

NEOLITHIC FARMER AND HIS TOOLS AT USGALIMAL, GOA - 9

This iconic carving is the most enigmatic of the petroglyphs. The three photographs taken from different angles depict different perspectives. In fig.1 it appears to be the side view of a stylized human wearing a disproportionate mask of an “elephant”.



Fig.1. A stylized human wearing the mask of an “elephant” or a farmer planting seeds?



Fig.2. Other perspectives of the same carving from different angles

Viewed from different angles the “elephant” has now metamorphosed to perhaps a “tadpole”, with facial features incorporating yet more exquisitely carved smaller horned animals and peacocks (around the left eye).

Seen from yet another angle, it is a totally transformed picture – now a human face!!!



Fig. 3 Unmasked – a portrait of a Neolithic farmer with tools!

By incorporating four or more different axes, including the head - and one doubling as a sickle – with a peacock (which lightens the left eyebrow), an upside down deer under the nose (with horns as lips), and perhaps also a 4-petaled flower, doubled as a candle above the jaw, the engraver has skillfully and successfully communicated the community’s place in human history - their beliefs, diet and occupation.

The complexity and the artistry of this engraving is a testimony of the artists’ great imagination and ability to transmit valuable information of his time by carving with stone tools on a hard rocky surface.

This carving is indeed the jewel of Usgalimal and the earliest jigsaw puzzle!

- Notes:
1. If it is a candle, it would indicate that besides animal fat, bee’s wax (collected from wild honey combs), was also a source of energy.
 2. The shapes of the tools indicate that such artefacts (without the wooden hafts) may lie buried in the vicinity. This would require experts also collecting any associated organic material for radiocarbon dating.