

ROCK ART IN TAMIL NADU



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INTRODUCTION

- **THE CURIOSITY OF MAN INSPIRED HIM TO REPRODUCE HIS THOUGHTS IN SOME ARTIFACTS WHICH DEVELOPED INTO ROCK ART**
- **PRIMITIVE ART IS IN FACT A RECORD OF THE CREATIVE GENIUS OF THE EARLY MAN**
- **INDIA RANKS AS ONE OF THE SIX MAJOR REGIONS IN THE OCCURRENCE OF ROCK ARTS IN THE WORLD**
- **THOUGH TAMILNADU IS PLACED IN THE PRE - HISTORIC MAP OF THE WORLD AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF MANY PALAEOLITHIC IMPLEMENTS, THE INVESTIGATION PERTAINING TO ROCK PAINTINGS GAINED MOMENTUM ONLY IN EARLY 1980'S.**

ROCK ART DISCOVERIES

- **THE DISCOVERY OF MAGNIFICENT BISON IN THE CAVERNS OF ALTAMIRA IN SPAIN DURING THE 19TH CENTURY**
- **SUBSEQUENTLY ROCK ARTS WERE IDENTIFIED AND STUDIED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD; EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, ASIA MINOR, SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA.**

EXPLORATION IN INDIA

- **THE EXPLORING ZEAL OF FOREIGNERS IN THE STUDY OF ROCK ART IN THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT IS REMARKABLE**
- **ARCHIBAL CARLLEYELE EXPLORED ROCK PAINTINGS IN KAIMUR RANGES IN THE YEAR 1880**
- **J.COCKBURN PUBLISHED HIS DISCOVERIES OF ROCK ART IN 1899**
- **F.FAWCETT,DISCOVERED ROCK PAINTINGS AT EDAKAL CAVES IN KERALA-1901**
- **C.A.SILBERRD THEN MEMBER OF INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE PUBLISHED ABOUT ROCK PAINTINGS OF BANDA DISTRICT -1907**
- **GODON IN 1932 SURVEYED PANCHMARHI AND ITS SURROUNDING AREAS**
- **IN THE YEAR 1955 F.R.ALCHIN PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE ON ROCK ART IN HYDERBAD AREA**

EXPLORATION BY INDIAN SCHOLARS

- **V.S.Wankankar, 1957, Dr. Pandey, 1960**
- **V.N.Mishra ,1970 surveyed Central India**
- **Sundara in Karnataka, 1967**
- **Dr.K.V.Raman, discovered Mallapadi paintings, 1978**
- **State Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu, found chain of rock paintings in & around Villupuram region, 1982**

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN TAMIL NADU

- **FIRST DISCOVERY OF ROCK PAINTING WAS MADE IN TAMIL NADU IN THE YEAR 1978 BY UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS**
- **THE INTERESTING ROCK PAINTINGS AT KILVALAI, SETTAVARAI, ALAMBADI AND OTHER PLACES WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE YEAR 1982 BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU**

AIM & OBJECTIVES FOR THE STUDY OF ROCK ART

- ORIGIN, PROGRESS AND PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION OF ROCK ART IN TAMILANADU**
- THE STUDY OF ROCK PAINTINGS OF SOUTHERN INDIAN REGIONS IN RELATION TO SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OF MAN AND HIS PROGRESS FROM NOMADIC TO COMMUNITY LIFE STYLE.**
- THE STUDY ALSO AIMS AT EXPLORING THE RELATION BETWEEN THE GRAFFITI ON POTTERIES OF MEGALITHIC PERIOD AND SYMBOLS FOUND ON ROCK PAINTINGS**
- THE REASONS FOR THE CREATION OF ROCK ART FORMS MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO SOME RITUALISTIC PURPOSE, DECORATION & AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION**

THE SCOPE FOR CRITICAL AND THOROUGH INVESTIGATION

- In Tamil Nadu the age of rock art dates back to three thousand years**
- The study envisages availability of modern tools like computerized techniques, Photography, Physical-Chemical process, Supporting information and examples**

GEOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL FEATURES

- **THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL FEATURES PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE PEOPLE.**
- **TAMIL NADU LIES IN BETWEEN 8' TO 14' N LATITUDE AND 76' TO 80' E LONGITUDE**
- **THE MAJOR PART OF TAMIL NADU CONSISTS OF AN ASSEMBLAGE OF CRYSTALLINE ROCKS OF ARCHAEOAN METAMORPHIC COMPLEX.**
- **THE PETROGLYPHS OR ABRASION DRAWINGS ARE CONFINED MAINLY TO THE GRANITE HILLS IN PENINSULAR INDIA.**

