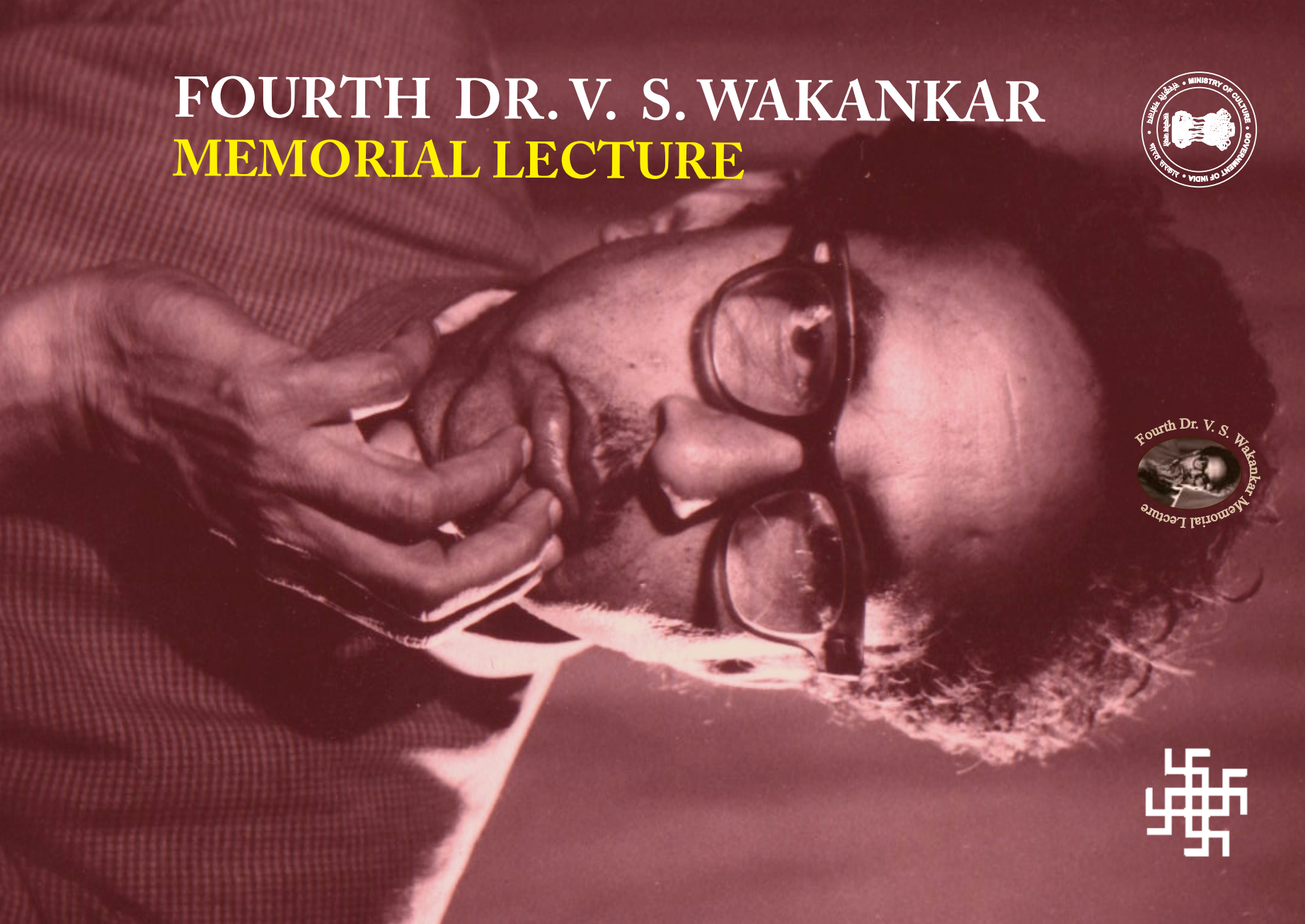
FOURTH DR. V. S. WAKANKAR
MEMORIAL LECTURE



Fourth Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lecture

VISHNU SHRIDHAR WAKANKAR

The Chief Architect of Rock Art Studies in India

by

Vishwasrao H. Sonawane

Organised by

Adi Drishya Department
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

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FOREWORD

The early man started to record the world around him and his activities from time immemorial for the life sustenance and to bring forth his progenies to flourish. He lived in the natural caves and shelters which he decorated with paintings and engravings. Rock art being the earliest expression of human aesthetic desire and an important cultural marker, having multifaceted dimensions together with its allied subjects like rock sculptures, rock monuments, megalithic structures and tribal art have always intrigued the scholars. Throughout the world, rock art is the most important visual record of humanity's ancient past. Rock art images can be treated as a source of cultural communication between the past, present and the future. IGNCA is perhaps the only institution in the country where rock art is being studied as the earliest visual manifestation of mankind in a holistic perspective.

The Adi Drishya Department of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) is mandated to study and experience the ancient worldview through its different art forms and associated subjects. It partakes of the holistic worldview, so forcefully articulated throughout the Indian tradition(s) and emphasised by modern research. Realising the importance of Adi Drishya studies, the IGNCA created a separate department for it. The department manifests its academic, research work in the form of publications, international and national seminars, conferences, exhibitions, lecture series and digital and physical databases.

Under the aegis of the Adi Drishya department, the IGNCA has initiated a Memorial Lecture in honour of the eminent archaeologist, art historian and great humanist, Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar, popularly known as Haribhau,- the pioneer of rock art studies in India and recognised as the Pitamah of rock art studies in the country. Dr. Wakankar has made enormous contributions, which include extensive field work in India and abroad. He was involved in numerous archaeological surveys and explorations and also traced the basin of the now dry Saraswati riverbed, said to hold the secrets too much of Indian civilization. Dr. Wakankar was awarded the Padmashree Award, one of India's highest civilian honours in 1975.

Under this annual memorial lecture series the first lecture was delivered by Dr. G. B. Deglurkar, renowned archaeologist and art historian on 'Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar: A Versatile Genius' on 3rd April, 2017. The second lecture in this series was delivered by Dr. Yashodhar Mathpal, a multifaceted scholar and renowned artist on 'Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar: The Legendary Encyclopaedia of Indian Rock Art' on 3rd April, 2018 and the third lecture was delivered by Prof. Arvind P. Jamkhedkar, Chairman, Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi on 'Interaction of the Mainstream Art of India and Autochthones' on 3rd April, 2019. The present lecture is the fourth in the series and will be delivered by Prof. V. H. Sonawane, an eminent Professor of Archaeology and a rock art specialist on 'Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar: The Chief Architect of Rock Art Studies in India' on 11th June, 2020.

Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi
Member Secretary, IGNCA

Dr. Wakankar with members of Kala Bhawan, 1980

Dr. Wakankar with his brother-in-law Shri Hari Bhau Joshi

Adi Drishya Department

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has designed a major academic programme, focusing on the exploration of the artistic manifestations emanating from man's primary sense perceptions. Amongst the senses that lead to an aesthetic experience are vision (Drishya) and hearing (Shravya). Rock art forms the crucial component of the Adi Drishya Department. IGNCA is perhaps the only organization in India that has a separate department working solely on primeval man's vision. This new initiative was introduced to broaden the vision and scope of various art forms and traditions that have been in practice over the ages.

The new department was conceived to pay special attention to a new kind of inter-disciplinary research involving allied disciplines like anthropology, geology, art history etc., which can open up new horizons for the study of prehistoric art. The IGNCA's concern with prehistoric rock art is restricted neither to the archaeologists, and the pre-historians' concern with establishing a linear chronological order of prehistoric rock art, nor is it limited to the identification of a style and a school as criteria for establishing chronology. Instead, it is concerned with man's creativity across time and space and civilisations and cultures through visual perception.

The study of rock art is an emerging discipline in India. It is an integral part of our culture as a reflection of man's existence from time immemorial. It is a historical record that helps us understand the development of artistic and cultural traditions and belief systems in various ecological niches, and various chronological contexts. It cannot be studied in isolation; it needs to be related to cultural, ecological and chronological contexts to understand its meaning and significance.

The aim is to: i) Document rock art sites, their environment and the communities living around these sites; ii) Discuss the extant theories of rock art and the intrinsic value of palaeo-art as humanity's cultural heritage and not merely the cultural property of a particular nation where it is found; iii) Examine concrete cases for the conservation, preservation and management of rock art caves and shelters; iv) Identify the common conservation hazards and interventionist practices; v) Evolve strategies of rock art site management, conservation and computerised documentation; vi) Enrich children, common people and serious scholars.

IGNCA has initiated many projects and programmes for the study of rock art, and research and outreach in this field. A number of survey and pilot study programmes are being organised as a part of IGNCA's National Project on Rock Art of India to

encourage the scholars and students to work in this emerging discipline. We also want to keep them updated on the status of rock art research in a global perspective and to encourage the Indian scholars to dedicate themselves seriously to this new discipline as it is directly related to the primeval vision of man and perhaps represents the first creative act of early human beings. A proper exploration and study of this art form can reveal the features of the civilisations that existed thousands of years ago.

IGNCA has initiated field documentation at the national level to preserve rock art sites and data, which are otherwise prone to human vandalism and natural factors beyond one's control. Recognising the importance of rock art for the present generation and for posterity, phase-wise field documentation is carried out in different states of India. The main objective of the project is to create textual, contextual, video-photo documentation and communicate with people in the hinterland for archaeological research purposes. The aim is to develop a bio-cultural map, a mental and ecological atlas of the rock art landscape based on a documentation of the related folklore and natural and manmade features. The results of this research and documentation etc., are published both in print and electronic media. A digital and physical database is in the making for further research and analysis.

As a part of its outreach programme, IGNCA organises different programmes for capacity building such as special lectures and orientation workshops for researchers and university students. In order to create general awareness among school and college students and the public at large; temporary and mobile exhibitions and, children's workshops are organised at the national, state and international levels. General awareness workshops are also conducted around rock art sites at the tehsil and block levels, for the local administration and for the community. The fourth Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lecture will be held this year on 3rd April, 2020 at IGNCA, New Delhi.

Further, we are planning to sensitise the younger generation to the importance of the first creative art of man, rock art, through various programmes and campaigns. The programmes include rock art appreciation courses (online & offline) and a diploma course as well as booklets for school children presenting an introduction to rock art and an Awareness and Interactive programme, 'Speaking Stones' on rock art for school and college students. We are also creating a permanent Rock Art Gallery at IGNCA and preparing a list of FAQs on rock art to provide basic information for children and the general public.

The impact of the projects and programmes launched and undertaken by

IGNCA is immense and overwhelming. It can be assessed by the responses of the children, scholars and general public who participate in these programmes and events throughout India. The reviews in professional journals and the wide coverage in both the print and electronic media (national and vernacular) are quite encouraging. Some of the universities have started taking up the subject very seriously.

Briefly, the goal is not merely the development of a database and a multimedia gallery or displays, but also to establish Adi Drishya as a school of thought and research on alternate means of understanding prehistoric art. In order to achieve all these goals, the outreach and general awareness programmes, inventorisation, research and interpretation of rock art are progressing simultaneously.

Prof. B. L. Malla
Project Director
Adi Drishya Department, IGNCA

Wakankar and other leading archaeologists during the seminar on Ramayan at Bhopal

Dr. Wakankar with Dr. Tillner at Archaeological Museum, Ujjain

Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar

(4th May,1919- 3rd April, 1988)

Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar was born on 4th May, 1919 at Neemuch, a town in the Malwa region of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. His distinguished academic career earned him the title of 'Pitamah' of rock art studies in India. From 1954 onwards, he carried out extensive field-work on rock art in India and abroad - Europe, North America and the Middle East. It is estimated that he discovered and documented some 4,000 decorated shelters in India alone. In 1957, he discovered the Bhimbetka rock art site which was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003.

Dr. Wakankar, an active freedom fighter, was awarded a number of prestigious awards including the Padmashree, one of India's highest civilian honours, in 1975. He held important positions in various academic institutions and was involved in numerous archaeological surveys; he explored the ravines of the Chambal and Narmada rivers, and also traced the basin of the now dry Saraswati riverbed, said to hold the secrets of Indian civilization. He carried out archaeological excavations at various sites in India and abroad.

Dr. Wakankar was also an expert and had numismatics and epigraphy collections, which are now part of the Wakankar Shodh Sansthan. Moreover, he studied numerous inscriptions dating from the 2nd Century BC in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Brahmi. Dr. Wakankar published 6 books and over 400 research papers. He established the Wakankar Indological Cultural Research Trust in Ujjain, India. Today, Wakankar Shodh Sansthan hosts a collection of over 7500 sketches of rock art paintings made by Dr. Wakankar himself.

Main Contributions

Research: Discovered and studied more than 4000 rock caves in India; also discovered rock shelters and paintings in Europe and America.

