

# EXPRESSION

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THE INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

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Male and female. Rock Engravings of Gobustan, Azerbaijan (from Anati 1992)

*Note: The editorial board is apologizing for the graphic quality of the present issue, due to the unexpected absence of the graphic editor. We shall do better in following issues.*

# EDITORIAL NOTES

## MALE AND FEMALE

### MALE OR FEMALE?

In Melville Island, just off the shores of northern Australia, the Tiwi people had been hunter-gatherers until two generations ago. Now they developed tourism and have a successful factory producing clothing with traditional patterns. The same motifs have shifted from the decoration of funerary poles and bark paintings to the decoration of imported woven textiles. Totem poles were traditionally prepared and decorated by men; most of the workers in the factory are female. Women also developed artisanship, producing objects with traditional motifs of pleasant aesthetic appeal. The initiated elders still preserve the knowledge of the meaning of symbols but to both, the women artists that produce them and the tourists who buy them, the only content is its aesthetic agreeability. The material job of producing traditional patterns has shifted from initiated males to uninitiated females. The content has shifted from meaningful magic formulae to pleasant aesthetic shapes.

Most of the traditional artists in the 1960s were men in some of the main localities of production of bark paintings in Arnhem Land, Oenpelli, Elcho Island and Yirrkala; now women produce most of the graphic art. The old symbols survive, not necessarily so for their meaning.

The same phenomenon is registered for the production of tapa bark cloth in New Guinea and in several islands of the Pacific. A hundred years ago the production and decoration of tapa cloth was an activity accompanied by magic rituals performed mainly by men. Today, the production of tapa is a female activity and has become a traditionally female activity. Once it was devoted to prestige and status symbols, to ceremonies and offerings to ancestors and to divinities; today it is mainly a commercial business.

In several communities in Australia, the production of art objects is continuing a traditional activity with some variations. The objects which were traditionally produced for local use, like

magic talismans, totem symbols and toys for children, are today produced for the tourist market; what was traditionally cut and shaped with flint tools is today produced with electric machines; what was the task of initiated elders is now produced by uninitiated women and organized by missionaries or government agencies. The objects, even when they resemble the traditional ones, have lost their original power and energy. Even when they are similar to the old ones, they are not the same.

The shift of activities from male to female has created mixed feelings. Keeping the women active and developing trade had positive outputs, but traditional values were offended. While visiting a cooperative of female artisans in Central Australia, our male guide was sarcastic towards the team of women producing wooden iguanas decorated with marks made by pyrography: 'Women do not know the meaning of the marks they are making!' He intended to hint that the women were not initiated; they made traditional motifs ignoring both their meaning and their power. According to the guide, this trend was harmful to traditional culture. 'When I was initiated to become an adult, magic signs were very powerful, now they do not function any more.'

The phenomenon of shifting activities from one gender to the other is widespread. For instance, even in European society a hundred years ago female engineers were very rare and now there are almost as many female engineers as male engineers. A hundred years ago male baby-sitters were unthinkable, but not any more; women soldiers were unthinkable, but not any more. Did similar shifts in gender activities take place in prehistoric times?

Students of prehistoric art often ask themselves whether the object of their research was produced by men or by women. Were the

marvellous artists of Lascaux or Altamira male or female? As we know the gender of most of the artists since Phidias, the European Renaissance, the classical art of China and the Far East, the School of Paris in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, or in contemporary art, we usually take for granted that major artists were male.

There may be doubts, however, about the gender of the producers of the refined Banpo pottery, a Chinese Neolithic culture, or the puzzling clay figurines of Vinča and other cultures of the Neolithic period 7,000 years ago in the Balkans: were they male or female? The same doubts may arise for the production of the beautiful Paracas Peruvian carpets over 2,000 years old, or the Chalcolithic frescoes of Teleilat Ghassul in Jordan 6,000 years old.

Most scholars, however, have no doubts that the makers of the French Palaeolithic cave painting were male. Why? What was the role of male and of female artists in such immense concentrations of rock art, like the Serra da Capivara in Brazil or Valcamonica in Italy, Bhimbetka in India, the Drakenberg in South Africa or Kakadu in Arnhem Land, Australia?

In the rock art of Gobustan, Azerbaijan, series of overlapping phases show an alternate preference of images representing female and male anthropomorphic figures. Was there an alternation of gender in the makers of these rock engravings? Or just alternate interest in makers of the same gender?

Is there any way to detect, from the output whether a work of art was produced by women or men? This seems to be possible in a few cases, like certain patterns of the decorations of tapa bark clothing from some Pacific islands, because of the historical records of their makers. A peculiar case concerns the tapa decorations of Oro province, in Papua New Guinea: it has been argued that women usually do certain motifs of geometric patterns when they are pregnant.

These considerations were reached about art objects made in the last couple of centuries.

Similar hypotheses about prehistoric art are still missing. And yet we know that even in contemporary graphics, decorative tendencies may vary

between male and female. Just to mention one example, female bodies are usually represented quite differently by male and female artists. Other questions arise on the relation of gender to art: different functions, different uses. In various parts of the world, sites of rock art are reserved for one gender and are taboo for the other. In Tanzania some rock art sites are reserved for the initiation of girls, and they are forbidden or taboo to men; probably women produced the paintings there. In northern Australia numerous rock art sites are taboo to females and a few are taboo to males. Are these possibly hints regarding the gender of their makers? The papers in this volume present cases of the relations of prehistoric and tribal art to the gender of their makers and of their users. And more queries remain open. The content in this issue appears to be relevant to conceptual anthropology and, already, is becoming the start of a wider debate.

E.A.

## CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Conceptual anthropology is the discipline that combines various aspects of human and social sciences in respect of human behavior and culture, using experiences of the past to understand the present and build the future. The concept gestated for some time until it was formalized during the UISPP Congress in Florianopolis, Brazil, in 2011, setting new horizons for the human sciences. The goal is to understand human behavior and cultural trends, recurring and isolated phenomena, predictable and unpredictable evolution and change, not only in technology, but also in social, intellectual and spiritual life. It is a journey of discovery and emotions. Each discipline has its own memory as the basis of research and of the advancement of the discipline itself. Combining disciplines is also

a union of memories for a broader base of research and culture. Today media replace technical and historical memory. But the human mind's insights and associations are still irreplaceable. Our being and our actions are rooted in the memory. When we err, we often owe it to our memory blurring. When we reach positive results, it is because we have made good use of our memory. We do not refer to electronic memory but to the one expressed in intuition and discovery, the memory that springs from the deep well of our psyche. Every being, like every discipline, focuses on certain aspects of memory and neglects others. Together, various disciplines and various cultures share wider dimensions of memory. Such approach turned up to give an immense contribution to the study of the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate peoples. One of the purposes of UISPP-CISENP, the International Scientific Committee on the Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-Literate Peoples, in addition to the pleasure of meeting and growing by dialogue, is to promote the common commitment to the understanding of such human expressions, with the support of multidisciplinary research. As students of various disciplines, anthropologists and archaeologists, psychoanalysts, educators, sociologists, semioticians, philosophers and historians, we all wish to face questions, which a shared commitment can help clarify. The meeting of different disciplines offers a wider dimension of knowledge and greater capacity for analysis and synthesis. Faced with the fashion of extreme specialization, which risks reducing scholars to technicians, conceptual anthropology goes against the tide. No doubt, technicians are needed, but we seek a cultural vision and broad overview in the common work of the humanities and social sciences. Let technicians and intellectuals be aware of their different roles, let them do their own jobs and then enrich each other through the joint dialogue. Research has a real social function when it produces culture. When culture is creative and innovative, it promotes growth of intellect

and stimulates new thought. The dialogue is open to all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences as well as to those who do not identify themselves with any specific discipline or who just want to listen. Each listener is a potential transmitter of ideas and ideas grow and spread not only through those who produce them, but also through those who listen. The dialogue does not stop and is a source of growth and enrichment, and also of cooperation and friendship. Research is a provocative, stimulating and inspiring source of awareness. You are welcome to join. The present day world crisis is a cultural crisis, a crisis of values and of wisdom that has economic, social and political tails. Reviving the role of culture is our modest joint effort to contribute overcoming the crisis.

## **APPRENTICESHIP IN CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

The apprenticeship, under the guidance of Prof. Emmanuel Anati, may last from a minimum of two months to a maximum of one year. It grants the apprentice the title of "Research Assistant". It involves the apprentice in active participation in research, editorial activities, compilation, organization and layout of exhibitions and publications, arrangement and cataloguing of ethnological collections, planning of cultural and scientific projects. During the active presence in the Camonica Valley, the selected apprentices will have access to self-catering accommodation on campus, at a symbolic fee. Preference is given to graduates and other seriously motivated young people with knowledge of the English language and operational abilities in database. Application as informal letter should specify motivations and be accompanied by: curriculum vitae, copy of record studies, ID card copy, passport standard photo and a letter of presentation or recommendation from a university professor or a previous employer. Application should be addressed by e-mail to: atelier.etno@gmail

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# DISCUSSION FORUM

**The Discussion Forum invites readers to be active protagonists in debates of worldwide interest in Conceptual Anthropology**

WHY ART ?

Dear friends and colleagues,

It seems that several of you are interested in a fascinating query: WHY ART? Let us face this new debate: WHY ART?

Some of the main problems to be considered could be: Why a certain place was selected and then used for What is or was the function of art? Who were the producers of this art? What pushes humans What place takes art in human culture? How, in early humans, the need started to produce art? When did it start? Are there populations in the world without art? Are there people wishing to destroy art? Why? Many more whys can develop in this broad debate.

Are the arts expressions of creative impulse? Prehistoric and tribal societies performed and still perform various types of art, oral literature and diction of myths, epics and memories, music, dance and performances, and visual arts including rock art and mobile or “mobile” arts, ceramics, and statuary art. The WHY may concern the various forms of art.

Following the traditions of EXPRESSION Magazine you are invited to propose a paper on a specific topic or site. Short papers of 1,500–3,000 words are suggested, with up to four illustrations each. Illustrations (definition 600dpi) should be separate from the text and each illustration should have a caption and be pertinent to the topic selected. The most meaningful papers for a worldwide debate will be published first in the international magazine EXPRESSION and then as a volume.

Please indicate the title you intend to present. Your fast reply will be appreciated. Try to avoid general conceptual disquisitions, unless they are of a strongly innovative nature. The deadline for the presentation of the final paper is May 30, 2016.

Reply to: “Why Art Project ”<atelier.etno@gmail.com>. We look forward to the pleasure of reading your paper.

Cordial regards and best wishes,  
E.A.

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## MALE + FEMALE = HUMANITY: MALE AND FEMALE IN PREHISTORIC AND TRIBAL ART

**Margalit BERRIET**

*Artist and President of "Memoire de l'Avenir"  
France*

Prehistoric and tribal art is evidence of attempts on the part of human beings to understand their nature and existence.

The symbols, marks, and lines found on rocks, in hidden caves, mountains or deserts are not only evidence of attempts to answer questions about the mysteries of the role of human beings in nature, but about the differences between male and female, and their equal necessity in the cycle of life.

Such expressions reflect man's intuitive ways of observing the unintelligible phenomena of life, while expressing his inner self and his questions about his existence, in a vast variety of interpretative forms. These expressions were tools of communication. They express ideas, describe humanity's nature, function, and motivation.

According to Luc Foubert, a neuroscientist, The imprinting design of associations of past events can be acknowledged through conservative processes, from early-life individual developmental to the culturally trans-individual level (language and communication), each of which is providing networks of associations (co-occurrence of events, correlations of activities), giving rise to prototypes/archaic forms, any sensation, feeling, object, perception, concept, symbolic recognition, semantic field; the idea of an alter-ego is an echo of an archaic form or prototypical association.<sup>1</sup>

The survival of Stone Age man was determined by his ability to reproduce and share activities for surviving, and these human functions were expressed in his art. He celebrated the mysteries of procreation and birth in scenes and sculptures like the Venus figurines. These fertility symbols – obese females, carefully sculpted with exaggerated breasts, buttocks and genitalia – appeared first during the early Auri-

and vanished in the Magdalenian. Men and women could observe the phenomena of their bodies, the cycle of natural forces and their behavior in relationship to their ability to endure life, in all its different aspects. The Venus figurines all share similar characteristics. They are portrayed nude, with a wide fat belly, suggesting pregnancy or afterbirth shape. The bodies usually have no arms or feet, nor exact facial detail, and the vulva is exaggerated in size.



The Venus of Willendorf is a female carvings - known as "Venus Figurines" – Appeared across Europe during the period of Gravettian art (c.25-20,000 BCE) The Venus of Willendorf was sculpted from oolitic limestone, is one of three such figurines unearthed at Paleolithic archeological sites at Willendorf in Austria.



The Venus of Monpazier was carved during the era of Upper Paleolithic prehistoric art Dated to about 25,000 BCE. It was discovered in 1970 in the Dordogne region, and is rated among the oldest Stone Age art in France. A nude female sculptures, emerged across Europe during the middle of the Upper Paleolithic.

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<sup>1</sup> Luc Foubert, PhD, *The Introspective Mind*, CNRS-UPR 3293, Unit for Neuroscience, Information and Complexity (<http://www.unic.cnrs-gif.fr>). His current research focuses on the structures and dynamics of the primary sensory cortices dealing with questions about the binding of perceptive unity and multi-sensory integration.

D'Errico's <sup>2</sup> work reinforces my observation that human beings have the ability to transform their behaviour into abstract or figurative gestures. In art, prehistoric men attempted to understand nature and the conflict of sexuality and humanity, offering perceptions of their common existence. According to Ernst Cassirer:

Man does not live with things because they exist. He lives with the mythical figures, not as an appropriation of reality, nor he become open to the real. He lets the world and himself melt together in his imaginary space, and by so doing, letting not only himself be in contact with his observations and conceptions, but he also, in parallel, attribute interpretations and sense to them. <sup>3</sup>

As in all times, the roles of men and women were questioned in Palaeolithic and Neolithic times, and were defined via the arts and via language. The old idea that man is the hunter, in outside spaces, while woman is confined to fertility and inside spaces, was most likely posed from the moment the two sexes could define their differences, yet also their similitude and their needs for equality. Both were responsible for their survival, both needed to meet obligations and assume roles, and thus, naturally, both were required to define their rights.

While hunting was almost exclusively done by males, it was inefficient as a means for providing food. Then as now, human society must not have relied solely on men for food. When the 'Ice Man' was found in the Italian Alps in 1991, analysis of his hair showed that most of his protein came from vegetable sources, a conclusion that his teeth corroborated. Through other teeth analyses, it has been discovered that grain, nuts, and fruits were the major foods of prehistoric people, not meat. Both men and women, then, needed to invent tools to collect, preserve, and save food. The role of women in preserving and storing food led to their need to invent weaving and pottery. Once bags and baskets could be woven from plants and animals, the creation of cloths for coverings, garments, and lodging could be developed. Through other teeth analyses, it has been discovered

that grain, nuts, and fruits were the major foods of prehistoric people, not meat. Both men and women, then, needed to invent tools to collect, preserve, and save food. The role of women in preserving and storing food led to their need to invent weaving and pottery. Once bags and baskets could be woven from plants and animals, the creation of cloths for coverings, garments, and lodging could be developed.

Linguistic research shows how language is developed and conveyed:

Prehistoric visual art, like every art, memorizes experiences, sensations and feelings; it reflects the intellectual reality of the society through the medium of the artist. It expresses the needs of three main drives; self-expression, memorizations, and communication ...

The fundamental role of prehistoric art was its didactic function; it was intended to transmit and memorize facts, myths, traditions or beliefs, through generations. ... to initiate young generations into the traditions of the clan and tribes. <sup>4</sup>

Children most often learn language from their mothers, who guide their early socialization through the need to organize their daily care, meals, play, and rituals. We can often determine which civilization invented certain roles and habits of socialization, but which gender was responsible for the invention of tools like the calendar is difficult to determine.

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<sup>2</sup> Journal of World Prehistory, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2003 (°C 2003) Archeological Evidence for the Emergence of Language, Symbolism, and Music—An Alternative Multidisciplinary Perspective

Francesco d'Errico,1,11 Christopher Henshilwood,2,3,4 Graeme Lawson,5 Marian Vanhaeren,1 Anne-Marie Tillier,6 Marie Soressi,1 Fred' erique ' Bresson,6 Bruno Maureille,6 April Nowell,7 Joseba Lakarra,8 Lucinda Backwell,9 and Michele Julien ` 10

<sup>3</sup> Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1953, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Decoding pre historic art and the origin of writing/ Emmanuel anati/ edition atelier/ 2013: ENGLISH EDITION 2015 ISBN 9788898284122

In a pioneering work on menstruation, *The Wise Wound*, Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove stress the connection made in primitive societies between the lunar and menstrual cycles. Since all women have these innate body calendars, and a woman would have been the first to notice the relationship between her body cycle and the lunar cycle, it is suggested that women must have been the first to invent a calendar.

Men and women relied on each other's nature, observation, and skills, before, during, and after all activities related to their lives and their breeding.

My modest supposition is that the expressions of non-literate people, like that of literate people, are a universal consequence of humanity's constant observation of their qualities and their need to survive, an intuitive and sensitive functioning of the brain stemming from a need to comprehend their function in life. Mark Dyble<sup>5</sup>, anthropologist on the study at University College London, says: 'There is still this wider perception that hunter-gatherers are more macho or male-dominated. We'd argue it was only with the emergence of agriculture, when people could start to accumulate resources, that inequality emerged.' In other words, the earliest human societies are likely to have been founded on egalitarian principles.

Dyble stated that the latest findings suggest that equality between the sexes may have been a survival advantage, and played an important role in shaping human society and evolution: 'Sexual equality is one of a important suite of changes to social organization, including things like pair-bonding, our big, social brains, and language, that distinguishes humans ... It's an important one that hasn't really been highlighted before.'<sup>6</sup> All over the world, humanity seems to have used physical phenomena like the elements, forces of nature and the body as resources to create roles within their social communities. Humanity explained the existence of the world and of living beings through symbols.

Goddesses and gods mirrored the virtues of male and female, and expressed the wonders of their nature. They offered explanations for intangible phenomena such as birth, life, and death. Humanity accumulated prototypical forms and symbols as cultural references that served to cultivate complex ideas, and to create ethical and aesthetic compositions.

Prehistoric and tribal art are the expressions of those notions, emotions, thoughts, and questions. Humanity developed its male/female histories and narrations through its representations, by the re-presentation and re-combination of impressions and expressions of their roles and behaviour. In *The Origins of the World's Mythologies*, Michael Witzel, Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University, gives evidence not only of the origin but also the communal structure of the fundamental narrations of life found in all the grand myths, starting with the Palaeolithic period:

Comparative mythology ... produced a lot of work since the nineteenth century ... what had not been done is to compare all the great mythologies in historical perspective. I had to compare the Greek theology of Hesiod, the Icelandic Eddo, and the Popol-Vuh Mayan, the mythologies of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Japan and India. Once you do that comparison, you realize how these mythologies are similar, how they share a common story line.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Early men and women were equal, say scientists/ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/early-men-and-women-had-gender-equality-say-anthropologists-10251956.html>

<sup>6</sup> Early men and women were equal. See scientists/ <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/may/14/early-men-women-equal-scientists>

<sup>7</sup> Mercredi 16 juillet 2014 <http://nouvellemythologiecomparee.hautetfort.com/archive/2014/07/16/review-e-j-michael-witzel-the-origins-of-the-world-s-mythol-5411827.html> (Review) E. J. Michael Witzel - *The Origins of the World's Mythologies* The Origins of the World's Mythologies (Anglais) Broché - 4 janvier 2013/Oxford Press  
de E.J. Michael Witzel (Auteur) ISBN: 9780199812851

Everything man-made is a result of his emotions, sustained with rational thinking, giving expression to our capacity to comprehend ourselves within the universe. Myths, and, later, religions are forms of intellectual spiritualism, an organization of people's sensitive inner worlds. They logically argue points of view and compose roles and answers. Humanity is constantly aiming for the construction of organized societies, living in ethical circumstances, reflecting on universal realities, on our limits, on the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. Myths offer an imaginative and creative organization of concepts that are significant to the understanding of values and functioning of peoples, later advancing into common laws and the building of collective organizations, while constantly remaining aware of the mystery of life and the universe, that has become sacred. Jean-Louis Dessalles concludes:

at the same time of the appearance of argumentative functioning, the development of humans' aptitudes for reason and the practice of logic. Without any doubt, we talk here about a cognitive capacity of man that plays an essential role in the manner humans could master and understand their environment.<sup>8</sup> Prehistoric artists were celebrating the important role that women had in their communities. This may direct suggestions for the understanding of human nature and the progress of education for living together. The arts support the need to solve the political and social lives of male and female, as a group. However, a male-centred society still dominates the academic world, which makes it difficult to decrypt prehistoric motivations and minds.

As researchers suggest, we can claim 40,000 years of European art. In an example of Aurignacian art, Emmanuel Anati described (in the XXII Valcamonica Symposium May 2007) engraved stone blocks found within a small circle of 20 km around the township of Les Eyzies de Tayac in Dordogne, all carrying the same extremely limited grammar of engraved signs: vulvae and cup marks as female signs, phallus and batonnets as male signs.

Most blocks also have an animal's head, possibly connected with a wild bovine species. In Anati's paper, we can outline the features that are relevant to the role of women in Palaeolithic communities:

- a) There are more female symbols than male symbols: 43 vulvae compared with one phallus, 60 cup marks compared with 28 batonnets.
- b) The outlines representing vulvae are generally larger and more deeply engraved than other graphemes.
- c) There is only a single zoomorphism for each stone block, and it is present most of the time.
- d) The stone blocks in question were found in locations used as living quarters..<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of these features and the explanatory approach proposed above, I would suggest that each stone block was identifying an extended family living in that region about 30,000 BC. The animal associated with each block would have represented the totemic identity of the older woman who founded the family, and consequently the identity of the extended family.

The social importance attributed to women in that culture would explain the prevalence and artistic relevance of vulvae. Women would have been perceived as the important providers of a stable food supply through their gathering of fruits and vegetable and the hunting of small animals, while the men's large-prey hunting depended greatly upon chance and migration patterns. Women would have represented the stable identity of the extended family, which probably consisted of 3–4 women (the average number of vulvar figures on the blocks), 3–4 men and a dozen children and adolescents, who were affected by a high rate of infant mortality.

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<sup>8</sup> Jean-Louis Dessalles, *Les origines de la culture*, Le Pommier/Cité des sciences et de l'industrie, 2006, p. 109. ÉDITIONS LE POMMIER

8, rue Férou 75278 Paris Cédex 6

<sup>9</sup> E. Anati (2007). 'Engraved palaeolithic stone blocks of La Ferrassie style' in E. Anati (ed.), *XXII Valcamonica Symposium*. Edizioni del Centro, Capo di Ponte, Brescia (Italy).

The central role of women would also have derived from the generating magic of birth (through the vulva) and the dispensation of warm milk from their breasts for 3–4 years.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

Prehistoric artists expressed emotions and shared them with others, just as contemporary artists, singers and writers do. This is not art for art's sake. It is communication.

Humanity embodies a conscious life force, with ethical considerations regarding sexuality, questions about the differences and similarities of men and women, and the acts of birth, life and death. Stories, traditions, habits, ceremonies and art are metaphors of man's life and nature, mixed with the elements of histories and the influence of culture. Traditions, myths, and religions evoke common elements translated via ideas, for example, the centre of the body as a metaphor for the central axis mundi of the world. Prehistoric and tribal art refers to the ideals of struggling life and humanity. The similarities found between the body and visions of the world illustrate a common functional behaviour of the mind and the body, and offer us insight into the relationship between the first two components of any society, those of male and female. These elements have served the arts and creativity of man ever since, until the attempts of contemporary artists to understand our natural, biological differences and the ability of each human being to function, morally and socially, in the world. This trans-conscious trade of humanity's art, found from prehistoric and tribal art until now, helps us to understand basic questions of cultural diversity, and to develop communication and debate with the other. Barry Conliffe mentions 'an emphasis of the central role of women in Upper Palaeolithic society'. Piero P. Giorgi would support such an interpretation via an examination of Aurignacian signs and symbols.

Women seemed to have enjoyed a central position (if not political power) in the Palaeolithic hunter-gathering society. Regardless of the degree of realism of the Venus statues, breast, vulva and the natural female pattern of fat distribution on legs, hips and buttocks probably represented woman in her full role of mothering, feeding, hosting, teaching, regenerating life. Remember that fertility was a typically important concern for advanced agricultural communities.<sup>11</sup> Men and women were equally important in prehistoric society. Sadly, in contemporary society the apparent demotion of the roles of women in public life coexists with the effective power of women at home. Although mothers are central elements of private life in all cultures, male dominance still exists. Expressing a unique and subjective point of view is an act of ethical and aesthetical research. Looking at the string of time and of cultures is recognition of the endless plurality of people, of their histories and of their identities. As an artist, I continue this constant inquiry into the relationship of male and female. My work has been an attempt to explore relations, to discover oneself and the 'other'. Art and culture has been for me the mirror of the journey of humanity since its creation.

After all, sexuality is birth, birth is death, and in between is love or hate, desire or rejection, loss or suffering,

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<sup>10</sup><http://www.universitadelledonne.it/english/giorgi10.htm#12/> A new interpretation of female symbols and figures produced in prehistoric Europe The hypothesis of the centrality of women /Piero P. Giorgi

Centre for European Studies, Gargnano (Italy) and Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland, Brisbane (Australia).

<sup>11</sup><http://www.universitadelledonne.it/english/giorgi10.htm#12/>, A new interpretation of female symbols and figures produced in prehistoric Europe The hypothesis of the centrality of women /Piero P. Giorgi

, Centre for European Studies, Gargnano (Italy) and Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland, Brisbane (Australia).



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suffering, creation or destruction, giving or taking. These are the roots and reasons of my work, and it was for these same exact reasons that I created the organization *Mémoire de l'Avenir* (Memory of the Future). Not knowing the nature of man and woman, and the dependency upon each other for life, is ignorance, and the cause of struggle in human relations, reflected in racism and discrimination. This awareness, I hope, makes my art effective, and within a continuous process. The responsibility of an artist lies not only in aesthetic research, or with his/her intellectual impact, but with his/her influence, challenges, proposals, criticisms, and ability to raise awareness.

*I cannot imagine that the artist could remain an indifferent spectator, refusing to take an option ... Being engaged means, for an artist, to be inserted in its social context, be the blood and flesh of the people, experience the problems of his time with intensity and testify. Aimé Césaire*

In the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1913), Stein wrote an account of Matisse's fall 1906 purchase of a small African sculpture, now identified as a Vili figure from the Democratic Republic of Congo, ... Matisse showed the sculpture to Picasso. Picasso later told curators and writers of the pivotal visits he subsequently made, beginning in June 1907, to the African collections at the Trocadéro ...

The African sculptures, he said, had helped him to understand his purpose as a painter, which was not to entertain with decorative images, but to mediate between perceived reality and the creativity of the human mind—to be freed, or 'exorcised', from fear of the unknown by giving form to it.



