

Sixteenth International Congress of Rock Art Society of India (rasi), Lucknow 27-29 November 2011: A Brief Report

Sixteenth International Congress of Rock Art Society of India (RASI) was organised jointly by Archaeological Survey of India, Lucknow Circle and Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, University of Lucknow at Lucknow from 27 to 29 November 2011. The Congress theme was Beginning of cattle domestication: Perspectives of rock art and archaeology (Theme rationale attached).

The RASI Congress was attended by nearly 80 scholars; out of whom 25 were resource persons from Hyderabad (A.P.), Pondichery, Kolkata (W.B.), Shirva and Kalyanpura (Karnataka), Chennai (Tamilnadu), Ghaziabad, Allahabad, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Agra, Lucknow (U.P.), Bhopal and Rewa (M.P.) and Raipur (Chattisgrah). Mr Erwin Neumayer, a veteran expert on Indian rock art from Vienna, Austria was the Chief Guest of the Congress. Besides, Mr Ruman Banerjee, a young scientist working on U-Th dating of rock art, from University of Bristol, U.K. also participated and presented his papers.

Prof P. Chenna Reddy, Director, Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad delivered the prestigious 16th Dr V.S. Wakankar Memorial lecture on Change and continuity: The manifestations of rock art in Andhra Pradesh. Prof Somnath Chakraverty, B.E.C. University, Kolkata delivered the Keynote Address of the Congress on Decoding rock art of India: An Anthropological approach. Twenty seven papers were presented in six technical sessions on various themes, details of which has been published in the Congress Souvenir (enclosed with this report). Besides, a panel discussion on the beginning of cattle domestication in India was also organised. It was chaired by Dr Rakesh Tewari, Director, Archaeological Organisations, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow. Panalists were Dr N. Chandramouli from Pondichery, Dr T. Murugeshi from Karnataka, Mr Erwin Neumayer from Vienna, Prof Vibha Trpathi from B.H.U., Varanasi, Prof S. Chakraverty from Kolkata, Prof Mahesh Chandra Srivastava from Rewa, Dr (Col) A.K. Prasad and Prof R.C. Agrawal from Ghaziabad and Prof Giriraj Kumar from Agra. The discussions were also debated in the house. Finally it was agreed in the Congress that understanding the beginning of cattle

domestication in India in particular and in the world in general is important for understanding the beginning of self reliant pastoral economy which led the foundation of agricultural economy and development of civilization in congenial environment. The conference also highlighted the significance of this phenomenon in human history which was neglected so far. The deliberations of the congress also emphasised that cattle domestication began with humpless cattle as evident from the evidence of rock art. However, more work



Guests on the dais during the inaugural function of 16th RASI Congress, Lucknow 2011 : From left to right Prof.V.D.Mishra, Prof.Sengupta, Prof.K.K.Thapliyal, Mr. Erwin Neumayer, Shri Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Prof.R.C.Agrawal, Shri C.B.Mishra, Prof.Giriraj Kumar, Prof.Nisith Rai and Prof.D.P. Tewari (partially visible)



Lighting of lamp: From left to right-Prof.Giriraj Kumar, Prof.Nisith Rai, Prof.K.K. Thapliyal, Prof. R.C.Agrawal, Shri Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Mr. Erwin Neumayer, From Austria, the Chief Guest of the Conference.



Delegates of the Congress discussing before the inaugural function. From right to left: Prof. R.C. Agrawal with Prof. K.S. Saraswat, Palaeobotanist, Prof. Vibha Tripathy and others.

is needed to obtain osteological evidence to substantiate the evidence from rock art.

In the Inaugural function on 27 November the Congress was inaugurated by Mr Erwin Neumayer, the Chief Guest of the RASI Congress by lighting the lamp in front of the image of goddess Saraswati. Shri Avanish Kumar Awasthi, Secretary, Higher Education, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh was the Guest of Honour. He

said that the first discovery of rock art in India was made in Sohagighat in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh in 1868, hence organising the RASI Congress at Lucknow is very significant. He also emphasised the importance of rock art as an important source of knowledge to understand the cognitive development of its authors in early human history. The function was Chaired by Prof K.K. Thapliyal, a veteran scholar of Indology and Archaeology.

The congress delegates were welcomed by Dr C.B. Mishra, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Lucknow and Prof D.P. Tewari, Department of A.I.H. and Archaeology, University of Lucknow, both as the local organising secretaries of the Congress. Prof R.C. Agrawal, President, RASI highlighted the importance of rock art heritage in India. He said that the important contribution of RASI to the Rock Art Discipline is to bring back the antiquity of rock art to Lower Palaeo-

lithic Age. Prof Giriraj Kumar, Secretary General, RASI briefly presented the contributions made by RASI both at nationally and globally since its formation in 1990. He said that because of the achievements of the EIP Project, a joint venture by RASI and AURA (Australia), India has become a pioneering country in the study of early petroglyphs. RASI Journal Purakala Vol. 20-21, 2011 was released by the guests in the function. Besides, a bibliography on Indian rock art published by

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Prof.D.P.Tewari , Lucknow Univeristy welcoming the Guests.

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalay (IGRMS), Bhopal was also released in the function.

The Director, IGRMS, Bhopal was also kind enough to install an exhibition on Indian rock art which was visited by the congress delegates and University teachers, staff and thousands of students. It was inaugurated by Mr Erwin Neumayer.