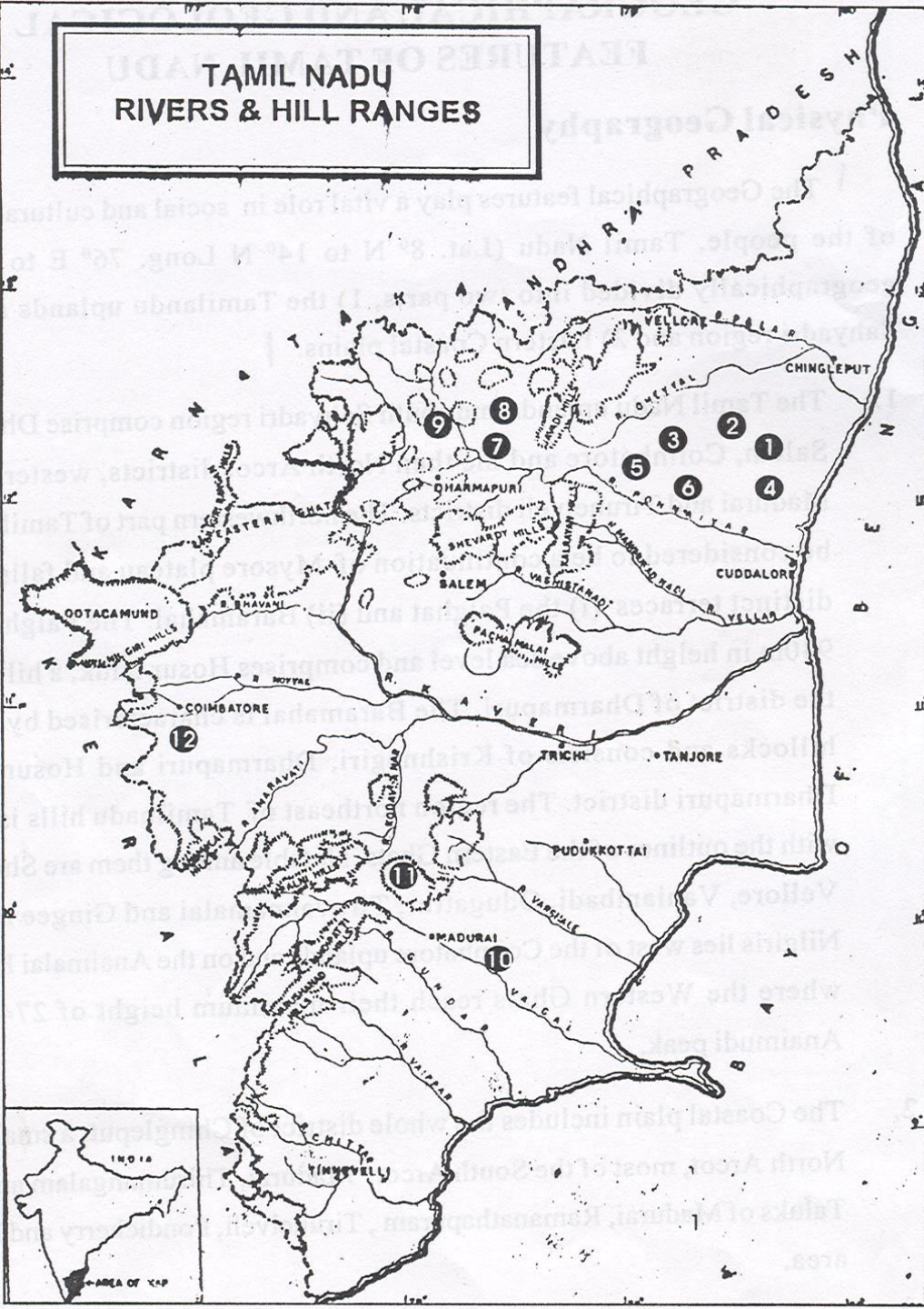
NATURE OF THE PAINTINGS

- **THE ROCK PAINTINGS ARE GENERALLY FOUND ON THE GRANITE HILLS**
- **MOSTLY OF HUNTING SCENE, HUMAN FIGURINES, HUMAN PALMS, ANIMALS ETC.,**
- **FOUND ON THE WALLS AND CEILING OF NATURALLY FORMED CAVES & BOULDERS**
- **GROUND PREPARATION WAS NOT MADE**

TECHNOLOGY

- **NATURALLY AVAILABLE COLOURS WERE USED**
- **PIGMENTS, SUCH AS MANGANESE, HAEMATITE, LIMONITE, OCHRE, RED-CHALK, CHARCOAL WERE MIXED WITH VEGETABLE JUICE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE COLOURS**
- **RED OCHRE AND KAOLIN FOUND IN SEVERAL PLACES ON THE DECCAN PLATEAU AND NILGIRIS HILLS**
- **ROOTS & PARTS OF THE PLANT WERE USED AS BRUSHES**

**TAMIL NADU
RIVERS & HILL RANGES**



**MAP SHOWING
DISTRIBUTION
OF
ROCK PAINTINGS
IN
TAMIL NADU**

1. KILVALAI
2. SETTAVARAI
3. ALAMBADI
4. PADIYANDAL
5. KOLLUR
6. NAYANUR
7. MALLAPPADI
8. MAHARAJAKADAI
9. MALLASAMUDRAM
10. TIRUMALAI
11. CIRUMALAI
12. VETTAIKKARANMALAI

