

MEMOIRS OF THE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

(1)

No. 24

ROCK-PAINTINGS AND OTHER ANTI-  
QUITIES OF PREHISTORIC AND  
LATER TIMES

BY

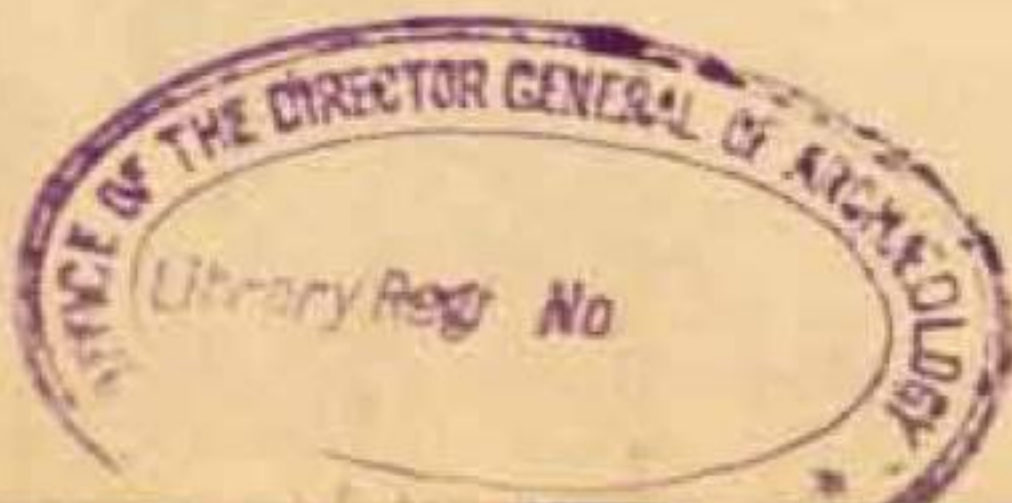
RAI SAHIB MANORANJAN GHOSH, M.A.,  
*Curator, Patna Museum*

21931

~~14808~~



CALCUTTA: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CENTRAL PUBLICATION BRANCH  
1932





trees among which the *Sāl* predominates. The rock-shelter which overlooks the village of Singanpur commands a fine view of the valley of the river Mand, a tributary of the Mahānadi river (Plate Ib). The rocks in this vicinity are of the upper Gondwana sandstones with three bands of carbonaceous shales.

The fauna of the Raigarh forest includes tigers, bisons, bears, leopards and wild boars, besides the *sambhar*, *nilgai*, *kotri* and barking and spotted deer.

Mirzapur, between Allahabad and Benares, is one of the largest districts of the United Provinces and its scenery is correspondingly diversified. In the north is the alluvial plain of the Ganges with its level tract, next a table-land, stretching from the top of the Vindhyan scarp southwards to the Kaimur range and the valley of the Son river, and beyond the Son, a wild hilly tract full of ravines and craggy hills and valleys. It is in the valley of the Son, in the Vindhyas and in the fastnesses of the Kaimurs that the rock-shelters with paintings are chiefly found. Of the different groups, Likhunia, Kohbar and Bhaldaria lie north of the Kaimur range and Mahararia and Bijaygarh to the south. They are all easily accessible from the town of Ahraura, connected by a metalled road 13 miles long with the Ahraura Road Railway Station on the main line of the East Indian Railway. From Ahraura an unmetalled road takes one to Chhātu Inspection Bungalow, 5 miles away, where after ascending the sides of the Kaimur plateau by a zigzag, the road bifurcates, one branch going south to Robertsganj and another turning west to the irrigation reservoir at Dongia, close to the village of Mahararia. Near this village and on the upper reaches of the Garai are specimens of rock-painting. The other road, after ascending the plateau, goes straight to Robertsganj, about 24 miles from Ahraura. Just where the road nears the end of the plateau near Robertsganj is the irrigation Inspection Bungalow of Dhandraul. Some three miles to the south of this Bungalow is the famous hill fort of Bijaygarh crowning the flat top of one of the hills of the range. On the west face of the hill on which the fort stands, are rock-shelters containing besides early paintings several Gupta inscriptions in red ochre. The upper Garai, after a sheer fall of some 100 ft. below Mahararia, cuts a deep course through the sandstone of the Kaimur Plateau and enters the open country near Chhātu where it is joined by a smaller stream, called the Bhaldaria. On the lower Garai are situated the Kohbar and Likhunia rock-shelters amidst lovely surroundings (Plate. VIb). Along the Bhaldaria are three other rock-shelters with rock-paintings. The scenery at all these places is picturesque and wild and has a rugged beauty. Of large game, leopard, lynx, wolf and wild dog are the chief. Of the deer tribe the *sambhar*, *chital*, black buck and ravine gazelle are found here and there. In days gone by, as narrated by Babar, there were found maneless lions, wild elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes and bisons.