Excavation: He explored the ravines of Chambal and Narmada rivers and carried out

excavations at Maheshwar (1954); Navadatoli (1955); Manoti (190); Awara (1960); Indragadh (1959); Kayatha (1966); Mandsaur(1974 and 1976); Azadnagar(1974); Dangawada (1974 and 1982); Verconium Roman site in England (1961) and Incoliev in France (1962); Runija (1980).

Collaborations: H. D. Sankalia, Mortimer Wheeler, Kashinath Krishna Lele, Anant Vaman Wakankar, S. K. Dikshit, Robert Brooks, Jerry Jacobson, N. R. Banerjee, S. B. Deo, M. K. Dhavalikar, Tilner.

Discovered and Deciphered: Rock edicts and copper plates belonging to the Gupta, Maukhari, Auliker, Parmar and Bhulund periods; discovered pre-historic paintings in America.

Exhibitions: One man shows in Jaipur, Ujjain, Indore, Khairagarh, Austria, Rome, Paris, Frankfurt and America; Founder and Director of All India Kalidas Paintings and Sculpture Exhibitions.

Positions held: Director, Bharat Kala Bhawan, Lalit Kala Sansthan, Rock Art Institute, Ujjain; Director, Excavation Dept. Archaeological Museum, Vikram University, Ujjain; Prantiya Boudhik Pramukh of R.S.S. Madhya Bharat Founder and former President Sarasvati Shishu Mandir, Ujjain; General Secretary, Sanskar Bharati, India; President, Theosophical Society, Ujjain; Patron, Kala Patrika Akar, Ujjain; Chief, Babasaheb Apte Itihas Sankalan Samiti, (M. P. and Gujarat); President, Vidyarthi Parishad, Madhya Pradesh; Member of the All India Kalidas Samaroh Committee.

Foreign Travel & Fellowships: In 1963 he travelled to Europe on a Dorbaji Tata Trust travel grant, from 1961 - 63 he carried out research on a French Government scholarship; in 1966 he was offered an invitation by the American Department of State for American Rock Shelters; in 1981 he participated in a seminar on rock shelters in Capo di Ponte, Italy.

Fourth Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lecture by Prof. Vishwasrao H. Sonawane

Dr. Vishwasrao H. Sonawane was born on 5th January, 1946 and pursued his higher studies (BA- Honors: 1968, MA: 1970 and Ph.D.: 1980) at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, where he later served as a Professor of Archaeology and Ancient History. He was the Director of Field Archaeology. After a dedicated academic service of 36 years, during which he extensively worked on various aspects of "Prehistoric, Proto-historic and Historic Archaeology" besides Rock Art, he retired from the same position in June, 2008. Apart from being the Head of the Department (1998-2003) he has also been the coordinator of the UGC-SAP (Phase-I: 2002-2007) at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History. He also guided seven scholars who were awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology.

A four time recipient of the "Hari Ohm Ashram Award" for best research papers during 1986, 1992, 1997 and 2001 and the recipient of "Vijay Ratna Award" by India International Friendship Society in 2002, Prof. V. H. Sonawane has been associated with important premier academic government bodies of the country. To name a few: President of the Society of South Asian Archaeology; Vice-President, Rock Art Society of India; Member, Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA-ASI) appointed by GOI; Member, Advisory and Monitoring Committee for Marine Archaeology Centre of the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa; UGC Representative on the Management Council of the Deccan College, Pune; Principal Investigator of the National Institute of Ocean Technology Project, Chennai and Convener UGC XI Plan Visiting Team for Deccan College, Pune.

Prof. Sonawane carried out an extensive research work on encompassing a wide range of areas, such as: village to village survey of the Panchmahals District of Gujarat (1971-78); Explorations and Excavations at the now recently declared first World Heritage Site of Gujarat at Champaner (1971-77); survey of the medieval capital of the Parmaras of the Arbuda Mandal of Rajasthan (1978) resulting the discovery of an 'Engraved Chert Fluted Core" of the Upper Palaeolithic Period, a portable artifact, the first of its kind in the world; excavation in collaboration with the British Museum, London and Hindustan Zinc Ltd. at the Zavar Mines of Rajasthan 4(1883), where Prof. Sonawane's key role in the discovery of the intact zinc furnaces is also noted to be the first of its kind in the world, which pushed the Antiquity of Zinc Technology to 2000 years back.

Inspired and motivated by Padmashree Dr. V. S. Wakankar, he has also worked on the Rock Art of Gujarat by exploring granite outcrops, located at different parts of the State; under the support of Ford Foundation Grants. He also carried out in-depth explorations in North Gujarat and discovered (1977-95) more than 100 Harappan and Harappan Affiliated Chalcolithic Settlements for the first time, which yielded interesting and revealing archaeological results during subsequent excavations carried out at some of them such as Vagad, Nageshwar, Nagwada, Ratanpura, Moti Pipli, Datrana, Santhali and Bagasra. He participated and made presentations at more than 100 National and International Seminars and conferences, of which 8 were held in abroad. The countries visited by him include Australia, France, Italy, Iran, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka, China and Hangary. He has published 102 research papers appeared in National and International Journals, many of which are referred ones, besides 3 monographs and 8 books reviews. He has been quoted by several research scholars and experts in the country and the abroad as well.

Prof. Sonawane also co-hosted a symposium on Rock Art at the World Archaeological Congress (WAC-3), held at the National Museum, New Delhi in 1994, and organised the National Conference on Ancient Technology during the Annual Conference of the Indian Archaeological Society, India Society for Prehistoric and Quaternary Studies and Indian History Culture Society in 2001 at Vadodara.