Pregnancy / cycle of life to birth/Calendar/ @Valcamonica /XXV Valcamonica Symposium. Edizioni del Centro, Capo di Ponte, Brescia (Italy). Photo by Margalit BERRIET

In 1907, after hundreds of preparatory sketches, Picasso completed the seminal *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)*, the painting to whose faceted female bodies and masklike faces ... <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Denise Murrell, 'African Influences in Modern Art', in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/aima/hd\\_aima.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/aima/hd_aima.htm) (April 2008).

*'Art is what makes life more interesting than art.'* Robert Filliou

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## NOT ALWAYS THE MALE

**Carl Bjork**

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USA

At a crime scene, the investigator will always ask the question, "who" perpetrated the offense. And, to answer the question you must discover the "why." What is the motivation; is it cultural or survival, or perhaps the dictates of the mores of the people? When we discover a crime scene; is there a "crime" committed, what or who has decided that an offense or violation took place? Was the evil deed the results of an action by a male or a female? Have we forgotten in our patriarchal world of today that there are females? Did females carve and paint petroglyphs and pictographs? The answer is, yes!

To understand the role of the female or the male and their "authority" to carve the rocks and paint the symbols in the caves, we will have to discover their role in the society that they live. Do "all" members of the society share equal authority; can each person regardless of social status carve the rocks? The answer is, no!

History as we know it, or more correctly, how a history has been taught to us and what we believe history to be because of our life education, we will never know the real answer. It is problematic to know the truth, so-called "rock art" is not a written language using an alphabet or any other system of symbols to create words that are orally and verbally spoken. There are no tomes of written knowledge; hieroglyphs may come close because we find it carved and painted on walls in ancient temples and tombs, not that far distance from what we find in many locations throughout the world. Many petroglyphs in the State of Nevada easily match carvings found on ancient walls along the Nile River.

Nile River. Where do we find the answer, do we trust the archeologist even though we can use science to date the site where the rock art is located, is there a valid connection between the dating of the organics

in the soil and the carvings? Did the carvings come first from an ancient time and the use of the site at a later date, or did the site activity come first and the carvings were a part of the use of the site? Both answers are no doubt correct. That is the answer that I received over the past 40 or so years that I have asked the questions who and why at the site and location of rock art. What was the motivation, the same question an investigator asks at the scene of a crime? You will discover the answer about the debate over which gender was carving and painting the petroglyphs and paintings in the indigenous community. Even today petroglyphs are carved by those given the authority and taught by the elders.

Within the Northern Paiute community of the Great Basin area of the western United States there are members of the tribal group that have been selected and given the authority. Many given the authority are female. It is a special honour to be selected for the authority and the teachings of the sacred medicine knowledge. Cupules, the small round-shaped dimpled petroglyphs (25–38 mm in diameter) are created only by females. When cupules are in a spatial relationship with a rock art site, the site location is female and usually the males in the indigenous community are forbidden from visiting the site or knowing the sacred female knowledge.



Cupules covered with dark patina caused by acid rain during the volcanic explosion of Mount Mazama in Oregon, circa 7,700 BP.



Cupules carved to show family clans, locally called the 'rain rock'.

At male sites it is forbidden for females to visit. Most rock art sites are off-limits to those without the authority in the community. Even today, sacredness and knowledge are closely guarded by those in positions of power and leadership. Many societies throughout the world are considered matriarchal, as are the Hopi and Dine (Navajo) tribes. The grandmother elders are highly respected and honoured, the keepers of the traditional knowledge.

Usually within the area of the female site there will be other rock art evidence of female activity and knowledge; childbirth, the 28-day menstrual cycle, ovulation period and location of a safe place to give birth. Located east of Fallon Nevada is a low range of mountains that were once surrounded by a shallow lake, the Pleistocene remnants of ancient Lake Lahontan. When the petroglyphs were carved the peaks of hills were safe islands for childbirthing and caring for the newly born; safe from dangerous, scavenging animals and banned males of the culture.

What is interesting at the site is that the carvings represent many different periods in time, many histories, a time of the last Ice Age, the pre-Lake Lahontan pluvial, when the Great Basin was mostly covered by Lake Lahontan and Lake Bonneville, and the Great Basin drying and becoming the rain-shadow desert of today.

The far-reaching question has to be asked: who were the people who carved the first cupules and pits/grooves, and notches on the edge of the boulders? Now heavily patinated by centuries of weather and acid rain from the volcanic explosion of Mount Manzanara in southern Oregon over 7,700 years ago; now Crater Lake. Etched into the dark patina are engraved a different style of petroglyphs of a different people; also pictographs appear in caves. Ancient high-water marks on the nearby hillsides indicate that the water levels of Lake Lahontan once covered the cupules many times; it has been discovered that the ancient lake has been lower and refilled at least seven times.



Notches carved into the edge of a large boulder at the Grimes Point NV female site. The notches were carved prior to the Mount Mazama event.

Today, cupules are still carved by many indigenous cultures for the same ceremonial reason; always, hand-drilled with a sacred stone by the young females as taught by their grandmothers (female elders). Over 12,000 years ago, this most sacred ritual began and even today the ceremonial ritual is conducted for the passing of the child-girl into womanhood. It is told by many medicine women that the rock powder was eaten (geophagia) by the young women to cause a pregnancy. Through proper ceremonial prayer during the creation of the cupule and ingesting the powder the continuance of life and of a

people was guaranteed. Who were the people that who created the system for universal communication using petroglyphs and pictographs; who were the ladies women who that created the cupule ceremony; how did the ancient information and 'authority' pass down through the many, many generations to the keepers of the knowledge of today?

Grandsons of two neighbouring tribes in western Nevada, the Paviotso (Northern Paiute) and the Wasiw (Washoe), have shared that during the early 1980's they were taken by their grandmothers into the mountains and shown where they were not allowed to enter. The area was for the Grandmothers grandmothers to tend to and care for the very young children. It was a place for soon-to-be mothers, and the other women and pubescent girls to meet; a quiet place to share, gossip, and talk about their cultural mission. Today, there is such a place at a small high mountain meadow in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, a summer camp to escape the hot desert heat in the valley below. Like at most Grandmother grandmother rock-art sites there is a large juniper, grandmother tree that was used as a day-care center, bed-rock mortars (grinding holes), small shade trees, prayer rocks, and cupule-covered boulders.



Big Spring CA female site. Large grandmother juniper tree upper left. Cupule-covered boulders, grinding holes and prayer rock in foreground, small grove of aspen trees for shade. Elevation: 7,700 feet / 2347 m.

When I first visited the site with my Washoe friend, Darrel Cruz, he told me if his late- grandmother was with us we would have to leave or we would both be chased away with a stick and receive a severe tongue lashing, and have to be cleansed with a special smoke purification ceremony, all necessary because of the essence of female activity from hundreds of generations at the site that would attach to us and change and weaken our masculinity. The late honoured, grandmother Yazzie, Dene' (Navajo) medicine woman shared that she traveled to her special female site to talk to the ravens and pray, a place high on the canyon walls of Chaco Canyon in western New Mexico. Knowing that I for at least 40 years had visited protected female sites and had not been harmed by the essence (spirits), it would have been allowed that I could visit with her and pray with the ravens (keepers of the knowledge). Grandmother cautioned that there were female rock art sites only used for teaching and ceremony for the sacred medicine with strict taboos. Those not invited or trained properly were in danger of harm, sickness or even death upon entering the area of a female rock art site. Most Native American grandmothers have said that the so-called vulva symbols as stated in volumes of rock-art literature are not female genitalia and where the vulva-shaped glyphs are found are not always female sites. Shared information contained in email messages from two grandmothers: 'My NA contacts also argue that these are not vulva forms. (They also deny creating anthropomorphs (stick figures) with exaggerated genitalia.) They tell me that they represent the camp arrangement with the tents arranged in a horseshoe pattern around the central area where the firewood and supplies are stacked and folks gather together. When I mention this to other archaeologists they tend to roll their eyes.' 'The so-called yonis/vulvas symbols are not female genital; that is a 'white man' thing that was created back in the 1960s hippy days. The NA ladies tell me that the symbols are how the folks slept around a long-shaped campfire or showing that the site is a camp/living site.

They build campfires to stay warm and the longer shape of the fire the more folks that could sit/sleep near the fire.

Of course you will never change the white man's version of the yoni/vulva use; it is now locked into the papers of academia.'

The grandmothers say that the small cupule-covered boulders and rock walls are located throughout the world.

Is there a global connection; was there a first people who created the cupule phenomenon and the ceremony?

Yes, there is a hidden history to be discovered by studying the ancient female and male doodling on the rocks.

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Information in this article was shared by the kind and sharing grandmothers of the Hopi, Navajo (Deni'), Chumash, Washoe and Northern Paiute People. I hold it as a personal honour to have been accepted by the many male and female elders who shared their cultural stories and travelled with me to their rock art sites in the western United States.

## MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN, ANTHROPOMORPHS AND ANIMALS

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The tocas of the Park da Serra da Capivara in the north-east region of Brazil, registered on UNESCO's world heritage list, have numerous rock art paintings. Today, more than 13,000 archaeological sites have been listed there. The majority shows art manifestations, paintings and engravings, and new discoveries are still regularly made. Numerous sites are also known outside the park. This exceptional concentration is one of the major rock paintings sites of the American continent, even though it is rich in all its territory, north and south, and particularly Brazil. The paintings in the tocas sometimes come to several hundred figures. This permits us several observations about the human representation, which is among the most numerous.

For the main part, indeed, human and animal figures are represented in dynamic situations, very often in movement. These representations have a very lifelike character. There is life in the paintings of these tocas and this life talks to us. This is stressed by the accuracy of depiction in the multiple details, which are very realistic without being naturalistic. So it is often easy to identify the represented subject.

### **Men and women: how to recognize them?**

A first look is enough for assessing the frequency of the human figures and their situation in the paintings of the Serra da Capivara. But the distinction of the genre is not so easy. Recognizing the women and men requires more analysis and that we get acquainted with the modalities of representation. However,

although there are always ambiguous figures, difficult to identify, the detailed realism of these paintings means that most are unequivocal. In general, most of the human representations are schematic and the sexual characteristics are not very marked, even sometimes absent. This means that there is more importance in the details which allow us to identify the genre of the represented human figures. These details are from various orders: natural, physical details or cultural objects. They constitute a rich information source for areas for which we have not always clues, material data – accessories, costumes – or immaterial data on human relationships and collectivity. The secondary sexual characteristics are the best indications of the genre. Because of their exteriority, they are naturally visible and thus susceptible of representation, if the figures are represented totally or partially naked, or their costumes allow us to apprehend these details. It is a question, mainly, of the vulvas and breasts of the women, and the beard and penis of the men. The penis is very often represented but not beards. The breasts of the women are very discreet, two small sticks sometimes, or a little point, a possible sign of a pre-pubescent breast; the representation of vulvas remains to be shown. The recognition of these characteristics constitutes the first stage of establishing the genre of the human figures represented. Once established, their association with other elements constitutes complementary data determining this identification. Although they are always in connection with the body, they are no longer anatomical or physiological details, but material: objects, accessories or costumes, or immaterial, an attitude for example from the social and cultural sphere. They are qualified as tertiary sexual characters. Their relevance comes from their repeated association with one of the sexual secondary characteristics which first guarantees the genre. Afterwards, in the possible absence of one of these

## Pregnant women, ithyphallic men and anthropomorphic characters

Two details mainly drew our attention to the sexual identity of the human representations of the paintings of the Serra da Capivara: the first was the pronounced abdominal curve of some of them, seeming to indicate that they were pregnant women ; the second, the shape and size of what, not being able to be a third leg, seemed to be the representation of the male genital organ.

The abdominal curve of the pregnant women can cover lot of diversity of form rather close to the physiological reality: round or sharp, high or low and more or less prominent. If a doubt persisted about this interpretation, we would propose as proof the figure of Toca do Caboclinho, where the abdomen of the woman was painted transparently, letting us see the foetus, with the sobriety of the detail peculiar to these paintings and without ambiguity. This detail indicates besides an excellent physiological knowledge. The transparency method of the depiction, revealing internal, known but not visible characteristics, is not a very frequent mode of representation here. It deserves to be underlined and remembered. This drawing supplies us with other information on the modalities of representation of the feminine figures.

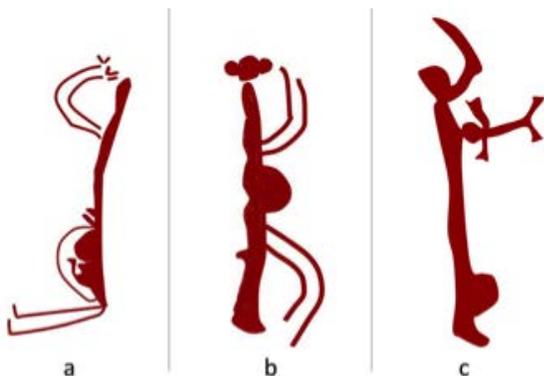


Figure 1 - Representations of Pregnant Women  
a- Toca do Caboclinho b- Toca do Salitre c- Toca do Zé Patú

So, two small sticks, just above the abdomen, repre-

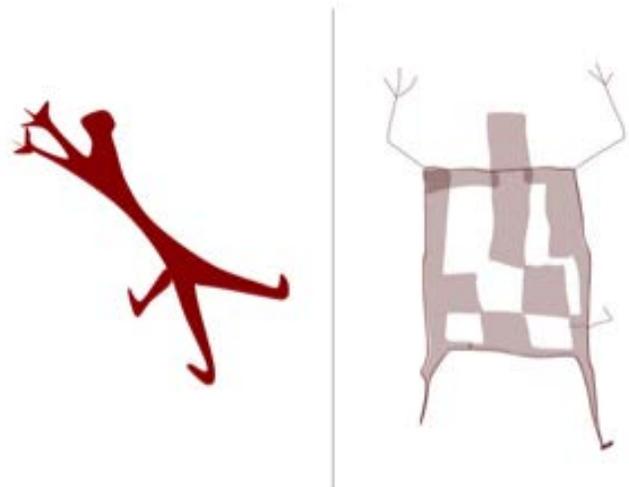


Figure 2 - Representations of Men  
a- Toca do Man; b- Toca do Gilberto

-sent breasts on an excessively long trunk, two small sticks that in the absence of a big abdomen we can now consider as a sign of femininity. Also let us retain the arms up, which may represent a special attitude in a particular context (Figs. 1a, b and c). As regards the men, the main attribute which allows to distinguish them is their sex, either a straight line represents the penis between the legs, or the sex is set up, strangely angled (Fig. 2a). This characteristic was often interpreted as ithyphallic and sometimes as the sign of unbridled sexuality. This hook shape is not anatomical. We find this hook on other representations of the Serra da Capivara: iconic figures of a non-anatomical depiction, of rather rectangular shape, who, arms up and outflung legs, seem to approach by running or by jumping, and covered from head to foot with a geometrical costume, never the same (Fig. 2b). Faceless, it is possible to qualify them as human beings strictly speaking, but their arms and their legs in dynamic movement make them anthropomorphs. We call them characters. So, paradoxically, these schematic figures have no body and are only bodies. Has this body a sex? If he has one, we think that it is represented by this funny hook with a non-anatomical shape position, beside of the rectangle costume. That is why we think that it is the

representation of penile cases. In general, to wear a penile case maintains the sex in a position which, drawn simply, can let think of a sex in erection. On the other hand, from a practical point of view, it seems easy to hang on its penile case on its suit, and it may be important that the genre of the character is clearly meant by the presence of this appendix. So, indeed, by this strange small detail, these masked characters continue to raise their manliness while their identity remains us unknown. These characters are rarely alone. A figure accompanies them very frequently, to the point that one might consider her as an accomplice: a woman, often pregnant.

### **Characters, men, women and children**

On the central panel of the toca of Zé Patú, to the right of the character, a pregnant woman with a well-rounded abdomen, very low, almost to the feet, arms up, feeds a child at the breast at the same time. The impossibility of this posture only strengthen the image of fertility which characterizes it. Pregnant women, women who breast-feed : I know only one other figure like this, women who deliver: through

them birth and childhood, which reflect fertility and reproduction, are very present subjects in the paintings of the Serra da Capivara. Without risking an exaggerated interpretation, we can say that we are in the presence of a couple of figures of respectively clearly male and feminine sex. The character, when female figures are associated with him, could be a representation of the reproductive power at their childbirth, a not human fertilizing power or not completely human, but nevertheless sexual. Yet, as noticed by Françoise Héritier: 'Ce n'est pas le sexe, mais la fécondité, qui fait la différence réelle entre le masculin et le féminin' (It is not sex, but fertility, that makes the real difference between the masculine and the feminine). However, fertilization needs the sexual act to be efficient. We find it also represented on walls painted in the Serra da Capivara. Just as the character and his accomplice adjoin sexes are not in contact, as the evocation was more significant than the act itself. Nevertheless, the sexual characteristics of these representations associates them with the theme of the fertility and that of fertilization, even virility.



Figure 3 - Human figure holding a deer Toca do Pinga do Boi

Other human representations can be interpreted as those of children only because of their small size. It is not about babies, whose specific morphology, stressed by their relationship to the body of the mother, is easily recognizable, but possibly young children represented as little adults. These small men are always represented in connection with bigger men, in particular in scenes in which several where adults, with tense arms, seem to take the child of hands with hands. In these scenes, the genre of the adult figures is still not clearly marked ; when they are, they are male figures.

While the representation of the couple of the character and the pregnant woman is always in a dominant, central and very visible position on the wall, scenes with possible children are localized in the whole of the representations unless no detail indicate them particularly position.

### **From human to animal**

Human representations are very numerous in the paintings of the Serra da Capivara, and we have just seen how we can distinguish children, women and men in this multiplicity and diversity, with, besides, an anthropomorphic figure of symbolic male genre. In parallel, the animal representations are also very numerous. They represent the main species known as local fauna and we can also distinguish males, females and young ones, according to distinctive anatomical criteria. Between them, animals also maintain relations, which the modes of representation sometimes clearly show, in particular scenes of games between females and their young. These scenes, like the adults with the child, form part of all the paintings without any particular position. Mixed with the human beings, they do not inevitably maintain relations with them. They are juxtaposed like more of the represented scenes which constitute the density of the large panels painted on the shelters of the Serra da Capivara. Nevertheless, there is a repeated association which completes our observations: that of the character and/or the couple of the

character/pregnant woman, with cervids, male or female. In the bestiary of the paintings of Serra da Capivara, cervids are the most represented. They are females or males, easily recognizable by the presence or the absence of antlers, and they do not occupy the same place on the wall nor with regard to the other represented figures. In a way, it is possible to say that the deer more often occupy an exceptional place. It is particularly true in the figures of the Toca do Pinga do Boi, in the northwest of the park, in Serra Branca, where the character carries a deer in triumph (Fig. 3). We can reproduce this situation metaphorically in certain painted places, when, stretching out arms in the air, we find as if to carry a figure of a cervid painted on the wall. In this relationship, the deer is glorified and mastered, even subjected, at the same time. The character is triumphant. Here, the strength of the character is not to bring down the animal but to sublimate it. From the point of view of the genre, the deer is a very powerful element of confirmation of the manliness or virility, of the figure of the character. The reproductive strength of the deer does not result so much among reaches nor youngs by female, but rather the herd which he gathers. With its virile and reproductive power, the deer is also symbol of the revival of the eternal cycle of life, because of the annual fall of its antlers which announces the seasonal revival and its regrowth. But only the male wears wood. He has to lose them so that, in a way, the genre fades. It is maybe this that we are being subtly informed of in the paintings of the Toca das Europas II, where three characters come towards us, in line, the second holding up what look like antlers, which could be those of the cervid, at the bottom, of a pale red colour, made tasteless by this grip which distorts him and would make him become female. Taken from the deer, the antlers are a trophy. Separated from the body of the deer, it loses its imposing presence and it is no more than wood, which perhaps is the one which we find transplanted in the scenes referred to as arboreal. So, the cycle of the life would not only be locked, but it will include all the

groups of life on earth: animal, vegetable and human, linked by the anthropomorphic figure of the character, each of them acting as an active ingredient of the vital dynamics and strength of the world balance.

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## BEDFORD BARRENS PETROGLYPHS

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In 1990, Brian Leigh Molyneaux received an archaeological contract from the Nova Scotia Museum and the Town of Bedford, NS to investigate and survey petroglyphs (Fig. 1) carved on a smooth ridge of rock, used as a hiking pathway, overlooking Bedford, NS, Canada.

There was a development plan to dynamite these rock ridges known as the Barrens and to extend a nearby housing project; that is, until a local resident raised the attention of museum officials to petroglyphs on this site.

The provincial government agreed to set aside a small patch of land surrounding the petroglyphs to be protected from residential development.

The inspirational and interpretative factors of this ancestral artwork did not seem to play a role in the preservation process. To this day, the rock art is allowed to deteriorate under the natural elements, including footprints from local hikers, a decision supported by Mi'kmaq Elder groups, who are consulted on traditional matters.

Their view is that all Mi'kmaq artwork carved on stone surfaces has its own time and place; and that nature should be allowed to return the stone surfaces to their natural state.

Most Mi'kmaq community leaders believe in the preservation and protection of their sacred heritage lands, including this rocky outcrop overlooking Bedford Basin known as the Barrens.

There is also a common belief that any ancient petroglyphs existing on this land were created by an artist who took their true meaning or message to the grave.

On occasion, there are spiritually minded individuals or small groups who gather around the Barrens petroglyphs to perform a ceremony or to commune with their ancestral connections.

The official interpretation of these geometric lines and pitted holes, referred to as the Bedford Barrens petroglyphs, is fertility rite symbolism with depictions of female and male sex organs; and with symbols of our sun and some stars. Below is a copy of the original journal notes by Ruth H. Whitehead, Nova Scotia Museum.

Since most of the local Mi'kmaq population has been converted to Catholicism, the official interpretation would not inspire any closer attention or inspection. One part of the symbolic illustrations, the circle enclosing the eight-pointed star, did become a designated and recognizable logo for the Mi'kmaq culture.



Figure 1 - Bedford Barrens Petroglyphs

It remains a popular design and is used on many of their hand-crafted baskets. The other portion of the symbolism, the so called sex organs depictions, were understandably forbidden and forgotten. The Nova Scotia Museum website features a trace drawing of the Barrens petroglyphs with an interpretative description found in the 'Ethnology' section, not their 'Archaeology' section, under 'Mi'kmaq Portrait Gallery'. A picture of this trace drawing is also viewable under the heading 'Mi'kmaq Petroglyphs', also in the museum's website's Ethnology section, which provides a Flickr.com link with a searchable page list of over 300 Mi'kmaq rock art samples; with the Barrens picture featured on its last page. The majority of the Mi'kmaq rock art carvings are simple designs, such as animals, boats, ceremonial headdresses, which can be readily interpreted by anyone who views them. Rock carvings with abstract designs, such as the Barrens with its thought-provoking illustrations, are few and far between. It was in 1999 while looking through the Nova Scotia Museum's website that I first saw Ruth Whitehead's 1983 trace drawing of the Barrens rock art. My eyes were drawn to the seven dots, pitted holes, located above the large carved circle. They were in the shape of the Pleiades star cluster. I had seen this before in other ancient artwork. After several months of online research on the cultural significance of this star cluster for past and present cultural worldviews; I decided to put together some of my findings in a digital media format, a PowerPoint presentation, entitled 'Star Stories'. I shared it with many of my contacts, who had an interest in ancient artifacts and cosmology. The ancient Maya believed the Pleiades star system was a birthplace of a species who were their relatives. One of their major temple sites, Yax Mutal, present-day Tikal, Guatemala, was architecturally designed in the pattern of the seven largest, visible stars of the Pleiades. The North American cultures of the Hopi, Zuni, Lakota, Cherokee, Pawnee and Ojibwa all had worldviews of the Pleiades as abodes of their sky ancestors, who were purported to be spiritually

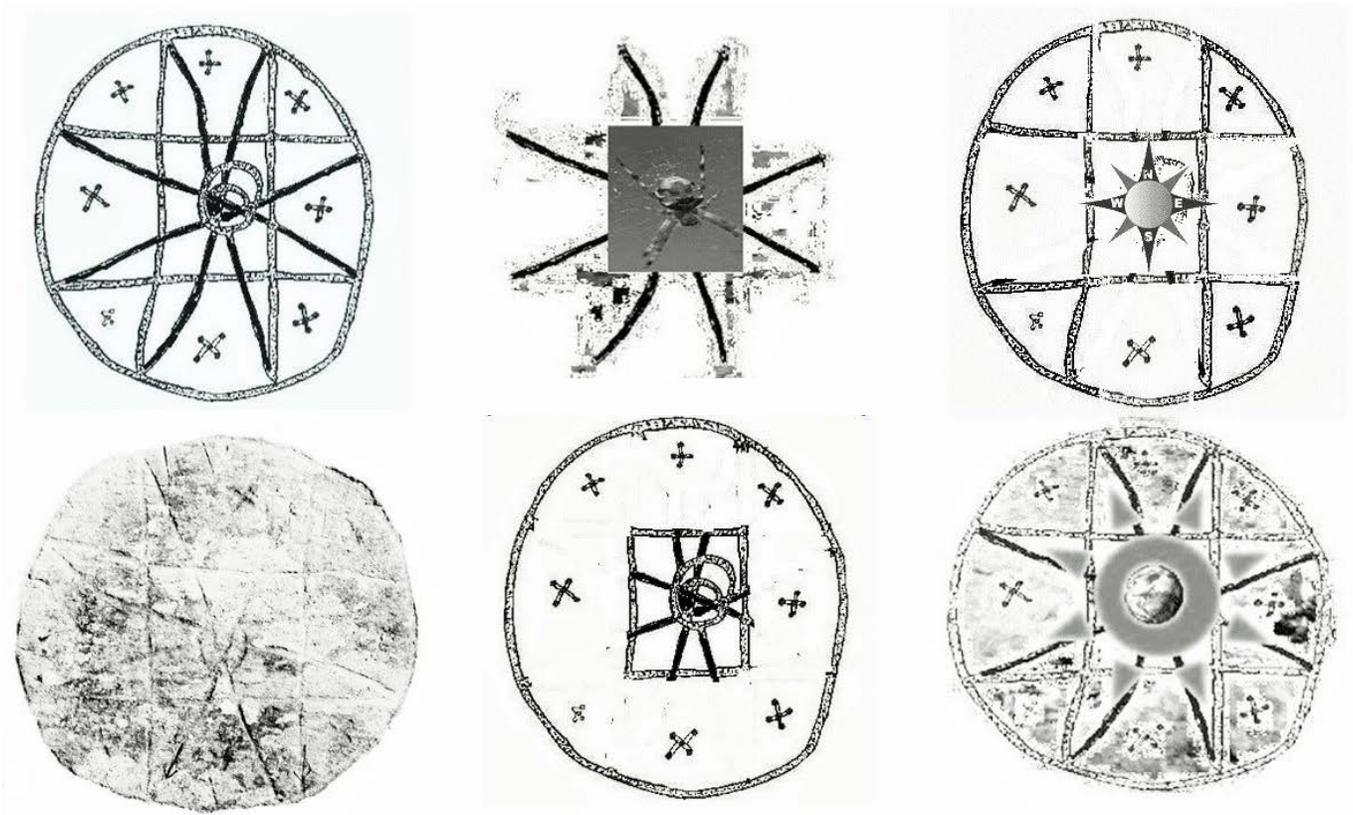


Figure 2 - Spider Woman Creation Story

and technically advanced beings, and who played an instrumental role in humankind's cultural evolution on mother earth. Emissaries of the Pleiades could be summoned through energetic ceremonies or personal intentions during times of personal, cultural or planetary confusion for advice and clarity. The ancient Maya referred to them as lords because of their brilliant, insightful knowledge and sometimes powerful interventions. Many of these legend stories of our pre-European cultures of North America are made available to the general public through the internet. It was this story-telling, expressed verbally, physically or symbolically in art, that was handed down to the next generation to retain and preserve as their history. I read online about an ancient traditional marriage rite of an indigenous society in Arizona, USA, where selected bachelor males were

taken to a mountain top and ceremoniously put in contact with sky people with an intention to be gifted or selected for a sacred union with a chosen earthly bride. Our planetary history is full of stories of celestial gods and goddesses intervening in the lives of humankind. The Mi'kmaq in their cultural repertoire have stories which tell of sisters who wanted to marry star men and of birds of fire with their light as a voice. A Mi'kmaq creation story of a female principle, Spider Woman/Grandmother Spider (Fig. 2), who descends from the sky to weave a web of life, descends to the sacred spiral and with the magical sacred rattles and four bundles, dreamed earth into existence and all life emerged from her womb. There are many online sources of information on this mythical feminine goddess, who taught the human people about cultural manifestations, such as weaving and spinning, fire-glazed clay pottery and basketry.

