

STUDY OF SHAMANISM AND ROCK ART

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, studies of rock art have relied heavily on ethnography as their primary research method. Since the 1970s, the (re)turn to ethnography has been thought to be something less than a paradigmatic transformation; nonetheless, it has in fact sparked a great deal of theoretical discussion in the highly undertheorized field of rock art study. Shamanism is here very simply defined as the causal relationship that academics make between shamanic rituals and rock art, and from which answers have been sought. This association is at the centre of the ethnographic turn, which has been primarily constructed around it. The application of this strategy has evolved over the course of time depending on 1) the archaeological context in which it was going to be applied, 2) the utilisation of additional sources of evidence (specifically, neuropsychology), and 3) the role of shamanism as either a hypothesis or as an established fact. It has been constructed as a theory by the utilisation of three distinct types of comparisons, namely ethnographic, formal, and uniformitarian analogies. This article discusses the changing role of shamanism in studies of South African and European Palaeolithic rock art. Its goal is to contribute, at least in some small way, to a more extensive discussion on the nature of analogous reasoning and its ramifications.

Keywords: Rock Art, Dolmens, Chronology

INTRODUCTION

The phrase "rock art" is commonly used to refer to ancient artwork in the form of paints, brushings, and engravings on the bare rock surfaces of caves and rock shelters as well as on isolated rock boulders in the open air. This type of artwork may be found all over the world. Rock art, also known as cave paintings, is the creative expression of early humans in the form of fashioned colourful pictures on rock surfaces that were painted many years ago. Cave paintings are also known as pictographs. The majority of them are accessible in the form of drawings and paintings that were done using natural dyes and were found in sandstone rock shelters, open boulders, caves, and megalithic burial sites. These locations. The aesthetic expressions carved into rocks are symbolic representations of the sociocultural, economical, sociopolitical, and socioreligious characteristics of the societies that created them in the past. We are able to comprehend the adaptive methods used in the past and the link between humans and their environments via the study of rock art. Rock art is the oldest surviving example of human creativity in the world. It is a significant source material that may be used to comprehend the mental world of the people who lived in prehistoric times. It offers a glimpse into the era that has long since passed.

Therefore, rock art provides a significant amount of evidence to illustrate the lifestyle of the people who lived in the past. The people who lived in the past gave significant value to rock art by including it in their daily lives. Around 40.000 years before now, cavemen first started writing on the walls of their caves. In

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spite of this, cultural characteristics may have persisted until the succeeding Mesolithic age, which lasted from 12000 to 10000 B.P. According to the paintings from this time period, ancient man domesticated animals and extended his activities throughout this time period. The discovery of copper during the Chalcolithic era marked the beginning of the final phase of the ancient era, which lasted from 8000 to 6000 B.P. and was known as the Neolithic age (6000-5000 BP). These are the vast prehistoric periods that span the whole earth and during which an abundance of rock art may be found. The most common forms of rock art include rock paintings, rock engravings, and rock brushings. However, there are many more varieties of rock art.

According to the research that has been conducted, the rock art depicts the graffities that comprise of the domestic fauna, scenes of hunting, dance, pastoralism, and food production, as well as imagery from religious and military settings. Women in India frequently create works of art in the setting of the home, where they do so for a variety of purposes, including ceremonial, therapeutic, apostrophic, auspiciousness-producing, or ornamental activities On the subject of the rock art, numerous experts have different points of view and interpretations. According to the findings of some of the academics, most of the imagery has a symbolic meaning and is generally associated with ceremonial activities to the findings of some other scholars, rising stylistic abstraction may be related to a transition away from rock art that serves a purportedly simple narrative function and toward the production of rock art that serves more symbolic or ritualistic reasons In any case, rock art is the global medium through which the past may be understood. Archibald Carlleyele was the first person to describe the discovery of Indian rock art sites in 1856. In later times, a number of discoveries were made that were documented on the rock art in India. Rock art research in India became much more focused on exploration, recording, and categorization, as well as similarities with ethno archaeological studies, when the rock drawings in Bhimbetka were found by V.S. Wakankar in the 1950s.

Rock art discovered in Andhra Pradesh

Caves in the Kadapa region that contain significant amounts of rock art have been found by a group of five scholars from Yogi Vemana University (YVU). The caverns may be found in the valley of the Kundu River in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, which is about four kilometres away from the Bhogeswaram temple complex.