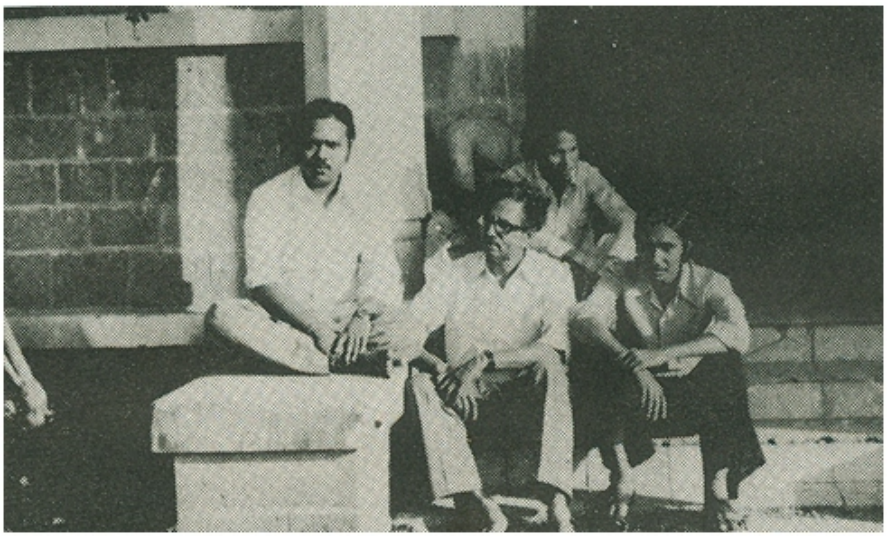
Apart from his active involvement in achieving the World Heritage status for Pavagadh, Champaner, and the discovery of intact Zinc furnaces at Zawar in Rajasthan, his contributions for Gujarat securing her permanent place in the field of Rock Art in the country is also recognized. His recent discoveries in the field of Proto-Historic studies in Harappan and Harappan affiliated Chalcolithic cultures in particular are of special merit in identifying regional indigenous Chalcolithic cultures and the role of rural settlements

in the development of Harappan urban settlements in Gujarat. Some of the Costal Harappan Sites, excavated during his tenure as the Director of Field Archaeology, throw a fresh light on various craft activities carried out by the Harappans exploiting natural resources of Gujarat, such as marine gastropods and semi-precious stones.

Prof. Sonawane has also contributed through his discoveries of a number of rare masterpieces of sculptures, very representative of Indian Art, belonging to different religious faiths. Throughout his career, he has been very much concerned about the propagation of Indian Culture across the span of the country and abroad. His contributions for creating awareness for the preservation of the historic and diverse cultural heritage of the country amongst the masses are acknowledged widely. Recently he has completed a project on the "Investigation of Rock Art of Western India with Specific Reference to Gujarat" and he is currently working on a project "Interpreting Rock Art of India".

Prof. Sonawane received Dr. V. S. Wakankar award, instituted by the Indian Archaeological Society for the best Field Archaeologist for the year 2010 and also recipient of Dr. V. S. Wakankar National Award by the Baba Saheb Apte Smark Samity, Delhi, in December 2011, for his contribution in the field of rock art and Harappan studies. Professor Sonawane has also received R. C. Parikh Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement by the Gujarat Itihas Parishad on 12th January, 2013 recognizing his overall contribution in the field of archaeology.

Dr. Wakankar at Akhil Bharitya Conference 1953 observing exhibition with Education Minister, Narsinghrao Dikshit Gwailor, Madhya Pradesh



Dr. Wakankar with his students at the entrance gate of Vikram Kriti Mandir, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

VISHNU SHRIDHAR WAKANKAR

The Chief Architect of Rock Art Studies In India

Vishwasrao H. Sonawane

Abstract

Dr. Wakankar's dedication and commitment towards the rock art research and preservation of this unique body of archaeological heritage won him a respectable position for not only Indian rock art but also in global context. Stimulated by his revolutionary work, today number of Indian and foreign scholars dedicatedly opting this discipline and making remarkable discoveries. He left a great legacy of rock art research in India. In this paper I tried to present my research and discoveries of the sites such as Chandravati, Chamardi and Vagad which are of great significance in Indian rock art. In initial days of my research I was very much inspired by the multi–faceted personality of Dr. V. S. Wakankar. This paper is my highest tribute to this great scholar.

I am grateful to the authorities of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi for inviting me to deliver the fourth Dr. V. S. Wakankar Memorial Lecture, under the aegis of its one of the prestigious annual lecture series, instituted by the Adi Drishya Department. I feel truly honored to be here amongst the august gathering of learned scholars. I attach special importance to this occasion because this year's lecture forms part of the Centenary Celebration of the eminent archaeologists, art historian and great humanist, Padmashree Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar.

As, you are all aware that Dr. V. S. Wakankar Memorial Lectures has been delivered by three reputed scholars like Dr. G. B. Deglurkar, former President of the of the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Pune, Padmashree Dr. Yashodhar Mathapal, Director of Folk Culture Museum at Bhimtal (Nainital) and Professor Arvind Jamkhedkar, Chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi who are known for their academic contribution in the field of Archaeology, Rock Art, and Art History. I have a tall order to follow my forerunners and would like to take this rare opportunity to speak on "Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar: The Chief Architect of Rock Art Studies in India", before this learned gathering.

For today's talk, I have deliberately selected the topic related to Wakankar's multi–faceted interest in Indian Culture. Hearty congratulations are due for paying the highest tribute to him by initiating this lecture series by the Adi Drishya Department of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

A tall, slim figure with rugged features, a weather beaten but innocent and perpetually cheerful face, high forehead, sparkling eyes, a booming voice, dressed simply in dhoti or trouser, and a shirt and jacket that was Dr. V. S. Wakankar, Dada or Haribhau to many of us who had the privilege of sharing close connections with him (Fig. 1). He was possessed by a burning zeal for unraveling his country's past. One could easily be captivated by his transparent sincerity and passionate devotion to Indian history and culture (Misra: 1989). To be precise, he was a common human being of uncommon personality. He was born on 4th May, 1919 in a scholarly Brahmin family at Neemach a town in the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. His traditional Brahmin upbringing instilled in him an interest in the Sanskrit studies and fine arts. Wakankar's academic interests covered not just prehistory and rock art but virtually every branch of ancient history and archaeology in general and Numismatics, Epigraphy, Palaeography and Iconography in particular. As a full time worker for the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS), a voluntary social organisation, he initially traveled widely in Malwa region of Central India. The hills and forest of his home state are inhabited by Bhils, Gonds and many other aboriginal people living in caves and rock shelters formed by natural weathering of the sandstone outcrops. Many of these were occupied at one or more stages by stone age hunters and gatherers who left a record of their existence in the form of stone tools, bones, burials besides many other items. But more than all these, our remote ancestors profusely painted the walls and ceilings of their shelters, depicted wild animals, hunting scenes and variety of activities of their daily life. As these forest dwellers and the rock paintings shared a common environment, Dr. Wakankar got ample opportunity to pursue his love for exploring rock paintings. In rock paintings he had found his vocation in life. For nearly fifty years he walked through different hilly tracks discovering several thousand painted rock shelters. No wonder rock art became his obsession.

