



Carvings at Usgalimal, Goa-2

Dancers and Story Tellers

Through the numerous pictograms on the rocky platform by the tributary of Kushavati river in Usgalimal, the early settlers have preserved their signatures and, perhaps something of the nature of the fauna and experiences of their rituals. These petroglyphs are now our prehistory books that tell of pasts and give us insights into the present. The carvings must have been very important to the community that they took the time to etch it into rock.

Without written codes to decipher the intricate and varied symbolisms of prehistoric art, and their religious practices, the earlier interpretations, and the ones now presented, will inevitably be very tentative and subjective.

All the figures carved are to be viewed from the river bank or from across the river facing north. If these 3-dimensional images were initially also colored with plant or mineral dyes, it must have resembled a panoramic painted canvas on the flat hard laterite stone-bed.



The setting, with the centrally located labyrinth on either side of the carved-out pools of water by the river's edge, and the arrangements of the various exquisitely carved animals, theriomorphic, anthropomorphic and human figures, is indicative of a very well-planned undertaking. Not the graffiti of idle cowherds and hunters.

The life-sized human figures are located at the eastern end and one very close to the edge, which is seen only in late spring when the water

level has receded. Dancers and story tellers normally perform in front of large gatherings on special occasions.



An androgynous story-teller-dancer with torches in both hands.
(Note that the right leg is slimmer than the left)



Dancer or a swimmer close to the water.



Drum-beats to accompany the show-and-tell dance