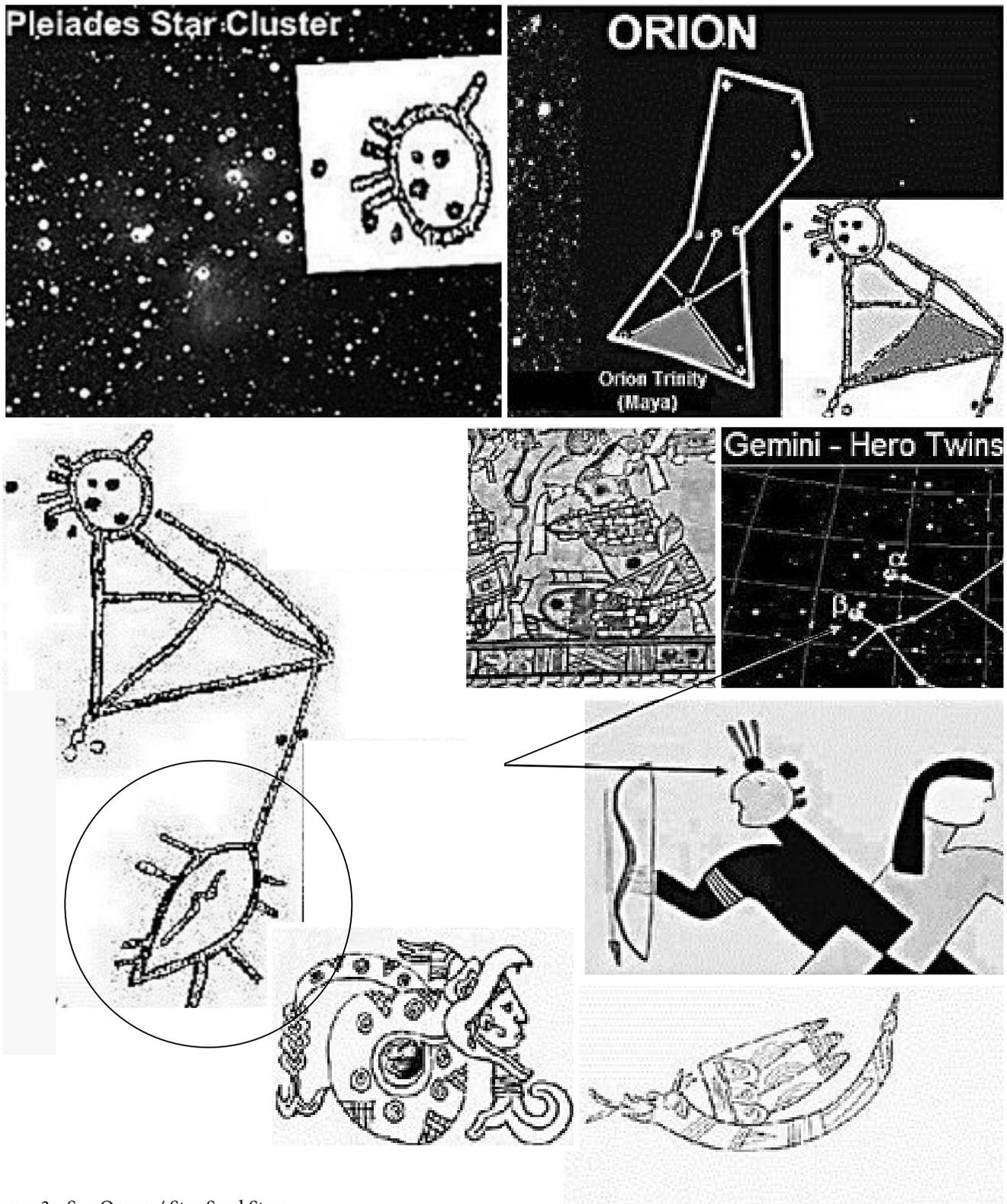


Figure 3 - Sex Organs/ Star Seed Story

dian neighbour, the Algonquin. It is also a theme in many other tribal societies across the North American continent, including the ancient Maya of Mesoamerica. This creatress, who mated with the sun creator, also gives birth to hero twins, which is another common theme throughout the world's genesis mythologies. The Roman version was the demi-goddess, Rhea, giving birth to the twins Romulus and Remus. In the Mi'kmaq version, the twins are giants with supernatural powers, Kluskap, a hero, and his adversarial brother, Malsumis. The Barrens rock art story is about a cosmic connection (Fig. 3) to not only the Pleiades stars, but also to the Orion constellation, the Sirius star and perhaps, by the two dots depicted just behind the oval symbol, the twin Gemini stars. This female sex organ oval symbol could also be a star seed. I digitally enlarged this symbol in my PowerPoint presentation to enhance a serpent within, a universal power icon. This star seed symbol seems to point towards the hooped spiral centre of a carved square within the large circle. A square within a circle is a universal symbol for our sun and earth. All of this symbolism is a familiar theme story which is recorded by many of our prehistoric societies around the globe. The Barrens rock art depicts a cosmic record of creation, a discovery that would make this rock art even more provocative than the forbidden fertility rites interpretation. I put together another PowerPoint presentation entitled 'Bedford Barrens: A New Perspective' and shared it with local, national and international academic and professional communities for any collaborative feedback. There were a few encouraging replies from accredited and recognized European researchers. I received a personal letter from Prof. Henry de Lumley, France's pre-eminent archaeologist, who invited me to attend one of his sponsored conferences. He had a special interest in the depictions of stellar and constellations in prehistoric art and thanked me for sharing my star stories. Many of the North American professionals whom I had contacted over the years were less enthusiastic,

although the American Rock Art Research Association recognized my digital artwork presentation on the Bedford Barrens petroglyphs as being significant enough to invite me to present it at their 2009 Conference: Session 7, World Series of Rock Art, Brian Britten: 'Bedford Barrens Petroglyph: Rock Art Worth a Thousand Words'(Report). This was one of my more successful attempts to attract interest in preserving and protecting this truly unique artifact from fading away from history. After viewing countless rock art depictions from around the globe, unique is definitely an appropriate adjective. How many ancient records of creation carved in stone do you think exist in the world? I visited the Bedford Barrens petroglyph site in 2005 and noticed how much had deteriorated compared with photographs taken only 12 years earlier. In 2008 the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia (CMMNS) was presented with a work plan agenda for approval to secure a funding budget to adequately preserve the Barrens petroglyphs from further deterioration. This was a culmination of many years of preparation by their Culture and Heritage Committee chairperson, with whom I was in correspondence and shared my PowerPoint presentations. I had suggested that even a preliminary approach by constructing a Plexiglas frame with mounts over the rock art would help to slow down the environmental degradation; until a better plan could be implemented. But there was no approval by the CMMNS.

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## GENDERED STONE CULTS IN PRE-CONTACT O'AHU, HAWAI'I

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My essay will contribute a gendered evaluation of Hawai'ian cultural landscapes with stone monuments from certain periods in the past to some aspects of the present. Insights gained will help empower current revitalization movements and raise awareness of archaeological sites and their need of preservation.

Hawai'ian history is amplified in oral narratives, often in the form of mele (chants, songs, poems), and under-documented in archaeological materials (notable exceptions are Bayman and Dye 2013; Kirch 2012). I will begin with a brief historical overview of Hawai'ian culture and conclude with a discussion linking pre-contact gendered stone cults to social practices.

### Historical Overview of the Hawai'ian Islands

The Hawai'ian islands form the northern point of Polynesia and were settled from southwestern island groups beginning approximately in the 10th century. The Hawai'ian archipelago comprises ten islands; O'ahu is one of the larger and important ones because the main port and city of Honolulu are situated there. Archaeological and ethnographic evidence suggest that during the first centuries after settlement, Hawai'ian society functioned by and large under egalitarian terms. The 'ohana was the dominant social unit with which an individual identified first. Within the 'ohana, women and men tended to complementary tasks to provide for the family. Linnekin (1990: 229-232) points out that in most indigenous societies female and male roles have been structured through complementarity rather than hierarchy.

Early chiefs operated as 'first among equals' coordinating interactions between 'ohanas. The position of some chiefs changed from that of a lineage head to a type of king around AD 1500. Paul Kirch (2012: 142-155, 187-201, 293-300) compellingly documents these processes in which certain chiefs began to exert state-like controls by taking over central management of the irrigation systems of taro fields on O'ahu and Kaua'i and of the dryland gardens with rain-fed agriculture on Hawai'i and Maui. These administrative changes set in motion major shifts in politics, the economy and traditional religion, moulding Hawai'ian society into a hierarchical state system composed in essence of two classes: chiefs (ali'i) and commoners. The island-centred, king-like chiefs instituted practices which would increasingly spatialize power, authority and status. Most importantly, the ali'i elaborated tapu (prohibition), a long known concept in Polynesia, to heighten their authority positions. Derived from their descent lines, ali'i possessed kapu, understood as divinely sanctioned status and privileges to pronounce tapu in the form of laws and restrictions of movement and behaviour in order to isolate and protect the high-ranking elite (see Handy 1971: 43). Kapu/tapu entailed the rights to issue commands – sometimes spontaneously and at will – to protect property and spaces that priests and aristocrats frequented. Violators could be put to death. Women occupied a very interesting and ambivalent position in this chiefly state society. Of course, women belonged to both classes: most were commoners but those born into a high-ranking lineage became members of the elite class. By definition through a religious lens, they were considered noa (common and free of kapu). Specific tapu pronounced by male kapu barred women from fully participating in sacrificial ceremonies or from eating together with men. Female access to heiaus (shrines and temples) was restricted and male and female eating places were rigidly segregated. Linnekin (1990: 13-24) highlights the ambivalence of female roles because the fine mats and tapa cloth produced

by women were indispensable items in chiefly rituals that cemented men's superior status. The ritual devaluation of women sprang from the notion of female pollution coming from menstrual blood that was said to drive the gods away. Special houses (hales) were constructed to which women had to withdraw during their monthly periods. At the same time, the isolated eating and menstruation hales structured independent female space where women could shape their spheres of influence. The archaeological site of Kukaniloko (Fig. 1) consisting of a group of modified and unmodified stone monuments will demonstrate the contradictions of gendered space. Kukaniloko is found on O'ahu, near Wahiawa, on the Waialua side of Kaukonahua Gulch.

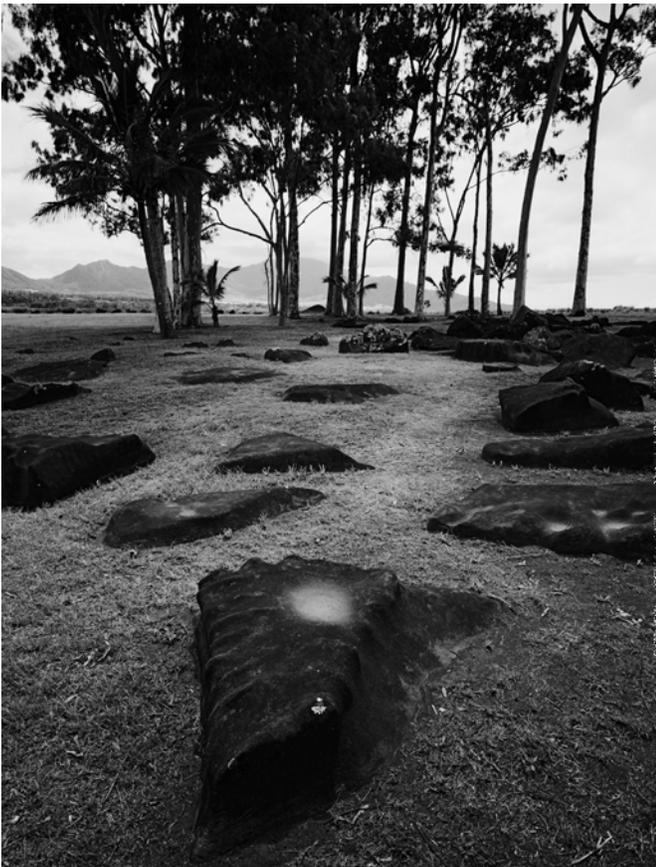


Figure 1: Kukaniloko, birthing stones. Courtesy of Jan Becket.

It is the only site on O'ahu that is being officially preserved. Elspeth Sterling and Catherine Summers (1978: 138-141) have compiled all the historical information about Kukaniloko. This site functioned as one of two sacred birthing places for chiefs and is said to have been established by Nanakaoko and his wife, Kahihiokalani, whose son, Kapawa, was the first chief born there sometime in the 12th century. Kamakau describes this famous birth place as follows:

A line of stones was set up on the right hand and another on the left hand, facing north. There sat thirty-six chiefs. There was a backrest, ... on the upper side, this was the rock Kukaniloko, which was the rock to lean against. If a chiefess entered and leaned against Kukaniloko and rested on the supports to hold up the thighs in observance of the Liloekapu, the child born in the presence of the chiefs was called an ali'i, an akua, a wela – a chief, a god, a blaze of heat (Kamakau 1991: 38).

Such a distinguished child was attended to by chiefs in Hoolonopahu Heiau situated next to the sacred stones. The stone Kukaniloko was surrounded by other ritual stations (see also Becket and Singer 1999: 61, 64-65). The birth of a chief was announced by the beat of tapu drums kept in the heiau. Then the common people assembled on the east side of Kukaniloko and the servants on the south side (Sterling and Summers 1978: 139).

Most interestingly, Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa also mentions Kukaniloko through her pronounced feminist lens: according to her, the high chiefess Kukaniloko was born at this birthing heiau around AD 1375 to become the first Mo'iwahine or supreme female ruler of O'ahu. She situates this site on the plains of Wahiawa known for especially violent thunderstorms which brought the mana of the heavens down to the chiefly children being born (Kame'eleihiwa 1999: 9-10). This latter version is included in Sterling and Summers' compilation (1978: 139).

Such layered and often conflicting oral narratives sketch the land of Hawai'ian storyscapes.

In the Kukaniloko case, a consensus emerges that a birthing place must accommodate both sexes and a compromise regarding kapu/tapu laws was made. As noted, women as biologically defined were categorically noa, profane or free of kapu, whereas chiefly women as cultural constructions could be vessels or carriers of the highest kapu ranks and thus were indispensable in the processes of dynastic successions (Linnekin 1990: 13-14). Thus the birth of a new chief was turned into a divine and tapu ritual from which women otherwise were excluded.

By c. 1700, the limits of agricultural production had been reached and surplus began to decline. Individual chief-kings could no longer maintain their wealth economy through tribute collected on their islands and therefore engaged in invasions and territorial conflict to secure prime agricultural areas on adjacent islands. Captain Cook discovered the Hawai'ian islands for the outside world on 18 January 1778, landing on Kaua'i and Ni'ihua (Kalakaua 1888: 22-25). In 1795, Kamehameha I united all of the Hawai'ian islands under his rule and assumed the title of king. His son, Kamehameha II, initiated a brief religious revolt during which he had most idols, shrines and temples destroyed and the traditional priesthood removed from office. The lasting political and historical significance of this religious break was the abolition of kapu and associated tapu in 1819. The lifting of the kapu and tapu weakened the traditional political and religious systems and left Hawai'ians open to receive the Christian faith in the 1820s. In 1893, the Hawai'ian monarchy was overthrown in a political act that was instigated to some extent by the US (Kauanui 2008: 281, 284). Five years later, the US annexed the Hawai'ian islands and unilaterally conferred citizenship on Hawai'ians. In 1959, the Hawai'ian archipelago became a state.

### Gendered Archaeological Sites on O'ahu

Highly distinct gendered sites are the Pohaku (stone) Wahine (woman) and Pohaku (stone) Kane

(man) stones near the Royal Hawai'ian Golf Club in Luna Hills, in the area of Maunawili. In 2015, this site was heavily overgrown, unmarked and unknown to the Kanaka Maoli (native Hawai'ian) gatekeeper at the golf course. I have not been able to match it with any place in Elspeth Sterling's and Catherine Summers' authoritative survey of Sites of Oahu (1978). The information presented here was shared by Jan Becket who has consulted with indigenous Hawai'ians through much of his life.

Pohaku Wahine and Pohaku Kane are part of a larger site which extends uphill and downhill the Loop Road which passes the golf course. The two stone formations are found above this road. Pohaku Wahine is formed by two rounded bedrock outcroppings with a small crevice in between them. A rounded stone was placed in the upper end of this crevice to create an image of the female genitalia (Fig. 2). A short distance below, the foundations of a fallen rubble wall run parallel to the road. Out of these foundations rises a distinct erect, stela-like stone slab to a height of c. 1-1.5 m, which is Pohaku Kane. The female/male associations have been made in oral traditions (Jan Becket, personal



Figure 2: Pohaku Wahine stone formation near the Royal Hawai'ian Golf Club in Luna Hills. Courtesy of Jan Becket.

communication 2015). Below the Loop Road lie remains of house foundations which have been professionally excavated.

Pohaku Wahine and Pohaku Kane should be understood as small shrines in the context of this adjacent house group. We do not have precise dates and neither is there any evidence of elite status or ali'i and kahuna activities. Most likely, we are looking at the archaeological traces of an upland community household. Even though such traces are very limited, they indicate that these maka'ainana (commoners) used local stones to create two shrines which represent female and male sexual identities. It is reasonable to deduce that they would have provided performance spaces for rituals and that they somehow structured the local landscape into female and male spheres. I further reason that Pohaku Wahine and Pohaku Kane present a slice of commoner lifeways in which gender relations relied upon egalitarian complementarity.

The second site is located on the ahupuaa boundary between Waialua and Koolauloa on the coast of Waimea Bay. It consists of a rock outcrop and a boulder on either side of Waimea Bay from which indigenous Hawai'ians once watched for fish (Sterling and Summers 1978: 131). Both are unmodified. The outcrop on the Waialua side sits in dense vegetation and exhibits deep cuts caused by erosion in the upper section which rises above the vegetation to offer a clear view of the ocean (Fig. 3). In oral traditions, this rock formation has a female character (Jan Becket, personal communication) and is known by the name Kalakoi which according to Mary Kawena Pukui means 'insistent proclamation'. In Hi'iaka's (the sister of Pele) chant, it may be the Ahuena stone, one of two stony patrons of fishermen standing sentinel on Waimea Bay on opposite bluffs (Sterling and Summers 1978: 131). Kalakoi/Ahuena has to be viewed in the context of fishing heiaus (ko'a). Sterling and Summers (1978: 125-131) report on a number of them along the old and present boundary lines between Waialulua and Koolauloa districts.



Figure 3: Kalakoi/Ahuena outcrop in Waimea Bay. Courtesy of Jan Becket.

Most ko'a were small in size and were formed by a circle of stones with an altar. Others featured houses surrounded by wooden fences. Fishing heiaus were always positioned close to beaches since their purpose was to bring life to the land by attracting fish. Diverse local fish deities were worshipped in these ko'a (see Kamakau in Sterling and Summers 1978: 129). When we visited Kalakoi/Ahuena in October 2015, we passed by the heiau of Keahu o Hapu'u in Waimea by Kapaeloa (Waialua side) makai of Government Road. Walls of loose stacked stones can be followed in the dense vegetation. One large residence was built on top of a platform composed of megalithic blocks which was probably the heiau. The various oral narratives listed by Sterling and Summers (1978: 126-129) describe the stone idol of Kaneaukai, a local fish god, placed in or nearby this heiau. Today the site is completely unpreserved and unprotected and therefore the stone idol can no longer be identified. The accounts make clear that Kalakoi/Ahuena must be the rocky bluff above Keahu o Hapu'u. The corresponding boulder on the Koolauloa side of Waimea Bay is much smaller and more inconspicuous.

It sits below Pu'u o Mahuka heiau and is known as Kalaku and in Hi'iaka's chant as Ku (Sterling and Summers 1978:131). According to Jan Becket's information, it has a male association. The stone displays rough cuts and a memorial plaque to a Danny Camplin added after 1994. A wide open view of the waters and shoreline of Waimea Bay can be enjoyed from its location.

Kalaku/Ku must have been related to Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau in some way. Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau is the largest heiau on O'ahu and is situated at approximately 300 ft (around 0.1 km) elevation above the Kalaku/Ku stone. It consists of two main enclosures extending roughly east to west and a small platform which was probably added on later to the west side. Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau has been associated with the kahuna Kaopulupulu which places it in the second half of the 18th century. It is thought that three of Captain Vancouver's men who came ashore to get water for the ship Daedalus were sacrificed or their dead bodies carried to this heiau (see Stokes and Thrum in Sterling and Summers 1978: 142-144).

Two smaller enclosures with low surrounding stone walls extend from the seaside of the heiau down toward Kalaku/Ku. Some of the accounts mention further that those seeking advice from the priests of this heiau climbed the steep path from the sea (Sterling and Summers 1978: 143) and thus would have passed by Kalaku/Ku. In the context of this discussion, it should be emphasized that the close spatial vicinity of Kalaku/Ku to Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau reinforced the male principle. As discussed above, heiaus constituted the male-dominated and male-controlled spaces of the ali'i and kahunas in traditional Hawai'ian society. On another level, Kalaku/Ku is looking out towards the ocean, Waimea Bay and over to its partner Kalakoi/Ahuena. Local oral traditions link the two stones as a pair of lookouts for fish in the more egalitarian and complementary landscape construction of the maka'ainana (Jan Becket, personal communication). The third location of great interest is the Kawainui pond area.

It is situated in the ahupua'a Koolaupoko, subdivision Kailua, near the city of Kailua. It was once a large inland fishpond, sections of which have been drained. In Hawai'ian oral traditions, it is known in four contexts (Sterling and Summers 1978: 230-232). First, Kawainui was famous for its abundant fish, such as mullet, awa and oopu kuia. Second, and most important in the context of this essay, this pond was the home of the lizard goddess (mo'o) Hauwahine. In traditional Hawai'ian thought, mo'o are reptilian female supernaturals always associated with shallow inland or shoreline waters rich in fish. Hauwahine guarded Kawainui. It must be noted that mo'o are not always benign in spirit. In the often told narrative of Pele and Hi'iaka, groups of mo'o appear as reptilian beasts which engage Hi'iaka and her girlfriends in life-and-death fights (Varez 2011: 24-27, 30-33).

In October 2015, we followed the main trail to a lookout with a panoramic overview of the marsh area. From this high point, the trail descends to the wetlands. It passes by various boulders; the sloping silhouette line of one of them bears a striking resemblance to a lizard head with a pointed snout and eye. All the features seem to be created by natural lines and crevices, yet they nevertheless compose this compelling image of a lizard head which was noticed and identified with Hauwahine by native Hawai'ians, according to Jan Becket. Near the water's edge, a rock formation strongly resembles the body of a lizard which is about to glide head first into the muddy waters (Fig. 4). Nearby another pair of boulders with a narrow cleft and a conspicuous stone set into this cleft appears to repeat the vagina image of the Pohaku Wahine described above. In my judgement, these stone monuments are mostly natural with perhaps some intentional cutting on the nose and under the head of the mo'o and the addition of the shaped cut stone into the cleft of the Pohaku Wahine in order to enhance visual imagination. I argue that Kawainui was constructed as a potent female space of fertile and shallow inland waters, guarded by the superna-



Figure 4: Kawainui pond area, moʻo Hauwahine stone formation. Courtesy of Jan Becket.

tural powers of the lizard moʻo, locally personified as Hauwahine.

## Conclusions

As discussed above, Kukaniloko echoes the social, religious and ensuing spatial contradictions in Hawaiʻian chiefly state societies between approximately 1500 and 1820. The female/male pairs of Pohaku Wahine and Pohaku Kane as well as Kalakoi/Ahuena and Kalaku/Ku have to be understood in the context of traditional egalitarian and comple-

mentary lifeways which probably persisted in inland agricultural households and fishing villages on the beaches throughout the centuries of chiefdoms and statehood. These stone monuments constitute the remaining traces of lineage rituals intended to provide for basic needs of fertility and fish supply and performed in a spatial setting that seems to have been gender-balanced. The Kawainui sites must be viewed in a different and more recent context. In the late 20th century, Hawaiʻian revitalization and nationalist movements were growing.

New versions of storyscapes of Hawaiʻian lands being created and guarded by Pele, the famed volcano goddess, and of moʻo, the female lizard beings, who own inland waters and swamps, are actively constructed. I argue that the Kawainui storyscape of the moʻo Hauwahine claims this watery land as female space. When united with the mountain and volcano realms of Pele, moʻo and Pele redefine the Hawaiʻian islands as female lands on a traditional conceptual level. This line of thinking is one of the political underpinnings of current decolonization initiatives against US imperialism, which is associated with the male principle.

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**FEMININE SEXUALITY IN PREHISTORIC ROCK ART:  
A PATH TOWARD STRUCTURES OF MIND**

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**Abstract**

What has made us human beings? We will try to approach this subject through rock art. We understand that this kind of visual communication, even though quite fragmentary due to time, can be a subtle means to primordial elements associated with a broader characterization of humanity.

We ask if, amid the apparent infinite diversity of motifs expressed in world rock art, there are elements similarly represented in all of them. In other words, we are searching for structures related to a more elementary nature. This topic was already given an epistemological possibility in anthropological structuralism: a means to investigate humans through elements that could be presented in all cultures. In our discussion, we intend to return to this approach by giving an example related to one of the first forms of symbolic manifestations. We can identify the way in which humans see and represent sexuality. It is highly variable across cultures, but it seems to be unique among ancient different cultures all over the world.

We will briefly observe a sign that may indicate an elemental character: the representation of the vulva. We will show this sign through a Brazilian archaeological site and its relation with other rock art sites. However, we will pose a discussion based on the concepts of contemporary anthropological theory. In addition, we discuss the implications of the existence of elementary signs in rock art. Finally, we indicate the vulva sign as a tool to access some structures of the human mind.