Rock Art

Among the many things that our ancestors left behind nothing is more evocative and exciting than their signatures on rock. Painted and engraved walls of caverns, rock shelters and boulders presented us an avenue to walk through archaic expressions of human societies as well as their cultural traditions by use of line, form and colour. Rock art is regarded as purposeful modification of bare rock surface to produce preconceived forms and images, both in paintings and engravings often called pictographs and petroglyphs. It can also be defined as “human made markings placed on natural stones”. Its antiquity ranging from palaeolithic to historic period is an important evidence of human creation through the changes of time and space. It is a global phenomenon and found in many culturally diverse regions of the world. In the history of mankind, rock

art is the only form of fine art having such a wide distribution and longevity. The spectrum of Indian rock art is vast in terms of their thematic and stylistic contents. In magnitude, vividness and richness it is outstanding and in some respect unique in the world, forming an important cultural heritage.

For a long time, after the pioneering discoveries made in 1867 by colonial period geologist Archibald Carlleyle in the Kaimur ranges in Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh, the existence of rock art in India was an enigma and even its very antiquity was questioned. However, though its study crossed the threshold of archaeology rather late, after the discovery of Bhimbetka, the spectacular rock art site in Madhya Pradesh by Wakankar in 1957 (declared as UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003), brought a new momentum in archaeological studies recognizing its archaeological potential. Wakankar's name is synonymous with Bhimbetka. His sustained research brought worldwide recognition and credibility for this branch of archaeological study.

Wakankar Impact

Amongst my several notable recollections of Wakankar, I would like to share the first interaction with him when I was the student of final year M. A. in archaeology in 1970. The lecture hosted by our department on "Rock Art of Bhimbetka" left ever-lasting impact on me. In those days rock art was not a very familiar subject. However, I found his lecture quite interesting and fascinating as it dealt with one of our greatest surviving art treasures.

Despite being one of the neighboring regions of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat remained terra incognita in the field of rock art studies until 1970. To fill this lacuna in the archaeological wealth of Gujarat, while working on "Archaeology of the Panchmahals", one of the districts of Gujarat bordering Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, for my Ph. D. Dissertation, I could able to establish the presence of rock art first in Panchmahals and subsequently in other parts of Gujarat (Sonawane: 2014).This was just possible because of inspiration and motivation I received from Dr. Wakankar from time to time.

One of the happiest moments in my life was when I discovered the unique fluted chert core of Upper Palaeolithic Period with design engraved on its patinated surface found at Chandravati. This incident brought me in close contact with Wakankar because of its significance on the chronology of the Indian rock art.

Significance of Chandravati Core

Chandravati (lat. 24° 26' N. long. 72° 45' E.) is a small village situated about seven kilometers south of Abu Road Station, district Sirohi, in the southern hilly region of Rajasthan. While exploring Chandravati in 1976, the capital of the Parmaras of the Arbuda branch (eight to fourteen century A.D.), an attempt was made to trace its earlier material relics also. As a result, a small triangular delta formed by the confluence of the river Banas and Chandravati revealed remains of the factory site forming a part of Upper Palaeolithic assemblage, consisting of blades and burins together with cores and flakes as a debitage of the process of manufacturing tools.

Fig. 2: Engraved fluted core from Chandravati, Rajasthan

Fig. 3: Close up of the engraved design

One of the fluted chert cores found in the assemblage bears engraving executed on one of its flat surfaces. The design appears to be like a spiral rhomboid, consists of a pair of parallel lines moving clock wise from the centre, forming two intertwining spiraling arms. One of these arms bears a series of short diagonal lines whereas the other one is significantly left plan (Fig.2 and Fig.3). The engraved design is partially damaged, particularly the outgoing portion of the spiraled rhomboid towards the flaked

periphery. This damage seems to have been caused by subsequent flaking of the nodule for taking out few parallel sided blade flakes by indirect pressure technique using anintermediate punch. As a result, a thin soft coating of the incrustation bearing engraving was damaged while removing flakes from the points of punch rest. Therefore, it appears that the design was engraved on the nodule prior to its use as a core (Sonawane: 2008).

Realising the uniqueness of the design engraved on the core, which is first of its kind, in the form of portable artifact, first I thought of Dr. Wakankar to know his reaction and comments on this new discovery. Simply, I send him by post the photograph of the engraved core along with brief information on the location of the site and nature of collected stone artifacts. To my surprise, he responded so promptly, congratulating me for this wonderful discovery. To put it in his words "Vishwas (he was one of the very few persons who use to call me by my first name) you have done a great job, the thing which I was looking for all these years to date some of the rock paintings precisely by correlating the archaeological evidence, you did it" (from his personal letter written to me).

On the basis of stylistic similarities between design engraved on the Chandravati core and identical intricate patterns often identified as 'Labyrinthine or Phosphen motifs' composed of rhombic meanders and honeycomb patterns along with their multiple derivations found in many Indian rock paintings could be dated to either Upper Palaeolithc or subsequent Mesolithic period depending upon the nature and theme of the rock painting. Thus the discovery of engraved core from Chandravati played a decisive role in resolving the problem of dating of those rock paintings containing identical designs.

Highly impressed with the kind of discovery from Chandravati, realizing its importance in rock art studies Wakankar suggested me to present a research paper at the First AURA Congress to be held at Darwin, Australia in August 1988. He said he will manage to get the funds for my participation in the AURA congress at Darwin. What a kind gesture. I could go and present my paper which was very well received by the international gathering of the rock art specialists there (Sonawane, 1992). In fact Robert G. Bednarik who organised this First International Congress of Australian Rock Art Research Association, raised funds to invite a delegation of seven Indian rock art researchers (I was one of them) to be headed by Dr. Wakankar and expected he could play a key role in it. Unfortunately Dr. Wakankar's health deteriorated while travelling in Singapore and suddenly succumbed to a heart attack on 3rd April 1988. A cruel twist robbed him of the satisfaction of witnessing the success of what he had set in motion, over a period of decades (Bednarik: 2005).

The earliest rock paintings of Indian subcontinent show a strictly codified repertoire in their style and use of space as if they were the part of a widely understood communication system. These paintings are distinguished by a very high degree of craftsmanship and a characteristic uniformity of intricate designs. The quality of application of the pigment in the form of fine and controlled lines seen in these early paints symbolize the beginning of rock art in India. In several paintings these are seen covering large space of virgin surface of rock shelters (Fig.4 and Fig.5).

