ON THE OCCURRENCE OF A PLEISTOCENE OSSIFEROUS GRAVEL AT NAGPUR, CENTRAL INDIA

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During field investigations of the Nagpur area in December 1981, a Middle-Upper Pleistocene Ossiferous Gravel was observed in an east-west trending nala, about 9 km south of the City. Although several Pleistocene localities have been recorded along the Narbada Basin, e.g. Hoshangabad, Narsingpur and Jabalpur1-3, there is as yet no documentation of Pleistocene mammals in the Nagpur region. The present finds include a large number of stone tools of palaeolithic culture along with several limb bone fragments and molars of Equus and Bos. The vertebrate remains are silicified and permineralised (figures 1-2b).

The vertebrate remains were recovered from a ossiferous gravel which overlies the Lameta beds exposed in the same nala. While the remains of stone tools and isolated bones are fairly common, dental material is less frequent. The gravel is composed of a partially unconsolidated assemblage of rolled Deccan Basalt boulders, fragments of chaledonic silica and silicified Physa—bearing intertrappean rocks. An interesting find from the same gravel is that of a fossil wood probably derived from the Kamphit Sandstone. Petrified woods have been reported earlier4.

The gravel was obviously a widespread sediment of the Pleistocene, blanketing all older deposits. At

Figures 1-2b. 1. Equus upper molar, 2a. Bos occlusal view, b. Lingual view (Bar represents 1 cm).

Takli, the tusk of an elephant was reported5 in a conglomerate and the authors correlated the conglomerate with the ossiferous horizon of Jabalpur6,7.

The Ossiferous Gravel appears to have good potential for Pleistocene vertebrate palaeontology and archaeology. Lateral extensions of the bone-bearing horizon are being investigated in Nagpur and surrounding areas for a more detailed study.

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