**Problem**

The paradigm underlying the epistemological core of current social anthropology emphasizes the human characteristics related to communication. From this perspective, humans emerge from a diversity of symbolic systems telling 'stories of the world' under different pillars of significance. Consequently, these systems support the existence of various ways for conceiving reality. Thus, such systems correspond to a great range of possibilities.

If, in fact, human identities are relative, what could they be? Would it be possible that one, human being, recognize limestone, a lion or a galaxy? Probably it would not, since we identify differences in order to categorize into groups, which is, according to Durkheim and Mauss (1903) lesson, an all too human, characteristic, that is, the intrinsic impulse to classify. In our case, there is doubtless a specific human characteristic associated with the capacity of communicate through visual representations.

The study of ancient representations would be a way of understanding a certain point from which diversity would have originated. Since these signs are found in different contexts, we wonder if they arise from inside to outside, that is, from the mind. However, it would also be possible that these signs are simply a copy from the visible world around. But If we found a symbolic world born primarily as a dream from which the first forms were to be raised and used as the bases for other forms, we would have a reason to think of a primordial human sign, especially if such a sign were found recurrently in the prehistoric record.

That is the way in which we will try to describe a sign which is present in many prehistoric rock art contexts, when the first forms of visual communication arose: the representation of the vulva. We indicate the archaeological record on the rock art in Montalvânia, located in the Brazilian southwest, as an example to indicate a similar structural feature of this sign in others found all over the world.

Intriguingly, this representation shows visual features that allow its interpretation as a sign associated with human sexuality. However, we observe such a sign as an abstract representation instead of a kind of naturalism. What would indicate that interpretation? Would it be primordial to think about frames of the mind? If not, why is there a reproduction of this sign in such distant prehistoric contexts?

### Montalvânia archaeological context

Since the beginning of research, at the end of 1960, the north part of the State of Minas Gerais and the south part of Bahia, in Brazil have presented important data regarding the space-chronological contextualization of the first rock art found (Calderón, 1967, 1970; Prous, 1984; Ribeiro 2006, 2008; Ribeiro et al. 1996-1997a, 1996-1997b; Schmitzet al., 1984). In this context, Montalvânia is one of the areas with a greater concentration of archaeological sites, many of them with rock art. Among these sites, the Gruta do Posêidon is one of the most significant (Prous et al. 1976).



1. a) Posêidon site - Montalvânia, Brazil
- b) Gallery sistem with petroglyphs on the rocky surface
- c) Panel with petroglyphs

The Gruta of Posêidon consists of two shelters framed in an escarpment intercommunicated by a system of galleries pictorially full scale, displaying manifestations in its entire length, both painted and engraved.

Due to the difficulties to obtain direct dating for the Montalvânia context, the main research aimed to establish stylistic systems. In addition, indirect dating allowed us to infer a period for rock art of between 9,000 and 3,000 years, approximately (Prous, 1996, 1999). A more precise definition provided a range between 9,350 and 7,810 ± 80 AP (Prous 1999) for the sedimentation deposited above a block with rock art recovered in excavations of the Lapa do Boquete site. The motifs comprised circles, grids or nets, and biomorphs are similar to those found in the Montalvânia's panel (Ribeiro, 2008).

Unlike these contexts, Montalvânia has no direct dating for rock art.

However, there is a possibility of ordering a style-chronological association between its petroglyphs and the petroglyphs found in the cited contexts. The technique, expression and gesture presented in anthropomorphic figures show similarity in all these contexts; this, therefore, supports a great antiquity.

Montalvânia presents a wide variety of motifs. All of them are found in the Gruta do Posêidon especially. However, there is a greater amount and variety of figurations such as idiomorphic, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, both in the petroglyphs and the paintings.

The ideomorphs, or signs, were classified by Leroi-Gourhan based on symbolic correlations of sexual nature (Sanchidrian 2002).

The theories dealing with ideomorphs were performed grounded on the data from European Palaeolithic art, dating back 30.000 years. However, it does not mean that these signs are restricted to the European continent, since the evolution of such forms is likely to be observed in different space-temporal prehistoric sites.

The interpretation of ideomorphs has been considered the division of two categories of signs, associated with masculine and feminine biological sexual characteristics.

These, while signs with geometrically close forms, such as triangular, quadrangular, or oval, are regarded as the feminine universe (Delluc 1978), while those more open, such as lines and straight lines, would be related to the phallic or male universe (Sauvet 1993).

Some of the most notorious geometric motifs in rock art are those associated with what the literature refers to as female: the vulvas.

These signs are also observed in other archaeological contexts, such as X-ray paintings and engravings style performed by Australian Aborigines (Morwood 2002). In Montalvânia, female sexual signs are found in rock art sites with higher density, such as the Gruta de Posêidon. They are commonly presented as a circle with an internal track cutting it partially or entirely. Generally, these signs have the same formal structure, occurring mainly as petroglyphs, but it not always so. Consequently, its reproduction through different techniques indicates its importance for the social group, regardless of the environmental condition.



Tito Bustillo - Spain - Superior Paleolithic



Serra da Capivara - Brazil



Australian prehistoric rock art - "The Wall of One Thousand Vulvas".



Abri Castanet - It has been dated to 37 000 BP

Even under the same formal structure, the representation of vulvas in Montalvânia has been configured in different stylizations. One of the representations stands out because of the integration of a rocky support as part of its composition. It consists of a fissure in the rock which highlights the character of the female sexual organ presented in the engraving. Although this technique is well-known in Palaeolithic world art (Otte 2011), in Montalvânia it seems to indicate an importance related to sexuality. Since it is possible to segregate these figures and relate their formal structure to signs from other contexts, one may hypothesize about their meaning. Through this *modus operandi* we have noticed the direct relationship of the representations of vulvas in Montalvânia archaeological sites with other prehistoric contexts, as European Paleolithic and Australian rock art.



3- Prehistoric representation of vulvas in Montalvânia, Brazil

However, the recurrence of a given sign does not mean that we have to research its meaning. Since it has a certain cultural background, there are several possible interpretations for a unique sign. For instance, the image of a cow may be interpreted as a deity rather than a simple animal, in the polytheistic Indian religions (Heinrich 1952).

This example is enough to show the great difficulty of interpreting any kind of sign, even the most iconic. In addition, one may also take for granted that meanings cannot be understood as their authors would like.

The hypothesis that assumes a sexual meaning to the figures recognized by prehistorians as vulvas comes from the stylistic study performed by Leroi-Gourhan (1965). The problem does not correspond to the correct interpretation of what these vulvas could be for their authors, but the reason for the rest of the body (in which the vulva is inserted) was disregarded. Would a circle or triangle cut by a slit be a sign uniquely related to the female sexuality? Since this sign is found similarly in many different contexts, could it not be a representative of the unconscious? If these signs were only a reflection of the symbolic system of each people, why would they be so similar?

### Discussion

One has to admit that human sexuality is one of the most complex forms of understanding human beings, mainly because there is no way to define it, unless by the valuation given by a particular group or individual. From our perspective, we see human sexuality, but unlike Newton's light, that arrives with us, we are the ones who provide some illumination. Thus, the sexcreated and experienced by us is more real than the animal sex: it becomes the genre.

The clothes that we use every day to go out to work allow our survival, so that we are not led to procreation. In other words, they mirror our creative character of giving meaning to everything.

But have we always been creative in such a process of assigning identity to things? What is the most remote archaeological record? Would we have always existed as groups and cultures very different from each other? Probably we have not, since we consider physical and biological sciences as a mode of understanding the tangible world. This is what geological data also report: the earlier is the time the lower the diversity of living organisms on planet earth.

It is convenient to consider that the exorbitant diversity of minds and cultures that exists today does not allow the assertion that there have always been different ways of life, as if our differences arise at random and concomitantly, the way other explanations suggest. Or, in other words, as suggested by Alfred Kroeber (1948), there is the interesting but controversial idea of a critical point, that is, a moment when the sudden occurrence of an explosive birth of human consciousness is responsible for the advent of cultures. Is this one of the reasons enabling us to justify anthropological structuralism as a way to understand a common human origin? Perhaps in a world where differences between groups are reiterated, it may be plausible to think that similarities are able to unite humans.

Once a structure is found in every human being, we find ourselves faced with what is elemental, primordial, even if it is depending of what is more variable: the symbolization.

The primary and elementary signs, at least from the scientific point of view, may be noticed in the first forms of representations, that is, rock art. It is not known, however, what the basis of such a structure would be. Would it be the incest taboo, indicated by Lévi-Strauss (2003), or the organization of the living space based on a more unconscious space, as presented in Leroi Gourhan (1965)? Or would this sign be a representation of the absent phallus, what would a psychoanalytical interpretation offer? Whatever the idea is, it seems to be directly linked to some sexual feature presented in a kind of socio-behavioral human structure.

This finding leads us to suggesting how rock art must be studied with reference to human behaviour, so that it may become possible to elaborate on the beings who have made these visual symbolizations rather than merely regard the product of their actions. Thus, it is worth returning to primatology and psychological, psychoanalytical, anthropological, sociological and semiotic theories as a way to problematize, for example, that the vulvas of Tito Bustilo would be a warning sign referring to the prohibition of incest. We should ask where the signs allowing a direct reference to other members of family come from. Furthermore, there is the problem of the detachment of the vulva from the body as a whole. Why does a unique part of the body appear to be more important than the complete organism?

It may be fruitful to take for granted the existence of a certain unity of representation structured through similar visual elements presented in some rock art themes. The representation of the vulva appears as one of these themes. The structure of such a sign, occurring throughout time and space, leads us to inquire if it is a mere reflection of the word configured by our sensorial perceptions. However, we also ask if such a structure would not be a clue to help us to know more about what comes from our own minds.

The abstract character developed along the stylistic evolution of the vulva in prehistory rock art is still a mystery, but it is already possible to recognize it as a kind of structure, that is, an existing structure far beyond cultures.

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## SEX AND GENDER IN WANJINA ROCK ART, KIMBERLEY, AUSTRALIA

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The sexual diversity of painted, anthropomorphic figures depicted in the rich rock art assemblage of the vast Kimberley region in northwestern Australia is marked. The assemblage has a Pleistocene origin (Roberts et al. 1997; Ross et al. in prep.) with distinct stylistic changes evident through time (Walsh 2000; Welch 1993). The most recent stylistic period, the Wanjina period, retains its relevance for the Aboriginal inhabitants of the region today. A range of different analytical methods was adopted to investigate the engendering of the anthropomorphic figures in each of the three major stylistic periods of rock art (Holt 2014). Analysis showed that during the Wanjina period, depictions of sex/gender are not restricted to the dichotomy of male and female, as depictions of bisexuality and homosexuality are also included in the assemblage. While iconographic keys were identified as markers of sex/gender in the earlier art periods, no such keys could be isolated for the Wanjina period. Rather, a study of Aboriginal mythologies from the region and a review of ethnographic and ethno-historical records documented in the late 19th and early 20th centuries provided a means to determine the sex and gendered roles of anthropomorphic motifs painted in the Wanjina period.

For over 40,000 years, Aboriginal people have occupied the Kimberley, situated in the remote and inaccessible far northwest of Australia (Balme 2000; O'Connor and Fankhauser 2001; Ross et al. 2011).

The landscape consists of rugged escarpments, patches of remnant rainforest, narrow rocky gorges carrying fast-flowing rivers, forested plateaus, all bordered by a coastline punctuated by inlets and bays, rocky headlands and cliff faces, with a scattering of offshore islands. In an area about the size of Spain, roads are scarce (and impassable during the tropical rainy season) with access to the thousands of rock art sites restricted to helicopters, boats or walkers. Rock art is protected in shelters of silicified sandstone or quartzite, which range in size from small overhangs to large caverns.

The relative stylistic sequence of changing styles established for the rock art assemblage (e.g. Travers 2015; Walsh 2000; Welch 1993) and the concomitant changes in excavated materials, stone tool technologies and economic strategies (Morwood et al. 1988; Ross et al. 2011) together demonstrate that past Aboriginal societies in the region were dynamic, and were able to adapt to effects of dramatic sea-level rises and changes in climatic conditions.

Anthropomorphic figures from the two earlier rock art periods, the Irregular Infill Animal period and the Gwion period, are most commonly depicted without sexual characteristics.

Analysis of the figures depicted with genitalia demonstrated that additional iconographic keys for sexing are an enculturated practice within both periods. For example, the inclusion of elaborate head-dresses and held weapons were strong indicators of male/masculine figures during the Gwion period, while weapons and tools carried in passive mode and the closed leg arrangement of sitting figures distinguish females and feminine action and decorum (Holt 2014).

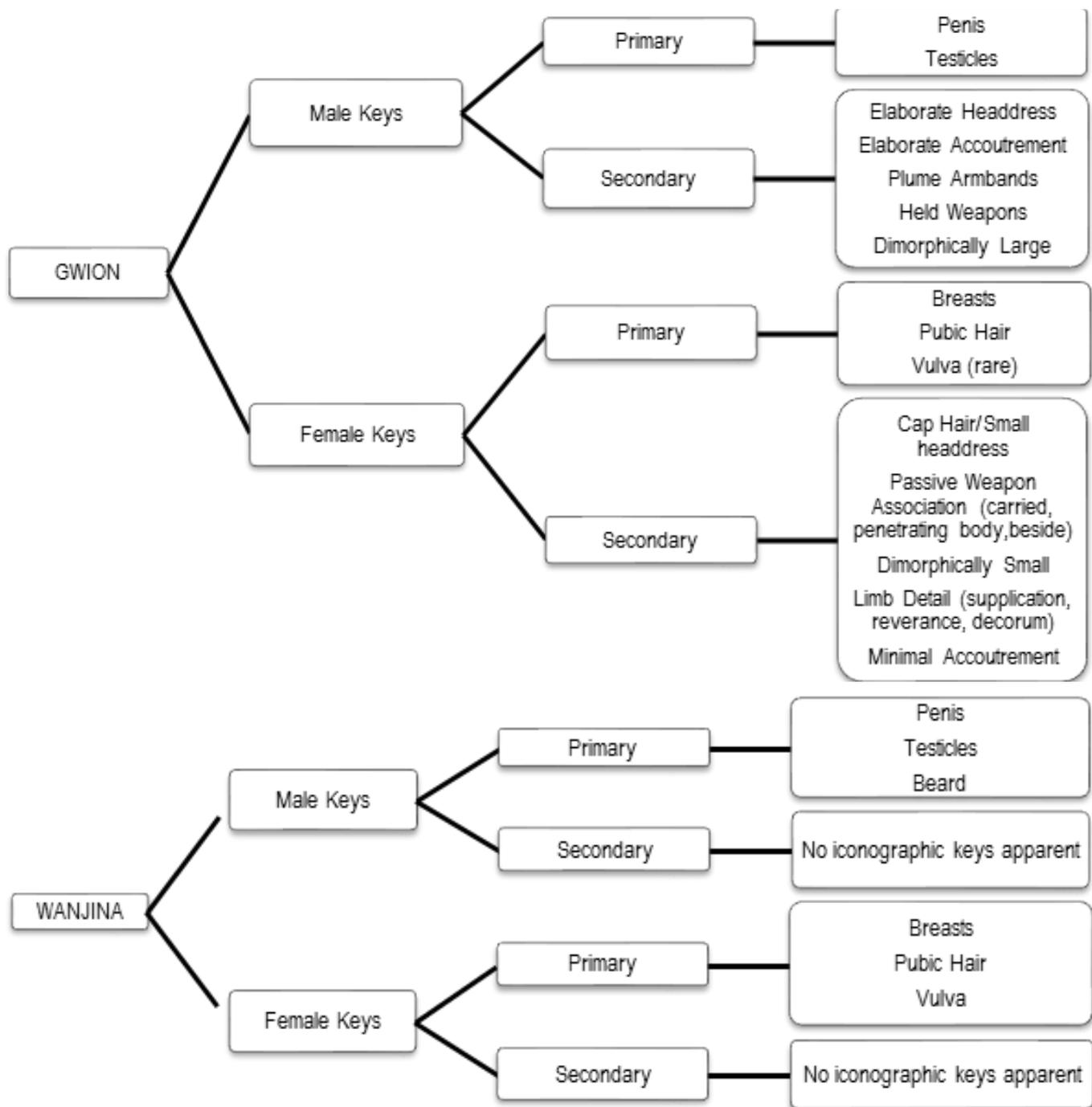


Figure 1 Flow chart of sex and gender keys for two periods of Kimberley rock art

When applied to the unsexed anthropomorphic figures of the Gwion period, these engendering keys demonstrate that males outnumber females by 66%, suggesting that the art produced by society at this time was male-orientated (Holt 2014: 99-131). However, this high level of motif standardization or homogeneity and use of sexing/gendering iconology is not evident in the later Wanjina period (Figure 1). Wanjina period rock art emerged around 5,500 years ago (Ross et al. in prep.). At this time, there was a change in the ways artists depicted sex and gender. These changes created significant challenges for us in identifying diagnostic keys to assign sex and gender to the motifs of this period. This was due, in part, to the variability in stylistic elements employed to create the motifs in the Wanjina period, which includes Painted Hand Style figures, as well as Argula and Jillinya figures. These styles appear to be contemporaneous, serving different purposes within the culture (Holt 2014: 131-157; Ross et al. in prep.) and sex/gender is expressed differently in each style. Classic Wanjina figures (Figures 2 and 3) are depictions of individual, named ancestral beings and the mythology associated with the motif or groups of motifs tells of their sex and their gendered roles. Both male and female Wanjina figures are depicted in the same manner, so that without the inclusion of mammae or genitalia, or knowledge of the relevant mythology, there are no analytical techniques that an outsider can employ to determine the sex or gendered role of the motifs. Therefore, it is critical to obtain and examine the specific mythology associated with each Wanjina rock shelter (Crawford 1968; Morwood 2002: 105; Mowaljarlai and Malnic 1993). The major rock art gallery within each clan territory across the Kimberley contains a painted Wanjina figure (Blundell 1975: 67), which is viewed as the shadow or essence of the Wanjina (Figures 2 and 3) who participated in activities associated with the site during the Lálan or creation period (Petri 2011).



Figure 2 Full-bodied Wanjina motif of an ancestor hero



Figure 3 Grouped head and shoulder Wanjina typically surrounded by motifs of flora and fauna

In contrast, Argula and Jillinya figures are viewed as instructive or malevolent and mischievous beings that warn and inform Aboriginal people of the rules of the society. Crawford (1968: 91) describes different grades of malevolent beings: Argula (devils who will take bad children), Djimi (spirits are less harmful and could even be helpful) and Djuari (ghosts of dead people). Some of these in turn have individual names, for example Wurulu Wurulu, the yam spirit argula (Grahame Walsh, pers. comm. 1993). Jillinya are the malevolent female spirits described in the myth of the female praying mantis/woman that used to eat men (Love 2009: 160). Along with figures from the Painted Hand Style, anthropomorphic depictions of Argula and Jillinya figures often include mammae and genitalia, can

be depicted with a range of sexual characteristics (Table 1) and are occasionally portrayed undertaking sexual acts. Analysis of 601 Wanjina period anthropomorphic figures by style and sex under the categories of ambiguous, bisexual (i.e. displays both male and female biological sexual features) and homosexual (male) added to the more traditional male, female and unsexed groupings demonstrated the varied expression of sex/gender across the anthropomorphic figures of the Wanjina period (Table 1).

While the overall proportions of male to female figures is relatively similar, there remains a large proportion of figures classified as unsexed that cannot be sexed because of the lack of iconographic standardization in each style. Figures classified as ambiguous in the Painted Hand Style are those often described as lizard-men, which are human-like motifs with a penis/tail longer than leg length.

Heterosexual copulation is depicted in both the Gwion and Wanjina periods (Figure 4).

The large headdress/hairstyle of the male in conjunction with the lack of headdress/hair on the female (Figure 4a) are standard iconographic elements signifying the sex of the Gwion period figures.

Depictions of copulating couples in the Wanjina period are more varied, with figures portrayed with stylised vulva and enlarged phallus rather than the breasts and more subtle sex/gender keys such as the headdress type of the earlier art.

This is so for both the Painted Hand (Figure 4b) and Argula and Jillinya styles (Figure 4c).

Myths associated with marriage have a similar emphasis on genitalia.

The ancestor, Kuranguli, is said to have introduced the marriage laws and with them the custom of defloration of marriageable daughters (Lommel 1952: 23-4).

	Painted Hand	%	Classic <u>Wanjina</u>	%	<u>Argula and Jillinya</u>	%	Total	%
Ambiguous	4	0.91	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	0.67
Bisexual	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	10.00	3	0.50
Female	52	11.85	11	8.33	15	50.00	78	12.98
Homosexual (male)	16	3.64	0	0.00	0	0.00	16	2.66
Male	54	12.30	7	5.3	10	33.33	71	11.81
Unsexed	313	71.30	114	86.36	2	6.67	429	71.38
	439		132		30		601	

This myth, states that it is considered attractive for a girl to have enlarged genitalia. However, the Jillinya or female spirit (Figure 4c) is also said to be a warning to young men against 'wrong way' liaisons (Terrence Manga, pers. comm., 2011) and Vinnicombe (1976: 245-60) notes that 'Australian Aboriginals used male figures with large penises (Argula) as warnings against the infringement of sexual laws' (Figure 4c top right).

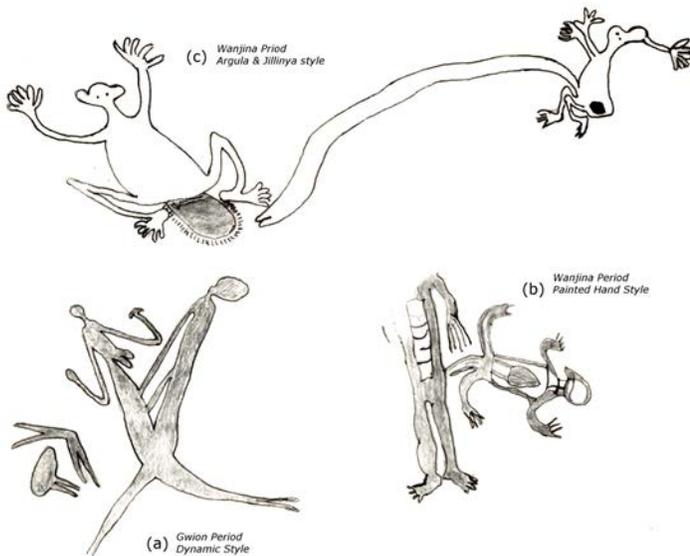


Figure 4 Heterosexual copulation scenes: (a) Gwion period, (b) Painted Hand Style and (c) Argula (male) and Jillinya (female) at top

Bisexual figures are not common, but they are found distributed throughout the area within groups of sexed and unsexed figures or singularly. There are different combinations of sexual keys for these figures: breasts and male genitalia on the same figure (Figure 5) or a combination of male and female genitalia with or without breasts. No explanation for these bisexual figures was obtained from Aboriginal Custodians, but Wanjina mythology suggests the 'dreaming ancestors' could choose to be either sex or a combination of both (Elkin 1930: 279; Lommel 1952: 16).



Figure 5 Bisexual figure with breasts and male genitalia described as a spirit figure (Crawford 2001: 85)

Elkin appears not to have come to any conclusion with regard to the gender of the wider Wanjina (wondjina) assemblage: "I am not sure whether wondjina is really thought of in terms of sex. Some of the paintings are said to be women while other references to wondjina seem to make him male. Then again, he is also the rainbow-serpent, and one of his functions as such is to 'make' spirit-children. He is apparently a generalised power who can be thought of in different ways according to his different functions (Elkin 1930: 279)."

This observation is supported by Andreas Lommel (1952), who reported: "The sky being, Wallanganda, and the earth being, Ungud, perform their creative deeds at night in the dream state. In this state 'Ungud transforms himself – or herself because Ungud is by choice of the one sex or the other or also bisexual (Lommel 1952: 16)."

In this state Ungud is said to have 'found the first Wondschina in a creative dream.' The Ungud (rainbow-serpent) that is hermaphroditic or bisexual creates the images of these Wondschina. Wanjina, therefore, may be of any gender.

This may explain in part the occurrences of bisexual anthropomorphic beings in the rock art. Moreover, the Ngarinyin people from the central Kimberley believe that the primary unit of life and existence is relationship, the combining of two entities (male and female) that have different functions and strengths, working separately but together as one entity (Mowaljarlai, pers. comm., 1995; Bell 1998: 22). One of the three bisexual figures recorded during the research is in a large protected shelter where extensive areas are covered with small, red and white round motifs resembling yams. It is tempting to speculate that the painting of yam motifs played a role in ensuring the increase of yams and that the unity of male and female genitalia on the associated Wanjina figure symbolizes procreation, fertility and/or perhaps an increase in the abundance of yams (Elkin 1938: 177-180).

Paintings of male figures from the Wanjina period portrayed in a manner that suggests homosexual ritual activity have been recorded throughout the Kimberley (e.g. Figure 6). The figures are generally grouped in horizontal friezes or depicted in pairs. While little ethnographic information on such practice has been documented in the Kimberley (but see Kaberry 1939: 257), the site in which Figure 6 was recorded was referred to as a men's site by Traditional Owner, Greg Goonack (pers. comm., 30 August 2011), when he accompanied us to the rock shelter. Still, ritual homosexual behaviour has been documented in other areas of northern Australia where young males were initiated into sexual activity with initiated men (Berndt 1976). It was also practised in societies across South-east Asia and the Pacific (Neil 2009: 45-6; see also Herdt 1993). Circumcision of the penis was performed on youths as part of initiation ceremonies, and later when young men's beards began to grow, they underwent additional sub-incision.



Figure 6 Row of white figures with phalluses suggest ritual activity (outlined for publication)

Sub-incision is sometimes represented as a split penis on paintings of male anthropomorphic figures from the Wanjina period. The significance of this custom, practised across much of arid Australia in the past is explained in Kimberley myth: Wanjina, Kalaru is considered to be the inventor of sub-incision, a practise that was created when he threw the first lightning, which split open his penis and in this way released fire and lightning. Consequently, all initiated men, particularly medicine men, had fire in their penis and were able to use lightning to kill their enemies and to smash parts of trees for firewood. The ritual and philosophies attached to these cultural practises were intense, and considered vital for the transmission of skills, fertility and power into the initiate (Lommel 1952: 34-5). The depiction of anthropomorphic figures with sub-incised penises in the rock art assemblage confirms the importance of males who have obtained the status of fully initiated men.

## Discussion

These data were collected as part of a research project focused on the sex and gender of anthropomorphic depictions in the rock art assemblage in the northwest Kimberley. Formal analysis has demonstrated that particular iconographic keys were incorporated into Gwion period motifs to specify the sex and the gendered role of anthropomorphic figures. In contrast, informed methods were adopted in order to identify the sex and gendered roles of the figures of the more recent Wanjina period.