DISTRIBUTION OF ROCK ART

- **DISTRICTS**

- **VILLUPURAM**

- **DHARMAPURI**

- **KRISHNAGIRI**

- **SIVAGANGA**

- **DINDUGAL**

- **COIMBATORE**

- **PLACES**

- **KILVALAI**

- **SETTAVARAI**

- **ALAMBADI**

- **PADIYANDAL**

- **KOLLUR**

- **NAYANUR**

- **MALLAPADI**

- **MAHARAJAKADAI**

- **MALLACHANDRAM**

- **TIRUMALAI**

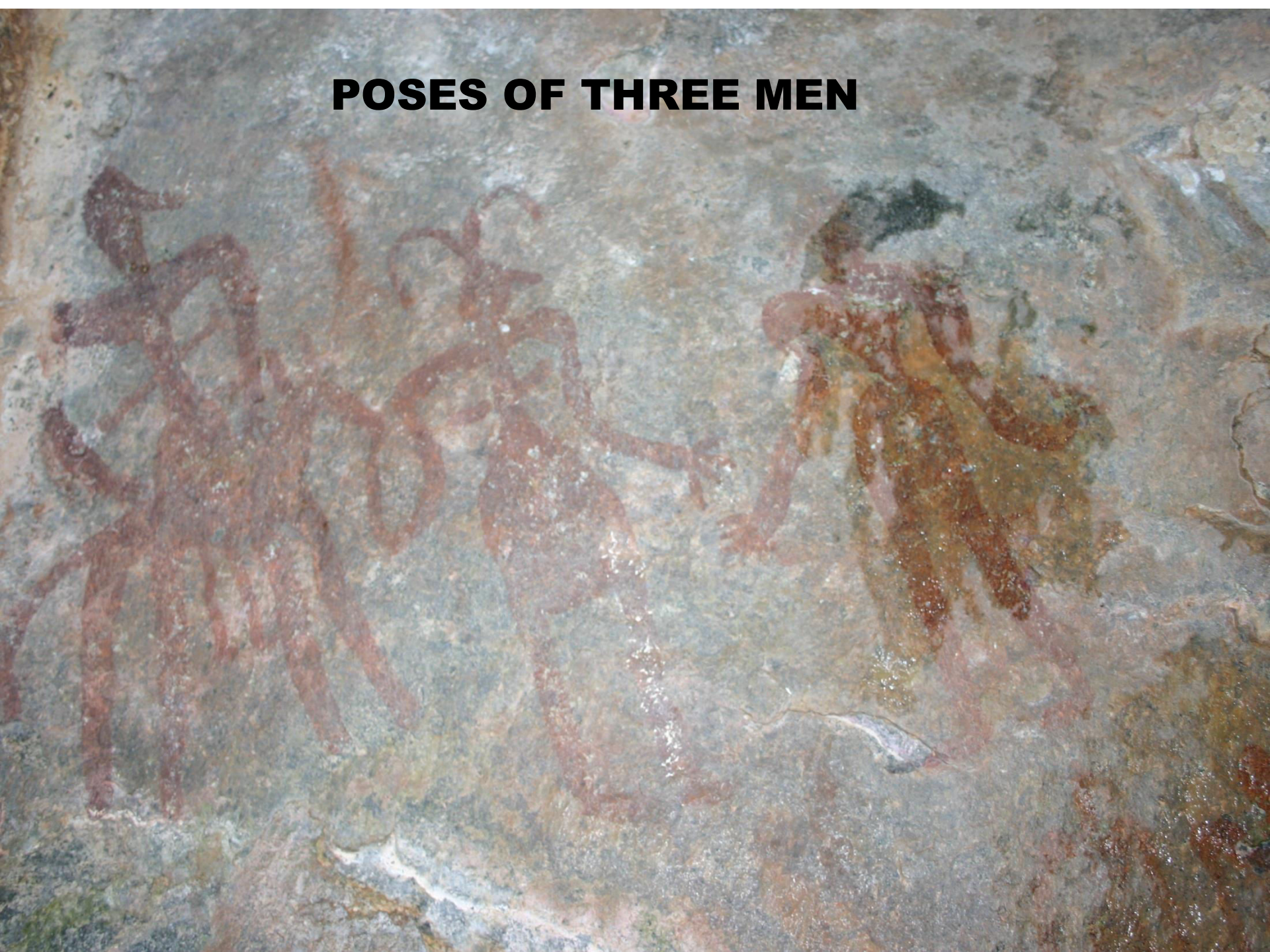
- **CIRUMALAI**

- **VETTAIKKARANMALAI**

KILVALAI

- A hamlet twenty three Km from Villupuram lies in between Latitude: $12^{\circ} 21' 48''$ N Longitude: $79^{\circ} 20' 28''$ E
- Paintings found in four different rocky areas; red ochre is used for colouring
- First picture depicts three human beings postured side by side; one man seated on a horse, another holding its bridle and the third man standing with outstretched hands in a way of welcoming them
- Some paintings of geometrical designs consisting of combined triangles, plus multiplication markings drawn inside the circles are also observed

POSES OF THREE MEN



GEOMETRICAL DESIGNS



KILVALAI

- **A picture of a sun with 17 rays is also noticed.**
- **The second group of painting seems to be the biggest in size, it depicts six men standing in a row**
- **The third group occurs deep inside the ledge; one has to crawl down to observe & decipher the paintings. Four men standing side by side while two others standing aloof from the group of four men.**
- **The fourth group of paintings consist of men with horned head gear and faces resembling that of bird's beak, which bear a very close similarity to some of the Egyptian paintings of the second millennium BCE**
- **The occurrence of designs and depiction of men rowing a boat indicates the link with Indus valley**
- **Date: 1000 – 500 BCE**

