

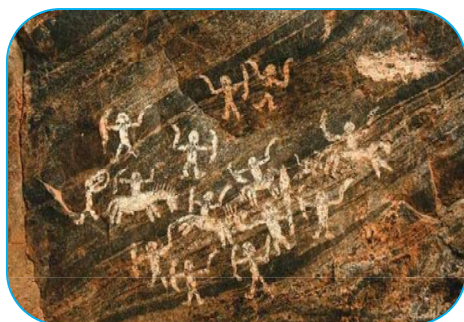


KARIKKIYUR ROCK ART - A STUDY

S.Nanthakumar

ISSN: 2249-894X
IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631(UIF)
UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514
VOLUME - 8 | ISSUE - 8 | MAY - 2019

Ph.D Research Scholar (Part-time) ,
Dept. of Ancient History and Archaeology ,
University of Madras, Chennai.



ABSTRACT:

Rock art is a terminology used to refer to paintings, carving and engravings found on the ceilings and walls of caves or rock shelters, located in remote areas and isolated rock boulders in the plains. In India, rock art is also termed as cave paintings.

KEYWORDS: rock shelters, cave paintings.

INTRODUCTION:

Rock art is a term used to define several types of artistic examples in the form of paintings, bruising, pecking, and engravings etc; in the bare rock surfaces of caves, rock shelters and isolated rock boulders, executed by our ancestors. Basically there are two types of rock art. One of them is produced by an "additive process", i.e. by adding some colour substance to the rock surface to depict motifs, figures etc. This form of art is variously known as pictographs, petroglyphs, paintings etc. Since majority of this form of rock art occurs in caves and rock shelters and which cannot be moved from place to place, it is also known as 'parietal art'. The second form of art is

produced by a 'deductive process' i.e., by removing rock particles from the rock with the help of a sharp instruments, of stone or metal, to depict the desired figure, motif or symbol. This form of art is known in various forms depending on the technique of execution, as petroglyphs, engravings and bruising. Rock art is a global phenomenon with its antiquity going back to more than forty thousands of years, when men's subsistence economy was based on hunting and gathering. In the history of mankind no work of fine art other than rock art has such a wide distribution lasting for such a long time. It constitutes the earliest written and visual document of the mankind-a very powerful means of expressing ancient artistic sophistication. It is a storehouse of information for archaeologists and historians

in their efforts to reconstruct the life style of the peoples of the remote past. These works of art provide first hand information on society, beliefs, rites, rituals, costumes, tools and implements, technological attainments, means of subsistence, contemporary flora and fauna and above all man-nature relationship. They exhibit incredible artistic maturity, be it in selection of colours or articulation of a form or a pattern.

HISTORY OF ROCK ART RESEARCH IN INDIA

India is one of the three countries with largest concentration of the world heritage of rock art, the other two being Australia and South Africa. It is also significant to note that India pioneered rock art research in the world. The evidence of first petroglyphs were reported from Almora in India by Henwood (1856: 204-

