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CONCEPTUAL TRENDS
AND CONCEPTUAL SURVIVAL

PART II

EDITORIAL NOTES

CONCEPTUAL TRENDS AND CONCEPTUAL SURVIVAL

The papers of this issue accompany us to various corners of the world, from the Near East to eastern Europe and central Asia, to the Iberian Peninsula, to Brazil, proposing aspects of sedentarization and of contents of art as expressions of the conceptual identity of peoples.

Various types of desert settlement in an area of the Negev desert in the third millennium BC reveal the presence of different social organizations, while awakening queries about their ethnic and cultural identity. In the same area, at the same time and with the same natural resources, different human societies coexisted, diversely organized in clans, extended families, and nuclear families. For all of them animal breeding was their main economic resource. What led them to having different social structures?

A peculiar art style and the images represented reveal the faith and concepts of a Scythian population from the first millennium BC in eastern Europe and western Asia. The representation of divine entities characterizes aspects of the cultural identity, the external influences, and the internal evolution. The specific context arouses queries about their relations with the then emerging Mediterranean cultures.

A specific type of object from the third millennium BC, the geometrically decorated slate plaques, mainly found in tombs of the southern Iberian Peninsula, causes a series of theories concerning their conceptual significance and the meaning of the geometric patterns. Do the repetitious patterns and their variable number indicate the identity of the holder? What do these objects tell us about their conceptual meaning?

The presence of erotic images in one of the most richly painted sites of rock art in Brazil raises questions about the role and purpose of such images. Many human expressions reveal the necessity of expressing an identity and granting a survival of beliefs and traditions. The function of such images and of their conceptual meaning are raising some queries.

These patterns of cultural expressions, from different periods and different parts of the world, and those which appeared in the previous issue have in common their conceptual trend of defining identity: a strong imperative of conceptual survival. The topic is open to additional contributions.

A NOTE FOR THE AUTHORS

EXPRESSION is a quarterly journal on conceptual anthropology addressed to readers in over 85 countries. It offers a space of expression and communication to researchers and authors from all over the world. Published papers are intended to produce culture: your article is addressed to a world of learned and open-minded people. Make it enjoyable also to people who are not specialized in your research field. Articles are expected to be stimulating and pleasant to read. The target of EXPRESSION is to promote dialogue, knowledge, and ideas concerning the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate societies. It is an open forum in conceptual anthropology, where 250 authors have already published their studies and their ideas.

Papers should be conceived for an audience involved in various fields of the humanities, mainly anthropology, archeology, art, sociology, and psychology. Your ideas, even if related to a local or circumscribed theme, should awaken the interest and curiosity of an international and interdisciplinary audience. The visual aspect is important for communication with the readers: quality images and text should complement each other.

Authors should talk openly to the readers, avoiding long descriptions, catalogues, and rhetorical arguments. Refrain from unnecessary references and from excessive citations. They make the reading discursive and do not make the article more scientific. Consider that short articles are more read and appreciated than long ones. Letters on current topics and short notes may be included in the Discussion Forum section.

Publication in EXPRESSION quarterly journal does not imply that the publisher and/or the editors agree with the ideas expressed. Authors are responsible for their ideas and for the information and the illustrations they present. Papers are submitted to reviewers, not to judge them but to help authors, if needed, to better communicate with their readers. Controversial ideas, if they make sense, are not censored. New thoughts and concepts are welcome; they may awaken debate and criticism. Time will be their judge. EXPRESSION is a free journal, independent and not submitted to formal traditional regulations. It offers space to ideas and discoveries, including debatable controversial issues, healthy discussions, and imaginative and creative papers, if they are conceptually reliable and respect the integrity, ethics, and dignity of authors, colleagues, and readers.



Front page image

Tapestry from the Pazyryk kurgan (in Saka territory), 3rd century BC, State Hermitage Museum (see Papadimitriou, this issue p. 67).

DISCUSSION FORUM

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

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS IN PREHISTORIC AND TRIBAL ART

What does art tell us about the notions and concepts of their makers? The art of non-literate people is a unique window open on the landscape of their minds. It is a source for understanding the primary roots of their and our way of thinking, knowing, imagining, and believing.

In various corners of the world scholars involved in prehistoric and tribal art research are often inadequately known, only locally or sectorally. What would a historian or a psychologist have to say about the ideas of an archeologist or an anthropologist?

The exchange of multidisciplinary information on a world level is increasing analytical abilities, is promoting the knowledge of the researchers' valuable efforts and, at the same time, is contributing to enhancing communication and the progress of research. Investigation in different continents may face similar queries or develop different ideas on analogous enquiries. Keep in touch! Let your ideas circulate and connect with others' ideas, favoring communication among the researchers and between them and the public.

Colleagues and friends interested in prehistoric and tribal art should propose their papers, their ideas, and the results of their research to a worldwide audience. **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal is reaching institutions, scholars, and students in over 85 countries. Papers may focus on specific cases or on general trends, on the description of beliefs, ceremonies, myths, and traditions revealed by the images. Diffusing knowledge and ideas is spreading the interest in research to a wider audience and is the core of culture.

If you have something to say, share your ideas with others; do not keep them just for yourself.

SEDENTARIZATION AND URBANIZATION

In the present issue, the theme of sedentarization and urbanization sees a new aspect, the patterns of settlements in

the desert. Some now fully desert areas were once settled. Climatic conditions and other factors have allowed diverse types of human presence. The case of Har Karkom in this issue is an example of differently structured human groups existing together in the same territory.

Once the Sahara had fertile oases, which are now abandoned. Rock art presents images of crocodiles in the Tassili mountains where these animals were then living in waters that have now disappeared. A few thousand years ago that same area offered living resources to humans and other species. Then, some 4,000 years ago, the area dried up and life changed. Today, the process of desertification of the Sahel is causing the abandonment of areas that were flourishing only a few years ago, with sedentary settlements, agriculture, and livestock which were then thriving, no longer in existence. At the same time, pipelines are transforming the desert into green land in the Negev desert of Israel, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere.

Climatic and environmental changes have usually determined the presence or absence of settlements. The changing of living resources is affecting sedentarization and urbanization and is affecting migrations. This has been the rule for hunter-gatherers. Both humans and the hunted game lived where there were water and food resources. From the layers of human deposits in caves and open-air sites in Africa, Asia, and Europe, we know that human groups maintained fairly permanent living sites in the last half a million years. Thick anthropic levels measuring several meters in depth, like the Mount Carmel caves, indicate a human presence for thousands of years in the same site.

The presence of water is a fundamental element for human life. This is alike true for hunter-gatherers and for agricultural societies, as crops will not grow without water. With the development of urbanization, most towns grew on the shores of rivers or lakes. Recently, other factors modified the patterns of sedentarization.

Urbanization gradually spread and in some corners of the world it arrived just a few years ago, as we learned from articles in the previous issue. Somewhere urbanization has not yet arrived and in some places it may not arrive at all. Urbanization is not a natural feature of our species, nor is it, as often claimed, a direct outcome of sedentarization. Prehistoric people were sedentary where the living resources permitted.

Now, urban centers have grown in even the most unthinkable areas of the planet, where there are no natural resources for human survival. Towns have grown among the sands of the Arabian desert, in the heart of the Amazonian tropical forest, or in the Arctic frozen lands of Siberia. Mineral resources like petrol or gold make it worthwhile

for people to settle down where the natural resources are of a different kind. Food and other facilities are brought from outside and the mineral resources are attractive and economically rewarding.

The foundation of Jericho, the earliest known urban settlement, marked a determining event in the history of mankind. Some monumental sanctuaries were built earlier but the first walled town illustrates a new way of life. The pattern of urban settlement has expanded since then to constitute over three-quarters of the world's population, an increase that awakens divergent opinions. Is this a permanent orientation leading to the globalization of an urban humankind, or can an inversion of tendencies be foreseen, a turning point in the opposite direction? Could the evolving habit of digital and other means of communication change the trend?

Could there be a loosening of the metropolis's fatal attraction and a return to living in the countryside? What are the factors that may lead one way or the other? Environmental conditions including pollution and climatic changes, social relations, means of communication, educational, medical and leisure facilities, potential economic resources, and concentration of manpower all influence the development, which may be very differentiated, from age-old urban centers like Beijing, Jerusalem or Rome, to an oil-field or a mining site where recent towns have developed in the middle of nowhere.

During the last few millions of years, the trend has been that of a constant numerical increase of humankind. Where is this trend leading? Is it conceivable that the number of humans will grow over the limits that the resources of this planet can face? Will food be available to all when the world population will be ten times that of today? Then there may be no more space for growing potatoes. Could the entire planet become globally urbanized? Then no more space will be left for living in the countryside besides the two poles and the top of the highest mountains. If the trend does not change, how many years are left to humanity to grant survival to every human being on this planet?

Being optimistic, humanity may become able to colonize other planets or to produce living satellites around the globe. Being pessimistic, a devastating pandemic, or drastic climatic changes, or an atomic war going out of control may provide other solutions. Meanwhile, sedentarization and urbanization are progressing.

Since the paper on Jericho appeared in **EXPRESSION** 30, new articles on sedentarization and urbanization have followed in subsequent issues, including the present one. The topic remains open for more facts, ideas, articles, and forecasts.

THE DEBATE ON HERITAGE RESTITUTION

Where should a valuable art object have its location? The fact that some African countries are requesting the restitution of art objects from European museums has awakened a broad debate which is here summarized. Various questions emerged: 1- The legal property of a work of art. A stolen object should belong to the robbed victim. A regularly acquired object belongs to its legal owner. According to the laws of most European and American countries, if an object was legally obtained, either bought or donated, it belongs to the owner. Its value depends on its function, not on the paid price. If the object was published in books, displayed in exhibitions, exposed in the Louvre or in other famous museum, its value is different than if it is offered to a tourist in the market of Porto-Novo or of Portobello. The restitution of stolen objects should not imply a payment for its acquired value. Simply: stolen objects belong to the robbed victim, and the victim should decide of its destiny.