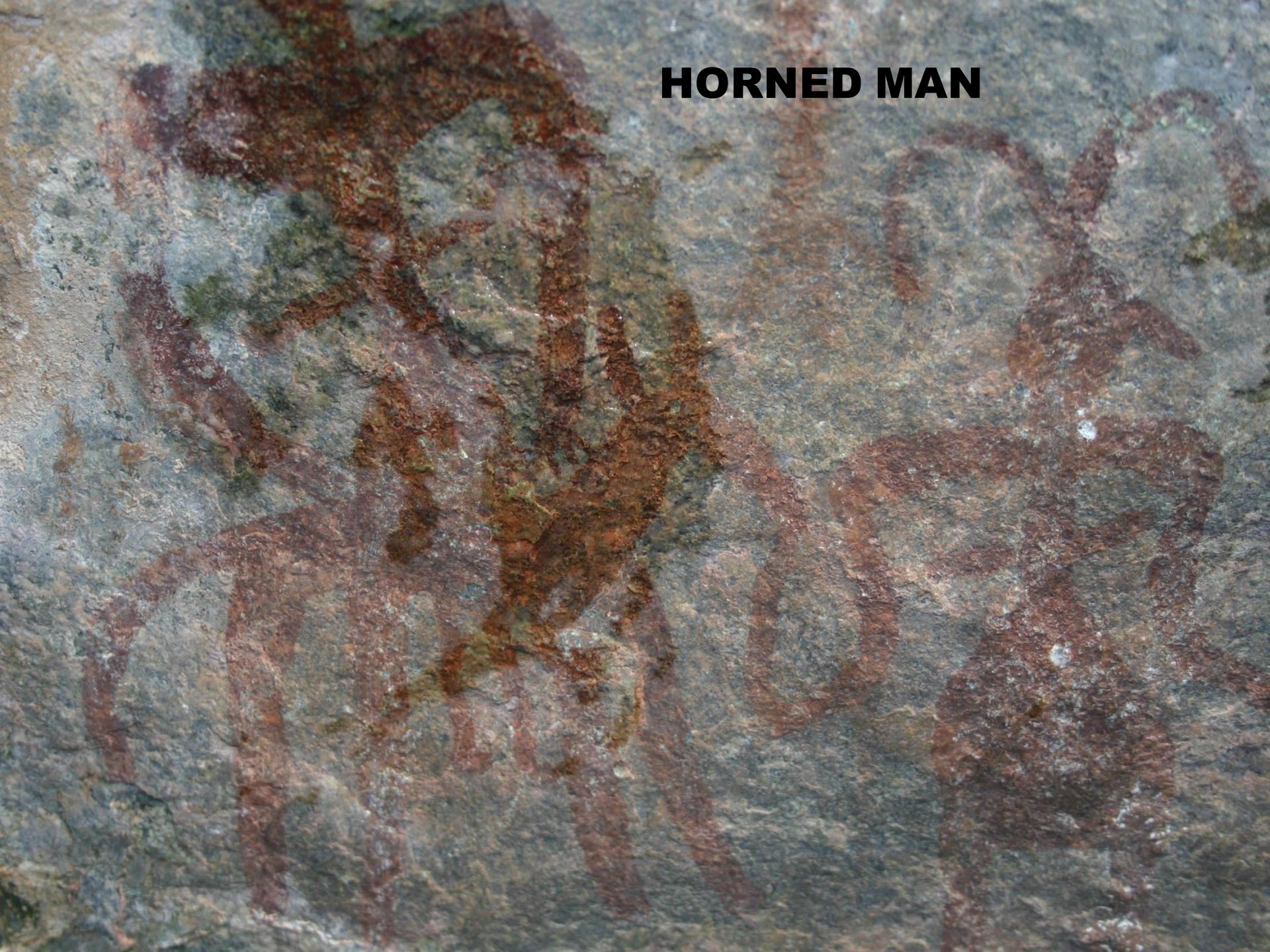
SUN SYMBOL & BEAKED MAN



MEN ROWING A BOAT



HORNED MAN



ALAMBADI

- Located about 18 Km from Tirukkoilur in between Latitude $12^{\circ} 0' 16''$ N & Longitude: $79^{\circ} 17' 54''$ E
- Locally the rock is called as *Kuzhankal parai* or *Vannathi parai*, red ochre is used
- Paintings like deer, cow, wild boar, fish are noticed
- A mask of a man is an interesting feature
- Another painting is of a deer standing behind the trees while another deer is being hunted by a tiger

ALAMBADI

- The painting of a cow with its x-rayed intestine shown transparently, similar to those found in Madhya Pradesh
- Superimposition of the paintings shows that this shelter was occupied by early man from time to time
- Date: 1000-500 BCE



Paintings of deer, cow



MASK OF A MAN



SUPERIMPOSITION

WILD BOAR & BOOMERANG



SETTAVARAI

- **About 15 Km west of Kilvalai near Vettavalam in Villupuram district. Latitude: 12° 09' 42' N
Longitude: 79° 15' 32' E**
- **The paintings are seen on the rock shelters of Ayyanar Malai.**
- **Deer, buffalo, wild boar, tiger, fish and geometrical designs are found in three rock shelters at the top of the hill in an inaccessible area.**
- **In portraying buffaloes and animals only red ochre was used; facial part of the buffalo is totally filled with red colour, while rear portion of the body show strokes**

SETTAVARAI

Outlines in some of the paintings had been done with red colour and the inner part filled with white pigments.

A well preserved painting of a deer, in white, standing near a fire and the flesh pierced with a long pole or spear being grilled in the fire is also seen; depiction of its bones resembles that of the paintings at Bhimbetka

