CHAPTER I

Introduction.

Less than half a century ago, the cultural history of India was supposed to begin only with the Mauryas or the invasion of Alexander, the Great, in B.C. 327 - 326. Smith was, therefore, justified in observing in 1905 that "India has no Bronze Age, that is to say she never passed through a stage of civilization marked by the general employment of bronze, an alloy of copper and tin for the manufacture of such implements and weapons as have been made ordinarily from iron or steel, since the beginning of the Iron Age." 1 But the epoch-making discoveries at Harappa in 1921 and at Mohenjodaro in the subsequent year ushered in a new vista of India's past, and the excavations by Sahni 2 and Banerji 3 pushed back, at one stroke, the history of India to 5,000 years back and revealed for the first time the chalcolithic nature of the ruins. These have been confirmed by the later explorations by Stein 4 and

4. Stein, A., An Archaeological Tour in Waziristan and North Baluchistan, MASI, No.37, 1929; An Archaeological Tour in Gedrosia, MASI, No. 43, 1931.
Majumdar, and excavations by Marshall, Mackay, Vats and Wheeler.

The same story repeated itself in the Deccan after a lapse of a quarter of a century. Since the discovery of the Asokan inscriptions at Brahmagiri, Siddapur and Jatinga Rameshvara in the Chitradurga district, and Maski and Koppal in the Raichur district, — all in the northern part of the present Mysore State — the cultural history of Karnataka was considered to begin with the Mauryan period. But the discovery of and the excavations at Brahmagiri in 1942 by Dr. Krishna of Mysore Archaeological Survey brought to light the elements of an earlier culture which has now been designated 'chalcolithic'. In 1947, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, re-excavated the site and established a sequence of cultures based on stratigraphic

5. 'Explorations in Sind', MASI, No. 8, XI-1934.
8. Vats, M.S., Excavations at Harappa, 1940, Calcutta.
10. MAR, 1942,(1943).
This, in brief, is the story of the discovery of Chalcolithic phase in the Cultural history of India.

These results gave fillip to the study of the proto-historic archaeology of India. Intensive explorations were, therefore, carried out in different parts of the country which have revealed the distribution of the sites of Chalcolithic Culture. The chief centres of this culture are Nagda on the Chambal; Ahar on Ahar river; Navdatoli, Maheshvar on the Narmada; Prakash and Bahal in the Tapti-Girna valley; Nasik, Jorwe, Daimabad and Nevasa in the Godavari-Pravara valley; Chandoli on the Ghod and Songaon on the Nira; Maski, Piklihal, Sangamakallu and Brahmagiri in the Krishna-Tungabhadra valley - 'all comprised in the stretch of land between Nagda in the north and Brahmagiri in the South, roughly extending from the tropic of Cancer to 15° Lat, a distance of about 600 miles.' 12 Recently, Pandu Rajar Dhibi in the Ajay valley in West Bengal 13 and T. Narsipur 14 and Hemmige 15,

11. 'Brahmagiri and Chandravalli 1947: Meglithic and other Cultures in Mysore State', AI, No.4, pp.180-310.
15. Ibid., 1963-64, pp. I. 47-49 (cyclostyled copy).
both on the Kaveri, have exhibited all the elements of this culture, thus extending the limits of this culture complex to the west and further south. Though all these sites exhibited, regional differences, there has been a broad similarity in the equipments of this culture, viz., the use of painted pottery, copper though in a restricted degree, ribbon flake industry, and in the Deccan polished stone axes. Carbon-14 dates are available for the Chalcolithic levels of the sites, Navdaṭolī in Central India, Ahar in Rajasthan, Nevasa and Chandoli in Northern Deccan, Utnur in Andhra. These dates for Navdaṭolī ranges from 1600 B.C. to 1300,\textsuperscript{16} while for Utnur, the date is B.C. $2150 \pm 150$\textsuperscript{17}. Thus, the chronology for the Chalcolithic phase in India, particularly Central India and the Deccan ranges from B.C. 2,000 to 1025.

