

ARCHAEOLOGY OF MUNDARGI TALUK

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Archaeology is the study of the past by looking for the remains and objects left by the people who lived long ago. These remains can include old coins, tools, buildings and inscriptions. Another meaning of archaeology is the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artefacts and other physical remains.

Purpose of archaeology

The goals of archaeology are to document and explain the origins and development of human culture under history, chronicle cultural evolution, and study human behaviour and ecology for both prehistoric and historic societies.

Archaeology is an ever growing subject as it mainly depends upon the evidences, as and when new evidences turn it either by planned explosions and excavations or by chance the concepts have to be changed, modified or reinterpreted according to the nature of the new evidence. That is the why it is saw that human history is continuously rewritten the department of archaeology and museums in Karnataka and other organisations have been very active in explorations pre and proto-historic studies. The excavations carried out by archaeological department in many places in India and Karnataka. For this purpose I have taken archaeological study of Mundargi taluk of Gadag district.

Mundargi taluk is in Gadag district located at the heart of Karnataka state is rich in archaeological remains and a place of historical importance. It comprises of ancient temples, sculptures, inscriptions, forts, coins, ancient and medieval habitation sites etc...

The Mundargi taluk contains only 53 villages. The region is bounded by the koppal district on the east, Bellary district on the south Gadag taluk on the north and Shirahatti taluk of Gadag district on the west.

The region had an ancient administrative centre called masavadi- 140 was surrounded by kogali-500, puligere-300, belavola-300 and kisukadu-70. Some of the villages of masavadi-140 was also included in the neighbouring villages of Gadag taluk. In addition to masavadinadu, a part of puligerenadu was located in mundargitaluk earlier.

The river Tungabhadra drains through southern villages of Mundargi taluks about 20 villages of the region are located by the side of Tungabhadra River.

Archaeological findings

The survey has resulted to notice eight ancient habitation sites, twenty new inscriptions, thirty temples, fourty-five sculptures, some coins, etc.

A brief report of the discoveries

53 villages in Mundargi taluk have shown various cultural materials from the beginning of the historical period to the post Vijayanagara period. The brief details are as follows.

- 1. Habitation sites:** various cultural materials were found and scattered in eight habitation sites in the region. The habitation sites are Nagarahalli, Kakkuru, Kalakeri, Jyalavadagi, Bagevadi, Dambal, Doni, Tamragundi, Koralahalli, Halamallapura, Rati, Hammigi, Kapotagiri. In the site are found and collected large number of potteries. At Nagarahalli a brick structure was found near panchalingeshwara temple situated on the bank of the river Tungabhadra. Some potteries were also collected. Similarly in the places at Halamallapura and Rati also have ancient habitation sites. In these places also collected huge quantity of potteries.

In the places At Dambal, Doni, Jyalavadagi, Kakkuru, Kalakeri also were found some habitation sites. At Bagevadi a small iron axe, a copper image of durga, nagamantapa were found in an ancient well. All these materials are kept in the temple of durgamma. The co-operation of the temple trustees is appreciable. A habitation site was found at Kalakeri. In the site, pottery and other cultural materials were found are under studied.

No evidence of the activities of the Stone Age period could be noticed. But in the surrounding region a few antiquities of paleolithic, mesolithic periods and iron age are found. For example Konchageri (Shirahatti taluk, Gadag District) and some places of Ron and Naragund etc., the Iron Age megalithic cultural materials were found. The cultural materials found in this region are under study.

- 2. Temples, sculptures, inscriptions, and coins etc.:** inscriptions, temples, sculptures, coins etc. are found in the region. The earlier work of several scholars have given us only some temples, sculptures and inscriptions. The findings of them are briefly explained below.

Inscriptions

The region under study informs totally 79 inscriptions, out of them 59 were published earlier. The remaining 20 are new inscriptions found during the survey. These inscriptions are belonging to the period of the Rashtrakuta (8th century) to the Vijayanagara period. But the region does not reveal any epigraphs before 8th century A.D.