Repeated occurrence of the human palm &

Beaked head portion of human figure

Date: 1000-500 BCE

**DEER, FIRE, FLESH
PIERCED IN A POLE**





FISH & TIGER

FISH



COLLAGE - PALM IMPRESSION & BUFFALO



OVERALL VIEW

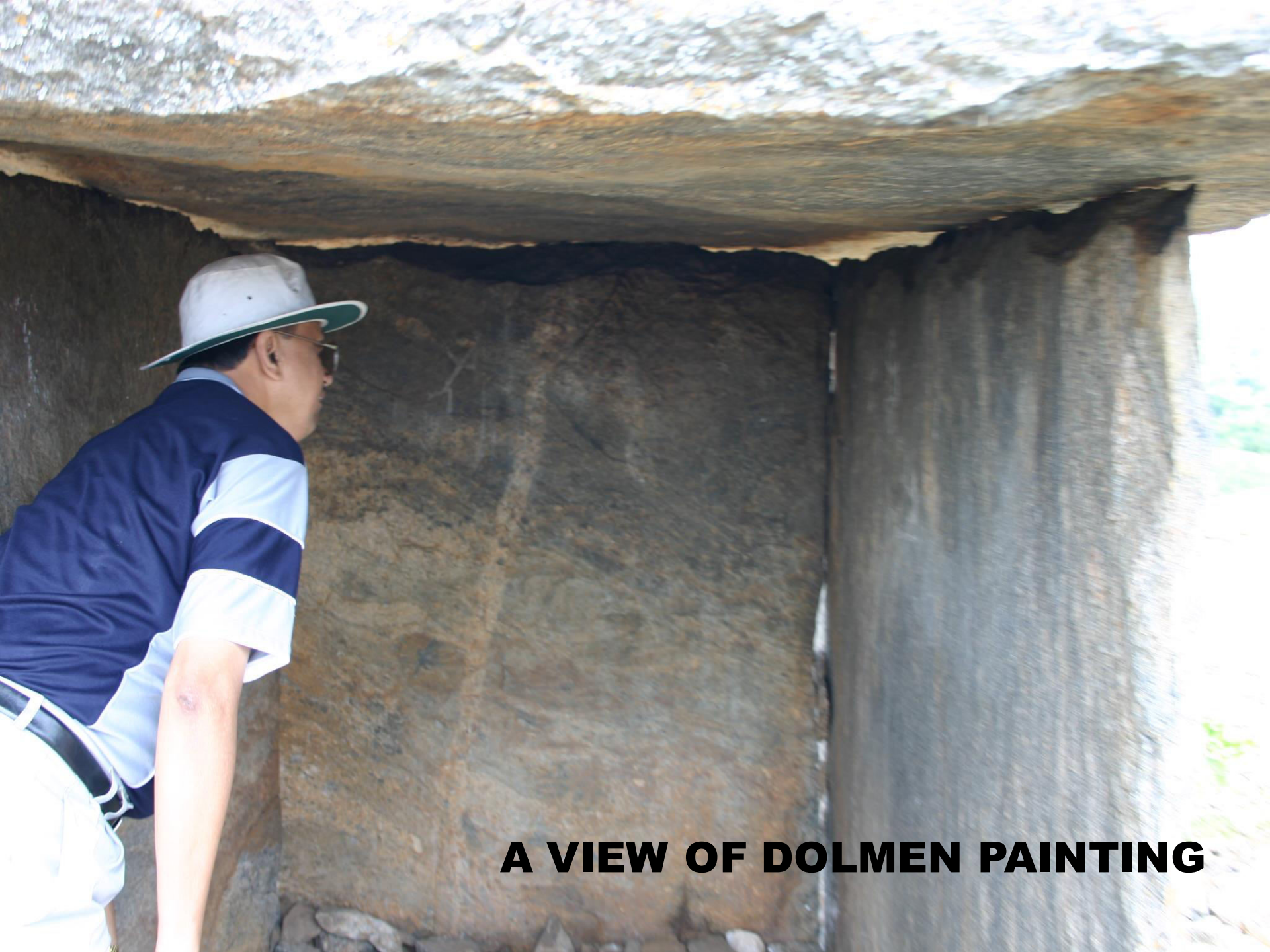


MALLACHANDIRAM

- Located about 22 km from Krishnagiri on the Bangalore highway Latitude: 12' 38' 54' N Longitude: 79' 15' 32' E
- Painting on the Dolmens seen through the post holes
- White pigment used for colouring
- Graffiti marks such as tree in railing, a drum like figure, a tulasi plant on a pedestal also noticed.
- Date: 300 BCE

DOLMENS - MALLACHINDIRAM





A VIEW OF DOLMEN PAINTING



**ROCK PAINTINGS -
MALLACHANDIRAM**

CHRONOLOGY

- The dating of the rock art is a complex problem
- We have to depend on indirect and circumstantial evidence to date the paintings
- In Tamil Nadu the Neolithic period is assigned to 4000-1000 BCE
- The Megalithic period is dated to 1000 BCE – 300 CE

Date of rock paintings in Tamil Nadu

- **In Tamil Nadu the rock paintings have been found close to sites which have Neolithic and Megalithic cultural traits**
- **The painting tradition was begun by the Neolithic people and continued in the Megalithic & Historic period**
- **Occurrence of Megalithic burials, typical burial potteries of black & red ware, paintings of the horses show that these paintings belongs to iron age or Megalithic culture**
- **Date: 1000-300 CE**

DISCUSSION

- Study of rock art is more a field of scientific approach to systematise the social, cultural and historical phases of human behaviour
- Man's initiation into the ritualistic and religious beliefs
- The paintings range from three inches miniature of animal figures to life size paintings of deer, buffaloes and human beings
- Animals like horses, deer, buffalo, fish are frequently painted
- Human beings are shown single or in groups
- Dancing, fighting and hunting scenes are often found

Discussion

- Symbols like cross, sun, circle, fence, human palms, wavy lines commonly noticed
- Picture of men wearing masks of birds, animals or human beings establishes a link with the influence of ritualistic belief
- Even today masked dances are an integral part of Indian culture in rustic and tribal living
- The symbols & markings observed on the rocks show similar features on the graffiti found in the megalithic period pot sherds