In the evening on 28 November 2011 in the General Body meeting Election of the RASI Executive Committee were held. Dr (Col) A.K. Prasad was the Presiding Officer. The Office bearers were elected unanimously which are as follows:

Prof R.C. Agrawal (Ghaziabad)	President
Shri S.B. Ota (Bhopal)	Vice President
Prof Giriraj Kumar (Agra)	Secretary General
Dr N. Chandramouli (Pondichery)	Joint Secretary
Sh. A. Pradhan (Agra)	Joint Secretary
Prof Ashvini K. Sharma (Agra)	Treasurer

Following members were nominated for the RASI Executive Committee by the Secretary General in consultation with the President:

Prof D.P. Tewari (Lucknow)
Prof Somnath Chakraverty (Kolkata)
Prof V.H. Sonavane (Baroda)
Prof S. Pradhan (Bhubneswar)



Shri C.B.Mishra, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Lucknow Circle delivering his welcome address.

Prof Mahesh C. Srivastava (Rewa)

Dr T. Murugeshi (Shirva, Karnataka)

Mrs Meenakshi Thakur (Agra)

Sh Ram Krishna (Ahmedabad)

Sh Ruman Banerjee (Briston, U.K.)

Besides, matters regarding the venue of the next RASI congress and names for delivering Dr. V. S. Wakankar Memorial Lecture and Keynote Address were also discussed. For the venue of the next RASI Congress we have three options- Hyderabad by the State Department of Archaeology, Badami by an NGO and Department of AIH & Arcaheology, University of Benaras. For Dr Wakankar Memorial lecture suggested names were Prof R.K. Verma and Dr Vidula Jayaswal. For Keynote Address were Dr P.P. Joglekar and Dr Rakesh Tewari. President and Secretary General were also assigned to explore other scholars. It was also resolved to express the vote of thanks to both the organisers of the Congress. The meeting was adjourned with a vote of thanks to the presiding officer and the Chairman of the meeting.

In the valedictory function Prof Giriraj Kumar presented a brief summary of the deliberations of the Congress and recommendations made to bring out a special volume of *Purakala* having papers based on the comprehensive data on rock art and archaeological evidence on the beginning of cattle domestication in

India. He also expressed his gratitude on behalf of Rock Art Society of India (RASI) and also on behalf of the President RASI who had to leave because of some urgent work and personally to the organisers and their team to organise the Congress most efficiently in cordial way, especially to Prof N. K. Rai, Head and Prof D. P. Tiwari, Department of A.I.H.& Archaeology, University of Lucknow and Dr C. B. Mishra, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Lucknow Circle, the Local Organising Secretaries of the 16th RASI Congress, and their respective teams. He also thanked the Vice Chancellor, University of Lucknow, the D.G. Archaeological Survey of India and the Chairman, Indian Council of Historical research for their kind support for the RASI Congress.

Dr. Rajeev Dwivedi
Asstt. Superintending Archaeologist
ASI, Lucknow Circle, Lucknow

Regional Conference of Archaeological Survey of India at Bhopal, 13th-14th October 2012:

A brief report

On the occasion of 150th Anniversary of Archaeological Survey of India as celebrated throughout the country between December 2011 and December 2012, the Central Region of Archaeological Survey of India at Bhopal, in collaboration with the Directorate of Archaeology, Archives & Museums, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal organised a two day Conference on "Archaeology of Central

Region" on 13th-14th October, 2012 at Bhopal. The objective of this conference was to bring the various scholars researching in the area on one platform to have an assessment of the numerous significant discoveries and advancement that have been made in various fields of Archaeology in Central Region in recent years. Since the conference was organised by the Central Region of Archaeological Survey of India, the area defined for the conference coincides with the administrative boundary of the Central Region of ASI that was circulated and clarified in the first circular of the conference. The conference was inaugurated by Prof. R.N. Misra and Dr. Gautam Sengupta, Director General, ASI both as Chief Guest and Guest of Honour respectively. Besides, the inaugural function was also chaired by Shri Pankaj Rag, Commissioner, Directorate of Archaeology, Archives & Museums, Government of Madhya Pradesh and Shri S.B. Ota, Regional Director, Archaeological Survey of India, Bhopal. The two day conference was divided into seven academic sessions - 1. Conservation, 2. Prehistory, 3. Rock art, 4. Protohistory, 5. Historical Archaeology, 6. Art and Architecture and 7. Miscellaneous that were chaired by senior scholars like Dr. K.S. Rana, Dr. S.K. Mittra, Prof. D.P. Tiwari, Prof. Sheila Mishra, Dr. Amrendra Nath, Prof. P.P. Joglekar and Prof. Giriraj Kumar respectively. Altogether 80 research papers were presented during the conference. The significant aspect of this conference is the research presentations by young scholars that constitute nearly 70 % of the total presentations. This is certainly a good indication that the future of archaeology in the country is in the hands of younger generation. The most noteworthy feature remained of this conference is the submission of full research papers before the conference. In fact every year a number of conferences are organised in the country. But unfortunately the proceedings are sometimes either not published or published very late. The main reason for this is the procurement of full research papers by the organisers from the participants after the conference for



*Lighting of lamp by Prof. R.N. Misra during the inauguration of the Conference.
Left to right: Dr. Gautam Sengupta, Shri Pankaj Rag and Shri S.B.Ota*