

INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION - FINE ARTS DEPT
HISTORY OF INDIAN ART – PREHISTORIC ROCK PAINTINGS
CLASS XI – WORKSHEET No.1

PREHISTORIC ROCK PAINTINGS

The distant past when there was no paper or language or the written word, and hence no books or written document, is called as the Prehistoric period.

It was difficult to understand how Prehistoric people lived until scholars began excavations in Prehistoric sites.

Paintings and drawings were the oldest art forms practiced by human beings to express themselves using the cave wall as their canvas.

Rock Paintings have been found in several districts of many states in India. Some of them have great importance to understand the human life of that period. These are:

a) Lakhudiyar Prehistoric Cave Paintings – in Almora district Uttarkhand.

It can be divided three categories – Man, Animals and Geometric patterns with black, red ochre and white.



Wave Pattern



Dancing Figure

B) Granite rocks- Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

Three types of rock paintings have been found – Paintings in white, Paintings in red ochre over white background and paintings in red ochre. These paintings belong to late historical, early historical and Neolithic periods.

Bulls, elephants, gazelles, sheep, goats, horses and stylized human are mainly depicted figures of these caves.

C) Bhimbetka

Largest rock shelters. Located in MP. 800 rock shelters of stone-age have been discovered.

Painting subjects are – events of daily life, hunting scene, dancing scene, playing musical instruments etc.

Some animals have also been painted with human as horse and elephant riders, animal fighting, stag, tiger, bison, etc. On the basis of style, technique and time-periods, the rock art of Bhimbetka art has been classified into seven groups.

Period-I: Upper Palaeolithic,
Period-IV & V: Early History,

Period-II: Mesolithic,
Period-VI & VII: Medieval

Period-III: Chalcolithic

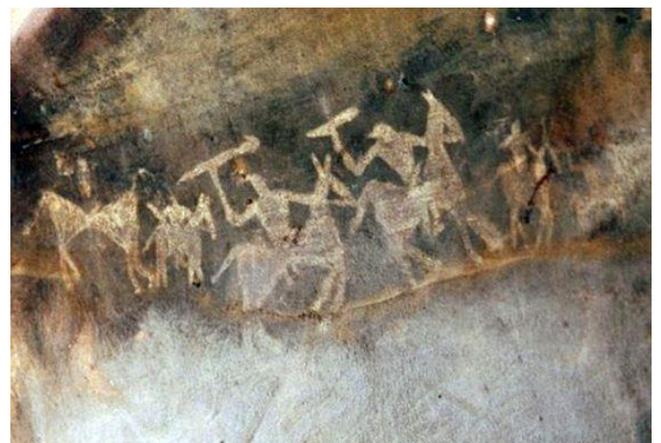
Upper Palaeolithic Period

- Paintings are linear representations, in green and dark red, of huge animal figures, such as Bisons, Tigers, Elephants, Rhinos and Boars beside stick-like human figures.
- Mostly they are filled with geometric patterns.
- Green paintings are of dances and red ones of hunters.



Mesolithic period Art

The paintings of this period are comparatively small in size but more in numbers. There is the depiction of communal dancers, birds, human playing musical instruments, mother and children and men carrying dead animals. In addition to animals there are many hunting scenes which are giving a clear picture of the weapons they used like pointed stick, bow and arrows.



Horse Rider (Hunting Scene)

Chalcolithic period

The paintings of this period are similar to that of the Mesolithic period. During this period, the cave dwellers of this area with settled agricultural communities of the Malwa Plateau.



Early History Period

The Paintings in this period are schematic and decorative in style and painted mainly with red, white and yellow colours. The association of riders, depiction of religious symbols as figures of Yakshas, trees, gods and magical sky chariots are worth seeing.



Dancing Girls

Medival Period

The Paintings in this period are more schematic, linear and geometrical in shape, but they show degeneration and crudeness in their style. The colours were prepared by combining manganese, haematite and wooden coal. The painters used many colours . Colours were made by grinding various rocks, minerals and pigments. Geru (*earthy-red colour*) used for red colour, chalcedony (*stone*) for green colour and limestone for white. To make them stable the artist used to mix animal fat or gum of trees. Plant fibers and hair of animals are used to make brushes. That is why these paintings are in existence after passing thousands of years.

Study of the Prehistoric Rock Paintings

1. A Roaring Animal



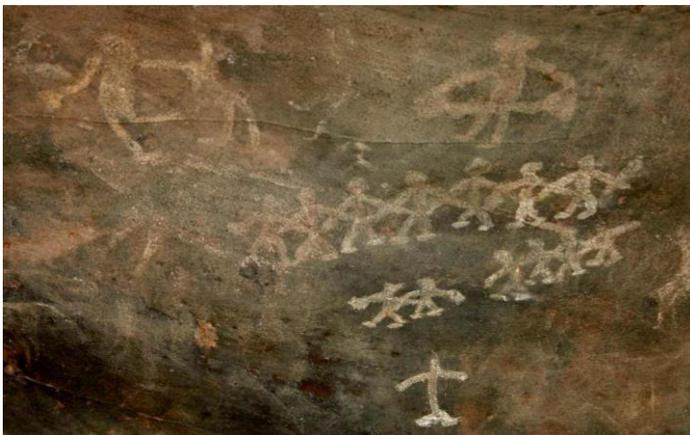
Name : **Roaring Animal**
Place: Bhimbetka Cave, MP
Artist: Unknown
Medium: Mineral Colours

Painting in red, showing man being hunted by a beast (Bison)

Description

In this painting, a bison in red has been shown in big size and a group of people in small size has been shown hunting that bison. In this process, some injured people have also been depicted lying scattered on the ground and a few people watching them helplessly.

2. Wizard's Dance



Name : **Wizard's Dance**
Place: Bhimbetka Cave, MP
Artist: Unknown
Medium: Mineral Colours

Hand-linked people in dancing mode

Description

In this painting, an animal is shown in the agony of death and the people have been depicted dancing with holding hands of each other and a person has been shown playing a big musical instrument and some people have been shown in sitting position to watch them. It is the initial painting which shows the celebration with full rhythm and movements.