (I will not go into the details of the Siberian shamanistic rituals and the role of the spirit helper in this case). Davenport and Jochim therefore concluded that perhaps this painting actually tells of a shaman's transformation into a bird (spirit helper) during his altered state (moment of death) and his erect phallus suggest the picture to depict some sort of a fertility ritual. David Lewis Williams (Lewis Williams 2002a; 265) further added that the image maker of the Shaft at Lascaux made a spirit bison out of the stain on the rock thus 'fixing' a spirit animal. He also added that since the hoofs of the animal are shown to be cut/sliced therefore it is not standing on the ground, but floating in spiritual space.

Therefore while studying the rhino-hunt scene at Matahwa rock shelter at Mirzapur we must keep in mind the above interpretation made by experienced archaeologists and simply not label the painting to be a hunting picture. Far too many points count against so simple an interpretation.



Fig 3b.3 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XIII)

Panchmukhi Rock shelter (Fig 3b.3)

Very clear depiction of hunting of a rhinoceros by a human figure. The outlined animal body contains design patterns, executed with vertical and horizontal lines. The horns of the rhino are in flatwash, however no depiction of eyes and mouth are seen. The human figure has been drawn in a very stiff and unrealistic manner. He is seen with a bow while the arrow is struck into the rhino's back. It needs mention here that Cockburn while studying this picture had identified the animal figure as a 'boar' (Tewari 1990, 23). However he later corrected his observation. Dr.R.K Tewari (Tewari 1990) identified it as a rhinoceros. As we have already discussed in the beginning of this section that during pre-hunt ceremonies, images were designed to communicate with big game animals to ensure a successful hunt.



Fig 3b.4 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XI)

Lakhma Rock shelter (Fig 3b.4)

This painting does not show the hunting activity to be performed directly. The animal looks like a deer, body done with thick outline along with X-ray depictions. Anatomically correct positions of the windpipe and lungs are seen. Amazing aspect seen here is that a full grown young one, in outline figure is depicted in standing position. Depiction of pregnant animals where the young one is visible inside the mother is seen in many other rock shelters, worldwide. It definitely bears deeper nuances, probably related to hunting magic or fertility rites. Out of the two, one human figure is shown in flatwash while the other is an outline drawing. The human figure in outline has been depicted with a triangular head, without eyes, nose or ears. Both hands are spread on either side. The second human figure is seen holding a spear like weapon with both hands, almost ready to strike the animal. The animal with its head down seems to have come to a halt and is fear struck. Apart from this basic description there are certain clues in this image which suggest that there is perhaps more to the hunting episode; like the animal figure is seen with cloven feet, similar with the rhinoceros seen at Lascaux (See fig 3c.42) in France. As mentioned earlier in case of fig 3b.3, animals with cloven feet are supposed not to be

standing on the ground; instead it is symbolic that the animal is in floating state which happens when it is a mental vision.

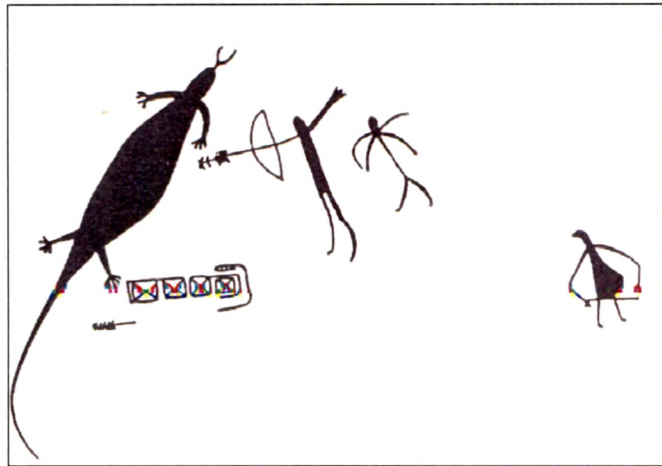


Fig 3b.5 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 236)

Kerwa Ghat rock shelter (Fig 3b.5)

This figure as well as the following figure depicts almost the same theme, which is crocodile hunting. In the above figure a rather large sized, flatwashed crocodile figure is being hunted by a single human figure with microlith tipped bow and arrow. Besides the hunter, two very strange human figures are represented, of which one has been depicted with a bulging abdomen. The figure is done in flatwash, with elongated arms and bird like head. Interestingly a small horizontal line cuts through its body and legs. Similar kind of human figures have been reported from rock art sites outside India. Ethnographic reports from North America and South Africa have identified similar kind of human figures with long arms and bird heads in their rock art to be shamans in their final stages of trance. Fig 3b.6 is a North American rock art image depicting shamans transformed into bird like figures and fig 3b.7 is a southern African rock painting of an animal surrounded by transformed winged shamans.

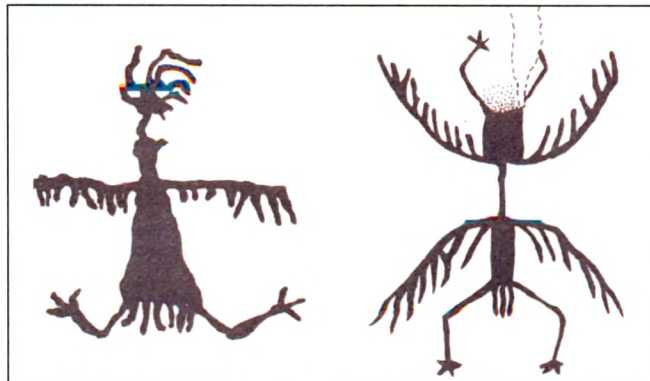


Fig 3b.6 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Mind in the Cave, Fig: 43B&C)

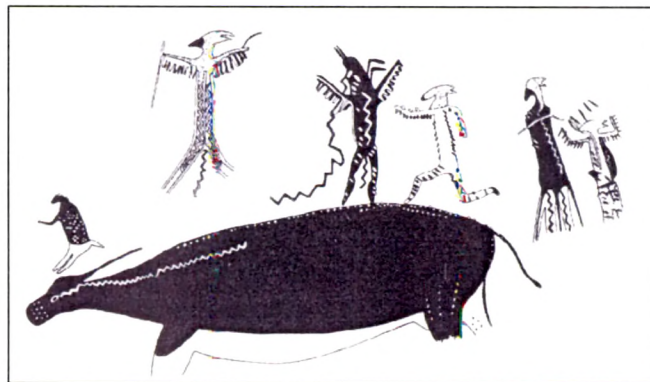


Fig 3b.7 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Mind in the Cave, Fig: 31)

Coming back to the figure from Kerwa Ghat, the second human figure (stick-like) is seen with four arms. The hunter has a weapon in one of his hands and the other arm is upraised. Interestingly this picture also contains geometric figures, comprising of four small crisscrossed square shapes. As we have seen that as per the neuropsychological model, in its third stage even when iconic images are derived from memory, geometric forms may persist. Though we cannot conclude anything regarding the above representation but one thing is for sure that it definitely has profound implication which seems far beyond our naïve understanding.



Fig 3b.8 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XX)

Kuava-Khoh rock shelter (Fig 3b.8)

This painting is comprised of a horizontal crocodile figure which is being hunted by a single human figure with bow and arrow. There are several other human figures surrounding this large animal, though they are not engaged in the hunting activity, directly. The human figures are seen with long arms which have several small horizontal lines in place of the fingers. One of the figures on top is seen with arms which resembles a snake. Here too it needs mention that according to David Whitley (Whitley 2000) and Lewis Williams (2002a, 176), both in North America and southern Africa, bodily transformation is a metaphor that is associated with altered state of consciousness. On both continents shamans have reported to have fused with animals and experience bodily transformations. Fig 3b.9 is a rock art image found in North America where a shaman has reported to have transformed into a rattlesnake in extreme stages of altered state.



Fig 3b.9 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Mind in the Cave, Fig: 43E)

So, the above painting from Kauva-khoh does exhibit signs which suggest it to be far more than a simple hunting activity.

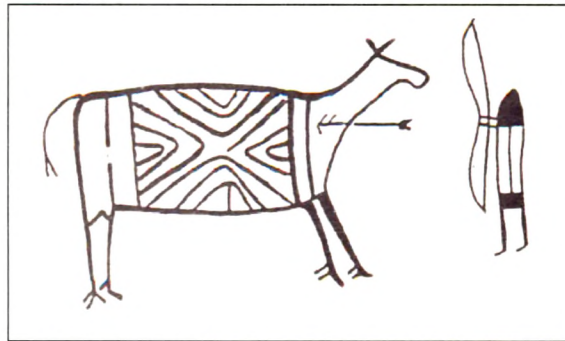


Fig 3b.10 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 240)

Kerwa Ghat rock shelter (Fig 3b.10)

In this painting a deer like animal is being hunted by a single hunter. The animal figure is executed in outline. The entire human figure is cone shaped where the head cannot be identified separately. Such figures which are incomplete may be just customary depictions as part of some complex ritual. The animal body contains decorative design which resembles stage three of neuropsychological model in which the human nervous system produces both geometric and representational imagery at the same time (Lewis

Williams 2002a). Its neck is pierced by a barbed arrow; however its facial expression does not depict expressions of pain and discomfort or any kind of movement.



Fig 3b.11 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate X11)

Lakhma rock shelter (Fig 3b.11)

In the above painting, we see a solitary hunter aiming his bow and arrow towards a humped bison. The arrow is barbed probably with microlith and its tip is touching the chest of the animal. Usually bison is a very common animal depicted in rock art all over the world and probably there lay some symbolic meaning attached to it. (Details will be discussed under section 'animal figures'). This recently discovered painting is significant from the point of view of depiction of eyes (Tewari 1990). Just behind the bison like animal figure does another animal figure resembling a nilgai. A human figure, very faintly visible is seen in front of this animal, most likely without weapons which would otherwise have (apparently) suggested hunting. Both the animals contain x-ray depictions which show parts of their anatomy like stomach and rib cage. The animal figures are natural depictions whereas the human figures are stiff. Here too the bison is depicted with cloven feet.

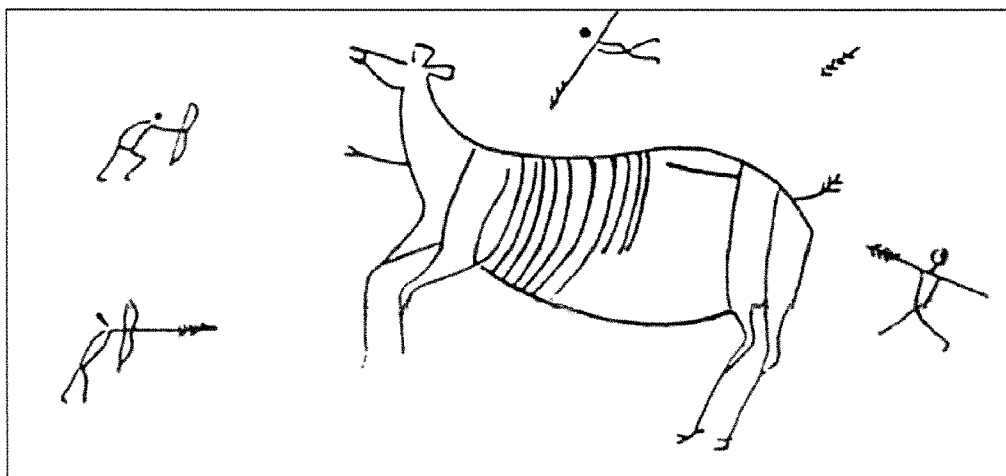


Fig 3b.12 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 126)

Kerwa Ghat Rock shelter (Fig 3b.12)

In this painting we see a sambar /deer like animal figure being surrounded by four human figures, very clearly discernable, with barbed spears and arrows. The animal is beautifully drawn. The most striking feature of this painting is the depiction of intense pain on the animal's face. Human figures are again very simplistic in style, even small compared to the animal figure. An arrow is seen deeply embedded just below the neck of the animal, which has been shot by an archer standing right in front of the deer. The latter has its mouth open as if gasping for air. The rest of the human figures are seen with spears in their hands. Scenes of deer- hunt are predominant in the Mirzapur region, indicating the economical importance of this animal as well as that the staple food of the society in question was animal flesh (Tewari 1990).



Fig 3b.13 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Page 22)

Sitakund Rock Shelter (Fig 3b.13)

Depiction of a single deer being hunted by a single human figure is rather common in Mirzapur region. Examples of this type are numerous, which may be sub-divided according to their style of portrayal. Due to non availability of a coloured photo, it becomes difficult to study this picture. Still, the above picture needs mention for it is a representative of a major style of hunting picture seen in this region.

In this picture a wounded deer like animal is seen in a posture of looking backwards. A barbed arrow shot by an archer standing before the animal is shown deeply embedded in the animal's chest (Tewari 1990, 22). The expression of pain due to the wound of the arrow is remarkably portrayed by the upturned face of the animal (Tewari 1990).



Fig 3b.14 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Page 22)

Kauva-Khoh Rock shelter (Fig 3b.14)

The above rock painting depicts an organized hunting expedition of a bison like animal. The painting is in red colour but in very poor state of preservation. The lower portion of the animal body is hardly visible. The animal body is executed with thick outline, while its head and legs are in flatwash. Eyes or mouth of the animal has not been depicted. The body is filled with vertical lines of half inch (Tewari 1990). The animal is seen to be attacked from all directions by multi-barbed spears and with bow and arrows. The tip of the arrows and spears are touching the animal in its chest, tail and hump. The hunters have been depicted in stiff manner. They seem to be wearing knee length single piece dress.

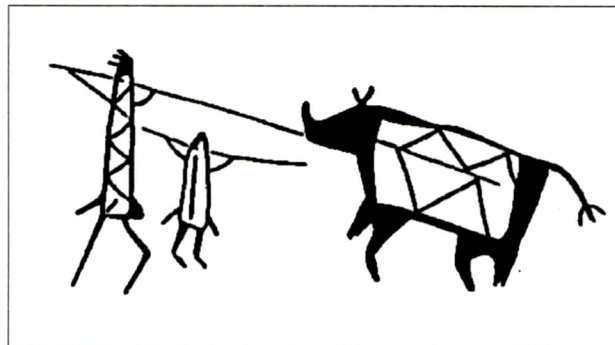


Fig 3b.15 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 123)

Robertsganj/ Panchmukhi Romp (Fig 3b.15)

This painting shows an animal figure, resembling a rhino. It has been executed in outline. However, certain portions like the head, front and hind legs including tail are done in flatwash. Two human like figures are seen in front of the animal with long sticks which may be spears, attacking the animal. The human figures are executed in outline but are far away from the real form. The larger figure has probably been depicted with a phallus as well as a trail in the back. Three small lines are drawn on its head and one of its legs is folded from knees. The second human figure which is the smaller one is almost headless and two small lines are seen to stick out from either side of its lower body, just above the legs. Striking feature of this figure is that both legs are folded from its knees which are suggestive of the fact that the figure is not in a standing position. The animal is also shown with incomplete legs and its entire body looks to be inclined, where the left side is slightly on a higher level than the right. This too suggests that the animal is not rooted to the ground. Therefore certain details found in this depiction faintly render a feeling that this is not suggestive of a real hunting act. Even the fact that both the human as well as the animal figure contain infilling geometric designs on their bodies is evocative of the neuropsychological model.

Central India

The rock art corpus of Central India display the best of thematic and stylistic variety and the tradition of rock art here is more or less continuous. We get to see realistic hunting and gathering scenes mostly in the Mesolithic paintings of central India which has no parallels elsewhere in India (Chandramouli 2002) and seems to be the single most depicted theme in the rock paintings belonging to this period. In the long span of Mesolithic art hunting groups are very common in all the different stylistic groups. In the earliest pictures, group hunting scenes show dozens of hunters, attacking herds of animals with microlith barbed spears (Neumayer 1993, Fig. 84).

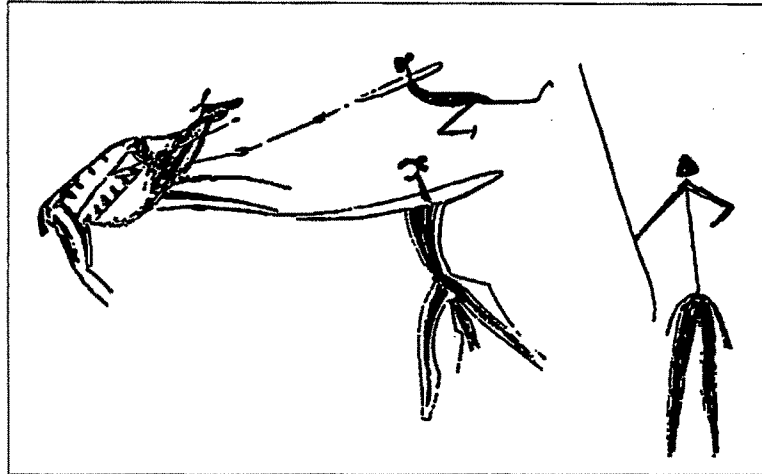


Fig 3b.16 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 40)

Bhopal (Fig 3b.16)

The above picture shows a group of three men performing a hunting activity. Of them, two men are attacking a sambar like animal with a long stick like weapon, with vigour. A third man is represented with a stick in one while the other, though incomplete, is on his waist. The animal figure is naturalistic, typical of early stylistic group. Both the animal as well as the human figures seems to be in flying postures. As has already been mentioned that in rock art depictions where feet of either the human or animal figures are not positioned on the ground, has been associated with dreams or visions that occur in an altered state. This is because individuals have reported the feeling of floating and flying in space while in deep stages of trance. In case of the above figure one of the human figures is probably shown ithyphallic though not very clear. Ethnographic reports from North American as well as southern African (Lewis Williams 2002a,175) rock art points to the fact that supernatural powers were associated with sexual potency and it is reported that ithyphallic male figures have been used as a metaphor to denote altered states of consciousness (Whitley 2000). However whether this is applicable to the above depiction is a far cry, as rock art is culture specific and varies from society to society.

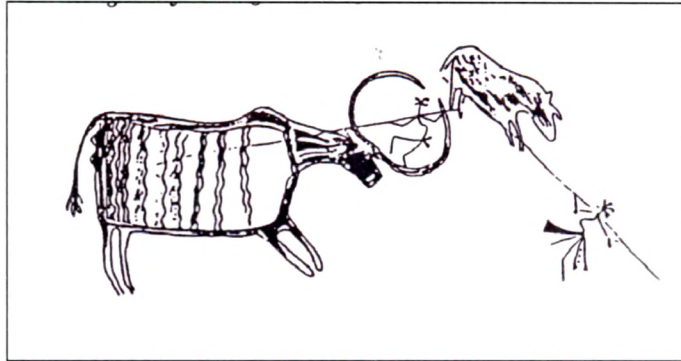


Fig 3b.17 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 42)

Gupha Masir rock shelter (Fig 3b.17)

In this depiction we see two human figures independently engaged in hunting like activity. There are two animals depicted as prey. The hunters are executed by S-shaped figures with very minimalist features. Usually S-shaped human figures were drawn to show movement that is either running or jumping (Neumayer 1993). Head of the human figure resembles a flower. Somewhat similar depictions (see fig 3b.18) of head are seen in North American rock art which has been interpreted to be a shaman wearing a quail feather topknot. This is because the quail bird was associated in a number of ways with the shamans (Whitley 2000, 115).



Fig 3b.18 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Mind in the Cave, Fig: 43A)

In the Indian context due to lack of ethnographic support we cannot conclude on this kind of a head depiction, but one thing is sure is that it is symbolic and definitely has some deeper meanings. Of the two, one animal figure has sets of wavy lines as body decoration. This picture has red as the colour of the contour lines, green was used as the in-filling colour (Neumayer, 108).

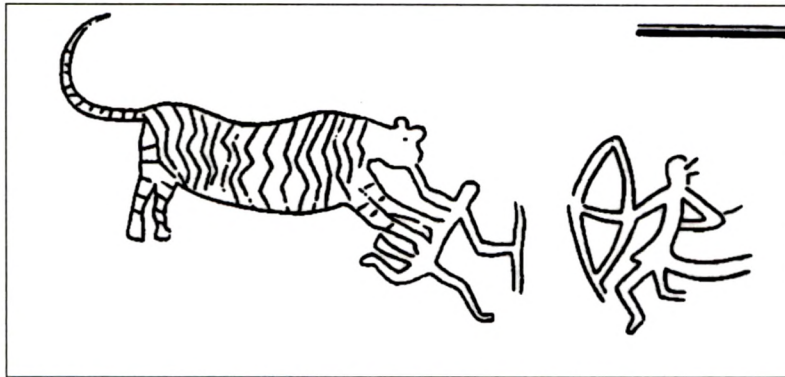


Fig 3b.19 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 49)

Chibar Nulla rock shelter (Fig 3b.19)

This picture shows a natural depiction of a tiger, which seems to attack a human figure by holding his arm in its mouth (Neumayer 1993). Both the animal as well as human figures are outline drawings. The animal body is executed with stripes which make it very real. Another human figure is seen with a bow as big as his body. Literal meaning of this painting appears very obvious that a human figure is trying to save another human from an attacking tiger, but as we already have an idea that most of the rock art has been executed with functional and ritualistic significance therefore there might be deeper meanings attached to this depiction.

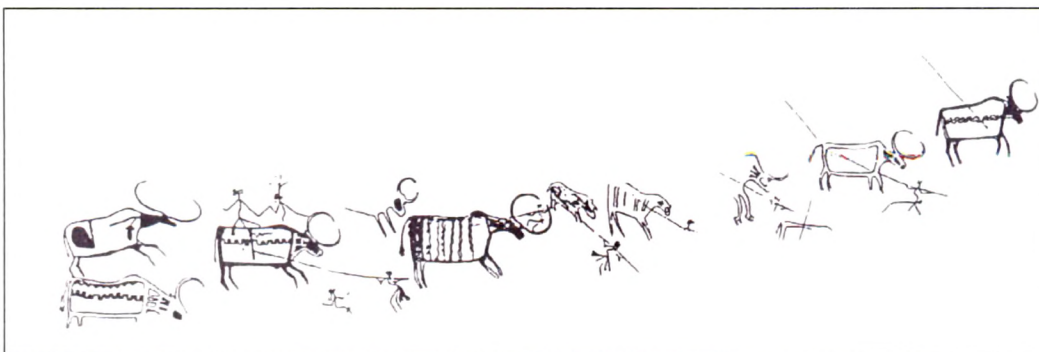


Fig 3b.20 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 84)

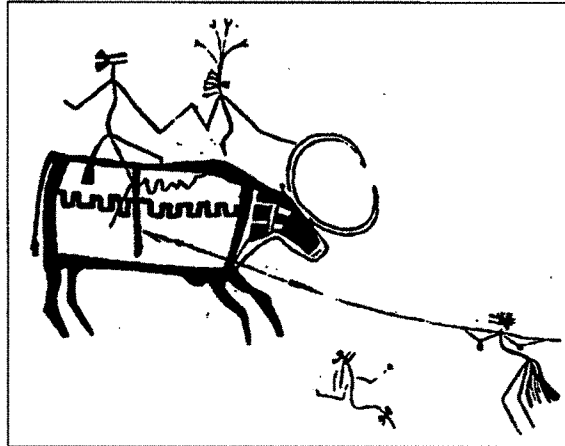


Fig 3b.21 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, (from fig 84), Fig: 86)

Gupha Masir rock shelter (Fig 3b.20, 3b.21)

The above depiction (3b.21) is part of a bigger painting from Gupha Masir (3b.20). The painting is very mysterious. It shows an animal, slightly higher plane than two human figures who seem to be on the ground. The animal, facing left direction, has been painted with thick outline. Inside body is divided into two equal segments by a thick vertical line. Designs in form of a horizontal line have also been made. Two stick like, human figures are riding the animal. Their hands are joined. Of them one is depicted with a peculiar head dress, almost resembling a tree. Here it needs mentions that lines emanating from human head have been made by San rock art artists, which according to them denote symbolic depiction of the spirit leaving the body (Lewis Williams 2002b, 241). This will be taken up in detail, later in 'human figures' section of the thesis. Coming back to the above depiction, the human figure standing on the ground is holding a long spear like weapon which is sticking into the animal's stomach. This picture definitely attaches a mystic element to the event of hunting practiced during Mesolithic times. If we go by Abbe Henri Breuil's theory of hunting magic then such images were actually intended to give powers to the hunter over his prey (Breuil 1952).

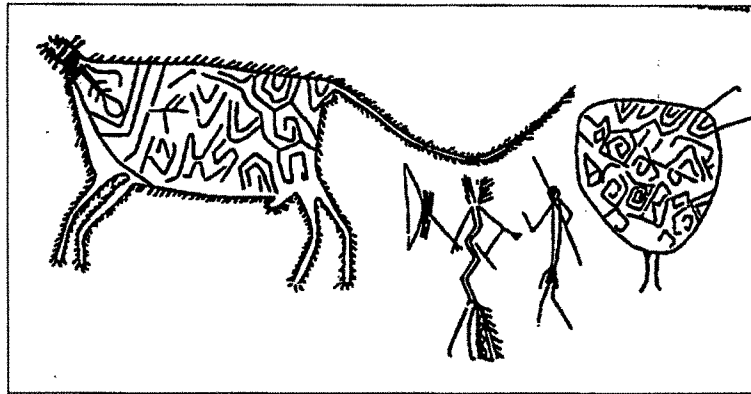


Fig 3b.22 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 96)

Barounda rock shelter (Fig 3b.22)

In this painting two human figures and an animal is depicted. All the figures are done in outline and the inside is filled with complex designs. Part of the animal anatomy, resembling the digestive tract is also shown. The animal figure is seen facing left direction and its head is represented in a very unusual manner. Tiny lines emanate out of its body. One of the human figures is seen with a zigzag (M) shaped body, done in outline. A trail from the knee is also seen. There are lines sticking out from its head. Such kind of representation is supposed to be representation of the entoptic phenomenon elsewhere, for example San rock art (see fig 3b.7). According to Erwin Neumayer pictures containing deified animals decorated with design patterns are probably interwoven with mythologies and they belong to the hunter-gatherer society (Neumayer 1993).

Surprisingly another strange figure is seen in this picture, where a medium sized circle is filled with designs which are almost similar to that made on the animal body. Just below this circle and also on the right side two lines are drawn which resembles human feet.



Fig3b.23 (Ref- Bhimbetka, photo by author)

Mount Rosa, Panchmarhi (Fig 3b.23)

The above figure has been executed at a height on the extreme right of Mt.Rosa. Though this does not suggest any hunting like activity directly, however a hunter is seen along with an animal figure. The human figure has been executed in white outline. It is carrying a bow in one hand while in other hand there are two arrows, which is placed above its head. He is followed by another human figure carrying a pot like vessel on its head. A monkey like animal figure has been made in flatwash. This rendition is probably of ritual significance.

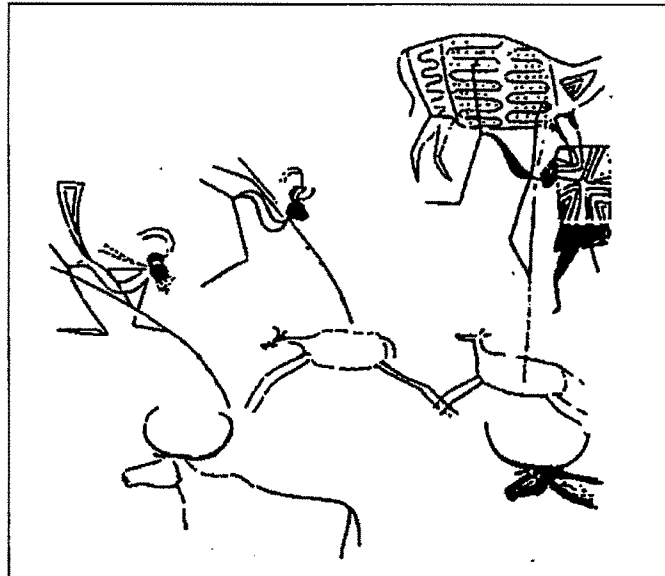


Fig 3b.24 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: *Lines on Stone*, Fig: 122)

Kathotia rock shelter (Fig 3b.24)

In this picture, two S-shaped human figures are seen with long stick like weapons. These figures are not rooted to the ground and seem to be in a flying posture. Noticeable aspect of this depiction is the presence of tiny dots just before face of one human figure. Though it will be nearly impossible to ascertain the exact context of this painting just as in case of all rock art but we can however refer to some ethnographic interpretations available for similar kind of depictions done elsewhere. For example San people of Southern Africa have interpreted their rock paintings where small lines are seen before human face to be nasal bleeding (Lewis Williams 2002a, fig 28). According to them this phenomenon occurs during trance states (Lewis Williams 2002a, 141). Besides this; we already know that dots are considered to be a part of stage I of the entoptic phenomenon.

Coming back to the above picture, the human figures are also depicted with feather like attachments on their heads along with a trail from their waist. The animals in this painting are very natural depictions which are also in flying posture. The entire composition gives an impression of hanging / floating, and definitely not grounded.

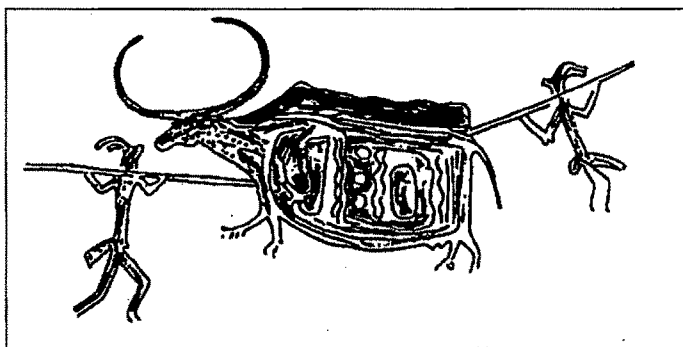


Fig 3b.25 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 124)

Gupha Masir rock shelter (Fig 3b.25)

A large animal figure, probably a bovine (very commonly found at Gupha Masir) is represented here. Two human figures possibly with loin cloth, head adornments and spears are seen both in front and back of the animal. Some researchers like Wanke (Wanke 1977) believe that hunting from back is a fertility rite. Here too like the previous figure, the animal and one of the human figures (the one behind the animal) are to some extent elevated from the ground. The animal figure has been depicted with a large belly, in contrast of which legs are quite small. There are several geometric shapes like oval, circle and rectangle along with small meandering lines painted all over its body.

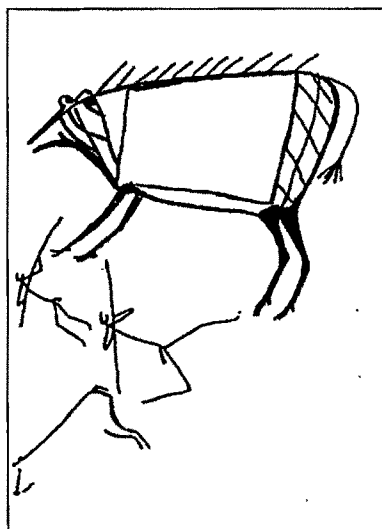


Fig 3b.26 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 173)

Lakhajoar (Fig 3b.26)

In this picture a large animal is depicted in outline. A rather hefty sized rectangle shape is done within its body which is left blank. The hind portion contains simple designs made with vertical and horizontal lines. Unlike most of the figures this animal is seen with complete portrayal of its feet. However both its front and hind legs are not placed on the same level. There are two stick like human figures with spears just below the animal. These figures are in a horizontal position, as if falling down. This is clearly suggestive of the fact that these human beings are in a floating state.

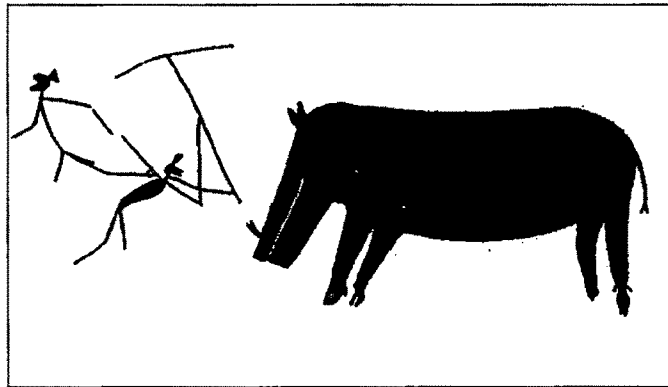


Fig 3b.27 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 175)

Urden rock shelter (Fig 3b.27)

In the above picture we see a large boar, done in flatwash, facing left direction. The animal is a complete depiction. In front of the animal a human figure is depicted with a very unusual stick like weapon in hand. However if we see it minutely it also looks like a stick like human figure complete with arms and legs. Just above this to the left another human figure is seen whose legs are extended so as to touch the shoulders of former human being. Also striking in this picture is the depiction of the animal feet which clearly shows that the animal is in a hanging position and not firmly rooted to the ground. Here again the enigmatic factor is reiterated.

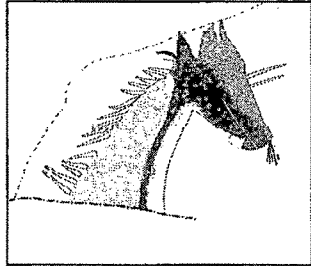


Fig 3b.28 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Cosmos in Stone, Fig: 5.5)

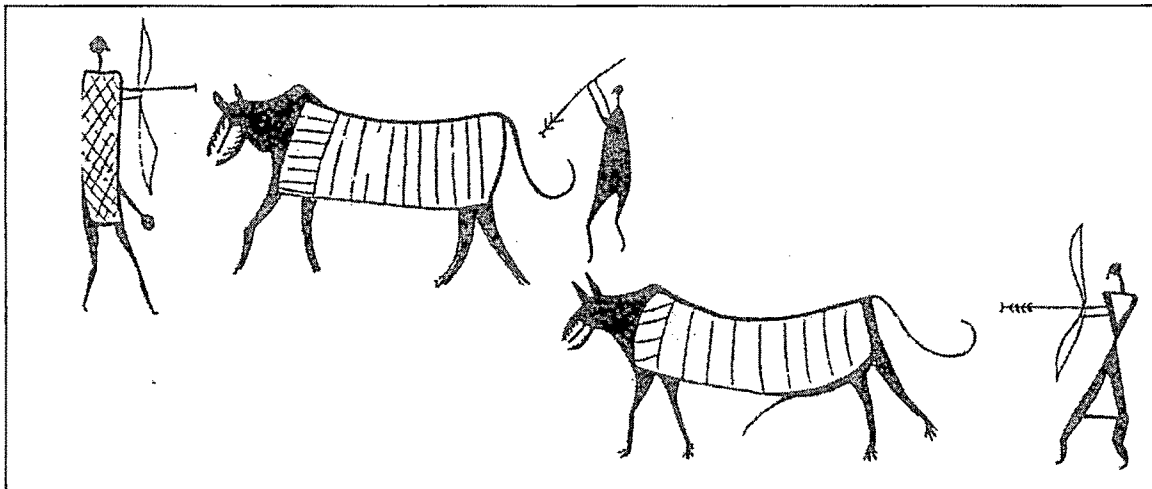


Fig 3b.29 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 377)

Raisen (Fig 3b.29)

In this picture we see two animal figures executed partly in flatwash and partly in outline, facing left direction. An outlined human figure with bow and arrow is facing one of the animals. Its body contain grid like designs (grids are one of the elements of the entoptic phenomenon). This human figure is seen with a prominent phallus and its head is depicted in flatwash with a long nose like projection. Interestingly small lines in front of the nose found in San rock art has been interpreted to be nasal blood by the San's themselves, which occurs during deep stages of trance (See fig 3b.28). The same animal is also been attacked from the rear with microlith barbed spear by a human figure done in flatwash. According to Wanke this is a fertility rite (Wanke 1977). Another animal, same as the above, is also seen but this one is seen with a prominent phallus. A solitary human figure is depicted behind this animal with its bow and arrow aimed at the animals back.

Regarding depiction of the 'prominent phallus' in case of both the animal as well as the human figure the author would like to refer to Alan Brodrick who was one of the earliest writers on Lascaux (Brodrick 1949). He had attempted to interpret the erect phallus found in the Shaft in Lascaux (See fig 3c.42). According to him erect phallus meant 'death by severance of the backbone'. To this Williams has added that (based on ethnography of San people and North Americans who made rock art), 'Death' in shamanistic thought may mean travel to the spirit world in an altered state and since erect phallus is a common occurrence during altered states and while in sleep therefore it is associated with 'travel' of a shaman and also his 'death'. Indeed, sex is sometimes associated with shamanistic travel (Lewis Williams 2002a; 265). Further in the western world motifs depicting male erections always stands for virility and fertility (Lewis Williams 2002a; 265). Therefore regarding the above painting (3b.29) it is doubt less that we shall never know the exact meaning because the symbolic associations attached with these ithyphallic figures and sex in general can affect a wide variety of cultural and natural objects, and take on unforeseeable meanings (Bahn 2004, 38).

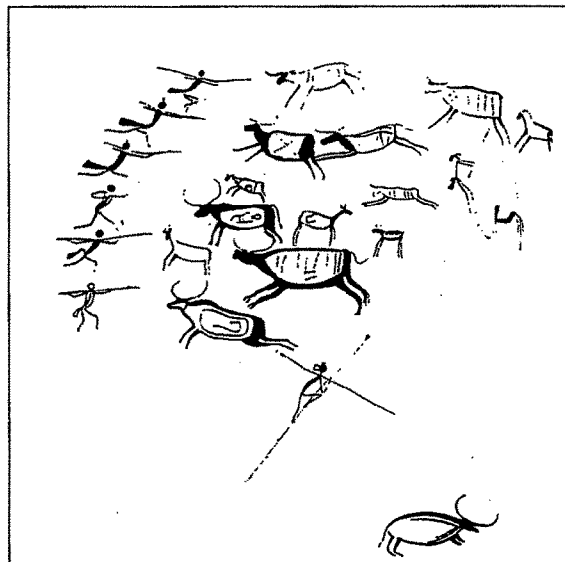


Fig 3b.30 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 137)

Urden rock shelter (Fig 3b.30)

In this painting a row of six human figures, with spears are facing a group of animals. Of them, two are simple outline drawings while the others are in flatwash and probably an extension of their dress is seen to fly in the air. The reasons behind the meager depiction of only two of the human figures are again puzzling. Some of the animals (probably wild bulls) are done with thick outlines while the others are simple outline drawings. Of them again one animal contain anatomical x-ray painting while others are filled with lines and dots. Though only one of the animals seem to have been depicted with cloven feet, but none seem to be standing on the ground. We also see that the cluster of animals is 'without regard to size or position relative to one another' (Halverson 1987, 66-67). These characteristics have been interpreted to be projections of mental images that have accumulated over a period of time. Mental images float freely and independently of any natural environment.

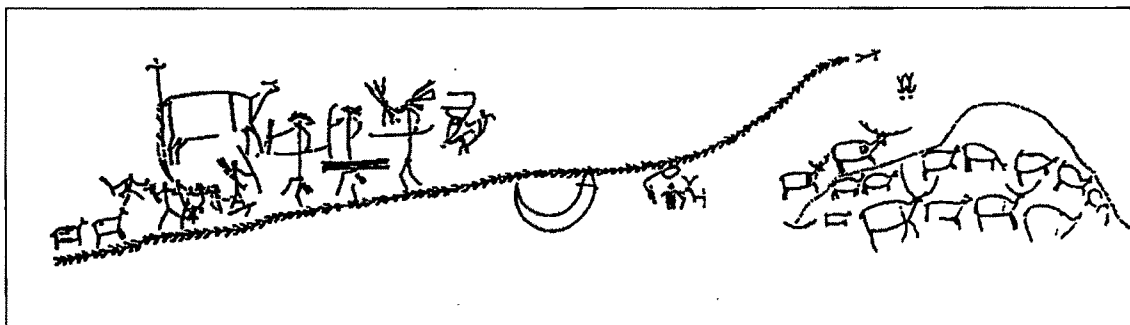


Fig 3b.31 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 198)

Mahadeo Hills, Astachal West (Fig 3b.31)

This painting is a very interesting as it clearly reiterates the enigmatic factor that haunts us on visualizing rock art. Though this painting does not suggest the subject of hunting precisely still I would like to discuss it in this section for it consists both animal and hunter like figures. In this several meters long portrayal (Neumayer 1993) we see a group of human beings resembling hunters along with some animals on the left hand side while on the right hand corner of the painting a cluster of deer like animal figures are represented in outline, facing left direction. In between these two, a row of horizontal human figures is seen, one after the other in form of a chain, from left to right hand side.

At the end of this chain a pair of human figures is represented in an upside down position. This appears to be the most enigmatic aspect of this depiction. I would like to further point to all the small details which suggest that this painting is purely symbolic and therefore functional. It is done in order to achieve some social cause; be it healing, or for better hunt, controlling weather, fertility rites or religious purpose. On a closer inspection (fig-199) three stick like human figures positioned on the left side of the human chain are depicted who exhibit very strange head depictions. The one in the middle sports a fish like figure in place of its head. Also, three horizontal lines are cutting through its body. Though not similar, but to some extent similar kind of human figures with three or more lines radiating from their bodies have been reported from Pech Merle, and Cognac rock art sites in France. These belong to the Upper Palaeolithic period and are well known as 'wounded men' amongst researchers (Leroi- Gourhan 1982: Lewis Williams 2002b, 238).