For doubtful cases, some questions raised divergent opinions. First, if a country imposes new laws regarding the export or ownership of works of art, do the new laws apply to the works of art acquired or exported before the implementation of the new laws? Can the new law be retroactive? Second, what are the criteria to evaluate the importance of an object to the local culture? What are the criteria to decide whether its cultural and educational role should be in a context visited by an international audience or in a local setting? Third, where would it best serve cultural, educational, economic, tourist functions, and the image of the country of origins?

Should Leonardo's Mona Lisa painting remain in Paris in the Louvre Museum, or go back to the Italian town of Florence where it was conceived and painted? Could an object from Alaska remain shown in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC or should it be returned to the Aleut people in Alaska? Should the objects collected by Captain Cook in the Pacific islands remain in the European museums, or should they be returned to the various islands where they were collected over 200 years ago?

A masque from Benin now exhibited in the Louvre is seen by millions of people and represents the Benin culture to the world. Is it in the interest of Benin to have it back and display it in the Porto-Novo museum, where in the best of cases a few hundred tourists would appreciate it? On the other hand, if the object can arise national awareness or pride, serve as a local educational tool or give additional prestige to the local museum, these factors require due consideration.

The debate evolved in two different tendencies. One ad-

vocated that an international law should regulate the principles of the ownership, intellectual property and use of objects retained to be of a national or ethnic interest. The other advocated that each single case should receive individual attention. The care, conservation, and function of the object in its present and in the proposed new location should deserve consideration.

A crucial point remains that of the function: where and how can the object grant best its cultural function? It seems that to date the issue of heritage restitution cannot be solved by automatically applying a general rule for all cases; both legal and cultural problems require individual consideration for each specific case.

PEER REVIEWERS: A DISCUSSED INSTITUTION

A debate recently arose about the value and correctness of the methods of peer reviewing which is here summarized. Facing the positive opinion of the academic traditional institutions, another tendency emerged opposing the system and considering it to be anti-scientific.

Some accepted peer reviewing as an objective system of selecting scientific articles. Others defined it as a practice adopted by academic institutions, possibly aimed at preventing the diffusion of non-conventional or not-desired ideas. It was named a reactionary, conservative, bigoted system. “The easiest way to have the green light from peer reviewers is avoiding expressing new ideas.” It was said that in some cases it may be a method of favoring the academic progress of certain candidates and preventing that of others. Also, it was said that it may be that one can acquire favorable evaluations by systems nearer to corruption than to the concern for the advancement of scientific research. Some elementary considerations emerged: scientific publications, as first requirement, must contain correct information; in the present-day availability of data, this may be eas-

ily verified. Also, they should propose innovative concepts, and this is what conservative peer reviewers may try to prevent. Freedom of research should leave evaluation to time. Wrong ideas are bound to have a short life in any case. Innovative ideas, if they survive, may be evaluated after one generation. Even if controversial, they may contribute to the advancement of research.

The main reviewer and the decider of the value of a text, should be the editor. His/her decisions determine the reputation and prestige of the publication. The editor is certainly entitled to refer to the opinions of reviewers, but it is up to him/her to accept them or not, and to decide whether the text or the ideas expressed should be published or not. This is his/her responsibility, not that of the often anonymous peer reviewers.

This debate can be extended to a wider audience. Readers are welcome to express their opinion. Please consider that innovative texts may be published. By sending your text or ideas you agree to the possibility that they may be published.

THE GREY SALT AND RED SALT OF JERICHO AND THE DEAD SEA

By David Bloch, Bloch Salt Archives, Israel

Given the essential nature and influence of common salt upon mankind’s physiology and its historical importance, the culture and trading of salt have been far more elusive and difficult to recount due to salt’s monopolized sources in times of famine and the fact that it dissolves. Rock salt and sea salt in one single location, as at the Dead Sea, are exceptionally rare. The recognized earliest urban locations – Mesopotamia, the Nile delta, the Indus valley, Jiahui China, Peru, Chile, Mesoamerica, and Jericho – all had in common *sabkha* (swamp) sea salt-making capabilities. As such they were enabled to develop and offer the first traded salt bulk commodity particularly to remnant hunting

Fig. 1. “War fire” (πολεμικὸν πῦρ polemikònrȳr), “liquid fire” (ὕγρὸν πῦρ hydròn pȳr) possibly mixed from Dead Sea bitumin. “sticky fire” (πῦρ κολλητικὸν pȳrkollētikòn), or “manufactured fire” (πῦρ σκευαστὸν pȳr ske-uastòn).





Fig. 2. Red salt-Dunaliella is a single-celled alga growing in salt ponds.

communities. With the exception of Jericho, these desert arid plateau sites were occasionally flooded by coastal eustatic inundation during early interglacial periods. Protein meat needed to be salted for distribution. In the tanning and its supporting role of protecting the monopolized salt technology, the culture of osmosis was paramount.

The only location that was not affected by coastal eustatic sea levels was the urban location of Jericho. The Madeba map clearly shows the Dead Sea, with bulk red salt from halophilic algae evaporation ponds and grey rock salt from Jebel U'sdom mountain being transported by boat to the port of Jericho.

In central Asia many other similar urban societies later sprang up built over and upon the ancient *qanat* matrix of tunnels and watershed irrigation systems designed to produce precipitated salt from such highly saline endorheic basins of the Persian Kavir and Taklamakan. Similarly, the Dead Sea endorheic Rift Valley, with the Jordan river watershed, provided the ideal salt-making conditions. Another precipitated salt, potassium chloride, mixed with a minimum organic animal dung supplement, produced potassium nitrate or Greek fire, a highly commercial commodity and together with Petra, south of Jericho, perhaps ensured a rationale for a very rich and powerful trading network also known as the Kings' Road.

The hundreds and thousands of kilometers of tunnels and a similar number of *qanat* irrigating systems were clearly developed in relation to these early urban communities specifically to produce salt crust along the Silk Road. Jericho is an example of their importance as commercial trading posts pre-dating agricultural units. The opposite may even be true in that the aqueducts made aquaponics and hydroponics a necessary technology long before the Islamic [Jafari] green revolution period which converted the salt fields.

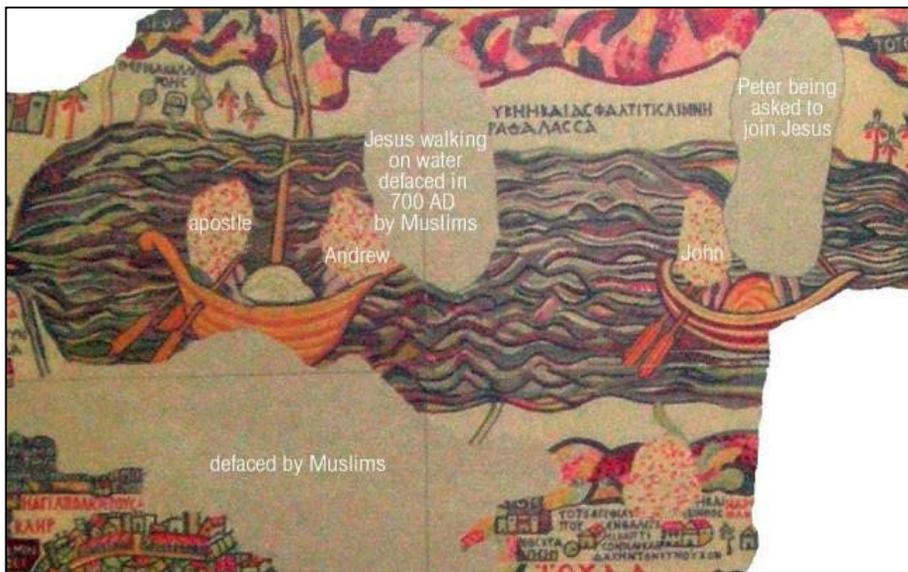


Fig. 3. The Madeba map shows two ships, one transporting red salt (*Dunallela Salina Agae*) from Dead Sea evaporation pans and the other, grey rock salt quarried from Jebel U'sdom rock mountain.

FORTHCOMING NEW DEBATES

Readers are proposing themes for debate. When at least three articles are submitted on the same theme, the topic is considered for a forthcoming issue.

1. **ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS**
2. **POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION AND THE ORIGINS OF ART.**
3. **DECODING PREHISTORIC AND TRIBAL ART:** meaning and purpose.
4. **IS *HOMO SAPIENS* THE INVENTOR OF FIGURATIVE ART?** Is visual art the sign of his presence?
5. **IMAGES OF WARFARE AND FIGHTING IN PREHISTORIC AND TRIBAL ART.** Their commemorating role and their historical value.
6. **SEAFARING DEPICTIONS: RECORDING MYTHS AND EVENTS** Considering the story of seafaring and its earliest documentation.
7. **MYTHS OF ORIGINS: WHERE DID THE ANCESTORS COME FROM?** Global and local versions.
8. **PERSONAL IDENTITIES OF ARTISTS.** Identifying the hands of a specific artist, school or tradition in prehistoric and tribal art.
9. **BURIAL CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES** as expression of beliefs in the afterlife. How was the world of the dead conceived?
10. **VERNACULAR DECORATIVE PATTERNS AND THEIR SOURCES.** Decoration of objects, huts or rock surfaces as the expression of identity.

PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEBATES

Proposals for papers and suggestions on these and other issues are welcome.

