



REPLICATION OF ROCK PAINTINGS AT CHATURBHUJNATH NALA
ON BHANPURA PLATEAU IN CHAMBAL VALLEY, INDIA - PART 2b

Selection of the Chariot Compositions and their study

Geetanjali *, Ram Krishna **, Hridayshri ***, Giriraj Kumar ****

SUMMARY

Chariots form an important feature of the rock art of early Pastoral Period at Chaturbhujnath Nala (CBN). Hence, we decided to replicate the preproduction and production processes of the chariots. We studied their location, forms, styles, number of persons riding and animals yoked in them, technical features, etc. We also observed certain features of their development, studied the minute details of the chariots for their replication, such as flow of lines and strokes, its body length, size and features of wheels, number of spokes in them, length of axel joining them, angle of their presentation, etc.

We observed that creation of chariots was a very important invention for fast conveyance and warfare. It was a deadly combination of machine, animal power, human skill and intelligence in early pastoral period representing an advanced stage of cognition and cultural development of the humans.

This study is a part of the Project on, "Replication of rock paintings at Chaturbhujnath Nala on Bhanpura plateau in Chambal Valley, India" by Rock Art Society of India.

Keywords: Rock art, Chariot Compositions, Replication, Chaturbhujnath Nala, India- Study

RIASSUNTO (SCELTA DELLE RAFFIGURAZIONI DI CARRI E LORO STUDIO)

I carri costituiscono un soggetto importante dell'arte rupestre del primo periodo pastorale a Chaturbhujnath Nala (CBN). Quindi, abbiamo deciso di replicare i processi di pre-produzione e produzione di queste rappresentazioni. Abbiamo studiato la loro posizione, le forme, gli stili, il numero di persone a cavallo e gli animali aggiogati ad essi, le caratteristiche tecniche, ecc. Abbiamo anche osservato alcune caratteristiche del loro sviluppo, studiandoli nei minimi dettagli dei carri perché fosse possibile produrne una replica. Abbiamo analizzato il flusso di linee e colpi, la lunghezza del corpo, le dimensioni e le caratteristiche delle ruote, il numero dei raggi, la lunghezza dell'asse che le unisce, l'angolo della loro presentazione, ecc. Il carro ha rappresentato un'invenzione molto importante per il trasporto veloce e la guerra. Era una combinazione mortale tecnologia, forza animale, abilità umana e intelligenza. Nella fase iniziale del periodo pastorale testimonia uno sviluppo sia cognitivo che culturale molto avanzato.

Questo studio fa parte del progetto "Replication of rock paintings at Chaturbhujnath Nala on Bhanpura plateau in Chambal Valley, India", condotto dalla Rock Art Society of India.

Parole chiave: arte rupestre, composizioni di carri, replica, Chaturbhujnath Nala, India, Studio

1. INTRODUCTION

Chariot was a very important invention for fast conveyance and warfare in early Pastoral period (WAKANKAR, BROOKS 1976; WAKANKAR 2005; NEUMAYER 1993, pp.159-166, 2008; SASTRI 2018, pp. 5-14). It was a deadly combination of machine, animal power, human skill and intelligence in early pastoral period representing an advanced stage of cognition and cultural development of the humans. It has been vividly described in Vedic literature (SPARREBOOM 1985, pp. 10-12). In the rock art of Chaturbhujnath Nala, Chariots, though less in number, have been presented very brilliantly in a variety of forms and styles (KUMAR 2007, in press, pl. 68-72). The present paper deals with the study and observation of the replication of chariots depicted in the

rock art of Chaturbhujnath Nala. It is to understand the cognitive, technological and cultural development of their authors in early Pastoral period.

2. PREPARATORY STUDY

As the present study is a part of the Project on, "Replication of rock paintings at Chaturbhujnath Nala on Bhanpura plateau in Chambal Valley, India" by Rock Art Society of India, hence the literature review, preparations, brush making, obtaining colour from Iron Oxide Mineral nodules, etc will be discussed elsewhere in the present Volume.

3. THE STUDY OF THE CHARIOTS AT HOME AND ON THE SITE

The preparatory study of the compositions was made

* MA Research Scholar, Delhi Institute of Heritage Research and Management, New Delhi. Email: gitanjali26aug@gmail.com.

** Ph. D. Research Scholar, Department of Management, Faculty of Social Sciences, DEI University, Dayalbagh, Agra-282005. Email: ramkrishna.gem@gmail.com.