About two miles from the town of Hoshangabad, the headquarters of the district of the same name in the Central Provinces, are rock-paintings in a rock shelter. The hill containing the paintings can be easily identified, as there is a stone quarry, locally known as the Adamgarh quarry, after the name of the adjoining village.



## CHAPTER IV.

## Mirzapur Rock-Paintings.

AFTER finishing work at Singanpur the writer went on to Mirzapur. Some of the paintings in this district were discovered as far back as 1880 by Mr. Archibald Carlleyle of the Archæological Survey and Mr. John Cockburn of the Opium Department. Mr. Carlleyle's discovery was noticed in the *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, February 1883, p. 49, but a more detailed account seems never to have been published. Mr. John Cockburn's account of the rock-paintings appeared in the *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* for 1883, p. 123, and his paper on the hunting of rhinoceros was published in the *Journal of the Society*, LII, Part 2, 1883, pp. 56-64. Another paper from the same author was published in the *Proceedings* for 1884, p. 141, and an illustrated article on the Cave Drawings in the Kaimur Range in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1899, p. 89. Mr. Percy Brown also drew attention to the Mirzapur Rock-Drawings in his book on *Indian Painting*, p. 16. He writes: "As usual hunting scenes are the principal subjects and we find the chase of wild animals, such as the rhinoceros and the sambar stag, most realistically rendered. All these drawings bear a remarkable resemblance to the famous rock-shelter paintings of Cogul in Spain, which are presumed to be the work of Aurignacian man of many thousands of years ago. An exploration of the Raigarh and Mirzapur Caves might reveal clues not only of the birth of painting in India, but also throw considerable light on the early history of mankind in the East generally."

The Mirzapur paintings have been noticed in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, pp. 89 to 98. There is also a general description of these paintings in the *District Gazetteer of Mirzapur*, 1911, pp. 197-200, based on a paper contributed by Messrs. W. B. and J. Cockburn. A notice by Mr. K. N. Dikshit of three paintings from three different places of the Mirzapur District appeared in the report of the Lucknow Museum for 1918.

In the first chapter the position of the different shelters containing paintings that were visited by me in the Mirzapur District has been described. Work was first begun at Likhunia. This rock-shelter is fairly well known to the villagers near Chhātu, and lies to the south-west of the Chhātu Inspection Bungalow at a distance of a little over two miles, the path passing through prickly scrub and over uneven rocky ground. On the way is an open space near which are to be seen stone flakes scattered about. At a little distance from this place the river Garai is visible with its stream glittering in the sunshine. Near the rock-shelter one has to climb the rocky bank of the Garai, and here the river has a fall of some fifteen feet, which makes the spot a singularly charming one (Plate VIb). The Likhunia shelter is formed by an over-hanging rock which projects some 16 feet towards the river (Plate VIa). The wall of the shelter containing the painting is 5' in height, the shelter itself being 72' in length, 11' in height and 24' in breadth



(Plate XXVIII). There are three paintings. The upper one represents a hunting scene with elephant (Plate VIa). Below it is another depicting the catching of birds; and to its left is an elephant and a horse. On the opposite bank of the shelter are other smaller paintings of cruder design. The details of these paintings are as follows:—