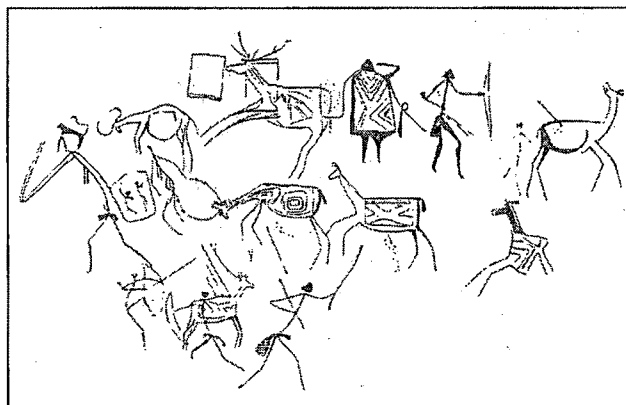


Fig 3b.32 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 138)

Lakhajoar rock shelter (Fig 3b.32)

The above picture again portrays mass hunt of a deer. This picture contains several interesting facts like that of man-woman co-operation during hunting, use of traps etc. The human figures are stick-like while the animal bodies are outline drawings, with inside body filled with decorative design patterns executed with geometric shapes. In the extreme left two women are seen with stick-like bodies, along with breasts which are showed with two vertical lines. They are also depicted with projected abdomens, which is very prominent for the second figure. Both the women are seen to carry load on their

backs; the former is seen with two small human figures in a flat-bottomed basket while the latter is carrying a pouch on her back. According to Neumayer this portrayal is a classic example of man and woman cooperation during hunting expeditions (Neumayer 1993). He has also mentioned the use of traps which are evident from the above picture. According to him the traps are square shaped as seen here and probably made of bamboo. These are placed into the shrubbery to entangle the animal (Neumayer 1993). As Wakankar writes 'bamboo and rope traps, bamboo strips with a zigzag weave of thin ropes, formed a trap. The form of the trap was rectangular, triangular or semi-circular and U-shape. The obstacles were created by uneven ground and by obliquely planting sharp bamboo pieces to trap the animals....Bolas were used for the purpose of entangling animals in the trap'(Wakankar 1992, 332). Use of a semi circle trap is also seen at Putli Karar, a single trapped rhino at Firengi (Neumayer 1993, fig 139) and animals trapped inside pitfalls at Urden (Nuemayer 1993, fig 140). Then again, this depiction appears very enigmatic to me, for the animals are seen to follow the female figures with bowed down heads. Just below the first woman figure from left, some hunting like activity is depicted which seems unreal and might be symbolic.

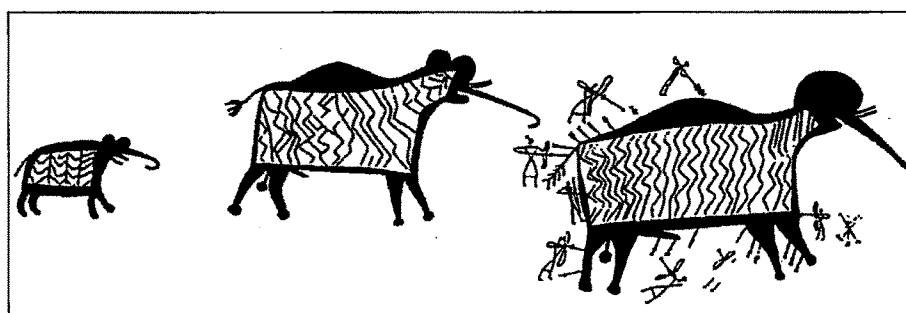


Fig 3b.33 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 386)

Urden rock shelter (Fig 3b.33)

An array of 3 different sized elephants (from large to small) are placed one behind the other facing left direction. Though several tiny human beings with bow and arrows are depicted round the largest elephant, giving an impression of hunting, still one can clearly figure out that this is not intended to convey a simple hunting incident. Certain important

clues point to the enigmatic factor in this painting. For example the animals are ithyphallic, the significance of which has already been discussed earlier in this section. Their bodies are done with thick outlines while the inside is filled with vertical wavy lines. Many arrows are sticking into the body of the first elephant on the right which therefore portrays pain, by an open mouth. Trunks and tails of all the animals are stretched outwards. Interestingly the other two elephants portray the same pain and body posture, almost like mirror reflections though they are not attacked by the hunters, nor are there any arrows sticking into their bodies. This representation definitely looks symbolic.

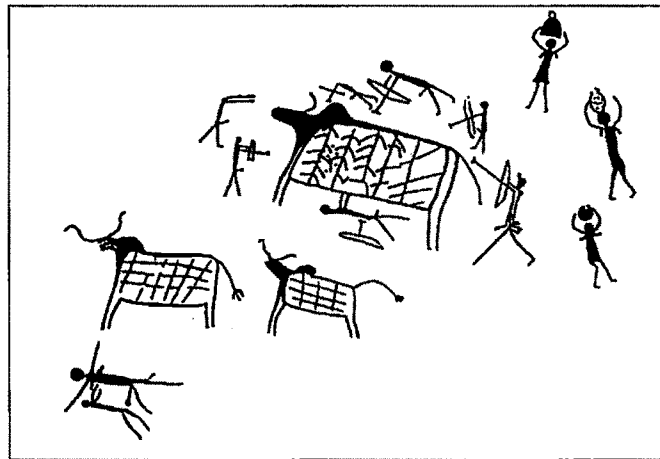


Fig 3b.34 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 387)

Narsingharh rock shelter (Fig 3b.34)

This painting is same as the previous picture fig 3b.33. Instead of elephants we see three humped cattle, probably chronologically belonging to the agriculturist's society. The animals here face right direction and the largest one is surrounded by several diminutive human, ithyphallic figures with bow and arrows. One of the human figures is seen right below the stomach of the animal in horizontally lying down position, while his weapon is drawn behind him. It looks very enigmatic. These two paintings establish the fact that both were done in the same context and aimed to achieve the same results. However one interesting point to be observed in this depiction is the presence of three human figures

who seem to be women, for they are fuller compared to the stick like men and appears to have breasts on either side of their bodies. They appear to carry some vessel on their head.

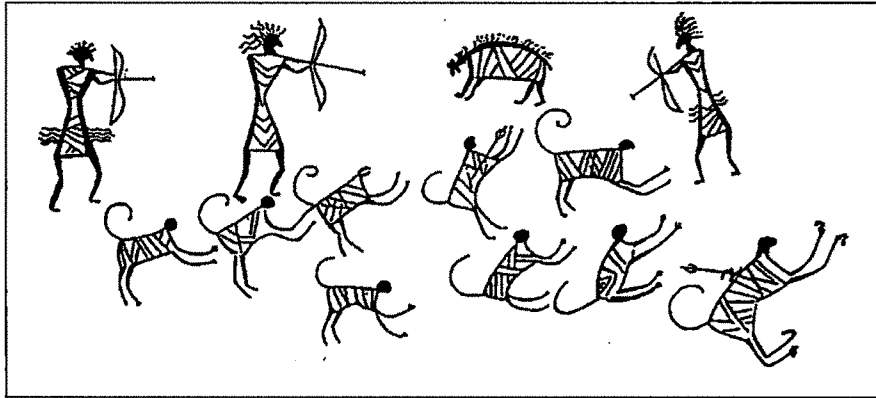


Fig 3b.35 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 388)

Raisen-Ramchaja rock shelter (Fig 3b.35)

This painting contains a group of nine monkeys along with three human figures with bow and flat tipped arrow. All the figures are outline drawings and contain simple geometric designs within their bodies. Some of the animal figures are almost placed in a vertical position. The animal in the extreme right is seen with an arrow sticking to its body. The human figures appear to be in long tunic like dress and wavy lines are seen to be emanating from their heads and waist region. The latter is very similar to stage 3, in which geometric entoptic imagery is peripheral to or integrated with iconic imagery. Interestingly a single animal like figure without tail belonging to a different species is also seen above the monkeys. It makes one wonder as well as curious about this particular animal for it has been depicted with human like feet, but four in number. Its spinal cord contains wavy lines. In this regard we should note that there are references that in extreme stages of altered state (Whitley 2000) shamans fuse with animals and experience bodily transformations and there are plenty of parallels of this found in rock art all over the world along with ethnographic support from North American and Southern African rock art. So while studying the above painting we should keep this

metaphor in mind which has been interpreted by researchers (Whitley 2000, Lewis Williams 2002a) as well as the artists themselves. Therefore this strange animal figure in all possibility may not have been a true animal depiction. However it is really difficult to conclude the complexities of ancient rituals and that too without ethnographic support.

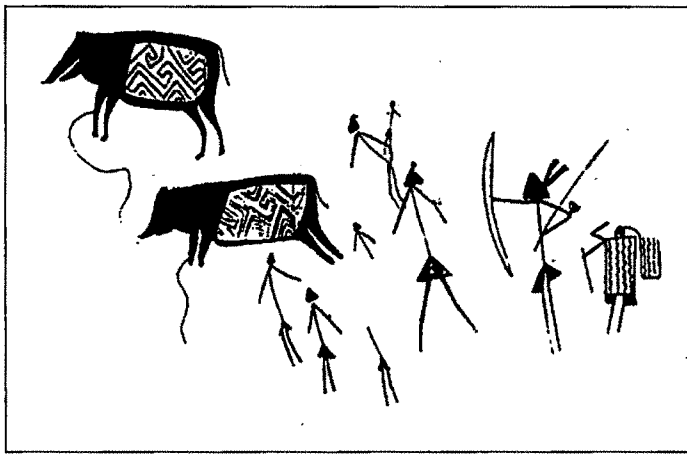


Fig 3b.36 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 105)

Kathotia rock shelter (Fig 3b.36)

This picture shows two boars along with several stick like human figures. One of the human figures is carrying a bow and arrow which probably is suggestive of some hunting activity. Head and legs of the animals are done in flatwash. Inside hollow of the body contain design patterns. The animals are seen with string like object tied to their feet which apparently looks as if the animals have been trapped. However this cannot be ascertained as we must always remember that rock images which look very obvious to interpret might also have very complex meanings and are probably metaphoric expressions. As already mentioned the human figures are stick- like, and very stiff. Their heads are depicted by small flatwashed triangles. Two of them are seen with feather like attachments to their heads. Noteworthy point in this depiction is the presence of a woman, square shaped outlined body, with decorations consisting of wavy lines within. While studying the rock paintings of Central India two significant points are noticed that is firstly women depictions are plump with scope of body decorations while male bodies

are in stick form. Secondly in some of the group hunting scenes women are seen with pouches hanging either from their heads or on their backs (See fig 3b.32).

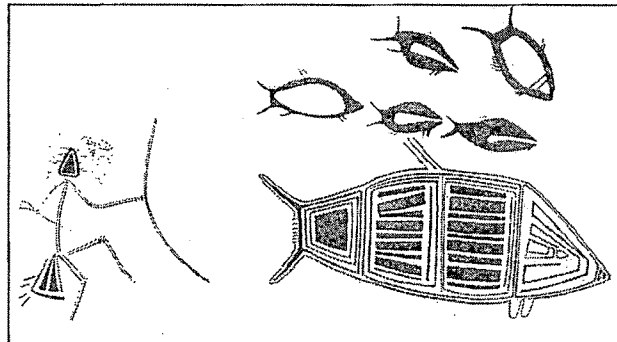


Fig 3b.37 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 50)

Mahadeo Hills, Agamdwar rock shelter (Fig 3b.37)

In the following three pictures we shall see the depiction of activities resembling hunting of fish. The above painting consists of one large and five comparatively smaller fishes, all facing right direction. Just behind them a human figure is seen with bow and arrow. Its head has been depicted with a triangle done in flatwash and placed within a slightly bigger triangle. Interestingly some wavy lines are seen emanating from its head which again reminds of entoptic signs and altered states of consciousness. Legs are depicted without feet and are bent from knees. The fishes are drawn in a manner which suggests that they are swimming. Inside body of the big fish is decorated with thick and thin lines while the smaller fishes are done with thick outline. Incase of particularly one fish the outline is so thick that it almost covers up the entire body. This painting appears to be symbolic and definitely not a simple act of fish hunting. Amazing point to note here is that the fishes and the human figure is drawn in the same level, nowhere does it look that the man is on land while the fishes are in water.

In this context I would like to refer to ethnography available from the San people of South Africa. As already mentioned it is not intended to apply the same interpretation in the Indian context; however such references will help us to view these paintings in a

different way, than mere incidents of everyday lives. We learn from accounts of J.M Orpen (Orpen 1874) and David Lewis Williams (Lewis Williams 2002a; 145) that the religion of the San people of Southern Africa is built around a tiered universe where they believe that there is realm above and another below the surface of the world on which they live. Concepts of a tiered universe are, of course, not restricted to shamanistic religions. Heaven above, Hell below and the level of anxious humanity in between appear in one form or another across the globe (Lewis Williams 2002a; 145), which is also seen in India. According to Williams, infact this concept of Heaven and Hell actually rises from mental experiences of early societies which are shamanistic as well as societies which are not. He argues, otherwise in the materiality of daily life there is, after all, no evidence whatsoever of hidden spiritual realms above and below. So, coming back to the widely reported mental experiences from a broad range of societies as well as laboratories, individuals have described the sensation of passing through a vortex or tunnel (this has already been discussed in detail in chapter 2) and as we have seen that usually iconic images start appearing at the sides of this enclosing vortex (Siegel 1978). During this stage individuals often feel passing underground to a subterranean realm along with a feeling of inhibited breathing, distorted vision, sounds in the ear, difficulty in moving, weightlessness and a sense of being in another world. These sensations have been interpreted as being underwater and underground. Therefore San's themselves have interpreted their rock art which contain images of fishes to symbolize the 'underwater' experience of the shaman in an altered state of consciousness (see fig. 3b.38).

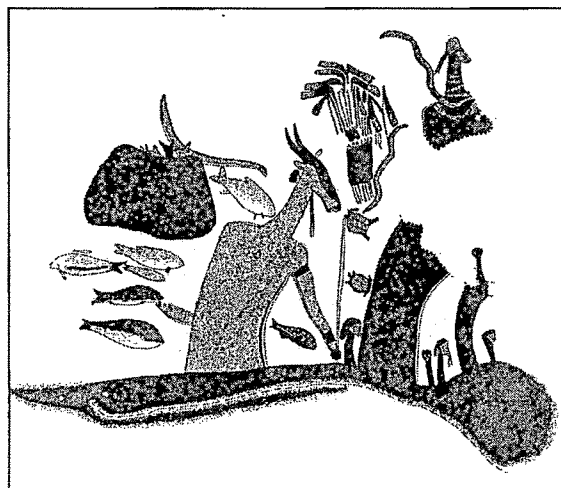


Fig 3b.38 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Cosmos in Stone, Fig: 7.9)

Both underground and underwater experiences are evident in an account of a shamanistic journey that a San man (shaman) named Kau Giraffe had given (Bieseke 1993, 70-72). In the following account the word Kaoya appears, which means 'god' in the San language and the man begins by saying that his 'protector' (or 'animal helper') and Kaoya came and took him. 'We traveled until we came to a wide body of water....Kaoya made the waters climb, and I lay my body in the direction they were flowing. My feet were behind, and my head was in front Then I entered the stream and began to move forwardMy sides were pressed by pieces of metal. Metal things fastened to my sides. And in this way I traveled forward my friend.....and the spirits were singing'After this Kau expressed how Kaoya taught him to dance and told him that his protector the Giraffe would give him potency. Then again Kau found himself underwater. 'But I was under water! I was gasping for breath; I called out, 'Don't kill me! Why are you killing me? My protector answered, 'If you cry out like that, I am going to make you drink water....the two of us struggled until we were tired. We danced and argued and I fought the water for a long timethen my friend, my protector spoke to me, saying that I would be able to cure. He said that I would stand up and trance. He told me that I would trance. And the trancing he was talking about, my friend -I was already doing it...Then my protector told me that I would enter the earth. That I would travel far through the earth and then emerge at another place" (Bieseke 1993, 72).

So from the above account we can see how the San people understood the universal feeling of altered states, and it also gives us a feeling that probably most of the rock art that we see, are symbolic representations.

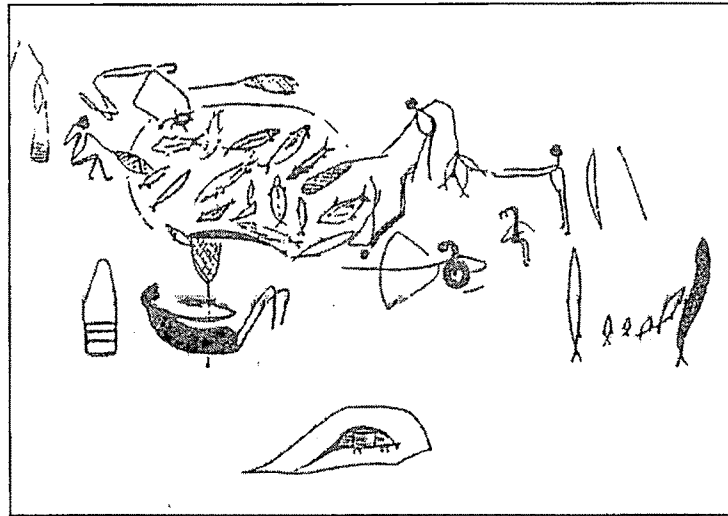


Fig 3b.39 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 155)

Lakhajoar rock shelter (Fig 3b.39)

This fishing scene from Lakhajoar is apparently detailed in description. Several fishes are shown within an enclosure (a pond?). Altogether there are three to four human figures. Of them, two human figures (very clearly) towards the left are in sitting position and the one on the right is in standing position. The picture can be better described under two segments; left and right. Left - Of the two human figures, one figure is holding a turtle with both hands while the other has a net in one hand and the other hand is placed on his head. Altogether there are seven fishes along with the turtle. Right- On this side of the pond like enclosure a human figure has three fishes strung into a rod. According to Neumayer it is for easy transport (Neumayer 1993). This painting gives descriptive details as far as to show pouches hanging from the branch of a tree and spare nets being laid out on the ground. It will be very risky to attempt any interpretation for this painting. Apparently the explanation seems very obvious but certain details present in the figure are dubious. For example just below the human figure on the right another figure is present which resembles a human figure, which is lying in such a manner that his head and upper torso is almost buried in the ground. Added to this, two more human figures with bird like heads are also seen in the right side. A fifth human figure (in relation to the above depiction) is depicted in a manner as if lying underground with his legs folded from knee onwards. Also towards the extreme left six fishes are seen in upright position

of which one is in flatwash while the others are outline drawings. Finally an animal figure is seen inside a burrow; however here too the shape of the burrow as well as the animal body is strangely similar.

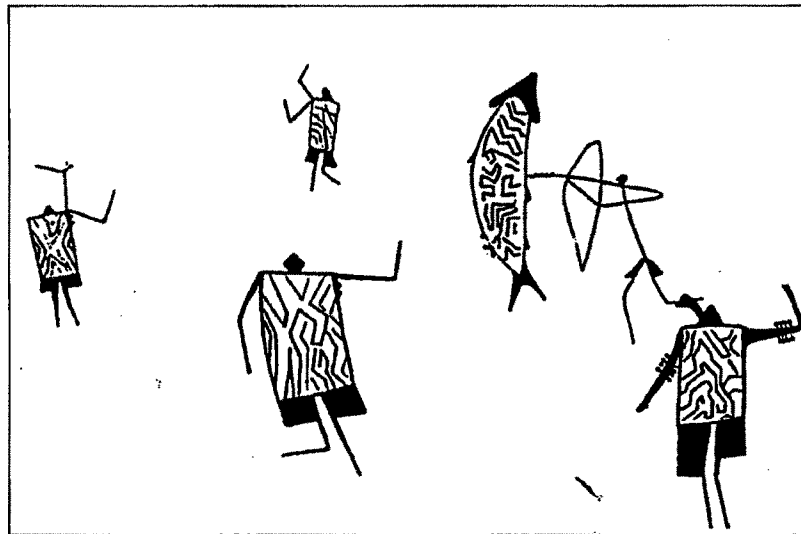


Fig 3b.40 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 183)

Kathotia rock shelter (Fig 3b.40)

This depiction shows a huge fish standing upright and a stick like human figure aiming his arrow which is just touching the body of the fish. Four square shaped human figures with decorated bodies are probably dancing around the fish and hunter. They appear to be female figures as depiction of breasts can be noticed. Of the four, one woman is wearing ornaments on both her arms. The decoration made on the female bodies and the fish are almost alike. This representation reminds of the ritual dance which is often associated with rock art by various communities around the world.

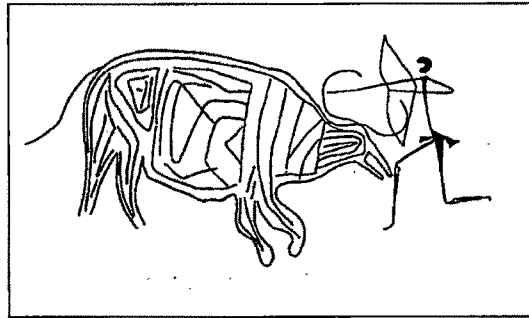


Fig 3b.41 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 43)

Urden rock shelter (Fig 3b.41)

This picture is part of a composition from Urden, found on the ceiling of a very low shelter and has only survived in sections (Neumayer 1993). In this painting we see a human figure hunting a bison-like animal bow and arrow. The animal body is in outline but contain design patterns executed with lines. The hind legs of the animal are left incomplete or may be obliterated. The human figure is seen with legs folded, right in front of the animal. There is absolutely no space between the two, which is quite unlikely while shooting a big animal. The animal on the other hand is in a posture that suggests total surrender, with its head bowed down before the human figure. Here we should keep in mind that similar depictions of animals with incomplete feet or without hoofs in rock art elsewhere has been interpreted to be spirit animals floating in free space, by researchers (Eg.Lascaux France, Lewis Williams 2002).

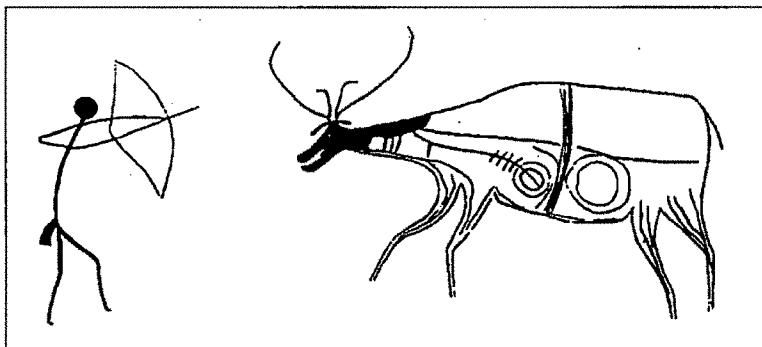


Fig 3b.42 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 88)

Kathotia rock shelter (Fig 3b.42)

In this picture a stick-like human figure and an outline drawing of an animal figure is represented. The animal body contains x-ray depictions showing its anatomy. The body is horizontally bisected into two halves; the upper half contains the stomach and digestive tract while the lower half contains a double lined circle probably indicating the womb. The depiction of the internal organs of the animal is mysterious and may have something to do with a supernatural vision; however nothing can be concluded decisively. The head of the human figure is depicted in flatwash without any facial features; however he seems wearing a cloth round his waist.

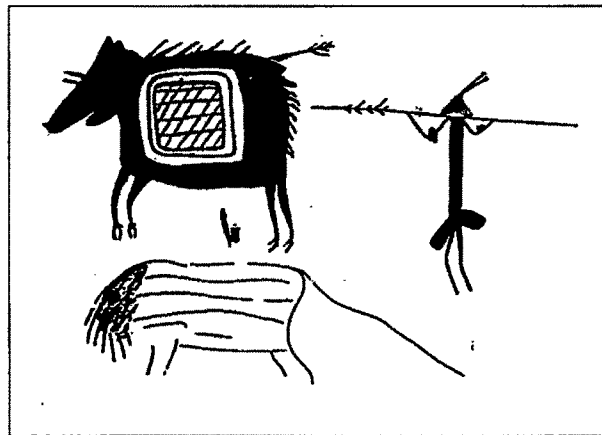


Fig 3b.43 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 107)

Abchand rock shelter (Fig 3b.43)

In this picture, a large boar is being attacked from back by a single human figure with a microlith barbed spear. Body of the animal has been done in flatwash, with a grid like design pattern in the centre. This style is very common in the Mesolithic rock pictures. The human figure too has been executed in flatwash. He is probably wearing armbands on both his arms and dressed in a tunic that trails around the waist region. Head is represented with a triangle which altogether looks like a cap. Interestingly the animal is seen with hoofs which are different in position for both the legs. The tail is small but

horizontally in straight position while mouth is open. Just below the animal another animal has been represented in outline which has a long line in place of its tail. This may be symbolic and significant.

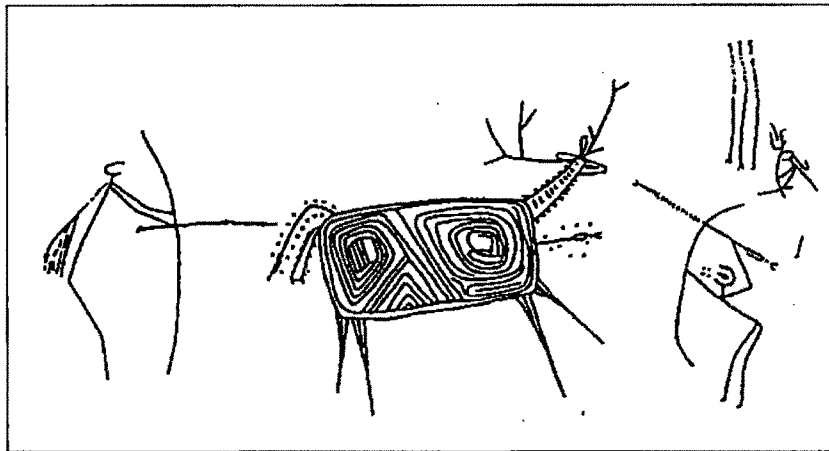


Fig 3b.44 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 45)

Mahadeo hills, Rajat Prabat rock shelter (Fig 3b.44)

This is a very interesting depiction of hunting like activity. The animal has been executed with outline, but inside body contains rhombus type spiral design somewhat similar to the Chandravati core (Sonawane 1984). Therefore the painting can be dated to the early Mesolithic times. Noteworthy aspect in this painting is that an additional tail like feature has been represented just above the actual tail of the animal, and is decorated with dots on either side. Similarly dots have also been executed on both sides of the arrow which is piercing the animal's neck. A stick like human figure in front of the animal is seen, ready to shoot an arrow. It's bending body posture is realistic, though four tiny dots in front of its stylized head is mysterious. It appears as if there is continuity between the dots, though it is not possible ascertain. Another human figure is depicted behind the animal with a very large bow and an arrow. One interpretation available for such depiction has been made by Wanke as a fertility rite, which I have already mentioned earlier (Wanke 1977). Three arrows in upright position have been represented on top, towards the right corner of the painting. Also seen here is a diminutive human figure. A somewhat similar

depiction has been reported from a different site, in Raisen district (see fig 3b.45) where dots have been executed on either side of the animal.

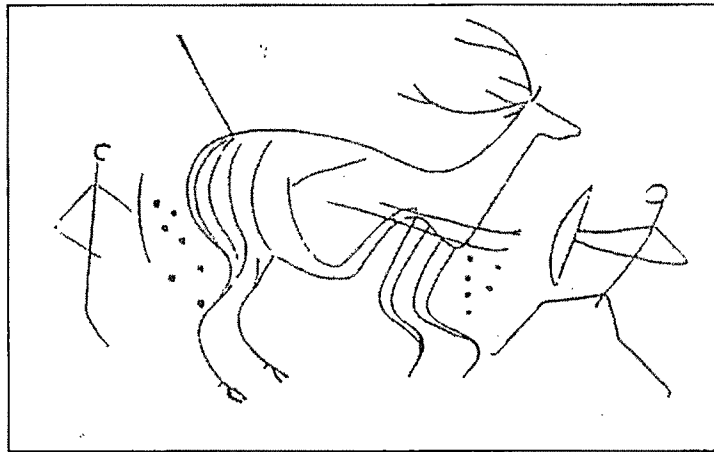


Fig 3b.45 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 46)

In this regard we can also keep in mind the famous ‘roaring stag’ and ‘horse paintings’ with dots found in Lascaux in France. These horses have been interpreted on the basis of the neurological model (Lewis Williams 2002a) according to which signs and representational images combine in deeply altered consciousness. This picture definitely establishes the fact that rock art of India has much more to say of much deeper connotations and are not mere depictions of everyday life of the hunters.

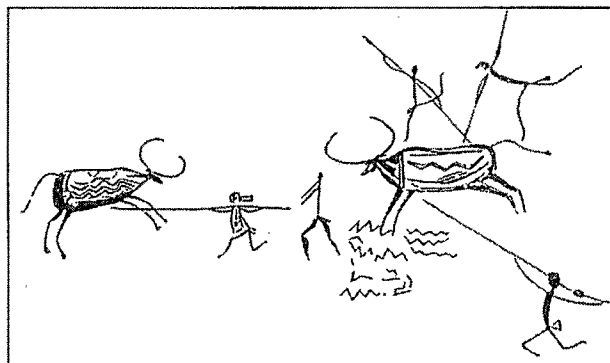


Fig 3b.46 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 133)

Dharampuri rock shelter, Bhopal (Fig 3b.46)

This painting portrays hunting like episode in which two animals (cattle) are attacked with spear like weapons by human figures. Though the animal on the right is only seen without hoofs but both the animals appear to be in flying posture, as if suspended in free air. Also the presence of zigzags reminds us of stage 1 of the entoptic phenomenon. Therefore altogether this painting may not have been representation of an actual hunting episode instead portrayed as part of a ritual.

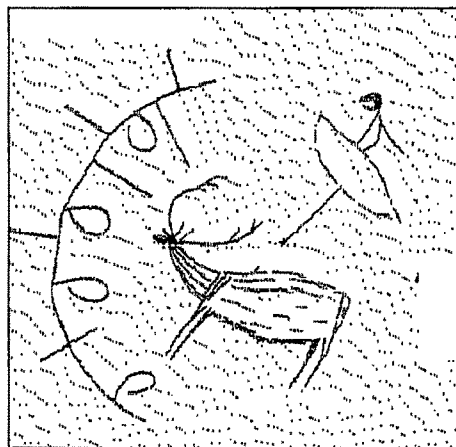


Fig 3b.47 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 136)

Putli Karar rock shelter (Fig 3b.47)

In the above picture we see a single human figure driving a deer with bow and arrow into a semicircle like object. According to Erwin Neumayer the human figure is a hunter who is driving the animal into a snare or trap (Neumayer 1993). He adds that several other Mesolithic pictures show trapping of animals in pitfalls and traps especially from Urden and Firengi sites. The human figure in the above depiction conforms to the strict minimalist style. Head along with open mouth appears mystic. The upright position of the trap like object is also ambiguous. Here, simply to be more adept on the topic we should know that curves and semi circles found in San rock art has been interpreted by the artist themselves as various forms of navicular entoptic phenomenon. As we already know that

the San frequently entered trance states and definitely had the neurological potential to see the entoptic phenomena, which is universal. At times specific forms of the entoptic phenomenon called navicular entoptic phenomenon occurred as part of initial stages of trance, which looks like semi-circles/curves, similar to boat shape. This has also been experienced by individuals as part of an experiment, in modern day laboratories and has been called 'fortification illusion' (Lewis Williams 2002a; 152). Interestingly rock paintings of San people have illustrated similar versions of navicular entoptic phenomenon as established by laboratory research (see fig-3b.48, B). In the past, these and similar paintings were mistaken for depiction of boats. Fig-3b.48: A, shows the three versions of the navicular entoptic phenomenon, as established by Western laboratory research.

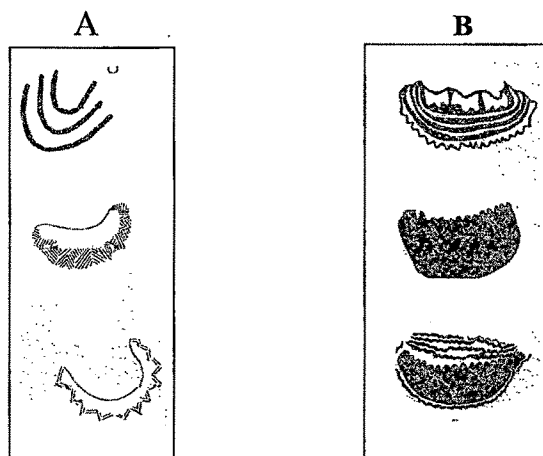


Fig 3b.48 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Cosmos in Stone, Fig: 34, 35)

So, coming back to the above picture one should keep in mind the profound connotation that lies in a rock painting even which apparently may appear very easy to comprehend.

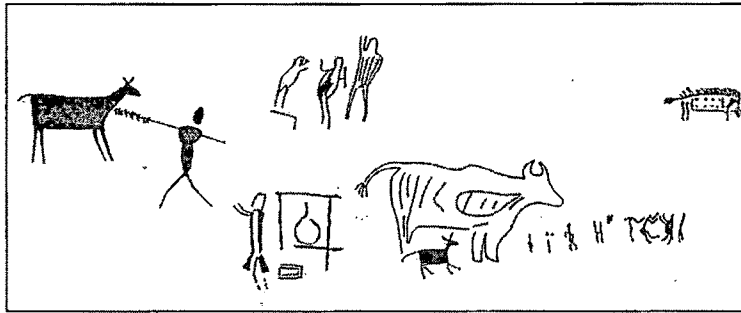


Fig 3b.49 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 244)

Mukhaderi rock shelter (Fig 3b.49)

This picture shows a single human figure attacking a deer with a microlith barbed spear. Noteworthy aspect in this painting is the rather plump male body, executed in flatwash. This is unlike Vindhyan rock paintings, where plump figures are usually made to denote female bodies. Almost all the paintings in this region of Kherwaghat contain either plump or square shaped human figures. In the above representation, the human figure portrays movement whereas the animal figure is stiff. Both are executed in flatwash. There are glimpses of other images, adjacent to this picture which might be interrelated; however, altogether it will make matters more complex for us. Depiction of several motifs which are not related to one another on the same canvass gives an impression of a mental vision or dream being represented.

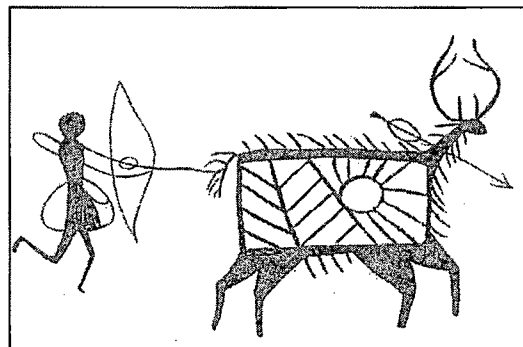


Fig 3b.50 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 385)

Lakhajoar rock shelter (Fig 3b.50)

This painting depicts a deer like animal and a human figure with bow and arrow. The animal has an arrow stuck through its neck, but looks absolutely still and straight without any depiction of pain or discomfort. This portrayal is again similar to the 'wounded men' figures seen in France as already mentioned. Head, neck and face is done in flatwash while inside hollow of the body contains design patterns executed with circle, diagonal, vertical and horizontal lines. Several small lines are seen all over the body. These design patterns reminds of the entoptic phenomenon and the close association of geometric forms with images of animals. Here too the legs of the animal are incomplete which probably indicates that it is not grounded and might be in a floating state. A human figure done in flatwash is placed in the rear of the animal figure holding bow and arrow with both hands. However one of its legs is folded upwards from the knees. As already mentioned according to Wanke this depiction is part of fertility cult 'fertilization by the shot of an arrow' (Wanke 1977).

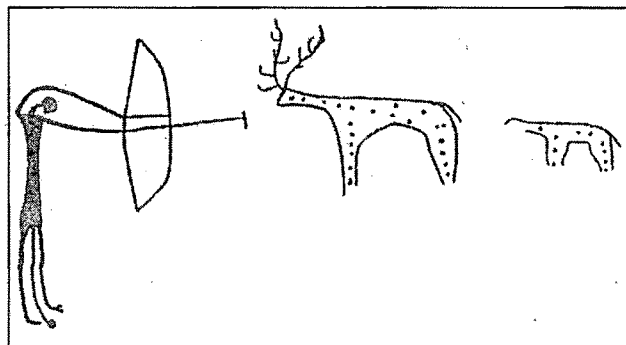


Fig 3b.51 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 383)

Firengi rock shelter (Fig 3b.51)

The above picture portrays depiction of a deer hunt by a single hunter with microlith barbed arrow. The entire representation is very stiff. Solitary hunters encountering animals with bow and arrow are a common feature of the chalolithic period. Large hunting expeditions were a regular feature of the hunting gathering society. The body of the animal contains dots, similar to stage three entoptic phenomenon (see fig 2.1). Here

we can refer to the famous 'Spotted horse' in Pech Merle (France). Researchers are of opinion that the dots are hallucinatory elements which as mentioned earlier occur in deep stages of trance where geometric elements combine with hallucinations of animal and people (Lewis Williams 2002b, 174). Moreover the human figure is ithyphallic, which again is associated as a metaphor for altered states of consciousness which has been supported by North American and Southern African ethnographic accounts (Whitley 2000). Another interesting feature of this painting is that the animal figure is seen without complete legs giving an impression of floating which according to Halverson (Halverson 1987, 66-67) is in 'own-free-floating existence' as these scenes are devoid of any kind of natural environment in which real animals live, like no trees, rivers or grassy plains. Moreover they are also placed 'without regard to size and position relative to one another'. These characteristics are exactly what one would expect of projected, fixed mental images that accumulated over a period of time.

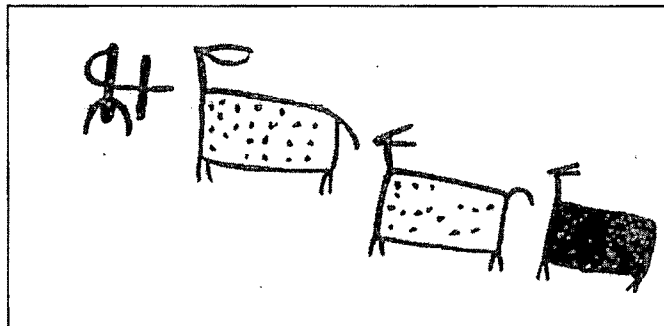


Fig 3b.52 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 380)

Abchand rock shelter (Fig 3b.52)

A very interesting depiction of three deer like animal figures. Of the three, two are outline drawings with spots within, while the third is done in flatwash. As already discussed regarding the previous painting that spots and dots are usually associated with stage three entoptic phenomena. Striking aspect in this painting is the manner in which the human figure is represented. If viewed as represented, it appears that it is without a head whereas if seen upside down it appears more or less complete.

South India

There are only a few picture groups which show interaction between animals and humans in this region. The dichotomy between the 'naturalism' of animal depictions and the schematization of contemporary human depictions is quite clear, even if not as pronounced as in the Mesolithic paintings of the Vindhyan hills (Neumayer 1993). Hunting pictures are not much available in the Mesolithic rock pictures of the Southern Deccan, whatever is available, their poor preservation condition makes it very difficult to study them. In the paintings of Hire Benakal area (Gordon and Allchin 1955; Sundara 1974) of Karnataka, human beings with weapons like bow, arrow and axe are seen along with scattered animal figures. For example hunting scene from Tekkalakote displays a dance being performed on the eve of hunting expedition, and thereafter people proceed along with a dog (Sundara 2006, 44-45). Even today people follow the same tradition. Somewhat similar aspect is known from elsewhere at Zuojiang River valley in China where dogs always appear above or below human figures. The latter are seen with swords hanging by their waist and are possibly rulers. The interpretation proposed for this depiction is that these paintings were occasioned by a form of totem ancestor worship according to which people of Guangxi has a dog ancestry myth explaining that the tribe descended from a dog called Pan Hau (Chen Zao Fu 1992, 382). Upto the Mesolithic period, rock art of Andhra Pradesh rarely depicts human figures. Whatever is seen only portrays humans in domestic activities but never as hunters (Chandramouli 2002). Only at Badami in Karnataka there is a single painting which shows a man thrusting his spear into the hindquarters of a bovid).

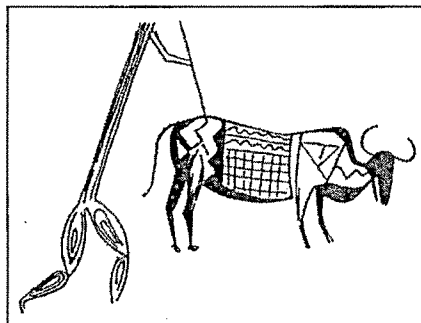
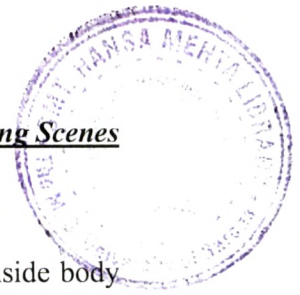


Fig 3b.53 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 277)



Badami rock shelter (Fig 3b.53)

In this picture a bovid (Neumayer 1993) like animal is depicted in outline. Inside body contain grid like design along with horizontal wavy lines. Head, neck, hump, back and portions of legs are done in flatwash. Again this depiction apparently looks similar to Stage three of the entoptic phenomenon. The human figure (partly visible) is thrusting a stick like weapon which is most probably a spear. Striking an animal from the back has been interpreted by researchers to be a fertility rite (Wanke 1977). Another point to be taken into account in this portrayal is the pretty long human figure without any regard to the size of the animal present in the picture. Such depictions which are without any regard to size and position, relative to one another are portrayals of mental images (Halverson 1987, 66-67).