*** Artist and Communication Designer, Rock Art Society of India. Email: hridayshri@gmail.com.

**** Director of the Rock Art Replication Project and Secretary General, Rock Art Society of India. Email: girirajrasi.india@gmail.com.

at home in Delhi with the help of enlarged photographs. It was followed by the detailed study on the site to have an exact idea of the location and position of the composition. The measurements of the size of composition have been given in terms of length x height. At the site, detailed study of the location of Chariot Composition, height from the floor, visibility, dimensions, present status of its preservation and trying to figure out the technological, cognitive and cultural development of the artist and his community. We also studied the movement of strokes and noted it. For the replication we selected five Chariot Compositions from the rock art of Chaturbhujnath Nala, which were clear to study, where one could have the basic understanding of the form, proportions, quality of strokes, brush movement and other details. We have to understand the concept, theme and technique used, selection of the pigment, selection of the site and spot to execute it, height of the composition from the rockshelter-floor, understanding the convenience for creating the composition, its visibility and viewing experience, tentative angle and position for creation, space and environment around it and possible technique and style of its execution. We observed that some of the Chariot Compositions have been made at convenient positions while some are at difficult locations. It might have been easy to execute some of the compositions at their location, while for certain compositions it might have been difficult to make them. The viewing experience was also worth noticing for some of the compositions. We tried to understand that why a particular composition has been made at a particular location in a particular rockshelter. The paper will present our observation and understanding of the cognitive development and spirit of adventure of the artists used in the selection of the spot for creation of certain compositions in the rock art of Chaturbhujnath Nala.

4. STUDY OF THE CHARIOT COMPOSITIONS OF PERIOD II

For the replication we selected five compositions of chariots from Chaturbhujnath Nala.

4.1. Figure 1, Rockshelter No. B17. Chariot Composition No. 1

Rockshelter orientation: Facing southwest.

Location of the composition: On the roof, above eye-level.

Height of the composition from the floor: 185 cm.

Colour: Dark red ochre.

Stroke thickness: 1.0-1.4 mm.

Composition theme: A chariot yoked with two horses and three charioteers wielding parashu (metal axes), moving in the right.

Composition size: 27 x 13 cm.

Observations: The composition is covered with a thin film of salt deposit due to being washed off with rain water. Though Spokes of the wheel are not clearly visible, there are 5 spokes in one half of the wheel on the left side and in the other half only 1 spoke is visible, while in the wheel on the right side, there are more

than 6 spokes. There are three charioteers, two of them are holding axes in their hands. Their head is decorated by eight dots. The height of the human figure in the middle is comparatively smaller than the other two.

4.2 Figure 2, Rockshelter No. B17. Chariot Composition No. 2

Rockshelter orientation: Facing southwest.

Location of the composition: On the roof of the shelter, above eyelevel, 202 cm above the floor.

Colour: Red.

Thickness of the lines and strokes: In human body: 0.7-1.5 mm, parashu (axe) stick 7.0 mm.

Composition size: 24 x 13 cm.

Composition appreciation: The chariot is suggestive. The animals and wheels have not been shown attached to the chariot, still the composition appears complete and powerful.

Observations: This is the only chariot with four charioteers in CBN. The whole composition is painted solid except the human figures. The size of the wheel is comparatively smaller and divided into four quadrants. If we study the figure by dividing it horizontally in two parts, then we found that the first half is very fine and proportionate compared to the other half. This chariot is superimposed by a bold angular line and disfigured because of the exfoliation.

4.3 Figure 3, Rockshelter No. B17. Chariot Composition No. 3

Orientation: Facing southwest.

Location of the composition: Located on the roof, below eyelevel, 40 cm above the floor.

Colour: Red.

Line and strokes: Lines fine, strokes thick.

Composition size: 15.0? x 6.0 cm.

Composition appreciation: Chariot is decorated with geometric patterns; the wheels are shown in outline only without spokes.

Observations: The yoked animals have almost disappeared. Only faint traces of them are there. The artist might have painted the figure by lying down on the floor.

4.4 Figure 4, Rockshelter No. B17. Chariot Composition No. 4.

Orientation of the rockshelter: Facing southwest.

Location of the composition: Located on the inclined roof, at a height of 205 cm from the floor.

Colour: Dark red.

Lines and strokes: Executed in a combination of fine lines and filled in style.

Composition size: 18.5 x 16.0 cm.

Composition appreciation: The chariot has been shown yoked with four horses and two charioteers executed in fine lines, strokes and in filled in style. The heads of the charioteers and parashu are decorated, (parashu of the right one has been exfoliated).

Observations: The chariot is preceded by two humans and two animals and followed by a person bearing some torch like object in his hand. The chariot with four horses and the charioteers with decorated head dress makes this composition special.

4.5 Figure 5, Rockshelter No. B17. Chariot Composition No. 5. Orientation of the rockshelter: Facing southwest. Location of the composition: Located on the inclined roof, at a height of 110 cm from the floor. Colour: Dark red.