Fig. 4: Intricate geometric pattern Shyamala Hills, Bhopal

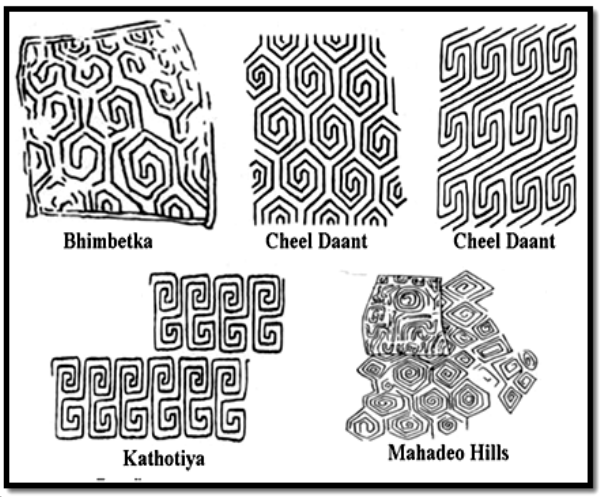


Fig. 5: Pre figurative rock paintings (intricate geometric patterns)

None of these are executed as superimposed ones on any of the earlier paintings. In several shelters these are found as body decoration of the large and uncommon depiction of wild boar, elephant, rhinoceros and dear identified as defied animals (Fig. 6). Quite often, square or rectangular shaped bodies of female figurines are also adorned with such intricate geometric patterns (Fig.7). Examples of independent or infilling of the body decorations cited above with the concentric or voluted geometric motifs thus draw our attention to the typical design engraved on the Chandravati core.

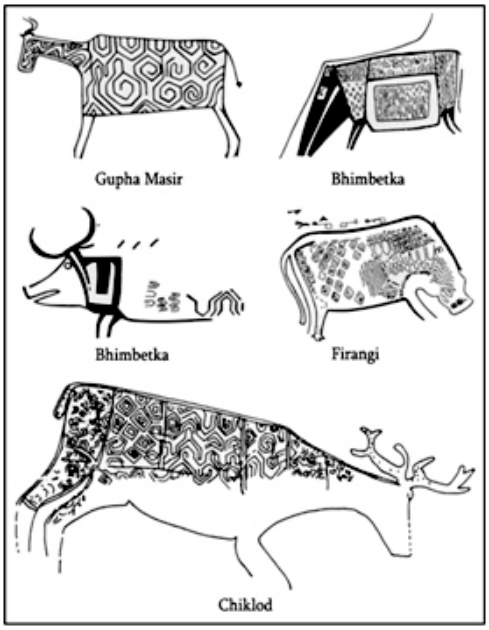


Fig. 6: Defied animals in rock paintings

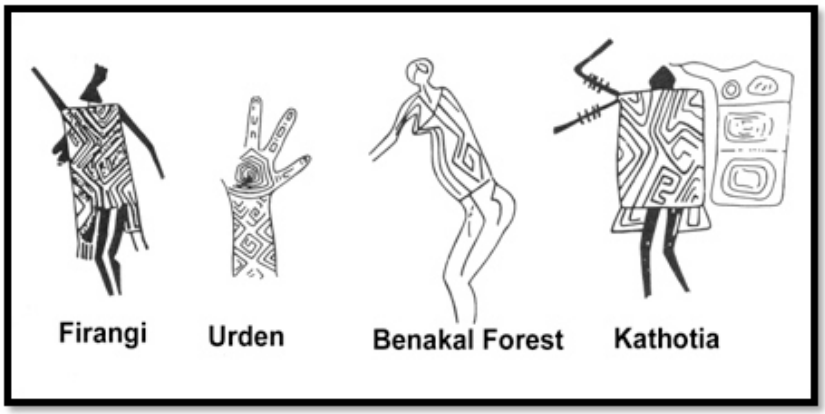


Fig. 7: Female figurines decorated with intricate geometric patterns

Incidentally it allows us to conclude that the type of motif executed on the Chandravati core and its variations found elsewhere in numerous rock paintings clearly suggest some connotation in the art of hunting-gathering prehistoric communities. It is surprising to find such uniformity spanning over a great distance covering the major portion of the Indian subcontinent. Erwin Neumayer has also reported similar rock paintings in Sri Lanka. This similarity reflects on a specific artistic tradition shared by all those whose pattern of living was comparable. From such uniformity, one could infer that the socio- cultural basis of the hunter–gatherers remained more or less the same. A striking parallel to these intricate design pattern exists even in the Upper Palaeolithic art of Mezin Ukraine, where similar patterns have been found engraved on the mammoth ivory bracelet (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9) besides three mammoth ivory female figurines (Fig. 10 and Fig.11) of late Pleistocene period (Clark:1977).

Fig.8: Mammoth ivory bracelet from Mezin, Ukraine

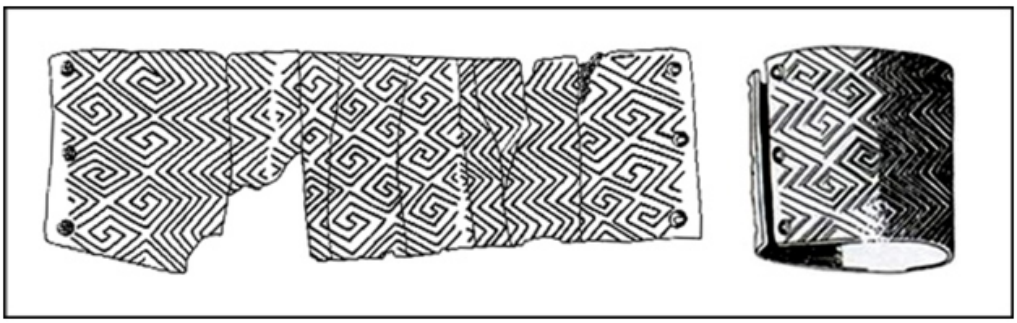


Fig. 9: Line drawing of mammoth ivory bracelet from Mezin, Ukraine

Fig. 10: Mammoth ivory female figurine from Mezin, Ukraine

Fig. 11: Line drawing of mammoth ivory female figurines from Mezin, Ukraine

In the context of aforesaid data, it is possible to infer that such a stylistic and formal uniformity of the design was possible only through long and continuous development encompassing the ideological makeup of the prehistoric society. Restricted use of the design, confined to either defied animals or female body decoration is again conventional. The motif engraved on the Chandravati core and its variations found elsewhere in early rock art thus clearly denote some religious connotations in prehistoric art. These symbolic expressions have not disappeared from the symbolic repertoire of the Indian culture. It has played an important role in the beliefs of subsequent cultures, which evolved in the same environment. This evidence is further supported by the later manifestations of the various forms of Yantras (Fig. 12). These are those abstract forms, which embody that energy, fertility or shakti, known and worshipped even today as the Divine Mother (Sonawane: 2017).