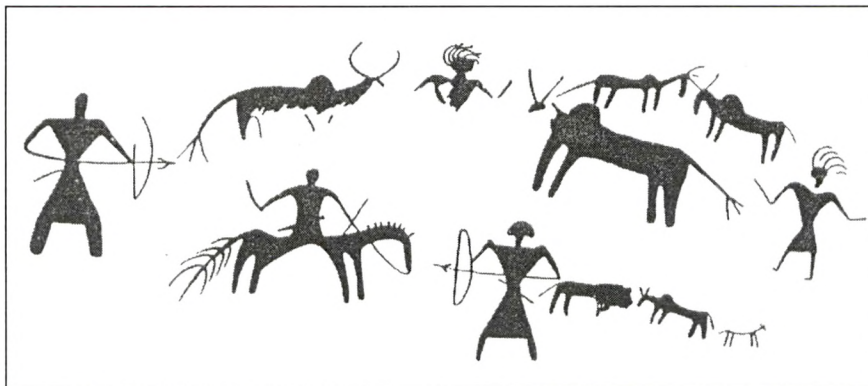


Fig 3b.54 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 502)

Benakal Forest- Oniki Kandi rock shelter (Fig 3b.54)

In this picture 'hunting' like activity is not directly suggested, only human figures with weapons are depicted. The human figures are done in flatwash and are seen with bow and arrow in their hands. None of the animal figures are depicted as prey in this portrayal. A rider with a sword in his waist is riding a horse, holding the animal by reigns. It appears that this representation may have been part of some ritual practice or maybe some folk elements have been represented.

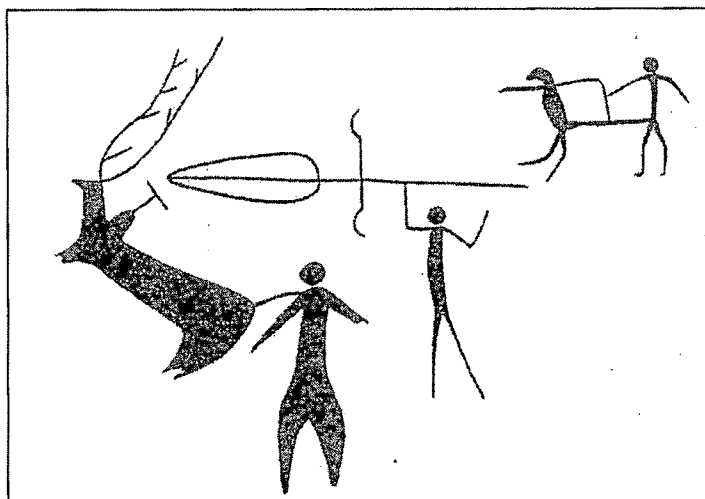


Fig 3b.55 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 482)

Kupgallu rock shelter (Fig 3b.55)

This picture belonging to southern Deccan is different stylistically from the paintings of Central India. Picture shows a human figure with a huge trident like weapon, along with a bull. The latter is not grounded but in a floating state. We must note that this picture belongs to the Chalcolithic period, a time by when man had already learnt to domesticate animals, for the bull has been drawn with large horns (Neumayer 1993); long horned bulls is a characteristic feature of Neolithic/Chalcolithic period. This depiction exhibits certain elements suggesting spiritual significance. In the right hand corner of this painting an ithyphallic human figure is represented, before whom another human figure that seems to have undergone some physical transformation is seen. The latter has a bird like head. As already seen in many occasions before, such kind of figures are usually associated with shamans when they go through complete physical transformations in deep stages of trance. Whether it is applicable in this case needs further speculation.

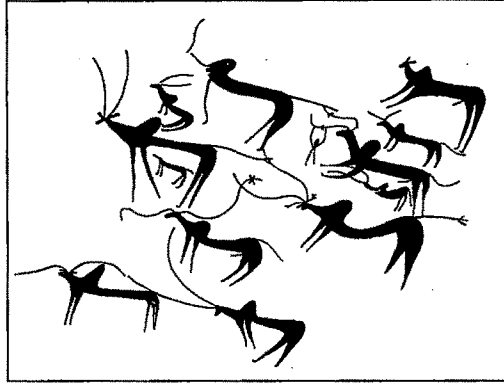


Fig 3b.56 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 463)

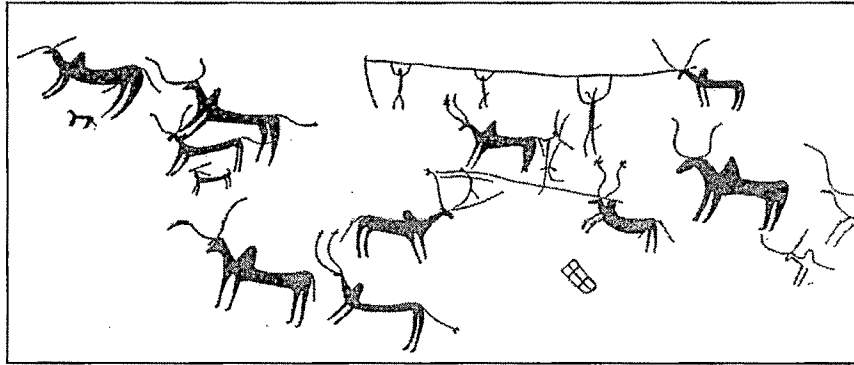


Fig 3b.57 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 464)

Piklihal rock shelters (Fig 3b.56 & 3b.57)

The above figures represent a group of paintings, which depict a host of animal figures along with few human figures. In no sense do these paintings suggest hunting, but since South India does not provide realistic hunting depictions, therefore I have selected some depictions which contain animals along with humans, in this section. Erwin Neumayer has elaborately described and as well interpreted this group of paintings, which needs mention. According to him, the above depictions portray steers with outloading horns and named them 'stampedes' (Neumayer 1993, 177). According to Neumayer the above group of 'stampedes' show 'diminutive humans figures carrying axes. On the form of the humans the artist seems not to have wasted any degree of sophistication. Sometimes they are seen clambering on the horns of the steers, and in one instance holding to a rope which is fastened at one end to a bull (Fig 3b.57). Several of the steers has decorations on

the horn ends' (Neumayer 1993, 177). Neumayer has interpreted these decorations as 'natural and consistent fraying of the horns, indicating the steers to be particularly ferocious'. He also adds that the pictures in which persons are clinging to the horns of the bulls might relate to soul transportation myths which are similar to bull depictions from the Chambal Valley and elsewhere. In this regard I would like to add that some of the animals are seen ithyphallic and also with upraised tails (Fig-3b.56).

3.4 ANIMAL FIGURES

‘Throughout history, animals have appeared on cave drawings, pottery, sculpture, and paintings. Every culture contains myths, stories, songs and fairy tales featuring animals. For earth-based spiritual traditions, animals serve as protectors, messengers, and guides. Because animal archetypes are so strong within the human psyche, many individuals resonate with the mannerisms, defense strategies, social structures and habits of particular animals, insects, birds, and fish. The animal world has much to teach us. Some animals are experts at survival and adaptation, some never get cancer, some embody strength and courage while others exude playfulness. Animals remind us of the potential we can unfold, but before we can learn from them, we must be able to speak to them’ (Andrews 1993). Understanding animal powers as well as ways by which this can be harnessed for the well being of individuals as well as the entire tribe will probably help us to understand the link between huge number of animal figures depicted in rock shelters in various parts of the world as well as India.

As we already know that India has the third largest concentration of rock art after Australia and Africa. Of the over one million motifs seen in rock art, animal figures are the most frequently depicted motif. Infact, diversity of animals and the ways to represent them in India is much greater than European cave art (Web site; The Rock art of Central India-Dr. Jean Clottes: www.bradshawfoundation.com). Nearly thirty different species of animals were identified in the rock art of the Upper Chambal Valley (Badam & Prakash, 1992). The technique used to render the animal figures is noteworthy. The simplest figures are usually seen as outline drawings or with the whole body coloured. Many animals are seen with body infilling with sometimes very intricate motifs in the form of parallel lines, grids and all sorts of geometric patterns which make the art distinctive. They may be sexed; sometimes pregnant females have been painted with the foetus showing in a sort of X-ray style (Web site; The rock art of Central India- Dr. Jean Clottes: www.bradshawfoundation.com). Two or more colours (red and white) are seen to be used for the same subject. The animals may be represented in isolation or in herds or in conjunction to humans. Infact animal figures seem to be one of the most favourite

subjects of rock art makers all over the world. The reason behind this is perhaps deep rooted in social and spiritual practices as mentioned earlier.

In the **Kumaon Himalaya** region there are illustrations of animals like ox, boar, goat, dog, fox and snake along with some unidentifiable animals. Horizontal designs on vertical rock surface along with pairs of forks on either side (centipede like), measuring 70X18 centimeters in length and breadth is frequently seen in this region (Mathpal 1995). Animal figures are also seen in the paintings of Gwarkhya-Udyar, Lakhu-Udyar and Phalseema rock shelters. Interesting feature of this region is that snakes are found incised on rocks at places like Chancharidhar, Munia ki dhai, Dharamgaon and Kasardevi (Mathpal 1995). They are grooved deeply in an S-shaped form. Painted figure of snakes have not been reported from this region. Another striking feature of this region is presence of certain animals which are difficult to identify (Mathpal 2002). For example animal figures at Petsal and Gwarkhya-Udyar rock shelters. In **Mirzapur region**, animal figures like deer, rhino, elephant, bison, boar, nilgai, bull, cow, monkey, porcupine, dog, horse, camel, iguana, snake, fish crocodile as well as birds like peacock, Crain and waterbirds are seen (Tewari 1990, 12). Very recent discovery of ostrich like birds are found in shelters of Jhandi Panhar and Lakhma rock shelters. In this region deer is the most frequent animal (almost 50% of total animal depictions) depicted in almost all the rock shelters and belonging to all periods. These are seen in the most elegant manner with a wide range of body postures along with facial expressions like pain due to a pierced weapon or an expression of alertness after sensing some danger is beautifully portrayed (Tewari 1990, 12). Important varieties of deers like chital, barasingha, sambhar etc are seen, being hunted. Next to deers, almost fifteen figures of one horned rhino are noticed in the rock shelters of Gochara, Kerwa, Kuava-Khoh, Ghormanagar, Panchmukhi, Soharo, Duara and Karihawa. Scholars have attributed these paintings to an earlier phase for rhino's had become extinct in Mirzapur region, in the later period (Tewari 1990, 12). Just like the deers these are mostly depicted (around the Son River) being hunted. (Rhino hunt scenes have been discussed in detail under 'hunting' section of the thesis). Next to deer and rhino, about fifty five elephant figures are depicted in the rock shelters of Kuava-Khoh, Ghormangar, Hathvani, Kandakot, Jhariya, Likhaniya and Mukhaderi.

They are represented in all the three major periods, either engaged in activities or with foetus or being hunted or with riders over them. Bisons are seen in the rock shelters of Gochara, Matahawa, Kuava-khoh, Sooga Pankh and Mathvani (Tewari 1990, 13). Interestingly, a recent discovery of a painting of bison from Lakhma rock shelter is important from the point of view that it is depicted with eyes (Tewari 1990). Also seen in Mirzapur are figures of wild bull and cattle in plenty of rock shelters. Humped and sometimes horned, these cattle can be dated to the Chalcolithic period. Depictions of monkeys with their prominent rounded tails are found in shelters like Dhanhhrault and Lakhma. The X-ray style of depiction was popular here. Numerous paintings showing skeleton, lung and wind pipe is seen in the rock shelters of Gochara, Hathvani and Kuava-Khoh (Tewari 1990). As already mentioned in the Lakhma rock shelter the bison's eyes are also shown in X-ray style. Figures in which foetus is shown in the womb of the animal is seen at Kuava-Khoh, Ghormangar and Lakhma of which the depiction at Lakhma is very clear (Fig: 3b.11). Animals are usually shown in herds and occasionally single or in pairs. Coming to **Orissa**, though the subject matter of rock art is by far non-figurative and non thematic, both paintings and engravings of animal figures are seen. However, animal figures are restricted to a few rock shelters like the Lekhamoda group. Variety of animal forms includes deer, antler, sambar, boar, tortoise, hare, rhinoceros, tiger, porcupine, snake, frog, fish and lizard (Pradhan 2001, 35). These paintings have a naturalist rendering and are found in random amidst other motifs and non figurative designs. The animals are portrayed in different moods and postures such as standing, running, looking back, up as well as down. A stylistic feature of this area is that animal bodies are done without body decorations which are very common in rock art of central India and other areas as well (Pradhan 2001). In **central India**, we get to see a wide variety of animal depiction in the rock art here. In the Mesolithic paintings of this region wild animals are the most common subject matter which are seen in various postures like standing, moving, running as well as being hunted. Just as individual animals are seen, similarly large compositions involving upto fifty or more animals are also depicted. In the famous 'zoo rock' in Bhimbetka, a large flat ceiling of more than 8m length and 5 m width is almost completely filled with a host of animals which include most of the species depicted in Bhimbetka paintings. Probable interpretations behind such

depictions will be done in the following section of this chapter. Among the animals depicted are cattle (gaur), buffalo, boar, tiger, leopard, bear, elephant, rhinoceros, nilgai, blackbuck, sambar, chital, four horned deer, fox, jackal and monkey (Mathpal 1984). The size of the animal varies from miniature to life size and at times larger than life size upto four meters in length. The early paintings of animal figures are usually characterized by 'naturalism' and vitality of the animal body and those done during the Historic period are made disproportionate and distorted. Like horses are sometimes shown with such elongated necks that they look like giraffes. Drawings are at times so stylized that they are simply depicted with semicircles to indicate the body to which necks and legs are drawn to give a complete representation (Mathpal 1984). There is a steady decline in the technique of portrayal which also points to the fact that perhaps these art forms were not meant for art's sake; instead it was simply a ritualistic repetition of a tradition (Mathpal 1984). Another interesting feature which is a typical entity in all stylistic groups of the art of hunters and gatherers seen in rock art is the presence of deified animals (see fig 3c.17). These animals were drawn in extremely big sizes (Wakankar 1992, 334) with attributes of two different animal species combined together for example a body like a boar along with a trunk of an elephant. Bodies of these animals were also filled with design patterns (Neumayer 1993). Often diminutive human figures are drawn close to these animal figures. At times human figures with microlith barbed spears are shown chased by these beings, but are never shown to be killed or being crushed upon. Neumayer further adds that these pictures are organized in narrative sequences and probably these sequences are related to some mythology. In Panchmarhi region of central India a total of 527 rock art motifs (Chakraverty 1999) depict different species of animals. These include bees, bovid, cows, bison, tigers, lion, dogs, deer, horses, elephants, bears, monkeys, fowls, peacock, vultures, porcupines, spiders and fish. In **South India**, the richest rock art zone is Karnataka. The paintings of Hire Benekal area (Sundara 1974) consists of pictures of animal figures like the humped bull, dog, cow, antelope, stag and the tiger. All these animals are found scattered amidst the human figures. At Piklihal (Allchin 1960) and Tekkalakota (Rao 1965), the paintings include mainly humped bulls along with some other animals like dog with twirled tail. Along with rock paintings there is a whole series of rock bruising and engravings in South

India. Representation of horned bulls, oxen raised on T-shaped stands and also figures of animals like the elephant, stag and birds have been excavated in the site of Sanganakallu (Gordon 1951). Even at Piklihal (Allchin 1960) majority of rock bruising are of bulls along with other animal figures like horse, buffalo, sambar deer, sheep and goat. Engravings at Koppagallu, Hunsgi, Kodemathi, Hallur and Hebbal Buzurg consist of humped cattle, horses and buffaloes. A commonly occurring stylistic trait in Karnataka region (analysis of rock art here is site specific and not complete) is the depiction of humped cattle in a fighting mood (Chandramouli 2002, 179). These humped cattle figures have stylistic similarities with those of Piklihal examples (Paddayya 1968:58-59). Besides humped cattle, horses and buffaloes are also found in Karnataka rock art. Some of the paintings and engravings where there is a dominance of cattle can be attributed to the Neolithic period. In Kerala the best known rock art site is the Edakal cave in Khozikode district (Smith 1906). Here carvings include deeply engraved stylized animals. Though realistic compositions were sometimes attempted but mainly these were depicted in a conventionalized manner (Chandramouli 2002, 180). At Ezhuttu Ala huge drawing of lizards are seen (Chandramouli 2002). In Rock art of Andhra Pradesh, the Mesolithic period is characterized by predominance of deer motifs, a characteristic feature of this region. The deer figures at Dapalle, Chintakunta and Kethavaram rock shelters have distinctive stylistic feature. Besides deer there are other animals like the rabbit, porcupine, tortoise, fox, hyenas and dogs. Here Neolithic sites are more than the Mesolithic sites and in all the Neolithic sites, humped bull is the predominant subject matter, both in paintings as well as engravings. Megalithic art of Andhra Pradesh is limited to petroglyphs mainly and a continuation in the depiction of humped cattle and horses are seen. However in this phase the shift in subject matter was from humped bulls to symbolic representations (Chandramouli 2002). Rock art belonging to Historic phase in Andhra Pradesh is mainly dominated by the depiction of animal figures like horses and elephants.

So we can see the variety as well as number of animal figures depicted across various rock shelters all over India. Regarding the motivation that may have worked behind depiction of the large number of animal figures, we know that most of the rock art are

representations of a diverse culture system that had existed in prehistoric societies. It may have originated in the religious practices and had functional ritualistic significance. For example depictions of ibex and goats are an integral part of the religious-iconic repertoire of many people in the Himalayas and Karakoram even today (Neumayer 1993, 27). According to ethnographic sources from Australia, America and South Africa animals are believed to carry some potency which only a shaman can harness in order to achieve some cause like healing, better hunt or bringing in rain etc. For example the terms “marriage of the jackal” or “marriage of the fox” is popularly used during a sunny rainfall. This is a common practice in India, North Africa (Bahn 2004, 37) in Eurasia and as far away as Japan in the East (Bahn 2004, 37). Interestingly this tends to suggest a very great prehistoric time-depth. It is possible that this was symbolic of fertilizing weddings that announced the arrival of rain and guaranteed fertility (Bahn 2004, 37). Infact working with animal power is a central feature of shamanism. “The true shaman, the true naturalist, works to reconnect conscious human life with Nature and Spirit through totems and ritual. The images of the animals are the expressions of nature that help us to transcend our normal, waking consciousness so that we can more easily attune to ethereal realms and beings” (Andrews 1993). The most important interpretation regarding the abundance of animal figures in rock art all over lies in the fact that in prehistoric cultures each animal was probably regarded as a totem, symbolic for its unique qualities. Research in social anthropology has also corroborated the fact that in a tribal society every tribe has a totem. A totem is the emblem of a family group or an individual. A totem can be any animal or bird which in some way is important to a tribe’s survival or is an object of fear and awe. Each animal totem is associated with a meaning and the animal spirit guides to recognize the wisdom of that particular animal totem imparts. Therefore, many of the animal figures found on rock surfaces are probably clan symbols or totem which has been used by a shaman in order to harness its powers. Even today there are references of using animal powers for achieving some cause, primarily healing. Humans are believed to have power animals which are to protect them from harm. Shamans usually call their power animals for diagnosis of an illness or guiding them in their spiritual journeys.

A very common aspect noticed in rock art anywhere in the world is the dominance of a single species of animal in a specific region; within India, for example humped bull in South India, deer in Mirzapur and so on. The following example provided by the San shamans in Kalahari today will help us to understand the reason behind the dominance of a particular animal (Elands) in their area. In Kalahari painted elands are considered to be symbols of potency that a shaman has to harness in order to enter trance (Lewis Williams 1981). Then there are special medicine songs which are associated with eland potency. Infact the animal is considered so potent that hunters like to dance next to the carcass of a freshly killed eland for they believe the entire place to be full of eland potency. So the eland's potency is one of the reasons why it is most frequently depicted antelope in many parts of southern Africa. When shamans dance, they turn to the depictions in the rock shelter to increase their potency (Lewis Williams 1986) and at further levels shamans believed that they actually became an eland. Now, a question that definitely arises in one's mind is whether all the animal figures seen in rock art of India are true depictions of the animal itself or it may have been possible that some of these were actually symbolic representations of human beings, transformed into animal forms during extreme stages of altered consciousness? As we have already discussed in chapter two that the San people of South Africa (who provide a good ethnographic account) regarded the rock surface as a 'veil' between the ordinary world and the spirit world, and they also believed that the spirit world existed behind this veil (Lewis Williams & Dowson 1990). It was only a shaman who was able to penetrate that veil during trance and then transformed into an animal form. So according to this ethnographic evidence, most of the animal forms depicted in San rock art are actually a shaman or spirit being in an animal form. A somewhat different example comes from Coso rock art which is located in the desert of interior south California, where highly stylized images of bighorn sheep are seen both as pictographs and petroglyphs. Two major theories have been put forward by researchers on the function of Coso rock art. One of the theories is that of 'hunting magic'. Noting the immense number of sheep drawings in the Coso engravings, Campbell Grant and others hypothesized in the 1960s that the hunter-gatherers living in this area were heavily dependent on bighorn sheep for subsistence, and that the rock drawings were created as part of a ritual meant to ensure a successful hunt (Grant C, Baird & Pringle 1968). The

other theory again interprets Coso rock art as the work of shamans for whom the images of the animals functioned as spirit helpers that assisted the shaman in obtaining supernatural power, or at times the images were representations of a shaman's transformation into that animal spirit (Whitley 2000). In the Coso engravings some of the bighorn sheep images seem to represent guardian spirits. Tribes of the plains and the Colorado plateau often use to send young people on a vision quest to seek their guardian. Young people, both men and women, would walk away from the village and stay alone without food for several days. When a guardian revealed itself, either in real life or in vision, the young person would choose this animal, plant or object for a guardian. In return the spirit of the bear, snake or whatever was selected would then protect the person for the rest of his/her life. Often parts of an animal such as a bone, claw, skin, fur, rattle from a snake, or pollen would then be carried in a medicine pouch. If a family or village chose an animal or plant for a guardian this would become its clan sign. Many petroglyphs are probably clan signs identifying the clan's hunting areas, planting areas or ceremonial sites. The Coso's believed that the spirit of this guardian would protect the members of the clan, as long as there was harmony and balance. Again a number of shamanic elements and rituals found in Zuni culture (Cunkle and Jacquemani, 1995) are represented in the rock art of that region. Some of the shamanic elements and rituals include healing and protection. Icons like centipede (represents death), mountain lion, birds, insects and lizards have symbolic and ritualistic meaning in Zuni culture as well. Along with ethnography, ethology (the study of animal behavior) becomes an evidential strand in understanding animal representations in rock art. Infact animal figures which are depicted in rock art almost in any part of the world exhibit mysterious traits like erect tails, human features, sliced toes, ithyphallic, in a floating/falling state etc., which have led archaeologists to suspect that perhaps the rock art artists were actually depicting symbolic animal figures instead of the real ones.

Keeping all this in mind some selected paintings and engravings of India containing animal figures will be discussed in the following section. Due to availability of a vast amount of rock art, depicting animal figures, it is not feasible to discuss each and every one. A broad classification on regional basis has been attempted here.

Kumaon Himalaya



Fig 3c.1 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Plate 3B)

Lakhu Udyar rock shelter (Fig 3c.1)

In this painting we see profile view of a goat like animal figure facing right side. The animal has been depicted in flatwash. This animal figure is 18 centimeters from its muzzle to the tip of its tail and its body contour is made of two simple curved lines (Mathpal 1995, 47). Interestingly the animal has a pendant belly which researchers (Mathpal 1995) suggest that it is pregnant. Faint depiction of another animal of similar kind is seen beside the goat like figure. Noteworthy aspect in this picture is the presence of four human figures with lizard like heads and arms resembling wings. Their feet too have been represented in a strange manner. Since the human figures in this representation display characteristics which are suggestive of mental image and altered state therefore the animal figure might also be associated with it. Possibilities are high that it may not be a true animal from the real world but altogether part of a vision. The entire representation has a mystic element. (The human figures will be discussed separately in the 'Human Figures' section)



Fig 3c.2 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Plate 7B)

Lakhu Udyar rock shelter (Fig 3c.2)

This is an interesting depiction where a painting of a fox like animal figure is seen, black in colour, 11.5 cms from its snout to tip of its tail (Mathpal 1995; pl-7b:41). The animal is done in flatwash. In the same composition a vertical figure with 20 legs or forks is seen, in black colour. This figure measures 27m in length and according to Yashodhar Mathpal (Mathpal 1995, 46) it is a centipede. Though it is very difficult to conclude this strange figure to be a centipede, still we can refer in this case to Zuni culture (Native American people belonging to New Mexico region) where icons like the centipede is found in rock art depictions and are associated with 'death' (Cunkle and Jacquemani 1995, 119). In case of all primitive cultures most of the animals, birds and insects do have symbolic and ritualistic meaning attached to them. Also seen in this composition is a group of human figures with joined hands in a row. This representation is probably associated with some ritual as dancing by holding hands occupy a central place in most of the ancient shamanistic rituals.



Fig 3c.3 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Plate 2A)

Petsal rock shelter (Fig 3c.3)

Two animal figures are seen here. Both the animals are shown in profile with natural body contours. Hind legs of the first animal are not in a good state of preservation (Mathpal 1995; 56). Though the animal figures apparently bears a resemblance with *nilgai* however since the presence of *nilgai* in the Himalaya is unknown (Atkinson 1973; 160) therefore these images may not be assigned as nilgais. Interestingly just below these animal figures four human figures (women) are portrayed with raised arms as if holding the animals on their heads. The animals are not rooted to the ground. This depiction too looks to have some spiritual significance attached to it, probably part of a ritualistic activity.

Mirzapur Region



Fig 3c.4 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Page 22)

Sitakund rock shelter (Fig 3c.4)

In this illustration, a deer like animal, facing left is represented in profile view.

Since this is the most frequently depicted animal therefore we can conclude that it was available in plenty and so its flesh must have served to be an important means of subsistence for the people of this region. So the deer images seen in plenty in rock art of Mirzapur reminds us of the ‘hunting magic’ theory as well as theory of being a ‘guardian spirit’ which has been put forward by researchers while interpreting the huge number of bighorn sheep in seen Coso rock art, as already mentioned earlier in this section. A barbed arrow is sticking into the animal’s chest and the animal is looking back with its head turned. According to some researchers the expression of pain due to the wound of the arrow is remarkably portrayed by the upturned face of the animal (Tewari 1990).

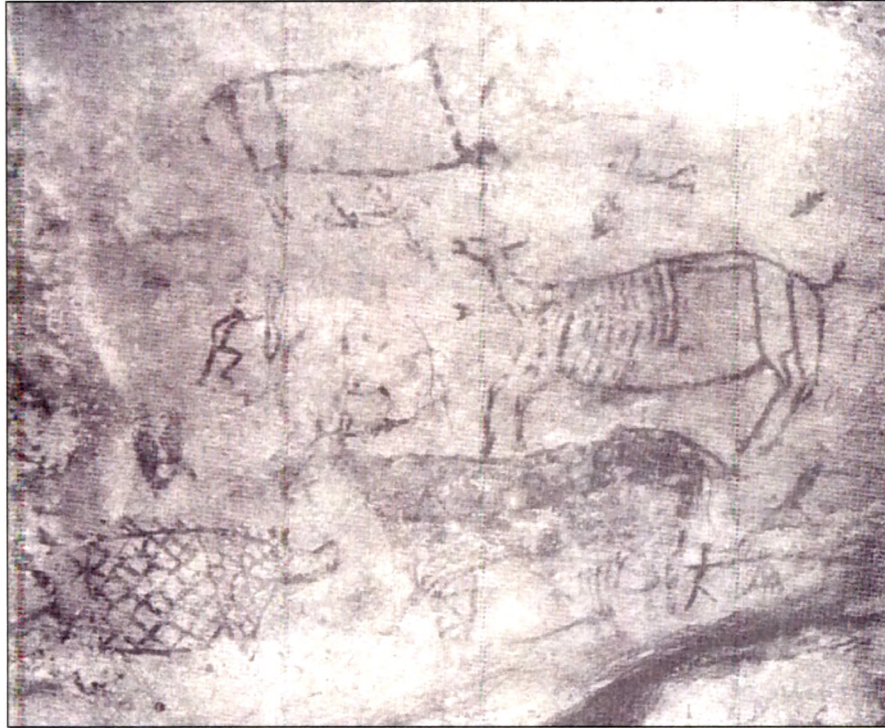


Fig 3c.5 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Page 24)

Kerwa ghat rock shelter (Fig 3c.5)

This is an outline depiction of a deer, facing left and in profile view. Half of its body contains simple horizontal line designs. The animal figure is very elegantly depicted. An archer has shot an arrow at the deer which is deeply embedded just below the neck. Another hunter is attacking the deer from behind, spear touching the leg of the deer. According to Tewari 'the open mouth and erect tail of the deer and his helpless and pathetic expression have been portrayed very realistically (Tewari 1990; 23).



Fig 3c.6 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Page 21)

Matahwa rock shelter (Fig 3c.6)

In this painting, an outline figure of an animal has been represented, facing right direction. This figure lacks the beauty and elegance which is seen in case of Sitakund or Kerwa Ghat depictions. Body of the animal has been executed by a rectangle to which four thick lines have been attached to denote legs. There are no hoofs/toes Body of the animal possibly contains x-ray depictions, though this cannot be definitely concluded as the picture for our reference is not very clear. This animal has a human figure on its back who is charging the animal with a spear. Just below it we see a group of human figures performing some activity, probably dancing around a circle with hands raised above. The latter resembles a ritual dance which is a common aspect of all primitive rituals. Also the rider on the elephant figure is seen with an elaborate head adornment. According to ethnographic records obtained from Himalayan tribes as well as many other shamanistic societies an important element of a shamans dress is his head dress. Therefore depiction of this animal figure might not have been a portrayal of a simple hunting event; rather it looks to be a part of some ritual associated with a better hunt.



Fig 3c.7 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XX)

Kauva-Khoh rock shelter (Fig 3c.7)

This is a depiction of a crocodile, in outline, facing left direction. The animal is a complete representation. Regarding the depiction of crocodile I would like to add here, that in many tribal societies even today crocodile is considered to be a source of strength (Web site-BBC Radio 4-A Man as Strong as a Crocodile.htm). Amongst the tribesmen called Niowra of New Guinea (along with several places in Africa, Madagascar) there is a secret ritual where a man goes through a rigorous initiation process and finally becomes as strong as a Crocodile. Anthropologist Benedict Allen himself was allowed a glimpse into the lives of the Niowra people and he went through this process along with other members of the tribe and then recorded his experiences in form of a book published by Faber and Faber titled 'Into The Crocodile's Nest; A Journey Inside New Guinea'(Allen 2002). In the secret ceremony they were first led into the 'crocodile's nest' (an arena centered on the sacred spirit house) force fed, beaten daily and as a badge of their courage were given hundreds of permanent crocodile marks carved with bamboo blades down their chests and backs. This is done so that they learnt to live in the forest, the crocodile was a role model for them. Infact Africa is rich in stories about crocodile. Amongst some tribes devotion towards crocodile is a religion to them. In Egypt crocodile was considered to be a God and associated with fertility. So, with the above references it becomes clear that probably majority of rock art has much deeper significance behind its depiction. However in this case since the animal figure is being hunted therefore it may or may not be a guardian spirit or totem. Therefore in the absence of direct explanations

provided by the artists, it is actually impossible for us to interpret. By referring to some tribal practices we can only add on to our awareness of the intricacies of society and beliefs that had existed amongst the primitive men.



Fig 3c.8 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate VIII)

Kauva Khoh (Fig 3c.8) /Hathvani rock shelters (3c.9)

In both fig 3c.8 and 3c.9 (next figure) we see depiction of bison like animal figures. The first painting is in a poor state of conservation therefore it is difficult to study the details. A bison (ithyphallic) like figure is seen here. The animal figure has been executed in red colour and flat washed. This rock surface contains a lot of superimpositions, palm prints (this motif will be elaborately dealt with in ‘human figures’ section of the thesis) where the latter is associated with ritual touching of the rock surface, therefore it might be assumed that this wall has perhaps served as a ritual space, a veil beyond which the spirit world lay. Therefore it can further be concluded that animal figures found in Kauva-Khoh rock shelter have functional ritualistic significance. An animal figure which appears to be falling is also depicted here.

Bisons are also seen in paintings from Hathvani rock shelter (Fig. 3c.9). Here too the animal is depicted in outline, profile view, facing left direction. Inside body contains X-ray depictions where probably ribs and womb is depicted. Body posture of the bison does not suggest it to be rooted to the ground, rather looks to be in a floating state. Another bison figure from Lakhma rock shelter is very significant for it is seen with eyes. This animal has already been discussed in the ‘hunting pictures’ section, therefore not done separately here (See fig 3b.11).

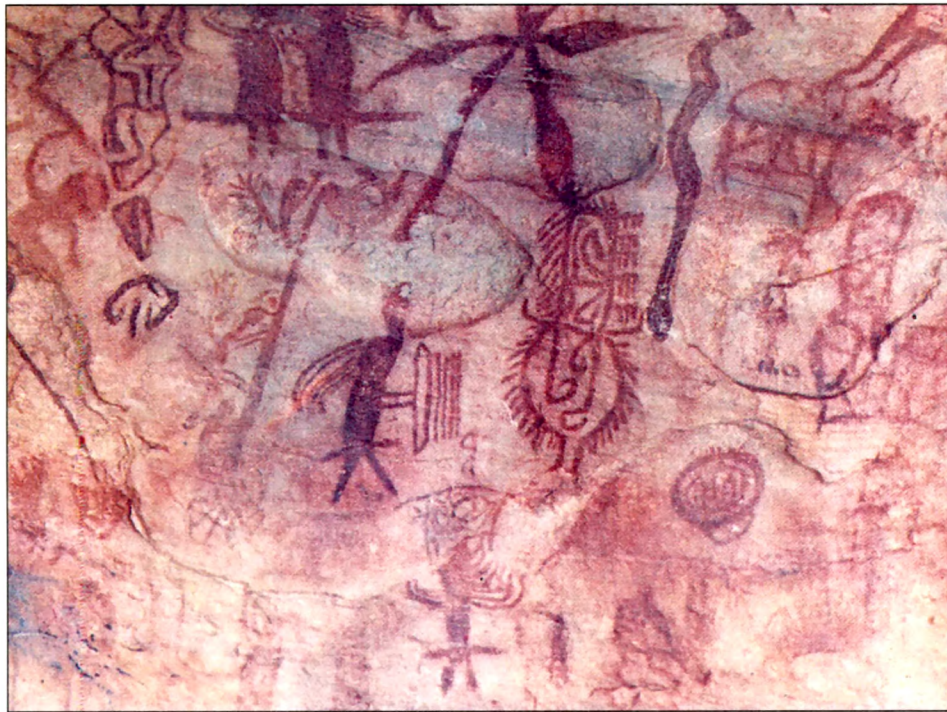


Fig 3c.10 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XVI)

Lakhma rock shelter (Fig 3c.10)

In this rock shelter a host of paintings are seen, amongst which a snake like figure is seen with its head towards the ground. This figure has been done in flatwash and black in colour. According to Indian mythology snakes are of great importance. It is believed that the whole world is supported by the hood of the great serpent ‘Shesha’, who is sometimes

coiled upon the back of a tortoise floating on the primal waters (Ions 2004; 31). Shesha, also known as Ananta, is the symbol of eternity, especially when he holds his own tail in his mouth (Ions 2003; 109). Shesha's sister Manasa is worshipped as a deity, mostly in Bengal, where she is invoked for protection against snake bites, as curer of diseases and bringer of wealth. Interestingly as snakes make a sudden appearance at the onset of the rainy season therefore they are connected with renewal of life. Moreover as per mythology the Nagas are a race of serpents who are worshipped all over India. Some of them are believed to have succeeded in obtaining immortality from licking up Amrita which fell to the ground during churning of the oceans. Not only in India even in other parts of the world the way people feel about snakes is heavily influenced by cultural beliefs and mythology. Some cultures held snakes in high esteem as powerful religious symbols and in most places it is associated with creation of the universe. Quetzalcoatl, the mythical "plumed serpent," was worshipped as the "Master of Life" by ancient Aztecs of Central America (Westwood 1998). In Australia, the Aborigines associated a giant rainbow serpent with the creation of life (Westwood 1998). In case of the above depiction, the rock shelter looks to be very sacred for it contains a number of images along with a host of superimpositions. Therefore this site was probably a place for ceremonial ritual as a result of which these walls have been repeatedly used. The image of the snake might have some ritualistic or religious or spiritual connections. In this regard it needs mention that a long specimen of an engraving of a serpentine shape measuring 2.52 m in length has also been reported from Manikmoda rock shelter in Orissa (Pradhan 1995, 7).



Fig 3c.11 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XI)

Lakhma rock shelter (Fig 3c.11)

This is a painting of an animal figure with X-ray depictions. It has been executed with thick outlines, in a standing posture. A full grown animal, which is also in a standing posture, is depicted within the body of the animal. Part of the windpipe and lung can be seen. Off the two human figures one is clearly seen with raised hands while the other is with a spear like weapon. It needs mention here that the x-ray motif is common to all rock art cultures. However rock art made by the San people of southern Africa has no X-ray depictions. According to Joseph Campbell, a renowned scholar of world mythology, the x-ray motif's appearance on such a broad scale implies shamanism in every region. Campbell interprets the x-ray theme to even prove the existence of shamanism across the globe (Campbell 1988, 131-135). This is further supported by an Australian practice (Grant S.McCall 1996) where shamans belonging to the Aranda tribe, in a dream state (in trance) are made to go to the mouth of a cave where they are killed. Their internal organs are then removed and a whole new set is installed. These new organs, along with an assortment of magic stones, revive the shaman. The shaman is then free to pursue the training he needs to be a shaman. As McCall writes that he believes this to be basically the practice behind the x-ray images, however, there would be regional and temporal variations on this (Grant S.McCall 1996).



Fig 3c.12 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Page 17)

Bhanwan rock shelter (Fig 3c.12)

This curious animal figure resembling some long necked bird, probably an ostrich is seen in the site of Jhandi Panhar in the village of Bhanwan. These are recently discovered (Tewari 1990) and also seen in rock shelters of Lakhma. The Jhandi Panhar photo for reference is not very clear for thorough study. However the little that can be made out, superimpositions are present, which in turn renders this place to be spiritually significant. The bird like figures is seen facing left direction and done in flatwash.



Fig 3c.13 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Page 14)

Kandakot rock shelter (Fig 3c.13)

In this painting, a group of rhinoceros like animal figures are depicted. All the animals are seen facing left side in profile view and the outline is executed with thick lines. Inside of the body shows some of the anatomical features. This is common in case of all the animal figures. Only some animals are seen with decorative designs comprising of either intersecting lines or single wavy lines or plain diagonally vertical straight lines, each different from the other. Motifs like these again remind of stage three of visual imagery of intensified spectrum (Lewis Williams 2002a, 126) when an individual witnesses iconic imagery against a background of geometric forms (Siegel 1977, 134) .The animal figure in the extreme right (down) corner is a very stiff representation, with no use of contour lines, which points to the fact that probably this entire composition is a ritualistic depiction.

Central India



Fig 3c.14 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Rock shelter: 51 (Fig 3c.14)

This is a painting of an animal figure resembling cattle. Side view of the animal is shown and it is facing left direction. It is a complete representation of the entire animal figure. Body is more or less rectangular in shape, which has been done in outline. Stereotyped depictions are usually associated with Neolithic /Chalcolithic period. The inner section of the body has been filled with design patterns comprising of vertical and several small horizontal lines which is again indicative of intensified stages of visual imagery (Siegel 1977, 134). The painting is medium sized, approximately 6 inches from tip of the horn to its leg. The animal is seen in standing posture and its legs are executed with contoured thick lines. This painting is more or less visible and superimpositions are present in this rock shelter. Few other animal figures are visible around this animal. All these factors like presence of superimpositions, stiff representation of the animal figure, presence of more animal figures of similar species here and there in the rock shelter hints to the fact that probably this representation is part of a ritualistic depiction.

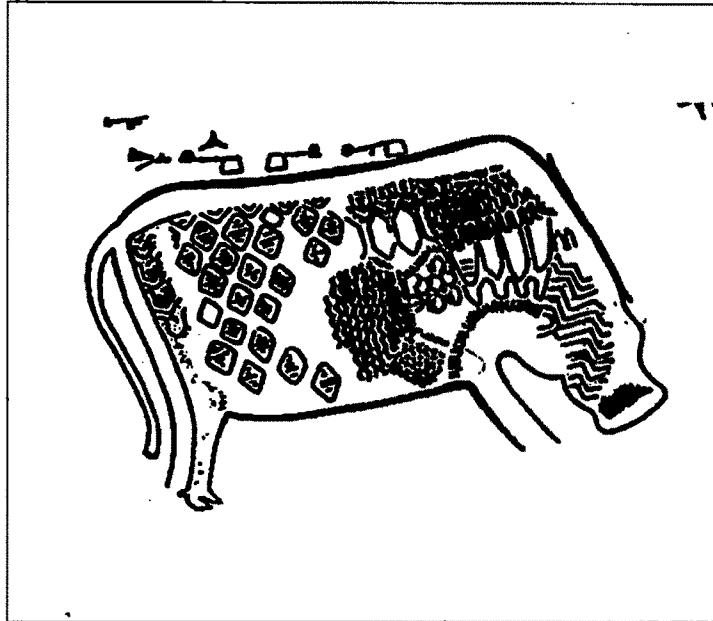


Fig 3c.15 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 80)

Firengi (Fig 3c.15)

Here we see a painting of a boar like animal. It is a complete representation, in standing posture and facing right direction. The painting has been executed in outline and the inside portions of the body have been filled with spiral, rhombus and other meandering lines, which again reminds of visual imagery where iconic and geometric forms get blended (Siegel 1977, 134). The animal is in standing position and facing right direction. Decorating animal bodies with intricate design patterns is emblematic trait of art of the hunters and gatherers (Neumayer 1993). It can therefore be concluded that the above boar is a wild one which resembles a representation of a visual imagery of intensified spectrum.