CONTENTS

Emmanuel Anati (Italy) Desert Settlement Patterns	9
Michel Justamand (Brasil), Ana Cristina Alves Balbino (Brasil), Vanessa da Silva Belarmino (Brasil), Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida (Brasil), Gabriel F. de Oliveira (Brasil), Matteus Freitas de Oliveira (Brasil) Prehistoric Sexuality in the Rock Art of Serra da Capivara (PNSC/PI), Brazil.....	31
Cristina Lopes (Portugal) Geometric Art in the Iberian Schist Plaques	47
Ioannis Papadimitriou (Greece) Three Scythian Goddesses	57

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DESERT SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Emmanuel Anati

Atelier Research Center for Conceptual Anthropology (Italy)

Prologue

This paper considers patterns of settlement in an arid zone and is a case study of the area of Har Karkom, in the Negev desert, consisting of a mountain and its surrounding valleys. The archeological survey recorded 1350 archeological sites. Many of them are Paleolithic, from the Pleistocene. In the Holocene a particular density of sites is present in two periods, in the Bronze Age and in Hellenistic-Roman-Byzantine times. This paper is considering 187 stone-built living settlements of the Bronze Age, in an area of 100 sq. km, which is today deep desert with not even nomadic presence. The variety of settlement patterns and social and economic structures in a desert area raises a number of questions.

Between the fifth and the third millennia BC the region was characterized by a material culture defined Bronze Age Complex (BAC), though its roots are previous to the Bronze Age. Both lithic implements and pottery illustrate Chalcolithic and Early Bronze patterns, which persisted during the time range of the Late Chalcolithic, the Early and Middle Bronze Ages of the fertile areas, about 4500–2000 BC, until a hiatus that followed, lasting about 1,000 years. While not far away there was metal mining exploitation, metal was practically absent: two small copper fragments in 187 living settlements. Throughout this period, both lithic and pottery shapes had minor variations, mainly due to external contacts, as evidenced by rare exotic pieces.

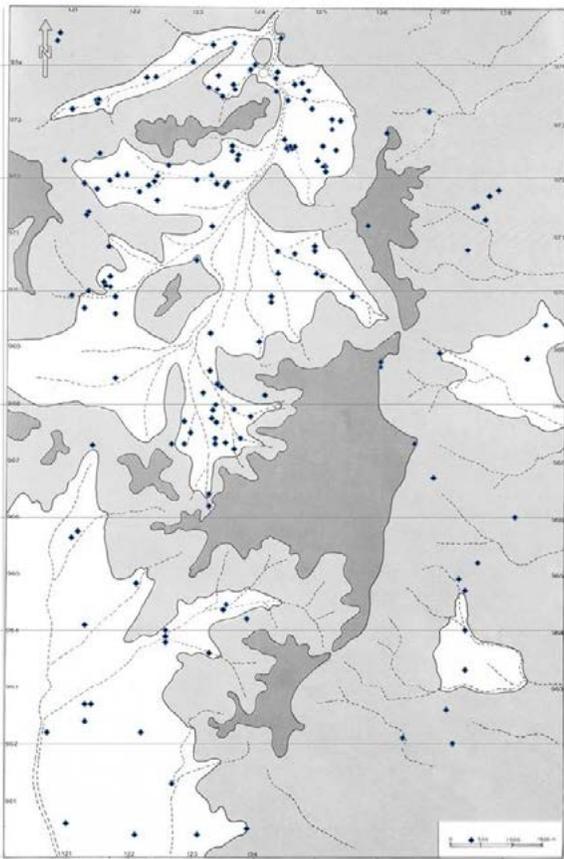
Despite the apparent cultural stagnation of the material culture, various kinds of habitation structures reveal the diversity of social organizations and economies among the ethnic groups that frequented the area. The types and size of living sites represent different kinds of social units: clans, extended families, and nuclear families. There is no evidence of socio-political patterns above that of tribal entities. Different tribal or clan groups coexisted in the area, each one with its own economic and social traditions.

Pastoral people had enclosures for their animals, while agricultural hamlets had other structures adapted to their economies. A small world of diverse social groups lived in the area in the BAC period and left significant traces of their identities. As we shall see, the idea that tribal life in the desert is of a simple widespread single kind requires rethinking.

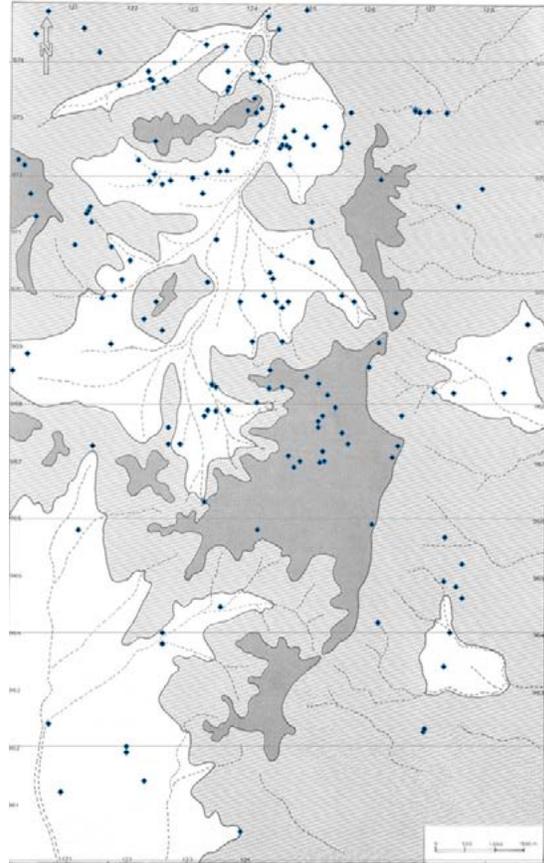
Several articles and books have been written about this mountain in the Negev, in the Israeli desert. The detailed description of the 1,350 recorded sites is reported in the two volumes of the survey. The presence of sanctuaries, geoglyphs, rock art, etc. was documented in earlier publications. The settlements have possible relationships with the biblical account of Mount Sinai also (see bibliography). Whether it is or it is not the biblical Mount Sinai, its sanctuaries and a wealth of other findings indicate its paramount role as a religious center in the middle of the desert. The over 2,500 years old biblical account on Exodus, that is related to the area, may assist in understanding the life of these settlements.

The concentration of 187 stone-built living settlements and other traces of less permanent camping sites make this limited area a suitable context for defining the different habitation patterns and their implications. Because of its desert conditions, kilometers of surface have remained practically untouched for millennia. Both stone structures and remains of material culture are on the ground. The area is an immense natural open-air archeological museum.

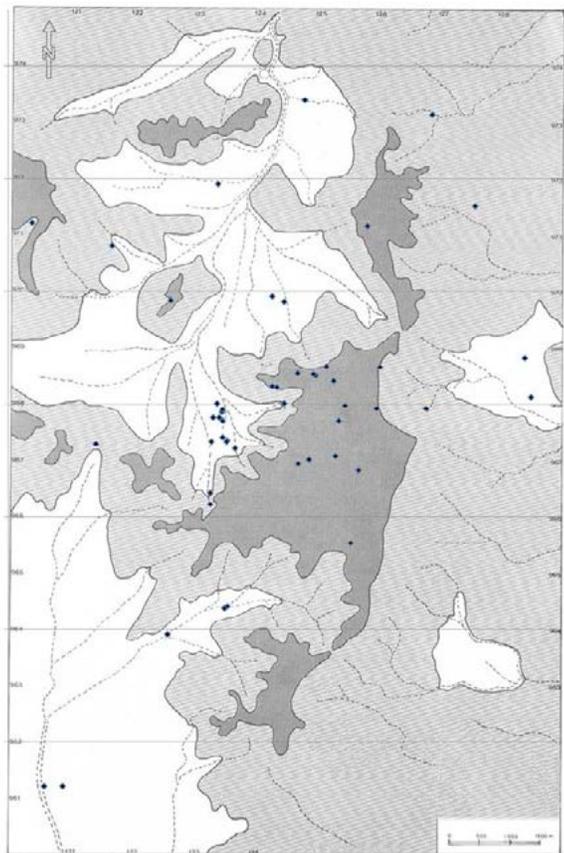
Camping sites are identified by the cleaned surfaces of the tents' or huts' internal spaces and by occasional rows of stones defining the edges of the temporary structures. Besides these remains, there are four main types of living sites with stone-built structures, which will be considered in the present paper. These are the courtyard, the hamlet, the row, and the plaza sites.



A



C



B

Fig. 1. The Har Karkom area was intensively settled during the Bronze age period: dwelling sites are in the valleys around the mountain (map A). Cult sites, including shrines, altars, sanctuaries, menhir structures, and orthostats are mostly on the plateau and at the mountain's foot in the western valley (map B). Tumuli are spread all over (map C). The mountain was a paramount worshipping and ceremonial place during the BAC period. In the maps, each dot represents a site (Anati, Mailand, 2018: 25).