- (1) The subject of the painting is probably the capture of a wild elephant by horsemen assisted by a tame elephant. In the left hand lower corner, two animals are shewn running away. In the right hand top corner are two more animals similar to the above; and below these a triangle surrounded by a comb-like object. Near by, are three deer being driven into a trap by three men, one of whom is painted in black, a second in white and a third in white and red. The central object of the scene is a driver on a big elephant carrying in one hand a long pointed spearlike weapon and in the other a round object, probably a shield. He is pursuing a tusked elephant. Among his retinue are shewn in the upper field two archers, two men with spears and shields and a man without any weapon. Below him are a man on foot with a spear and a shield and three horses of which one has lost its rider (probably defaced). The two riders are armed with spear and shield. In front of the wild elephants is a rectangular figure blocked in with colour which may be a corral, and adjoining it some other structures drawn in line only. On the extreme left of the scene are three men with arms above their heads, engaged in driving the wild elephant. Below the leg of the latter is the figure of a man painted in black which appears to be an older work (Plate VIa).
- (2) This scene (Plate XVIIb) depicts the catching of large birds. On the left is a group of men, some on foot and others on horseback. In the centre are a number of birds and to the right others apparently entangled in a trap. On the extreme right is portrayed a structure which may be an elaborate trap.
- (3) To the left of the scene is a horse (Plate XXd) with a man on it and to the right an elephant (?) goaded by a man with a stick.

A little higher up the stream and about a furlong and a half from the Likhunia rock-shelter, is another shelter locally known as Kohbar. The height of the rock-shelter is 18', its length 64', and depth 31' 2" (Plate XXVIII). As there was a painting on the roof of the shelter, it was necessary to erect a scaffold. The photograph (Plate VIIa) shows the copyist at work. There are other paintings on the wall of the shelter, of which the writer was able to copy the following:—

- (1) Two strange animals, perhaps bears, attacking a deer. (Plate XXc.)
- (2) Two deer drawn single file. (Plate XXIIa, Fig. 1.)
- (3) A man armed with shield and apparently dancing. (Plate XXIIa, Fig. 2.)



- (4) Figure of a deer with body filled in with hatching, facing two traps. (Plate XXIIa, Fig. 3.)
- (5) Unknown symbols. (Plate XXIIa, Fig. 4.)
- (6) A man with a shield or bow, either fighting or dancing. (Plate XXIIa, Fig. 5.)

Returning from Kohbar to Chhātu Inspection Bungalow we followed up the course of the river Bhaldaria, and near where the path crosses the dry bed of the stream, came upon a hollow in the river bed, where water remains all the year round. By the side of this pool is the rock-shelter No. III (Plate VIII b). As it is approached from the top, it is a little difficult of access and I needed the help of an elephant's ladder to reach it. The height of the shelter is  $6\frac{1}{2}'$ , its length 110' and its depth 14' (Plate XXVIII). On the walls of the shelter are a number of paintings of which I succeeded in copying the one reproduced in Plate XXId, which depicts three figures with an object between them of indefinite shape. At a distance of some 10' from this painting are two inscriptions (Plate XXIc) which look like mediæval records of the 9th Century A.D. or somewhat earlier. One is tentatively read as '*dasa*'; the other as '*gisada*'.

Crossing the river and proceeding about two miles, the path rises up the side of the hill and at a distance of nearly three miles from the Chhātu Inspection Bungalow leads to the rock-shelter No. II (Plate VIIb). In it is inscribed the name of Mr. Cockburn who visited the spot in 1883. At the back of the shelter is a cave and in front, a narrow platform extending beyond the mouth of the cave towards the south (Plate XXVIII). The length of the shelter is 56', its height 9' 6", and breadth in front of the cave 24'. On the wall are many paintings of which the following four were copied as being the most interesting:—

- (1) A remarkable painting on the wall of the shelter, depicting four snipe standing in water with a tree on the right (Plate XXVa). At the bottom are faint traces of two animals that may be monkeys.
- (2) A hunting scene (Plate XXa). The central figure is a deer or antelope, with short horns, according to Mr. Cockburn, a Gopr stag (*Rucervus Duvancellii*). It is being speared by a man who is very crudely drawn. Above is a smaller stag and there are other hunters besides the one mentioned. The larger animal is also being attacked by dogs. The scene is executed in polychrome.
- (3) A striking picture of a boar, wounded and with its mouth open as if in pain. At the back of the hind legs are five characters. The animal figure is distinctly well drawn and all four legs are shewn instead of the two usually seen in prehistoric pictures (Plate XXVb). The rock on which this scene is painted has suffered much from flaking.
- (4) The forepart of a deer with peculiar horns facing right (Plate XXIe). The rock has flaked and it is likely that the painting will soon disappear altogether.