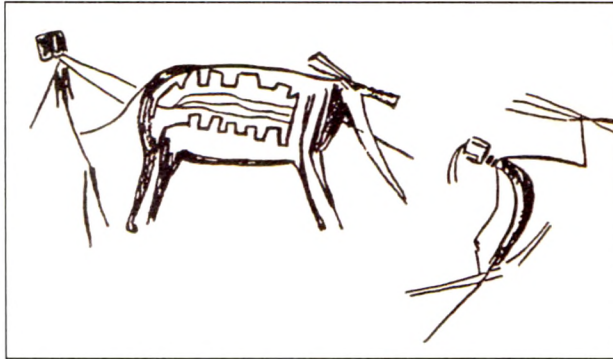


Fig 3c.16 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 101)

Kharwai (Fig 3c.16)

This is an outline figure of a defied animal, in profile view. Body contains x-ray depictions. Though the animal looks more like a boar, it has a long nose which looks like an elephant trunk. The ears are drawn over the head, spread on either side. The above image is a complete representation of the animal figure. The animal is in standing posture. Two human figures are seen on either side of the animal.



Fig 3c.17 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Bhonrawali. Rock shelter 57 (Fig 3c.17)

In this picture we see an outline painting of a boar like, defied animal. It is a complete representation but certain portions are obliterated. Profile view of the animal, is seen facing left direction. Body portion has been divided into five blocks which have been filled with spiral and rhombus shaped designs. Interesting point of this painting is that this animal figure has antlers which are extremely long. Decorating animal and human bodies with intricate design patterns are a peculiarity observed in the images made by hunters and gatherers. Superimpositions are present, so all the depictions in this shelter appear to be ritualistic and spiritual representations. These types of defied boars are common at Bhimbetka and regarding this particular painting of the ‘deified boar’ Neumayer (1983: 76-77, 96-99,110) has observed that “it was found to have been restored several times”. Several other figures of boar with horns at Bhimbetka indicate that this figure had a cult following which was quite widespread in the area during the ancient times (Neumayer 1983, 110).



Fig 3c.18 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3c.18)

This is one of the most famous paintings of Bhimbetka known as 'Bull Rock' (Mishra 1977). The animal figure is life-size and located on the top of the rock canvass. Most of the individual Mesolithic figures are not more than 30 cm high. The above figure however is an exception. This large animal done in flatwash is seen with an enormous face like that of a boar, horns of a bull and with its hair raised on its back. The animal is a complete representation facing left direction with a pendant belly. There are few more large defied animals found from central Vindhyan region. It is seen in a chasing position, with head pointing down. Right in front of the animal a very tiny human figure is drawn in a running posture. It has been generally observed that, usually there exists multitude of smaller figures in the vicinity of these large animals (Neumayer 1993). Some scholars attribute these images to be center of some cult (Neumayer 1993). According to V.N Misra, probably these life sized drawings of animals were inspired by awe and fear of the large beasts (Misra 1977). He is also of the opinion that this is obviously a mythological scene (Misra 1977). The same scene on a slightly reduced scale is repeated in two other shelters (Misra 1977). Therefore, presence of two depictions of the same theme again attests to the fact that the spot has particular relevance for the folklore (J Manuel 2005, 80). Yashodhar Mathpal (Mathpal 1984, 32-34) too has cited the worship of the boar in the region of Bhimbetka and also elaborated on the myth around the deity. The painting is more or less distinct, faint superimpositions in white colour are present.

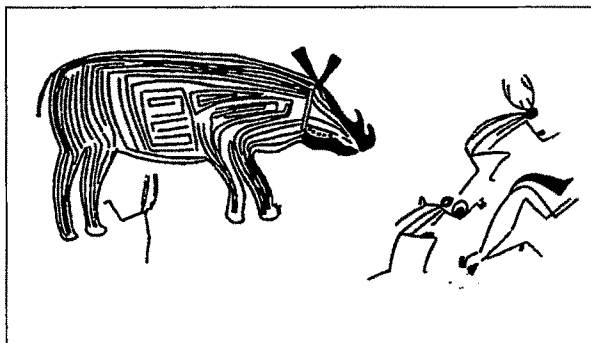


Fig 3c.19 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 197)

Urden rock shelter (Fig 3c.19)

This is an interesting depiction of a rhino like animal figure with two horns. The animal figure is done in outline, facing right direction. Inside body is filled with designs comprising of horizontal, vertical lines with incomplete squares in the centre. Just like the 'Bull rock' of Bhimbetka here too the animal appears to be chasing stick like human figures, one of whom has antlers. This looks like a symbolic representation. The above animal figure is a part of a representation from Urden. Other animal figures present in the same shelter, looks as if floating in air (Neumayer 1993, Fig. 196).



Fig 3c.20 (photo by author)

Dorothy Deep rock shelter, Pancmarhi (Fig 3c.20)

This is a painting of an elephant like figure, facing right direction. It is a complete representation; done in flatwash. Legs are quite small compared to the body. Probably, this stylized version is just a ritualistic depiction or else the artist may have taken care to

portray a baby elephant. The tail contains branch like designs. Whole of the body has been represented and it is distinct to the viewer.



Fig 3c.21 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.21)

This is another painting of an elephant figure from Panchmarhi, done in flatwash. It appears that this was initially a complete representation, but now it is not in good state of preservation. Three of the four legs have been partly obliterated. This figure is facing left direction, mouth open and is in a running position. Superimpositions are present.

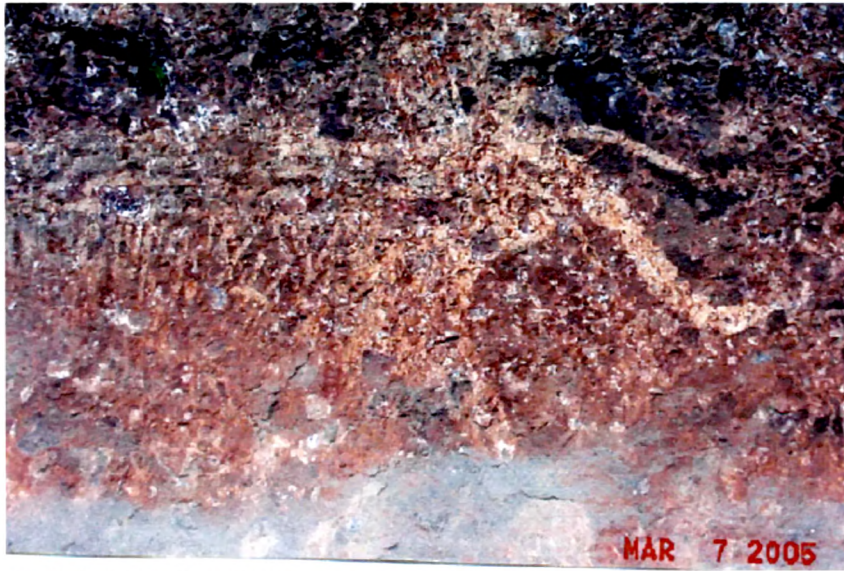


Fig 3c.22 (photo by author)

Mt. Rosa rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.22)

The above is a painting of an elephant figure. It is in a bad state of preservation. Most of it contains marks of patination, making it very faintly visible. The animal figure has been done in outline. Its body portions are decorated with designs and seem to be in a walking position. The elephant is facing right side. Elephants may have served as totem, or guardian spirits which were to protect an individual or a clan.



Fig 3c.23 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.23)

This is a very naturalistic painting of a tiger. The figure is an outline drawing, and the body portions are filled with vertical stripes. The animal is facing right direction. Here too, patination marks as well as superimpositions make the lower portion of the tiger blurry, for the observer. Profile view has been executed. As already seen, ethnographic evidences from many communities including the San of southern Africa uphold that each tribe had its origin from certain animals. Some had their origin in a carnivore like lion or tiger which is associated with the hunting-ground which embodies concepts of danger, strangeness and conflict (Lewis Williams 2002a). So, the above tiger figure may have served as a symbol for clan, tribe, personality, inner spirit or a protector. Another tiger like figure has been reported from the Auditorium rock shelter at Bhimbetka. On ethnological grounds it has been found that the original inhabitants of Bhimbetka and its neighbourhood are the Gonds and Korkus. Incidentally, both the Korkus and Gonds worship the Bagan deo, which is a tiger deity (Manuel J 2005, 81). Other tribes are also known to have worshipped the tiger deity not long ago.

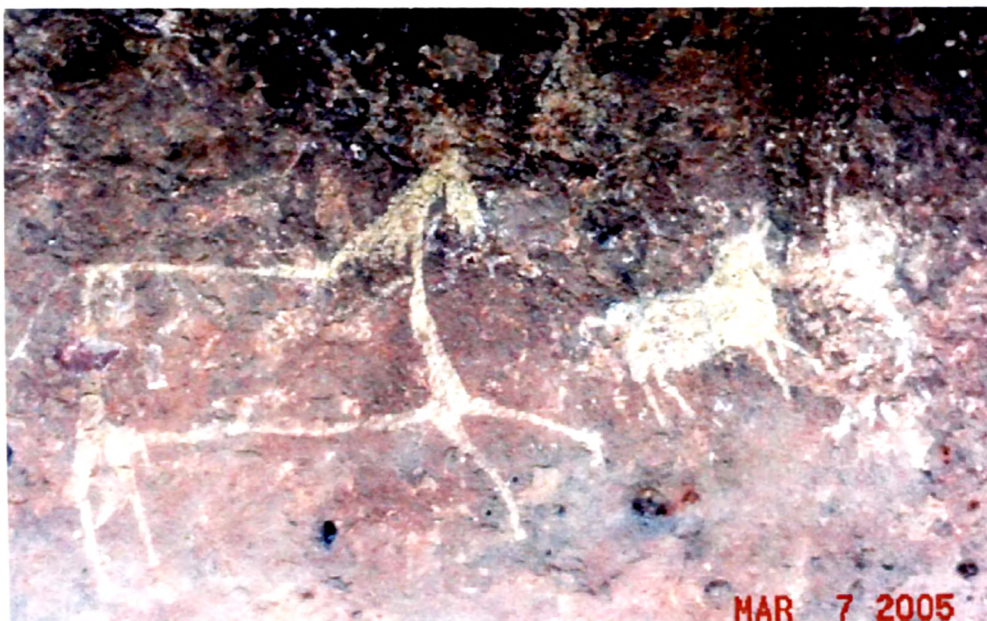


Fig 3c.24 (photo by author)

Mount Rosa rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.24)

This painting consists of a pair of horses. Both are complete representations of the entire body and in standing posture. One has been done in flatwash, while the other is an outline drawing. Both the animals are seen with front legs slightly raised, facing right direction.



Fig 3c.25 (photo by author)

Maradeo rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.25)

In this figure we see three cows in a line. This painting is located in the bottom of the rock canvass. Side –view of the animals are represented and all three are facing left direction. The bodies are depicted in flatwash, only the first animal from the left have x-ray depictions. All the animals are realistic in style and they are complete representations. Here too, like Lakhma rock shelter of Mirzapur (Fig 3c.11), X-ray painting of the first cow shows a fetus inside its womb. Therefore the same interpretation applies here. An interesting point needs mention here, stories regarding pregnant animals are still told by the Korku tribes in the Panchmarhi hills (Wakankar 1992, 335). The front legs of all the animals are slightly raised and body is in a slanting position as if floating in air. This kind of depiction where animal figures are not rooted to the ground has been interpreted to be spirit animals floating in spiritual space by researchers while studying cave paintings of

Lascaux in France. As Williams writes that the ‘images are disengaged from any sort of natural setting. In only a few cases (eg. Rouffignac Cave) there are suggestions of what might possibly be a ground line (a natural stain on the rock wall): there is no suggestion of the kind of environment in which the real animals live: like there are no trees, rivers or grassy plains (Lewis Williams 2002a, 194). Halverson has called these images to be perceptively in ‘own free –floating existence’. They are placed without regard to size and position relative to one another (Halverson 1987, 66-67). Moreover plenty of superimpositions are seen in this rock shelter which further corroborates the fact that this place might have been very potent with powers for which repeated drawings have been made in the same place. So it can be concluded that these animal figures are made as part of a ritual.



Fig 3c.26 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.26)

In the above picture three humped bulls are represented in flatwash. All three are very realistic depictions.



Fig 3c.27 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.27)

This is a painting of a monkey-like animal figure. It is a complete representation done in flatwash. Profile view of the animal is seen, and it is facing left direction. The tail is long and slightly, curved at the top. Positions of front legs indicate movement. Head is not very clearly visible. No depiction of eyes or mouth is seen. This painting is more or less distinct. A human figure seen standing behind the monkey appears to have some connection with the animal figure. Another monkey like animal figure is also seen, but not very clear. Monkeys may have served as totem for tribes. Qualities like skill, grace, power and observation can be harnessed from them. Sexual potency of male monkeys is symbolic of birth, rebirth and new creation. Here we should also keep in mind that monkeys are looked upon with a lot of admiration in Indian mythology. Hanuman is a monkey deity with divine origin who is renowned for his learning, agility, and speed and for his faithful service to Rama, the king of Ayodhya. Along with many other qualities Hanuman is said to have been blessed by Lord Indra who granted him immortality.

Moreover Jambavan, Sugriva, Bali are all famous monkey characters; along with their monkey troops they are held in high esteem in Indian tradition.



Fig 3c.28 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Rock Shelter-9 (Fig 3c.28)

This is a beautiful painting of a complete elephant done in flatwash. Profile/side view of the animal is represented. Direction of the figure is towards the left. Though no eyes are seen but trunk and tusks are clearly visible. Tail appears to be slightly raised. Front legs are joined. Hind legs are separately made which looks natural. The mouth of the elephant is open with its trunk raised upwards. It is in standing posture and is more or less distinct. A human figure seems to be standing behind the elephant, but since it is in a partially obliterated state, therefore a probable connection between the animal and human figure cannot be concluded.



Fig 3c.29 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter-52 (Fig 3c.29)

This is an outline painting of an animal figure. It is a complete representation, except that the hind legs are not clearly visible. Side view is represented and the animal is facing left direction. The body of the animal is rectangular shaped to which legs, neck, head and tail has been added. The inside portion of the body contain two more rectangles. Tail and head is hardly visible. Unlike the Mesolithic animal paintings which were always done by contour lines, chalcolithic pictures were rather stiff depictions of domesticated animals (Neumayer 1993). The reason behind stiff depictions appears to be that with an increase of human activities during chalcolithic times making of rock art might have been reduced to just a ritualistic work.



Fig 3c.30 (photo by author)

Bhonrawali rock shelter, Bhimbetka (Fig 3c.30)

The above picture is a painting showing a group of cattle. The herd of animals are done in outline and their inside body contain unilinear pattern. Though all the animals look to be similar but careful scrutiny reveals that the first two animal figures from left are done in red ochre while the rest are in dark brown colour. This might be because all the animal figures were probably not done at the same point of time. The animals are seen with long horns and humped back. Animal figures which follow the first two are stylistically different. Interestingly two animals are seen with raised tails. Since superimpositions are present and since humped cattle has been done in probably two occasions, therefore this leads us to possibly conclude that this shelter might have served as a ritual space. So this representation may have had functional significance like multiplying cattle population or some other related issue.



Fig 3c.31 (photo by author)

Mount Rosa rock shelter (backside), Panchmarhi(Fig 3c.31)

This is a painting of a bird-like figure, executed in flatwash. It is a complete representation found in the backside of Mount Rosa. Size of the painting is small and is located at the extreme right corner of the rock canvass. The painting is very faintly visible. The bird is seen in a standing position. It has a short tail and a very long beak. A big round eye has been drawn probably, but it is very faintly visible. Another incomplete figure is seen behind the bird.



Fig 3c.32 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3c.32)

This is a painting of an unidentified animal figure. The painting has been executed by use of two colours. Borderline has been done in red and the inside has been filled with white colour. The animal figure is a complete representation and is in a standing posture, facing left, lateral view. Body and legs of the animal is to some extent similar to a horse. It has a short tail pointed upwards. The animal has star shaped toes, similar to that of a duck. Interesting aspect of this image is that the face of the animal resembles that of a dinosaur's. However we know that dinosaurs had ceased to exist before the Lower Palaeolithic era.



Fig 3c.33 (photo by author)

Mt Rosa rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.33)

In this painting a group of 6 (clearly visible) to 8 animal figures are done in flatwash, all facing left. Fronto-lateral view of all the animal figures is represented. Contour lines have been used; therefore the animals look to be more or less realistic. Usually Chalcolithic domesticated cattle are seen in groups (Neumayer 1993). In this painting some the

animals are seen with their front legs slightly raised, looks as if they are climbing up the rock surface.

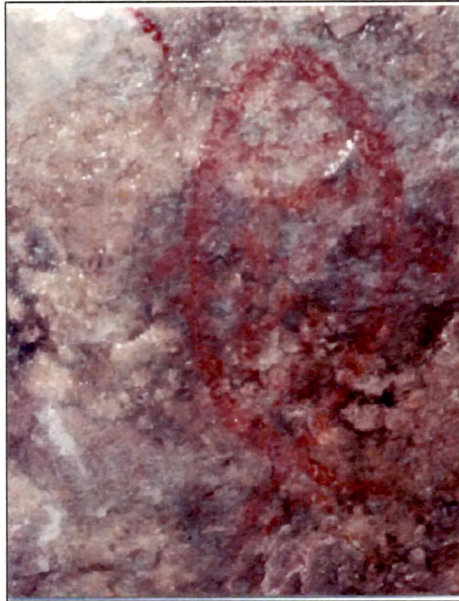


Fig 3c.34 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Rock Shelter-31(Fig 3c.34)

This is an outline painting of a single fish. It is a complete illustration in a perpendicular position. It appears that inside body contains fins but not clearly visible; head and body segment is divided by a line. A flower like motif (not seen here) has been made beside the fish and there definitely lies a link between the two. If we turn to San ethnography we will see that creatures like fish, tortoise, frogs and snakes are personified as ‘rain things’ (Bleek 1933, 301). These creatures are usually depicted by a rain shaman in order to bring rain. Also, representations of aquatic animals are associated with a shamans feeling of passing underwater during trance (Whitley 2000). Fish is held with high reverence even in India. According to *Manusmriti* (Indian mythology) ‘fish’ is associated with creation myths (Ions1983; 33). Moreover Lord Vishnu’s (one of the most important God from Hindu mythology) first incarnation was in the form of a fish or *Matsya*.



Fig 3c.35 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, rock shelter-10 (Fig 3c.35)

This is a stylized painting of an elephant done in flatwash, facing right. Superimpositions are present on the rock canvass which implies that this was a ritual space. The elephant figure in a complete representation and is in standing posture. Body is rectangular shaped to which its head, legs and tail are attached. The trunk is thin and curved inside. This painting probably belongs to Chalcolithic period for it is typical expression of the static art of the agriculturists. There lies no realistic touch to the elephant, therefore probably it is only a routine depiction related to some ritual. Some 'trisul' like signs are also seen above this animal figure.



Fig 3c.36 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3c.36)

In the above painting we see complete representation of four animal figures in profile. Of these four animals three can be considered for study. From below we see two humped figures. Just above these two, stiff representation of another animal is seen which is without a hump, probably a goat. All the three animals are in standing posture, facing left. They are done in red flatwash, without eyes; only their humps are outline drawings. Interesting aspect of these figures is that the animals have been depicted with rather unusual feet which resemble inverted 'u' shapes. This is very significant and definitely it has some spiritual significance.



Fig 3c.37 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3c.37)

In this painting, a group (approximately four) of defied animals is represented, of which only two figures will be considered for study; rest are not clearly visible. There are marks of patination on the rock surface. One of the animal figures (the one on the top) is a complete representation, while the other is partly visible. The animals are seen with horns like that of a bull but with a deer like body. Head is joined to the body with a thin neck. Direction of the figures is towards the right. Body portions are filled with decorative designs which are indicative of intensified visual imagery (Siegel 1977, 134). The animals are not standing on the ground. They are seen with front and hind legs, stretched outwards, as if flying, floating in the air. So these animals too have had ritualistic significance.



Fig 3c.38 (photo by author)

Rangmahal; Bhimbetka, Rock shelter-45 (Fig 3c.38)

This is a faint depiction of a turtle like figure. There are superimpositions present around. Usually turtles or tortoise are associated with great awe in almost all cultures, worldwide. From San ethnography we learn that San shamans have spoken of entering a hole in the ground, or following roots of a tree during trance. Nineteenth century San shamans spoke of diving into waterholes and traveling underground. So at times this sub aquatic experience of trance is suggested by the painted images of fish, eels and turtles (Lewis Williams 2002a, 148) in case of San rock art. North American shamans have also referred to the experience of passing underwater by using images of aquatic spirit helpers like turtles (Whitley 2000). In India tortoise itself is held with great reverence and worshipped in many places. Brahma who is the supreme creator according to the Indian mythology assumed the form of a tortoise in order to create offspring. It is also said that Lord Vishnu's second incarnation was in the form of a tortoise or '*kurma*'. The story goes that during one of the period of deluges which destroyed the world in the first age some of the valuable things were lost of which the most important was *amrita* which was crème of the milk ocean and without which the existence of the entire universe was threatened. Therefore Vishnu descended on the earth as a tortoise to help to recover these objects

(Ions 2004). Finally we have also talked about totems which were used to distinguish different families/clans in the past so the turtle can also be such a clan symbol. According to ethnographic sources turtles were used as a totem as it stands for motherhood and longevity (Andrews 1993).



Fig 3c.39 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.39)

The above image is a painting, depicting humped cattle. We see, complete figure of two cattle very clearly, which will be taken into account, for study. A third cattle is present nearby but is not discernable. The animals are represented from their back, facing towards left side. This is a bichrome painting done red outline and inside is filled with white which is stylistically similar to the paintings belonging to the historic period. The animals are very natural renderings with use of contour lines. They are in standing posture. State of preservation is more or less distinct.

A



B



Fig 3c.40 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3c.40)

In both the paintings we see horse like figures along with riders, facing left side, belonging to historic period. Two colours have been used to execute the paintings. Outline has been done in red colour while inside body has been filled with white. This particular style of Historic rock art is seen in some of the rock shelters in central India. Both the above paintings average in size and complete, with marks of patination. The rider in the second figure (3c.40 B) is seated in a strange manner (not the usual pose where both the legs are placed on either side of the animal's body) holding the horse by its reigns. Noteworthy aspect in this representation is that, hoofs of the animals in both

the pictures are turned inwards for which it looks as if floating and not rooted to the ground. Such compositions might have been made with some definite purpose which is rather difficult to conclude at this stage. Moreover there are plenty of superimpositions (fig: 3c.40 A) thereby indicating that the shelter must have been considered sacred. However based on an idea formed by studying ethnographic accounts of other tribes one probable reason of such representations can be to achieve success in warfare.

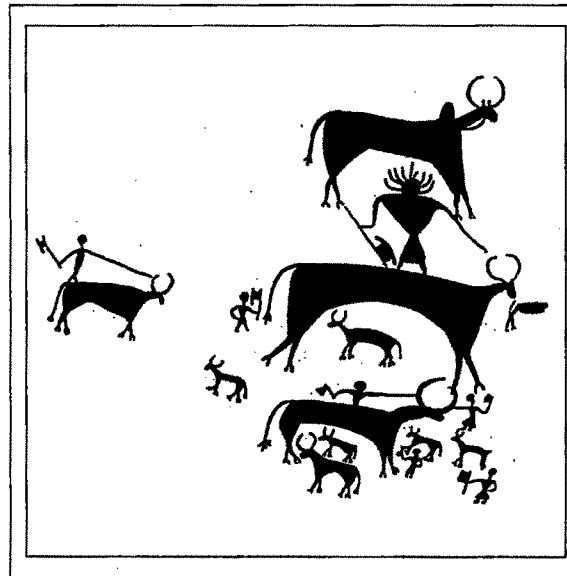


Fig 3c.41 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 438

Dekan rock shelter, Adarshila (Fig 3c.41)

This is a very amazing depiction, executed completely in flatwash. A horde of cattle like figure is represented, one of which has a hump. The mystic aspect of this painting is the way the feet of the animals are drawn. Instead of hoofs, all are seen with cloven feet. Similar depictions of bison feet have been represented in the Shaft at Lascaux in France (see fig3c.42). According to Williams (Lewis Williams 2002a, 265) since the



Fig 3c.42 (Ref-Lewis Williams: The Mind in the Cave, Plate-28)

hoofs of the animal are cut/sliced therefore it is not standing on the ground but floating in spiritual space. This example might throw some light on the cattle figures at Adarshila.

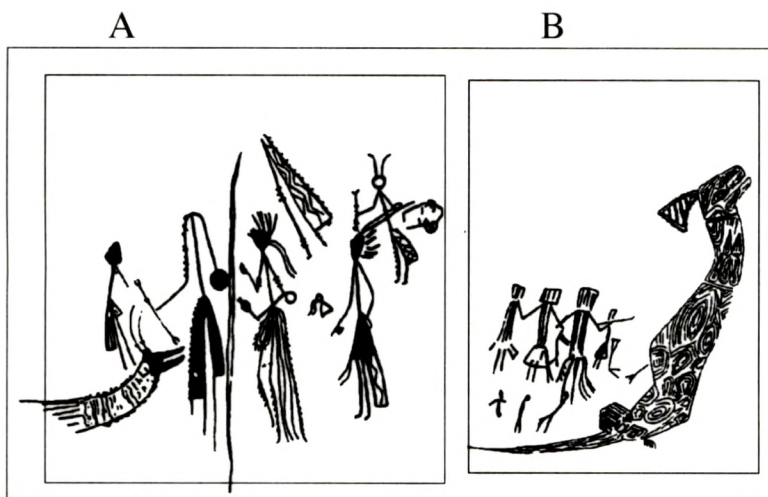


Fig 3c.43 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, A- Fig: 200, B-Fig: 201)

Gupha Masir rock shelters (Fig 3c.43)

Snakes are very rarely depicted in Mesolithic rock art (Neumayer 1993). In the above paintings strange figures resembling snakes are seen. In fig-3c.44B body has been done

in outline and inside is filled with designs, similar to stage three of the entoptic phenomenon in which iconic imagery may be projected against geometric forms (Siegel 1977, 134). In both the sites the snake like figures are more or less depicted in the same manner, long body, open mouth with antlers (fig-3c.44A) and long ears (fig-3c.44B). These animals have been described as ‘mythic’ and comparable to figures of the Great Rainbow snake of Australian rock art (Neumayer 1993, 94). The latter is associated with creation myths. However we should keep in mind as Paul Bahn rightly says that it ‘sometimes happen that rock art images are reused in a mythical framework, other than the one that provided their original meaning’ (Bahn 2004, 159).

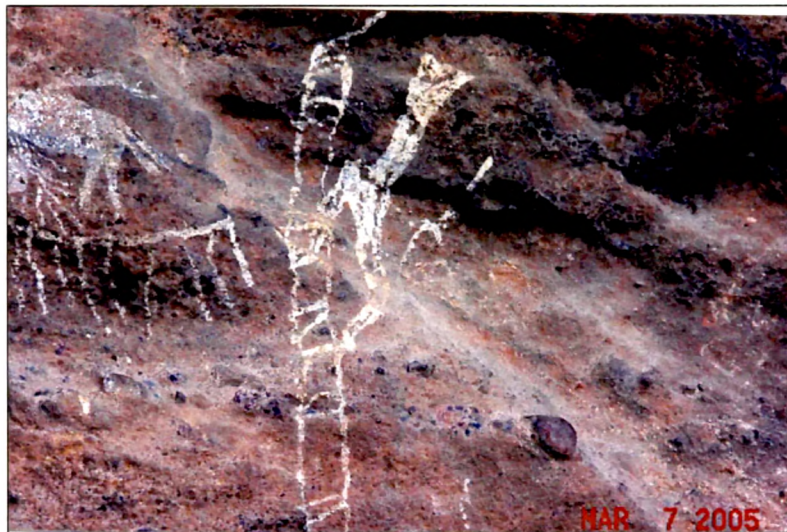


Fig 3c.44 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.44)

In the above painting a ladder like motif is represented and it seems as if an animal like figure is climbing the ladder. The colour used is white. Interestingly the ‘ladder’ motif is universal and found in many rock shelters all over the world. Detailed discussions have been made in the next section (Human figures). A ladder can be interpreted as a symbol of the cosmic axis connecting the earth and the sky (Oddie, 1995).



Fig 3c.45 (photo by author)

Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.45)

This is a single animal figure, in flatwash. The colour used is white and it is a complete representation. Superimpositions are present which is suggestive of this shelter being used as a ritual space. This animal figure is important in terms of documentation purpose otherwise there is nothing especially noteworthy about it.



Fig 3c.46 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Rock Shelter-4(Fig 3c.46)

The above representation is the famous ‘zoo-rock’ found in Bhimbetka. A horde of animal figures belonging to a variety of species is depicted. Some of them which can be identified are elephant, monkey, deer and cattle. The animals are executed both in outline and flatwash. The mystic aspect of this picture is that all the animals seem to be in a galloping posture, as if running away from something. Again, all the animals are not facing the same direction. A cow like animal can be identified with cloven feet. Some have geometric designs within their bodies. This rock shelter has been repeatedly used for drawing though there are absolutely bare surfaces around. Therefore the fact that can almost certainly be concluded regarding this painting is that these animals are possibly part of ritual depictions and this rock surface was considered to be particularly sacred and very potent with powers.



Fig 3c.47 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Rock Shelter 8 (Fig 3c.47)

This resembles a scorpion. There are abstract geometric shapes near this figure in the rock shelter. Scorpions are considered sacred symbols for the tribal artists of Hazaribagh district of Bihar, who practice the Khobar art (untitled document from web site).



Fig 3c.48 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3c.48)

Unique aspect of this representation is that, animals are represented in such a manner that it seems as if they are falling. A cow is depicted in almost vertical position with its legs up in the air. Another cow like figure is seen, which is also not grounded. Both the animals have raised tails. Superimpositions are present in this shelter.

South India

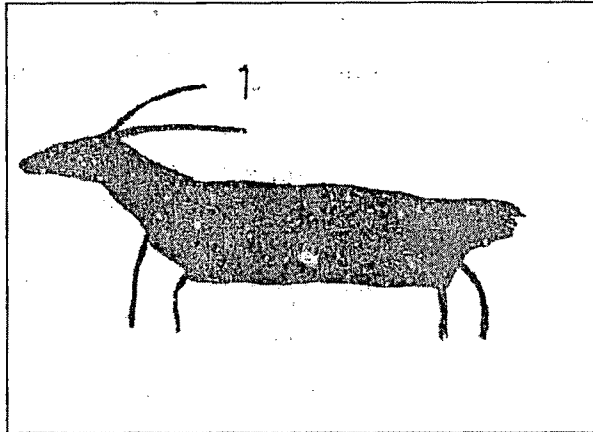


Fig 3c.49 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 5)

Budagavi, Rock shelter-3, Andhra Pradesh (Fig 3c.49)

This is a complete painting of a deer like animal. Profile view of the animal is represented; facing left direction. Style implemented for this painting is flatwash. Body of the animal is stretched out and legs stick –like. The animal is in standing position, however posterior part of its body is slightly faded and partly destroyed. This painting is probably an example of stiff and static art belonging to the farming and agriculturists society.

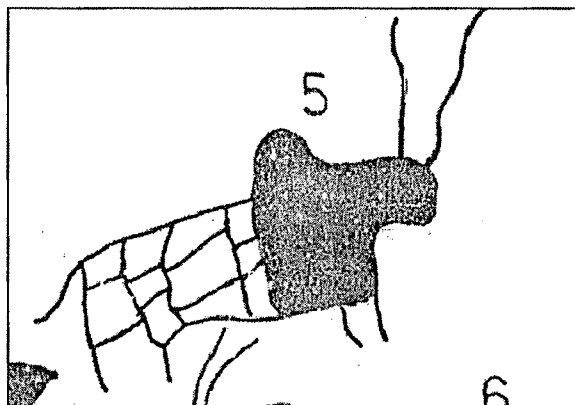


Fig 3c.50 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 5)

Budagavi, Rock shelter-3, Andhra Pradesh (Fig 3c.50)

This is a painting of a complete figure of a humped bull. Side view of the animal is represented, facing right direction. Anterior portion of the body from the hump has been done in flatwash, while the posterior segment is decorated with intersecting horizontal and vertical lines (Chandramouli 2002) which is similar to intensified spectrum of visual imagery (Siegel 1977, 134). The horns are shown by thin, curvy lines straight above the head. As mentioned earlier, humped bull figures from Budagavi display certain stylistic features which are different not only from central India but even from rest of south India (30cmX21cm).

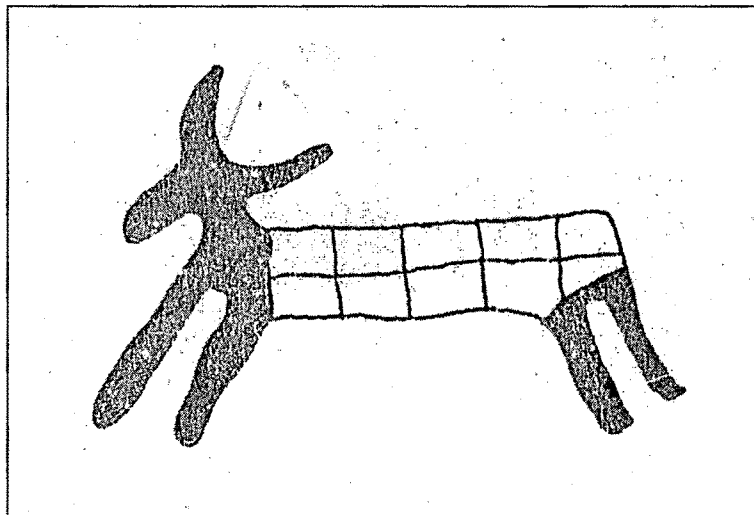


Fig 3c.51 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 7)

Budagavi, Rock Shelter-4, Andhra Pradesh (Fig 3c.51)

A complete painting of a deer (22cmX30cm), (Chandramouli 2002) like animal is seen here. Side view of the animal has been represented, facing left direction. This animal has been made partly in flatwash and partly decorative pattern. The legs, head and horns are in flatwash while body is decorated with one horizontal and four vertical lines intersecting each other. This image looks like a stylized version, and not very pragmatic

in its depiction. Here too we see the body segment to be stretched out. There is no portrayal of tail and eyes.

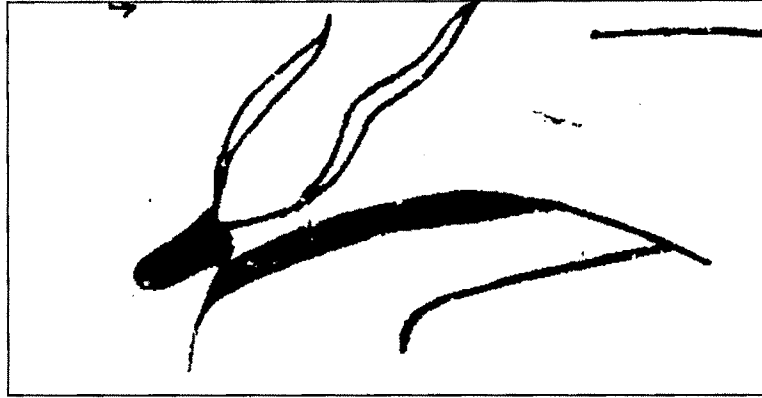


Fig 3c.52 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 10)

Chintakunta, Rock Shelter-1, Andhra Pradesh (Fig 3c.52)

The above image is a painting of another deer like animal but from a different site of Andhra Pradesh. This is an incomplete image and very faintly visible (Chandramouli 2002). Here too we see execution of flatwash painting as well as line drawings. The head and a part of the body are done in flatwash while it's warped horns and rest of the body is in outline. There are no depictions of legs, eyes or tail. The animal seems to be in motion and it is facing left direction.

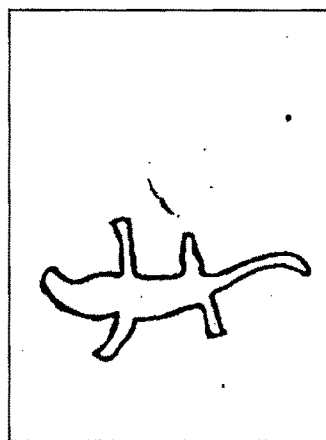


Fig 3c.53 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 34.b)

Kethavaram, Rock Shelter -9, Andhra Pradesh (Fig 3c.53)

The above image is a painting of a lizard like animal. This diagram is small in size (3cm X1and half cm) (Chandramouli 2002). It is seen facing left direction and is a complete representation. The animal has been done in outline. Pair of legs is seen to be spread out on either side of its body. The animal is a realistic expression and it seems to be in a crawling posture. At times, several depictions of lizards are difficult to separate from humans and aquatic frogs with tails. A human figure with raised arms looks exactly like a lizard or an aquatic frog with extended legs.

Lizards and frogs, in the Muisca culture, may have been spirit helpers or messengers for shamans, able to enter holes in the earth and rocks and descend to bring back answers to the shamans' prayers to underworld gods (Marriner, H. A 2002). Vaupes Indians believed that the lizard symbolizes the generative forces of nature (Marriner 2002). According to ethnographic sources Kogi Indian dancers performs a dance honoring the lizard (Marriner 2002). Plenty of lizard paintings as well as engravings are found in Orissa region also. Therefore further interpretations will be discussed in that section.

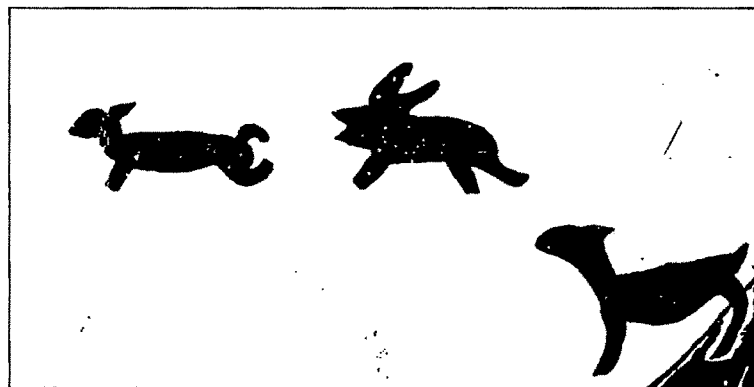


Fig 3c.54 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 34.a)

Kethavaram, Rock Shelter-9 (Fig 3c.54)

This is a painting of a group of three animal figures in flatwash, one behind the other towards the right corner of the rock shelter at a height of 2m from the floor level (Chandramouli 2002). All the three animals are complete representations and facing left direction. A rabbit like small animal is shown in a running (galloping) posture with its hind legs outstretched. It looks as if the anxious animal is running for saving its life somewhat like 'Zoo rock' at Bhimbetka. Just behind this animal, another animal is seen with its mouth wide open, chasing the scared rabbit. Below these, is a third animal, its head somewhat raised as if viewing the chase. A propensity towards stylization (which might have ritualistic significance) is seen in the depiction of these animals.

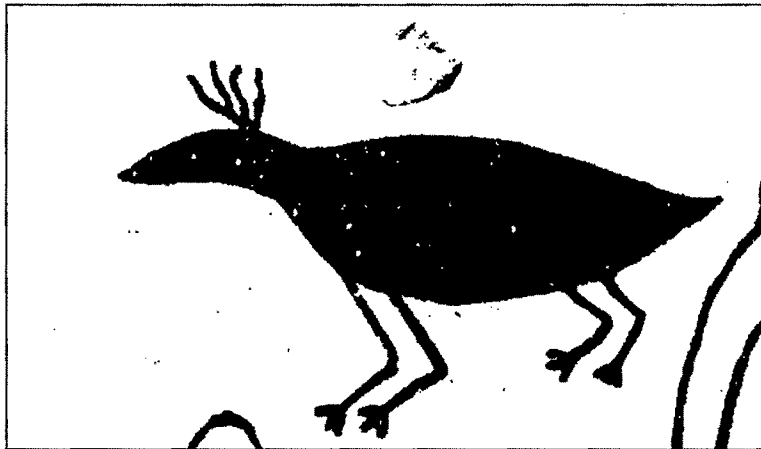


Fig 3c.55 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 12)

Chintakunta, Rock shelter-3, Andhra Pradesh (Fig 3c.55)

The above picture is a painting, of a bird. It is a complete illustration, done in flatwash. The bird is seen to face left direction. This painting is at a height of 4m from the floor level and towards the left corner of the rock shelter (Chandramouli 2002). It is in a standing posture and a practical representation. Trail is shown over its head. Noteworthy point here is that the bird is shown with four, thin, legs instead of the usual two.