05) as early as 1856. The first reported discovery of Stone Age paintings was made in India in 1867-68, twelve years before the sensational discovery of Altamira in Spain, by a British archaeologist Archibald Carlleyle at Sohagighat in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. What is significant is that Archibald Carlleyle even in those days claimed Stone Age antiquity for those rock paintings on the basis of the large number of microliths he collected along with pieces of charcoal and hematite from the occupational deposits of the painted rock shelters. Unfortunately, Carlleyle's discovery could not come to limelight and remained confined to his field notes as he did not publish any account of his discovery. It was only in 1906 Vincent Smith managed to collect the field notes of Carlleyle from Rev. R. Gatty, a friend of Carlleyle and published them in *Indian Antiquary*. (Smith.1906:185-95). The first scientific article on Indian rock art was published by John Cockburn, an officer in the Opium Department of the British Government, in 1883 when he reported his discovery of a few painted rock shelters in the Kaimur ranges (Cockburn. 1983: 56-64). Cockburn published his second article on rock art of India in 1899 (Cockburn. 1899: 89-97). After 5 Carlleyle and Cockburn a host of scholars & explorers reported their discoveries on various occasions from different parts of the subcontinent. In 1901 F. Fawcett reported the carvings of the Edakkal cave in Kozhikode district of Kerala (Fawcett.1901: 401-21). In 1902 A.H. Francke published a paper on his discovery of petroglyphs in lower Ladakh region (Francke. 1902 : 398-401). C. A. Silberrad (1907: 567-70) an officer of Indian Civil Service discovered a series of rock art sites in Banda district. C. W. Anderson reported rock paintings in Raigarh district of Chhatisgarh (erstwhile Madhya Pradesh) (Anderson 1918: 290-306). In 1916 Robert Bruce Foote reported the rock bruising of Ballary district in Karnataka, which were discovered by Hubert Knox in the eighties of the nineteenth century (Foote. 1916). Percy Brown in his book on *Indian Paintings* (1917: 14-41) included a chapter on rock paintings. Similarly Panchanana Mishra in his book on *Prehistoric India* (1923) described about rock art. Manoranjan Ghosh (1932) studied the rock painting of Mirzapur, Adamgarh and Raigarh. Rock engravings in Orissa was reported from Vikramkhol in Sundargarh district by K.P. Jayaswal (1933: 58-60). Rock paintings of the Panchmari region were restudied by D.H.Gordon (1958). Rock art research in India in the subsequent yearn was carried forward further by a host of scholars namely: F. R. Allchin (1963: 161), V. S. Wakankar (1973, 1976), R. K. Verma (1964), Jagdish Gupta (1967), S. K. Pandey (1970 & 1993) A. Sundara (1974: 21-23).

In the last two decades a host of scholars like; Y. Mathapal (1984, 1995,1998), Giriraj Kumar (1984), V. H. Sonawane (1984,1996), K. K.Chakravorty (1984), Rakesh Tiwari (1990), Erwin Neumayer (1993), R.K.Sharma and K. K. Tripathy (1996), Somnath Chakraverty (1996), Murari Lai Sharma(1996), K. K. Chakravorty and R.G.Bedrarik (1997) N. Chandramouli (1991, 1995) S. Pradhan (1988 1994, 1995, 1996, 2001,2002) have substantially contributed in bringing to limelight new rock art sites and in furthering the rock art research in India.

ROCK ART RESEARCH IN TAMIL NADU:

The Knowledge of Rock art in Tami Nadu is almost blind the last quarter of 20th Century. The first discovery of Rock paintings at Mallapadi Village in Krishnagiri district was dicovered by K.V. Raman Professor; University of Madras in 1978 initiated a new beginning in the study of rock art in Tamil Nadu. After that many scholars like Ponarasu discovered rock paintingsfrom South Aroct and North Arcot. In (1984) BagurKuppusamy discovered an important rock painting at Kilvalai, present Villupuram District. R. Poongundran discovered several rock art sites in the Nilgiri hills, R Krishnamoorthy discovered rock painting on the dolmens at Maharajakadai and Mallachandiram in Krishnagiri district, V.Vedachalam discovered few sites in Madurai Region as the same time the Tamil Nadu Archaeological Department initiated a concrete programme to survey and documented all the available rock art sites in Tamil Nadu (Sridhar 2005) and R. Poundurai (1986) Consolidated the available date on rock art and brought out a monograph. K. Rajan in association with pulavarDuraiSamy and T. Subramanian carried out archaeological survey between 1990-2005, there was a full pledged research in rock art Studies. However, recently in the year 2005 to 2007 a few investigators like K.T. Gandhirajan, R.N. Kumaran, M. Saranya and K.Kumar brought to light several sites. Till now more than 75 rock art sites have been reported in Tamil Nadu.

ROCK ART IN KARIKKIYUR

The present study area Karikkiyur is located in the Kothagiri taluk, Nilgiri district. The Nilgiri hills are a range of mountains in the western most part of Tamil Nadu state at the junction of Karnataka and Kerala state in south India. The village Karikkiyur is situated North longitude 11°28'1.04"N and East latitude 76°52'46.39"E and the village situated 40km west of Kothakiri. About 2km towards north of village a big rock shelter locally called Porivarai is located and it is the one of biggest rock art site in Tamil Nadu.

This is an east facing shelter measuring about 30 m in height and 150 m in length paintings are executed extend over a a length of nearly 100m. the rock art site painted more than 300 images in individual images or in group compositions. Some of images are faded due to natural calamity. This shelter has layers of superimposed figures painted in different style and colours and possibly of different time period.