It may be noted that in the surrounding region a few epigraphs of the Shatavahana, the early Kadamba, Badami Chalukya were found. That is at Vasana (Naragundtaluk), Lakshmeshwara, Gudigere (Shirahatti taluk), Jakkali (Ron taluk) etc., found the inscriptions of the above said dynasties. Therefore there would be a socio-political impact with this region ever before this period. Regarding the new inscriptions, six from Doni, four from Bennalli, four from Haitapura, five from Mallikarjunapura, two from Dambal, three from Mevundi, two from Guddada Boodihala, two from Hirevadavatti, Bidarahalli, Munda Vada, Baradooru, Bagevadi, Tamragundi. All these inscriptions are under study.

Both published and unpublished epigraphs will help us to reconstruct the political and cultural condition of various periods. The earliest epigraphs of the region is belonged to the period of the Rashtrakutas. They belong to the period of Amoghavarsh-i, Krishna-ii and some subordinators like Kuppeyarasa and Kakkarasa, Bijjarasa who were ruled as mahamandaleshwara in the region. In the next phase shows the rulers of the later Chalukyas. In this period the important rulers as mentioned in the epigraphs are Jayasimha-ii, Someshwara-i, ii, & iv, Vikramaditya-v and Vikramaditya-vi, and also appears certain Mahamandaleswara like Pennayabatta, Dasarasa, Tribhuvanasetti, Malavarasetti,

Nagagaunda, KunchagaundaDasayya, Shoucharasa, DandanayakaVasudevayya, MadhavaArasa, Dasimayya, Madimayya, Mahadevayya, Hollarasa, Kuppadevarasa, Mahadevayya, Hollarasa. Their political and cultural contribution as mentioned in the epigraphs are significant.

An epigraph of the region appears the ruler of Sankamadeva in the region. It doesn't reveal any of his subordinators in the region. There are a few epigraphs of the ruler of Veeraballala-i, of the Hoysala dynasty. He had placed his big garrison at Lakkundi to resist the force of the seunas. His important subordinator in the region was ShrikaraBoppana. Next appear the rule of the seunas. A few epigraphs shows the rule of Singhanadeva-ii, Mahadeva, Ramachandra. The subordinators of them are PurushottamaNayaka and MadavariBasavayya. The appearance of the officer names like Sarvadhikari as well as Basavayya are significant. Because in the administrative system the terms like Sarvadhikari seems to be appeared after the rule of the Chalukyas of Kalyana. The other name i.e., Basavayyais remembering Basavesvara of 12th century A.D. obviously his name was popular in the later period. Latter appears during the rule of the Vijayanagara. It is interesting to note that the names of the monarches are hardly appeared in the region. But is appears certain subordinators like BarikaraBallaveera, Chikkaveeranna, ParusiNayaka, Basavannagouda. One significant evidence during the period is Bisthappayya of Vittalapurabelongs to this region. He appears to be responsible for the construction of a big gopurainfront of Virupaksha temple at Hampi. Besides a bridge was constructed across the river Tungabhadra near Koralahalli in this region. Some of the new epigraphs like a copper plate reveals the ruler of the Gouda after the Vijayanagara dynasty. The ruler of the Nayakas were appeared in the places. But the rule of the Goudas existed in the region is indeed a rare incident. The other epigraphs showing significant historical information for reconstruction of the history and culture of this region.

Temples

During the survey 14 temples were newly brought to light. They are documented and studied. 21 are briefly studied are published. It indicates totally 35 temples were constructed from the period of the Chalukya of Kalyana to Post Vijayanagara. Out of these twenty are belonging to Shaiva religion, 8 are belonging to Vaishnava and four are belonging to shakta. It is interesting to note that, basadies were rarely built in the region in that period. But only at one place the remains of the jainabasadi was formed at Dambal. There are references about the jainabasadies at Dambal, doni and Kalakeri. In the other places also found sculptures and the jainateerthankaras. Another unique feature of the region is the remains of the Buddhistvihara of Dambal. The deity Tarabhagavati was appeared in the region. These temples are under study they inform various significant art and architecture elements which are significant in the history of Karnataka. Some of the important features of temples are briefly explained here.

Important features of temples

1. Ground plan: temples were built on different ground plans in mundargi region. They have both large and small in types.
2. The ground plans are either stellate or square or rectangular. Doddabasappa temple of dambal bears a stellate plan from bottom to top, not only to the garbagraha but also to the ardhmantapa is indeed a unique feature. The ground plan consists of a garbagraha,

ardhamantapa, sabhamantapa, nandimantapa and mukahmantapa. Th temple is belonged the chalukyas of kalyana. But stellate feature usual in the temple of the hoysala.