Descending the hill and ascending the bed of the stream we arrive at the Bhaldaria Rock-shelter No. I. The height of the shelter is 9' 6", its length 45', and depth 18' 10" in the middle (Plate XXVIII). The photo on Plate



VIIIa will give an idea of the position of the shelter. On the roof and side of the shelter are many paintings, of which the following are the most interesting:—

- (1) A man riding a galloping horse to right. With his left hand he holds the reins, and with his upraised right a weapon—probably a sword. The figures of both man and horse are vigorous and lifelike (Plate XXIf). This picture is on the roof of the shelter.
- (2) A camel, with possibly a rider once seated on its back. It is painted on the roof of the shelter (Plate XXIg).

Returning to Chhātu and ascending the Kaimur plateau by the Sukrit Pass, one turns at the fifth mile-stone to the right towards the Dongia reservoir of the Irrigation Department. About 5 miles from this point is a rock-shelter on the upper Garai near Mahararia. Here numerous paintings have been executed in red ochre, of which the two following were copied:—

- (1) Three persons with long hair evidently engaged in dancing. This has been copied in outline only, though the figures were originally filled in with colour (Plate XXIa, Fig. 1).
- (2) Below, four persons drawn in a pale red colour are dancing within an enclosure (Plate XXIa, Fig. 2). Both scenes are on the roof of the shelter.

Returning to the fifth mile-stone one reaches the main road again and at the 24th mile-stone the town of Robertsganj. On the range of hills south of this town, about 3 miles from the Dhandraul Public Works Department Inspection Bungalow, is situated the famous fort of Bijaygarh which is a prominent landmark for many miles around.

This fort stands on the summit of the hill some 1,860' above mean sea level and some 800' higher than the table-land from which it rises. The position of the fort is one of great natural strength, as it has a steep escarpment all round and is accessible only by way of two difficult passes (Plate IXa). The approach from the side of Robertsganj is by an ancient bridge over the Gāghar river, now utilized by the Irrigation Department as a dam. The bridge dates from the time of Sher Shah but seems to have been subsequently repaired. From the bridge the path to the fort ascends for some distance by an easy slope along which at intervals are the remains of ancient outworks. At the place where the path abruptly rises is the figure of a chief fighting with a lion, cut in relief on the rock and coloured (Plate IXb). The path rises through a sheer ascent of some two hundred feet to the entrance of the fort. The circumference of the hill is nearly two miles. There is a masonry rampart all round with circular bastions at irregular intervals.

The fort is of unknown origin, and is attributed to the Kols. When its history begins it was in the possession of the Baland Rājās, and thereafter passed to the Chandelā Rājputs. The construction of the present fort is attributed to Sher Shah and its later additions to Balwant Singh of Benares. After the break-up of Sher Shah's empire, it again passed to the Chandelas who held it till it was conquered by Balwant Singh. Since the expulsion of Chait Singh it has been the property of Government. Within the fort there are a tomb of a



Muhammadan saint, remains of five stone buildings of the Pathan period and three tanks from one of which good drinking water can be obtained throughout the year. Scattered about are numerous interesting sculptures of fine mediæval workmanship.

The rock-shelters are below the rampart wall and on the west side of the fort. From the entrance of the fort, already referred to, one has to go about 4 furlongs along the hill-side among dense bamboo and other jungle, over fallen debris and rocks. The rock-shelter containing the painting has a height of 80', a length of 160' and depth of 27' (Plate XXVIII). To reach the painting itself a scaffolding was needed. The painting portrays two deer-like animals with long necks and behind them, to the left, two figures facing the other way, the smaller of which resembles a man and the larger an ape (Plate XXb). The former appears to hold a branch of a tree. This painting is on the wall of the shelter (Plate IVa).

