CHAPTER II

Nature and Scope of the Subject.

The title of the present thesis, 'the Chalcolithic Cultures of the Deccan with reference to North Karnataka' needs some explanation. For the purpose of the present study, the 'Deccan' is meant that stretch of land between the Tapti in the north and Kaveri in the south. In the first instance, it is proposed to examine the work so far carried out in that region called the 'Northern Deccan' which consists of the river valleys of the Tapti, the Godavari, and the Bhima; then in the 'Southern Deccan' or 'North Karnataka' - the area between the Bhima and the Tungabhadra rivers. The Kaveri valley sites, further South are few and isolated and nothing is known of the region in between the Tungabhadra and Kaveri. Hence the results of the excavated sites on the Kaveri would be considered only for a comparative study.

Although the title refers to 'North Karnataka', all the rivers in the northern districts of Karnataka have not been surveyed by the author. Parts of the district of Bijapur have been explored by the officials of the Archaeological Survey of India and a number of sites have been brought to light. The other districts are yet to be surveyed.
During his field survey, the author explored thoroughly the river Tungabhadra from the southern tip of Dharwar district, up to the confluence of the river with the Krishna. For the excavations at Brahmagiri, Sangamankallu and Piklihal have already shown the similarity in the equipments of this culture with those of the Godavari valley. It was, therefore, proposed to conduct fresh excavations at promising sites in the Tungabhadra valley and compare the cultural traits in the two contiguous regions, viz., the southern and the northern Deccan, i.e. North Karnataka and Maharashtra. Accordingly after a thorough survey, two sites were selected, one on the granitoid hills and the other on the bank of the river itself and excavated.

Further, the word 'Chalcolithic' is to be explained. While giving a picture of the neolithic pattern of India, Krishnaswami has divided the available data into four neolithic provinces. In doing so, he does not show any clear demarcation between the neolithic and the Chalcolithic. But Sankalia proposes a distinction, with

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29. Krishnaswami, V.D., Proceedings of the forty-sixth Indian Science Congress, pp. 124-149, 1959; See also 'Neolithic Pattern of India', AI, No.16, pp. 25-64.
the available data, and says that the criterion for the
difference between the 'Neolithic' and 'Chalcolithic'
cultures should be technological. 30 As for instance
whether the Chalcolithic man possessed the knowledge of
smelting copper or not. But as the evidence for this is
scanty, he considers other criteria, Viz., (i) variations
in pottery traditions, (ii) the presence or absence of
ground stone industry; (iii) as well as the stone blade
industry. 31

But it would be better to take economy rather
than technology or any other criterion into consideration,
in differentiating these cultural groups. The presence or
absence of stone tools or copper implements is no criterion.
The basalt dykes are easily detectable in the granitoid
or gneissic region of Bellary, Raichur and the adjacent
districts of Andhra Pradesh, whereas, in the Southern
Maharashtra, it requires the expert knowledge of a geolo-
gist to detect such dykes even though they are present.
Naturally, the neolithic inhabitant of Bellary and the
adjacent region made use of the material which he could
see without going in search of it. This would possibly

30. Sankalia, H.D., Prehistory and Protohistory in
India and Pakistan, p. 153.
31. Ibid., p. 154.
explain the presence of large number of polished stone tools in the southern Deccan and their comparative rarity in the northern part.

As we know, the neolithic and the chalcolithic are not far removed from each other chronologically. Almost all the neolithic or chalcolithic sites have proved to be small village communities. As pointed out elsewhere, 'neolithic' is an economic stage towards urbanisation, although the term did not carry that connotation when it was first used. And chalcolithic phase is considered to be only a neolithic stage. Therefore, it is best to designate the various cultural groups of the Deccan including North Karnatak, as neolithic-chalcolithic. In short, the present study would be a comparative study of the pastoral-cum-food producing cultures of the Deccan and north Karnatak, in the 2nd millennium B.C.