3. Someshwara temple of dambal, siddheswara temple of don kalmeshwara temple of koralahalli, bharateshwara temple baradooru, ganesh temple of bidarahalli, ishwara temple of tamragundi, mahabaleshwara, siddheshwara temple of shirooruveerbahadra temple of singtalooru, ramalingeshwara temple halamallapura etc., are built in square plan.
4. The someshwara temple of dambal consisted of a garbagrahaantarala, and open sabhamantapa with kakshasana. The land measuring unit engraved on the outside of wall is significant. The sabhamantapa of this temple containing as many as 24 pillars.
5. More than one entrances are seen in some temples of this region. Siddeshwara temples of dambal, naganatheshwara temple of alooru, ishwara temple of tamaragundi, someshwara temple of dambal have three entrances to the sabhamantapa. The entrances are two on the sides and one in the front. The krishna temple of shiroor, bharateshwara temple of baradooru and ahobalanarasimha temples have two entrances; one is in the side and other in the front.
6. The plan of the naganatheshwara and someshwara temple of hirevadavatti has rectangular ground plan is a rare type in the region.
7. The ekakuta types are more in mundargi. Dvikuta types are not found here. Three trikuta temples are constructed in less number. One of the trikuta temple is built at alooru. It is called naganatheshwara temple. Another one is someshwara temple at hirevadavatti and kalmeshwara temple of koralahalli. They contain three garbhagras, three sukasanas, a common navaranga with single entrance in the front. But naganatheshwara temple at alooru had three garbhagras in a single line. In these garbhagras three shivalingas are enshrined. They are trimurties brahma, vishnu and maheshwara.

The plan of the someshwara temple at herevadavatti is interesting. It has three garbhagras on three conditional directions. The middle garbagraha has an ardhamantapas and including the side two garbhagras have a common navaranga.

Shaiva temples

Some of the well-known and important shaiva temples of the region are the Doddabasappa and Someshwara (Doni); Kalmeshwara Temple (Koralahalli), Bharateshwara Temple at Baradooru, Panchlingeshwara Temple of Nagarahalli, Naganatheshwara Temple (PethaAlooru), Veerabhadreshwara Temple (Singatalooru), Kalmeshwara Temple (Chikkavadavatt), Someshwara And Ganesha Temple (Bidarahalli), Didigeshwara, Ishvara Temple (Mavundi), Ishwara Temple (Tamragundi), Ramalinga And Iswara Temple (Halamallapura), Baleshwara And Someshwara Temple (Hirevadavatti) And Mallikarjuna Temple (Mundargi).

Vaishnava temples

Some of the important Vaishnava temples of the region are Venugopala temple (Shiroor), AhobalaNarasimhaswami Temple (Baradooru), Vittala Temple (Vittalapura), Ananthashayana Temple (PethAlooru), Venkateshwara Temple (Mevundi) Ashvattanarayana Temple (Bidaralli).

Shakta temples

Some of the well-known Shakta temples of the region are Donikavva temple (Doni), KanaviDurgamma Temple (Chikkavadavatti), Renukamba (Bidaralli), DandinaDurgamma (Dambal) Temples.

Jaina relics

Some JainaBasadiesare found in ruins, are located at Kalakeri, Doni and Dambal.

Bouddhavihara

Dambalis significant because an important BuddhistVihara was located here. The deity tarabhagavati as mentioned in the epigraphy was in a Vihara during Chalukyan feudatory Dangamashettl. Presently the BuddhistVihara ruined and is buried under mound.

It shows that Shaivism was predominant in the region. Next is Vaishnavism, afterwards JainaShakta and Buddhism; the east one is belonged to medieval period. It was completely declined in south India. The survival of Buddhist remains during the period is indeed significant. Such Buddhist centres during the period in Karnataka are Koliwada near Hubballi and Balligave in Shivamogga district. The former place is located at a distance of 20km from dambal. In all these places the occurrence of the Buddhist remains during the period are Vihara with a deity Tarabhagavati.

Sculptures

The region under study has about 55 sculptures belonging to Shaiva, Vaishnava, Jaina and Shaktareligious. Among them 20 are unpublished. The sculptures of Shaiva are 40 in numbers and are the largest. Vaishnava sculptures are 8 in number. Jaina sculptures are 4 in numbersShakta sculptures are 10 in numbers. Some Jaina sculptures have significant features. The sculptures are studied below.