Fig:1 - Map Showing location of the Karikkiyur

Pigment:

In this shelter Rock Painting were made invariably by using both white and red pigment. In red pigment superimposed by the white pigment are seen. The most commonly used material for preparing pigment in all periods was Iron-oxide for red pigment and kaoling for white pigment. Here also the same may be used for the red and white pigments. However, the future research has to be done in this regard.

Theme and analysis:

The Rock shelters more than group composition panels have survived better condition. The paintings at Porivarai rock shelter in Karikkiyur are thematically subdivided into purely three major themes the first one is animal themes, the second one is human themes and the final themes is the interaction between animals and humans.

Hunting Scenes

The image shows six hunters in natural outline style. Originally these hunters were painter white colour and few of the figures have touches of red over the white. This could have been added at a later period. The first hunter from our left holds some weapon which could be a boomerang. He is not engaged in any action probably because he is observing the animal. The second figure has strung his bow while the third hunter is in the process of lifting the arrow and stringing it to the bow. The figure next to him holds a stick like weapon and the fifth figure holds something which is not clear. The sixth hunter is in the initial stage of picking his arrow.

The artist depicts three of the hunters with bow and arrows in different stages instead of showing them all shooting their arrows at once. This is because arrows were a precious item in those days and the hunters would do their best to economise on their use of arrows. Hence the artist shows the first hunter aiming for the animal and the second and third one in different stages of preparation. Visually also this creates a pleasing sense of movement and variation within the image. The artist composes all the six images in keeping with the hunting practice that was in vogue then and he also creates a sense of animation within the image.

Domestication cattle

The image shows two human figures and five buffalos and calves are depicted white on grey surfaced wall. These two human figures are holding a stick on their right hand to control the animals. Among the five, four of them are going to left side. The whole scene to be process of domestication of wild animal.

Battle scene

One of the panels is a battle scene depicting fighting between human figures on the horses and foot soldiers. In this panel, four of the human figures are on the horse and there are ten foot soldiers most of them carrying bow and arrows, few holding long sticks. All the figures, both human and animal, are executed in silhouetted natural style.

Snake and Mongoose combat

The rock art depicted all the wild animals like bison's, monkeys, deer, snake, mongoose, tiger, dog, boar etc. but particularly the snake and mongoose shows an aerial view. The snake and mongoose is in a smooth wavy line which is painted in one stroke and the mongoose like creature has also been painted in a single stroke. The snake and mongoose combat is a game that is shown by entertainers even now and the snake and mongoose fight is a metaphor used to describe extreme enmity. On the top of the panel three hunters with bow and arrow are seen. The treatment of these figures and the creatures are in a similar way. One is not sure whether the humans are onlookers of the event or whether they are unrelated to the snake and mongoose combat.

Monkeys playing scene

There are seven monkeys climbing up the curved branches of a tree. These are in the single stroke outline style. The artist has composed in such a way that there is a sense of rhythm in the composition due to the curve of the branch and the repeating curves of the monkeys' tails. The raised tail is both an aesthetic device and a marker of the artist's observation of life around wherein the monkey uses its tail to balance its climbing. The bend of the branches shows the monkeys' agility and our wonder at the animal's ability to do things that humans cannot do. The artist has captured the moment of anticipation just before it is about to leap off to another branch.

Group Dancing

In this rock art shows as a group of hunters dancing together after a successful boar hunt. All the figures are depicted vertically and the animal is shown horizontally. Hunting a boar is one of the important activities among the tribes because killing a boar will give enough meat to satisfy the community. But killing a boar is not an easy task as it takes a lot of effort and man power. So a successful boar hunt is an occasion to rejoice and this happy event is depicted here.

Indicating a continuation between these prehistoric traditions and contemporary tribal life, Irula community inhabiting the region perform a kind of dance after a boar hunt. Their happiness and excitement at having hunted a boar manifests itself as a song-dance. Interestingly, the song-dance is also like a lament since the tribes apologize to the boar for having hunted it. They believe that by asking the animal for forgiveness they will be assured of such kills in the future. This indicates the people's closeness to nature and their sensitivity to the living beings around them.