About two furlongs from this shelter there is another at a height of 28' (Plate Xa and b). This second shelter is very spacious: 8' in height, 40' in length, and 36' in depth at the centre (Plate XXVIII). On its roof and side are no less than 34 inscriptions painted in red ochre and dating from 5th to 8th Century A.D. An article describing in detail these records which do not appear to have been previously noticed will be published in the *Epigraphia Indica*.

Of the three inscriptions figured in Plate XIa, the first reads '*Indradattah, guhidattah*'. The letters of this inscription resemble the letters of the *Kahaum* Pillar inscription of Skanda Gupta of 459 A.D.

The second inscription reads '*giriḥ ~~chauma~~ chandra*'. It is in characters of the 8th Century A.D. The third inscription reads '*savatavid*' and is also written in characters of 8th Century A.D. So/

In Plate XIIb, the first inscription reads '*raṇavarmā chandra*'. The second reads '*giriḥ prakāsha*'. The third reads '*savathā*'. They are written in characters of 5th Century A.D. la/

It is to be remembered that neither at Likhunia nor at Kohbar was there any soil in the shelters. I have already mentioned that on the way to Likhunia I found a number of flakes. Along the Bhaldaria neither at the rock-shelter No. III nor at No. I was there any soil. It was only at No. II that I was able to excavate to any great depth but I could only procure broken pottery, which did not appear to be ancient. In the vicinity of the Mahararia rock-shelters and in the shelters themselves no place appeared to be promising for excavation. At Bijaygarh alone was there any considerable depth of soil below the shelter, but owing to want of time and money nothing could be done here.

On the way to Bhaldaria rock-shelters one of my peons picked up a sand-stone hammer (Plate XIV, Fig. 14). One stone implement was also picked up on our way to Bijaygarh (Plate XV, Fig. 8). A detailed list of some antiquities picked up by the writer is given below:—

- (1) Stone implement, 1½" long, of quartz. Scraper. Later period. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3658. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 8.)



- (2) Stone implement,  $\frac{11}{16}$ " long, of flint. Probably a broken scraper of later Stone Age. It has been reflaked at the back. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3656. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 4.)
- (3) Stone implement,  $\frac{3}{8}$ " long, flint, a broken knife of later period. Reflaked at the back. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3657. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 5.)
- (4) Stone implement, 1" long, of flint, blue colour. A scraper. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3663. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 1.)
- (5) Stone implement,  $\frac{3}{16}$ " long, of flint of green colour. A flake knife. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3661. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 2.)
- (6) Stone implement,  $\frac{3}{4}$ " long, of agate. A flake knife. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3666. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 3.)
- (7) Stone implement,  $1\frac{1}{16}$ " long, of grey flint. An incurved scraper. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3662. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 6.)
- (8) Stone implement,  $\frac{11}{16}$ " long, of flint. A denticulated flake. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3664. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 7.)
- (9) Stone implement,  $\frac{11}{16}$ " long, flint. A flake knife. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3665. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 9.)
- (10) Stone implement,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " long, of grey flint. A flake knife. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3666. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 10.)
- (11) Stone implement,  $\frac{11}{16}$ " long, chert. A core. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3668. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 11.)
- (12) Stone implement, 1' long, of green flint. A core. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3667. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 12.)
- (13) Stone implement,  $1\frac{5}{16}$ " long, of flint. It has a denticulated edge and is a typical neolithic implement. Found on the surface near Likhunia. Reg. No. 3659. (Plate XIIIb, Fig. 13.)
- (14) Stone implement,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " long, of flint. A broken knife. Found on the surface on the way to Bijaygarh fort. Reg. No. 3742. (Plate XV, Fig. 8.)