Lines and strokes: Executed in a fine lines and strokes. Composition size: 29.0 x 21.0 cm.

Composition appreciation: The structure of the chariot is elongated, so also the body of the charioteer who is holding the reins of both the yoked animals. The animal has been shown in outlines without tail, the vertical lines are thick. Rein from the mouth of the animal is going up above their head and body. The other animal has disappeared.

Observations: It is an elongated chariot. The decorated animal above it is not the part of the chariot composition.

5. OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

Some of the chariot compositions have been made close to the floor (20-30 cm to 40-50 cm above the floor). The compositions made at the height of 20-30 cm can be made by lying down on the belly or with the stretched legs on the floor and belly, and shoulders at convenient angles. It is not an easy position to execute artistic work, however it is comfortable to make the composition by bending the legs.

Rest of our observations and comments being common have already been presented in Part 2a. Hence, we are not giving them here again.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Invention of a Chariot was a deadly combination of

machine, animal power, human skill and intelligence in early pastoral period representing an advanced stage of cognition and cultural development of the humans. We observed that the selection and location of the compositions in the rockshelter was well thought out in terms of execution strategy and processes, the surrounding environment, visibility and effect of the composition on the visitors. The compositions are also well planned and thoughtfully created by the artist who was highly observant and was having analytical mind and great skills, deep understanding of the environment and structure in it.

The compositions are sophisticated and complex with applied technicalities of art and design, rich in information, analytical observations, anatomical and structural details, gracefully manoeuvring simple strokes and lines. At some places, even with the limitation of the brush, the artist was able to execute powerful strokes and created soft and delicate lines. Force and power in the brush movement on hard rock surface seem surprising. It changed our perception of rock art completely.

The technological and chronological development of chariots can be understood on the basis of the types of wheels, execution of the chariot and number of animals yoked to it, size and style of it, its finishing, number of persons standing on it, their personality and implements, etc.

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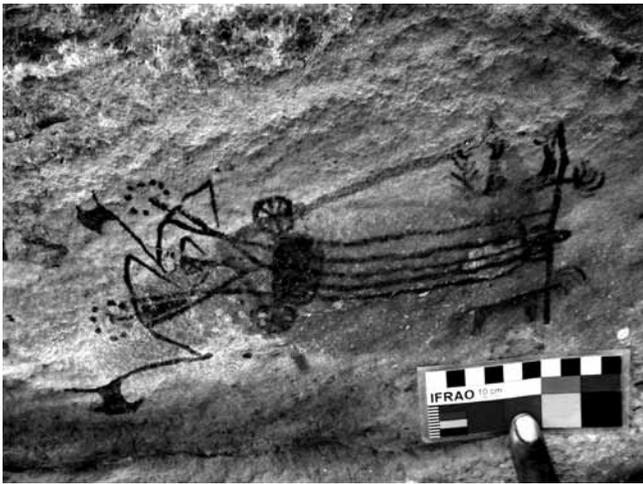


Fig. 1 - A chariot composition No. 1. CBN Rockshelter No. B17. Period IIb, Early Pastoral.

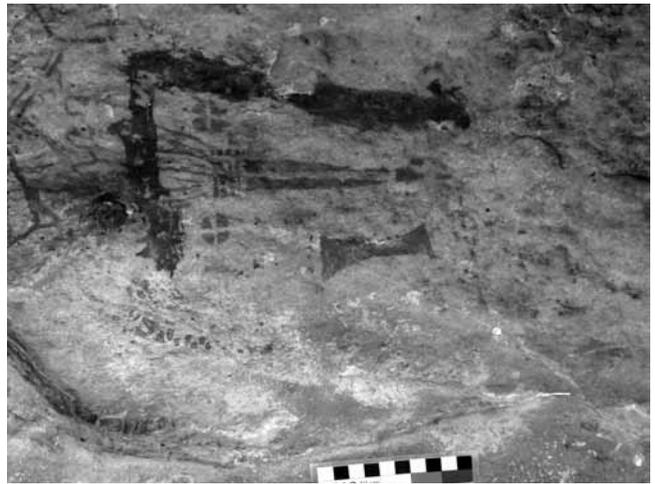


Fig. 2 - A chariot composition No. 2. CBN Rockshelter No. B17. Period IIb, Early Pastoral.



Fig. 3 - A chariot composition No. 3. CBN Rockshelter No. B17. Period IIb, Early Pastoral.



Fig. 4 - A chariot composition No. 4. CBN Rockshelter No. B17 yoked with four horses. Period IIb, Early Pastoral.



Fig. 5 - A chariot composition No. 5. CBN Rockshelter No. B17. Period IIb, Early Pastoral.