Chronology

The content, pigments, superimposition an context suggest that these paintings seem to have been executed at various times. On stylistic ground, it is possible to date some of the paintings belong to the Neolithic and megalithic periods. The cultural material like Neolithic stone tools and megalithic pottery pieces encountered at this site suggests this connection. Furthermore, megalithic burial remains like stone circle, dolmen, cist and menheir are also found in the villages at Kallampalayam, Uppupallam and Allimoyar, all of which are located in the vicinity of Porivarai. Apart from prehistoric paintings, there are also a few paintings belongs to the historical period.

CONCLUSION

The unique fauna of this region has a significant impact on the rock art heritage of the Niligiri region. Because of the fauna Elephant, Gaur, Mouse, deer, tiger, panther, sambar, spotted Deer, Malabar giant Squirrel, wild dog, spotted cat, leopard cat, hyena, etc., are still surviving animals in the Nilgiris. Most of the animals are depicted in the Karikkiyur rock paintings. The paintings play a vital role in the history of Tamil Nadu because it reflecting human day to day life and providing us a valuable information about the human past history. To determine the accurate chronology of the rock paintings is more difficult us. Hence, require relativity dating to fix the chronology. On the basis of the material evidence and drawing style and similarities are also more useful to know about the chronological sequences of the paintings.

REFERENCES:

1. Allchin, B and R 1968 *The Birth of Indian Civilization: India and Pakistan before 500 BC*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books.
2. Allchin, F.R., 1963 *Neolithic Cattel Keepers of South India: A study of the Decan Ashmounds*, Cambridge University Press.
3. Andreson, C.W. "Singanpur Rock Paintings" *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society* V.4, no. 2: 298-306.
4. Carlleyle, Archibald. "Cave Paintings of the Kaimur Range." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1899.
5. Cockburn, J 1883 On the recent existence of Rhinoceros indicus in the North Western Provinces, and a description of a tracing of an archaic rock painting from Mirzapore representing the hunting of this animal. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, V. 52, no. 2: 56-54.
6. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 18, 1976, William Benton Publishers, pp.519-520.
7. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 2, P . 483-498
8. *Encyclopedia Britannica* Hoebel & E. L. Frost, *Cultural and Social Anthropology*, New Delhi, 1979, p.385.
9. Fawcett, F. "Notes on Rock Carving in the Edakkal Cave." *Indian Antiquary* 30 (1901).
10. Foote, R.B., 1916 Madras Government Museum, *The Foote collection of Indian Prehistoric and Protohistoric Antiquities, Notes on their Ages and Distribution*, Madras Government Press.
11. Gordon, D.H. 1958. *The prehistoric Background of Indian Culture*. Bombay, N.M. Tripathi.
12. Gupta, J 1967 *Pragitihasiik Bharteeya Chitrakala*. Delhi, National Pub. House.
13. Jacobson, J 1970 Microlithic Contexts in the Vindhayn Hills of Central India. Ph.D Thesis, Sub.to the Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University.
14. Mathpal, Y 1984 *Prehistoric Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi.
15. Neumayer, Erwin 1983 *Prehistoric Indian Rock Paintings*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
16. Paddaya, K 1968 *Pre and Proto Historic Invetigations in shorapur Doab*. Ph.D Thesis. Poona University.
17. Pandey, SK 1969 *Painted Rock Shelters of Madhya Pradesh with Special Reference to Mahakoshal*. Ph.D. Thesis. Saugor University.
18. Silberrad, CA 1907 Rock Drawings in the Banda District. *Journal of the Asiatic society of Bengal*, v.3-1:567-700.

19. Smith, V 1906 "Pygmy Flints". Quoting a letter from A. Carlleyle to the Rev. R. Gatty. *The Indian Antiquary*.
20. Sundara, A 1974 Further Notices of rock paintings in Hire Benakal. *Journey of Indian History, Trivandrum* v.52: 21-32.
21. Varma, R.K 1964 "Stone Age Cultures and Rock Paintings of Mirzapur District." Ph.D thesis, Allahabad University.
22. Wakankar, Vishnu S. 1957 Rock Shelters in Madhya Pradesh. IAR, 1956-57, 1979.
23. Wakankar, V.S. & Brooks, R.R.R., 1976 Stone Age Paintings in India; Bombay.



Fig: 1 - The image shows Human with Animal



Fig: 2 - The image shows Human Hold with Bow and Arrow



Fig: 3 - The image shows Human Battle



Fig: 4 - The image shows group of cattle