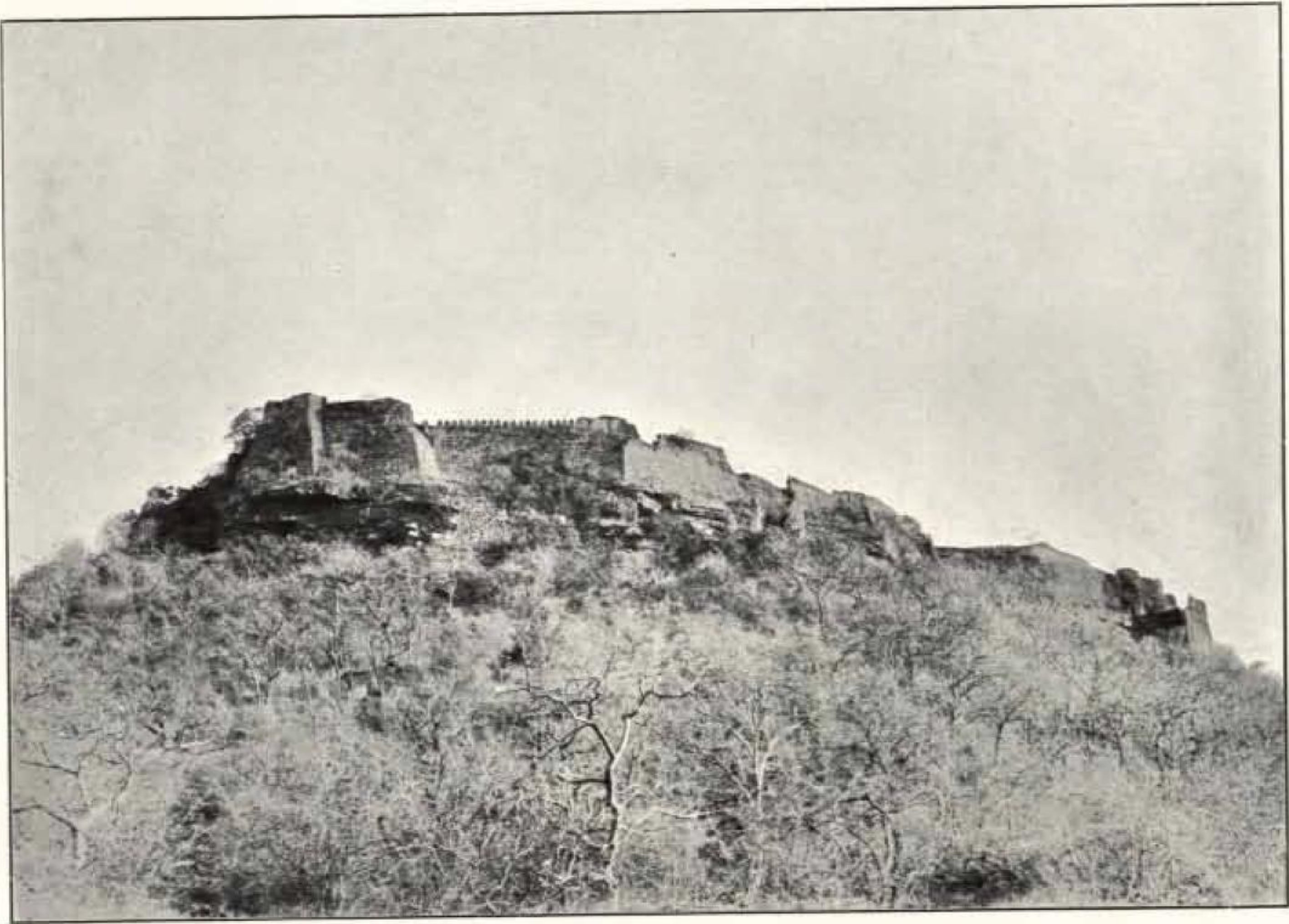
Antiquities of later period :—

- (1) Stone object,  $3" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$ , of sandstone. Probably an unfinished hammer with a depression in the middle. Found on the surface near Bhal-daria Rock-shelter No. III. Reg. No. 3669. (Plate XIV, Fig. 14.)
- (2) Round terracotta disc,  $1\frac{3}{16}"$  in diam. Found near Rock-shelter No. I, Bijaygarh. Reg. No. 3743. (Plate XV, Fig. 10.)

The paintings described above are all of late date ranging from the 4th Century A.D. to the 10th A.D. They are contemporary with the inscriptions found in the locality.



ROCK PAINTINGS AND PREHISTORICS.