The courtyard sites

The most widespread type of living site in the BAC period was the courtyard site. It consists of stone foundations of large round or oval courtyards surrounded by small rooms. The animals had most of the space. The people lived in small rooms that framed the animal enclosures. There are some smaller courtyards near the major courtyard. The accumulation of walls and enclosures seems to indicate that each complex had been used repeatedly, likely for generations. Clans composed of a number of extended families had their animal pens and living quarters clustered together. The different sizes of the courtyards may indicate the size of the herds of sheltered animals. If we draw from the ethnographic examples of the

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE NEGEV
Quantitative Analysis of the sites
BAC Period (Bronze Age Complex)

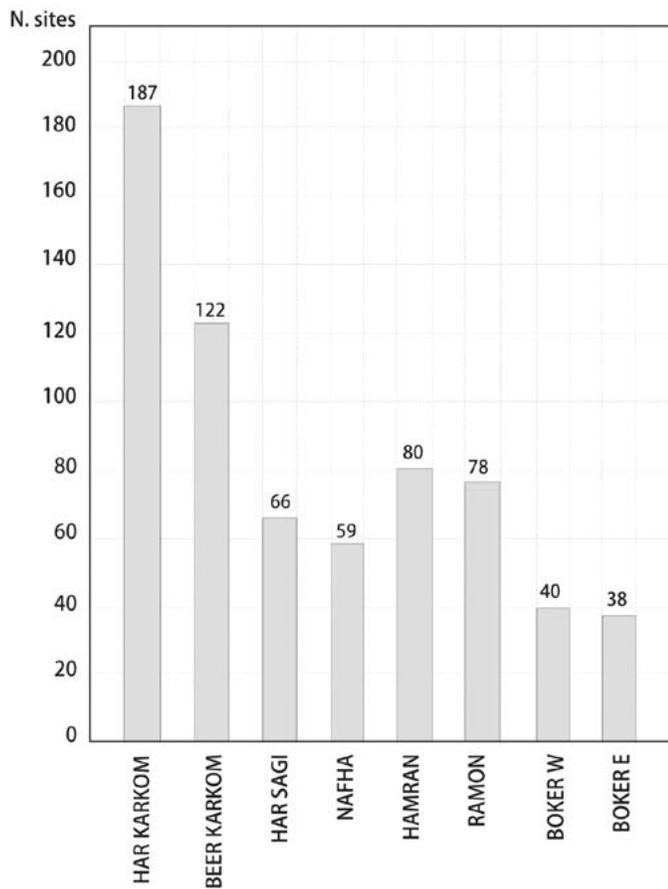


Fig. 2. Quantitative analysis of the sites of the BAC period in eight areas of the Negev Desert, 100 sq. km each, explored by different archaeologists (HK Archives)

Maasai and other African pastoral populations that still live in villages with comparable enclosures, these settlements might reflect the way of life of pastoral groups that maintained their sites and returned to them seasonally for generations. The courtyard sites are typical of the older phases of BAC, but in a few cases finds of material culture indicate that they remained in use in later phases.

Most of these sites had their own ceremonial or cult structures. A stone circle or stone heaps may surround a natural monolith or a large boulder just outside the cluster of huts and enclosures. A hypothesis is that their function might have been something similar to what the Bible calls *gal-ed*, or 'testimonial heaps', near which contracts or agreements were concluded, or where elders met in a sort of local court. In some cases, alignments of orthostats are located near the monoliths. In these living sites there are also structures that were not just for sleeping and eating, which may have had a ceremonial function.

Vaguely anthropomorphic stones were tentatively defined as idols. They are usually found in groups. Most of them were apparently selected for their natural form often enhanced by human hands. The natural anthropomorphic shapes were given a particular focus: did the natural shape reflect the contents? Were these stones receptacles of animistic powers? Other tumuli found around these settlements may have had a funerary or other use. Some of them preserve on their top a standing pillar or menhir. Only one of them out of twelve excavated revealed the presence of a burial.

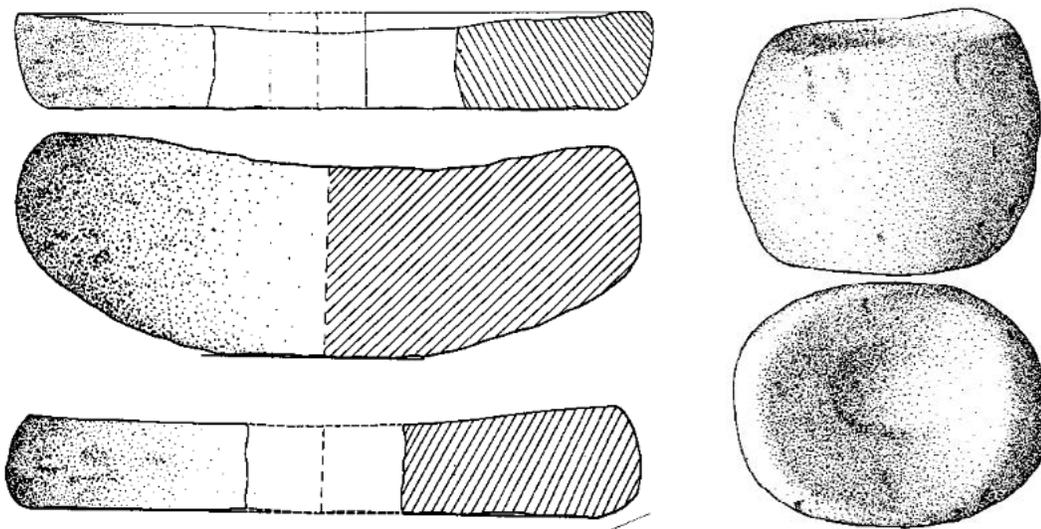


Fig. 3. Millstones and pestle of the BAC period (drawing by Ida Mailland; HK Archives).

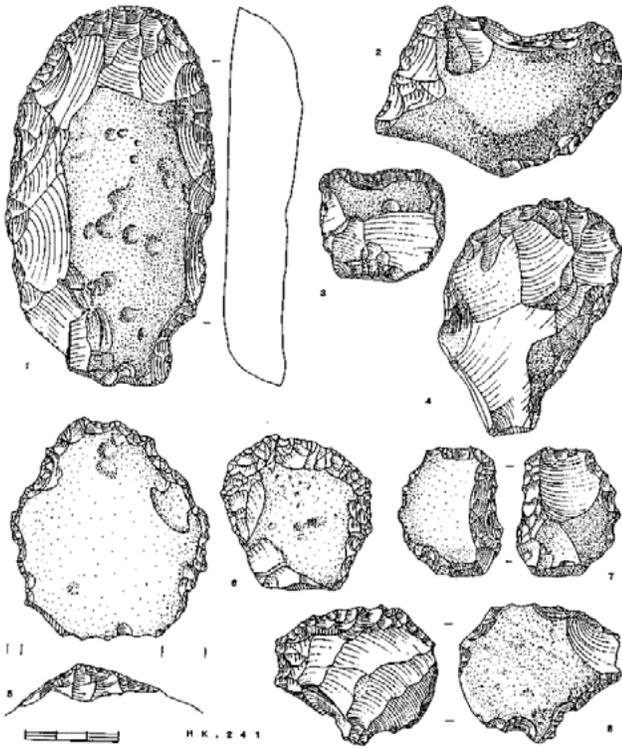


Fig. 4. Flint implements of an archaic phase of the BAC from Plaza site HK 241 (drawing by Ida Mailland; HK Archives.)

As a tentative reconstruction, the courtyard sites appear to be seasonal settlements to which people returned. They suggest the presence of clan groups that moved with the herd. We do not know what kind of animals composed these herds, but we suppose that they were mainly bovines and caprines, which are described in the rock art of that period.

Usually, the larger courtyards have several smaller ones around them. As analyzed in an earlier text (see bibliography), this sort of housing arrangement might be the result of a patriarchal model of several families grouped around a main household, perhaps the house of the father or leader. In the Bible the reference for such a patriarchal figure is Abraham, whose name may literally mean high father (*ab* = father, *ram* = high or great).

The predominance of herd enclosures shows that the economy of the courtyard sites was based on animal husbandry, but evidence of field clearing also seems to testify to some sort of limited garden agriculture. The remains of agricultural terracing located near several



Fig. 5a. Small alabaster vase of the Sixth Egyptian Dynasty or the First Intermediate Period, from site BK 407 (drawing by Ida Mailland. HK Archives.)

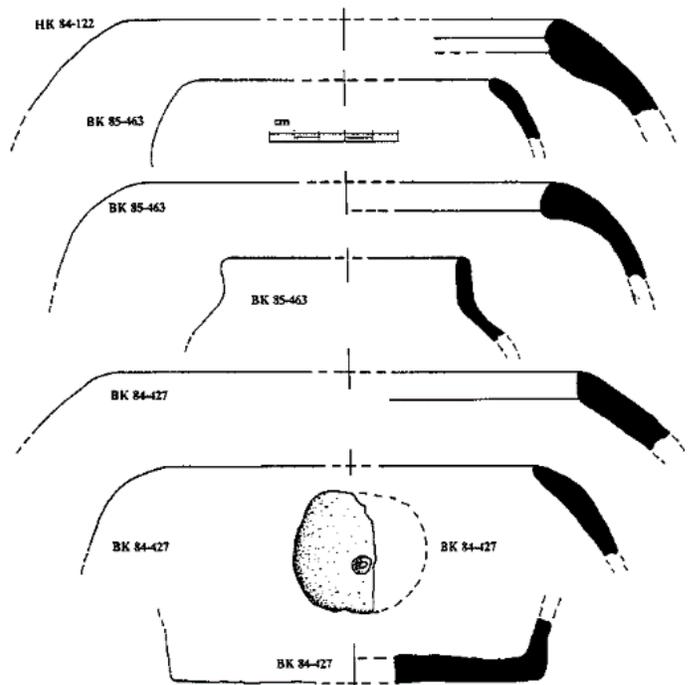


Fig. 5b. Ceramic forms of the BAC period. (drawing by Ida Mailland; HK Archives.)