Attempting to attribute sex/gender to motifs lacking specific sexual features is a challenging pursuit. It is evident that art, in its many shapes and forms (body, mobile, rock), plays an integral role in mediating the complexities of Aboriginal social and belief systems. Adding to the complexity of art systems, individual motifs may vary in meaning depending on their social or environmental context (Spencer and Gillen 1899: 618). Accordingly, it cannot be assumed that the meanings and functions of particular rock art motifs remained constant through time, or that they could be lifted from art practised in historic times in order to explain all Holocene art in the northwest Kimberley (Morwood 1988). Nonetheless, the Kimberley provides a rare opportunity to obtain insights into the ways in which past rock art systems functioned, as cultural knowledge of the rock art assemblage has been carried into the present. However, it is evident that there was a significant societal change in the northwest Kimberley over time and that the production of rock art played a role in mediating these changes. Of the 961 Gwion period anthropomorphic figures documented, only one copulation scene and no promiscuous female motifs were depicted, (although anecdotal evidence suggests that additional motifs do exist).

Yet of the 601 Wanjina period figures, there were 15 copulation scenes, 39 promiscuous and dangerous to young males Jillinya females and 26 erect side penises and Argula males.

Human agency involves the negotiation and manipulation of artistic systems to encode social and economic information and therefore is always in flux. Identifying the factors that drove or contributed to these changes in the rock art assemblage remains problematic, but a combination of environmental and social factors is likely to have played a role. As sea levels rose from the end of the Last Glacial Maximum, reaching their present-day levels around 6000 BP, Aboriginal populations were forced back towards the escarpment as landmass decreased markedly, creating a higher population density and a concomitant increase in competition for resources. The delineation of clan territories, each marked with a Wanjina, provided one means of mediating access and rights to resources. Increased focus on figures with supernatural powers such as Wanjinias who, if acknowledged and treated in the prescribed way, could ensure certainty over climate and resources – something that mere humans could not do. The role of spirit figures such as Argula and Jillinya may have played a complementary role mediating social behaviour, thus creating and maintaining an ordered society in what must have been an increasingly stressful world.

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## EXPLORING THE SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION OF GENDER FLUIDITY AMONG THE POTBELLYSCULPTURES OF SOUTHEASTERN MESOAMERICA: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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The potbelly sculptures of southeastern Mesoamerica, a group of anthropomorphic carvings characterized by schematic limbs wrapped round their bodies and with bald heads distinguished by closed eyes with puffy eyelids, large pendulous cheeks and rectangular ears, are well known for their unconventional morphology and stark iconography (Figure 1).

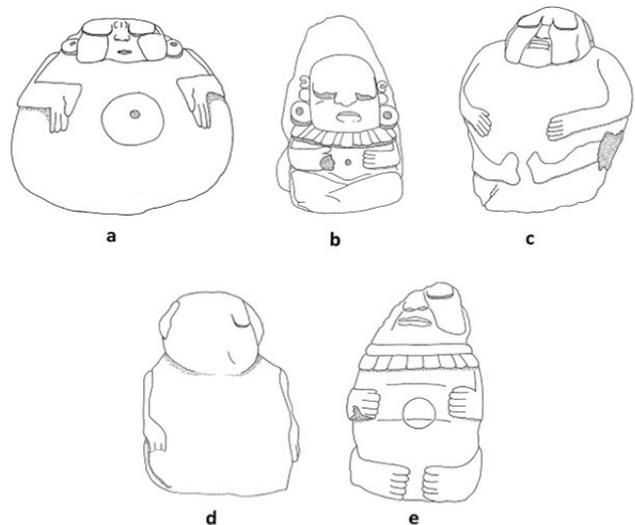


Figure 1. Examples of potbelly sculptures from southeastern Mesoamerica: (a) Santa Leticia Monument 1; (b) Kaminaljuyú Pieza C; (c) Monte Alto Monument 4; (d) Takalik Ab'aj Monument 109; and (e) Kaminaljuyú Monument 6 (Drawings by the author).

While these sculptures date to the Late Preclassic period and Early Classic period (200 BC–AD 350) and are found throughout southeastern Mesoamerica (Guernsey 2012), the earliest and most numerous iterations of the monuments are associated with sites belonging to the Southern Maya cultural complex (Guernsey 2011), including Kaminaljuyú, Tak'alik Ab'aj and Monte Alto (Rodas 1993; Parsons 1986). Because of their wide distribution and unique morphological features, potbelly sculptures have become the subject of many theories which have tried to explain their meaning and use. Recent investigations of these stone carvings have strongly indicated that they represented ancestors of important lineages or houses in public spaces, possibly as monumental versions of domestic figurines (Guernsey 2010) or false mortuary bundles (Lambert 2015). In their role as public ancestral effigies, potbelly sculptures were also used to materially express a number of important markers of social identity in Preclassic Maya communities, such as social rank, ceremonial roles and possibly gender.

In her provocative study of potbelly sculptures, Guernsey addressed the gender identity of these monuments by suggesting that it was closely linked to Preclassic Maya practices of ancestor veneration and conceptions of these semi-divine beings (Guernsey 2012: 157). Yet the exact nature of this relationship has been difficult to define because of the lack of clearly gendered features among potbelly sculptures. This paper proposes that the ambiguously gendered morphology and iconography of potbelly sculptures can be explained by connecting practices of ancestor veneration to the basic principles of Preclassic Maya social organization. This proposal is based on the correlation of this archaeological data with epigraphic, ethnohistoric and ethnographic information about Maya worldviews, gender ideologies and social structure since the Classic period. I begin with an appraisal of the gender ambiguity observed among potbelly sculptures.

Beyond their common attributes, most potbelly

sculptures are noteworthy for having been carved without any clear delineation of either their anatomical sex or gendered social roles. There appears to be a total absence of primary sex traits, making it difficult to assign a gender identity to these carvings. Some scholars have relied on the presence of secondary sex traits, such as breasts, to make inferences about the gender identity of the sculptures. But among the potbelly sculptures described as having breasts, e.g., the Teopan potbelly sculpture, Giralda Monument 1, Monte Alto Monument 5 and one of the Tlaxcala potbelly sculptures (Amaroli 1997; Delgadillo Torres and Santana Sandoval 1989; Rodas 1993) (Figure 2), these physiognomic traits could just as easily be explained as flaccid pectorals due to old age (Guernsey 2012: 156-159).

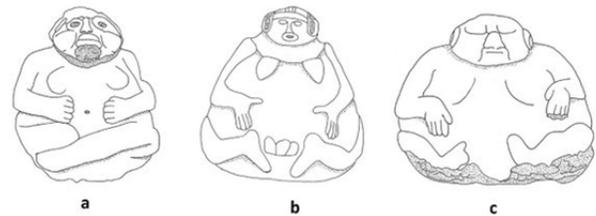


Figure 2. Examples of potbelly sculptures with ambiguous sex traits: (a) Teopán potbelly sculpture; (b) Tlaxcala potbelly sculpture (after Delgadillo Torres and Santana Sandoval 1989: 55, Fig. 1); and (c) Monte Alto Monument 5 (Drawings by the author).

Making matters worse, potbelly sculptures lack articles of clothing that were clearly gendered in Mesoamerica, such as huipils. Most are shown with collars, headdresses, pectorals and ear ornaments that could be related to either males or females. The gender ambiguity present in these figures could be interpreted in a number of different ways (Guernsey 2012: 156-159). One possibility is that the gender identity was deliberately de-emphasized in order to highlight the impersonal nature and interchangeability of ancestors (Joyce 2001). However, this assertion does not agree with what we know of Late

Classic period Maya ancestor veneration which tended to emphasize recently deceased ancestors over others in royal genealogies, to the point of portraiture (McAnany 1998: 281).

It is also unclear whether gender was incorporated into the anonymity of Early Classic period representations of ancestors. A second possibility is that the potbelly sculptures were painted or dressed in more gender-specific ways for certain ritual events, which for taphonomic reasons (i.e., lack of preservation) are no longer readily apparent to scholars (Guernsey 2012: 157). A third possible explanation, not wholly exclusive of the second proposal, will be explored here and suggests that the ambiguous features of potbelly sculptures highlighted their status as ancestral figures by emphasizing the fluid nature of their male and female identity. A number of iconographic and epigraphic studies of Classic period Maya monuments have shown that rulers could appropriate the symbolic domains of different genders, creating a third gender category that combined elements of both male and female identity (Ashmore 2002; Loper 2002; Stone 1988, 1991). It appears that the ancient Maya also conceived of their ancestors and gods as having a bi-gendered identity (Ashmore 2002: 235-237; Gillespie 2000: 474).

While the bi-gendered nature of ancestors, gods, and divine rules appears to be a reflection of a widespread ideology of gender complementarity among Maya peoples both past and present (Ashmore 2002; Gillespie 2000), the symbolic expression of gender fluidity among potbelly sculptures is not as straightforward given the ambiguity of sex and gender traits in these monuments.

Since gender symbolism was a consistent feature of the Maya social world at least from the Classic period onwards and was a prominent aspect of the division of labour and social organization (Ashmore 2002; Gillespie and Joyce 1997), a similar connection to ancestor veneration could provide further insights into the nature of gender symbolism among potbelly sculptures.

Indeed, the Maya consistently related ancestors to residential complexes representing large corporate groups (Gillespie 2000: 477; McAnany 1998: 273). In prehispanic times, a great deal of effort was exerted by these groups to honour their ancestors through burials, public art, shrines and ritual commemoration. This was especially true of noble houses. Ancestors therefore symbolized the entire group and represented their home literally by being buried underneath it and ideologically by linking these residences to a larger cosmic order (McAnany 1998: 284-287).

In addition to these ethnographic and epigraphic observations, there are several details of ancient Maya social organization which might help us better understand the gender symbolism of potbelly sculptures. As noted previously, it has been long noted that during the Late Classic period there was a general shift in ancestor imagery away from schematic representations of generic divine predecessors to a reliance on referencing recently deceased ancestors (McAnany 1998: 284). At first glance, the schematic nature of potbelly sculptures and their ambiguous representation of gender would appear to lend itself easily to such early manifestations of ancestor iconography among the Maya. However, if we return to the emerging consensus that potbelly sculptures served as public effigies of ancestors and therefore as material representations of large residential groups, it may be possible to demonstrate that the gender ambiguity of the sculptures was not due to their depiction of anonymous ancestors. Rather, the androgynous identity of particular potbelly sculptures may have served as a marker of an ancestor's ability to blur gender roles and, more importantly, to adopt the social expectations and privileges of different genders (Ashmore 2002: 235).

The importance of these distinctions becomes paramount when discussed in terms of the nature of ancient Maya social groups. Although the nature of Classic and Preclassic period Maya household groups is still a matter of debate (Enser 2013: 114-

120), Spanish documentary sources (Roys 1943; Tozzer 1941), hieroglyphic accounts (Marcus 1987; Matthews and Schele 1974) and ethnographic documents (Gillespie 2000) indicate that these communities displayed a great deal of variation in terms of descent rules, household organization and marriage customs (Haviland 1968; Edmonson 1981). Much of this diversity was based on the different cultural and political arrangements of various city-states, but a number of social practices and family structures appear to have been fairly widespread and may be indicative of ancestral forms of social organization during the Early Classic and Late Preclassic periods. One of these common features has already been alluded to in previous sections and involves a sense of complementary filiation, or a recognition of kinship links to relatives on both the mother's and the father's side of the family regardless of the descent rules, among elite houses (Gillespie and Joyce 1997: 198). Another common feature among these houses is the use of arranged marriages as the basis of alliances between family groups (Edmonson 1981: 222; Gillespie and Joyce 1997: 200-202). Most unions were monogamous but polygynous marriages and preferential cross-cousin marriages have been recorded by both Spanish chroniclers and modern ethnographers. The same sources indicate that most of these marital alliances, and therefore the household units themselves, were virilocal.

Taken together, these basic elements of social organization among the Maya formed the structural context for the gendering of social relationships between houses and of houses themselves (Gillespie and Joyce 1997). In particular, the virilocal nature of houses seems to have created a dynamic in marital alliances that served to differentiate between wife-providing and wife-receiving family units. Based on a common trope of women serving as a source of life (i.e., descendants) for their husbands' houses (Gillespie and Joyce 1997: 200-203), the flow of gifts associated with marital exchanges in Classic period

Maya art were gendered such that wife-receivers presented female goods (e.g., chocolate, necklaces) as brideprice payments; while wife-providers typically gave reciprocal payments in the form of male goods such as shields and eccentric flints. As a result, wife-providing houses were gendered as female and were viewed as having a higher status compared with wife-receiving houses, which were gendered as male (Ashmore 2002: 238) (Figure 3).

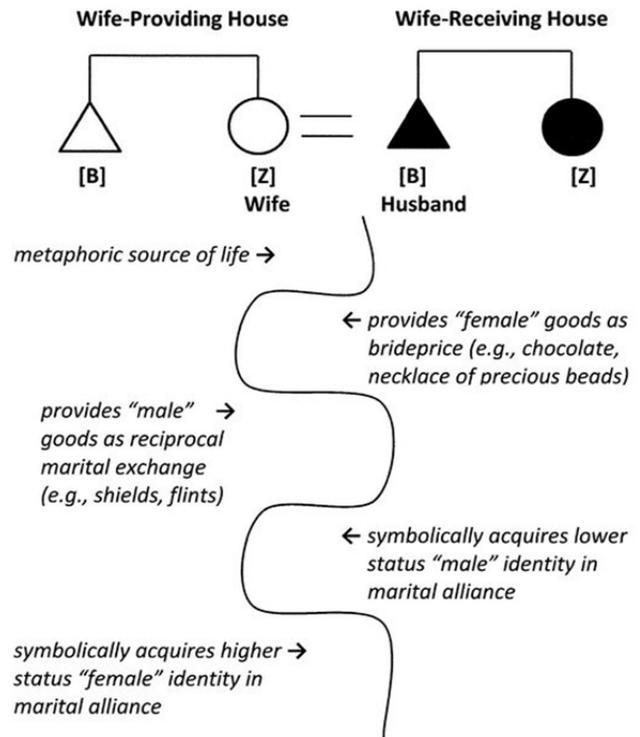


Figure 3. Schematic model of the gendering of prehispanic Maya houses based on their marital alliance relationship (Drawing by the author after Gillespie and Joyce 1997: 204, Fig. 2).

This principle of gender assignment was extended to alter kinship references between individuals in noble families. For instance, at Naranjo, the text on Stela 23 describes how a male ruler referred to a male noble from Dos Pilas as his elder sister because the Naranjo lord's mother had come from Dos Pilas (Schele and Freidel 1990: 191).

To return to the potbelly sculptures of southeastern Mesoamerica, it is now possible to make some inferences about the nature of the gender symbolism of these monuments based on the information gleaned from this brief overview of ancient Maya social organization. The hierarchical nature of marital alliances between Maya houses served as the foundation for the assignment of a gender to those houses and their members. It is quite likely that a similar form of gendering took place in reference to the ancestors of those houses, based on their role as symbols for these family units. As a house participated in different alliance relationships, the gender of the house and its ancestors changed in relation to the houses with which it was allied. In this context, it would be necessary to express these changes materially through public effigies of the ancestors, such as potbelly sculptures. By carving potbelly sculptures in a gender-ambiguous way, it became possible to reference different genders to different audiences at the same time. The androgynous nature of these monuments therefore served to identify them as sources of symbolic power for their associated houses. In this fashion, gender identity, group membership and politics were closely intertwined in the representation of ancestors (McAnany 1998: 273).

To summarize, this paper has sought to explore the ambiguously gendered morphology and iconography of potbelly sculptures in relation to ancestor veneration by using observations about prehispanic Maya social organization to highlight pertinent sociological relationships that could have influenced the expression of gender in these monuments.

Epigraphic, ethnohistoric and ethnographic data were used to suggest a link between the gendering of houses and their ancestors through various marital alliances and the gender fluidity of potbelly sculptures as public effigies of household ancestors.

If this interpretation is correct, potbelly sculptures provide yet another clue about the diverse ways in which gender categories were ritually manifested

among the Late Preclassic and Early Classic Maya (Looper 2002). They also point to the early institutionalization of a third gender as a way to represent the blurring of maleness and femaleness in relation to ancestor veneration, household organization and marital customs.

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## **MOON WORSHIPPING IN PREHISTORY: FERTILITY GOD OR GODDESS?**

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The cult of the lunar deity spread in a vast geographic area in Europe and Asia during the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. The moon was worshipped for the strict analogy between the moon cycle and the life cycle: in fact, the cycle of crescent, full moon, waning and new moon was the symbol of life from birth, infancy, adulthood and old age until death. The crescent occurring after the new moon was the symbol of life after death.

Although no proof exists of the origin of this cult during prehistory, we believe that it would have started very early after the Neolithic revolution. In fact, life beyond death is at the basis of all modern religions, and it would have been the central belief since the origin of Homo sapiens. Furthermore, worshipping the moon as the protector of fertility would have started very early in societies with economies based on animal breeding and agriculture. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the cult was present in different forms for different populations and geographic areas. The main difference among these forms was between the representation of the lunar deity as a male or as a female entity, even in the presence of the same belief; i.e., the moon was connected with fertility and life and with external genitals, either male or female. The megalithic temples of Malta prove that during the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Ages there was a cult of the Great Mother, and Malta was a point of reference in the middle of the Mediterra-

nean Sea for ancient sailors. The cult of the Great-Mother spread all over Europe with the circulation of megaliths, and the Great Mother goddess remained the supernatural entity of reference for fertility. At the beginning, the Great Mother was Gea (the Earth), and later on she was identified with the Moon.

In the prehistory of Europe, the moon was always considered the feminine symbol par excellence, as the fertility goddess who presided over birth and lit the night of the unborn and the tribe. It was worshipped by tribal societies in prehistory as well as by historic people who handed down their knowledge in classical culture so that it was included in the wisdom literature of the holy texts. Documentation of that in prehistoric times consists of engravings and carvings dedicated to the moon in various parts of the European continent.

The Nuraghe Su Mulinu on Sardinia (Saba 2014) dates back to the Middle Bronze Age (16th century BCE) and was transformed during the Iron Age (10th century BCE) into a large shrine structure where it was preeminent in the worship of the moon goddess. It contains findings which document a ritual based on a light offering, likely at the summer solstice. In the sanctuary, a seat for moon worshippers is preserved, and the crescent is carved on the front of the altar.

The moon cycle, from crescent to full moon, to waning and new moon, is a common motif in European prehistoric cultures in Britain, Romania, Hungary and Malta, from the Balkans to Ireland, sometimes with snakelike shapes. According to Gimbutas (2008, p. 282), these snakelike shapes have 'sometimes from 14 to 17 turnings, the number of days of crescent moon: after 2 weeks it is considered full moon for 3 days and on the 17th day it starts to vanish. The longest tortuous snakes present up to 30 turnings, the closest possible to the 29.5 days of the lunar month.' The engravings on stone, bone or horn, sometimes on pottery or bronze, were probably used in the whole of Europe

for time calculation.

In the land of the moon, now named Lunigiana, north of Tuscany, evidence of moon worship was engraved on the rocks by the Apuan-Ligurian people, as recently noted by Angelina Magnotta in a book (Magnotta 2015a) and in some papers (Magnotta 2015b, 2015c, 2015d). In all six sites recently discovered by the Apuan Ligurians of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines (ALATE), the moon is carved in various shapes, from thin to waxing gibbous and waning crescent to full moon and black moon. Indeed, the moon is carved five times on the Rock of the Moons, which is actually the Moon Shrine. The identity of the moon goddess with the Great Mother with her female and generative features is easily demonstrated. Cicero said:

‘Luna a lucendo nominata sit; eadem est enim Lucina, itaque ut apud Graecos Dianam eamque Luciferam sic apud nostros Iunonem Lucinam in pariendo invocant... Diana dicta quia noctu quasi diem efficeret, adhibetur autem ad partus, quod maturescunt aut septem non numquam aut ut plerumque novem lunae...’ (Luna comes from *lucere* ‘to shine’; for it is the same word as *Lucina*, and therefore in our country *Juno Lucina* is invoked in childbirth, as is *Diana* in her manifestation as *Lucifera* (the light-bringer) among the Greeks. .... She was called *Diana* because she made a sort of day in the night-time. She is invoked to assist at the birth of children, because the period of gestation is either occasionally seven, or more usually nine, lunar revolutions, and these are called *menses* (months), because they cover measured spaces. Ovidius, too, wrote of the moon: ‘*Gratia Lucinae: dedit haec tibi nomina lucus/ aut quia principium tu, dea, lucis habes/ Parce, precor gravidis, facilis Lucina, puellis,/ maturumque utero molliter aufer onus*’ (Thanks to *Lucina*! this name, goddess, thou didst take from the sacred grove, or because with thee is the fount of light. Gracious *Lucina*, spare,

I pray, women with child, and gently lift the ripe burden from the womb).

Again in the *Fasti* (Book of Days), the name *Lucina* is referred to *Juno*, in the day of temple dedication, to her who loves the brides ‘give flowers to the goddess who likes the flowering plants! and ring the head by flowers!’ Here is the invocation taught by Ovidius to new mothers: *Dicite: “Tu nobis lucem Lucina dedisti!/dicite: “Tu voto parturientes ades!”* (Say: ‘You, *Lucina*, gave us light! You help women in childbirth!’).

It is evident how much early people believed in the connection between the moon and the Mother Goddess due to her influence on the moon cycle, birth and fertility, a connection coming from long ago from prehistory and ascribed to the moon goddess and also to *Juno*, who takes from her the name *Lucina*. She protects those babies whose arrivals coincide with the phases of the moon, so that often the two names, *Luna* (Moon) and *Lucina*, become interchangeable.

Even the name of the Roman church dedicated to *San Lorenzo* (St Lawrence) in *Lucina* in Rome is believed to come from the ancient temple dedicated to *Juno/Lucina*, who protected childbirth and fertility. The archaeological excavations unearthed precious marbles, a hole (perhaps from which the women drew the holy water), a mosaic and frescoes.

It may be concerned with the *Aedes Iunionis Lucinae* (temple of *Juno/Lucina*) (Ball Platner 1929), protector of women in childbirth, where the holidays of *Matronalia* were celebrated in March, on the anniversary of the temple’s foundation. *Lucina* comes from *lucus*, the ancient and holy forest or sacred grove of lotus reported by the ancient writers, Varro and Pliny the Elder, who tell of the forest’s existence much before the construction of the holy building. The temple of *Juno/Lucina* cited by Livius was the temple of the moon goddess as reported by Varro and Cicero.

The sanctuary of the moon is to be considered the Rock of the Moons, where three moons in their full round shape represent the female element (Figure 1).



Figure 1: On the Rock of the Moons (Lunigiana, Italy), three light moons are evident, fully round symbols of nature's generating aspect. Bronze Age carving.

Beyond the Rock of the Moons, on the near rock, the female triangle is the base of the life tree, which is the male element, part of generating nature; the triangle is very deeply carved in the rock which contains also a natural piece of gemstone left there most likely as a fertility symbol (Figure 2).



Figure 2: On a rock near the Rock of the Moons, the male symbol, part of generating nature, erect above the base, consisting of the female chevron. Bronze Age carving.

Moon worshipping has been known for four millennia in the Near East. It started in Mesopotamia at around 4,000 BCE, and the moon was always represented as a male, either as a human or animal figure. When represented as a human figure, the god is depicted as an adult man with a beard and a couple of horns and the crescent moon within the frame of horns (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Mythological scene on a quiver plaque (details) with the moon god represented as a man with beard and horns and the moon waxing from the horns, and as a bull. From northwest Iran (Luristan?) about 1,000 BCE. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

When represented as a zoomorphic figure, the lunar god is depicted as a bull (named Nanna) mostly in Mesopotamia, Assyria and Akkad, or as an ibex (named Sin) in the rest of the Near East and Central Asia (Mailland 2015a). The dimensions of the horns and of the ridges tell us that the figure of an ibex is always a male adult animal, either on a ceramic picture, bronze casts or rock engravings. It is rarely represented with a penis.

The ibex figure is often associated with the crescent and/or full moon, the latter being represented as a disc, cross, swastika, disc with a dot in the centre or just a dot. Thus, all of the following combinations are found in the rock art of the Near East and Central Asia: ibex and crescent; ibex, crescent and disc; ibex, crescent and swastika; ibex and swastika; ibex, disc and dot; ibex, crescent and dot; ibex and disc; and ibex and dot. The combinations of crescent

and swastika and crescent and disc are also present without the ibex.

Interestingly, the male lunar god of Asia has the same function of the Mother Goddess/Lucina worshipped in Europe. For Lucina, we have the writings of the Latin historians, referring to older rituals of Greek mythology and probably deriving from prehistoric beliefs but confirmed by rock carvings. For Sin, we have just the remains of pictures on vessels, metallic casts or rock engravings, as well as remnants of a kind of pre-writing done by pre-literate people. But Sin has the same function as Lucina, of being the protector of fertility who is invoked during childbirth. An explicit example of that is a scene at Har Karkom with a man touching the horn of an ibex with a pole and with a woman delivering her baby in a standing position and with her arms upraised in invocation of the god (Mailland 2015a, Figure 7). The god Sin is also protector of fertility *sensu lato* in relationship to agriculture and animal breeding. With reference to rituals of rain and fertility, the scenes of ibex hunting acquire a particular significance. The hunting ritual is described in 26 rock inscriptions on a monument near Marib (Bastoni 2013). Reserved for initiated persons, the ritual was performed directly by the Sabean and Hadramautean kings to propitiate rains and harvest. Furthermore, the role of ibex hunting as a ritual of fertility has been pointed out by Mailland (2015b) as existing in a vast area including the Near East and Central Asia for many millennia; it probably started during the Bronze Age or even earlier. For example, the hunting scene from Har Karkom (Israel) of Figure 4 shows an ithyphallic archer with bow and arrow releasing his semen while hunting an ibex with the help of his dog. The religious significance of ibex hunting is confirmed in a further hunting scene, also from the Bronze Age, in Iran (Mailland 2015b, Figure 4), where the life tree is represented in the middle between the archer and his prey.



Figure 4: Hunting scene from Har Karkom (Israel): the ithyphallic archer releases his semen while hunting an ibex, assisted by his dog.

The association between ibex hunting and ibex worshipping also comes from a rock engraving of Har Karkom, also from the Bronze Age, with later additions which confirm the persistence of the religious significance of the scene (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Rock art panel from Har Karkom (Israel): The oldest engraving (darker patina) includes an ibex hunting scene in the middle of the panel and a worshipping scene with footprints pointing towards an ibex image right up. Early Bronze or Chalcolithic. Later elements reinforce the scene with another ibex and dog. Finally, a Hellenistic inscription was added to the panel.

Much later, ibex hunting was associated with a worshipping scene of two gods by the Nabataeans in a rock engraving at Wadi Rum in Jordan (Mailland 2015b, Figure 6).

In conclusion, moon worshipping in ancient times was associated with life, fertility, propitiation of rain and childbirth. Interestingly, the moon maintained its features in the different geographical areas even if it had different aspects. In Europe it was a goddess identified with the Great Mother and then with Diana or Juno. It was a god represented as a horned man or a bull in Mesopotamia, Babylonia and northwest Iran. In the other regions it was represented as an adult male ibex and among propitiatory rites there were touching horns and hunting the animal with bow and arrow.