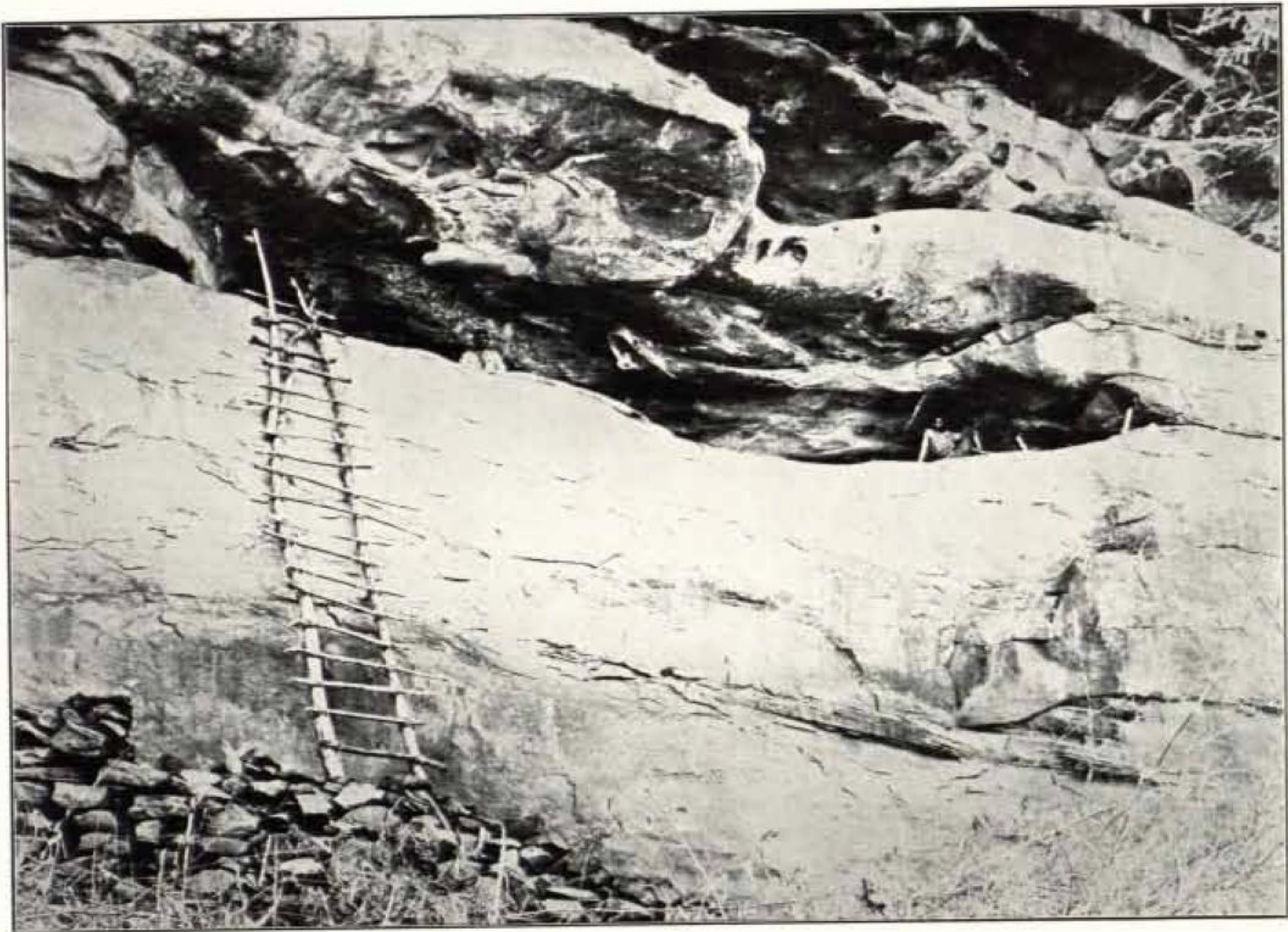
(a) VIEW OF THE FORT OF BIJAYGARH, MIRZAPUR.



(b) VIEW OF THE WARRIOR ON THE WAY TO BIJAYGARH, MIRZAPUR.



ROCK PAINTINGS AND PREHISTORICS.



(a) VIEW OF THE ROCK-SHELTER NO. II, BIJAYGARH, MIRZAPUR.



(b) VIEW OF THE INSCRIPTIONS PAINTED ON THE ROOF OF THE ROCK-SHELTER NO. II, BIJAYGARH, MIRZAPUR.