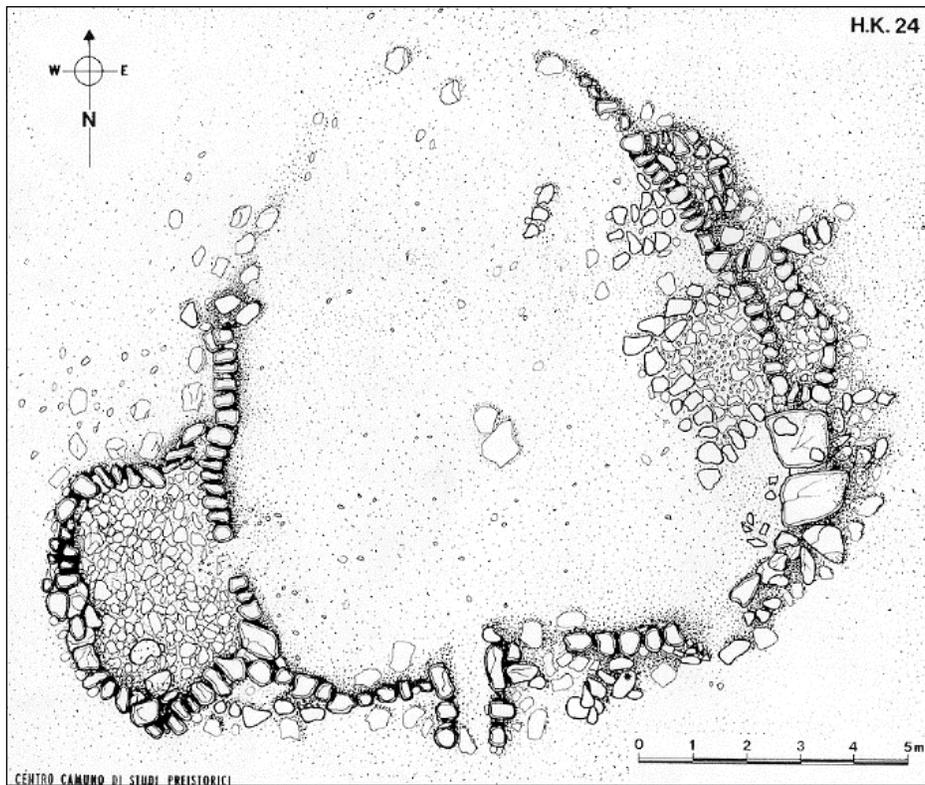
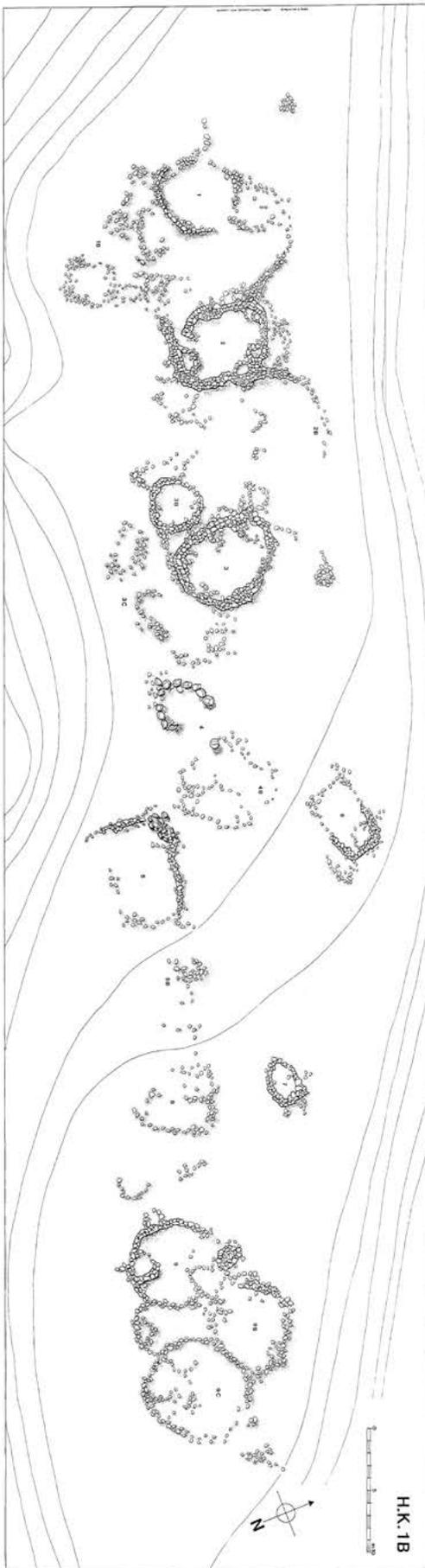


Fig. 6a. Fig. 6b. Plan and aerial view of the so-called Midianite Temple on the plateau of Har Karkom (Site HK 24; photo EA93: XXXI-12; Plan by L. Cottinelli. HK Archives).



of these habitation sites indicate the presence of small cultivated fields.

The BAC terraces are distinct from later ones in their building technique: they are usually made of rows of boulders and the choice of cultivable land is not in the wadis, but on the mild lateral slopes and semi-flat areas, defining small cultivation fields. The Roman-Byzantine terraces present in the area are usually built with smaller stones, mainly in side lateral wadis and encompassed much larger fields.

The hamlet sites

A second type of BAC habitation is the hamlet site. It is characterized by the agglomeration of stone structures, counting 10-30 rooms and small courtyards. The concentration in a cluster, which sometimes is also surrounded by a wall or a palisade, may have had a protective purpose. Hamlet site BK 427 was evaluated to have sheltered between 20 and 30 individuals, probably an extended family. Hamlet sites do not have a main central courtyard; rather, they have threshing floors around the settlement.

In the immediate vicinity there are tumuli, standing monoliths, and paved platforms, some with an altar-like structure oriented toward the mountain. It is noteworthy that almost every BAC living site is connected to some sort of ceremonial or cult structure. Each site had its own worship or social facilities.

This type of settlement seems to have been rather permanent and may have been in use the year round. The threshing floors indicate wheat cultivation; also, the purpose of small rooms, too small for habitation, might be justified by the storage of grain or other agricultural products.

Similar living sites are known also in the Uvda Valley, south of Har Karkom, near the Arabah Valley. As a tentative historical reconstruction, it was suggested that they may reflect a way of life similar to that of the Midianites: pastoral and agricultural permanent or semi-permanent habitation sites, as described in the Bible.

Fig. 7. A general plan of site HK 1a. A living site of the BAC period which has been reused repeatedly. The rounded huts belong to the Bronze Age while the rectangular structure in the middle of the plan is related to Roman pottery, indicating a secondary reuse of the same site. The plans of the living structures and the system of building walls are neatly different in the two period (Site HK 1a; HK Archives).



Fig. 8. Partial plan of the site HK 122 with courtyard structures of the BAC period. The living rooms are outside the enclosures. Remains of walls in the slopes may represent agricultural terracing (Site HK 122; HK Archives).

On the basis of the material remains at Har Karkom, these sites were mainly active in the late phases of the BAC period, thus in the late phases of the Early Bronze Age and at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age.

The row sites

A third type is the row sites. They consist of rows of small, round, living quarters. The planning of these sites, with the peculiar alignment of their structures, seems to reflect a tribal organization that was more

rigid and regimented in comparison with the others. The presence of one or more animal enclosures in a group of several habitations seems to indicate a system of common property with regard to livestock.

The living structures are small round or oval huts with stone foundations, presumably covered by roofs of organic material, as in other types of sites. All the remains of huts of the BAC period appear to have had roofs made of organic material.

In the row sites, each structure, having an internal



Fig. 9a, b. Courtyard settlement of the BAC period seen from the air. It has a group of courtyards surrounded by small structures (Site BK 403; photo ISR 85 C/IV-35).



Fig. 10. Site HK 63, where the BAC row of round huts has been overlapped by a row of Roman rectangular huts. (Anati, Maillard, 2018, p. 60).

space averaging 6–8 sq. m, could have hosted a maximum of four or five, likely conceived to shelter a nuclear family. The cellular plan of row sites may be that of groups of nuclear families. In this respect it differs from both hamlet and courtyard sites, which were probably planned to accommodate extended families. Row sites are also known in various parts of the Sinai Peninsula and on the highlands of central Negev; they belong primarily to the evolved phases of BAC.

A peculiar case is site HK 63, where the BAC row of round huts had been overlaid by a row of Roman rectangular huts. This site was described in the survey report as belonging to the Roman period. Subsequent investigation allowed the recognition of the presence of BAC material culture and the two different phases of habitation structures built on the same spot, but belonging to two distinct periods, 2,000 years apart. Often, the people of the BAC period and those of the Roman period, selected the same spots for their living sites.

The plaza sites

The plaza sites are characterized by stone structures arranged in a circle around a central plaza. In a monographic study on *The Plaza Sites of Har Karkom* (Anati, 1987), 30 such settlements were analyzed in order

to obtain an overview. Such sites are known both in the Israeli Negev and in Jordan, but nowhere else do we know of a concentration as large as the one found at Har Karkom. Some of these plaza sites may encompass as many as 26 structures and their diameters may reach up to 80 m. Most of them are smaller and some may consist of just five or six built structures.

The stone floors have different shapes: some have a rounder form and measure 7–8 m in diameter. Some have a small courtyard on their side and appear to be living quarters. Other structures are stone platforms with small subterranean bell-shaped silos; others appear just as stone heaps that would require systematic digging for better analysis.

Orthostats with marks of fire and other cult or ceremonial structures have been recorded in over half the plaza sites near altar stones. Rock engravings are also common, appearing in small “sanctuaries” usually located just outside the plaza site itself. At one of these sites (HK 267) a boulder covered by a heap of stones had a rock engraving representing what seems to be a woman giving birth.

On the basis of flint tool typology, the majority of plaza sites belong to an archaic phase of BAC, thus corresponding to the Chalcolithic period and the beginning of the Early Bronze Age. They seem to form



Fig.11a, b. Detail of an anthropomorphic stone in a small heap of rocks, among which are other anthropomorphic forms (Site HK 65d; photo EA93 BIII XXVIII-27; EA93 BIII XIX-16; E.A. 1994).

a ring around Har Karkom along the main trails leading to the mountain, while maintaining a surprisingly constant distance from each other (average 2 to 3 km). There are areas near several of the plaza sites, covered by traces of regularly spaced holes 0.5–1.0 m in diameter, and about 1.0-1.5 m from each other, on the slopes by the sides of small wadis. Several soundings of these holes produced in all just one broken flint polished herminet or hoe, a Chalcolithic or Early Bronze Age agricultural tool. Not much, but enough to consider them to be traces of plantations. Some of these fields may count over 500 holes and be over 150 m long. The kind of cultivation in the areas of the plantations was a product suitable to the desert climatic conditions, worth cultivating just there, but which specific type remains a mystery. The size of the plantations indicates their important function.



Fig. 12. Tracing of rock engravings from Wadi Huwara, displaying three overlapping phases showing different shades of patina. The black figure is considered to be Islamic, the dark grey Hellenistic or Roman, and the lighter grey is attributed to the BAC period. It represents bovines and caprines in a scene where a wild animal is endangering the herd. (HK Archives).