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## **MALE, FEMALE AND SEXLESS FIGURES OF THE HALLSTATT CULTURE: INDICATORS OF SOCIAL ORDER AND REPRODUCTIVE CONTROL?**

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Human representations of the Hallstatt culture are striking in their diversity. Communities living in parts of eastern France, Switzerland, southern Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and northern Italy between c. 800 and 400 BC produced images in a wide range of sizes, materials and technologies (Rebay-Salisbury 2014), decorating artefacts such as the sheet bronze situlae or ornaments, and as representations in their own right, as figurines, stelae and rock art. The variability of human representations found in different contexts makes it hard to describe their common characteristics, and entices us to apply our own cultural norms and expectations to their interpretation. This is particularly true for the assessment of gender, which is based on the biological duality of the male and female sex evolved for reproduction, but not restricted to it. Masculine and feminine identities are based on their bodies' sex, but ultimately do not depend on it (e.g. Sørensen 2000). The archaeological investigation of gender in prehistoric graves reinforces the idea of male and female as primary structuring principles of any human society. A recent analysis of over 3,000 human images (Rebay-Salisbury in press), however, has brought to light the fact that a purely binary understanding of gender is insufficient for understanding human representations of the Hallstatt culture.

The analysed body of early Iron Age imagery from central Europe includes naked and clothed people, and some which are rendered too simply to tell apart. Male human representations outnumber female ones by about three to one. The central European Iron Age was clearly male-dominated and masculinity set the standard. The sex of human representations, determined by visible sexual characteristics (penis for men; vulva and/or breasts for women), is indicated more often for men than for women. In the absence of sexual characteristics, gender can often be inferred by gender-specific dress and attire, as well as objects people handle and activities they engage with. About 15% of all human representations appear naked. Nudity is commonly associated with sex, sport, enslavement in conflict (for men only) and with ritual practices for both women and men. Images that appear naked, but cannot be ascribed clearly to one sex or the other, have often been interpreted as female, based on the absence of male reproductive parts, or not further pursued. Conversely, I argue that representations included a third category, the sexless, in the central European early Iron Age.

This category is elusive, because sexless figures can only be recognized in comparison with similar, sexed figures of the same context and style. Perhaps the best example is the bronze figurine assemblage from the Cult Wagon of Strettweg, Austria (Fig. 1, Egg 1996), found in a monumental tumulus in 1851, and dated to c. 600 BC. The mound included a dromos entrance to a burial chamber for several cremated individuals buried with exceptional ritual, drinking and feasting equipment, of which further parts have recently come to light in a re-excavation (Tiefengraber and Tiefengraber 2014).

The Cult Wagon shows two scenes of the sacrifice of a stag in mirror image, arranged around the central figurine of a nude woman with broad belt and earrings, twice as large as the other figures and depicted carrying a vessel. The stag in the front row is led by the antlers by two nude figurines without

any sex indication. A woman and a man with a raised axe follow behind, ready to strike the animal from the back; the male and female sex of the figures in the second row is clearly shown. The figures are flanked by two mounted warriors. The two sexless figures in the front row evidently contrast with the sexed figures in the second row.

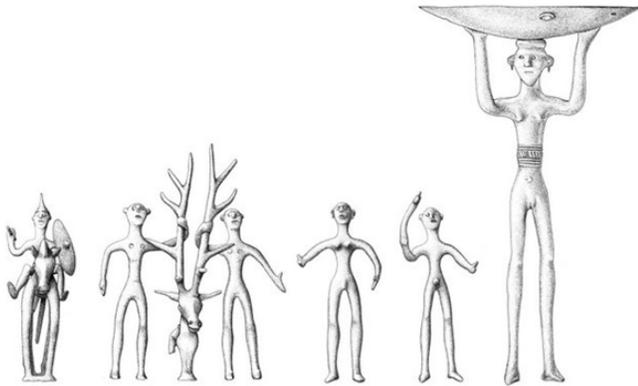


Fig. 1: Figurines from the Cult Wagon of Strettweg, Austria (Plate 8, Egg 1996a: figs 10-14, © Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz)

A similar contrast between sexed and sexless figurines was found at Gemeinlebarn (Fig. 2, Kromer 1958) and Langenlebarn (Fig. 3, Preinfalk 2003), two sites in Lower Austria close to one another. Like Strettweg, the sites date to c. 600 BC and include high-status burials in monumental mounds; the abundance of high-quality, highly decorated ceramic grave goods is regionally specific. At both sites, sets of ceramic figurines were found. The figurine set from Gemeinlebarn includes at least 14 human figurines, as well as a few animals, which were fixed to an object with resin, perhaps a wagon of organic material or a large conical vessel. For some figures, sexual characteristics are absent, whereas at least three others are unmistakably modelled as females, with one painted breast and one formed in clay (note a parallel to the bronze *klinē* bearers from Hochdorf, Germany, which similarly have a single breast, Biel 1985: pl. 29).



Fig. 2: Figurine from Gemeinlebarn, Austria © Naturhistorisches Museum Wien

The figurine set from Langenlebarn consists of at least seven human figurines, three of which represent men with clearly modelled penises. The left half of their bodies is painted red. Other figurines show neither traces of paint nor sexual characteristics; their necks are long and over-emphasized, but their body proportions are those of adults.



Fig. 3: Figurines from Langenlebarn, Austria. Photo: Norbert Weigl © Landessammlungen Niederösterreich

At both Gemeinlebarn and Langenlebarn, the level of antique and antiquarian grave disturbance prevents a concrete reconstruction of the narrative scenes embodied in the human and animal figurines. In analogy to Strettweg, a sacrificial scene is thinkable, but a hunting scene, for example, is equally likely. In any case, all three sets of figurines make a distinction between people for which sex is clearly indicated and sexless people. Similar figurines from other sites such as Schirndorf, Germany (Stroh 2000: pl. 9.1) and Ilsfeld, Germany (Echt 1999: 87) do not have contrasting, clearly sexed figures in the same context; it is therefore impossible to ascertain if a sexless representation was the intention of the artist. Sexless ceramic figurines further appear in the ritual context of Turska kosa, Croatia (Balen-Letunić 2004), where animal and human figurines were found in a layer dating between c. 600 and 300 BC along with sherds from broken vessels, spindle whorls and spools, as well as miniatures representing loafs of bread and boats. The Turska kosa assemblage also included the representation of a pregnant woman, indicated by a large, round slab pressed on to the abdominal area of the figurine before firing (Čučković 2008: 99, no. 68), and the representation of an intersex person with both male and female sexual characteristics: protruding breasts, penis and scrota (Balen-Letunić 2004: 337 Number 21). Representations such as these testify to the engagement of early Iron Age people with the concepts of sex and gender, health and reproduction as well as bodily ideals. But how might this early Iron Age thinking, apparent from the distinction between sexed and sexless human images, be interpreted? That gender was not a relevant category for the performance of certain tasks and therefore not depicted is certainly a possibility; most likely, early Iron Age societies allowed for social roles that were not aligned with either of the two sexes. The juxtaposition of sexed and sexless people in the same contexts emphasizes reproductive abilities for some people, whereas for others, they were of no importance or actively restricted.

The establishment of a genetic lineage through the male line seems to have been of uttermost importance to early Iron Age elites. This can be derived from the way sexuality is represented in situla art, which captures lives and myths of the powerful elite (e.g. Turk 2005). Sex is presented as a public act, framed in a feast and witnessed by bystanders offering drinks or watching the scene (e.g. on the situlae from Sanzeno and Montebelluna, Italy, Lucke and Frey 1962: 67, 68; Fig. 4). Witnessing the sexual act and at the same time, closely controlling the sexuality of women, was the only way to ensure paternity in the past. After imaginative courtship and sex scenes, the bottom frieze of the situla of Pieve d'Alpago (Gangemi 2013: fig. 6.9) displays a birth, the desired outcome of the sexual union.



Fig. 4: Scenes from the situlae of Sanzeno and Montebelluna, Italy (after Lucke and Frey 1962: pl. 67, 68 and Capuis and Serafini 1996: fig. 6)

For high-status women, pregnancy and childbearing were clearly important and desired. However, reproduction may have been socially regulated and restricted to a defined group of people within a society, for instance those who were married and could afford their own household. Farmhands, maids and domestic servants in post-medieval central Europe, for instance, were frequently discouraged from marriage. Only half of all women between 15 and 50 years of age were married in western Europe just prior to industrialization, the others were spinsters, nuns or widowed early (Hajnal 1965). Census data from 19th-century Austria suggest a link between mi cro-regional socio-economic structures and

marriage rates, which ranged between 30% and 60% (Teibenbacher 2012). Although unmarried women did have (illegitimate) children, their fertility rates were a fraction of married women's; it depended largely on the generosity of their masters whether pregnancies would be accepted, since they did, after all, represent the coming generation of low-status servants. On the other hand, women were also dismissed from service, or pregnancies hidden and infants killed (Weber 1985). In global, cross-cultural comparison, this specific marriage pattern is unusual, but it may be traced into the European Iron Age by following what the clear representation of sexed and unsexed people suggests. The social system of high-status elites with servants discouraged from reproduction is not only captured by the early Iron Age image world, but reproduced and reinforced through artistic expression.

A further, more literal interpretation of people depicted unsexed is to see them as representations of castrated men, as eunuchs. Eunuchs were part of a wide range of pre-modern societies, for instance in Assyria, Persia, China and Byzantium (Tougher 2002). Their special gender and inability to have biological children destined them for specific roles in court societies, such as the position of a treasurer or the guard of a harem. They had no family responsibilities and no children who could potentially claim inheritance, which made them safe, high-ranking servants to the rulers and perhaps, at the same time, candidates for specific ritual and religious roles. Early Iron Age societies show many similarities to historically known court societies, and may well have had a place for eunuchs. But even in the absence of genital mutilation, the deliberate abstinence from sexuality and reproduction for some members of society may have been held as a virtue, in a similar way as it is, for example, for Catholic priests, monks or nuns today. In the absence of written records, human representations and graves are the only clues

to family and social organization in the early Iron Age Hallstatt culture. As graves include human bodies, which are biologically classifiable as male and female, our view on gender has long been restricted to the simple distinction of men and women. With advances in ancient DNA technologies and their wider application to entire cemetery populations, we can safely await progress in reconstructing family lines and genealogies. Meanwhile, human representations, which include renderings of male, female and sexless people, provide complementary insights into social order. It is important not to overlook these subtle clues, in particular by misreading sexless figures as females. Artistic expression provides insights into early Iron Age thinking about sexuality and reproduction by capturing people both with sexed and unsexed bodies.

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## THE REPRESENTATION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN THE ROCK ART OF THE MOROCCAN HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS

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### Introduction

There are several ways of addressing this interesting topic suggested by Professor Anati: one can consider facial and body expressions, activities, weapons, clothing... In this short article on how males and females are represented in rock art, I have chosen to look into the question of male/female parity– or rather absence of it – in the representation of males and females in the Moroccan High Atlas mountains.

### Presentation

The High Atlas is a chain of mountains running some 800 km, cutting across Morocco from the Atlantic Ocean in the south-west, to the Algerian frontier in the north-east. A dozen peaks are over 4,000 m high, about 100 more reach 3,500 m and more than 400 others are over 3,000 m.

The five rock art zones which are dealt with in this article lie in the centre of the range, just south of Marrakech. Three zones are particularly rich in engravings: Oukaimeden, the Yagour plateau and the Jbel Rat. Two important but minor zones lie to the south of these three localities: Tainant and Telouat. The sites at Oukaimeden contain about 1,000 engravings, the Yagour several thousand, the Jbel Rat somewhere between these two figures. The other two, taken together, hold several hundred images.

The earliest engravings were made in what is for Europe the Early Bronze Age, that is to say, from around 2500 BC. They probably continued into the first centuries AD, the themes changing as the poles of interest of the mountain populations changed.

### Subjects engraved from the earliest times

While the striking feature of the High Atlas Mountains is the engravings of metal weapons – in contrast with southern Morocco where such images are rare, almost inexistent – they are not the subjects most frequently engraved, which remain cattle. A new and striking feature is the representation of humans, again unlike the southern sites which are parsimonious in their illustrations of humans. Even so, engravings of human figures are numerically scarce: some 40 at Oukaimeden, 142 for the Yagour plateau, perhaps 2 at Tainant and under 10 at Telouat. If all the Libyco-Berber warriors figuring on the main Jbel Rat sites, plus a few isolated engravings, were counted they might reach 100.

### Representation of anthropomorphs

Anthropomorphs come in all shapes and sizes. There are various ways of grouping them into different categories, and each researcher has his own criteria (Searight, 1993; Rodrigue, 1999; El Hassan Ezziani, 2004). Here they are divided into three main groups, based on their general appearance.

The simplest portrayal consists of linear, filiform, stick figures, made up of single straight lines representing the legs, the body and the arms, with a circle at the top for the head (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Group 1 stick figure: a horseman from the Jbel Rat.

The head itself can indicate the eyes, nose, mouth and ears, but in the Jbel Rat this type of representation, used for the Libyco-Berber horsemen and foot soldiers, is featureless. Other stick figures often hold their arms bent above their heads and have conspicuous hands. Some of them fall into the category of orants, imploring or simply astonished. They are often sexless.

In a second group, the more complete images are close cousins to the stick figures. But here the body is represented by two lines, semi-circles are added to indicate the pelvis, shoulder and knee joints. Facial features are given but the arms and legs are still shown as a single line. These figures also have prominent hands but their arms are held out, not uplifted as in adoration. The penis is clearly featured (testicles also, sometimes) (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Group 2 close to Group 1 but more complete.

The third group is more evolved and the engravings can be said to be realistic, in so far as they clearly portray a human: the body, arms and legs are more or less anatomically correct, facial features are given, hands and sometimes feet shown. The penis is again prominent. This group reaches its heights of realism in several almost life-size figures with belts, necklaces and bracelets, seen particularly on the Yagour plateau (Fig. 3). Engravings of the first two groups rarely reach more than 50 cm high.



Fig. 3 Group 3 more or less realistic.

### Males or females?

To ascertain whether an engraving represents a man or a woman, the primary sexual traits have to be clear. The presence of a penis is of course a deciding factor. Obvious female breasts are never engraved (with one possible exception – see below). Two dots on the upper torso are obviously insufficient to identify a female, since they occur equally on males and females. A V or a  $\Delta$  are taken to be symbols of vulvas and thus indicate a woman, but they are rare in the High Atlas engravings. Bracelets, necklaces and other ornaments do not identify the engraving as feminine, since men also liked to decorate themselves in this way.

A few engravings show two figures in such close connection that it seems reasonable to suppose that one is a female, since the other is definitely a male.

### Representations of men

The High Atlas Bronze Age and later societies were masculine societies, as witnessed by the emphasis placed on the male sexual organs in practically every engraving, with the exception of the stick figures of the Jbel Rat, which provide little information about their subjects.

In addition to the emphasis on male virility, the larger, life-size engravings of men show them nearly

always closely associated with weapons, generally daggers.

In most cases, they are not actually touched by these weapons, only threatened. They were called 'sacrificed' or 'victims' by Malhomme in his studies (Malhomme, 1961), but they may well have been heroes, local chiefs, immortalized in engravings (the equivalent of modern statues).

It may well be that this type of image is among the earliest to be engraved and that the remarks referring to heroes or chiefs do not apply to images of later periods. It is evident that with the stick figures of the Jbel Rat, mounted on horses, we are no longer in a Bronze Age society but in a totally different culture. The figures given in this article do not take into account any chronological differences, but there is no reason to suppose that male supremacy did not continue throughout the ages and that women continued to be under-represented.

Apart from the weapons, the engravings in this evolved realistic group show that their clothing ranged from simple fringed, leather tunics, to more complicated garments including what look like socks or leggings. Belts were frequent, as were close-fitting necklaces, bracelets or arm guards and objects suspended from the neck. Other Group 3 and often Group 2 men and women are simply shown with a belt, indicated by a line dividing the body. The clothing worn by the stick figures is not delineated. No human contacts are shown by the large, Group 3, Oukaimeden and Yagour male figures: neither friend nor foe; no fights, no activities (very exceptionally with a woman in a sexual scene – see below). Smaller men are more active: one is shown threatened by a lion (or attacking the beast himself, if you look at the engraving from another angle), another, not obviously a male (no penis) is ploughing; one or two (probably men – no body visible) have heads peering out from large rectangular shields, many are busy with a female partner. Some small males, often of the stick group, interact with

wild animals (on the Jbel Rat for instance). They too indulge in sexual activities.

Two Yagour sites show large-size men with rather unusual sexual attributes: each has a second phallus sticking out from his side and penetrating what is, presumably, a female. In one case, the man holds a dagger (Fig. 4).

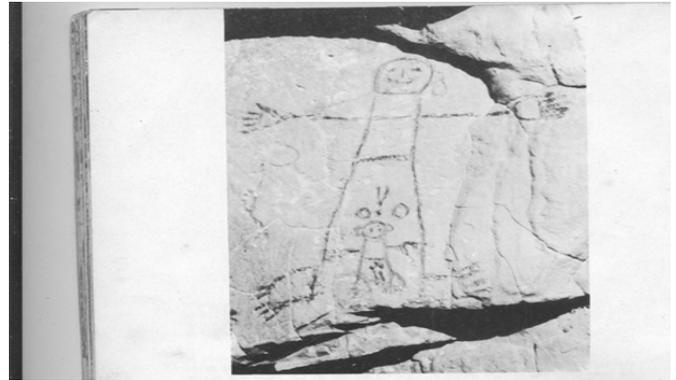


Fig. 4 Man with double phallus standing beside a woman.

## Representations of women

Women are not among the favourite subjects engraved by the people of the High Atlas. Images of women are in fact very rare, as they are on all Moroccan rock art sites. There are none at Oukaimeden, nine on the Yagour and so far only one recorded on the Jbel Rat.

Women are never engraved on their own: they are always accompanied by a man. The one possible exception is what is sometimes called a childbirth scene: between the legs of a woman (no breasts but the female V sign) a very much smaller male figure has been engraved, his head just below the V sign – the 'new-born child'. Both have their legs apart, with feet and toes (Fig. 5).

The local people, more down to earth, see only a child sheltering between the legs of its mother. Indeed, the head of the 'baby' is curiously placed for a birth scene.

With three exceptions (including the one described above) women are always engaged in a sexual

activity. On the same Yagour site what is obviously a man (phallus) and supposedly a woman, with heads facing in different directions, have been engraved close to each other (but not touching), on a surface measuring 2 m x 2.40 m.

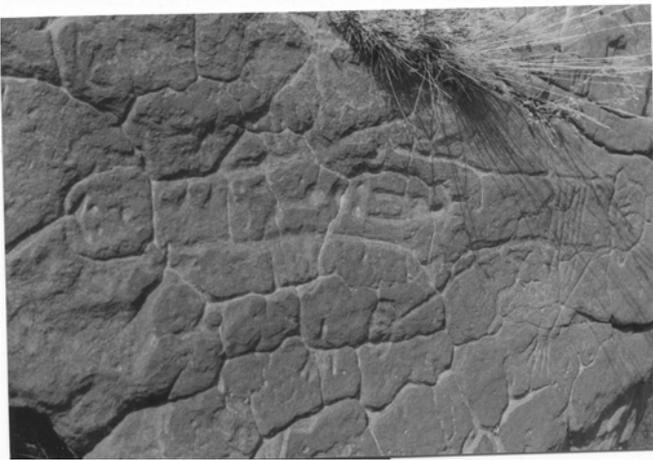


Fig. 5 Possible birth scene (from Simoneau, 1977).

They have been given the picturesque nickname of ‘The Fiancés’ and enclosed within a low, recently built wall. The third exception comes from another Yagour site where a life-size human (1.60 m), thought to be female (no penis), stands beside a man (1.90 m), who is endowed with two penises, one ‘normal’, the other coming from his waist which penetrates a small (40 cm), featureless, presumably female individual situated perpendicularly to him (see Fig. 4). The woman herself is not engaged in any sexual activity.

All the remaining women are sexually active, or at any rate interacting with a man. One is in a situation similar to that just described above: a large man (almost 1.50 m), a dagger in his left hand, his phallus standing out at right angles to his body from the pelvic area, penetrates a very small being, presumably human. Another, at a different Yagour site, is lying on her back with legs apart, receiving the penis of her partner in a more orthodox way (Fig. 6).

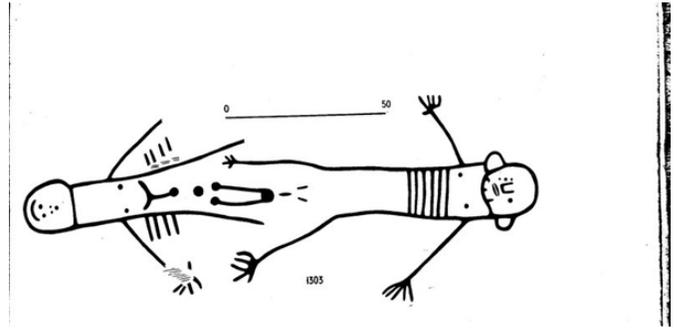


Fig. 6 Sexual intercourse: a) photograph by author; b) drawing from Malhomme, 1961.

One Yagour site shows a woman on her back, legs apart, penetrated by a man shown in profile underneath her, phallus erect (Fig. 7). Another, rather confused group on the Yagour involves two rhinoceros and five anthropomorphs, including two sexually active females.



Fig. 7 Sexual intercourse (from Hoarau and Ewague, 2008).

Finally, a clear sexual scene occurs on a Jbel Rat site. A small, totally pecked human, doubtless a woman, on her back, legs open and bent at the knee, is penetrated by a small man with a substantial penis (Fig. 8).

To sum up, ten women are engraved. None is on their own: one is accompanied only by a child, the other stands beside a man, one lies calmly close to a male figure, the others are engaged in sexual activities.



Fig. 8 Sexual activity, Jbel Rat (from Simoneau, 1977).

### Idols or women?

Ten images engraved at Oukaimeden, all on one site and nowhere else in Oukaimeden or in the whole High Atlas mountain range, were originally called 'violin-shaped idols' (Malhomme, 1958). Are they 'idols' or simply women? They are generally referred to as idols in the literature (Rodrigue, 1999).

Whatever their meaning, and function, they are taken to be feminine (absence of penis). A head is clearly distinguishable, sometimes the eyes or a nose. An abnormally long thin neck links the head to the upper body where large excrescences sticking out perpendicularly could be breasts, or arms akimbo, before blooming out into a large oval or semi-circle ending in short fringes or sometimes rather sketchy legs (Fig. 9).

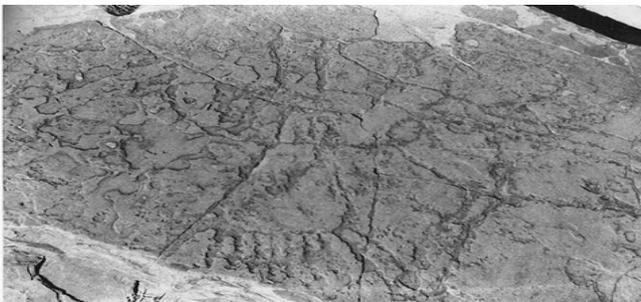


Fig. 9 'Idol', Oukaimeden.

They have been said to be simply a strange way of representing a female. Other researchers saw them as birds, perhaps ostriches, on account of the bird-like face or the two possible rounded wings (not breasts). This type of Mother Goddess figure was current around the Mediterranean and was also present in the Canary Islands.

This is not the place to discuss the pros and cons concerning the identity of this image. Here it is sufficient to say that they are not included in the figures given earlier for the representations of males and females.

### Conclusion

The large, well portrayed males probably date from the European Early Bronze Age, to judge from the weapons, typologically dated, with which they are associated. The smaller figures, supplying little information, could date from anywhere within the long time span of the High Atlas engravings. However, the mounted stick figures, especially visible on the Jbel Rat, cannot be earlier than the first millennium BC, when the horse appeared in Morocco. Were these horsemen invaders or local communities who had adopted the horse – and later the camel? This question has no bearing on the male and female representation in the High Atlas, since no distinguishing gender traits are shown.

Whatever the chronological position of the 194 engravings of humans in the High Atlas, images of men predominate. The ratio is 1 woman for 20 men (excluding the Jbel Rat). The males are identified by the presence of a phallus, the women by the absence of such an appendix. However it must be admitted that apart from a desire to emphasize the virility of the subject, the artist had little at his disposal to show that the image he was engraving did indeed represent a man.

The few women engraved are never on their own. It seems that single women were not a subject to be recorded. Not only were they never alone, when

portrayed they were always accompanied by a man (even a male child would do). A woman's sole activity seems to have been that of a sexual partner, apart from a possible childbirth scene and two images where the woman is engraved quietly beside a man. The High Atlas populations were definitely male-dominated, judging from the human representations in their rock art.

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## LEADING ROLE OF MALE HUNTERS IN CENTRAL SAHARAN PREHISTORIC RITUALS

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### Abstract

The oldest rock paintings of central Sahara, called 'round heads' for the way in which the human head is represented, were produced by dark-skinned hunters during a humid period starting 10,000 years before present. These paintings present apparently nothing from everyday life; the scenes represent rituals, dancing, sophisticated masks and fantastic creatures. Both men and women are depicted. However, men are not only more numerous but they also appear as active protagonists of this extremely elaborate spiritual world.

### **Keywords: hunters, rituals, ethnographic record, Tassili mountains**

The round head paintings are found in a limited area of southern Algeria, southern Libya and northern Niger. They are most numerous in the Algerian Tassili n'Ajjer mountains where rock shelters are particularly abundant. In the Algerian Tadrart and Libyan Tadrart Acacus mountains the round head images are less frequent because of the lack of suitable rock walls, and in the Nigerian Djado mountains they have been so far documented only in a few shelters. Although we still lack reliable direct dating of these paintings, the data from archaeology and climatology applied to the rock art suggest that the earliest paintings were created by the Epipalaeolithic and then Mesolithic populations (Soukopova 2012). Thanks to the abundance of local resources in the Early Holocene, these hunting societies were partially sedentary and they demonstrated a high level of material culture, mainly by the production of sophisticated lithic tools and excellent quality decorated

ceramics, produced as early as the 10th millennium before present (Aumassip 2004).

## **Spiritual world**

The round head art, consisting of thousands of images, is characterized by the lack of everyday life scenes. The majority of human figures are depicted with elaborate body paintings, with particular body attributes and/or they are represented while dancing or in apparently worshipping behaviour. The non-common character of the paintings is confirmed by the representation of various kinds of masks, both associated with human figures and painted as isolated objects, as well as by the depiction of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic fantastic creatures.

Several species of wild animals are represented and they are often associated with the ritual scenes. The most frequent are mouflon and antelope which were the protagonists of these hunters' spiritual world, followed by bovid, elephant and giraffe. However, the dominant position in round head art belongs to humans as they are much more numerous than animals.

Both men and women are represented, showing that this hunting society was basically egalitarian. A deeper analysis of the complex nevertheless reveals that the role of men in the spiritual side of society was more significant. The male figures are four times more numerous than the female ones (Sansoni 1994) and they are also aesthetically different.

