

Newly Discovered Rock Art Sites in North Karnataka, India

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Introduction

Indian rock art is well known in the world for its uniqueness and for its great message, (Chakravarty & Bednarik 1997; Nuemayer 1993, 2010; Brooks & Wakankar 1976). In the global context India has to its credit the discovery and appreciation of prehistoric rock art. India is one of the six major regions of rock art in the world. The others are South-Western Europe, Russia, North Africa and Australia. Thus, India is the biggest centre of rock art in Asia (Mathpal 1991). The main concentration of rock art found in the Central, Eastern and Southern India, consists mainly of paintings and petroglyphs. Initial investigation began in the late 1867-68 (Chandramouli 2002). Later researchers have focused on Central India. However, earlier finds from the South India, have more recently been followed up by investigations which demonstrate that South India also has a wide range of rock art (Paul et. al. 2010).

The rock art sites are located in an archaeologically rich area noted for the highly significant Palaeolithic deposits in North Karnataka (Paddayya 1971; Korisetar 1979; Pappu & Deo 1994) as well as an abundance of varied Holocene sites, including those of hunter-gatherer, Neolithic and Megalithic people (Allchin 1963; Sundara 1969; Paddayya 2011).

Rock art studies in the North Karnataka was heralded by F. Fawcett in 1892 at Kupgal (near Bellary) (Gordon 1951 & Nuemayer 1991) Later, scholars like Leonard Munn when a special officer of the Hyderabad Geological Survey discovered paintings at Hire Benakal in 1934 (Raymond & Allchin 1994-95). It drew the attention of archaeologists to look for further exploration in this region, like, R.B Foote(1916), H. Knox, D.H Gordon (1951 & 1955), M.S. Nagarajarao, Neumayer(1993), Raymond and B. Allchin (1994-95), Shrishaila Aradhya, Lakshman Telagavi, A Sundara, L.S Rao, Sharana Basappa Kolkar. V.S Wakankar did visit Badami region and noticed some rock paintings in the area around 1961. Neumayer has exclusively carried out field survey of rock art sites in different parts of India; he also brought to light rock paintings in Ranganathana gudda, Hiregudda (near Badami), Nagarhal and Kutakankeri (Neumayer 1983, 1991 & 1993). A. Sundara (1974, 1982, 1994 &



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