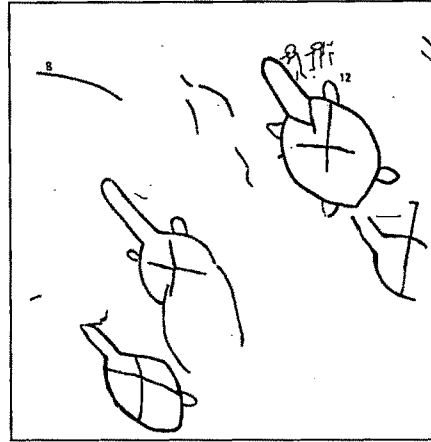


Fig 3c.56 (Ref-N.Chandramouli: Rock art of South India, Fig: 46b)

Sanganunpalli, Rock shelter-1 (Fig 3c.56)

This is the most beautiful and best preserved tortoise figure measuring 53cmX25cm (Chandramouli 2002) superimposing another faded, incomplete tortoise figure. An interesting point of this depiction is that two human figures (outline drawings) are shown in close proximity of the tortoise of which one of the human figures is seen to touch the tortoise with both hands. Chandramouli adds that several faint traces of similar tortoise figures are visible at this corner of the rock shelter, often clustered as well as superimposing each other (Chandramouli 2002). So this point again opens up the possibility that this corner of the shelter may have been potent with the spirit of the tortoise, for which repeated drawings in the same place have been executed in order to harness its qualities of longevity and also motherhood. If we turn to the Australian aboriginals from the Barunga society, for them rock art is a highly structured art and is an affirmation that the artist is meeting his responsibilities to the ancestral world actually maintaining it in same way. Senior artist Billy Lukanawi says that he has shown the proper painting style done by his father and uncle: 'I've got to draw that same one, the same drawing: kangaroo, turtle, crocodile, rainbow snake, quiet snake, file snake. I've got to draw the same way my father, my uncle drew I've got to do red, yellow and white...the same way' (Web site-Australian Art.htm). While analyzing the turtle figure from Bhimbetka we have referred to South Africa, where turtles were sometimes thought

of as doors to the spirit world. Also, North American shamans have referred to their experience of passing underwater or drowning during trance by images of aquatic spirit helpers which include turtles along with some other aquatic animals (Whitley 2000). Moreover Indian mythology too holds turtle in high esteem and it is worshipped in many places. So clustering of the same animal figure in the a particular location can either be a depiction of clan symbol, or maybe that particular place is potent with tortoise spirits, it can also be related to mythology or has been made as a tribute to ancestors.



Fig 3c.57 (Ref-Yashodhar Mathpal: Rock art in Kerala, Plate-4A)

Ezuthu Guha (rock shelter), Kerala (Fig 3c.57)

In this plate we see two humped bulls facing right direction. The first bull from the right is ithyphallic. These bulls are painted at the extreme height of the shelter and atleast five phases of superimpositions can be identified easily (Mathpal 1998b, 31). The second bull has been depicted headless or may be head has faded. According to Mathpal almost six bull figures are there in this shelter (Mathpal 1998b, 31).



Fig 3c.58 (Ref-Yashodhar Mathpal: Rock art in Kerala, Plate-4B)

Ezuthu Guha (rock shelter), Kerala (Fig 3c.58)

Just below the bulls (Fig 3b.55) several other animal figures are seen amongst which an elegant depiction of a deer like animal is made. This too is facing right direction and done in flatwash. In the same plate few other animal figures are seen which are positioned in an ascending order. Interestingly the bulls described in the above plate (Fig 3b.55) along with some other faintly seen animals are also placed in an ascending order. The most amazing aspect is a diagonal line which is a natural rock feature, seems to have been used as a support line in positioning the animals.

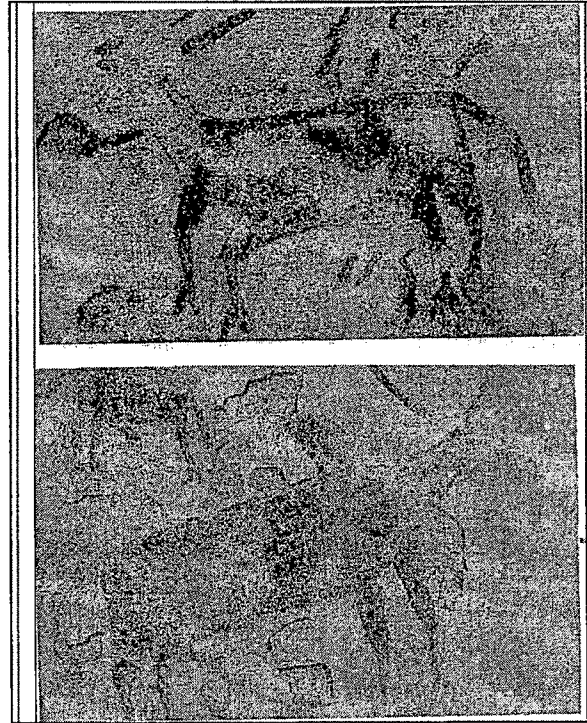
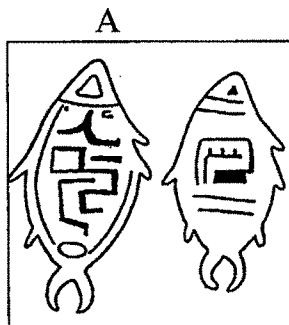


Fig 3c.59 (Ref-Yashodhar Mathpal: Rock art in Kerala, Plate-6A and Plate-6B)

Ezuthu Guha (rock shelter), Kerala (Fig 3c.59)

Surrounded by the above drawings of cattle and a deer there are four more humped oxen in the middle part of the rock (Mathpal 1998b). Their colour and style differ from the earlier figures. These animal figures are very stiff depictions. A very interesting point is that all these animals are seen with cloven feet.



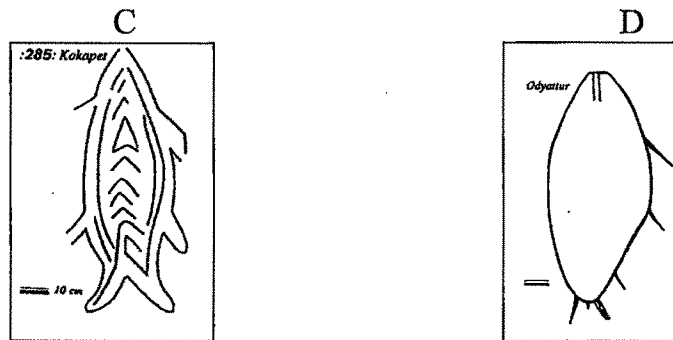


Fig3c.60 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 283(A), 284(B), 285(C) and 286(D))

Fig: A-Settevaray, Tamil Nadu; Fig: B-Sangankallu, Karnataka; Fig: C-Kokapet Andhra Pradesh; Fig: D Odayattur, Tamil Nadu

In all these pictures we see paintings of fish like figures, done in outline. Though these paintings belong to different sites but there lies a similarity in their style of depiction. All the figures are positioned vertically. Inside body of some of the fishes contain peculiar designs, specially the figure from Settavaray. Tip of the tail is turned inside (Fig A) which is again very intriguing. South African and North American shamans have associated fishes with underwater experiences of trance and as discussed earlier many spiritual traditions use animals as totems, which are used to distinguish different families.

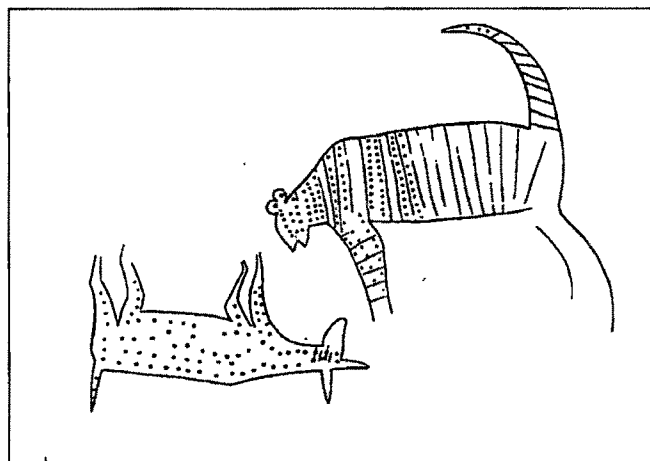


Fig 3c.61 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 290)

Badami rock shelter, Karnataka (Fig 3c.61)

This is a very interesting and unusual depiction of two animal figures where one deer like animal figure, is in a recline position while the other resembling a carnivore looks down. Both the animals are executed in outline. The carnivore like animal has vertical lines along with dots on its body. Tail is placed aloft, mouth open and legs are incomplete. The reclined animal is done with dots all over the body, with a straight tail. This depiction is very intriguing in nature and has definitely some spiritual and mythological connections.

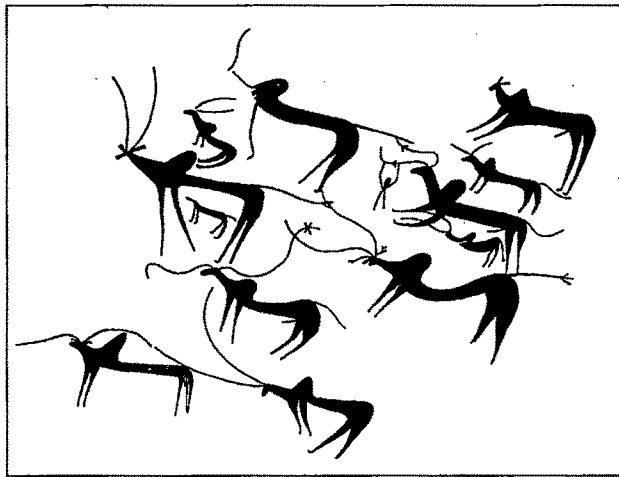


Fig 3c.62 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 463)

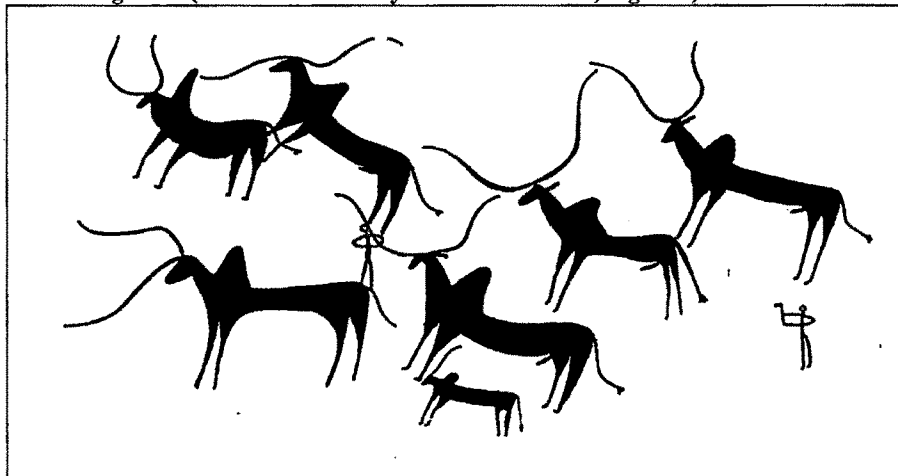


Fig 3c.63 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 465)

Piklihal rock shelter, Karnataka (Fig 3c.62, 3c.63)

In these paintings from Piklihal we see a particular style of depiction of humped, long horned bulls. These paintings make it clear for us to understand the importance of bulls in southern Indian rock art. They are done in flatwash and mostly facing left direction. Some are ithyphallic while most of them are seen with raised tails (fig 3c.62). Both these factors suggest aggressive behaviour (arousal and anger) and this is an instance in which ethology (the study of animal behaviour) becomes an evidential strand in interpretation, though definitely not in a simple straightforward way (Lewis Williams 2002a, 260). In all probability the animal figures represented in rock art are metaphors used to denote complex emotional experiences experienced by individuals. These paintings have been grouped as ‘stampedes’ by researchers (Neumayer 1993, 177). Comments on this depiction by Erwin Neumayer have already been discussed in the previous ‘hunting’ section (fig 3b.57). Apart from that, noteworthy aspect seen here is that one of the bulls is standing on another bull, on its back which is usually known to be a mating posture in the animal world. Therefore in all probability these animal figures have been made as part of some elaborate and complex system of rituals.

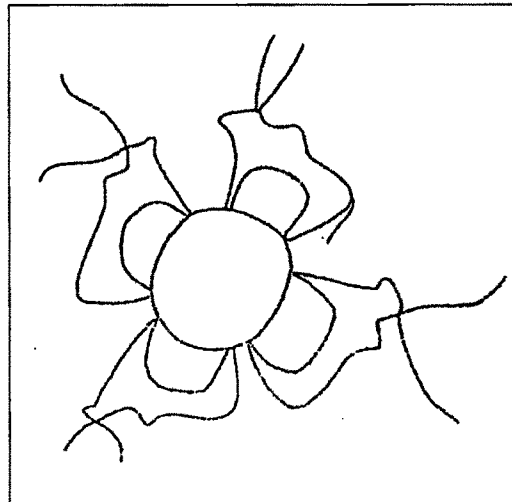


Fig 3c.64 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 471)

Kupgallu rock shelter (Fig 3c.64)

This is a bruising from Kupagallu. Here we see four bulls arrayed on the periphery of a circle. What we can surely interpret from this as well as earlier rock art from South India is that humped bull is considered very sacred here. According to Neumayer cattle has taken the position of an icon here which is further evident from the above picture (Neumayer 1993, 179). Noteworthy aspect in this painting is that only one of the bulls is represented with a tail.

In this regard I would like to cite an example of a picture from San rock art made by the shamans which is related to their spiritual experiences (See fig-3b.65). In this painting seven antelope heads have been arranged clockwise around an arc. This arc is interpreted by the San shamans to be an expression of navicular entoptic phenomenon (chapter-II), in which an individual who goes in trance sees a flickering outer arc and complete darkness in the inner area before going into complete altered state, in which images start appearing. So in fig-3b.63 we see how the San shamans construed this outer arc of the navicular entoptic phenomenon (Lewis Williams 2002a). For the Sans of South Africa the eland or the antelope was the most potent animal which helped the shamans in their spiritual journey. Probably what the eland is to the San's, the humped bull is to South India.

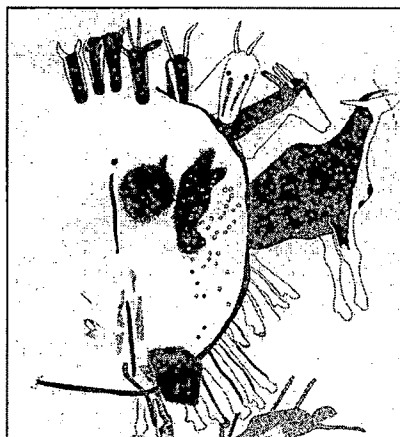


Fig 3c.65 (Ref-Lewis Williams: A Cosmos in Stone, Fig: 7.4)

The above example provides us with one explanation of an arc. However this is not the interpretation for the bruising from Koppallu. It can only be concluded that the Koppallu bruising has something to do with spiritual experience of the people.

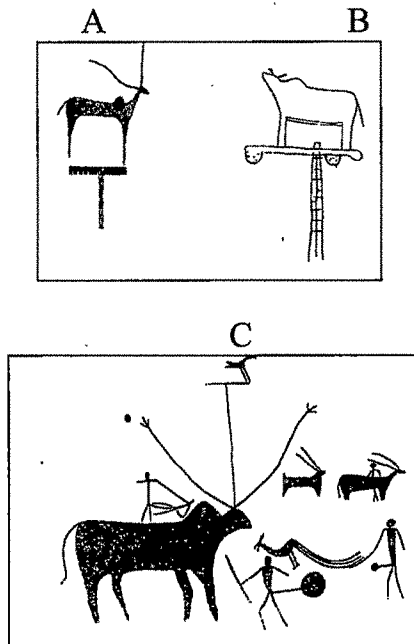


Fig 3c.66 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: A: 473, B: 474, C: 475)

A -Chintakunta rock shelter / B- Hampi/ C- Koppallu rock shelter (Fig 3c.66)

These are very interesting bruising of long horned bulls placed on T-shaped pedestal. These icons are not only found at Koppagallu but also from sites close to Vijaynagar ruins and Chintakunta in Kudappah district of Andhra Pradesh (Neumayer 1993, 179). In Koppagallu this icon is bruised at a lithophon. The T-shaped stand is bruised in between the horns of a large bull which is bruised into the centre of a triangular stone (Neumayer 1993, fig-475). Two ithyphallic male figures are seen in fig-C. There might be spiritual significance attached to these bruising.

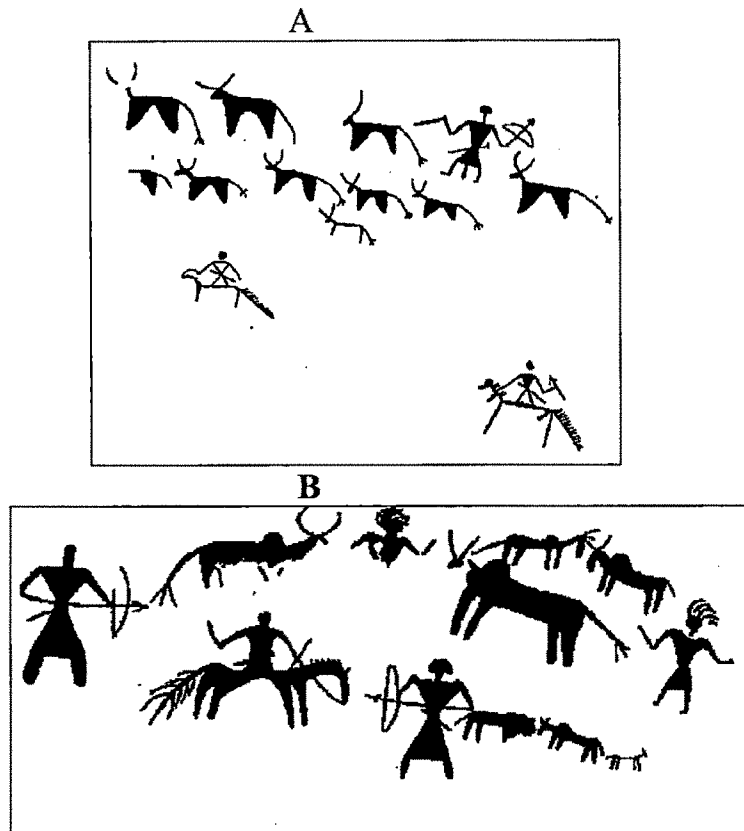


Fig 3c.67 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 501, 502)

Hire Benekal rock shelters, Karnataka (Fig 3c.67)

Animals with their riders are a very common theme of the paintings of Hire Benekal area, some of which can be seen in fig 3c.66A&B. All these paintings are done in red colour and its different shades (Sundara 1974). The animals are executed in a very stiff manner. There is no use of contour lines at all. In these stylized paintings, human figures are seen standing on the animal back. One of the animals in extreme right corner (fig-3b.67A) is seen with prominent sexual organ. Again these depictions appear to be symbolic and not true depictions of the animal itself.

In fig-3b.65A, a group of animal figures facing left is seen. Amongst these an ithyphallic human figure is seen with weapons in hand. Though there lies no ethnographic record from India to throw light on this but in North America supernatural power was associated with sexual potency, and shamans were believed to be especially virile. Sexual arousal is

associated with altered states of consciousness (Whitley 2000). So this example might help with a better understanding of the ithyphallic male and the animals seen at Hire Benekal instead of vaguely referring the human figure to be just a ‘masculine’ hunter with a herd of animals.

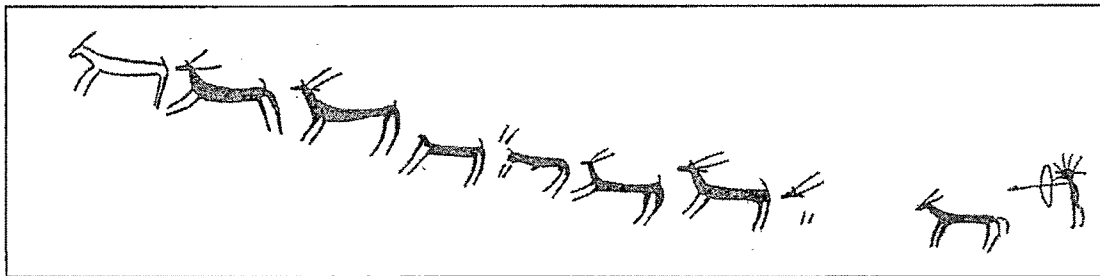


Fig 3c.68 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 483)

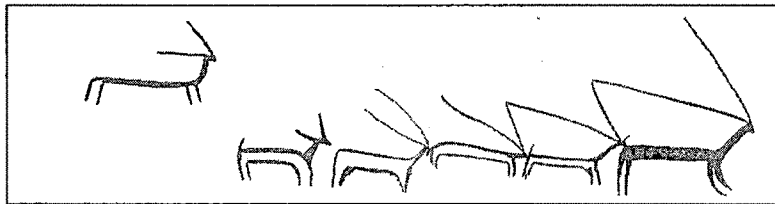


Fig 3c.69 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 485)

Piklihal rock shelters, Karnataka (Fig 3c.68 & 3c.69)

In all the above paintings a number of wild animals are depicted. The animals are seen in herds facing left and done in flatwash (Fig: 3b.68). However in fig 3b.69 the animals are looking towards the right and done in outline, except one. In this figure the horns of stags are joined to give a zig –zag pattern. In fig-3b.68 a hunter is seen aiming his arrow towards a file of animals. None of the animals seem to be standing on the ground in figure 3b.68.

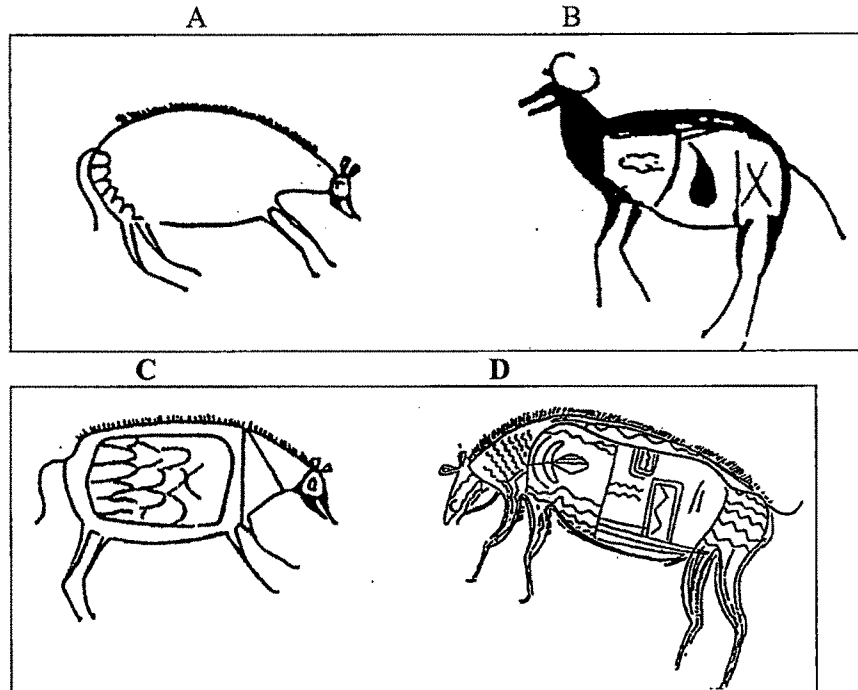


Fig 3c.70 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 301,302,306,303)

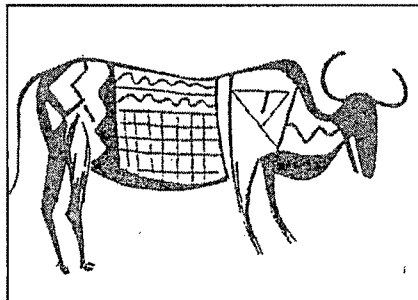


Fig 3c.71 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 310)

Badami rock shelter (Fig 3c.70& 71)

These single animal figures are all enigmatic. Most of them are outline drawings. Two figures are seen with eyes. Usually depiction of eyes in animal as well as human figures is rare in Indian rock art. Fig (d) has decorations comprising primarily of wavy lines inside the body as well as x-ray depictions showing anatomical details. Fig 3c.71 is executed with grid like design and looks very elegant very similar to stage three of the neuropsychological model in which iconic imagery gets blended and may be projected

against a background of geometric forms (Siegel 1977, 134). Portions are done in flatwash thus giving an ethereal look. Nearly all these figures from Badami are seen with open mouth. It is very difficult to believe that these are real depictions of the animal itself; painting of these animal figures was clearly part of a ritual.

Orissa

In Orissa any rock art site is called '**Lekhamoda**' meaning rock shelter with writing (Lekha means writing and moda means rock shelter) and '**Ushakuthi**' which means worship hall or ritual chamber (Pradhan 2001, 26).

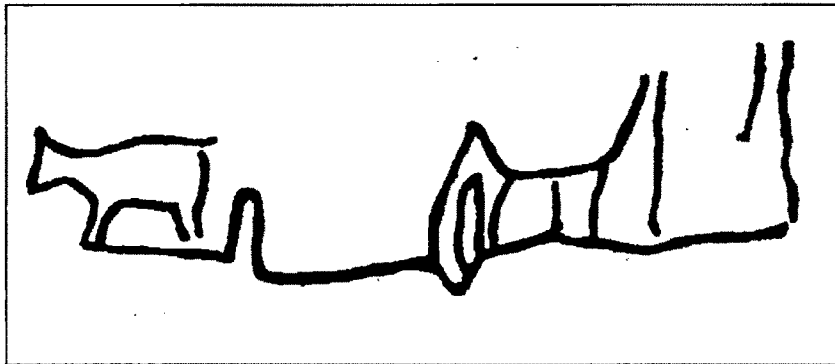


Fig 3c.72 (Ref- Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Fig: 16)

Lekhamoda rock shelter III (Fig 3c.72)

In this engraving probably two animal figures are executed. One deer like animal is seen in standing position while the other is in upside down position. The latter is quite similar to the painting from Badami in South India (Fig 3c.61).

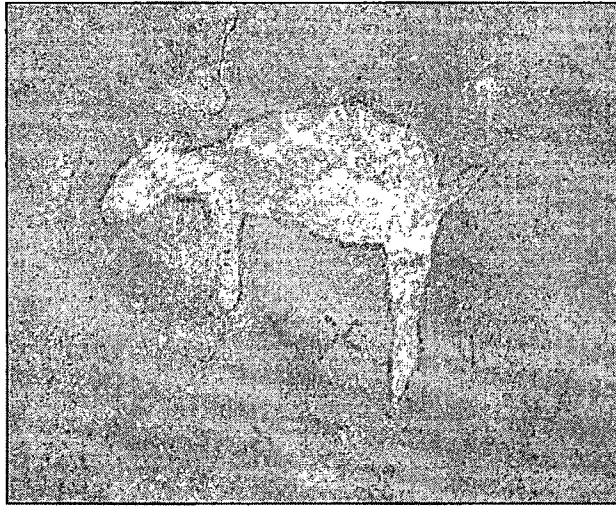


Fig 3c.73 (Ref- Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Plate: 19)

Lekhamoda IV (Fig 3c.73)

This is a bichrome painting of a deer like animal figure. The outline has been done in red while the inside is done in white. Hind legs of the animal are longer compared to the front legs, which is very significant. Tail is raised. There are superimpositions present which maybe because the site functioned ceremonially, serving ritual functions. Almost similar depiction is seen in Lekhamoda II, Chhengapahar, and Chichiria Kohl. This kind of animal depictions is a typical style of Orissa rock art. Also seen in the above painting is a frog like animal, which is generally a common motif that occurs at Lekhamoda group of rock shelters. Similar figures are seen at Lekhamoda I, II, IV, X, XI and XII. The prominence of frog like figures in this area is probably linked to the culture of this region.

For example according to Zuni people (a tribe in the Colorado River area) many icons that are found in the rock art of that area including the frogs have symbolic and ritualistic meaning, these animals are significant in the Zuni culture as well (Cunkle and Jacquemani 1995:119). Moreover as we have already discussed about the North American shamans whose experience of drowning and passing underwater during trance is represented by images of frogs (Whitley 2000). Also according to Pueblo mythology (Parsons 1996) before modern human figures emerged they had tails and webbed feet like the lizard or frog.

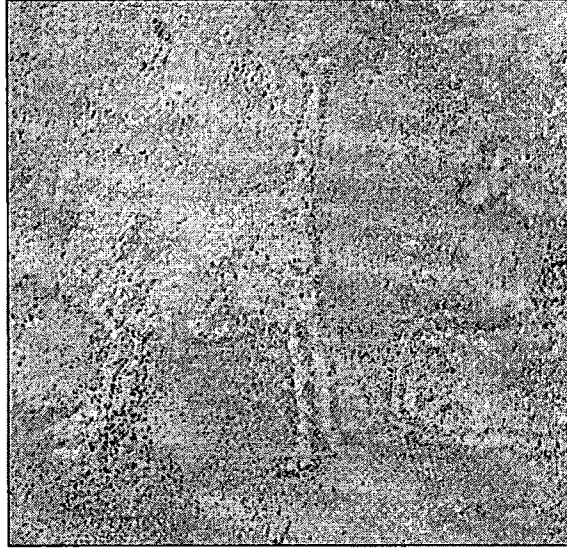


Fig 3c.74 (Ref- Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Plate: 21)



Fig 3c.75 (Ref- Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Plate: 20)

Lekhamoda II /Lekhamoda X (Fig 3c.74& 75)

This is a painting of an animal figure done in white outline with dots inside. Here too the tail is raised and positions of legs are such that it looks to be in a floating state. Plenty of

superimpositions including palm prints suggest that the shelter was a ceremonial ground, potent with powers. Therefore it can be possibly concluded that the animal figure is a part of a ritualistic depiction.

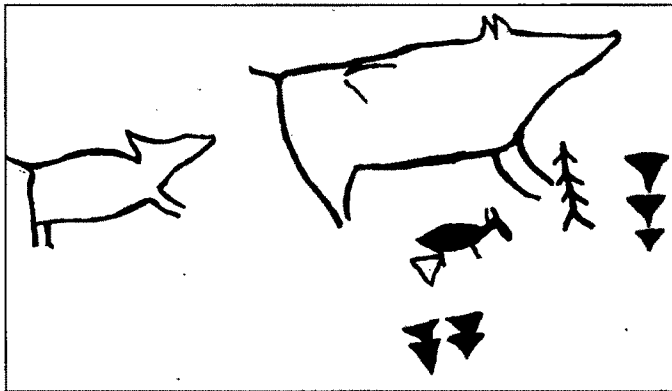


Fig 3c.76 (Ref- Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Fig: 6)

Rail Ushakuthi IX (Fig 3c.76)

These are a group of boar like figures engraved in the rock shelters of Rail Ushakuthi. These animal figures are found along with triangles and a host of abstract and geometric patterns (Pradhan 2001, 34-35). Repeated use of a rock shelter clearly points to the fact that it was a place for ceremonial rituals.

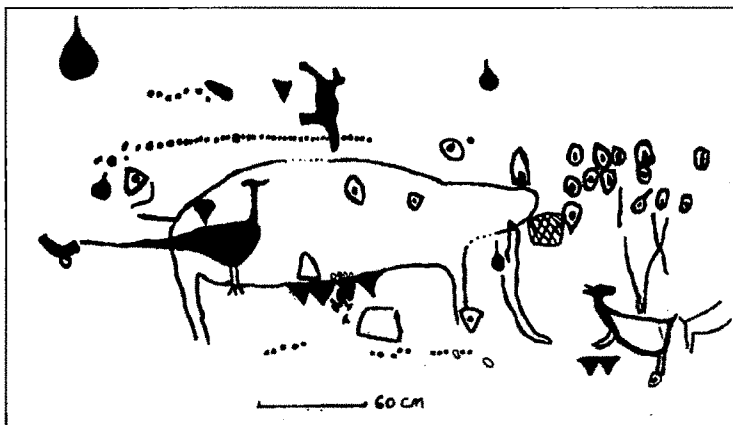


Fig 3c.77 (Ref: Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Fig: 5)

Landimal Ushakuthi I (Fig 3c.77)

This is an engraving of a peacock like bird. It is a complete depiction facing right and superimposed over an elephant like figure. As we have already discussed earlier that repeated use of a rock surface suggests the fact that the site was probably used for ceremonial rituals therefore the figures done here is of ritualistic significance. According to ethnographic records obtained from Saura tribe of Orissa ‘the colourful peacock largely found in the surrounding is the guardian of the icon’ (Pradhan 2001, 62). Interestingly peacock feathers are believed to have protective powers and are used in Indian as well as shaman rituals as an aid in healing.

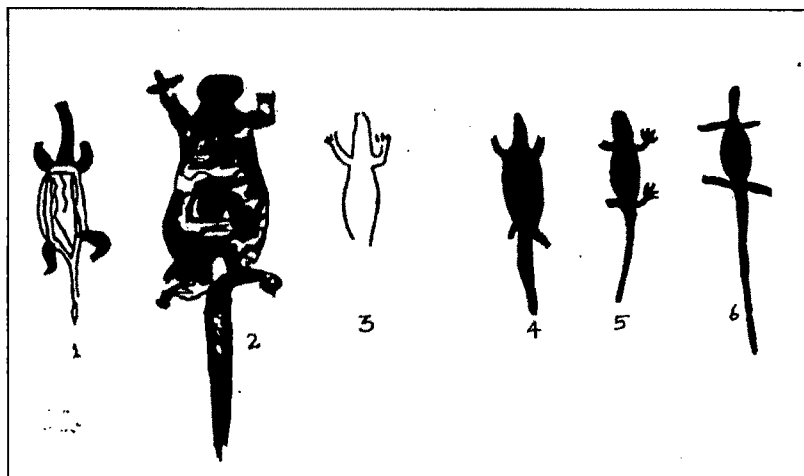


Fig 3c.78 (Ref: Sadasiba Pradhan; Rock Art in Orissa, Fig: 22)

Lizards: Paintings and Engravings from Orissa (Fig 3c.78)

In the above figure we see paintings and engravings of lizard like figures found in the rock shelters of Orissa. These are found at Pakhanapathar, Rail Ushakuthi XII, Landimal Ushakuthi II, Lekhamoda I, II, IV and X. According to ethnographic sources provided by the Saura tribe of Orissa lizard is considered to be a pet of the underworld entities. The icons that Saura's make are mostly symbolic and rarely abstract (Pradhan 2001, 62).

Moreover there are other traditions outside India which can throw further light on this motif. As already discussed, Pueblo mythology (Parsons 1996) states that early man resembled the lizard and after traveling four underworlds when he was struck by the first

rays of the sun, his fingers were separated, tail fell off and modified into the human phallus. Therefore, lizards are attached with spiritual significance in many cultures. It might have functioned as a totem or power animal with a lot of potency. Characteristics like sharp eyes, acute hearing and sensitivity to vibrations give the lizard a symbolism associated with 'psychic' and 'intuitive'(Andrews 1993). Individuals with lizard totem should listen to their own intuitions. Also because of the ability of feigning sleep while basking in the sun is sometimes related to controlling the sleep state specially dreams (Andrews 1993). The ability to perceive physical and ethereal, waking or sleeping is what the lizard medicine teaches. Therefore the paintings and engravings of the lizard like figures might be a totem of a particular tribe/clan, which has been made in order to harness its power to achieve some cause.

3.5 HUMAN FIGURES

‘While hunting, a shaman or ojha (Indian word to denote a shaman), served as the guide. He would have an elaborate headdress often using a square or rectangular shield either to protect himself or to enrage the animal of prey’ (Wakankar 1992, 332). This observation made by V. S Wakankar reinforces the presence of shamans and their association with rock art, within India. Therefore on the basis of this, along with the other related issues we can presume that some of the human figures might be representations of the shamans themselves. Even if not, atleast they are of profound significance.

Though human figures are dominant in the historic period of India’s rock art but they have been depicted from very early times. A great variety in terms of style which is very numinous at times, is represented, though they are less detailed than the animal figures. Only exception is the horse riders and fighters of the later ages (Chakraborty & Bednarik 1997:69). One of the most common style adapted to depict humans are stick like figures which gives an impression of both being stiff as well as dynamic. The latter includes running, hunting, dancing and fighting poses. Some figures are executed with double lines for the thick body which contains inner decorations made of geometric or rhombic patterns representing females. However this is too far less compared to the animal figures. X-ray style is present but less frequent. Heads are depicted by triangles or a circle with an opening probably indicating the mouth. At times they are seen to sport simple to elaborate headgears. According to Wakankar ‘animals such as deer, rhinos, and monkeys were modeled for headdresses or their skulls were used for these purposes. Feathers of different birds were also used to decorate the headdresses. Arm decorations as suspending ropes with decorated ends tied at the elbow were very common. Necklaces hanging over the chest made of bone beads or decorated bird bones were popular. Bracelets made of reeds or some unknown materials are often observed in the paintings.... The langoti (a strip of long cloth) was a common garment for males and females wore waist bands’ (Wakankar 1992, 332). Hunters and fighters are seen with weapons like bow and arrow and variously tipped spears or axes. Human figures are also

seen to be engaged in a number of group activities. In the following section we shall be discussing human figures found depicted in rock art of various regions of India.

Orissa

As already discussed earlier that subject matter of Orissa's rock art is mostly non figurative and non thematic, therefore paintings here are rather isolated and unique compared to rest of India. Human forms are very rarely depicted and the few that are there are stylized versions, very similar to being symbolic representations. Human figures are totally absent in the engravings (Pradhan-1995, 13). Here too dark red, stick like stiff bodies, with horned headgear is featured in the earlier phases (Pradhan 2001, pl-28). White coloured triangular body with head represented by a dot along with sword, shield and musical drums is the feature in the later period (Pradhan 2001). Depiction of human activities is rare in rock art of Orissa (Pradhan 1995, Purakala, 13).

Kumaon Himalaya

As far as pictographs are concerned, human figures constitute the main body here. They are depicted as hunters, dancers and common man performing different kinds of daily activities (Mathpal 1995). At rock shelters of Lakhu-Udyar, Lwethap, Petsal and Phadakanauli long rows of dancers are seen with interlocked hands and feet moving in a single direction (Mathpal 1995). At Petsal children are shown in between two dancers (See fig. 3d.1). Most of the figures are schematic in style and depicted stick like with elongated bodies. Interestingly this is similar to a very significant aspect in the practice of shamanism, which will be discussed in detail in the interpretation section. The only example of a drummer comes from Petsal (Mathpal 1995, 62) where two men are shown playing the drum (See fig 3d.3). The dancers from this region are usually seen with head gear like adornments along with protruding objects. For ceremonial dancing, masks headdresses, skirts were essential (Wakankar 1992, 332). Besides dancer like figures, human figures resembling hunters are also found in Kumayoun region (Mathpal 1995). However according to Mathpal though human and animal figures appear together, weapons are hardly depicted nor any kind of direct confrontation between the human and animal figures can be seen (Mathpal 1995). It therefore becomes very difficult to classify

them as hunters. These figures are seen sometimes with their arms raised above their heads, a posture which is usually associated with extreme stages of trance (See fig. 3d.5). Seated human figures are also seen at sites like Gwarkhya –Udyar (Mathpal 1995, Plate-33) but due to lack of clarity of the photograph, it cannot be considered for study. In the main shelter at Lakhu-Udyar a man holding a large bowl-shaped object (Mathpal 1995, Plate-29) is depicted but this picture is also not clear enough to allow detailed study. Similarly a painting at Phadakanauli shows a human figure with two heads and four arms (Mathpal 1995, no photo available). The extra head and arms are shown at the place of its feet which according to Mathpal might indicate copulation, for similar paintings have been reported from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra (Mathpal 1995, 63). Another interesting point needs mention here. A number of engraved monoliths have been found at several places in Kumayoun Himalayas (Mathpal 1995). These monoliths were called ‘Brikham’ supposed to be a corrupt form of ‘Brihat’, stick like human figures- stambha’ and belonged to the Katyuri kings. Similar monoliths were recorded from Someshwar and Pandukholi in Almora district (Carnac 1877, 1-15). The monolith from Someshwar contained a well proportioned human figure on one of its four faces. Simple carved out human figures in standing postures were also noticed by Mathpal on all the monoliths found at Suraikehet, Devalidhar, Barechhina and Barkham in the Kumayoun region (Mathpal 1995, 63). People regarded them as signposts or spots where some kind of rituals was performed by kings. It is also said that these monoliths served as boundary marks. Nobody knows as to when these monoliths were made and the purpose behind making of these monoliths. Here I would like to add that a practice seen amongst the Himalayan tribes are to place, human figurines mostly made of wood in strategic locations and ethnographic sources confirm these figurines to be protectors from evil spirits. Infact Himalayan tribal arts are primarily characterized with its links to shamanism, which underlies and accompanies all religious beliefs in the region, be it Hindu or Buddhists (Chazot 1995). Though individuals seek the services of Buddhist lamas or Hindu Brahmans, the shaman is still a powerful man, consulted for healing, divination, and the appeasement of hostile spirits. Western Nepal was once part of a vast empire dominated by the Khas people, who arrived in waves from India beginning in the seventh century A.D., and mingled with the native tribes. Figurative art developed in the

western regions, where effigies were made to guard the family and the house, the community and its territory against evil or hostile spirits. These beautiful, enigmatic statues are sober and stylized. Most are carved from wood; a few rare stone pieces are also seen. For example at the corners of the roofs of some houses stand rustic figures, as protector. According to ethnographic sources these figures believed to brave all weather in dramatic or grotesque postures. Figural carvings and statues are also seen on bridges (considered to be a point of transition, from one world to another), at mountain passes, crossroads (unclean spirits are believed to gather here) or confluence of two rivers. Statues are also placed over a spring, where it looks like a decoration piece. In the mountains, Gods and spirits are perceived to be everywhere, planted in the fields, watching over the land and the grain, or thrust in the ground near springs. Therefore in this regard the monoliths found in the Kumayoun region might also have had some similar purposes behind their makings.