Except for the style, the round head art may be recognized by its characteristic elements associated with the anthropomorphic figures, the most frequent being the masks, horns, half-moon like objects attached to shoulders, bracelets, short sticks and bows. These elements were not simple decoration, but were functional objects/symbols with their specific meaning and message.

The most significant information for the analysis of the male-female role in this hunting society is the fact that all the characteristic elements, except for

a few rare examples, are associated exclusively with men. As this rule is followed among thousands of figures, they must have been objects not allowed to be associated with women. The only characteristic element of the round head art which belongs to both sexes and is indeed frequently associated with women is the body painting. There is no distinction between the painted motifs used by males and females, the most common being the decorations made of dotted lines, simple lines and V-shaped lines.

## **Men as ritual leaders**

From the analysis of the round head complex it is evident that although females are numerous and often mixed with male figures on the same panel, their role in spiritual life must have been rather secondary. There are numerous scenes in which males adorned with horns, masks or other ritual attributes are side by side with women with no object or decoration other than body painting.

Each of the characteristic elements communicated an information understandable to the members of the hunting society. We cannot know exactly what information it was but we can hypothesize a possible meaning comparing the rock art with the ethnographic record of sub-Saharan populations. Studies of African religious beliefs and practices show that there are more similarities than differences (Mbiti 1969). Fundamental concepts like god, spirits and magic seem to have been retained when groups of people split in the course of the centuries, the new groups forming tribes recognized today as ethnic and linguistic groupings of African peoples. Similar beliefs found all over Africa are comparable among many peoples and they may be rooted in the same prehistoric tradition.

For example, one of the main characteristic elements, the bow, is not only a functional object of the hunt but it is also a fundamental symbol of initiated males in most hunting societies, such as the San

in South Africa (Lee 1979). Also sticks play a role in boys' initiation rituals as they signify wisdom and peace and in numerous African societies the clubs are a phallic symbol representing the sexual maturity of initiated men (Goodman 1988). The current African religions are all concerned with fertility and growth, often represented by the symbol of horns so frequent in the round head art.

Considering the importance of attributes in round head art and their exclusive association with men, we can postulate that many paintings were produced by initiated males and, especially when without females, they may have been created during or after the initiation rituals undertaken in the selected shelters. Nothing excludes the supposition that groups of females in certain shelters also represent female initiation rituals; however, this could only be presumed from eventual body paintings.

Although it seems to be secondary, the presence of women must have been fundamental in the ancient rituals documented in round head art. Women are not discriminated in the paintings, on the contrary, they are numerous, of the same size as men and frequently depicted next to male figures in apparently ritual behaviour. For example, at Techakelaouen on the Tassili Plateau (Fig. 1), a scene shows a richly decorated man with almost all characteristic attributes such as horns, objects attached to his shoulders, rounded stick and objects attached to his waist and calves, who is followed by a woman with no attributes but a short stick.

Next to the woman there is a much smaller figure also holding a stick, which may be interpreted as a child. The woman is followed by another man with some characteristic attributes and another possible child. Although single figures may have been painted at different moments, the location of a female next to the males with ritual attributes is significant.



1 A male hunter adorned with the characteristic round head elements followed by an undecorated female (Techakelaouen, Tassili).

## Ethnographic record

If we compare ritual behaviour of recent sub-Saharan populations with round head art we find surprising similarities in the role of women. In many groups documented ethnographically men are the main leaders of rituals, whereas women are secondary but still fundamental members of special occasions. In many traditional African societies the most important rituals (such as rain-making, healing and fire rituals) are actively performed by men, while women have the essential task of playing music, singing and/or clapping the hands (Marshall 1969, Palau Marti 1957).

A great number of rituals result in dancing men entering into the state of trance and the important role of women is to take care of individuals in the altered state of consciousness. In this sense women are a kind of assistant without which the rituals could not start and could not be successfully carried out. Perhaps the best example are the San peoples in South Africa (Van der Post 1958). This egalitarian hunting society performs various rituals which follow generally the same pattern, namely women sitting in a circle and making music and men dancing in the middle of the circle around the fire until they join the state of trance. Children, if present in

the group, assist the rituals near to women.

Rituals involving exclusively women also exist, the most important being the first-menstruation initiation ritual during which a girl becomes an adult woman. In this case females are the obvious protagonists of rituals and where the rock art follows the initiation, it is made by the same initiated girls (Zubieta 2006).

It is possible that some round head images also represent exclusively female rituals such as, for example, panels representing rows of women with rich body painting. A famous scene at Tan Zoumaitak represents a group of five women with not only body paintings but also some attributes, namely a stick and oval objects attached to arms (Fig. 2).



2 A group of five women with body decoration (Tan Zoumaitak, Tassili).

Considering that the majority of round head anthropomorphic figures are apparently adult males it is likely that most rock art was produced by male already initiated hunters during special occasions or rituals. Very probably, the paintings themselves were ritual actions or parts of ritual actions conducted by these men. These figures in a dominant position on

## God is male

To support the leading role of males in the spiritual life of the central Saharan hunters is the fact that also the highest supernatural being was a male. There are several figures in round head art which are generally called 'great gods' for their outstanding size up to 4 m high (Fig. 3).

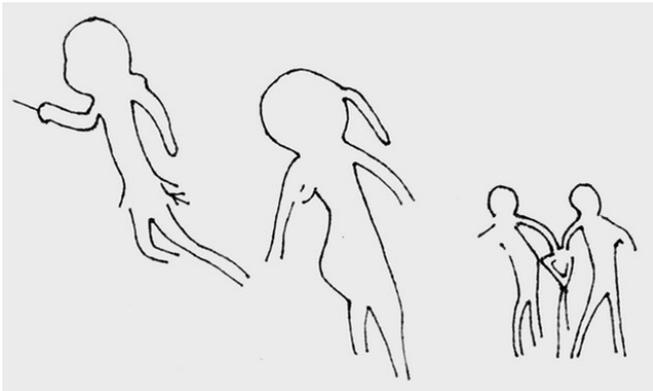


3 A figure of a so-called great god with horns and raised hands (Sefar, Tassili).

the rock wall, with their heads adorned with horns and their hands raised as if they were blessing ancient spectators, must have been an important subject of the prehistoric mythological or spiritual world.

The role of children in the art of the ancient central Saharan hunters seems to be marginal. Only a few scenes depict what can be identified as possible children, mainly for their reduced size among other figures. At Tin Aboteka (Fig. 4) two bigger individuals, a man and a woman, are followed by smaller figures holding an enigmatic triangular object.

The scene was evidently depicted at the same time since all the figures are the same colour and also show the same level of natural erosion; it is therefore possible that the intention of the prehistoric painter was to depict two adults and two children. Women in round head art are not represented with children, which is understandable considering that the main goal of this art was not to depict everyday life.



4 A possible family scene: a man, a woman and two children. Tracing by the author (Tin Aboteka, Tassili).

The predominant position of males and the less marked role of females in round head art must have reflected the social organization of this hunting society. The main role of women in all prehistoric societies was the most important one, namely motherhood. Women had the crucial task of giving birth and assuring thus the continuation of the tribe, they had to take care of the children and give them their early education. Moreover, women had to gather vegetable food and hunt small game (while still looking after children, of course), they had to run the family home and they had to take care of their husbands. A full-time job during which, no wonder, there was no time to waste.

Being charged mostly with the hunt, men could dedicate their remaining time to spiritual activities, including the fabrication of elaborated masks. Indeed, it is perceptible from round head art that the spiritual side of this hunting society was managed

by males who were probably charged with the organization and the performance of the rituals. Except for the secret rituals such as boys' initiations where the presence of women was forbidden, in the public rituals men were helped and assisted by women. This situation emerges from the earliest central Saharan paintings: an extremely elaborate spiritual life in which the leading role of males was supported and integrated by females as their equal partners.

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## ARE MEN ONLY ACTIVE IN THE PAST WAR? TRUTH IN LIGHT OF THE FOLKLORE OF THE KAIMUR TRIBES

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### **Abstract**

This article is based on the ethnographic data concerning female roles in society. The data which we use for the description and interpretation of ancient society and tribal group behaviour are always not correct. This article is based on the folklore which is prevalent among the tribes and semi-tribes such as the Kharwar, Chero, Bhar, Oraon, Mushahar and Ahir of the Kaimur region. The folklore, which is in various raags, proves that all ethnographic data are not correct. Folklore is the best source to find out about actual past events, through folktales and myths. Through folklore one may understand the role of females in groups in the past.

### **Introduction**

According to Abrahams (1980) the term 'folklore' is generally used to refer to the traditional beliefs, myths, tales and practices of a people which have been disseminated in an informal manner usually via word of mouth (Abrahams, 1980: 370-379). The term was first coined by William J. Thomas in 1846 (Thomas, 1846). Thomas was a British antiquarian who wanted a simple term to replace various awkward phrases floating around at the time to discuss the same concept such as 'popular antiquities', 'the lore of the people', and 'the manners, customs,

observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs etc, of the olden times'.

The information thus transmitted expresses the shared ideas and values of a particular group (Sims and Stephens, 2005: 23). As an academic discipline folklore shares methods and insights with literature, anthropology, art, music, history, linguistics, philosophy and mythology. Elliott Oring states that folklore is that part of culture that lives happily ever after (Toelken, 2003: 2).

It has much historical, ecological and cultural importance. (Pierrotti and Wildcat, 2000: 1333-1340.) The term folklore may also be used to define the comparative study of folk knowledge and culture. Folklore lets us know where we came from by passing on the traditions, beliefs and legends of our culture. Many stories, movies, books, holiday traditions and superstitions have their basis in folklore. And many folkloric stories are local, so they offer a connection to our place of origin.

### **Review of ethnographical data**

The author of this paper wishes to review the earlier descriptions of ethnographers of the demographics of groups of people, remembering that the data are generally correct. The data also depend on the methods of scholars. It is worth stressing that scholars have often treated some activities as exclusively male, notably hunting, stone tool making, fighting and rock art, as well as all domestic activities like making food and clothes and keeping house. However, ethnography shows that women often do these things too.

Scholars were ignorant of this fact, or chose to ignore it, and the result was a skewed version of the past. But the feminists themselves, far from shunning this (while justifiably complaining about it), do exactly the same by ignoring or brushing aside examples of men carrying out 'female' activities. In any case, the realization that women made stone tools will hardly produce compelling insights. Tools tell us nothing about gender: even if some future

analytical technique were to detect traces of pheromones or couplings on a stone tool, or blood residues that could be identified as male or female, this would merely tell us which sex was the last to touch it; it would reveal nothing about which sex made or habitually used it. Any detailed knowledge we have about which sex did what comes from ethnohistory and ethnography, not from archaeology. There is no alternative to reconstructing the past in this way, combining modern observations with the archaeological data. But how far can ethnography help to find women in the past? We can understand the demographic structure by way of folklores, folktales, mythology and the study of rock art.

The basic problem is that ethnography can usually provide a number of possible explanations for archaeological data. It has been pointed out that even a rich female burial does not necessarily indicate that the occupant had any power; it could merely reflect her husband's wealth (and the opposite is equally applicable to a rich male burial, of course). First of all what is the necessity of this genderization of archaeological relics' demography? Archaeological data never directly provide enough information to construct such interpretation. Men and women as well as children contributed in all the activities of subsistence during ancient times. This is very easy to understand by looking at the behaviour of certain groups today which are still prevalent in modern society. Even the earliest texts maintain the equality of gender in all activities, be it learning, warfare, politics or arts and crafts.

### **Kaimur tribes and their folklore**

The Kaimur region is well known globally for its archaeology and historical background. Many groups such as the Mushahara, Chero, Oraon, Bind, Kharwar and others live there. Advises are regarded as having descended from the earliest inhabitants of the land. Among these the Chero were the most active and famous and they are actually indigenous people of this land as Kharwar. According to the

Oraon people, their language and caste is Kudukh (Hari, 1973). They are known from their folklore. Their songs tell us that they belong to Ruidasgarh (present Rohtasgarh on Kaimur Hill, Rohtas District, Bihar). According to their folktales the role of Chero girls and women was very important. They have many raags, such as Karma Raag, Dans Karam Raag, Chirandi Raag, Sarahul Raag, Ghudriya Karam Raag and Asaari Karam Raag. The songs used to be performed by old men or old women on various occasions such as the Karma festival and marriage. In these raags the evolution, expansion and migration of this particular tribe, the Chero, are defined. The Chirandi Raag goes as follows: "Ruidaas Gaden-ta Makka Dhamisa: Chenda Pello Dharch Sendara Kaali. Pairibiri Makka dhamisa: Chenda Pello Sendara Kaali".

It mentions that the girls of Rohtasgarh were very famous hunters. The king of Chero permitted girls and women to have training for war and hunting. They had to enter into the deep forest for hunting.

Another song describes the dresses of the girls and women which should go with the high turban on the head: "Sendara Kaloya Chenda Pello: Kukka Nu Pagari Nanoya. Pairi Biri Chenda Pello: Kukku Nu Pagari He Aoya".

The song also relates that after the wild animal hunt you should carry the dead animal on your shoulder. Your shoulder is strong and while moving with this heavy animal your waist is moving right and left. This folklore proves how the females of the tribes actively participated in war and even in hunting. It was mandatory to do all these things under the supervision of a head woman who had expertise in war and hunting (Mishra, 1983: 273-276).

In the Chero songs it is mentioned that the females of the Chero defeated the Kharwar when they attacked. This is very famous lore among the Chero. After finding out that the warriors were women, the Kharwar defeated the Chero. The song also tells that this defeat by the Kharwar of Chero is due to the delusion by the women who were in the territory of Chero.

So the defeats behind the Chero female warriors were betrayed. The female warriors like Princess Singi Dai (Dai is the last name for the female still prevalent among the Chero, which means warrior) were very well known among the folklore of the Chero. Due to the three victories over the Kharwar the Chero females used to have three tattoo dots on their foreheads.

### **Female: light of hope**

At the end of the song the warrior and the females of the Chero were the only hope to gain victory and occupying the Rohtasgarh was demanded: "Tadaree Dharaoya Kooya Chenda Pello: Ruidas Gadhe Nu Billi Dagoya. Pairi Biri Dhar Oya Koya Chenda Pello: Gadhe Nu Khudati Biri Billidagoya".

(‘Young ladies please hold the swords, now you have to fight with men warriors, you are the only hope to lighten the light at Rohtasgarh, young ladies ... only you can flame the light over the land of Chero and see off the Oraon.’)

This proves that the Chero women were the main source of energy and hope. This folklore proves the role and importance of females the past society.

The present conditions of the tribes of Kaimur and even the adjoining plains people of the Kaimur range and their customs, dress, habitations, rituals, mode of worship, behaviour and methods of herding and cultivation remind us of the characteristics of the protohistoric people, and there is enough archaeological evidence. This speculation may approach us to reality and one may hope that in future this will prove to be authentic. In these groups the role of female is more important than that of the male.

### **Discussion**

Folklore is most neglected by people in modern times, and this is certainly true (in Indian context) of Afrikaners. Folklore involves those things we love to hear, sing, say and do with our God-given senses and talents when we are at home with our own people. It is in those things that we find commonality, truly giving us the joyous feeling of being at home among our own people.

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**IT'S ALL ABOUT THE HEAD. MORPHOLOGICAL BASIS FOR CEPHALIC DIFFERENCES IN MALE AND FEMALE ANTHROPOMORPHIC IMAGERY IN DESERT ANDES ROCK ART**

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**Introduction**

As most anthropomorphic figures in the rock art of the desert Andes (the extremely dry coastal zone just west of the High Andes in South America) are unsexed (Van Hoek 2012), it is particularly difficult to tell whether they depict a female or a male individual. Moreover, in apparently sexed images a short, single line between the legs of an anthropomorphic figure only seemingly indicates male sex. Yet in many cases this single line may equally have been intended to represent female sex. It is all in the head of the prehistoric manufacturer, who has had the liberty to depict male or female sex in any way she or he wanted. An extra problem is that in most cases in Andean rock art there does not exist any informed knowledge.

**Hopi females and Navajo males**

Before discussing the Andean examples, we first hop over to North America in order to discuss ethnographically confirmed analogies. In the rock art of the southwest of the US two groups of indigenous people sometimes expressed the differences between females and males in an unambiguous way in their rock art imagery. They used specific cephalic shapes in anthropomorphic figures to differentiate between females and males. In Hopi rock art it actually is the specific shape of the hairstyle that is used to indicate female sex, rather than specify female gender, as Dennis Slifer (2000: 46) explains: 'in the rock art of some cultures, clothing or hairstyles may indicate female gender, as with the "squash blossom" style of

hair whorls worn on the side of the head by Hopi maidens and their Anasazi ancestors'.

The second group concerns the Navajo people. In the rock art of the southwest the Navajo also had their ways of distinguishing between female and male representations. Polly Schaafsma discusses rock art images of the so called ye'is, female and male Navajo supernaturals, which can often be distinguished by the shape of their heads. Male ye'is are typically shown with round heads, while female ye'is usually have rectangular heads (1992: 27-28). Those graphical cephalic differences have nothing to do with biological properties, as anyone will understand that women do not have rectangular heads. It is either a specific cultural expression of their religion, or the differences in shapes may actually involve masks worn in certain rituals. Whatever is the truth, the point is that in Hopi and Navajo rock art graphic differences in the shape of the heads clearly express differences in gender. Armed with this knowledge we now travel SE to the desert Andes of South America. The Usaca 'female'

Artificial cranial deformation, in which the skull of a human being is deformed intentionally, was practised in many ancient societies all over the world. Also the prehistoric Paracas-Nasca societies of the desert Andes are known to have practised head-flattening. Yet, to my knowledge, images of heads clearly showing such cephalic deformations have not unequivocally been reported in their rich rock art repertoire.

There are however some rock art images from the Paracas-Nasca area that, comparable with the Hopi people conventions mentioned above, may show a specific hairstyle depicting female individuals. Reported for the first time by rock art researcher Ana Nieves (2007: 83, 281) is a weathered petroglyph of an anthropomorph on Panel 1 at Usaca (Site X03), located in the Lower Nasca River (an important part of the Paracas-Nasca cultural heartland) in southern Peru.

It represents a frontally depicted anthropomorph with two large, circular pecked areas on the thorax, more or less where the breasts would be located. Apparently, they are too large to depict male nipples (although this option cannot be ruled out). While Nieves draws them as joined areas (2007: Figs 6.7.d and A.34), the ‘breasts’ in fact occur separately on the thorax (Van Hoek 2012: Fig. 29). Most importantly, the anthropomorph also features bifurcated grooves emerging from the head, which most likely represent some kind of hairstyle (or perhaps a head-dress).

Simultaneously, an interesting hypothesis was put forward by Ana Nieves, who compared this Usaca petroglyph with a nearby geoglyph (2007: 84). Only 25 km to the north of Usaca are the geoglyphs of Llipata. Several of those geoglyph complexes include anthropomorphic figures, also with bifurcated ‘hair’, for instance the well known PAP-715 site, while circular areas on the thorax of the geoglyphs possibly represent breasts (or male nipples?). Importantly, another similar anthropomorphic geoglyph at a nearby site (PAP-370) also seems to show labia, thus even more emphasizing the possible female gender of bifurcated ‘hair’ (Van Hoek 2012: Fig. 31).

Therefore, bifurcated hair or headgear in the rock art of the Paracas-Nasca heartland might be an indication of feminine gender. Consequently it may be reasoned that also other Andean anthropomorphic representations featuring the bifurcated hair style might be female. Unfortunately there are too few instances of comparable anthropomorphic figures in desert Andes rock art to be able to firmly prove the female-bifurcated-hair hypothesis. However, further south is an area with an equally specific rock art style in which images graphically show possible female and male cephalic properties, which are comparable with the Navajo conventions. The hub of this rock art group is Miculla.

## The Miculla females and males

Miculla is an enormous boulder field in the extreme south of Peru where more than 450 petroglyph boulders have been recorded (sites in the study area and mentioned in this paper appear in the map of Fig. 1).

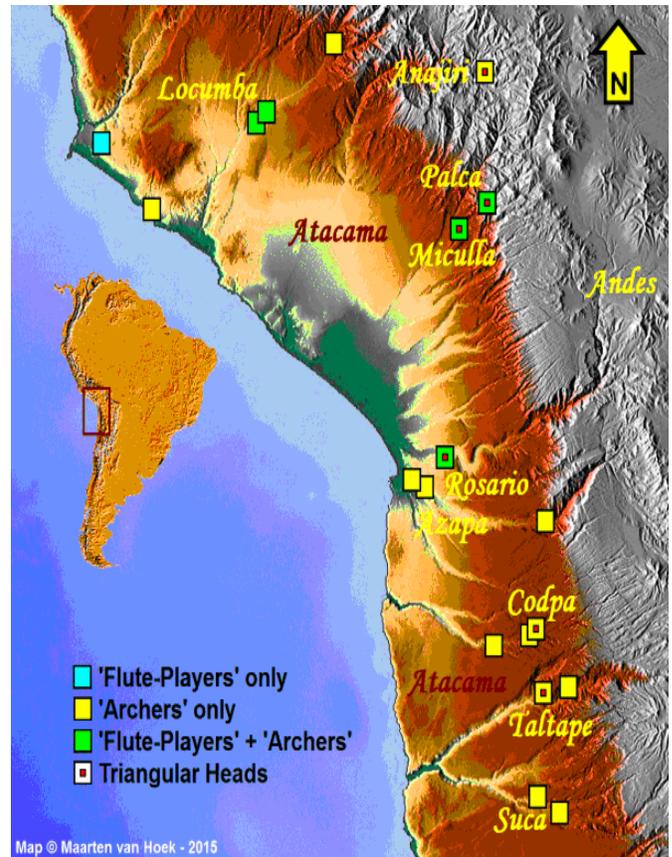


Fig. 1. Map of the study area in the desert Andes of South America with the rock art sites mentioned in the text approximately indicated. Map by Maarten van Hoek, based on Google Earth (<http://www.maps-for-free.com>).

Many depictions of anthropomorphs occur at this huge site. Although in most cases it is undecided what sex those figures are, several images provide informative clues. Obviously, anthropomorphs that are clearly phallic are male. But also the relatively very high number of purported ‘flute-player’ images (at least 44 examples occur at Miculla) may be con

sidered to represent male figures, as in the ancient Andean worldview it was taboo for females to play or even to touch a flute (see however my reservations regarding 'flute-players' in Van Hoek 2010: 161-164).

Although only one triangular-headed 'flute-player' at Miculla is phallic, it is still safe to consider all 'flute-player' images in this part of the Atacama to represent males. This concept is also demonstrated at Rosario, a rock art site in the extreme north of Chile and only 60 km south of Miculla, where four panels with altogether ten 'flute-players' have been recorded by me. No less than six examples feature a phallus.

Yet it is sometimes argued that many of the Miculla 'flute-players' actually display male sex. However, one has to be cautious as many of those 'flute-players' have a downward appendage from the lower end of the back that looks like a flaccid phallus, while clearly it is part of some attire. If the direction of the appendage is opposite to the orientation of the 'flute', then it is legitimate to regard the appendage to be part of a garment. Therefore, despite the seemingly phallic appendage only three, perhaps four, 'flute-player' petroglyphs at Miculla are biologically male, as they show a distinct phallus.

At Miculla there are several laterally depicted 'flute-players' featuring a small, round, fully pecked head with (often long) appendages. However, there is another variety of the 'flute-player' that is striking and important. It concerns the 'flute-player' depicted with a clearly triangular head (triangle inverted, apex down). The head, often hovering in isolation above the shoulders, usually has all kinds of appendages, which often vary considerably. Importantly, there are at least 25 'flute-players' with a triangular head at Miculla (one even with an extra, inverted triangle on its head), while many more anthropomorphic figures, several fully frontally depicted, also have a triangular head (although they do not play a wind instrument).

The image of the 'flute-player' with a triangular head occurs elsewhere in this area. Only 7 km to the NE of Miculla is the little known petroglyph site of Capilla de Lluta near Palca. On a split boulder are at least two 'flute-players' with a triangular head; one is possibly phallic. About 42 km north of Miculla is the petroglyph site of Anajiri featuring an image locally called the 'Quenista de Anajiri' (the 'flute-player of Anajiri'). Also this unsexed 'flute-player' features a triangular head.

Importantly however, not only 'flute-player' images feature triangular heads. Miculla is also rich in petroglyphs depicting 'archers'. About 20 petroglyphs of anthropomorphs with 'bow-and-arrow' have been reported at this huge site. Remarkably, only two 'archers' show male sex and only one of these has a triangular head. Yet it is safe to accept that in general also representations of 'archers' in Andean rock art depict male figures.

At Rosario at least seven panels have at least eight 'archer' petroglyphs. Four (perhaps five) 'archers' have a distinct triangular head and these 'archers' especially are very large. However, none of the 'archers' at Rosario shows male sex, but they all may be considered to be male. At a site called La Ladera just west of the village of Codpa in the Codpa Valley a large panel bears a petroglyph of an 'archer' with a distinct triangular head. It has an appendage projecting forward from the belly area that may be a phallus. The similar, though bigger, appendage protruding from the back may be part of the attire (analogous to the Miculla appendages). A boulder at Taltape in the Camarones Valley has a large petroglyph of an 'archer' with a distinct triangular head. It also seems to have a flaccid phallus between the legs.

In conclusion, it is safe to consider all 'flute-players', all 'archers' and probably all anthropomorphic petroglyphs with triangular heads in this part of the Atacama to represent male figures.

If we accept the triangular 'head' (or 'mask') as a sign of male gender, how to distinguish female gen-

der in this rock art group?

In my opinion several anthropomorphic petroglyphs at Miculla do depict females and I argue that those figures can (only) be distinguished from males by the two-lobed shape of the head (the two lobes on each side possibly represent the 'hair' or 'head-dress'). My hypothesis that anthropomorphs with a triangular head are male may thus be completed by the theory that anthropomorphs with a two-lobed head are female. Although all figures with a two-lobed head occurring at Miculla are unsexed, the claim seems nonetheless to be underpinned by three graphic configurations, all occurring at Miculla.

First, there are associations with 'flute-players'. In one case the petroglyph of a larger, clearly phallic 'flute-player' with a triangular head is 'touched' by a smaller, frontally depicted, 'saluting' anthropomorph that obviously is sexless (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Petroglyphs on a boulder at Miculla, southern Peru. Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photograph from the private collection of Rainer Hostnig (2007).

Yet, it seems to be justified to regard this smaller figure to be female. The female gender of this figure has possibly been indicated by its two-lobed head. A clearly male 'flute-player' from the Locumba Valley (75 km WNW of Miculla) is standing next to a frontally depicted, 'female'. Although the male figure, depicted in profile, has no triangular head, this deficiency is clearly balanced by the enormous phallus and the apparent 'flute' he is playing. The purported female figure is smaller and armless, but it has an unusual two-lobed head. The fact that such 'female' figures often have no arms is not a sign of an unfinished image. Together with the 'floating-head' convention, it is a very specific way to sometimes depict anthropomorphs in the rock art and geoglyph art in this part of the Atacama, although the reason for not drawing the arms is unknown to me.