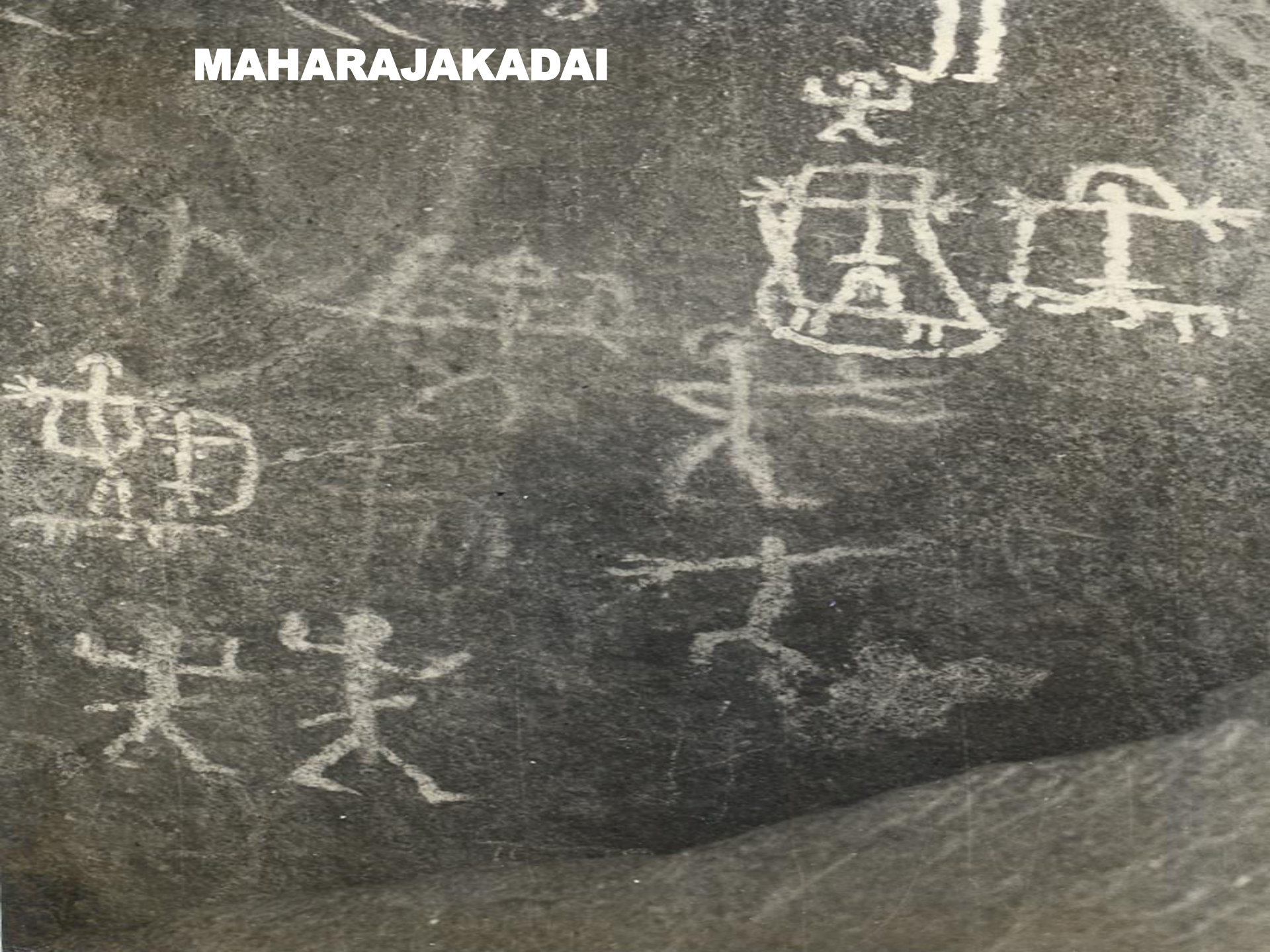


**ANTHROPOMORPHIC - MEGALITHIC BURIAL
UDAIYANATHAM**

MALLAPPADI – FIGHTING SCENE



MAHARAJAKADAI

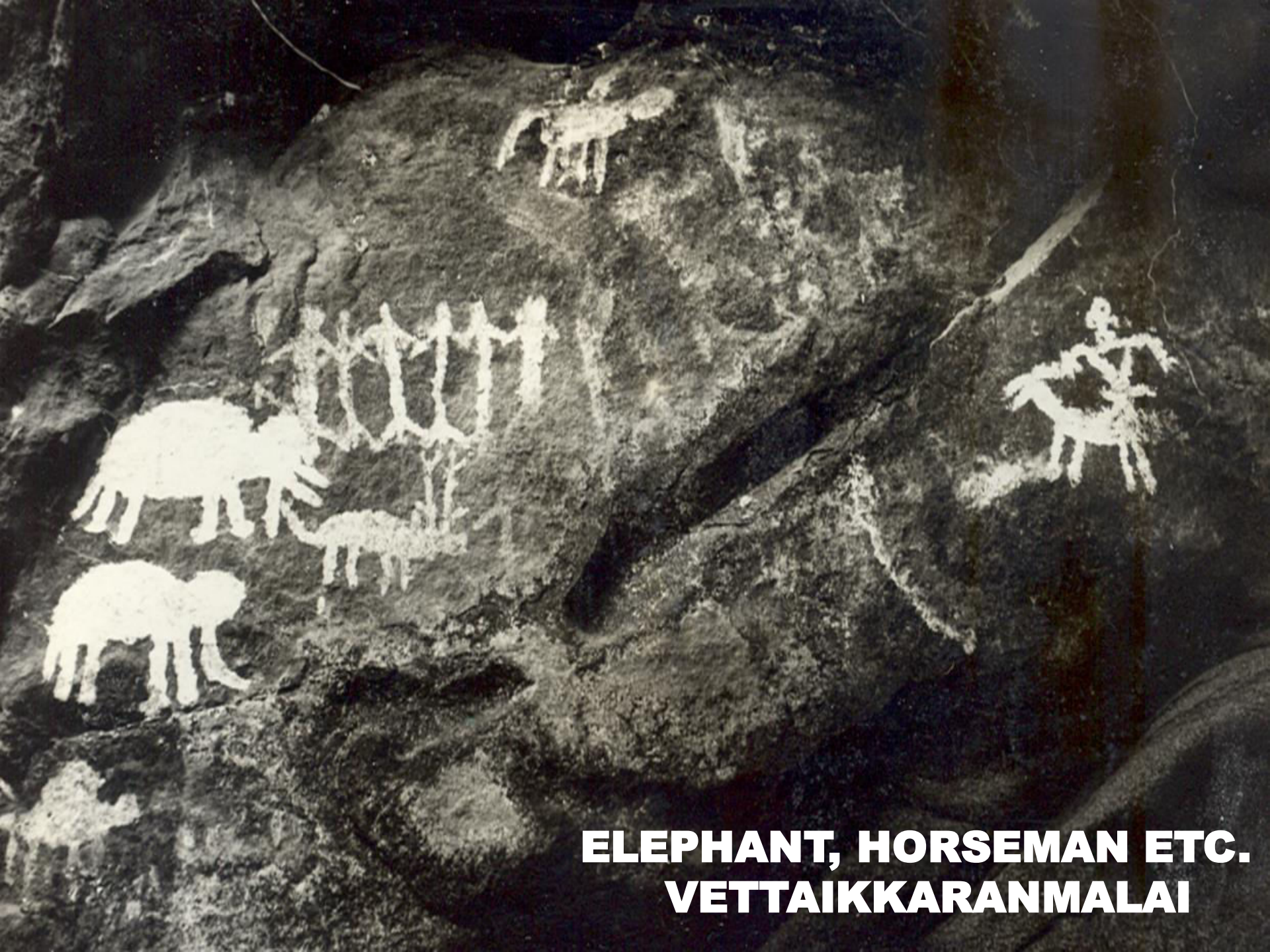