Fig 3d.1 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Plate 1A)



Fig 3d.2 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Plate 1B)

Petsal (Fig 3d.1) / Lakhu-Udyar (Fig 3d.2) rock shelters

In both the above paintings, human figures have been depicted with joined hands, at times with joined feet (Fig 3d.2), standing in rows. Such kind of depiction is also seen in many other rock art sites in other parts of the country and scholars have usually interpreted these figures to be engaged in some dance like activity (Mathpal 1995, Neumayer 1993). As Mathpal writes 'Long rows of dancers with their hands interlocked and feet moving in rhythm towards a single direction' (Mathpal 1995, 61). He further adds that similar kind of dancers are found today during festivals and fairs in the interior parts of the region , for example in the 'Jhora' dance men and women in equal numbers dance and sing together in a circular motion with arms interlocked. Their numbers sometimes exceed 200. 'In one case two men are shown dancing with their legs fixed on long sticks which is similar to the Muriya youths of central India'(Mathpal 1995 ,62).

On viewing these representations, not only from Kumayoun region but elsewhere in India there lies no doubt that these are definitely portraying dance like activity but the question that pricks any viewer's mind is that why is group dance being portrayed in rock art? What can be the purpose behind its depiction? In search for an answer what I find is that the dance was and infact still remains to be an integral part of any tribal ritual. Also, importance of dance in shamanic societies across the world has been noted by numerous

researchers (Marshall 1999, Keeney 1999). For example for the Sans of South Africa, the healing or trance dance is the most important ritual of all people -men, women, children as well as visitors (Williams 2002a). These dances continue to be practiced amongst San groups living in the Kalahari even today. By intense concentration associated with prolonged rhythmic movement, sounds of songs and drums a shaman is able to induce an altered state of consciousness. Dancers stomp in a circle around the campfire for many hours. Infact the healing dance performed by the San shamans to find and cast out sickness starts at night and carries on until dawn the next day. After hours of stomping some dancers start to slip into trance and travels to the spirit world. Almost same thing is also seen amongst present day Himalayan tribal shamans (locally called 'Jhankri'). Here too music and dance is essential for inducing trance (Chazot 1995). Therefore, all the dancing figures that is seen in rock art are probably ritual dances. However, since the minutiae of each of these rituals and the context under which the individual paintings may have been made are lost in the past therefore the exact interpretation still remains elusive.

In the above paintings the human figures have been depicted with elongated bodies, which seem to be covered with a one piece long ankle length dress. Here I would like to add that San ethnography has afforded interpretation for elongated human bodies to be a metaphor and hallucination to denote trance experience. However, this might not or may have been the case here; it is open to further research. In the above paintings some of the human figures are also seen with 'V' shaped head adornments. Co-incidentally head adornments even to this day is a very common accessory for shamans or members of various tribes in India in their rituals. For example for a Siberian shaman four accessories are a must which comprises of coat, mask, cap and iron-plate (Walsh 1990). Even for a Himalayan tribal shaman his dress is regarded as the god's garment which is supposed to make him invulnerable to attacks from evil spirits. They usually wear a white shirt and a long white skirt symbolizing purity, and various protective necklaces (Chazot 1995).

Petsal rock shelter (See photo 3c.3 ‘Animal Figures’)

In the above painting four women figures are shown in similar positions, by the side of two animal figures. They are all standing in a line with their arms raised above their heads. Though their dress cannot be understood clearly, however depiction of breasts is very prominent. In the Kumayoun region we see that women dancers are less frequent than men, which is applicable to other parts of the country also. The reason for this is open to debate. It seems likely because of the dominant male role in a hunter's community. Raised arms are a common posture which is associated with deep trance which might have been the case here. The animal figures are likely in a floating state for they have been made on top of the human figures.



Fig 3d.3 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Plate 2B)

Petsal rock shelter (Fig 3d.3)

This is a very interesting painting, where a human figure is probably depicted with a drum and sticks. Infact this is the solo example of a drummer (Mathpal 1995). The shadowgraph of one of the drummers gives him an appearance of a pregnant woman

(Mathpal 1995). It needs mention here that rhythmic stimulation, whether by music, singing, or dancing has long been known to induce altered states. Such techniques have been widely used by mystics of many traditions. Infact the importance of music in general, and percussion in particular, in various ritual transformations across the world has been noted by numerous researchers (Needham 1967, Tuzin 1984). Even the shamans have used the technique of drumming to facilitate shamanic states (Walsh 1990, 173). Percussion appears to play a role in effecting transformations not only for shamans but also in other rituals where communication with the supernatural world is required (Needham 1967). In rural Rajasthan for example, spirit possession of shamans (bhopa) is preceded by the measured beating of large loud drums (Boivin 2001:26). Same is the case for Kalahari San shamans (Williams 2002), Himalayan tribal shamans (Chazot 1995) and almost all shamanistic practices anywhere in the world. Infact as mentioned earlier (chapter two) that on my field trip to Miapur (nearest village to Bhimbetka), localite Babulal, almost in his 100 th year affirmed that these rock paintings were made by spirits (bhoot, prît) and their cries along with drumbeats could be heard from the mountains. Links between percussion and rituals related to rock art have been ethnographically documented or archaeologically postulated in a number of cases (Hedges 1993; Ouzman 1998, 2001).

As Nicole Boivin (Boivin 2003) puts it 'it may be that percussion and/or other sounds contribute to the creation of an appropriate spiritual or emotional state for the viewing or creation of rock art in ritual contexts. In the above painting, a second human figure is also seen with only sticks in hand. This figure has a head adornment.



Fig 3d.4 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Pl-3)

Lakhu-Udyar rock shelter (Fig 3d.4)

In this painting the human figures are portrayed in a peculiar manner where it seems as if they have undergone a physical transformation. Their heads are animal like, elongated bodies and very short arms, resembling wings. Some other human figures are also seen with head dresses. As has already been mentioned that ethnographic accounts support the fact that during intense stages of altered state an individual can transform into an animal. However since these ethnographic details are not from India therefore it remains speculative.



Fig 3d.5 (Ref- Yashodhar Mathpal; Rock Art in Kumaon Himalaya; Plate 5B)

Lakhu-Udyar rock shelter (Fig 3d.5)

An interesting aspect of this human depiction is that the bodies are very long, with raised arms, both of which are similar to extreme stages of trance. Also seen here are a few rows of zigzag patterns which again are similar to signs of the entoptic phenomenon. According to the neuropsychological model geometric imagery are wired into the human brain and then activated during altered state of consciousness. However these are simply based on observations and are tentative conclusions.

Mirzapur Region

The proportion of human figures is the largest amongst the rock paintings of Mirzapur. Of these only 18% figures can be recognized to be male and 3% as female figures, with certainty (Tewari 1990, 17). A few figures of children have also been found. The figures of earlier phases are smaller than those of historical period. The largest human figure is about 75cm (Khauva-Khoh) belonging to the historical period and the smallest figure is from Harna harni site, 2.5 cm belonging to Mesolithic period (Tewari 1990, 17). Human figures engaged in dance scenes constitute the majority of the rock paintings which is 33% followed by hunters 11% and warriors 4 % (Tewari 1990, 17). Besides these, depiction of human figures as boat –rowers, load bearers, fruit gatherers and tree climbers is also seen. A few of the compositions have sexual overtones. About 40% of human figures are depicted with a variety of head dresses as well as other decorations (Tewari 1990). The styles depicted here are natural silhouettes, stick shape and X-ray style both with and without clothes. Generally they are seen wearing long cloaks with head-dresses. About 213 styles of headdresses made from feathers, leaves horns and other materials are depicted (Tewari 1990). The figures are shown filled with colour sometimes partly or fully. In some of the examples only outlines of the figure is also depicted. The ears, nose, eyes and other minor details of the human figures are generally absent. At times only one hand or leg is shown. Again multiarmed and multilegged human figures are also depicted in Kowar khoh rock shelter (Neumayer 1993). The heads of the figures are generally round, oval, triangular or square. A few of them are seen with open mouth. Torso's are S-shaped, cylindrical, linear, rectangular and triangular. Sometimes their thighs and calves

are shown strong with fully developed muscles (Similar to the human figures made by the Sans of South Africa (See fig 3d.6).



Fig 3d.6 (Ref-David Williams: The Mind in the Cave, Fig-28)

Dancers holding each other's hands are comparable with similar paintings found on Chalcolithic pottery (Tewari 1990). Dancing scenes from Ghormangar rock shelter needs mention. Here a group of four figures (reference photo is not clear enough for study) are seen where the upper part of the figures resemble a fish tail while the lower part is like a frog (Tewari 1990, 19) which definitely appears to be a symbolic representation. Here too like Kumaon region, children are noticed amongst male and female dancers. Another noteworthy aspect of this region is that the human figures are always depicted smaller than the animals (Neumayer 1993) (See fig 3b.10). Plenty of dancing human figures is also found in this region. Various dance types are noticed like dancers in a row holding hands or each other's waist, dancers in a circle. Since general dancing figures and their relation to trance and spirit possession have already been discussed earlier in this document therefore I would like to discuss only those pictures which contain some unusual features, than the regular ones.

See Fig 3b.8 in 'Hunting Scenes' section and 3d.7 (below)



Fig 3d.7 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XVIII)

Kauva-Khoh rock shelters (Fig 3d.7)

Since both human as well as animal figures feature together in figure 3b.8 (Kauva-khoh rock shelter, Mirzapur) therefore it has already been discussed in the 'hunting section'. However in that, human figures have been represented in a strange manner, where their hands are extremely long and instead of palm or fingers several small horizontal lines radiates from the hand. Another human figure is seen with a snake like arm which appears as if the person has undergone physical transformation. Therefore it seems that all these figures are representations of trance experiences.

In the above painting (fig 3d.7) curved human figures with feathered head adornment is seen. Close at hand another figure is depicted with raised arms and probably dancing. These human figures are very similar to the spirit seekers represented in other cultures.



Fig 3d.8 (Ref- Dr Rakesh Tewari; Rock Paintings of Mirzapur; Plate XXIII)



Fig 3d.9 (Ref-David Williams: The Mind in the Cave, Fig-28)

Hathvani Rock Shelter (Fig 3d.8)

In figure 3d.8 dancing figures are represented in a peculiar body posture where their legs are folded from the knees, almost as if sitting on a chair. Hands are positioned upwards. Similar kinds of figures are also seen in South Africa which has been interpreted by the San artists themselves to be a peculiar kind of posture which is adopted during intense trance (See fig. 3d.9). The San's have explained that, as the dance increases in intensity, the energy in the shaman's stomach starts to boil and their muscles contract for which they adopt a bent posture (Lewis Williams 2002a).

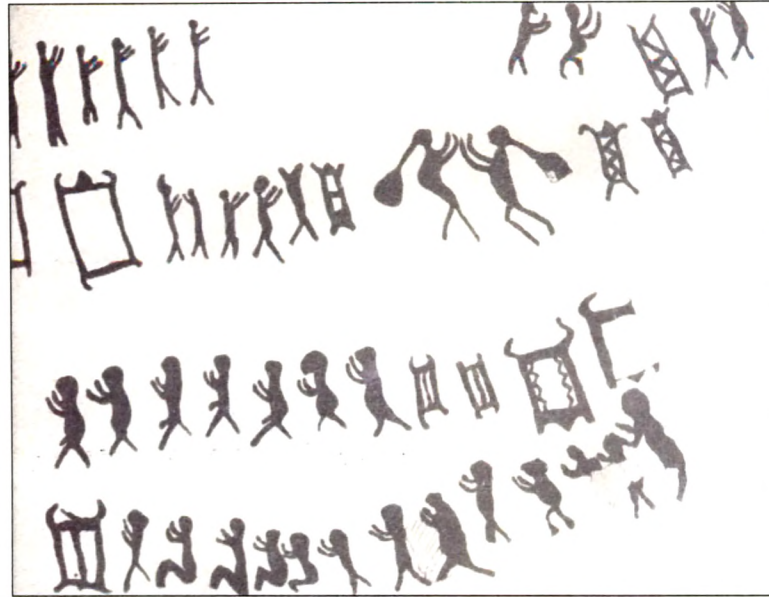


Fig 3d.10 (Ref-Michel Lorblanchet Ed: Rock Art in the Old World, Fig-28)

Duara rock shelter (Fig 3d.10)

In this painting human figures are depicted in rows, probably engaged in dancing. Pairs of dancers facing each other and striking each other's palm are seen. Pair dancing is found in plenty at Firengi rock shelter in Central India (See fig 3e.5). In the above figure some of them are also seen to sport either a sort of a head dress or long hair. Another row of ithyphallic dancers are seen with raised arms, dancing in a queue one behind the other. Some of them have large heads. One particular figure on the top row, fourth from the right is seen with horned nose. As already discussed in North America supernatural power was associated with sexual potency, and shamans were believed to be especially virile. Sexual arousal or being ithyphallic are associated with both altered states of consciousness and sleep (Whitley 2000). In the above painting all the human figures are done in flatwash. Interestingly another group of box shaped figures, (10 in number approx.) some with wavy lines or zigzags within their bodies are also seen. These figures are represented with hands, legs and a head. All the more one is (in second last row from bottom) ithyphallic. According to Tewari this type of dance scene is not found in any

other shelter of Mirzapur area and as far as known data is concerned they are not reported from any other rock art site outside this area (Tewari 1990).

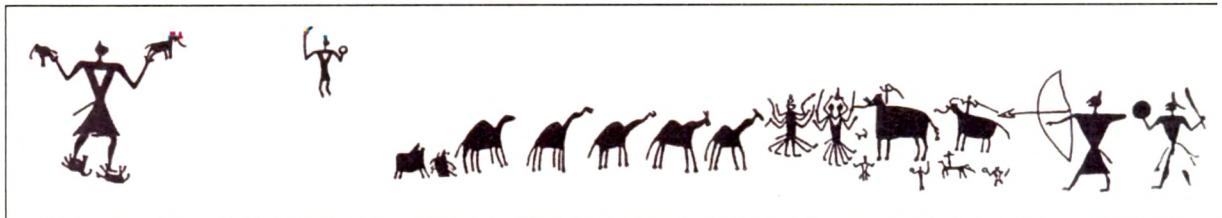


Fig 3d.11 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 559)



Fig 3d.12 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 560)

Kowar-khoh rock shelters (Fig 3d.11& 3d.12)

The above human figures are part of a war scene therefore is associated with the historic period. They are already interpreted to be part of local mythologies by scholars (Tewari 1990; 29, Neumayer 1993). In the first figure 3d.11, the human figure seen on the right is construed to be that of a warrior's which is shown about four times larger than the other figures of the scene. He is holding an elephant in each of his raised hands and both his feet trampling an elephant under them (fig 3d.12). This figure has been associated with Lorika; hero of the most popular folklore called 'Lorikayan' in Mirzapur area and is also

sung in Bhojpuri language region in the eastern parts of central India (Crooke W 1896; 251). Lorika's valour and immense strength is highly acclaimed. It is mentioned in 'Lorikayan' that Lorika single handedly pulled out an elephant from a pond and flung it in air in war. It is also believed that goddess Sarda accompanied by forty six pairs of 'yoginis' herself helped Lorika in the battle field. Therefore the above human figure has been presumed to be Lorika and the twin faced and multiarmed figures to be goddess and their associates (Tewari and Bharti 1988: 97-102). However as Neumayer (Neumayer 1993, 209) rightly adds that 'it should be kept in mind that during the early Historic period there were many legends current, which would fit these pictures, and it would be most subjective to prefer one against another'. This is very true for the above figure which is shown with elephants on both hands as well as one under each feet, whereas 'Lorika' is believed to have pulled out one elephant from the pond. Therefore whatever is depicted here is definitely symbolic and done for some specific purpose.

Central India

Very early paintings of central India are termed as 'naturalistic' (Mathpal 1998a). Both human and animal figures are found in these groups which are found in the rock shelters of Singanpur, Kabrapahar, Abchand, Adamgarh, Gupha Masir, Bhimbetka, Firengi, Jaora and Sitakhardi rock shelters (Pandey 1992). According to Wakankar green coloured human figures found at Bhimbetka belong to very early stages (Wakankar & Brooks 1976). As already mentioned the possible basis for this supposition is that Wakankar had found faceted green earth named 'terra verta' in the Upper Palaeolithic deposits in rock shelter 111 A-28 at Bhimbetka (Wakankar 1983). After this stage only stylized (animal figures continued to be naturalistic) human figures are seen comprising of stick like and S-shaped figures, where the former is identified to be stiff and static while the latter is known to be 'dynamic' figures. The stiff and static figures are often draped with heavy adornment, head gears and other embellishments (see fig. 3d.22). The S-shaped figures on the other hand seem to be embodying movement be it running, dancing or jumping. These paintings are known for their vigorous dynamism which is unparalleled in later rock art. Female figures are represented by square shapes filled with designs and intricate

patterns (See fig 3b.40). Designs on male figures are rare. They usually contain simple horizontal lines or zigzag patterns. Male figures are usually depicted with slim bodies (See fig. 3d.13).

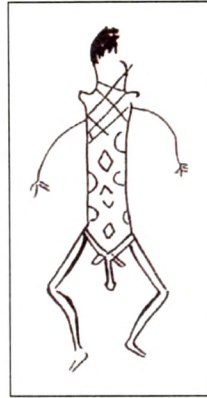


Fig 3d.13 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 64)



Fig 3d.14 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 59)

Depiction of human figures underwent considerable stylistic changes during the long span of Mesolithic art. The stick like human figures continued, however they were adorned with weapons like bow, arrow or spears. The heads of human figures are depicted triangular, square or round without any attempt to draw eyes, ears or noses. At times depression on the head was made which indicated the mouth. Sometimes humans are shown wearing masks or elaborate head-dress. Human figures are also depicted in various activities, unlike the early paintings in which they seem to be primarily hunters. After this phase human figures are represented as agriculturists. Infact all the Chalcolithic pictures of central India represent very much a man's world, in which women were depicted very peripherally (Sonawane 2002). Men have been depicted ithyphallic at Jaora

(Neumayer 1993, Fig: 400), Kathotia (Neumayer 1993, Fig: 401). According to Neumayer absence of female figures during the chalcolithic period may be due to lack of proper depiction of female physical features like breasts (Neumayer 1993, 150). Depictions of breasts are confined only to very early stylistic group of paintings of the agriculturists (Neumayer 1993, 150). On the other hand depiction of ithyphallic men is very common during this period. Several paintings apparently is suggestive of various sexual activities, though I feel are of deeper significance. (Probable interpretations will be discussed in the following section). During the Historic period human figures are depicted as horse/elephant riders and warriors. For the first time warrior class is shown in the paintings which are mainly found in Raisen and Panchmarhi region. This is primarily because the largest part of rock paintings belongs to the Historic period. Other areas also have such paintings but they are comparatively less in number. However the entire assemblages of war scenes in Indian rock art do not completely throw light on the warrior class of people. These war scenes at times represent well organized battle scenes. Usually these warriors are shown in groups, equipped with arms as if ready to fight. They also throw considerable light on the weapons used. These paintings were made by using white and red colours but there was a considerable decline in artistic merit (Mathpal 1998a, 11). Representation of human figures as bands of marching soldiers sometimes wearing armours (Sonawane 2002a) with their chiefs riding elephants and horses, equipped with long spears, swords, bows and arrows are also seen. Also there are royal processions depicting royal personages standing under canopies. In addition they were also engaged in activities like domestic work, dancing and various other types of human action. As already mentioned earlier while discussing human figures of South India, the historic period of central India too saw the introduction of religious icons of various prevailing faiths like the depiction of Krisna, Balarama and Vinadhar Shiva at Tikula near Gwalior (Neumayer 1992), Ganesha and Yaksha at Bhimbetka, Buddha at Satdhara near Sanchi and story of Shravan Kumar at Chibbarnala near Bhanpura (Sonawane 2002a).



Fig 3d.15 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka; Bhonrawali Rock Shelter-58 (Fig 3d.15)

The above painting represents green coloured human figures. Stick like, S-shaped figures are seen here. The S-shaped human figures found in Indian rock art do not depict any activity except dancing and hunting and are known for their vigorous dynamism which is unparalleled in later rock art (Sonawane 2002a). These paintings are distinguished from the later paintings by a high degree of craftsmanship and a characteristic uniformity. The quality of application of the pigment in the form of fine and controlled lines seen in these early paintings symbolize the beginning of known rock art in India (Sonawane 2002a, 274). Since superimpositions are present therefore probably this rock surface was repeatedly used for ritual depictions.



Fig 3d.16 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3d.16)

This is a war scene belonging to the Historic period. Two human figures are depicted as foot soldiers armed with sword and shield. They are executed in red and white colours. Both of the figures are seen with eyes and superimposed on earlier white paintings. The warriors are shown with cross belts on their body. The purpose behind making of these war scenes is very strange. According to Gordon, ‘ it is very strange that there should be in these primitive rock shelters , surrounded as they are by dense jungle and precipitous ravines, a record of a people who employed all the arts of war known in their age. Somewhere certainly not in the hills where their paintings are found , they rode to war on caparisoned horses and advanced their spear men ranks to encounter enemy’(Gordon 1940,209). Also interesting is that these war scenes does not appear in the earlier group of paintings which is probably because social importance of warfare emerged only during the Historic period. In this regard if we turn to a rock shelter named ‘Medicine Creek’ in America where horse rider motifs have been depicted (Roper, Donna C 2002). While explaining that researchers have once again held that sometimes a shaman even painted images of enemies they were trying to bewitch. In other parts of the West shamans are known to have made images of horses and riders, pictures of Euro Americans who were trying to take over their lands. Southern Oregon experienced great strife during the 19th century, culminating in the Rogue River Indian wars. Therefore some of the paintings at

Medicine Creek may have been made by a shaman hoping to influence the outcome of battles. However the fact that these war paintings were superimposed on earlier paintings is probably because these were also part of a ritualistic depiction.



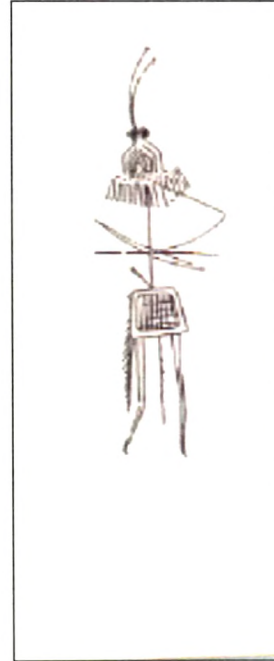
Fig 3d.17 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3d.17)

In this picture a human figure is depicted in a kneeling position. The figure is stick like, and arms are held high as if praying for something. These figures again hint at the mystic as well as ritualistic purpose behind Indian rock art.



Fig 3d.18 (photo by author)



(Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 63)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3d.18)

This painting belonging to early Mesolithic period is an example of the ‘minimalized’ human figure. As already mentioned minimalized are seen either depicted in S-shape or in a stiff manner draped with heavy adornments and head gears. The above painting is an example of the latter. Similar kind of human figures are also seen in plenty at Kathotia (Neumayer, 1993, fig-39, 45). However such stylized versions can always be expressions of figures which are in trance, or for similar kind of some other reasons. The above figure is probably ithyphallic, as a tail like extension is seen in between the legs. Head depiction too is suggestive of a visual imagery.



Fig 3d.19 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3d.19)

This is a complete representation of a human figure with raised arms, with probably a stick like object in one hand. Body is done with triangles and the man probably wearing a long dress.



Fig 3d.20 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.20)

This is an example of a demon like human figure. These kinds of figures are common in central India but not present in great numbers (Gordon M.E. & D.H. 1939- 40). In the above painting the figure is depicted with a tail and one of its arms and leg are raised, as if dancing. Fingers of both the arms as well as legs are natural renditions and therefore the figure appears to be firmly standing on the ground. There is also some adornment round its waist. Such figures add to the mystic aspect of the rock paintings.



Fig 3d.21 (photo by author)



Fig 3d.22 (photo by author)

Badkachar, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.21)/ Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3d.22)

In this painting a human figure has been done in white flatwash. The significant aspect of this figure is that both its hands are held above its head on either side and in one of the hands there is lotus like flower. The upper part of the body is quite large and broad compared to its legs. Regarding the petaled lotus, we know that the latter features a lot in Indian mythology. Even Buddha has been depicted with Lotus in hand in Ajanta caves. He is also known as 'Padmapani' meaning 'lotus in hand' that is he is capable of leading everybody to 'nirvana' or eternal salvation. The human figure in the above picture is not an ordinary depiction but has some spiritual significance. Another noteworthy feature is the presence of a drummer. As we have already discussed earlier in this section that rhythm and percussion played a very important role to achieve altered state, therefore the drummer along with the human figure is probably signifying some spiritual action.

In the second (lower) picture some god like human figure has been represented from Bhimbetka. According to Prof. V.H Sonawane it resembles Lord Ganesha (personal communication). The figure is done in red flatwash. Probably it has more than two hands; however it cannot be decisively concluded for lack of clarity. Here too, as in Panchmarhi

a lotus like flower seems to have been represented beside the human figure. The figure is possibly in a seated position and holding some objects in its hands, of which one appears to be a trident. In all probability these kind of human figures bear some religious connotation.



Fig 3d.23 (photo by author)

Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.23)

In this painting we can see a figure with an elephant like head holding an object in its trunk. It is done in red with eyes done with white. This shelter contains superimpositions (white stick like figures) probably because this was considered sacred for rituals.



Fig 3d.24 (photo by author)

Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.24)

Here, a human figure is depicted with raised arms, engaged in some activity. The entire figure is done in white flatwash.



Fig 3d.25 (photo by author)

Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.25)

Just below the above painting a group of six human figures resembling hunters are drawn in a row. The first three figures from left are with bows while the last two (have spears in their hands. All the figures are complete representations with their right feet slightly raised from the ground. These men look to be strong and muscular with dress comprising of a short dhoti kind of a wrapping round their waist with trails hanging. Infact in general, human figures in the Mahadeo hills region are depicted with natural version of muscles, heels and toes very and the above painting conforms to this. They are also wearing earrings. Usually the 'Kushana paintings' depict detailed clothing, where men are shown wearing dhotis (Neumayer 1993, 221). Noteworthy point here is that the first three figures are executed with red flatwash whereas the last three are done completely with white colour.



Fig 3d.26 (photo by author)

Dorothy Deep rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.26)

The above painting from Dorothy Deep is not in a good state of conservation. Here, human figures are represented as hunters. Their bodies are done in white colour with red

outline. These hunters are clad in short 'dhoti' like dress which ends high above the knees and a trail is left loose. They are armed with bow/arrow and hair is tied as a low bun on the back of their head. These figures give an effect of floating for they are found at a height in the rock shelter.



Fig 3d.27 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.27)

In this painting human figures are depicted as warriors. Two pairs of men are done with red contour lines and inside filled with white. The pair towards the left is with rectangular shaped shields while the pair on the right is seen with daggers. Their dresses are not very clear, however the pair with shields possibly have belt like straps crossed all over their bodies.

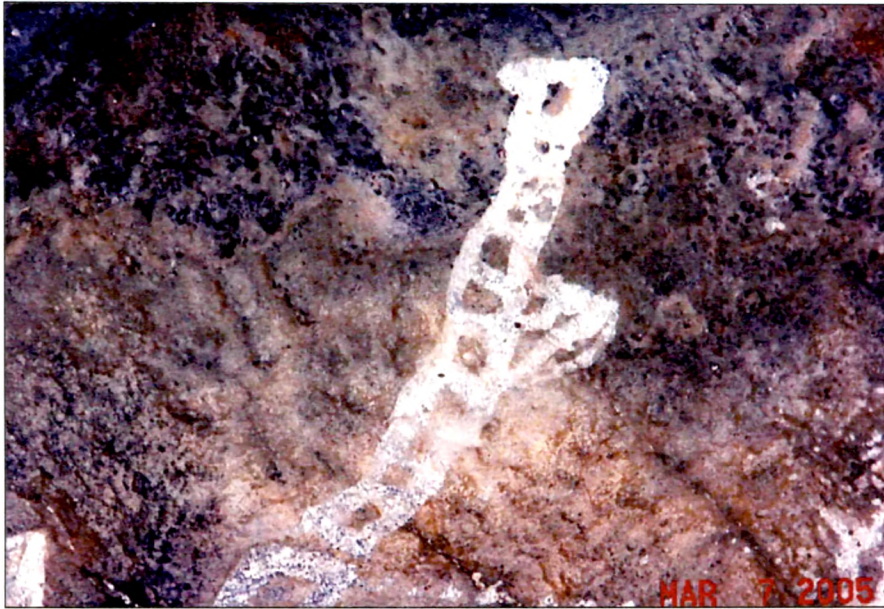


Fig 3d.28 (photo by author)



Fig 3d.29 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.29)

In this painting a human figure is done in white flatwash. As we know that most of the paintings in Mahadeo hills are done in white colour, which is possibly because of the red pigmentation of the rock, to which white is the best colour of contrast as seen in the above painting (Neumayer 1993, 227). In the above painting the human figure is seen holding strange objects in both hands which have been completely executed in flatwash thereby making it practically impossible to comprehend. It may be another example of a 'head hunter' figure (see fig 3d.32) which is very famous in the Panchmarhi region. 'Head hunter' figures have been reported from Rajat Prabat, Kites Crag and Agamdwar sites (Dubey 1992, Neumayer 1993).



Fig 3d.30 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.30)

In the above painting a group of dynamic human figures are represented. All the figures are done in white and are moving towards left in a row. This can be a dancing posture. Both hand as well as leg movements are present.

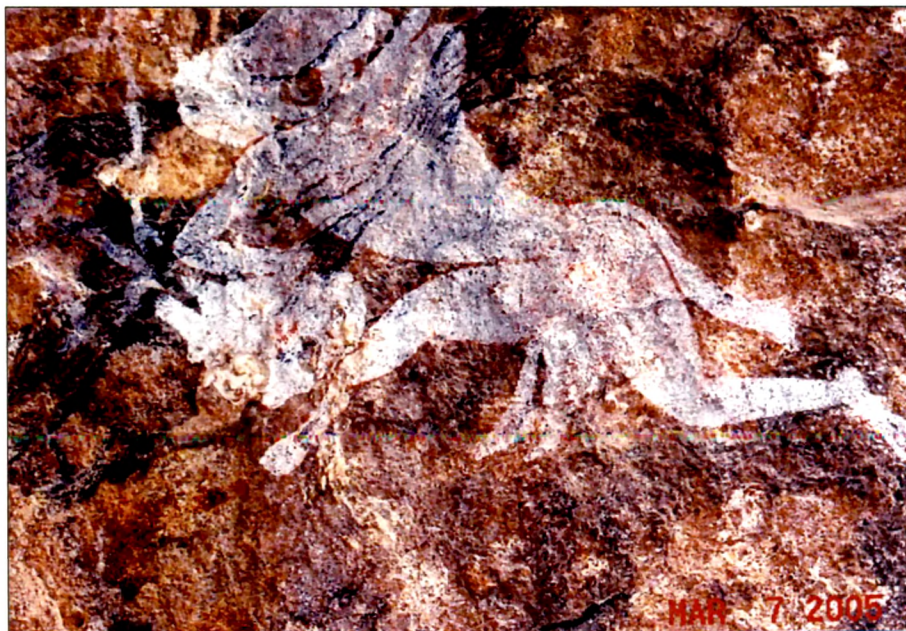


Fig 3d.31 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.31)

This is an interesting human figure done in white flatwash. Though it resembles the ‘head hunter’ figures reported from Panchmarhi (Dubey 1992), but cannot be concluded decisively (Fig 3d.32).



Fig 3d.32 (Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 685-A and fig: 687-B)

Usually the 'head hunter' figures are always depicted in a running posture with their heads turned backwards, holding human heads in one hand. Also, these figures are painted much larger than the adjacent human figures (Neumayer 1993, 258), which is applicable in this case. The man in the above figure is seen in a Dhoti like dress. Striking feature of this figure is that the running man is depicted with an unusual head, (due to lack of clarity, it becomes difficult to comment further). However these figures are categorically symbolic and spiritual representations. Michael Harner (Harner 1973, 17-20) and Mircea Eliade (Eliade 1972, 106) have discussed the parallels between shamanism and occult death magic. As Harner writes that amongst many types of shamans there is a group of 'bewitching' shaman who actually uses their powers to kill someone or make them sick. These shamans send their spirit helpers into the victim's body to kill them. Even 'good shamans' can also use their powers for evil whenever it suits them. Similarly 'head hunting' is just another illustration of how shamanism is used in killing and murdering. In primitive shamanistic societies shamans have enjoyed 'taking the heads of tribal enemies' and also innocent victims. A television special on this subject was produced by Douchan Gersi who has led a successful expedition in search of head hunting shamans in Central Borneo(Malaysia) region(internet site-Title: Shamanism Part-6 by Dr.John Ankerberg and Dr.John Weldon).Gersi discovered 350 of these shamanic tribes and spent years among them living as a convert. One such tribe called 'Iban' gathered heads from other tribes as well as explorers like Gersi.For every major event a head must be sacrificed and placed on pole for public display. Religious justification for this is the human skull is believed to be a home of living spirits, symbolizes life, so the tribe must be kept healthy by ritual sacrifice-the human sacrifice itself symbolizing life giving power to the tribe. It is also believed that the person taking the head of the victim receives the power from the spirit of the dead man.



Fig 3d.33 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.33)

In this painting a human figure is done in white flatwash and in a sitting posture. The figure is holding up a child with one arm. This too appears symbolic and probably has some ritualistic connections as well as significance, which is difficult to interpret without proper ethnological support.



Fig 3d.34 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 675)

Rajat Prabhat rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.34)

These human like figures are commonly termed as ‘demon figures’ which show anthropomorph beings possessing features of animals at times. According to Neumayer, ‘fabulous animals and hybrid anthropomorph and zoomorph beings are not unknown in Mesolithic and Chalcolithic pictures, but it is only in the historic paintings in the Mahadeo hills that these seem to act like humans’ (Neumayer 1993, 254). In San rock art some images show half human and half antelope figures. According to Lewis Williams these man-beast figures called **therianthropes** are shamans themselves and are capable of wielding supernatural power.

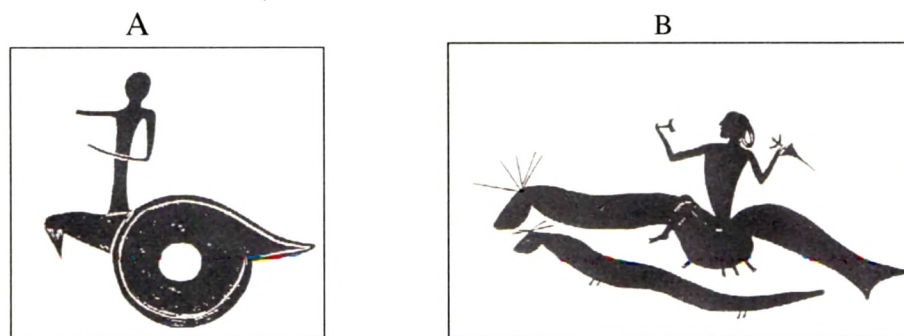


Fig 3d.35 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs; A: 680, B: 681)

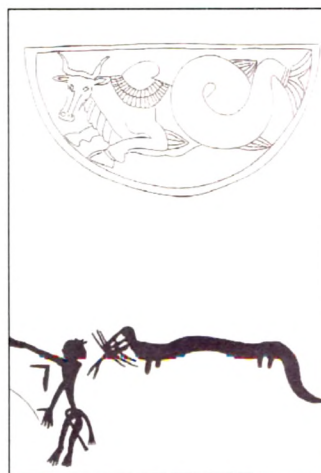


Fig 3d.36 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 678)

A: Dorothy Deep/ B: Agamdwar rock shelter: Panchmarhi (Fig 3d.35)

Bharhut rock shelter, Pannar District (Fig 3d.36)

The above group of paintings apparently depicts strange animal like figures, however it has been discussed under this section as human figures too feature along with them and I feel that there is a strong connection between the two. These figures are known only from Mahadeo Hills (Neumayer 1993, 256). These figures display a head either like bird (3d.35A) or like a four legged animal (3d.35 B) while the body is snake like, coiled (3d.35A) as well as elongated(3d.35 B). Interestingly human figures as riders armed with a dagger or an axe mount these animals. These strange animal figures show strong parallels to *makrama* figures which are well known from early historic sculptures (Neumayer 1993, 256). These makrama figures from the Mahadeo hills are reminiscent of the ‘gandhara-Palettes’ or compartmented stone plates, which show often the figure of *nerides* on a monster which is half horse and half coiled dragon (Francfort H.P 1979).

A



Fig 3d.37 (photo by author)

B



(photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Rock Shelter-21(A) and rock shelter 44 (B) (Fig 3d.37)

Fig A is a very interesting depiction of a human figure. Upper half of the body is done in flatwash with open arms placed are on either side of the body. Unique aspect of this figure is that the bottom portion from waist downwards is done in outline and somewhat

oval shaped. The reason behind this remains elusive as I have not found similar figures elsewhere for comparative study, but definitely adds on to the mystic aspect attached with rock art.

Fig B is also a very unique depiction, because the rider has almost fused into the horse on which it is riding. The human figure is depicted only waist upwards with no legs, which under normal circumstances should hang on either side of the animal figure. The animal figure on the other hand is a stylized depiction, its body shaped like a 'damru' (Indian word denoting a percussion instrument). The animal's hoofs are turned inwards, which suggests that it is in a floating state.



Fig 3d.38 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka, Rock Shelter-3 (Fig 3d.38)

Hand prints are a very common motif that is found in rock art all over the world.

In the above picture it appears to be an outline impression of a left hand with five digits. However it is very difficult to say whether the left hand was placed directly on the wall and stenciled out or was it the right hand placed with its back against the wall to make

what appears to be the left hand? According to Yashodhar Mathpal it is a boy's handprint (Mathpal 1984:214). Negative handprints are also recorded from Bhopal area (Tewari 1990, 46). Hand prints have been reported from Mirzapur (Tewari 1990, 30), South India as well as Orissa (Pradhan 2001:30, fig-2) region. Worldwide two kinds of handprints are common in rock art: positive and negative (Williams 2002a, 216-217). Positive prints were made by applying paint on the palm and fingers and then pressing the hand against the rock wall. Negative prints were made by placing the hand against the rock and then blowing paint over the hand and the surrounding rock: when the hand was removed, an image of the hand remained. In case of the above painting none of these techniques are applicable. The significance of the negative hands painted in caves or shelters has long been a mystery. In some cultures (e.g. in South Africa), traditional rock painting is still practiced (or was still practiced very recently), there the hand prints are made by shamans and have a sacred meaning (Lewis- Williams 1983). A comparative analysis indicated that the negative hands from the Upper Palaeolithic period probably have the same interpretation (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988; Clottes & Lewis-Williams 1998). 'In a variety of ways, people touched, respected painted and ritually treated the walls of caves because of what they were and what existed behind their surfaces. The walls were not a meaningless support' (Williams 2002a, 220). They were part of a context, which according to Williams is one of the earliest evidence for one of the archetypal religious metaphors (Williams 2002a, 220).



Fig 3d.39 (photo by author)



Fig 3d.40 (photo by author)

Handprints are still seen in many Indian homes, especially in villages and tribal belts, though their interpretation is different. On my personal visit to Miapur village (nearest locality to Bhimbetka rock shelters) on the 11th day after Diwali (the famous festival of lights usually held in the month of November, in India), I noticed several homes with positive hand prints (See photo 3d.39, 3d.40). On enquiring I found that usually five positive handprints are made on the wall as well as on cows (considered very sacred in India) in honour of Laxmi Mata (Goddess of wealth and prosperity).

South India

The richest rock art zone in south India is the Karnataka region comprising of Benekal forest and Piklihal area in Raichur district and Badami in Bijapur district. The paintings of the Hire Benakal area consist mainly of human beings who are featured as horse riders, dancers and also with weapons (Sundara 1968, 1974). These paintings are done in red and various other shades of red colour. Paintings at Hire Benekal region show decorated human figures with elaborate head dress, and protruding eyes (Chandramouli 2002). Another group of human figures from Benekal region are so stylized that they are almost transformed to geometric shapes (Fig 3d.43). At Piklihal (Allchin 1960, 11-13)

human figures in groups are seen amongst which horsemen with spears and men with swords have been represented. At Tekkalakota (Rao 1965, 97-99) stylized human figures are found. Rock paintings from Badami sport unique human figures for they are featured with extremely long bodies (Fig 3d.44). Along with rock paintings five engravings of human figures engaged in sexual activities (supposedly) are reported from Sanganakallu (Gordon 1951, 117fig-1b). Engravings were also reported from Piklihal where dancers holding hands, elongated human figures, human figures with large head and human figures with weapons are seen (Allchin 1960:13-16, Chandramouli 2002). In Kerala human figures in standing postures and masked dancers are seen at Edakal cave in Khozikode district (Chandamouli 2002). At Maraiyur in Kottayam district, amongst three successive layers of paintings, a large human figure was noticed by Thampi in the last layer (Thampi 1976; 37-34, Chandramouli 2002). Engravings resembling impressions of human feet have been found in the rock art sites in Kammam district of Andhra Pradesh along with a large number of engraved animal footprints as well as engraved herbivorous animals on a quartzite wall at Bainete Banda (Neumayer 1993). Engravings of strange but human like figures are also seen, which are filled with red paint. Lot of superimpositions is present in this wall of Bainete Banda. Another group of paintings from Velary Kombay in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu contains human figures with unusual decorations in place of their heads (fig 3d.46). The clothes for both the sexes consisted of a single piece of fabric, worn around the waist, with a train falling down in the front as well as in the back (Neumayer 1993, 121). Upper body seems to have been left bare in both the sexes (Neumayer 1993, 121). Several depictions of human bodies contain decorations made of rhombic patterns (See fig-3d.36). It needs mention here that religious icon like Lajja Gauri at Chintakunta in Andhra Pradesh is characteristic of the Historic period (Sonawane 2002a). Apart from these, some paintings at Badami (Sonawane 2002a, fig 21) are comparable with the famous fresco paintings of classical Indian art (Sonawane 2002a, 291).