Shaiva sculptures

Shaiva sculptures comprised Of Shiva, Shivalinga, Nataraja, Bhairava, Nandi, Veerabhadra, Ganeshaetc., and theiconographic features of each deity are briefly given below.

Shaivalingas

Three types of Shivalingas are appeared in the region. The Shivalingas are in various types. They Are Sthambhalinga, Yonipanilinga, MukhalingaandPanchalinga, Sahasralingaete, Sthambalinga and Yonipanilingasare Found at Dambal, Hirevadavatti, Mevundi, Alooru, Baradooru, Tamargundi, Koralahalli, Doni, Jyalavadagi. Some Shivalingas are placed on the pithas which are either square or circular or rectangular in shape. Sthambalingas are enshrined usually in the open ground and are not possessing any peethas. We have seen this type of lingas in the temple itself at Dambal and Alooru. Bramhasutra is engraved on the Shivalingas. The study of brahmasutras inform that they are of 12th, 14th and 17th century A.D.

Mukhalingas or group of lingas

They are different types of Mukhalingas. They are Chaturmukhalingas, Panchamukhalingas and Sahasralingas. These type of lingas have been studied by various scholars. In the Mukhalingas, the upper part is Chiseled out the faces of Shiva four sides. There are called Chaturmukhalinga or BramhaStambas. These types of Mukhalingas are found at Bidarahalli and Singatalooru in the region.

Panchalinga and sahasralingass

Panchalingas are found in Panchalingeshwara temple at Nagarahalli. Here Panchalingas are enshrined on the circularpeetha. Sahasralinga is found on the top of a

hillock at Mundargi. These lingas are made in group and are started appearing right from the period of Vijayanagara in the region. They are comparable to those found at Sonda, Hampi and Pura. (Vijayanagara period).

Bhairava

The study of the region shows only one Bhairavaseulpture is Didigeshwara temple at Mevundi. Bhairava is four armed. The lower two hands are broken. He bears big eyes and has curly hair hanging on the shoulder. He is seated in Padmasana. This is made on black stone. This is 20cm in height. He wears rings, necklaces, Yognopaveeta, Rundamala, bangles, armllets anklets etc. He has Prabhamandala. The face is in round relief and smiling face. It may be dated to 12th century A.D.

The iconographic features in relation to vastu as well as puranic background the religions sculptures are rarely touched. In the study of the Mukhalingas they start appearing right from the period of 3rd century B.C. for example Gudimallamlinga of Andhrapradesh belongs to this period. Similarly, panchamukhalinga found in a kalyani at the complex of mahakuteshwara temple could be the earliest in Karnataka. Mahakuta is in Bagalkot district.

The linga belongs century 7th A.D. likewise Chaturmukha/Panchamukhalinga called aMahadeva is chiselled out at elephant near Bombay in Maharashtra. It belongs to 8th century A.D. Chaturmukha sculptures called aBramhaStambhas are invariable installed at the corner of the villages. The faces are made on the top part of a pillar and is fixed at the centre of the pithas.

Veerabhadra

Veerabhadra sculptures are found more in numbers at Singatalooru, Alooru, Jyalavadagi and Gummagolain the region. He is usually standing in tribhanga and has four hands, holding bow, arrow, sword and shield. He is flanked by daksha and kalika. Stylistically they are belonged to 16th C.A.d.

Among them the virabhadra sculpture from Gummagola placed in a monastery called gonibasaveshwara. He has two armed with sword and shield in the hands. It may be noted that an inscription reads 'Sri Veerabhadreshwar' is engraved on the shield.

Ganeshja

Ganesha sculptures are found at Dambal, Doni, Bidarahalli, Gummagola, Hirevadavattiand also an engraved Ganesh on a lalatabimba on a temple doorway.

Nandi

A big Nandi sculpture is engraved in Doddabasappa temple at Dambal has a unique feature. A sculpture of shatnandi found in panchalingeshwara temple at Nagarahalli has six seated nandies. All six nandies are seated around the peetha. In the middle of these a Shivalinga is engraved. Some other Nandi sculptures are in Somanatha temple at Bidarahalli, Gonibasaveshwaramatha at Gummagoala and Didgeshwara temple at Mevundimaruti temple at Ekaspura and some other temples. It may be recalled here that various temples with bhairava and other sculptures are found associated with certain temples at Choudayyanapur. Gadag etc., and were studied by a. Sundara. He has pointed out that in the kalamukha temples, usually the sculptures of bhairava are either enshrined or shown on the walls of the temples. The epigraphic or sculptural study of the region in the bhairava sculptures are rarely coming across the region.