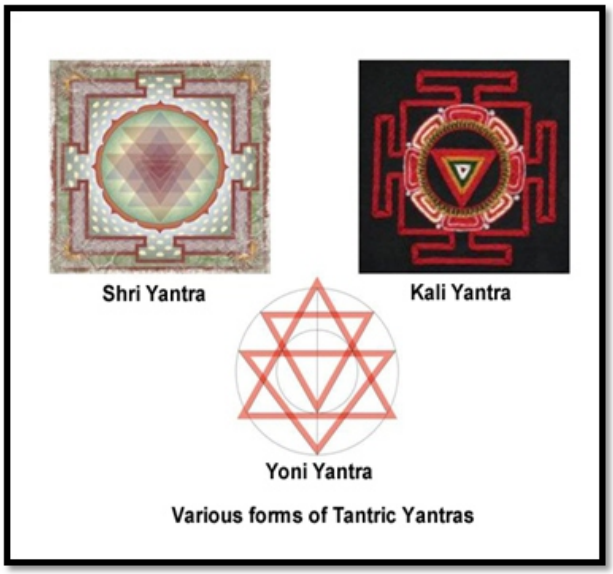


Fig. 12: Various forms of Tantric Yantras

Rock Painting Depicting Sailing Boats

After gaining some experience while working on the rock art of Gujarat I developed a knack for spotting rock paintings. While excavating at Vallabhipur in 1980, as a usual practice, we were exploring the surrounding region to understand the history of the site. The granite outcrops lying between Vallabhipur and Bhavnagar attracted our attention as a possible area where one can look for rock paintings. So far rock paintings in Gujarat are confined to granite pockets only. With my intuitive approach, we discovered one of the most important and rare rock paintings in the form of two sailing boats at a place called Chamardi (Fig. 13).

Fig. 13: Rock painting depicting sailing boats from Chamardi, Gujarat

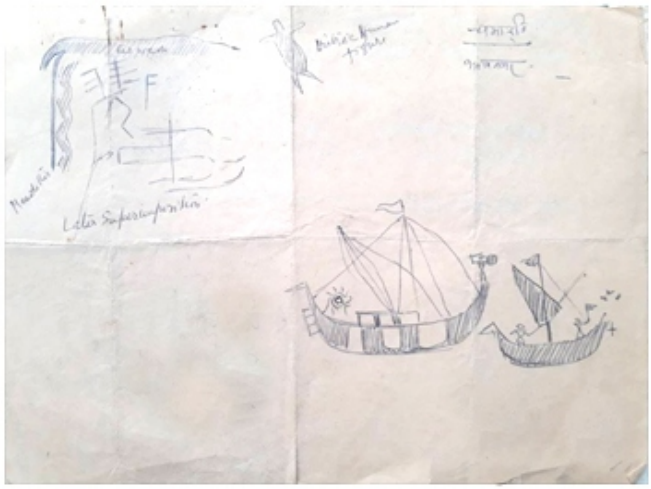


Fig. 14: Sailing boats from Chamardi, sketch made by Dr. V. S. Wakankar

Coincidently the same rock painting was also discovered by Dr. Wakankar while he was travelling to Bhavnagar during his tour to Gujarat. He was on a different mission, but the granite outcrops at Chamardi could not escape from his keen eyes, much like how he discovered Bhimbetka earlier in 1957. In spite of his busy schedule, he could spend some time at the site and captured the picture depicting two sailing boats and prepared the sketch on a small piece of paper showing all possible details not only of sailing boats but also other associated rock paintings (Fig. 14). Before returning to Ujjain he wanted to share this unique rock painting with me without

knowing that we have already noticed it earlier. I have carefully preserved this precious sketch as a memory to mark his love and affection towards me. The line drawing which I have made with the help of professional draftsman and the quick sketch made by Dr. Wakankar is almost accurate.

Chamardi (21° 52' N, 71° 56' E) is a small picturesque village situated at a distance of about 6 km south of Vallabhipur on the Vallabhipur-Bhavnagar highway, in Bhavnagar District of Gujarat. The novel feature of Chamardi rock painting is the depiction of sailing boats. The depiction clearly reveals structural as well as technological details of small sea going vessels. The details of the ship painted here shows that the painter must have been acquainted with sailing crafts. It appears that the artist had the knowledge about the boats, their parts and navigation. Both the ships have single masts and lateen sails. Cross – shaped anchors are shown hanging from the prow. The bigger vessel has a rudder and a helmsman at the stern. The warrior holding a shield and a sward stands at the prow. The stem and stern rise upwards. The flag is shown aloft the stem post. A long and narrow triangular flag is hoisted on the masthead. The mast is secured with stay and back stay. The presence of chambers is marked by red alternate squares on the hull suggesting its large carrying capacity.

The ships have all the features of sea going vessels used in maritime trade. A ship with a mast, a sail and rudder marks great technological advancement. The ornament upon the stem head (probably a circular disc) as seen on the smaller boat, is known to be distinctive mark of the kotiyas a native craft of Saurashtra and Kachchh. Chamardi is located very close to Ghogha – one of the active ports on the Saurashtra coast. Vallabhi, the capital of the Maitrakas played very important role in maritime trade. Since Chamardi is near Vallabhipur, it is logical to believe that some people living in Chamardi had seen or worked on such boats and hence someone might have got tempted to execute this unique painting. The picture showing sailing boats is painted on the wall of the rock shelter and hence it is not within the datable archaeological context. Despite this shortcoming, circumstantial evidence of historical data on Vallabhi's trade contacts with the China and the Roman world provides a reasonable base to assign this rock painting to the Maitraka period (6^{th} - 7^{th} century A. D.). This representation has generated interest among the rock art specialists and those working on ancient shipbuilding technology and maritime activities. It may not provide a nautical researcher with reliable technological information but it is certainly an interesting example of an object or image whose deceptive similarity reveals a conceptual richness. This is the only rock painting of a sea – going vessel found in India so far (Sonawane: 2011).