Five out of 30 plaza sites are double plaza sites, that is, two circular series of structures, one near the other, probably built in two phases, the later to replace the earlier one. This repetition of the same structure in the same spot may indicate that the specific locality was fit for its function.

All the plaza sites are located on the major trails with easy access, are on flat areas or mild slopes and can be seen from a distance. They seem to have been set up on a system of intervisibility: from each plaza site one can see the nearest one in either direction. The repetitive shape of plaza surrounded by stone-built structures should have had both a functional reason and conceptual or ceremonial motivations. But why should people convene in such places?

What was the function of these peculiar structures? A wide-ranging debate concerns the function of the

plaza sites. After excavating or performing soundings in ten of these sites, the first hypothesis – that these structures might have been funerary complexes – had to be dismissed. Not a single one of the excavated structures revealed a burial. A second hypothesis suggested that the plaza sites were guard stations around the mountain. It was discarded because the sites lacked defensive walls and were not strategically positioned on hilltops, which is a logical characteristic of guard sites. There is a defensive site (BK 407) near Beer Karkom with massive defense walls and towers. The plaza sites appear to be more open than closed, inviting visitors rather than blocking them.

Another hypothesis suggested that plaza sites were boundaries placed round the sacred mountain in order to demarcate the territory that was not to be entered by the people coming from outside. The Bi-



Fig. 13. Alignment of large stones of an agricultural terrace of the BAC period. Later terraces were built with smaller stones arranged to form small walls, but BAC- period terraces were usually simple alignments of boulders (Site HK 64; photo EA93; XXII-36).



Fig. 14. Assemblages of traces of holes in the soil, concentrated on sloping grounds by the side of wadis, appear to be remains of plantations in which each shrub had its own hole. These clusters of holes are found near the living sites, on the edge of small wadis (Site BK 410; photo ISR 85: XXXV-11).

ble reports this sort of restriction (*Exodus* 19:12). According to this hypothesis, the early date of the plaza sites would indicate that a boundary for the sacred mountain was indeed an ancient tradition. But if they marked boundaries, it is not clear why the other BAC living sites are concentrated inside that boundary, not outside it.

These plaza sites should have had special functions which neither archeologists nor architects have been able to explain. They include living quarters, but their structures also had different functions. All of them are located along trails leading to the mountain. They are topographically positioned differently from all the other BAC living sites.

In one of the plaza sites (HK 241) an area of less than 2 sq. m yielded a concentration of a dozen flint fan scrapers of excellent quality, apparently unused. This spot may have been the area of a flint craftsman, or a

shop, or both.

In another plaza site (HK 152) a bell-shaped silo evidenced by a circular set of stones at ground level was dug. At the bottom of the silo, 80 cm below the surface, a level of gray ash soil contained a gray rectangular earth block, likely the remains of a wooden box, about 20–30 cm wide and long, and 12–15 cm high, that probably contained a small quantity of valued organic material. The microscopic analysis did not provide any helpful hint about its contents.

The structure of these sites should have had a specific function. Their main characteristic was the plaza shape. What was the function of this plaza? Was it for gatherings, meetings, and assemblages of people, like market or trade? The impression is that plaza sites may have been caravan stations or commercial centers of some kind. Can we imagine the functions of such markets around a mountain

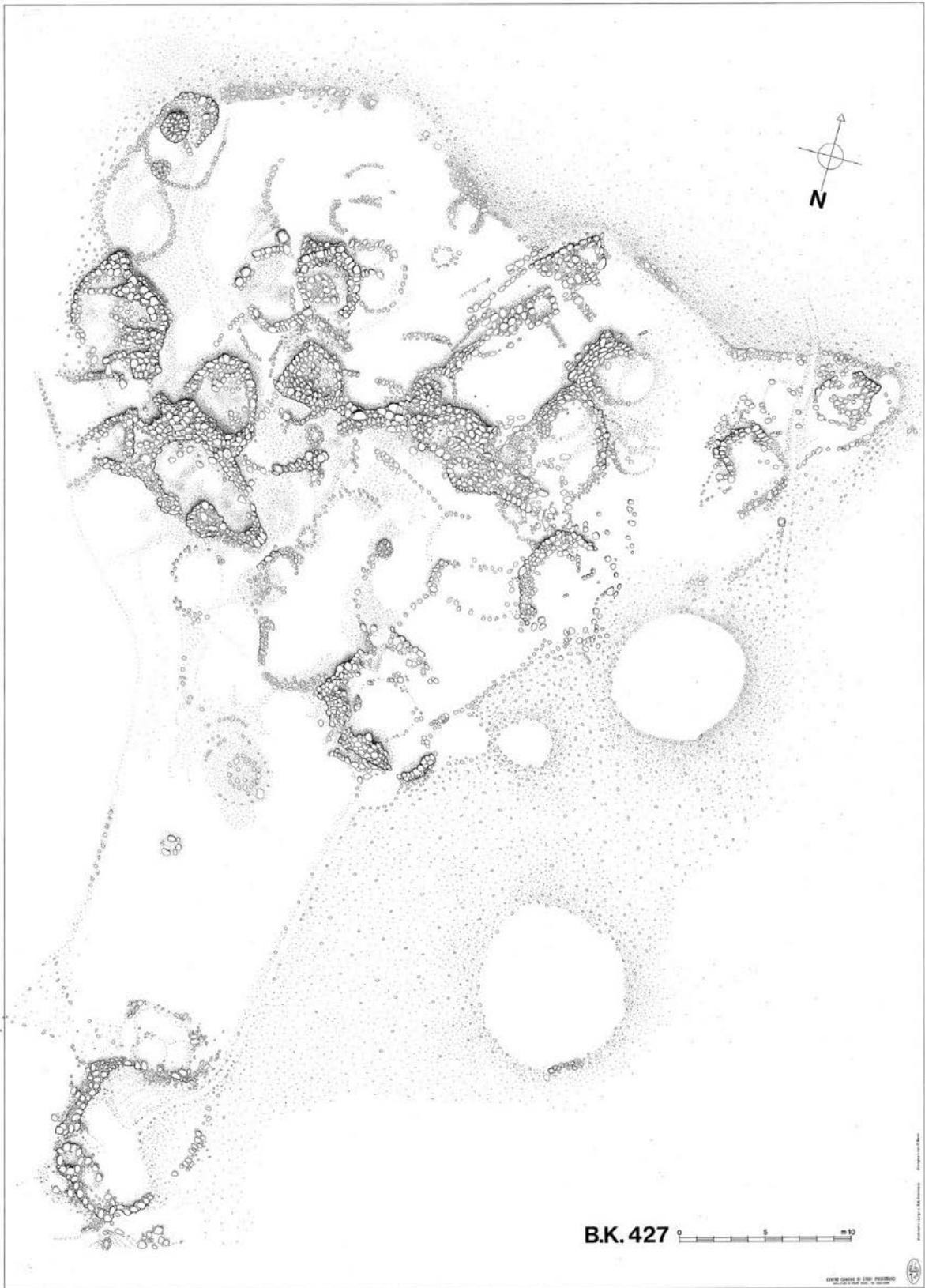


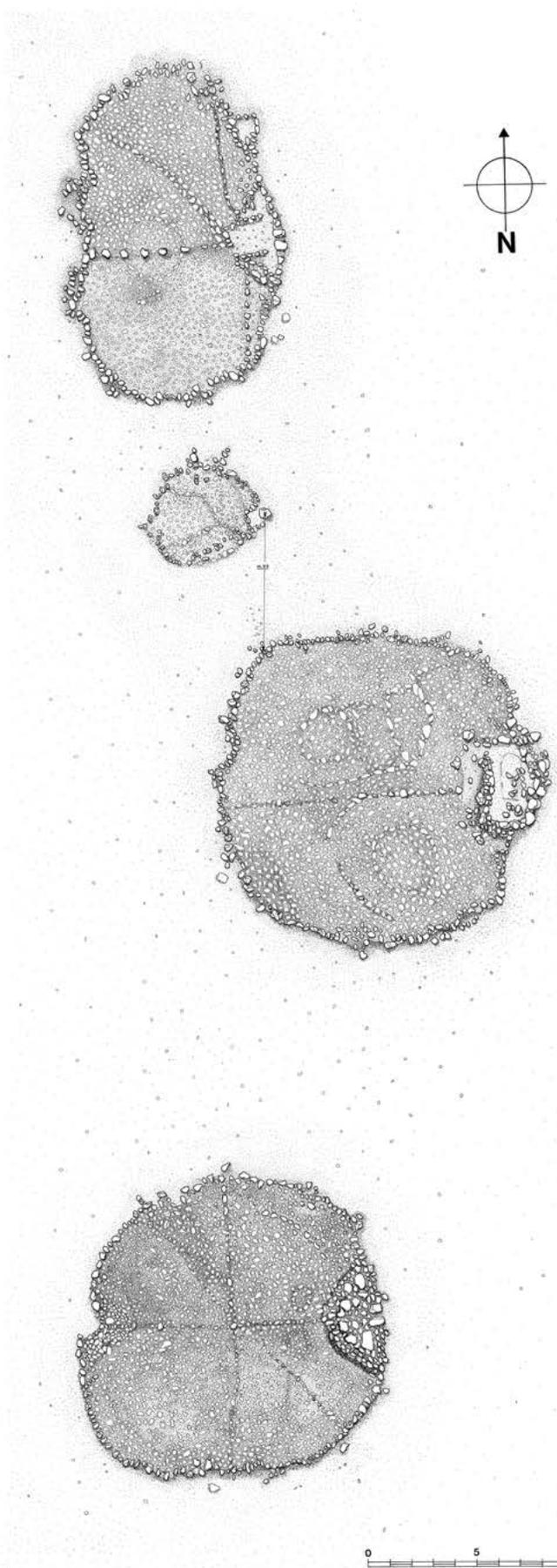
Fig. 15. Hamlet-type village of the BAC period. Clusters of rooms are associated with small courtyards. Around the settlement are several threshing floors, and one side of the village seems to have been bounded by a wall or a palisade (Site BK 427; EA 1994, HK Archives).