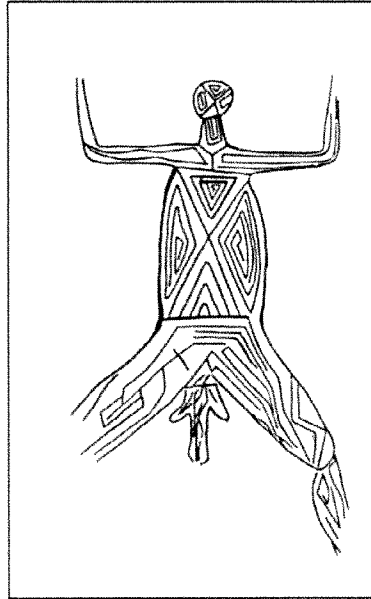


Fig 3d.41 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 278)

Benekal Forest (Fig 3d.41)

This large human figure is depicted on the inclined ceiling in a shelter near Mallarpur (Neumayer 1993). The figure is shown with prominent sexual organ and its body is filled with geometric designs. According to D.S Whitley, in North America as well as Southern Africa prominent sexual organs were used as a metaphor for altered state of consciousness (Whitley 2000). Moreover the above figure resembles the neuro psychological model of David Williams according to which in third stage of trance geometric forms get blended with iconic imagery. Researchers like H. Kluver (Kluver 1942, 181,182) and Reichel –Dlomatoff (Reichel –Dlomatoff, 1978a, 147) too have corroborated this. Plenty of such figures are found all over India where human as well as animal body is filled with geometric designs. Added to this, the figure is seen with raised arms which are again known to be common posture adopted in trance. However all these observations are based on comparisons which are open to further research within the Indian context.

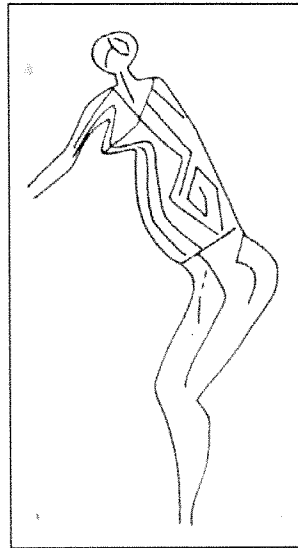


Fig 3d.42 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 279)

Benekal Forest (Fig 3d.42)

According to Neumayer this is a figure of a woman drawn in profile (Neumayer 1993, 123). He further writes these figures represent a certain stylistic group though they are few in number. The woman figure has its upper body bent forward. Since it is depicted in profile therefore only one leg and one arm is shown. Body contains designs which are suggestive of intense trance when iconic images contain geometric designs (Kluver 1942, 181,182). Regarding this bending forward position Leroi-Gourhan (1982) while commenting on Cougnac (rock art site in Quercy district of France) notes that ‘an important number’ of all human figures have the body bent forward to around 30-45 degree (Leroi- Gourhan 1982, 53). He adds that this posture is due to physiological effects of some altered states of consciousness. Similarly a San informant described trance feeling as pricking of ‘needles and thorns’ and because of this painful experience San trance dancers bend forward (Marshall 1969, 363-64). However intriguing aspect about this figure is that along with breasts it also has well developed cuff and back muscles. As already mentioned earlier in this section that according to San rock ethnography (Williams 2002a) this is considered to be a trance posture which occurs due to muscle contraction during the trance dance. However since there is no directly relevant ethnography to guide the interpretation for rock art of India parallels from San rock art are cited which is a first hand ethnographic account for San rock art. Keeping in mind

that the kind of shamanism and the complexity of rituals that may have existed in the prehistoric days do not exist any more still today tribal women in India practice trance dance in which they vigorously shake their heads with hair kept loose, and their bodies do become stiff.

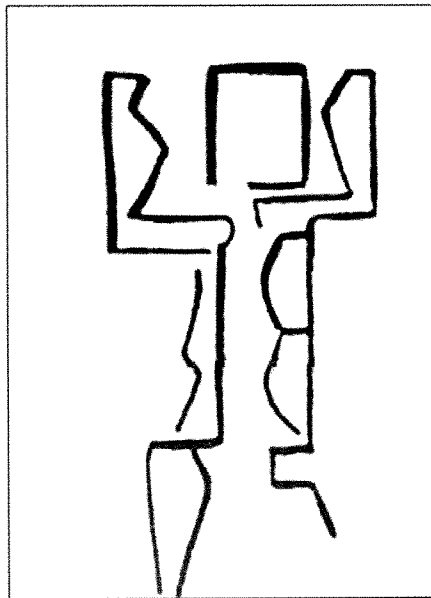


Fig 3d.43 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 343)

Benekal Forest (Fig 3d.43)

This painting is a graphic representation of geometric shapes. To me, this representation looks like a depiction in which iconic imagery is framed by geometric forms which apparently do happen to individuals in extreme states of altered consciousness (Reichel – Dumatoff, 1978, 147).

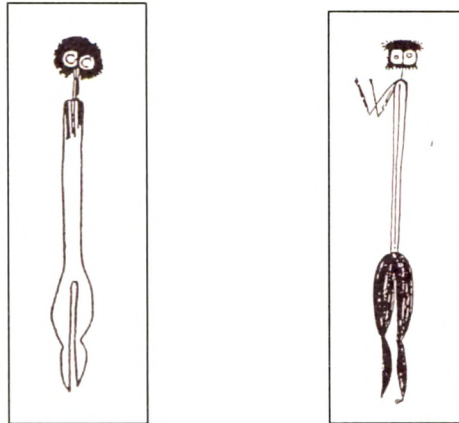


Fig 3d.44 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 232,324)

Badami (Fig 3d.44)

These figures from Badami appear to be perfect examples of shamans in trance with elongated bodies and big eyes. Big eyes symbolize the fact that Shamans can see in darkness and far beyond the ordinary limits of human sight.



Fig 3d.45 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 356)

Bainete Banda rock shelter (Fig 3d.45)

These figures are elongated, done in flatwash with outstretched arms and legs. Fingers are very clearly shown. Though these are human figures but have gone through transformation and resemble frogs.

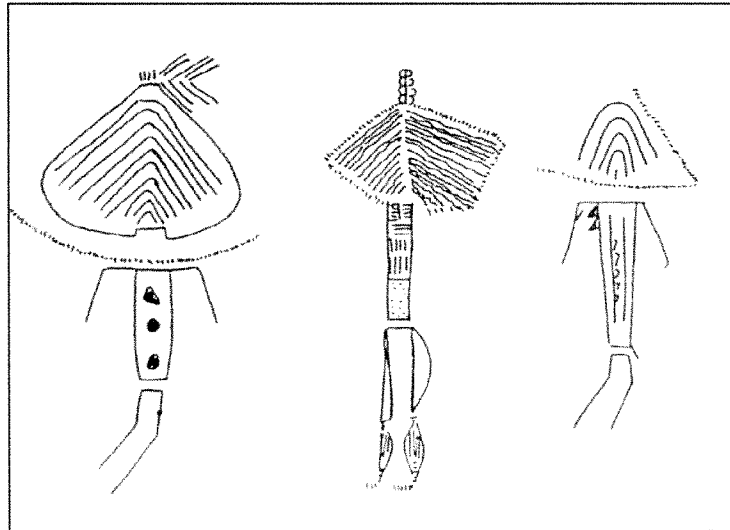


Fig 3d.46 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 329,330, 331)

Velary Komabay rock shelter (Fig 3d.46)

Apparently it looks that the human figures in the above picture exhibit the entoptic elements (Williams 2002a) which occur during trance. The number of lines in place of the head looks like flickering lights or zigzags seen during trance stages or else it can also be a symbolic depiction of the spirit leaving the body. An ethnographic example further illustrates this point. When San trancers experience a tingling sensation in the top of the head, they ascribe it to the soul, or spirit leaving on an extracorporeal travel. Some San shaman artists depicted this experience by drawing long lines emanating from the head of the figures in trance (Lewis Williams 2002b, 241). Coming back to the above depictions one of the figures in it is also seen with elongated body and strong cuff muscles. These depictions are very mystic and probably convey much more than simple hair do's.

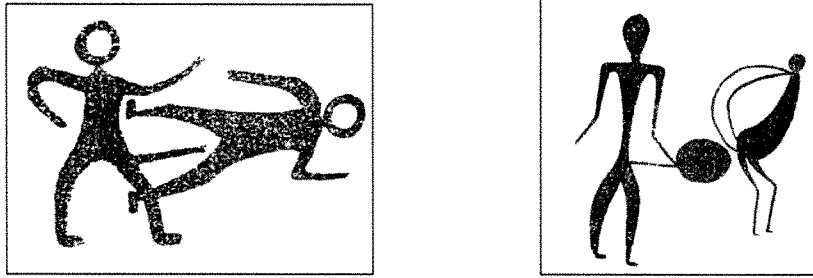


Fig 3d.47 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 477,478)

Kuppgallu rock shelters, Karnataka (Fig 3d.47)

These bruising suggest sexual activities amongst human figures. The male figures can be identified without doubt for they are depicted ithyphallic with very prominent sexual organs. Female figures however cannot be identified in these bruising for there are no depictions of breast. These figures definitely convey a sense of 'kama' or sexuality and as we know that for centuries everywhere in the world including India sexuality correlates with fertility ritual and vice-versa. Sexuality, fertility, copulation, birth-these ideas have traversed through the art tradition of India and erotic art found fused with fertility (Mohanty &Singh Deo 2004).

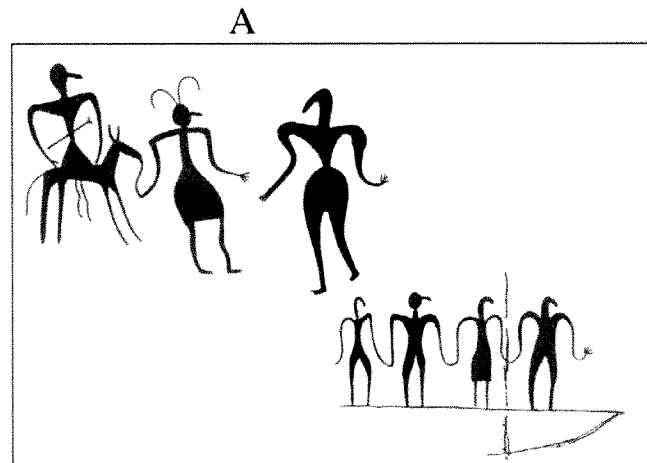


Fig 3d.48 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 497)

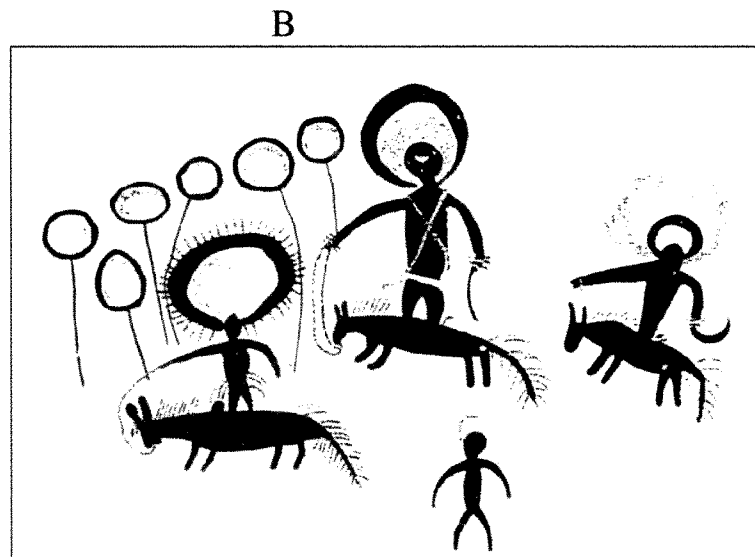


Fig 3d.49 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 532)

Kilvalay rock shelter (A)/ Sirumalai-Meenputti (B) (Fig 3d.49)

The human figures depicted in both the figures are very mystic for they have lines rising out from their heads. The above human figure is shown with hour-glass shaped bodies (Fig.3d.48), done in flatwash and pronounced shoulders. The most striking feature of this figure is the bird like head with long beaks which usually occurs in deep stages of altered state when an individual has undergone physical transformation. Similar kinds of human figures are seen in Southern African rock paintings which have been interpreted to be highly transformed shamans (See fig 3b.7). However in this regard we should keep in mind that a very famous character in Indian mythology is 'Garuda' who is considered king of birds. He has head, wings, talons and beak like that of a bird (eagle) and body and limbs like a human figure. He is believed to roam about the world devouring the bad. Garuda is also famous for his hatred of snakes.

Human figures with mystic elements (some resembling the entoptic phenomenon) riding on animals are also seen in figure 3d.49.



Fig 3d.50 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 553)

Chintakunta rock shelter (Fig 3d.50)

This is the famous rock art depiction resembling Goddess Lajja Gauri to some extent. In this painting a woman figure is depicted seated on a small seat on the back of an animal figure with her legs bent at the knees and drawn up to each side in a squatting position and displaying her vulva. Amazingly this painting resembles Goddess Lajja Gauri figurines which is worshipped not only in many parts of India but also is found depicted in churches and monuments as far as South East Asia (Mohanty & Singh Deo 2004). The name Lajja Gauri means 'the shy woman' or 'shameless woman'. It is also known by numerous other names like Sakambari, Prithvi, Aditi, Renuka, Kottavi and so on. Usually the Lajja Gauri plaques are found lying in birth position, the spread out legs drawn laterally and bent at knees, the soles of the feet turned upwards, the arms bent upwards and the hands each holding a lotus bud and which also touches the petals of a large and open lotus blossom that crowns the figure as its neck and head (Mohanty & Singh Deo 2004). The figure is almost always made to lie on its back. On a human level the image of Lajja Gauri acts as a female giving birth which is an auspicious occurrence, on the divine level it is an embodiment of the idea of fertility of generation and life force. These figures appear at the beginning of Christian era. Interestingly similar representations are also found amongst some tribes like the Bhiyas of Orissa who are hunting gathering tribe,

the relation of sex and vegetative fertility is fathomed by many tribal communities of eastern India which might also be relevant in case of the rock painting at Chintakunta.

According to Carol Bolon who wrote a book titled 'Forms of the Goddess Lajja Gauri in Indian art' (Bolon 1992) there were changes in the goddess's form over a period of more than four centuries, including its possible adoption from tribal worship into Hindu temples. Therefore the images resembling Lajja Gauri portrayed in the rock shelters may be the primary images made as a part of fertility rituals, which was later adopted as Goddess Lajja Gauri by Hindu priests.

3.6 SOCIAL GROUPS: GATHERINGS AND ACTIVITIES

The abundance of scenes of all sorts in Indian rock art is one of its major and most appealing characteristics. Not only geometric forms, animal figures or anthromorph figures, a variety of other subjects are depicted as well. For example human figures are often found engaged in activities with other humans like dancing, fighting, carrying loads, curing the sick, collecting honey, in domestic scenes sometimes inside a house or a tent, fishing, riding horses /elephants /oxen, driving carts or chariots and drawing plough. This chapter will focus on some of these group activities which will help us to understand some more facets of their way of life besides hunting and dancing, which has already been discussed in detail in the earlier segments.

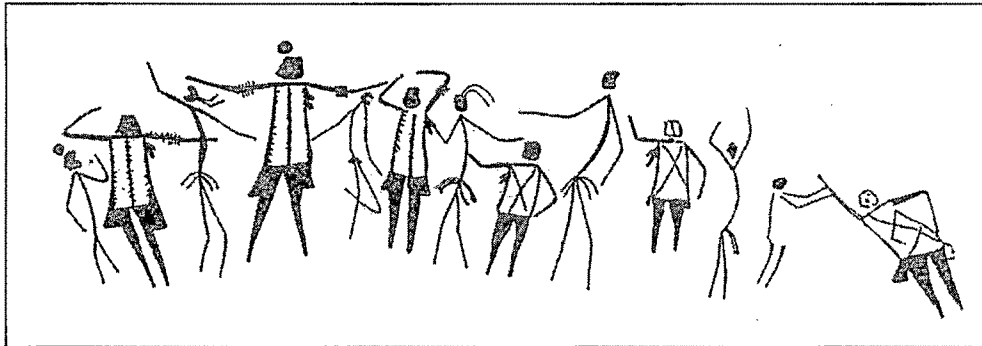


Fig 3e.1 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 193)

Cooperation between two or more persons is frequently shown in Mesolithic rock art. Depictions of large hunting expeditions sometimes show more than a dozen hunters moving in well marked guidelines. In several of these hunting large hunting expeditions women carrying baskets are depicted, infact apparently from these pictures it seems clear that women functioned as load bearers in the hunting expeditions (Neumayer 1993). Co-operation between man and women are rarely shown (fig 3e.1). Paintings depict activities such as dancing, singing, playing with musical instruments, drinking and eating inside a roofed house (fig 3e.6) (Sonawane 2002, 284).

Dance

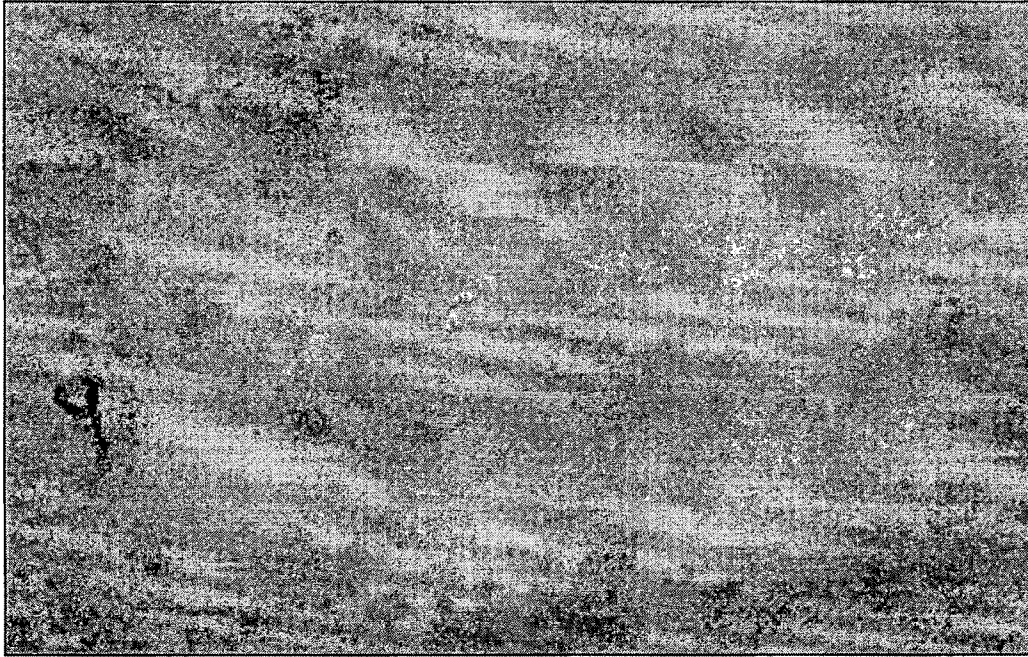


Fig 3e.2 (photo by author)

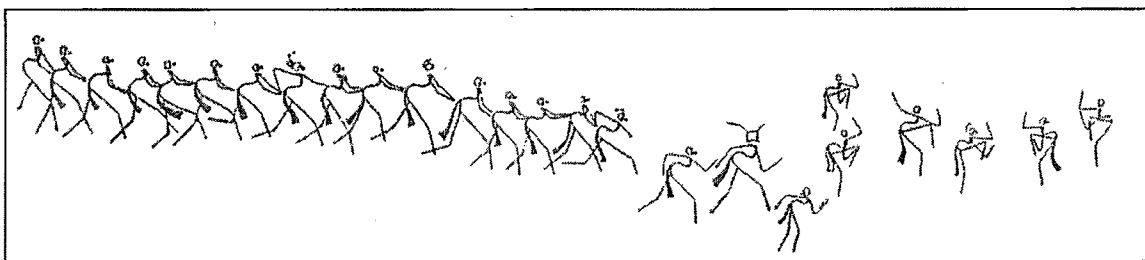


Fig 3e.3 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 38)

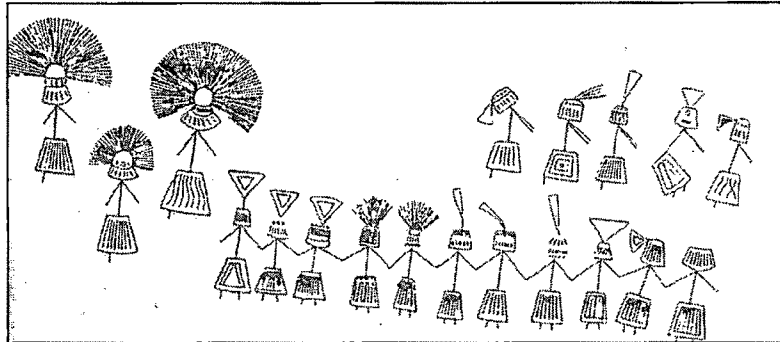


Fig 3e.4 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 39)

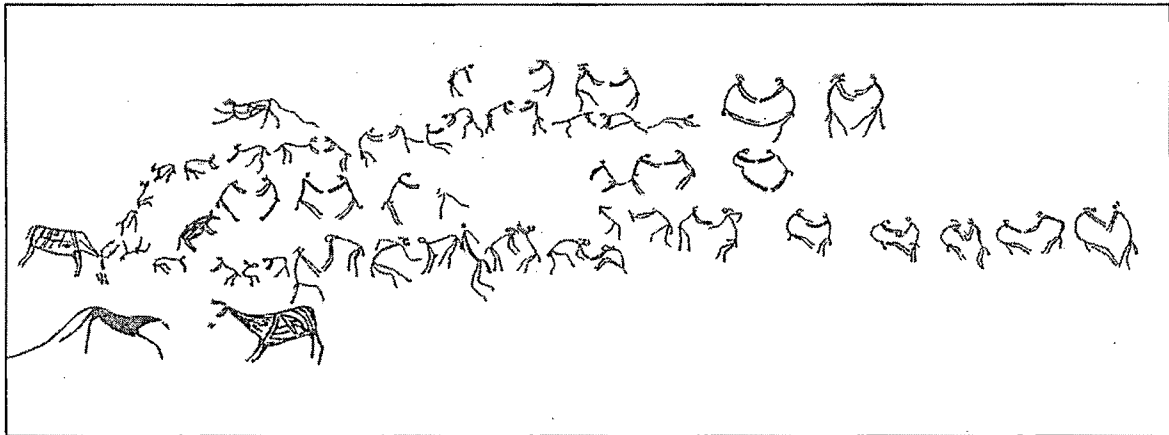


Fig 3e.5 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 209)

3e.2-Bhimbetka / 3e.3-Lakhajuar/ 3e.4 -Kathotia/ 3e.5 -Firengi rock shelters

All the above paintings from central India depict human figures in dance like postures. Just like other areas here too dancing seems to be a very important activity. In the above painting a row of human figures, in white, are depicted, hands interlocked and placed on the waist. Some of the figures have one of their legs slightly raised (Fig 3e.2). The painting from Firengi shows dancers in couples. Individual dancers have their arms stretched but never touch each other (Neumayer 1993, 98). As already discussed earlier in detail about the importance of dance and music in prehistoric as well as modern tribal

communities therefore all the above paintings might have been represented as part of some ritual.

Domestic Life

Of the many activities depicted in Mesolithic rock art, **domestic scenes** like eating inside a house or hut have been reported from Central India.

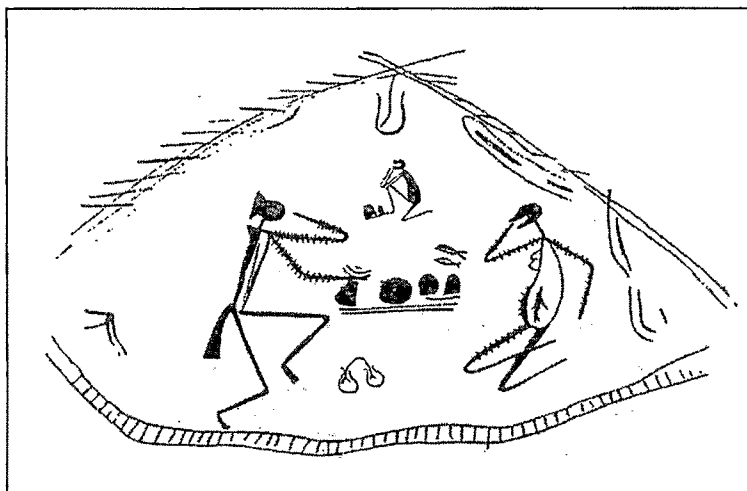


Fig 3e.6 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 152)

Lakhajoar rock shelter (Fig 3e.6)

In the above painting a man and woman along with another human figure, (a little far away) is sitting at a well laid table inside an enclosure which might be a tent/hut. The woman figure is depicted in an x-ray pattern where a horizontally placed fish is seen inside her stomach. Noteworthy aspect here is that the fish has not been chewed though apparently it seems that the woman is eating her food, as her hand is also placed in front of her mouth. Another interesting point here is that both the hands of the male figure as well as the female figure (portions of stomach as well as one leg of the woman) contains small streaks, which is not likely body hair. Therefore I feel that it is very dangerous to assume this depiction to be simple scene of domestic life. However observable reality in this painting are the vessels and as Neumayer writes (Neumayer 1993, 77) that the dumpling shape of the food is visible in several other pictures and might denote a ball

shaped mass of paste prepared from tubers or ground seeds. He further adds that since in two pictures this ball shaped material is shown in compartmented baskets (See fig. 3e.7), it is more likely that it depicts a sort of staple food of pulpy nature which could also be stored for a while (Neumayer 1993, 77: fig-226). This picture also shows contacts of cave dwellers with the people living on plains, where they live in such circular huts with conical thatched roof.

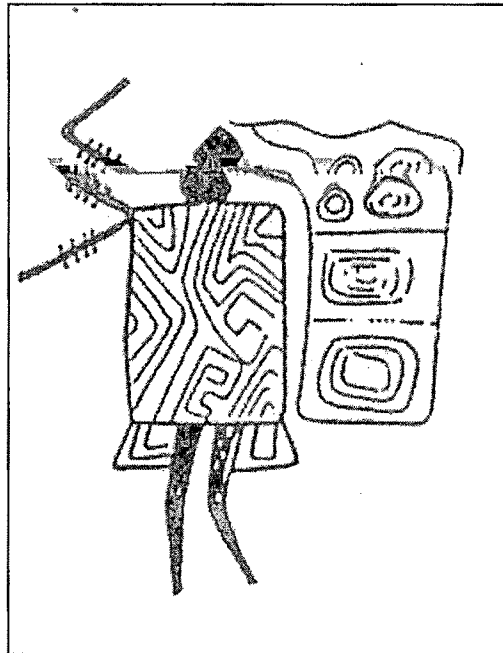


Fig 3e.7 Kathotia, (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 226)

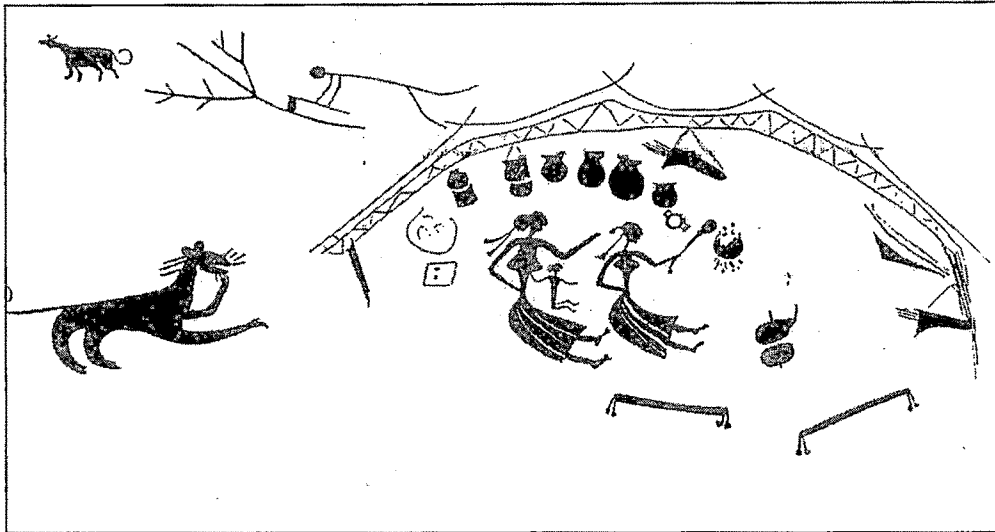


Fig 3e.8 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 634)

Mahadeo hills, Panchmarhi (Fig 3e.8)

This painting gives a fairly detailed account of a house. It shows a hut like enclosure inside which two woman figures shown in flatwash are cooking. One woman has a child sitting on her lap, while the other woman with a large spoon is sitting in front of a fire, over which a pot is placed. Several pots and other utensils are seen overhead, one of which is very clearly seen hanging. From one of the pillars hangs a quiver filled with arrows and a bow, another quiver hangs from the roof. According to Neumayer the object near the centre of the kitchen is probably a rotating hand mill, however he also adds that since this is the only depiction therefore this identification has to be treated as preliminary (Neumayer 1993, 235). A large animal depicted just outside the hut has one of its legs in its mouth, which appears very mysterious. Interestingly a large cat 'threateningly' hovering around a camp scene is an often repeated scene in the Historic rock paintings of the Mahadeo hills (Neumayer 1993, 235).

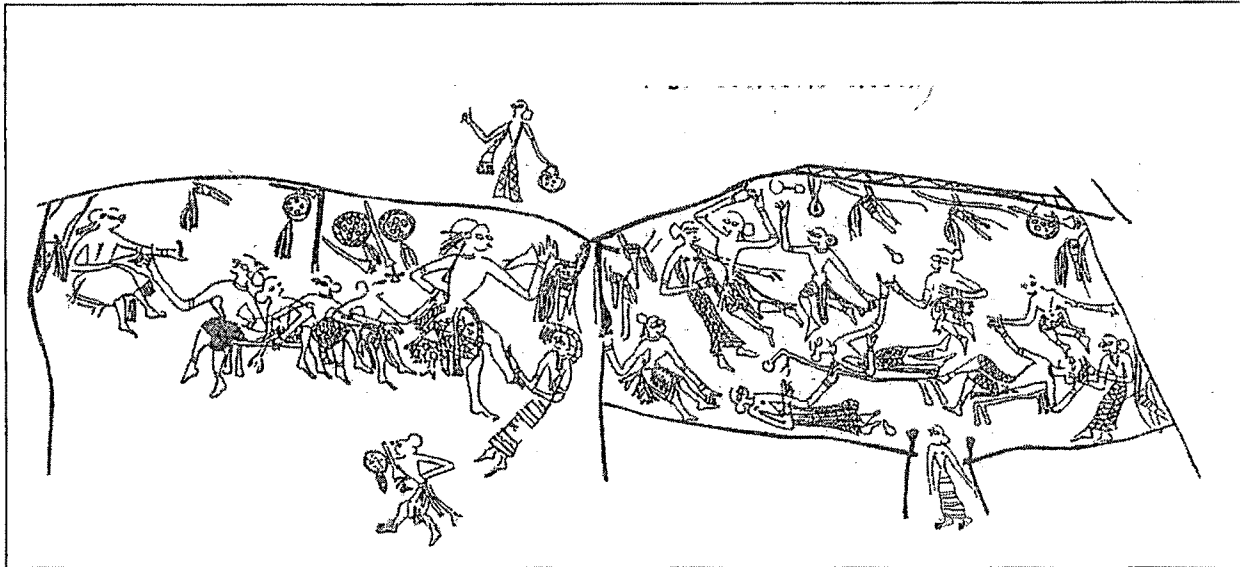


Fig 3e.9 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 637)

Bori West rock shelter, Mahadeo Hills (Fig 3e.9)

This is another depiction of a house giving all possible details. This house seems to be divided into two rooms which are filled with human figures who are probably soldiers for weapons like swords, bows and arrows are hanging from the walls. In one of the rooms human figures are sitting together on bed like furnitures. One large sitting man points a dagger towards himself while his legs are massaged by a woman (Neumayer 1993 237). In the other room men are depicted in standing and lying positions. Some figures seem to be in dancing poses. It is very difficult to understand the real reasons behind these depictions without ethnographic support.



Fig 3e.10 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter (Fig 3e.10)

Here again a hut like enclosure is seen in which two human figures are seen. The entire representation is executed with red outline with white colour within. Both the figures are sporting head adornments and probably earrings. Their arms are spread out on either side of their bodies. One of them is holding a disc which is probably a shield in one hand and a sword in the other. The other human figure is wearing some garment round his waist region which is hanging on either side.

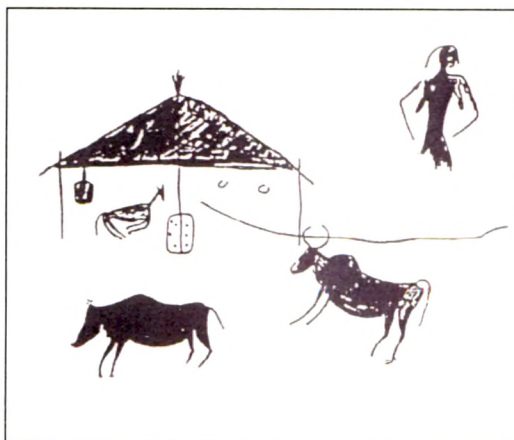


Fig 3e.11 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 640)

Astachal, Mahadeo Hills, Panchmarhi (Fig 3e.11)

This is a further depiction of an outlined house, almost resembling one which we see in villages even now. This is a pillared house with thatched roof (roof is flatwashed) and windows. An animal is seen inside the building. While going through all these depictions it seems that these paintings might not have been done to simply portray daily life, but definitely has deeper meanings attached.



Fig 3e.12 (photo by author)

Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3e.12)

This seems to be a tent like enclosure, denoting a house within which a human figure is drawn. A faint depiction of probably some container towards the right can also be seen. Nothing more can be commented.

Load Bearers



Fig 3e. 13 Panarpani, Panchmarhi (photo by author)



Fig 3e.14 Badkachar, Panchmarhi (photo by author)



Fig 3e. 15, Bhimbetka (photo by author)

In all the above pictures human figures carrying load is depicted.

Honey Collection

Out of the miscellaneous subjects **honey collection** as well as **honeycombs** has been a frequent depiction in Indian rock art. The honey collection scenes of historic rock pictures of Mahadeo Hills are the most elaborate ones. The swarms of bees are usually indicated by mass of dots. Individual bees are very rarely depicted. Interestingly at times pots are found depicted in close vicinity of the honey collection scenes at Mahadeo hills. According to Neumayer 'depictions of female genitalia and the bag shaped honeycombs seem to be related. In several engravings and paintings the honeycombs are transferred into female pudenda' (See fig. 3e.17). He further adds that 'this relation is particularly suggestive in the rock engravings near Chhenga Pahar and Osakhoti in the Sundergarh

district of Orissa’. In a painting from Ganesh Ghati site of Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh a honeycomb with insects buzzing around is depicted between the legs of an antelope (See fig. 3e.16).

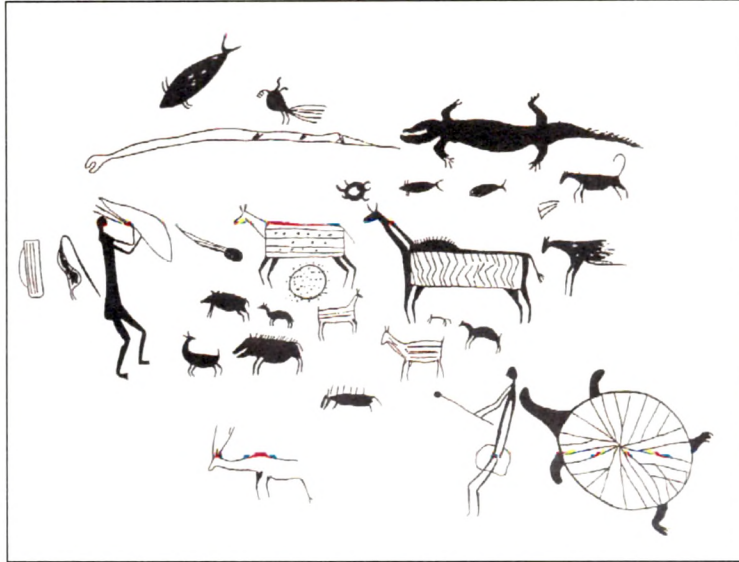


Fig 3e.16 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 645)



Fig 3e. 17 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 657)

Honeycombs have also been found in rock art of southern India. Even now these paintings are revered by people of the area, who claim that the pictures have healing properties against mumps (Neumayer 1993, 240). A honeycomb made on T-stands at Moissailana Guddu (See fig 3c.65 B) near Vijaynagar is another example where honeycombs are related to icons (Neumayer 1993, 474).

In her recent book *The Rock Art of Honey Hunters*, Dr. Eva Crane (Crane 2001) has collected some of the most striking examples of the cave art chronicling these prehistoric hunts. As she has vividly documented, there are a number of common elements that recur throughout, irrespective of the geographical location. The honeycombs are prominently drawn, generally with great exuberance and appearing much larger than they are in real life. Bees, with or without wings, are shown flying angrily about as their nests are pillaged by the daring hunters (See fig. 3e.18). The hunters themselves are usually depicted either standing at the foot of a tree or cliff that harbors a bee nest or climbing long rope ladders to reach their prize.



Fig 3e.18 (photo by author)

Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3e.18)

In the above painting two hunters are represented in a manner, as if running away from attacking bees. The human figures are done in flatwash and are very naturalistic depictions. Out of the two one human figure is pointing towards the beehive. The latter has a swarm of bees around it and some are even flying away in a straight line. The human figures are shown with bow and arrows.



Fig 3e.19 (photo by author)



Fig 3e.20 (enlarged from Fig 3e.19)

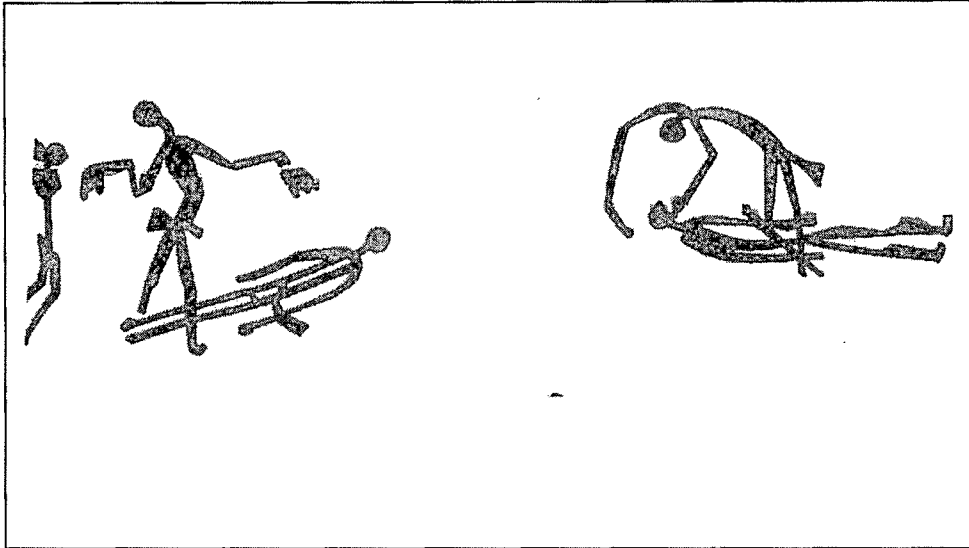
Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi (Fig 3e.20)

This is a representation of a vessel resembling a pot found in the same shelter where bees, hives and the hunters have been depicted. The body as well as the periphery of the pot is lined with dots. The top of the pot is flatwashed which is probably indicating the lid. As Neumayer writes that ‘these scenes do not appear as if they were only a narration of the profane act of collecting honey, but suggest a closer relation between the mythology of rising of the shaman and the bees, which is also manifest in many Central Indian tribal myths’(Neumayer 1993, 248). For example, amongst the ‘Baiga’ tribes of Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh there is a festival called ‘Ras-Nawa’ which means ceremonial eating of honey(Ref: website-webindia123.com-Festivals of Madhya Pradesh). The festival falls once in every nine years. The Baigas associate this festival to their legendary ancestor named Nanga Baiga. The legend goes in this way that once a drop of honey fell to the ground which was being carried by the bees and Nanga Baiga by mistake dipped his finger and tasted the substance. No sooner he did this, all the bees transformed into tigers. Nanga Baiga ran for his life and when he reached his house he found it filled with bees. He was unable to move either inside the house or outside and under such circumstances he promised to make offerings every nine years. It is also believed that preceding this

festival many deaths occur and therefore among the Baigas a taboo is observed not to eat honey before the festival. On the festival day the Baigas go to the forest to get honey. On their return to the village a festal booth is built for the Mohati and Anhera shrubs (favorites amongst the bees as they bear flowers which are filled with honey) which are considered to be wife and husband. Near the festal booth millet is prepared by shaman, in gourds and when it is ready honey is poured into the vessels. It is distributed to all those who attend the ceremony.