For the study of the Chalcolithic phase of the Deccan and north Karnataka, the discovery of the sites of Jorwe, Nasik and Nevasa, was of far reaching importance. For the elements of this Culture were already met with at Brahmagiri, the first known southern outpost of this culture. It was, therefore, thought very necessary to study

the Chalcolithic culture in the region lying in between, i.e. the northern districts of the present Mysore State - Bellary, Dharwar, Belgaum, Bijapur, Raichur, Gulbarga and Bijar - all situated in the river valleys of Tungabhadra, Krishna, and the Bhima, and observe how far the Chalcolithic of the northern Deccan has influenced the Southern sites, and/or vice versa. With this plan in view, Sri. M.N. Deshpande, the then Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, organised through explorations in the districts of Dhulia, Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Dharwar, as part of the regular plan of the survey of antiquarian remains in India.

As already noted, Wheeler's excavations at Brahmagiri had established a sequence of cultures, viz., the Chalcolithic - polished stone axe culture -, the Megalithic and the Early Historic cultures with an appreciable overlap in between. In the same year, Subbarao, who had explored the adjacent Bellary region excavated Sanganakallu, 3 miles north of Bellary town, where the chalcolithic was preceded by the neolithic and followed by the megalithic without much time lag in between. In Raichur Doab, Maski

21. In his excavations, Subbarao, also noticed a pre-neolithic a-ceramic phase characterised by quartz and patinated trap flakes. Recent excavations at the same site and the adjacent area have confirmed Subbarao's observations.
was excavated by the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad and the excavated materials were re-examined by Gordons. But it was Thapar who systematically dug the site and confirmed the culture sequence already obtained at Brhamagiri and Sanganakallu. Dr. Allchin who surveyed the Raichur region, excavated Piklihal in the same region and further confirmed the evidence from Brhamagiri, Maski and other sites.

With this background, the district of Bijapur was explored by Sri. A. Sundar of the Archaeological Survey, and the rivers Bhima, Don and Krishna were systematically surveyed, bringing to light a large number of sites. The writer himself explored the stretch of land drained by Tungabhadra, with the tributaries Varada and Kumudvati, in the Dharwar district and located a number of sites.

22. ARADH, 1935-36, p. 22.
24. 'Maski 1954; a Chalcolithic site of the Southern Deccan', AI, No. 13, pp. 4-142, 1957.
The results of the explorations and the excavations in the Tungabhadra valley referred to above and the writer's own work prompted him to make a thorough study of the Chalcolithic phase of the north Karnatak region in relation to the Deccan Chalcolithic in general. He confined his investigations only to the Tungabhadra valley, comprising the districts of Bellary, Dharwar and Raichur. For the importance of this region, particularly of Bellary area, has been very well stressed by Rao Bahadur Dikshit in his address to the historians, as early as 1943, in the memorable words, 'Bellary district which has been the pivot of the lower Deccan, the seat of the Vijayanagar empire and the junction between the Kannada-Telugu linguistic areas, holds the key to the study and understanding of various epochs of India's history from the Palaeolithic over 50,000 years old, to the dawn of the Mauryan period. No other area in India holds a similar promise of a better harvest to the investigator of Prehistoric Cultures. Palaeolithic man stayed here, as in other widely disputed area of the Peninsula in the river valleys where his implements are still found. Neolithic sites and factories have been distinctly recognised and the birth of Iron Age in India was ushered in this tract. The exact stages by which metal supplanted the use of stone in the tools and implements of man can be studied.
Antiquities of early Iron Age and pre-Mauryan cultures in the adjoining strip of Mysore territory included in the Chitaldurg district, in the Nizam's dominions give the hope that the intervening district of Bellary area is bound to reveal to the systematic investigator, similar finds of far-reaching importance. Therefore, the three districts of Bellary, Raichur and Dharwar were intensively surveyed, the results of which form the subject matter of the present study.