Second, there are associations with 'archers'. There are 'frontally' depicted 'archers' with a triangular head and profile 'archers' with a much smaller, round head. One boulder at Miculla bears a revealing combination of an 'archer' depicted in profile (and possibly with a phallus) and a frontally depicted anthropomorph with a 'floating head' of the 'two-lobed head' type (Fig. 3).

Again it is safe to assume that the 'archer' is male and that the smaller figure is female (as is a similar, isolated example on the same boulder). There are several more boulders at Miculla with such (often armless) female figures.

Third, I would like to describe two convincing scenes involving copulation. While copulation scenes between humans in desert Andes rock art are extremely rare, a boulder at Miculla features no less than two of them.



Fig. 3. Petroglyphs on a boulder at Miculla, southern Peru. Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photograph from his private collection (2002-2008).

The right-hand couple (A in Fig. 4) evidently involves a male and a female, because the male clearly shows a phallus. Therefore, there is no question of actually depicting intercourse. Probably this configuration simply symbolizes procreation. Moreover, the male has a shorter appendage from the head (the longer, curved appendage may represent an arm), while the female clearly has a two-lobed head.

The other couple (B in Fig. 4) does not show any biological sexual characteristics, but their sex can be deduced from the shapes of the heads. The male figure is the one with the 'masculine', triangular head, while the figure on the right clearly features the 'feminine' two-lobed headdress. In this case only the cephalic discrepancy offers the evidence. The same is true for a copulation scene that has been recorded at Inscription Point, Arizona, US.

In this petroglyph scene the female figure is also recognizable only by the shape of the head (Slifer 2000: Fig. 38).



Fig. 4. Petroglyphs on a boulder at Miculla, southern Peru (the two sets of petroglyphs are not in the relatively correct positions). Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on an unnumbered photograph by Jesús Gordillo Begazo (2010).

## Conclusions

Usually it is extremely difficult to establish the sex or gender of unsexed anthropomorphic figures in prehistoric rock art. This paper attempts to distinguish certain female and male figures in Andean rock art based on graphic cephalic differences. Especially the petroglyph site of Miculla in the Atacama Desert of southern Peru yields several images of anthropomorphs that are clearly male by either showing male sex (phalli) or male gender (flutes and bows). I propose also that the triangular head in the rock art of this part of the Atacama should also be admitted as a sign of male gender. Following this line of reasoning, I moreover propose that female figures can also be recognized by the shape of the head, which, in this case, is two-lobed. The most convincing images in this respect are the two copulation scenes in which the female individuals show the two-lobed head. It proves that especially 'flute-players', 'archers' and 'dancers' are often arranged in scenes and moreover frequently show very distinct triangular heads. They apparently seem to be involved in some kind of ceremony.

Just possibly they are wearing triangular masks for those rituals. The role of the often much smaller depicted female individuals is much less clear. In most cases they have been depicted in a rather static posture and often without arms. Only in the two copulation scenes do females play an active and graphically revealing role.

### Acknowledgements

Although my observations and theories in this paper are based on my own surveys at Miculla and at several other rock art sites in the Atacama, I am still much indebted to Rainer Hostnig, rock art researcher from Cusco, Peru, for sharing with me his many photos of Miculla. I am also grateful for his kind permission to use them any time (Fig. 3). I also thank the archaeologist Jesús Gordillo Begazo from INC-Tacna, Peru, for confirming the authenticity of the copulation scenes on a boulder at Miculla (Fig. 4). However, any textual, interpretational or graphic inaccuracy in this paper is completely my responsibility.

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## ENGRAVING GENDER IN TALAMPAYA ROCK ART (ARGENTINA)?

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### Introduction

Gender studies have already reached maturity in archaeology and are currently seen as a highly valuable proposition for understanding not only the variability present in material culture but also for inferring the complex relationships present between the people who created and used it. However, this development has been quite uneven, with important differences between materials and geographical areas.

Northwestern Argentinean archaeology has not been very prolific in this sense. A handful of articles and books include questions regarding gender issues, but most of them are rather anecdotal and mainly focused on the possibility of identifying hierarchical structures in the communities studied rather than in the relations between people of the same or different sex. Leaving aside the references to female sexual features in the work of late 19th- and early 20th-century pioneers in Argentinean archaeology, who basically described the women represented as submissive companions of men (see Gluzman 2010), the first author to consider gender in a modern sense was M.C. Scattolin (2006) when discussing the representation and inferred role of women in sedentary societies in the first millennium of the modern era. Since then, the topic has roused the attention of a few scholars who have included gender issues in their discussions, with varying success.

### Rock art at Talampaya National Park

Talampaya National Park, La Rioja (PNTA; Figure 1), together with Ischigualasto Provincial Park, San Juan, was declared a World Heritage Site due to its outstanding universal value which includes the origins of dinosaurs, a complete Triassic geological sequence and the aesthetic interest of its geofoms, particularly the Talampaya canyon. This sandstone landscape also includes many archaeological sites which yielded a well-preserved record of rock art manifestations of regional significance.

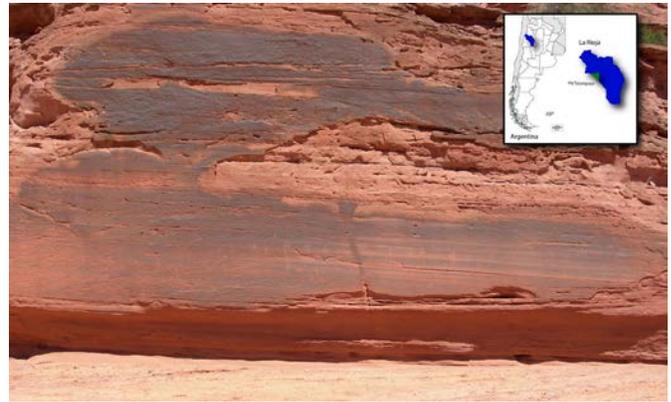


Figure 1: Photograph of Los Pizarrones (LP), PNTA and its location.

Even though the information on the functional performance context (Aschero 2000) of the rock art at PNTA is limited, it may be deduced from their punctuated occupational nature (640 BC–1180 AD) and the absence of productive and domestic structures that they represent the activity of human groups using the Talampaya valley as a transit area but inhabiting residential bases located elsewhere (Gonaldi 1996). Currently, defensive domestic loci dated to the Late Period (Guraieb et al. 2014) are known to the south of the National Park, in the El Chiflón Natural Provincial Park, La Rioja. Nevertheless, it is still possible to consider the thematic performance context, which aims to recognize the objective reference of the symbolized motifs represented, that is, what and how they are represented,

and which canons are most appropriate for such manifestations, in other words, to understand the conventions for the representation of an image considering its real model. It should include the observation perspective implied as well as the way the several parts of an animal/person are represented and their relative proportions. Hence, some formal attributes are selected from the large Body of information exchanged in any society, in order to define a strategy for visual communication.

It is traditionally assumed that a theme, that is, the recurrent association of motifs, together with their compositional elements and features, which gains relevance in later periods in the rock art of the area (Regional Developments–Inka) is the human figure with attributes of power and prestige (e.g. the lizard-men: Schobinger 1966). Aschero (2000) indicated that anchor-like motifs were revalidated in the Later Period and included tupu pins, tumi knives and axes with human representation, sometimes associated with clothing, headdresses, shield-shaped objects, etc.

However, despite the many proposals for the interpretation of this specific iconographic repertoire and its context of meaning, gender issues and their representations have hardly been discussed. In one of the few exceptions, Muscio (2006) was interested in the visualization of hierarchy and inequality in the men depicted at Matancillas (Salta), females being defined as motifs devoid of any sexual feature. On the other hand, early archaeological work focused on the female attributes found in different objects of the northwestern region (see Introduction). Regarding our case study, it should be noted that in the PNTA a significant number of rock art locations have been identified. Most of them, both in terms of abundance of motifs and their relevance, are found in the Talampaya river valley, and are supplemen-

ted by the Chañares locality (Ferraro et al. 2016) and other sites to the south of the protected area (de la Fuente and Arrigoni 1971). Currently, Los Pizarrones (LP; Figure 1), near the Talampaya riverhead, is the site most thoroughly studied, providing an extremely informative corpus. LP is unique in the sense that it is composed of a sole panel 15.34 m long with 267 motifs identified, facilitating the exhaustive treatment of the relative synchrony and diachrony of the assemblage. Furthermore, this tentative sequence allows the analysis of the iconographic repertoire of the many rock art sites at PNTA, being in turn enlarged with these data. This paper considers the information provided by LP as well as the anthropo-zoomorphic representations at La Apolinaria (LA), Los Tipitos (LT) and La Angostura (LAN) and the tupus and anthropomorphs at Puerta de Talampaya (PT) and Chañares II (CII). Regionally, the

### **Gender manifestations**

The identification of patina series and assemblages at LP was the starting point for relating the description of the motifs to their distribution in the panel, their position and the individual features of the types of motifs represented, as well as their canons. Four themes were thus defined (Aschero 2000), of which the second with a dominance of tupus (Figure 2) and the third, anthropo-zoomorphic motifs wearing anchor-like headdresses and possible ear-spoils and unkus (Figure 3) are considered here. It is proposed that they postulate a relationship between anchor-like and certain anthropo-zoomorphic motifs in gender terms. Broadly speaking, archaeological, ethnohistorical and ethnographic literature indicates that tupus are associated with the female world, as they were (and still are) worn by women and included as grave goods in many Andean areas (Arriaza et al. 1986; Fernández 2015; Vetter 2007).



Figure 2: Tupu motifs at PNTA. Motifs 1 CII; 2, 4–10 and 12–5 LP; 3, 11 and 26 PT.

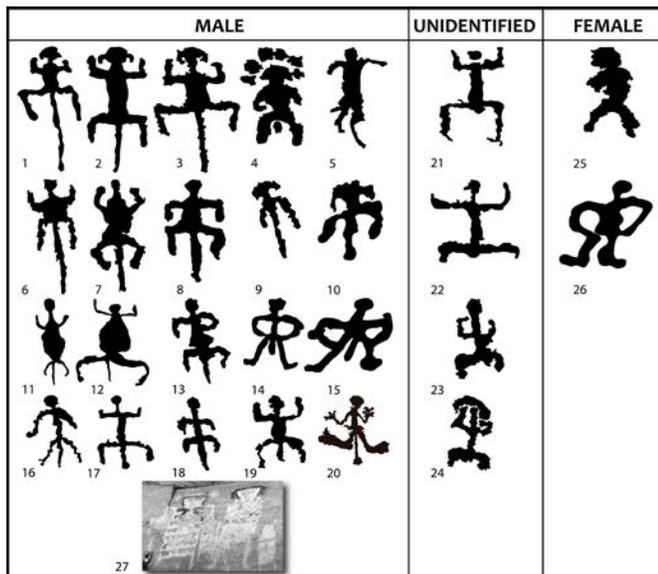


Figure 3: Anthropo-zoomorphic motifs at PNTA, classified by gender attributes. Motifs 1–13, 16–19 and 22–5 LP; 14 LA; 15 and 26 LT; 20 PT; and 21 LAN.

They are thought to have originated in northern Chile and northwestern Argentina in the Formative Period. Some studies identified them even at later times, including the Inka period, and their

manufacture and use is also known in colonial times (Latorre 2009).

In rock art, they have been interpreted as prestige goods in the Intermediate Period (Aschero 2000) and Aguada pottery, later to be resignified at Regional Development and Inka times (Ferraro 2016).

Tumis, on the other hand, are not well-represented in rock art except for the peculiar tumi-like headdresses, present in some pottery paintings and ornaments (Latorre 2009). Metal objects in northwestern Argentina also depict this relation, the tumi being a common headdress generally interpreted as a hierarchical embodiment, following northern Andes burial finds (L. González 2007). Much more frequent are the manifestation of axes such as the ones described in Callegari et al. 2009.

Now, in the rock art manifestations at PNTA tupus, unlike tumis or axes (defined by the shape of the cutting edge), are represented as simple independent motifs, devoid of any anecdotic relation. Their association with other types of motifs is not clear either. In LP, however, they were recorded in the Intermediate and Late Patina series.

The most interesting deductions, however, are connected with the representation of anthropo-zoomorphic motifs. Both the canons they are constructed with and the features defining their materialisation, including the anchor-like shape and any sexual reference, could be seen as indicative of a gender discourse.

Two examples of paired motifs which may be interpreted as representing a male and a female individual have been recorded at PNTA so far. In this case, both motifs identified as females were engraved in side view and show a projection which resembles a female breast. Here, as expected, no appendage which may be read as a phallus is visible underneath. The indication of breasts, together with female genitalia, has been typically described in women representations in pottery and metal items (Gluzman 2010), but not so often in engravings.

In the first example, there are two relative synchronic and juxtaposed motifs (included in the Intermediate Patina series) with identical technical characteristics but, again, lacking anecdotic relationship (Figure 4a).

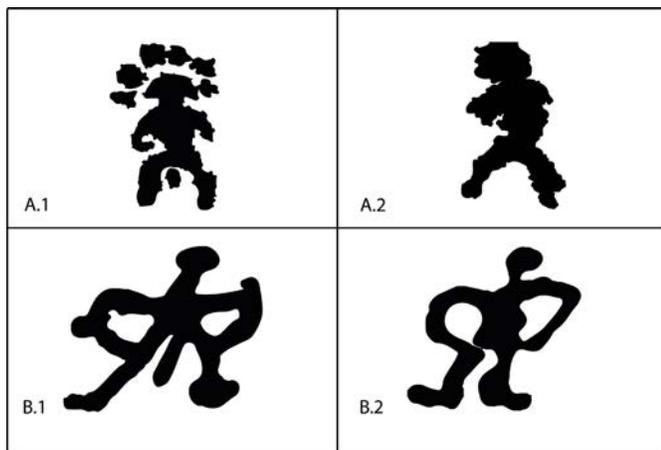


Figure 4: Significant pairs of motifs. A. LP: 1 Male; 2 Female; B. LT: 1 Male; 2 Female.

They are an almost side-view motif with what seems to be a female breast which is spatially related to a second motif in front view with a phallus and a feline paw in the place of the head, which also presents an anchor-like feature. The canon for these motifs is typical of Middle Period iconography in the Puna and valley area and round about, such as in the nearby Vinchina region (Callegari et al. 2009).

The second example refers to two independent motifs included in the same patina series in LT (Figure 4b), one of them showing an appendage which may be interpreted as a phallus and the other one with an indication of a female breast. Both motifs were engraved with their arms akimbo, describing two semicircles which remind one of a variation of the tupu subtypes represented in LP. The motif with the phallus is further replicated at LA. Lastly, the revision of the anthropo-zoomorphic motifs of LP contributes to the discussion about anchor-like features as representative of prestige or power. These motifs were interpreted by Schobinger (1966) as lizard-men,

while Aschero (2000) considered the anchor-like headdresses in Andean rock art as tumis or large tupus, indicating the hierarchical category of curacas-chiefs. In both cases, although the authors did not enlarge on the topic, the motifs were regarded as male due to their peculiar condition, as females seem not to have played political leading roles in these Andean societies.

Reinforcing the idea of a male condition for these motifs, the rather long feature between the legs of the anthropo-zoomorphic representations (Figure 3.1-20), which was seen as a lizard tail by the first author or a tumi haft in similar Andean motifs by the second, could be interpreted as a prominent phallus. Although the motifs at LP are highly schematic, the idea is not unknown to the area: a clear example of this condition may be seen in the nearby location of PT, where a man with a large phallus is herding a pack of llamas following the naturalistic canon (Figure 3.20).

Further attributes of male characters may be mentioned, although some ambiguity cannot be ruled out in most cases. Unku shirts and complex headdresses are ethnohistorically known to be male clothing, women wearing aqsu (a kind of tunic), together with blankets fastened with a tupus, and tending to do their hair in two lateral plaits (Arriaza et al. 1986; Jordán 2003). The motifs at LP are rather elusive regarding clothing, but representations near the PNTA may be highly informative. At Anchumbil, for instance, a couple was painted (Villanueva 1940) wearing what seem to be profusely decorated unkus (Figure 3.27), a pattern mirroring the dresses of Arica mummies (Arriaza et al. 1986). Hence, although the engraved motifs do not yield any sexual attribute (i.e. phallus), ethnohistorical as well as archaeological references for this piece of clothing suggest their identification as males (Jordán 2003).

Furthermore, both are probably wearing some kind of ear-spools, indicative of hierarchical positions traditionally held by men. Going back to LP, some

of the anthropo-zoomorphic motifs present square bodies which resemble the unku shape, and in some cases they also present ear-spools (Figure 3.1-3) or headdresses (Figure 3.4?, 9-10).

Regarding tupus, although some of the headdresses were suggested as either tumi or tupu (Aschero 2000), it should be remembered that the tupus were exclusively female possessions, excluding their interpretation as symbols of the curacas position. The figures identified as female (Figure 4a2 and 4b2) are devoid of any kind of dress or ornaments and no association can be made here; it may well be connected with their status, as suggested for male representations. However, it is rather curious that, compared with male motifs, their numbers are extremely low (20:2 for clearer motifs, 24:2 if the unidentified motifs are male; 20:6 if they are regarded female). Although the explanation of social inequality may respond for this absence, the possibility of a kind of taboo operating for female representations is quite attractive. It is based on the abundance of tupu representations (Figure 2) without any connection to human or animal motifs at LP, sharing the panel with the mostly male anthropo-zoomorphic motifs just described and unconnected to them in PT and CII. The use of the tupus as a metonymy for females may well have been read in terms of their presence in the representations without making a direct figurative reference to them.

A further problem is presented by some motifs here classified as undetermined gender (Figure 3.21-24). They may well be females, as they also lack other male-related clothing or ornaments, except in Figure 3.24. A second alternative is considering them males for the lack of breast. In this case, the absence of a phallus or its reduced size when compared with the preferred canon demands further explanation. Could a prominent phallus have been an attribute not only of gender, but also of hierarchy, supplementing more generalized features such as tumi headdresses, ear-spools and unkus? They may also represent males but of a lower category, and thus,

their gender identity was minimized, although not avoided, as seems to have happened with females. Unfortunately, their ambiguous identity prevents further explanations at the moment.

## Conclusion

Rock art representations at PNTA, as with any cultural product, are the meaningful expression of the many human groups who used the canyon as a connecting path along millennia. As such, it includes motifs of both the physical and social world they lived in. Animals and plants from both ends of the canyon were engraved on the walls of LP, such as a seahorse from the Pacific or plants from the eastern valleys. The references for social organization can also be found in the subjects wearing complex headdresses and clothing, probably symbolizing power and hierarchy. Gender manifestation of the panels is thus a logical consequence of the discourse told by the people at Talampaya.

Even though their intention was not to discuss the motifs in gender terms, some scholars have described the motifs at the National Park or similar manifestations as either anthropo-zoomorphic figures or high-status characters, taking for granted in both cases that they were men (i.e. lizard-men; curacas). In this sense, the rather prominent feature represented between their legs may well be a phallus which reinforces the cultural attributes defining males in these societies: tumi-like headdresses, unkus, ear-spools. Nevertheless, the presence of females in the rock art panels at PNTA should not be ruled out. Despite their more elusive representation, some anthropomorphic motifs show attributes typical of women (breasts, no phallus) and were engraved in a similar distribution in the representational space with many similar motifs which look like men (phallus, headdress in one case). Furthermore, the abundance of tupus, an ornament known to have been exclusively worn by females, sharing the panel with mostly male anthropo-zoomorphic representations, suggests a deliberate use of this motif which may well be

referring to their female users, embodying in this way a new meaning for the tupus in terms of gender. The justification for this metonymical representation is still unknown and demands further studies of the motifs themselves, their thematic performance context and similar representations. It could be proposed that it is related to the hierarchical order existing in the society, a taboo excluding females from being physically depicted, a division of the world where gender defined different spaces, such as public versus private contexts. Whatever the reason, it may be concluded that there was an intention of representing a specific worldview and it certainly included the participation of both males and females in society.

### Acknowledgements

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# EXPRESSION

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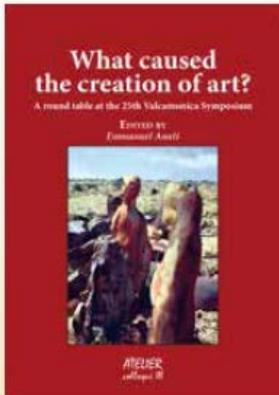
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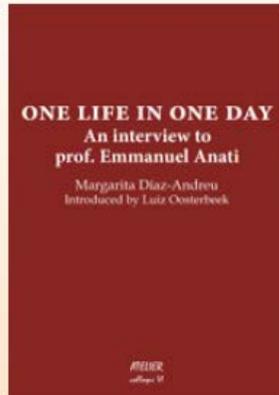
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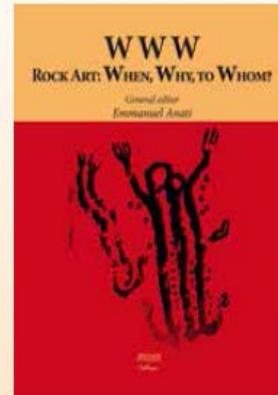
Anati, E. (ed.) 2013. *What Caused the Creation of Art? A Round Table at the 25th Valcamonica Symposium*, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 44 pp. € 10.

'What caused the creation of art?' People from different disciplines and different cultural backgrounds present contrasting views. And yet, the same question has bothered thinkers for generation.



Diaz-Andreu, M. 2015 *One life in one day, an interview to prof. Emmanuel Anati*, Capo di Ponte, (Atelier), 104 pp. 51 pls. € 20

In the gardens of the campus of Burgos University, while delegates were moving from sessions and lectures to coffee breaks and back, Margarita Diaz-Andreu recorded, for hours, the words of Professor Emmanuel Anati. It was the 5th of September 2014 and when the electric lights of the evening replaced the sunlight, a life-long story was drafted.

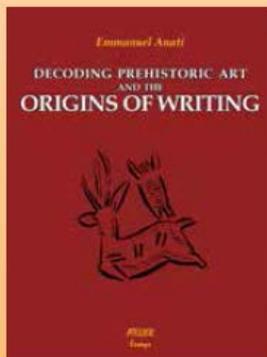


Anati, E. (ed.). 2015 *WWW. Rock Art: when, why, to whom?* Capo di Ponte, (Atelier), 218 pp. 184 pls. € 40

How come that Rock art is widespread in five continents? Some sites, in South Africa, Australia or Brazil, count well over one million figures. They were produced over centuries and millennia. What made generations persist in this tradition of marking the stone surfaces with the records of their minds? Why did they invest on it such immense time and energy? Fifty authors from five continent face the query: when, why and to whom?

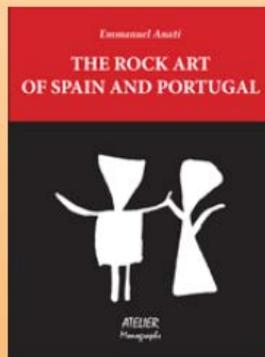
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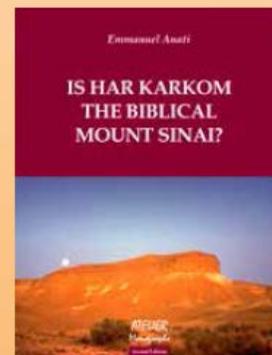
Anati, E. 2015. *Decoding Prehistoric Art and the Origins of Writing*, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 152 pp. 83 pls. € 20.

This text examines the cognitive process that led to the invention of writing and highlights constants of memorization and associative synthesis held in the mind of Homo sapiens for thousands of years. Some examples of decoding prehistoric art propose a new vision for the beginning of writing.



Anati, E. 2014. *The rock Art of Spain and Portugal, a Study of Conceptual Anthropology*, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 104 pp. 87 pls. € 20.

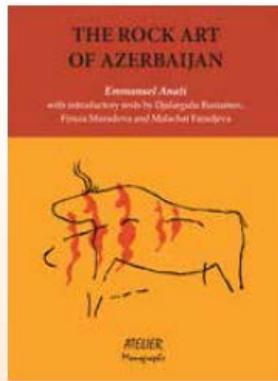
An analytical synthesis of the rock art in the Iberian peninsula from the conceptual anthropology approach. The major concentrations of rock art are considered as expressions of their different cultural and social patterns.



Anati, E. 2013. *Is Har Karkom the Biblical Mount Sinai?* (II ed.), Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 96 pp. 53 pls. € 20.

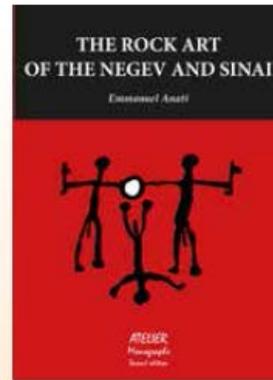
Remains of ancient sanctuaries and camp-sites tell the story of a hitherto unknown mountain in the heart of the desert of Exodus. Is Har Karkom the biblical Mount Sinai? To what point can we consider the biblical narratives as a source of historical documentation?

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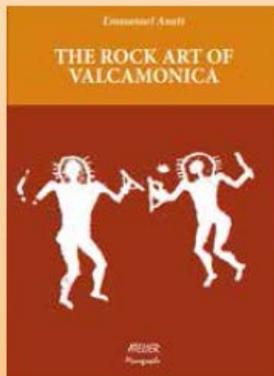
Anati, E. 2015. *The Rock art of Azerbaijan*, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 156 pp. 190 pls. € 20

In the course of centuries, Azerbaijan, was a great centre of rock art. This gateway of Europe, between the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea, was a major way of migrations from Asia to Europe. New chapters in the history of art are revealed by beautiful design and stylisation.



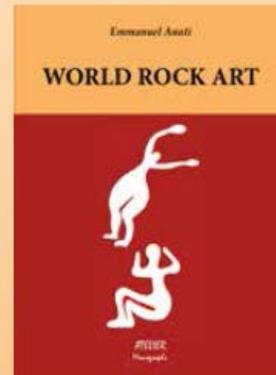
Anati, E. 2015. *The Rock Art of the Negev and Sinai*, second edition, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 242 pp., 190 pls. € 25.

The present volume is concerned with a new theme of archeology and anthropology: the rock art of the Negev and Sinai, which never had before a general analysis in English. It elaborates on articles and a book written in the last 60 years, to produce a synthesis and an overview.



Anati, E. 2015. *The Rock art of Valcamonica*, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 260 pp. 153 pls. € 20

Valcamonica, in the Italian Alps, with over 300,000 images engraved on rocks, is the major rock art site in Europe. It is the first "World Heritage Site" listed by UNESCO in Italy and the first rock art site listed in the world. Its study reveals the largest archive left behind by the ancient inhabitants of Europe. After having excavated, traced, described and analyzed it for over half a century, the author presents this synthesis bringing new light on 10,000 years of history. The present work represents a turning point in the methodology of archaeological research. Europe acquires back millennia of its forgotten history.



Anati, E. 2015. *World Rock Art*, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 208 pp. 193 pls. € 20

This book is a fundamental introduction to rock art studies. It marks the starting point of a new methodology for rock art analysis, based on typology and style, first developed by the author at the Centro camuno di Studi Preistorici, Capo di Ponte, Brescia, Italy. He can be seen the beginning of a new discipline, the systematic study of world rock art.

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