HUMAN FIGURES - THANAPPALLI





**DANCING SCENE –
VETTAIKKARANMALAI**



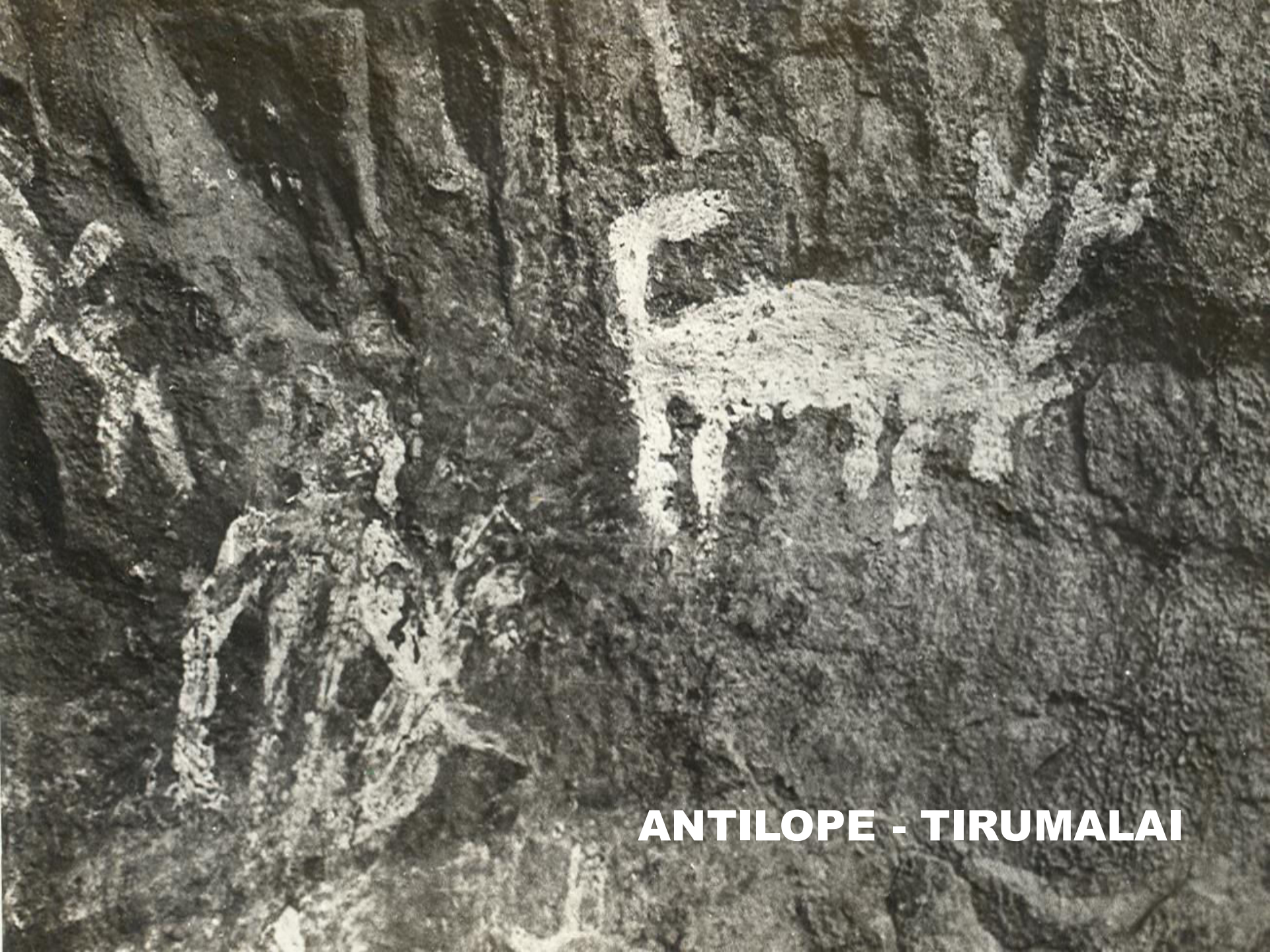
**ELEPHANT, HORSEMAN ETC.
VETTAIKKARANMALAI**