Shivalinga with scorpion

In a hirematha at bennalli has a shivalinga. It has a scorpion symbol on the peetha. Obviously it was a pitha of another goddess. In the Veerashaiva community the worship of deities like Nandi, Shivalinga and Veerabhadra is a usual practice. They are in largest population in this bhairava sculptures are hardly found in this region.

Vaishnava sculptures

The vaishnava sculptures are vishnu, venkateshwara, vitthala, venugopala etc. About eight vishnavaseulptures are found in region. Vishnu sculptures are at Dambal, Chikkavadavatti, Venugopala Is at Shirooru and Bidarahalli Venkateshwara at Mevundi and Mushtikoppa. Vittala Is At Vitthalapura.

Venugopala

Logographically venugopala is in Tribhanga posture he has four armed with Abhaya, Sahana, Chakra, and Gadha.

It may be noted that Vishnu sculptures are few in the region. The sculptures of Vitthala, Venugopala and Venkateshwara are belonged to 18 - 17 century a.d. obviously the disciplen of these deities are in the region from the Vijayanagara period. It is probably because of the great patronage given to these deities during the period of Krishnadevaraya. It may be noted that this king gave elaborate grants and donations to Venkateshwara, vitthala etc less grant to virupaksha. Shrivaisnavism was popularized by Ramanujacharya. He gave diksha to the scheduled caste people to worship these deities, iconographic features of Venkateshwara and vithala are distinct from other vaishnava deities.

Jaina sculptures

Four jaina sculptures have been found in the region. Now three are kept in archaeological museum of gadag. They are Parshvanatha and Teerthankar (Dambal, Doni). Parshvanatha bears naga hood canopy over the head. Other Tirthankaras are in seated posture.

Shakta sculptures

Shakta sculptures are also found in the region. Among the shakta sculptures, Mahishamardini, Gajalaxmi, Saraswati, durga are important. Mahishasuramardhini located at Kadampura. Dandina Durgamma Is at Dambal, Gajalaxmi sculpture with inscription is at Tamargundi and without inscriptions at Alooru, Doni and Mevundi. Durga sculpture and Nagamantapa sculptures at kalakeri are made of copper. One Saraswati sculpture is situated in a niche or the Navaranga of Someshwara temple at Hirevadavatti

Herostones

Twenty five hero stones are found in this region. About 15 of them are unpublished. It may be noted that some have inscriptions. There are beautiful inscribed hero stones are found in Mallikarjunapura. A herostone probably a kumararama was noticed at eklaspura. A herostone bears the hunting tiger found near a tank at doni is significant. A very beautiful inscribed hero stone was recently found at ratihalli. Some more herostones have been found at Bidarahalli, Dambal, Baradooru, Alooru. Mevundi, Ratihalli, Hirevadavatti, Doni, Kapotagiri, Mallikarjunapura etc. All these hero stones are under study.

Coins

Some Muslim and British coins were noticed in this region. Among there 20 British coins and two are Muslim coins. They are collected from Baradooru. On the Muslim coins, one has the name of Muslim ruler "Alasshah and also wrote 'Mahammad'. On the observe wrote 'Alan shah' and reverse is Mahammad'. Another one is not yet identified. But it may be

Lajarilab' and 'Navala' script is in Urdu. It appears the name of Muslim rulers written like **Mohammad and Lajarilab.**

Among the 20 British coins, some are related to George King Edward.Vii, Victoriyaqueen and others. All coins are dated to 1912, 1914, 1840, 1844, 1833, 1840, 1919, 1952, 1918, 1914, 1877, and 1896. Some silver coins are also found here. These are related with britishrulers. Only their (silver coins) photo were taken. The photos of these coins have been taken. The coins are given by am Hoogar, Nk. Gouripuraand SharavvaMeti.

Thus, the above accounts are brought to light for the first time. It contributes for the reconstructions of the archaeology and socio-political, cultural of the region or to the province or nation.

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