V. Ramabrahmam, who was in charge of leading the expedition, determined that the rock art dates back to sometime between 6000 BC and the 6th century AD. Paintings dating back to the historic period may be seen here among rock art that dates to the Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Megalithic periods. Regarding the artwork from the Mesolithic period, he claims that four or five hand imprints made with red ochre by a single individual have been found. At many rock art sites in Rayalaseema, impressions that are quite similar to these have also been discovered. The investigator explains that the handprints were formed on the wall of the rock shelter by dipping the palm of the hand into colour and then slapping it on the wall. In addition, artefacts dating back to the Mesolithic period have been discovered, which is evidence that people of this time period formerly inhabited the area. "Although there are no drawings of animals or livestock from the Neolithic age, we did find stone tools that were from the Neolithic period," he adds. "Although there are no paintings from the Neolithic age." He claims that there is a human figure depicted in white pigment that dates back to the Megalithic epoch. "The picture showed what appeared to be a fight between a human and a wild animal that resembled a tiger. A artwork of two people standing together and holding tridents in their left hands was

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another thing that caught our attention. This demonstrates that iron weapons were used, which is a fundamental characteristic of the Megalithic cultures.

In addition to the rock art that dates back to ancient times, there is also art that depicts Ravana, Hanuman, and Rama. "Rama is shown with ochre yellow paint covering his face and holding a bow in his left hand. The artwork of Ravana is similarly done in yellow ochre, and it depicts him in a kneeling position. According to Dr. Ramabharhmam, there is a scene in which Hanuman is seen standing while moving a mountain. The group comes to the conclusion that the cave was inhabited by humans of several stone age periods, ranging from the late Mesolithic to the historic period. According to Dr. Ramabrahmam, distinct stone age eras are represented by the presence of red ochre, white pigment, and yellow ochre.

The study team discovered five graves in the surrounding area. "Of the five, three are in their original condition," he explains. Other members of the group include an assistant professor named Y. Raghu, as well as Ph.D. candidates named C. Shiva Kumar, J. Narayana, and P. Nagesh. The group has made a request to the Archaeological Survey of India to keep the rock art protected for the benefit of subsequent generations.



ANANTAPUR DISTRICT

Budagavi (140 58'N; 7 70 14'E)

Within the Anatapur district and within the Uravakonda taluk, Budagavi is a little village that can be found on the route leading from Anatapur to Bellary. The taluk headquarters are approximately 6 kilometres away

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(Fig.10). The Buddhist stupas (Buddha = Buda) that can be found inside of a deep and long rock shelter known as a cave (Gavi (telugu) = Cave) on the top of the mound that is facing east are where the settlement got its name. The flora that covers the granite hill is primarily of the scrub jungle variety and includes a great number of prickly plants. The granite hillock has several locations, both on its level top and slopes, that produced evidence of Mesolithic and Neolithic tool use. It is quite astonishing to observe that neither the person who found the site nor the following investigator (Rami Reddy 1971) made even a passing reference to the rock art of this site which is near to the Neolithic dwelling site.

The site was discovered by Robert Bruce Foote (Rami Reddy 1978:7). (Chandramouli1990b). An extensive surface collection of Neolithic items, pottery, and Mesolithic tools was documented, despite the fact that no excavations were carried out at this location. At several of the flat tops of the hillock, there were a significant number of man-made grounds that were discovered. It is believed that these grounds date back to the Neolithic period. This region appears to have been continuously inhabited right up until the historical period, as attested by the existence of a rare temple dedicated to the Sun god at the foot of the hillock on its western side and a stepped tank at the top of the hillock itself. Both of these features can be found on the western side of the hillock. Also discovered are a few of loose sculptures, one of which is identified as being that of Mahishasuramardani. This particular sculpture is notable for the numerous distinctive characteristics it possesses. The site may provide numerous intriguing artefacts belonging to a variety of cultural eras, notably the Neolithic phase, if systematic excavations are carried out at the location.

The Budagavi rock art site is situated at an elevation that is 522 metres higher than mean sea level. According to Dutt's classification of Andhra Pradesh's topography, the region in question is one of the physiographic sub divisions known as "the Interior Rugged Plain." This particular sub division may be found in the located area (1981). This region is more rough, and it is dotted with clusters of hills. In the southern section, it climbs from 500 to 1177 metres towards the west and south. This area is mostly made up of grey granite that ranges in grain size from medium to coarse and is around the same age as the Closepet granite that was discovered in the Bellary region by Crawford (1969). This granite is part of a more recent intrusive phase that occurred inside the Dharwar Super group in the Karnataka area. This granite is composed of layers of amphibolite schist, lenses of quartzite with widths ranging from 6-8 inches, and it is cut through by coarsely crystalline pegmatite with widths ranging from 1-6 inches. The hand specimen of granite reveals blue and grey quartz, light brown k feldspar, white and light green plagioclase feldspar, all of which contribute to the rock's overall grey coloration. In the rock of the country, various joints and fracture patterns may be seen running in different directions. Gray granite has been found to include dolerite dykes as well.