David Williams has added neuropsychological aspect along with mythologies, in his interpretation to bees and honeycombs. According to him, it is two strands of evidence that leads to the depiction of honeycombs. One is neuropsychological and the other is ethnographic (Williams 2002 b, 148). According to him altered state of consciousness causes all the senses, to hallucinate, not just sight. A common aural experience is a buzzing or humming sound and this essentially remains constant cross-culturally for it is neurologically determined. So it is possible that individuals who are passing through the experience of altered state may link this buzzing aural experience along with flickering visual hallucinations of navicular entoptic phenomenon and thus believe that they were both seeing and hearing bees swarming over honeycombs. Now, ethnographic reports can further explain why some shamans made this analysis. In case of San rock art according to the San shamans bees are supposed to be messengers of God and to have great deal of potency (Wilmsen, personal communication in Williams 2002b, 148). They like to dance when the bees are swarming because they believe that they can use 'bee potency'. Infact they have a 'medicine' or trance dance called 'honey' (Marshall 1962, 249). Interestingly ethnographic records obtained from the Sauras of Orissa corroborates the fact that of the many motifs made by an *ittalmaran* (picture man), trees laden with beehives are considered to be an icon which is worshipped (Pradhan 2001, 61). Therefore we can now understand that the hives and bees represented in the rock paintings of India might not have been simple depictions of the real world. Further ethnographic studies in order to understand the tribal myths regarding bees as well as in-depth studies on 'spirit possession' that still exists in tribes of India is required.

Medical Treatments



**Fig 3e.21 (Ref-Recent Studies in Indian Archaeology, Ed.K.Paddaya,
Article: Rock Art of India by V.H Sonawane, Fig: 16)**

Rock art in India is also characterized by scenes narrating magical cures or medical treatments. As we already know by now that one of the primary functions of a shaman was curing diseases, therefore presence of paintings depicting medical treatments aren't surprising. In the above painting a human figure is bending over another human figure who is in an inclined position. This is probably a depiction of a curing act which was done probably by sweeping the body with brooms or casting spells on the sick (Wakankar 1992, 334).

3.7 OBJECTS OF TRANSPORT

As we already know that rock art presents us with observable reality amidst religious /spiritual visions. The rock paintings as well as engravings do inform us about various innovations, from which we can learn about the technological progress of the society that produced rock art. Wheeled vehicles are known to have existed from the third millennium B.C in the Indus Valley and a considerable amount of model carts made of clay and bronze have been found in Harappan urban settlements (Neumayer 1993,166). Production of wheeled vehicles definitely requires a through knowledge of compound materials like the interaction of moveable and static elements. Depictions of bullock carts are frequent as the common vehicle for transportation (Sonawane 2002a, 287). A cart bruising from Kapgallu resembles the terracotta toy cart models reported from several Chalcolithic sites(See fig 3f.1).

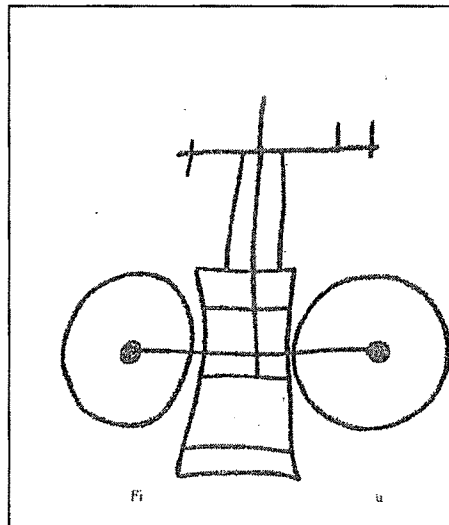


Fig 3f.1 (Ref-Recent Studies in Indian Archaeology, Ed.K.Paddaya, Article: Rock Art of India by V.H Sonawane, Fig: 17)

The complexity of available technology can be best studied from representations of chariots. The earliest chariot depictions appear in the very early pictures of the agriculturist's and cattle keepers which according to Neumayer make it difficult to ascertain its chronological position (Neumayer 1993, 166). He also adds that the only available chariot from the Chalcolithic period in India which can be compared to the Indian rock pictures is the bronze chariot found in Daimabad (Dhavlikar K 1982: 361-6

P1-35/2-5). Besides cattle, several other animals like horse (Neumayer 1993, 156) were used as draught animals. Many a times the species of the animal has not been specific. Interestingly, there is no evidence in the rock pictures that chariots were used for hunting, although in several scenes wild animals are shown in the vicinity of chariots (Neumayer 1993, 164). A variety of construction principles of the chariot can be seen also, the artists seem to have adopted a change in the perspective or viewpoint of depicting the chariot. Many a time's instead of the common frontal or profile view, a bird's eye view of chariots have been represented. Many chariots are made incomplete where no clear superstructure can be made out. The draught animals are not put under any yoke and are not even connected to the wheeled portion by any pole, instead the charioteer holds the animals by their reins. The reins are usually drawn over the head of the animals leading from their mouth to the charioteer's hands. At times chariots are depicted amidst processions. These scenes are extremely vivid, with animals and strange human figures around. In several cases there are foot soldiers and antagonistic warriors near the chariot (Neumayer 1993, 160). However it needs mention that wheeled vehicles drawn by animals are absent from rock art of Orissa (Pradhan 1995, 13), Mirzapur and the Kumayoun region.

Carts

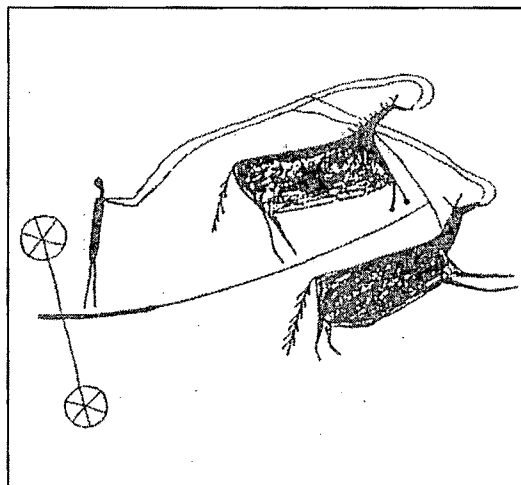


Fig 3f.2 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 408)

Putli Karar rock shelter (Fig 3f.2)

In this painting a pair of draught animals, probably cattle, has been represented. The animals are put under a straight yoke which is connected to the wheeled parts by a long pole. The charioteer, who is in a standing posture, is seen to hold the animals by the reigns.

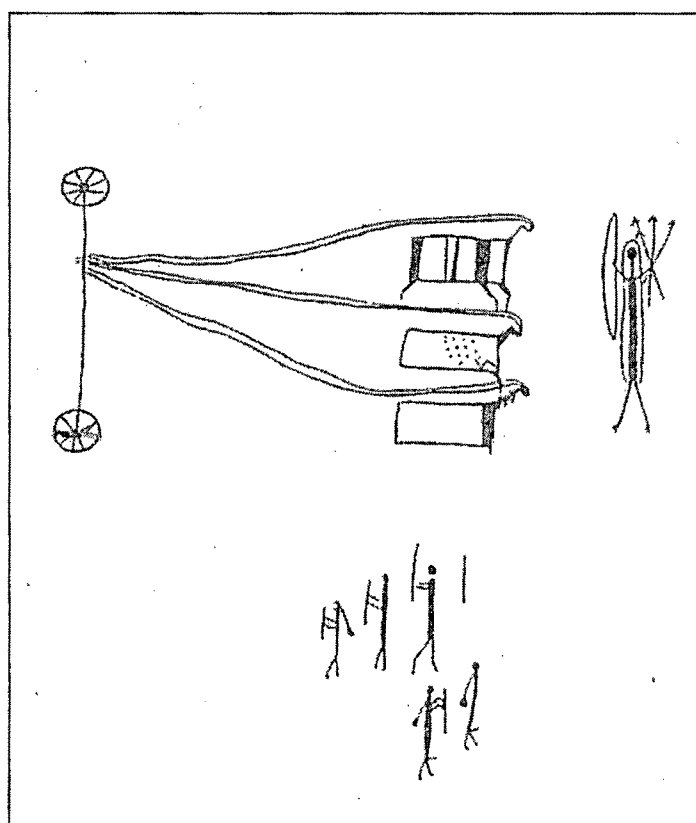


Fig 3f.3 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 410)

Firengi rock shelter (Fig 3f.3)

In this painting three animal figures have been attached to the cart by the reigns. No charioteer has been made. A rather elongated human figure, enclosed within a circle is represented in front of the animals with bow and arrows. Five other human figures are also seen off which two are ithyphallic male figures.

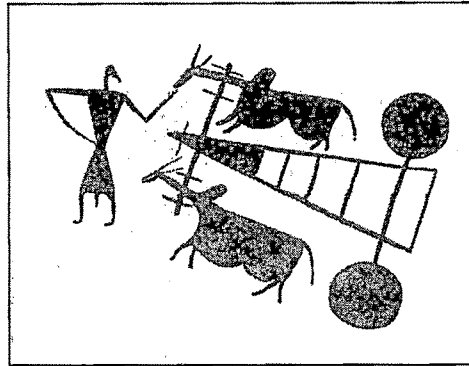


Fig 3f.4 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 411)

Pahargarh, Asan River (Fig 3f.4)

This vehicle is very similar to a present day bullock cart used in villages. A pair of humped cattle is fastened to a straight yoke which is connected by a wide central staff, to the wheels. An ithyphallic human figure is represented in front of the vehicle. The figure is done in flatwash and has a bird like head which is similar to a symbolic representation of an altered state.

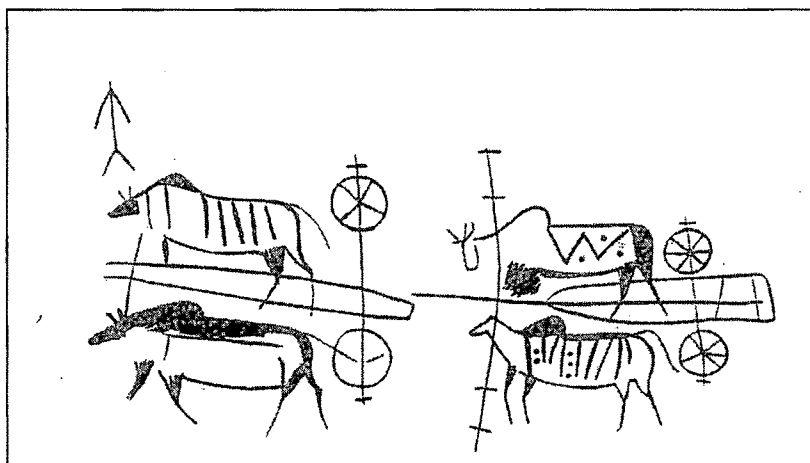


Fig 3f.5 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 412)

Urden rock shelter (Fig 3f.5)

Two pairs of cattle, each pulling a cart, are seen in this painting. Here too the animals are put under a yoke which is attached to a central staff which is further attached to the wheels. Interestingly here the axle pins are drawn on the periphery of the wheels (Neumayer 1993, 157).

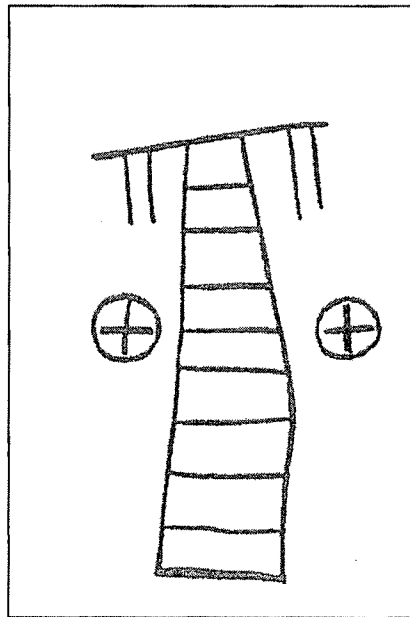


Fig 3f. 6 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 511)

Edakal rock shelter, Kerala (Fig 3f.6)

This is an engraving of a cart. The wheels are seen on both the sides of the yoke without any attachment. These cart depictions also indicate the earliest time limit for these engravings as not earlier than the Neolithic period (Neumayer 1993, 193).

Chariots

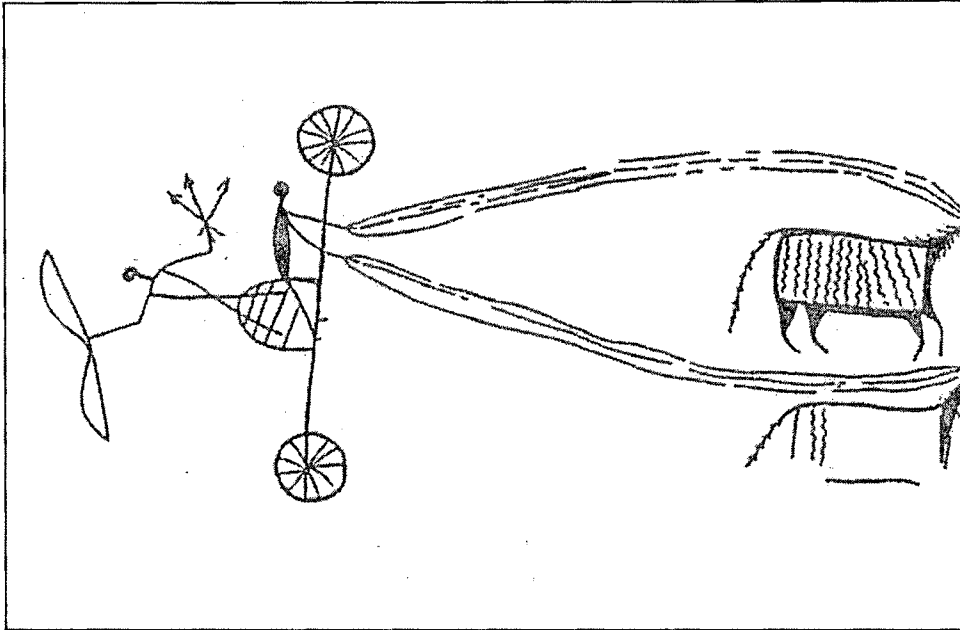


Fig 3f.7 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 409)

Kathotia rock shelter (Fig 3f.7)

This is technically an incomplete chariot. In this painting a single pair of draught animals is being held by the charioteer only by the reigns. There is no pole to connect the animals to the wheeled part of the cart nor are the animals put under any yoke. Only two wheels with spokes attached by an axle are shown. Interestingly, along with the charioteer another outline human figure is seen with a bow and three arrows.

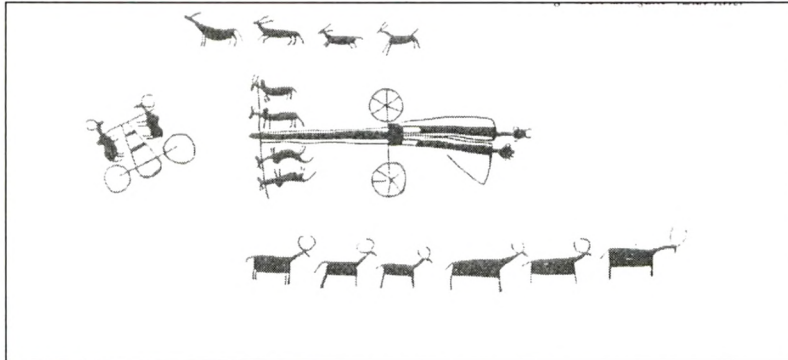


Fig 3f.8 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 416)

Pahargarh, Asan River (Fig 3f.8)

In this painting the artist has deviated from the conventional viewpoint of depicting chariots in profile, instead we see bird's eye view of the vehicle. Two pairs of humped cattle have been put under a straight yoke. Each pair is placed on either side of the pole, in such a manner that each animal's legs are directed towards the pole, in this pattern of depiction one pair of animals are seen in an upside down position.

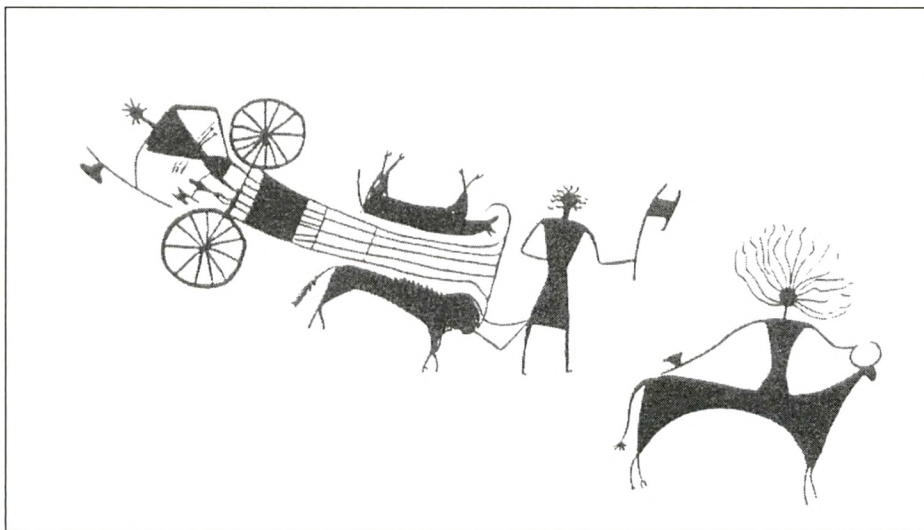


Fig 3f.9 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 415)

Dekan rock shelter, Adarshila (Fig 3f.9)

Here too one of the animals is shown as if lying on its back. Both the wheels are connected by an axle, from which the pole is passing. However in this chariot more than one pole (Five poles) connects the yoke with the axle. Two human figures are seen in front of the draught animals. Noteworthy point about these men is the curved lines emanating from their heads which is symbolic of trance. The entire depiction might be a symbolic depiction of soul transportation.

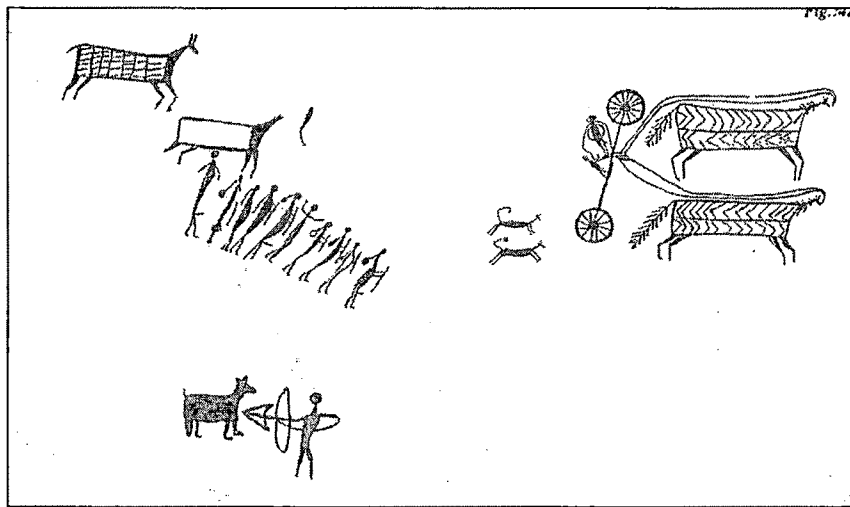


Fig 3f.10 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 426)

Firengi rock shelter (Fig 3f.10)

This is one of the best preserved depictions of a chariot (Neumayer 1993, 164) which is technically incomplete. The draught animals are not put under any yoke and there is no pole connecting the yoke to the axle, only the charioteer is holding the animals by the reins. The animals in this painting contains design on body which might apparently seem that it is done for decorative purpose, but as already discussed it is a representation of final stages of trance where iconic imagery is projected against a background of geometric forms (Siegel 1977, 134). Also seen in this depiction is a row of human figures (few ithyphallic) below two antelopes. Two dog like animal figures are seen behind the

chariot. Altogether this depiction exhibits some elements that suggest that probably it is a surreal representation.

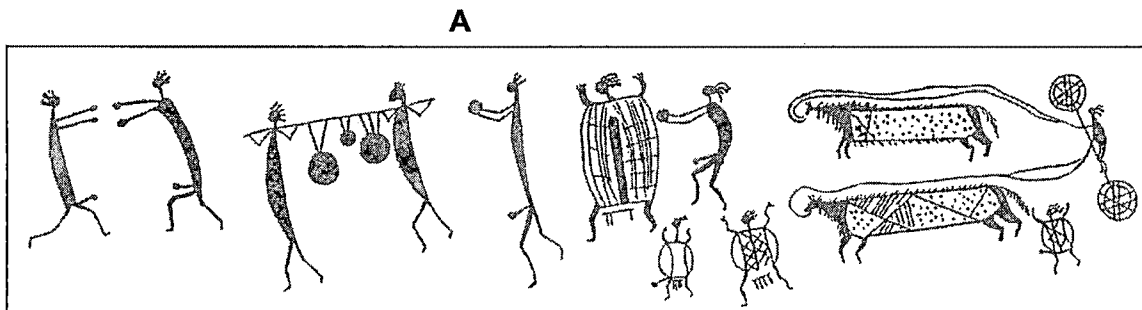


Fig 3f.11 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 429)

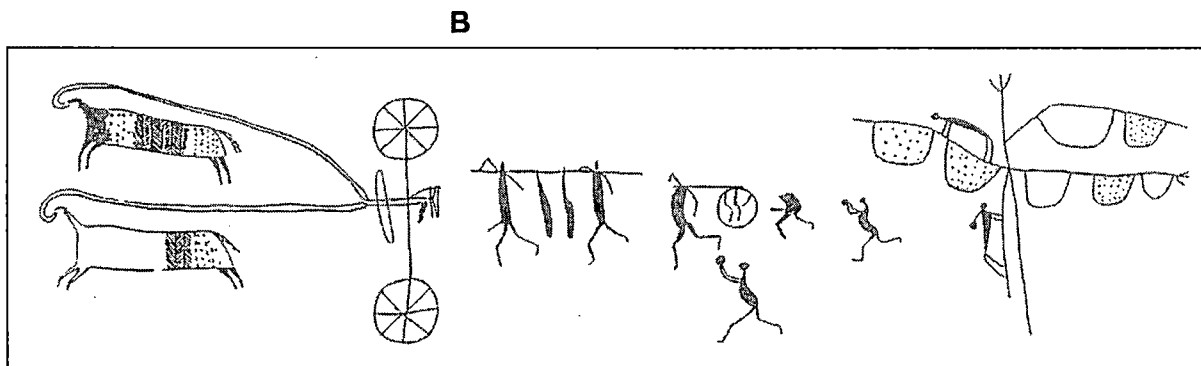


Fig 3f.12 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 430)

A-Kathotia/ B-Firengi rock shelter (Fig 3f.11 & Fig 3f.12)

In both these paintings, chariots are depicted amidst processions along with load bearers carrying load. The animal bodies contain design patterns which are expressions of hallucinations where iconic imagery is framed with geometric or entoptic (Williams 2002) forms (Siegel 1977, 134). Also seen are ithyphallic male figures which according to Whitley are a metaphor for altered state of consciousness (Whitley 2000). At Firengi (Fig B) the end of the procession shows two persons climbing up a tree loaded with honeycombs hanging from its branches. In both the paintings the chariots show no superstructure, only the wheels with spokes attached by the axle are depicted. The

charioteer holds to the animal by the reins. One aspect that seems clear regarding these procession scenes is that though they offer many observable realities still it appears totally symbolic. Depiction of chariots and carts are not very frequent in rock art of South India. Yoked cattle are rarely depicted probably here it takes the position of an icon.

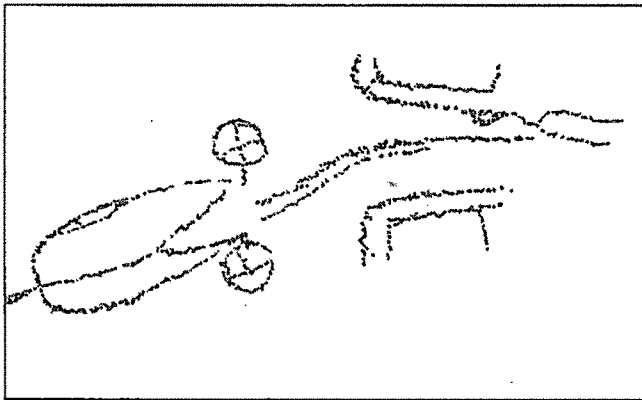


Fig 3f.13 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 468)

Maski, Karnataka (Fig 3f.13)

In this petroglyph we can see a two wheeled chariot, pulled by two cattle. The spokes in the wheels are clearly visible. One of the cattle is drawn upside down.

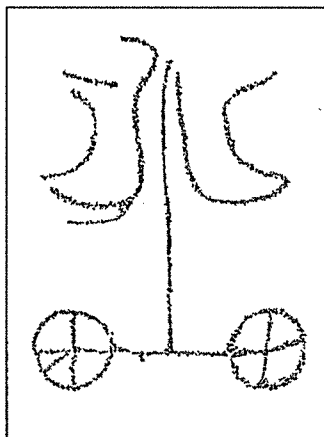


Fig 3f.14 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 469)

Badami, Hiregudda (Fig 3f.14)

This is another engraving of a chariot. The wheels are joined by the axle, similar like those of central India. Animals have been pecked in such a manner that both have their backs towards the pole.

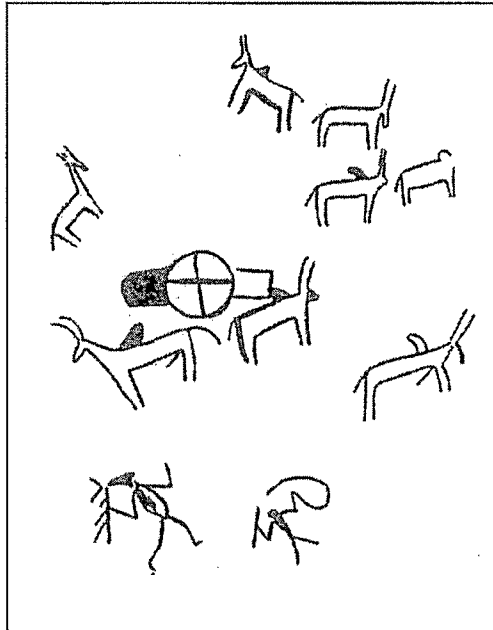


Fig 3f.15 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Fig: 512)

Yerdanur, Andhra Pradesh (Fig 3f.15)

This is rather a peculiar depiction of a bullock cart. This painting is drawn in a very low ceiling (Neumayer 1993, 193). Only a single wheel is drawn, the cart seems to have been represented in a profile view. Interestingly the oxen are drawn back to back but below the cart. Several other animal figures seem to be floating around.

Boats

India being a peninsula with stretches of sea and ocean on east, west and south along with plenty of water bodies within, it is not surprising to see depiction of boats in rock art. In this regard it needs mention that some scholars (not in the Indian context) have emphasized the symbolic interpretations behind the depiction of boats and ships. The symbolic significance of boats in clan construction, mortuary rites, and other rites of passage in the South East Asia region has been widely described by P.Y Manguin (Manguin 2000) and Chris Ballard (Ballard et al. 2003).

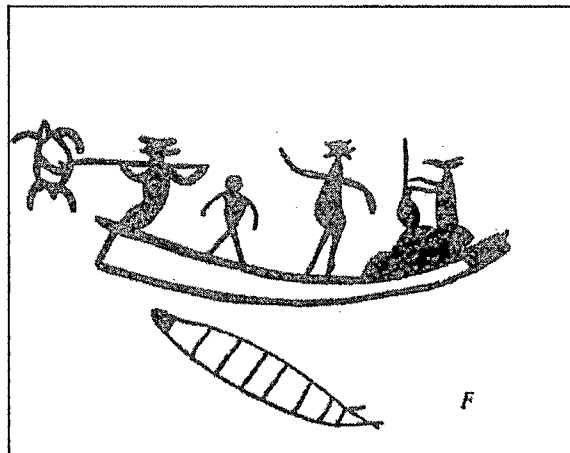


Fig 3f.16 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 250)

Representations of boats are found in Kerwaghat and Gojara rock paintings in Son valley of the northern Vindhyan hills. It appears that these boats are used for fishing and spearing turtles. Generally these are manned by two to four persons (fig 3f.16), (four persons are seen here), of which one person is seen clearly to perform the hunt. According to Neumayer these are simple small fishing boats that operated in rivers or lakes (Neumayer 1993). The construction details of these boats are not very clear, as these pictures are very small in size (Neumayer 1993). Most of these boats as well as the human figures are done in flatwash. Some of them have outriggers attached (Fig: 248,3f.18).

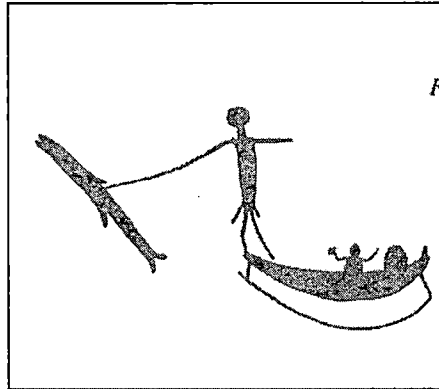


Fig 3f.17 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 251)

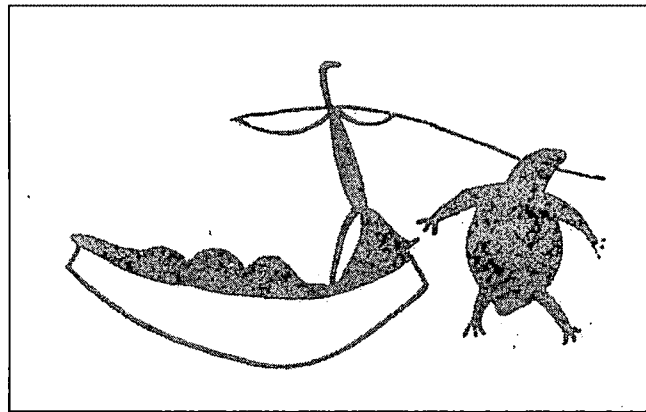
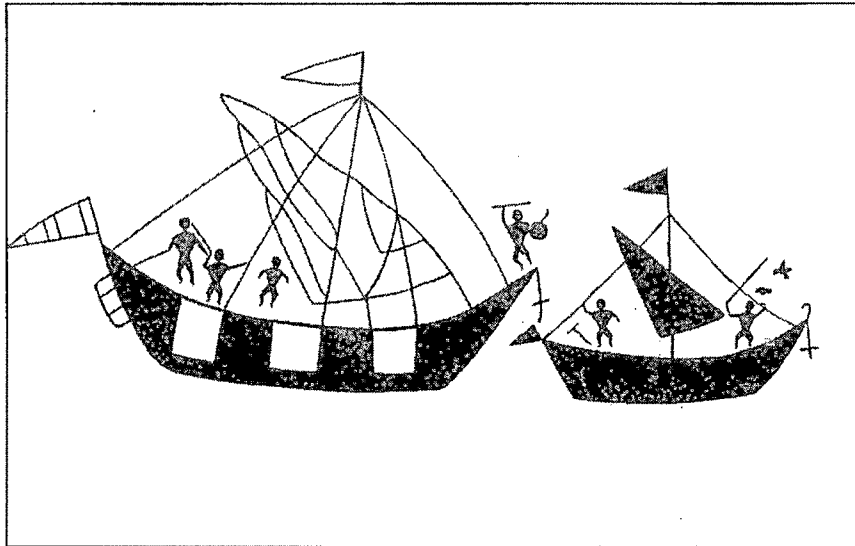


Fig 3f.18 (Ref-Erwin Neumayer: Lines on Stone, Figs: 252)

Interestingly the human figure from Kerwaghat rock shelter (fig-3f.18) has a bird like head. A noteworthy depiction of sea-going vessels has been reported from Chamardi (See fig 3f.19) near Bhavnagar in Gujarat (Sonawane 2002a: 291) which is seen in the west coast of Saurashtra even today. 'The depiction reveals structural and technological features of small sea-vessels. Besides the main body of a baot (hull) and human figures as sailors, one could find rudder, masts, weathervanes, flags and anchors in the picture. It represents a single masted vessel having the characteristic features of the sea vessel of the west coast called under the head of Machwas' (Sonawane, Paper Titled-A Rare Depiction of Sailing Boats in Rock Paintings at Chamardi, Gujarat presented at 2004 International Rock Art Congress at Agra). However a point to be noted here is that in the same shelter at Chamardi, abstract designs comprising of triangles, reactangles along with their

variation and intermediate forms are witnessed on either side of the sailing boat. These abstract designs are symbolic (Sonawane 1996, 13). Presence of abstract designs comprising of geometric forms definitely points to the mystic aspect behind most rock art depictions and also to the fact that wall was probably put up for ritual use.



**Fig 3f.19 (Ref-Recent Studies in Indian Archaeology, Ed.K.Paddaya,
Article: Rock Art of India by V.H Sonawane, Fig: 23)**

3.8 PLANTS AND FLOWERS

We know that the Saura tribes of Orissa follow a tradition of painting which is ritualistic as well as shamanistic in nature. Amongst several motifs that are regarded as icons, a plantain tree laden with bananas is associated with fertility goddess (Pradhan 2001, 62). Trees laden with beehives are also considered to be a popular motif (Pradhan 2001, 62).

In this regard we need to mention here that certain plants have been held in high esteem in almost every culture due to certain qualities which the plant possessed. For example even today we see 'tulsi' plant is an object of veneration as well as worship in almost every Indian home. Similarly in the Americas, psychedelic power plants like peyote and certain types of mushrooms are held in high spiritual esteem and this is seen in almost every culture anywhere in the world (Max Bertola's web page titled Max Bertola's Southern Utah.htm). Similarly images of Datura plant is found in rock art of Lower Pecos region in western Texas. Since Datura grows throughout the Lower Pecos region, it has been identified in archeological deposits in caves and rock shelters. It is known to be one of the more important medicinal and hallucinogenic plants used by Native Americans. Carolyn E. Boyd (Boyd 2003) makes a compelling argument that the Datura motif represents the use of the plant by shamans for its medical and hallucinogenic properties (i.e., altered states). Now, just for our knowledge we should try and understand how these plants may have contributed to the spiritual life of the people? Interestingly, here again comes the shaman who we know goes into trance by aid of drum beats. However there were other techniques to induce a trance. One of which was eating hallucinogenic plants. Researchers have documented more than 50 hallucinogenic plants used by Native Americans. Therefore the plants represented in rock art of Lower Pecos region were representations of Peyote and Datura plants, both of which are psychotropic plants used by shamans "as a sacrament, medicine, and bridge to the supernatural realm (Boyd 2003, 67). Similarly, in India Soma plant has been shrouded in mystery for centuries. It is simultaneously a sacred hallucinogenic plant used in ancient Hindu secret rituals mentioned in the Vedas, a personified God, and an important cosmological principle. David Spess in his book titled 'Soma: The Divine Hallucinogen' (Spess 1999) shows that

Soma provides an important key to the understanding of the earliest systemized methods of medicine, psychology, magic, rejuvenation, longevity, and alchemy. Most significant is that his intensive research helps in actual identification of the plants that served as the basis for the divine hallucinogen like *Nelumbo nucifera*, the sacred lotus of India, as well as some members of the *Nymphaea* genus. He also talks about the ritual use of the plants as psychoactive substances, shamanism, psychic phenomena, and alternative modalities of healing. Soma is also known as 'Amrita' (ambrosia) in the Indian mythology and according to the latter it is milky fermented liquor produced from the soma plant (Ions 1983, 22). This intoxicating drink was an integral part of Vedic sacrifices. Such was the power of this juice that it was considered to be the vital fluid in all beings, healer of diseases, and bestower of riches and therefore even assumed the position of the supreme god. As in other mythologies, where the moon is associated with the regulation of waters and in general with fertility, so in India, Soma which is believed to personify the water of life is said to have absorbed the moon or Chandra (Ions 1983, 23). It needs mention here that Achar and Mahua (Wakankar 1992, 333) are known to have formed the major food for the Mesolithic gatherers. Interestingly Mahua even today is also known for its hallucinogenic properties and is famous for producing an intoxicating drink. It is found plenty in Central India along with some other places within the country.

In the following section some plant like depictions in rock art from India will be discussed, although the exact purpose behind these representations cannot be concluded now. Comprehensive research is required in that direction. However by keeping the above points in mind we can atleast be alert that probably there is much more significance attached to the plant like motifs, seen in rock art from India.



Fig 3g.1 (photo by author)

Panarpani rock shelter, Panchmarhi



Fig 3g.2 (photo by author)

Badkachar rock shelter, Panchmarhi



Fig 3g.3 (photo by author)

Dorothy deep rock shelter, Panchmarhi



Fig 3g.4 (photo by author)

Bhimbetka rock shelter



Fig 3g.5 (photo by author) (Plants along with beehives)

In all the above figures plants as well as flower like motifs have been represented. In fig 3g.5 beehives are probably seen along with the plants. In case of all the figures it is very difficult to ascertain the the species depicted. As already discussed in the earlier section of 'social groups' that there are paintings depicting human figures eating food, which is of pulpy nature and could also be stored for a while (Neumayer 1993, 77 fig-150,226). Therefore it might be possible that food was obtained from these plants. Moreover as already mentioned researchers have documented that shamans used to eat hallucinogenic plants so these may have had ritual significance.

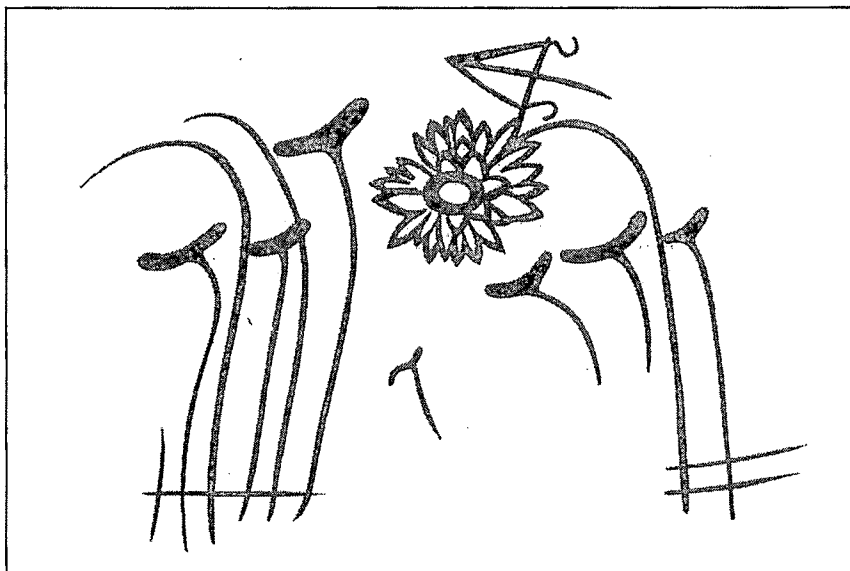


Fig 3g.6 (Ref –V.H Sonawane 2002, 73: Purakala 2002, Vol-13 Fig: 8)

The above painting (3g.6) has been reported from ‘Nano Dungar’ in Maheshwari hill at Tarsang in Gujarat. The painting consists of plants in railing, depicting several pedicels bearing full and partially blown flowers and buds. Floral motif of this type is associated with either Gupta Bharmi or Sankha scripts, and brought into light from rock shelters at Kharvai, Bhimbetka, Putlikarar etc. belonging to Gupta or post-Gupta period (Sonawane 2002b, Purakala, 74).

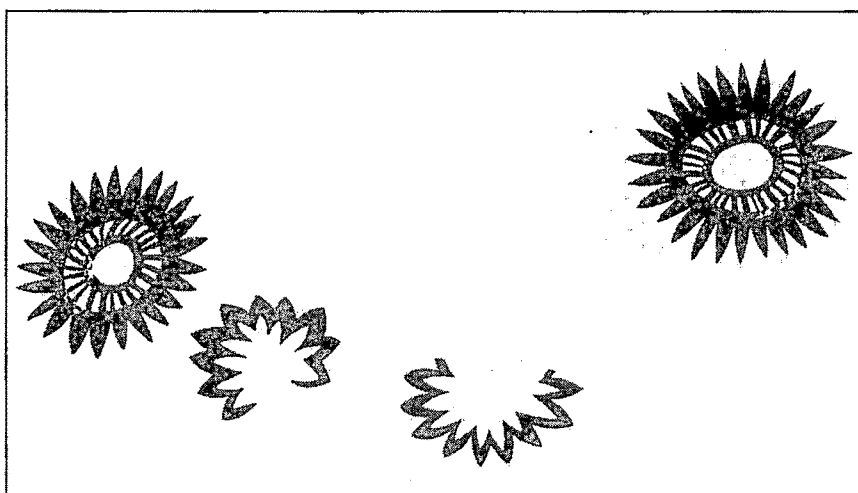


Fig 3g.7 (Ref –V.H Sonawane 2002, 71: Purakala 2002, Vol-13 Fig: 5)

Maheshwari hill, Tarsang (Fig 3g.7)

If seen in an isolated manner the above floral motifs are a collection of geometric designs. The flower like motif is comprised of concentric circles enclosed by triangular shaped petals. In fig 3g.7 the blank space between the concentric circles is filled with obliquely hatched lines whereas outer petals are completely filled up with red colour (Sonawane 2002b, 72). This group has been called floral motifs resembling sunflowers (Sonawane 2002b, 72).