**HUNTING SCENE –
VETTAIKKARANMALAI**

**HORSE RIDER –
VETTAIKKARANMALAI**



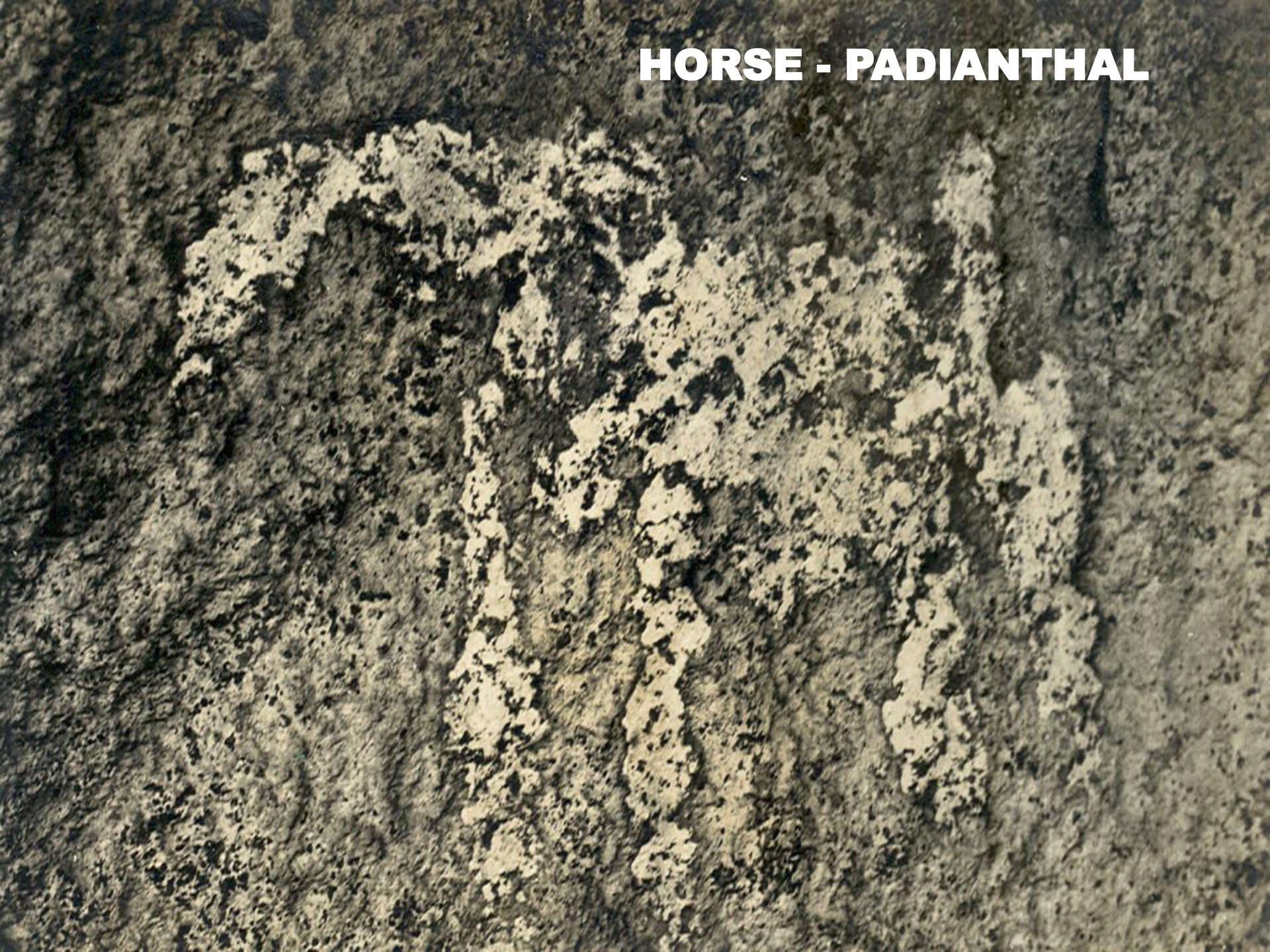


ANTILOPE - TIRUMALAI



SUPER IMPOSED PAINTING - CIRUMALAI

HORSE - PADIANTHAL



ROCK PAINTINGS

CONCLUSION

- **ESTABLISHES THE PRESENCE OF HUMAN HABITATION IN REMOTE REGIONS**
- **TRACES THE GROWTH OF HUMAN THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION IN ART FORM PRIOR TO SCRIPTS**
- **ESTABLISHES A CLEAR LINK BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**
- **HELPFUL TO ARCHAEOLOGY IN IDENTIFYING PERIOD & TYPE OF ARTEFACTS FOUND IN LOCALITY**



THANK YOU