The grey granite contains a variety of pot holes of varying diameters, which is evidence of surface water movement over the masses. On the slope at the location, the native tree species that predominate are largely bushes of Euphorbia cattimandoo, Phyllanthus pinnatus, Dregea volubilis, Justicia sp., and Anona squamosa as well as shrubs of Barleria pronitis, Cocculus sp., Plumbago zylanica, Sida ovalifolia, Arva lanata, Gyroc On the highest point of the hilltop are a total of four rock shelters, each of which contains a painting (and one bruising). The paintings are done in a combination of red ochre and white. Rock shelters 1, 3, and 4 include paintings done in red ochre, whilst rock shelter 2 contains paintings done in a white colour.

Drawings of two human beings, one in flat wash and another in outline, are depicted in the white paintings. Both individuals are shown in a standing position next to one another. The paintings done in red ochre feature human and animal images, including a deer, humped bulls, handprints, and geometric and symmetrical

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figures. The lone etching shows a bull with a hump in front of which the sign of a circle with a trident is also carved. Twenty different rock paintings may be seen spread among the four different rock shelters. It is possible to differentiate between three distinct stages of rock art by using the principle of superimposition. There are weakly discernible deer figures in rock shelter 3, which are artistically comparable to the deer images in the Kethavaram rock paintings. This period of the painting activity here represents the initial phase of the painting activity. The situation is the same both with the inverted V-shaped designs that are on the bodies of the animals and with those that are drawn independently. The second phase is symbolised by paintings of humped bulls, which are distinctive features of the Neolithic art of South India.





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The humped Bull figurines of Budagavi, on the other hand, demonstrate a number of unusual aesthetic characteristics (Fig.11). The Budagavi humped bulls are represented with a low hump, straight or curved horns, and a distinct body of design consisting of criss – cross lines, and half of the body in flat wash. This is in contrast to the lyre-shaped horns of the bull figures in the Karnataka rock art (Sundara1974, 1984, 2006). Even a simplified representation of a deer has the same general shape to its body. There is no other rock art location in Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh that depicts humped bulls in just the same way as this one does. The humped bull sculptures found at Budagavi (Figure 12) might have been of a different breed and could have been created as early as the Neolithic period (Chandramouli 1991, 2011). There are further paintings of the same animal in addition to these humped bull forms. These paintings are artistically comparable to Neolithic specimens found in Karnataka and other locations in Andhra. The white paintings of the two human beings seen in the third phase are meant to represent that period.

Paintings that are done entirely in white begin to emerge during the Neolithic period, but their frequency increases significantly throughout the stages that follow. It is possible that the early historic era is when the white paintings at this site were painted over the red paintings since they are overlaid on top of one other. The carvings of a humped bull and a geometric symbol are both intriguing features of the object. The image of the bull is etched with a thin line, and its hump is not rendered in a particularly noticeable manner. The carved geometric design that can be seen to the right of the humped bull is known as the "circle with a trident symbol," and it is the identifying feature of the megalithic civilisation that was practised in Andhra Pradesh. On this site, however, it is discovered in conjunction with the artistic representations of the Neolithic period. There have been no discoveries of engravings or paintings that can be dated to the megalithic period at this site. In addition to this, the artifactual material exhibits characteristics typical of an early Neolithic era. It is not out of place to note the observations made by Paddayya (2011: 9) with regard to the rock art of Neolithic Karnataka, which includes the present-day Bellary and Raichur districts as well as the surrounding Shorapur Doab, has maintained considerable evidence of rock art from a variety of locations, including Piklihal, Kupgal, and others.

The fact that all of the dated ash mound sites in the nuclear region and elsewhere correspond to the early and middle periods of the Neolithic civilisation is an additional element that is remarkable. As a result of the similarity in geological and topographical factors, the rock art sites of Budagavi and Velpumadugu are considered to be part of the same nuclear zone in the Indian state of Karnataka. The accompanying surface artifactual collection at each of these sites indicates that they reflect the early Neolithic period. This may be deduced from the prevalence of the pecked –and ground stone tool industries, micriliths, handmade pottery, and other such artefacts. The majority of the rock carvings and bruisings found in the nuclear zone of Karnataka represent humped bulls. These engravings and bruisings cover hundreds of thousands of square feet (Neumayer 1993). As a result, the rock art sites of Budagavi and Velpumadugu need to be considered to be part of the initial phase of Neolithic art in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

CONCLUSION

The caverns are located in close proximity to the rock art location. Nearly half a kilometre distant from the rock art site is a gully that flows, and the stone tools are found along with the gully (Vanka). Stone artefacts such as hand axes, flakes, blades, pestle, and Neolithic ring stones can also be discovered in the areas that are immediately around the caves. One of the religious buildings is constructed entirely out of stones, giving

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the impression that it is rather old. When the residents of the villages first began venturing into the forest once a year for the purpose of hunting or grazing their animals, they brought their annual pilgrimage to this location to perform religious ceremonies. These buildings are the property of Akka Dhevathalu (Sister Goddess). The megalithic structures may also be found in close proximity to the site, and treasure hunters frequently disrupt these monuments. The available evidences at the locations that are immediately next to this rock art site showed that the region has strong livelihood continuity from the past to the present.

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