Fig. 16a. Aerial view showing the location of the same village on the lower left side of the photo. Near the settlement are paved platforms, each having an altar facing the east toward the mountain (Site HK 426-27; photo EA99: XXXV-10).

Fig. 16b. Detail of a platform seen in the previous photograph (Site BK 426; photo EA90: VIII-9).





in the middle of the desert, during the Chalcolithic period? The idea of a prehistoric Lourdes, with merchants offering ritual objects, incense, holy water, drugs, objects of cult, but also water and food, though seductive, is far from proven. The function of these plaza sites remains an unsolved question. This was also the conclusion of the monographic volume dedicated to this subject.

In addition to the four types of BAC living sites, the remains of nomadic camping sites, with floors of tents or huts, and remains of living layers in caves and rock shelters illustrate a variety of desert living patterns.

The BK 407 fortress

A unique site in the studied area is a fortress, with walls over 2 m thick, several towers and two fortified gates. The material culture consists of BAC lithic industry and a small Egyptian alabaster juglet from the Sixth dynasty (or about the end of the Early Bronze age, around 2000 BC). It overlooks the trail to the only well of the area. A possible connection with the biblical account may identify it with a well that was on the border between two tribes and source of dispute between them.

Conclusions

The various types of living structures indicate different social and economic systems. Animal husbandry, agriculture, hunting, and trade had different weights for each one of the described types of site. Hamlet sites were more or less permanent, with an economy involving grain threshing. Courtyard sites likely were seasonal, with a prevailing patriarchal, pastoral economy. Row sites were primarily pastoral, with a more rigid social structure of nuclear families. Plaza sites seem to have been utilized for trade to a higher extent than the others. Plantations were grown, and products probably traded.

Courtyard sites and plaza sites may have appeared before the hamlet and the row sites, but during the BAC period these four types of habitation sites coexisted for centuries. This period of concomitance of various human groups ended rather abruptly as the entire area of the Negev and Sinai became empty of humans. The

Fig.17. Site BK 226e. Plan of the platforms. Each platform has an altar oriented toward the mountain of Har Karkom (HK Archives).



Fig. 18. Har Karkom, site 217. The figure displaying a light patina was hidden under earth and a heap of stones in a Chalcolithic or Early Bronze age plaza site. The image is likely to show a birth (Photo ISR 87 IV-23).

BAC period and its various living sites came to an end in the 20th century BC. A hiatus followed. The cause may have been a period of extreme drought.

Besides a few mines and other rare regime sites, the hiatus of human presence lasted for most of the second millennium BC. There is no consistent evidence of tribal life in the Late Bronze Age. Some sporadic traces of the Iron Age were followed by a new wave of settlements, lasting about one millennium, from the 6th century BC to the 7th century AD.

The BAC period was an age of intense life in the desert, which likely was less dry than today. It was also an age of intense spiritual life. Almost every settlement had its ceremonial or cult structures: temples, shrines, sanctuaries, altars, standing pillars, stone circles, testimonial heaps, and more have been described in previous publications. Each site had places of worship. These were not in the central square of the settlement, like cathedrals, mosques, or temples in urban societies, they were just outside the settlement. Probably they were one of several facilities to have existed near the settlement.

Besides simple considerations, like the fact that they

all looked for some supernatural forces, worshiped idols, had altars, and made sacrifices, in fact there is very little we can figure out about the content and concepts of their spiritual life and beliefs.

The various types of living sites, as we have seen, also reflected different kinds of social organization. Courtyard sites probably sheltered large clans. Row sites hosted groups of nuclear families, while hamlet sites seem to show a society formed by extended families with common economic activities.

According to the different typology of the enclosures for animals, sometimes the herds were a common property of the entire community, while in other cases each family owned their animals. Doubts arise about the common belief that agriculture was non-existent or secondary for desert people. The hamlet sites produced wheat and the plaza sites had plantations (of what we do not know). The terracing of the fields and the sites of plantation holes indicate that something was cultivated there, and perhaps not just for family use. If a few living structures are related to large plantation fields, the product may not have been only for family consumption.

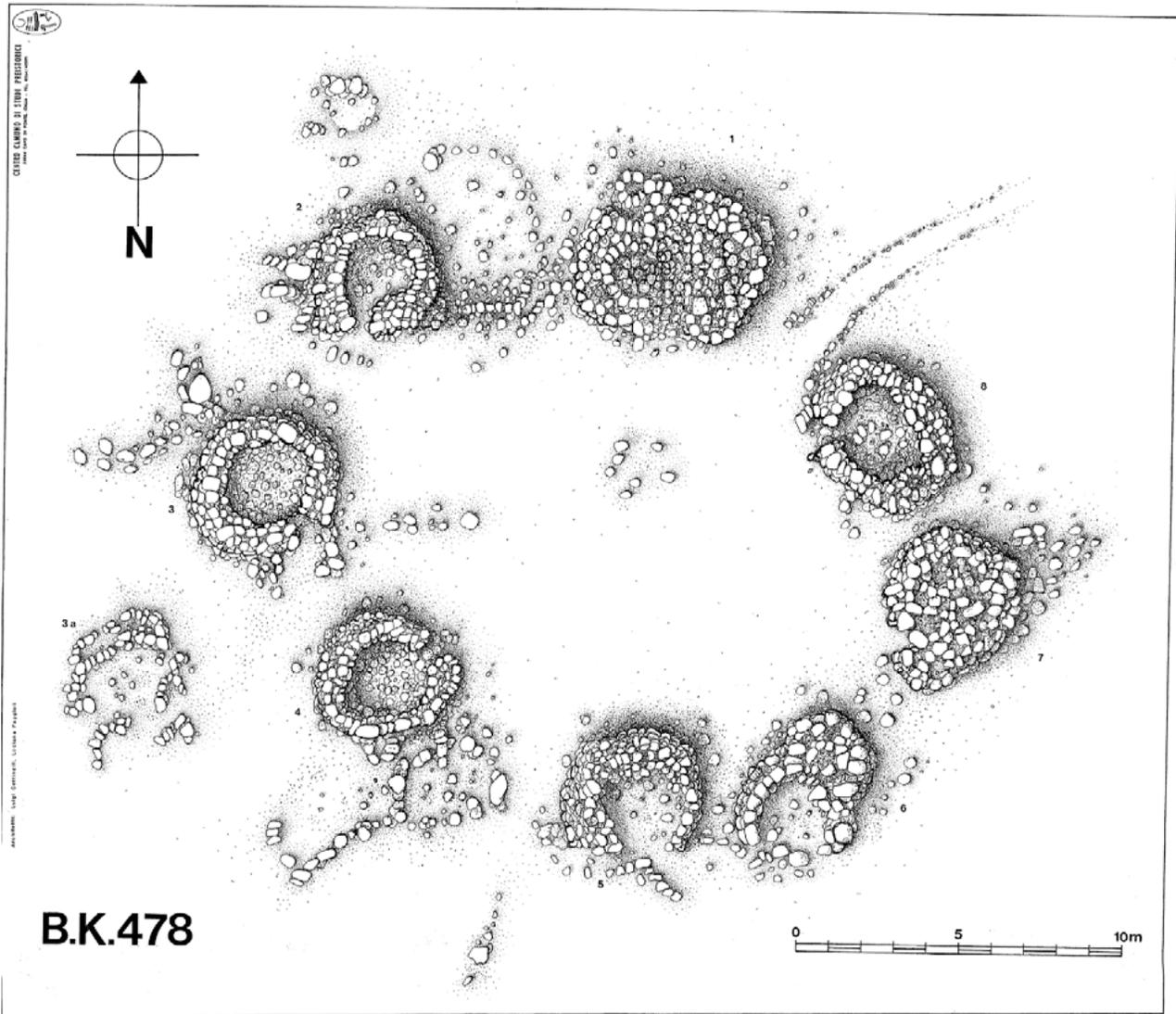


Fig. 18a. A plaza site, with eight round structures arranged in a circle (Site BK 478; tracing by Luigi Cottinelli. HK Archives).

Fig. 18b. Aerial view of the same plaza site, located by the side of a large wadi. In the flat space in the left of the photograph, appearing lighter in the photo, is an alignment of large boulders, likely a BAC terracing (Site BK 478; photo EA98: III-22).

PLAZA SITES AND ROUTES AROUND HAR KARKOM

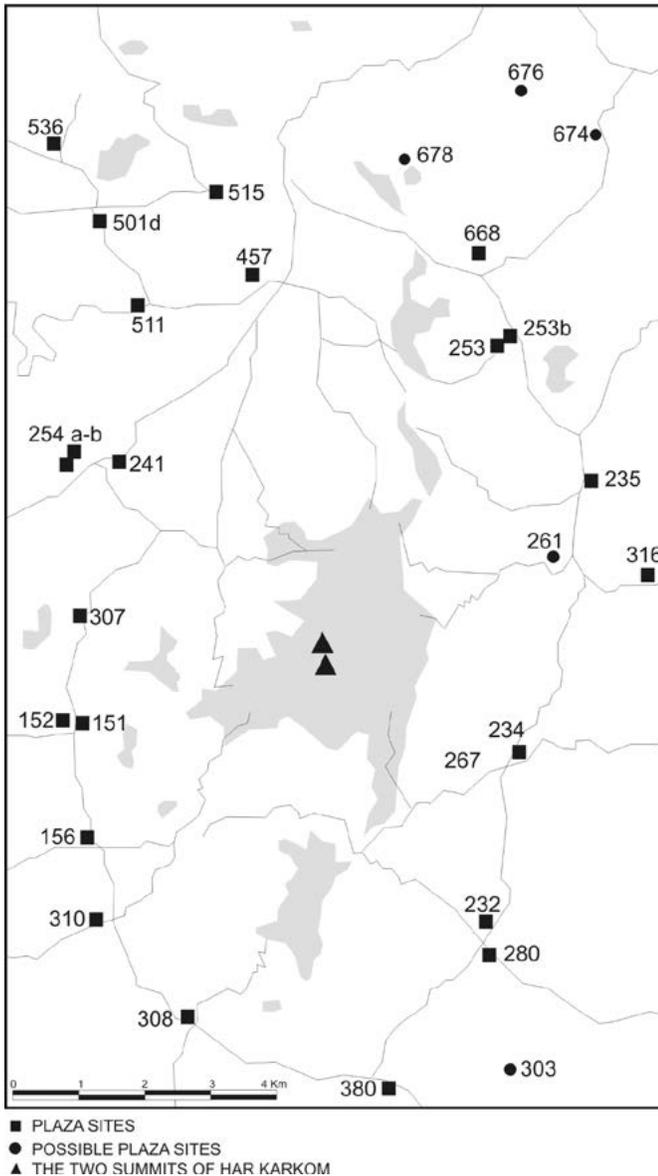


Fig. 19. Map of plaza site distribution around Har Karkom. Lines show the trails that lead toward the mountain and between sites (HK Archives).