Harappan Sacrificial Fir Altars at Vagad

Wakankar was essentially a self – taught archaeologist. Dispite having no formal education in archaeological excavation techniques, during the commendable two decades as a director of excavations and museums at the Vikram University, Ujjain, he excavated a number of archaeological sites of different cultural periods in Madhya Pradesh. Important among these are Maheshwar (1954), Navdatoli (1955), Indragadh (1956), Manoti (1960), Awra (1960), Kayatha (1966), Mandsaur (1974-76), Azadhanagar (1974), and Dangawada (1974 and 1982) (Fig.15 and Fig.16). Of these the findings from the chalcolithic sites like Navdatoli, Kayatha, Azadhanagar (Indore) and Dangwada have thrown a flood of light on the first permanently settled inhabitants of Malwa. The painted pottery and some of the copper tools showed that these first farmers of Malwa were inheritors of the legacy of the Harappan peoples of Gujarat. However, among these the yagna kundas associated with terracotta figurines of mother goddess and triple shrine is most outstanding discovery of the Dangwada excavation (Khare: 1979-80 and Wakankar: 1987). It is proved beyond doubt that the chalcolithic people of Dangwada performed Yagnas, as testified by the sacrificial pits.

Fig.15: Dr. V. S. Wakankar fourth from right in white attire along with Dr. H. D. Sankalia, B. Subba Rao and others (Team –Maheshwar Excavation Camp 1957)

Fig.16: Dr. Wakankar and others at Inamgaon Excavation

Here I would like to cite supporting evidence from Vagad, one of the Harappan sites in Gujarat. The discovery of four circular clay lined fire pits deserves special mention (Fig.17 and Fig.18). Of these, three bigger ones with sager base were dug into the natural soil orienting north, south and western direction with their diameter being 1 m, 1.45 m and 1.3 m respectively. They were arranged in a triangular form at an approximately distance of about 90 cm between the two. The fourth one, cylindrical in shape with flat base / bottom, having a diameter of 40 cm was dug little inside between the southern and western ones. All of them were internally neatly plastered with cow dung paste mixed with clay. These pits contained ash, possibly of cow dung cakes. The inner clay - lined walls of larger fire pits were subjected to intense firing of a prolonged period. In the absence of bones or any kind of industrial material these fire pits seem to have been used for some kind of ritualistic purpose. It is also quite interesting to note that the northern and western fire pits have been provided with a square raised mud platforms perhaps meant for yajamana or host and officiating purohit or priest who performed the ritual.

Offering to the fire was well known practice in the yagnas. The vedic text mentions three fires, namely Garhapatya, Ahavaniya and Dakshinatya. Along with these, there is also a provision for one more circular pit, smaller in size and located in the centre known as Utkar in the traditional Vedic Yagnashalas. In this context it is worth

Fig. 17: General view of the excavated Fire Altars at Vagad, Gujarat

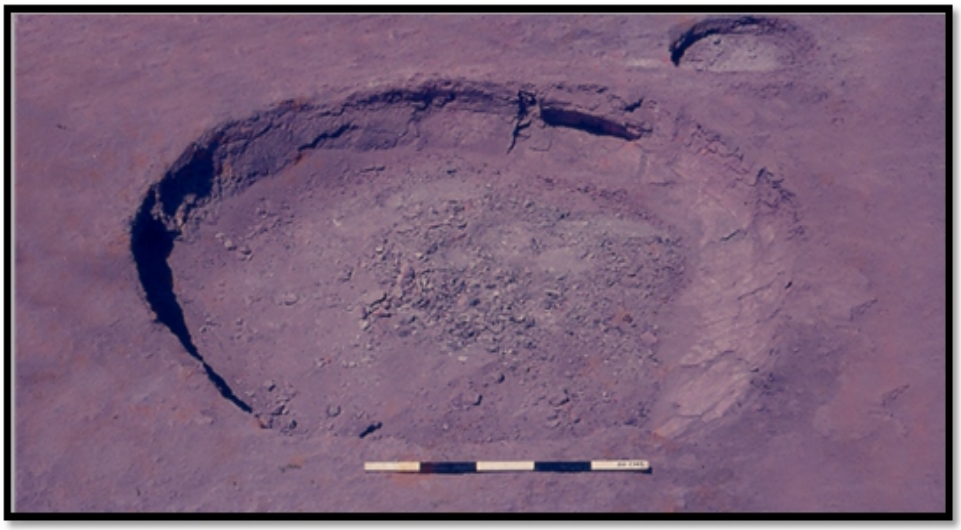


Fig. 18: A close up of one of the fire altar at Vagad, Gujarat

noting that the vedic fire altars were made of packed earth and not of bricks. Also square or quadrangular seems to be a shape of vedic altars while circular one is a pre – Vedic tradition. Therefore, a kind of Harappan fire altars particularly found at Vagad does show a pattern of sacrifice which many practicing Hindus will recognise as something similar to their own tradition. Except the dimensions, orientation and shapes to some extent, the Vagad evidence has close resemblance with the elements of later Indian fire worship. To sum up, there is every reason to see in the Harappan religion many features of vedic and subsequent Indian Hindu tradition. Therefore, from the extant of archaeological data known thus for, it will not be farfetched to argue that some features of Hinduism have been echoed by Harappan finds and thus Harappan culture is likely to have contributed to the stream of Sanatana Dharma or the traditional religion of the present day Hindus. Thus, the presence of sacrificial fire altars at Vagad, a rural Harappan settlement in Gujarat, not only supports to the sketchy evidence found at Harappan urban centers like Kalibangan. Banawali and Lothal but confirms its validity because of its non-ambiguous nature (Sonawane: 2005).

Epilogue

Dr. Wakankar's dedication and commitment to the cause of rock art research, dissemination of knowledge and preservation of this unique body of archaeological heritage won him national and international recognition. He left a great legacy of rock art research in India. A man of simple disposition stands tall among his colleagues and is unrivalled in his contribution to rock art research in India. His work continues to be a source of inspiration to most researchers both young and old. He inspired generations of students who have carried forward his vision of rock art studies in India. Dr. Wakankar's sustained research on rock art and his scholarly lectures and publications in reputed journals in India and abroad won him a respectable position for Indian rock art. Inspired by his pioneering work today number of Indian and foreign scholars are investigating the field of rock art. His passion for rock art was unremitting. As a result of his seminal contribution to Indian archaeology he was awarded with the Padmashree in 1975, one of the India's highest civilian honors. Dr. V. S. Wakankar the "Pitamah of rock art studies" no wonder is regarded as the chief architect of rock art studies in India.

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The author is grateful to the above mentioned scholars for the sketches, plates, photographs and references taken from their works cited in the bibliography.

Dr. Wakankar during Bhimbetka Excavation

Dr. Wakankar during his foreign visit

Dr. Wakankar with embossed panel of *'Shakuntala* and *Mrig* (Deer)'

Dr. Wakankar with renowned poetess Mahadevi Verma

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