The stone-built structures of the BAC living sites provide the image of a territory frequented by various human groups, which may well correspond to the image of the tribal populations described in the biblical narration, like the Midianites, the Amalekites, the Edomites, and others.

A major problem concerns the fact that no consistent water source is known at Har Karkom. Today there are just a few small stagnant water pools inside the wadis, where water remains for a few months a year

during the rainy season. It could hardly be a source of drinking water for multitudes of people. The nearest water source is the poor well of Beer Karkom, 7 km away. Even if water may have been less limited during the Bronze Age, it is difficult to figure out how all the people that left behind living structures could have survived.

The mosaic of different lifestyles recorded in the field provides a view of how desert life may have unfolded during the BAC period. Archeology is revealing an image of an empty quarter that was all but empty. Different human groups carried on an intense life around the sacred mountain.

Apart from the problem of how all these people obtained water and food, other major queries persist. What drew all these people to a territory with such scanty economic resources? Why are there so many villages and camping sites? Why all the cult sites? Yes: it was a holy mountain. But why? Why just there? Why was it a holy mountain? Major queries remain unanswered.

Imperial courts did not settle down in the dry periphery, tribal people did. But is it a periphery? This arid area is the land bridge between Africa and Asia, a land of migrations and encounter between people and civilizations. The desert was dry but fertile for thinkers, prophets, and shamans, as testified by the fact that some major religions were conceived in the desert.

A small corner of a desert at a specific period offers an image of a variety of lifestyles. Even in the most arid places of the world, human beings found different ways of living and socializing. The processes that produce different patterns of society are the roots of culture. This case study, in its modest frame, raises queries about the nature of social diversities, even in the middle of the desert. The environment and the natural resources of the territory were the same for all, but each group developed its own solutions. This is perhaps a fundamental aspect of human nature.

The tribes of the desert did not build palaces, did not erect pyramids or ziggurats; their monuments were offered to them by the shapes of nature. They produced art; millions of images are engraved on the rock surfaces. They had ceremonial and cult sites; apparently, they had an intense intellectual life in search of values and identity. More detailed and depth studies of desert civilizations may open up new chapters in the history of the Near East.

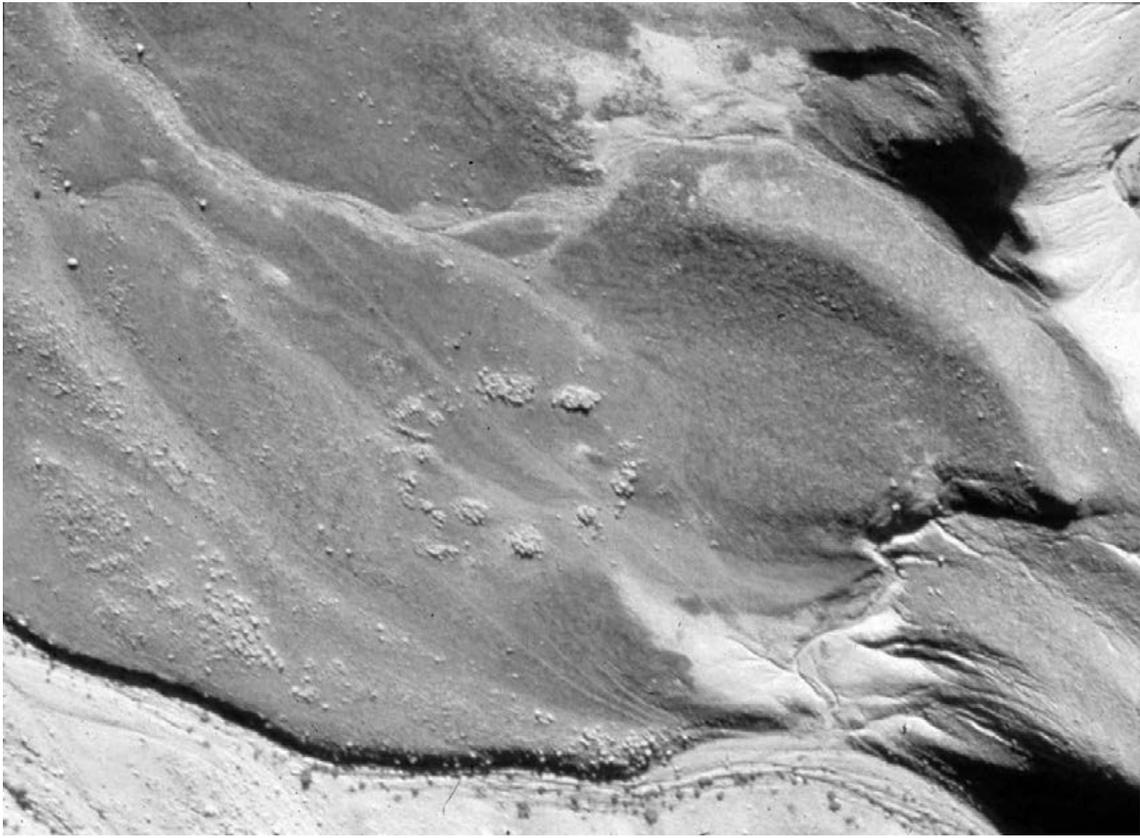
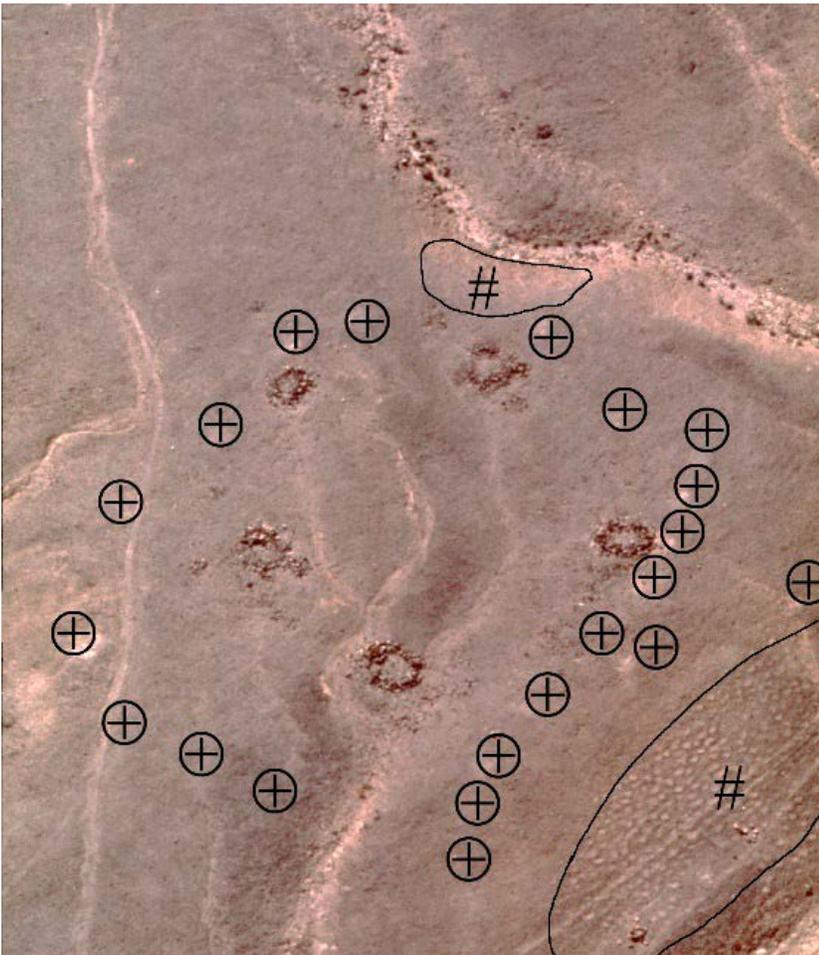


Fig. 20. Aerial view of plaza Site HK 152. Near the edge of the large wadi, in the lower left side of the photograph, are traces of a field of plantation holes. (Site HK 152; photo ISR86: XX-8).



Fig. 21. Group of stones near Plaza site HK 232. A flat slab near an altar stone has cup-marks on its upper surface and several engravings on its exposed surfaces. The top of the left stone has a whiteish color due to prolonged use of fire (Site HK 232; photo ISR 86: V-8).



LEGENDA
⊕ Post-holes
Plantation fields

Fig. 22a, 22b. A plaza site of wadi Zuriaz east of Har Karkom, with five round stone huts around a central plaza. Remains of plantations are evidenced by traces of holes near the wadi, on the right side, at the base of the photograph. Post-holes may indicate the traces of a palisade surrounding the site (Photo ISR 87 III-5).

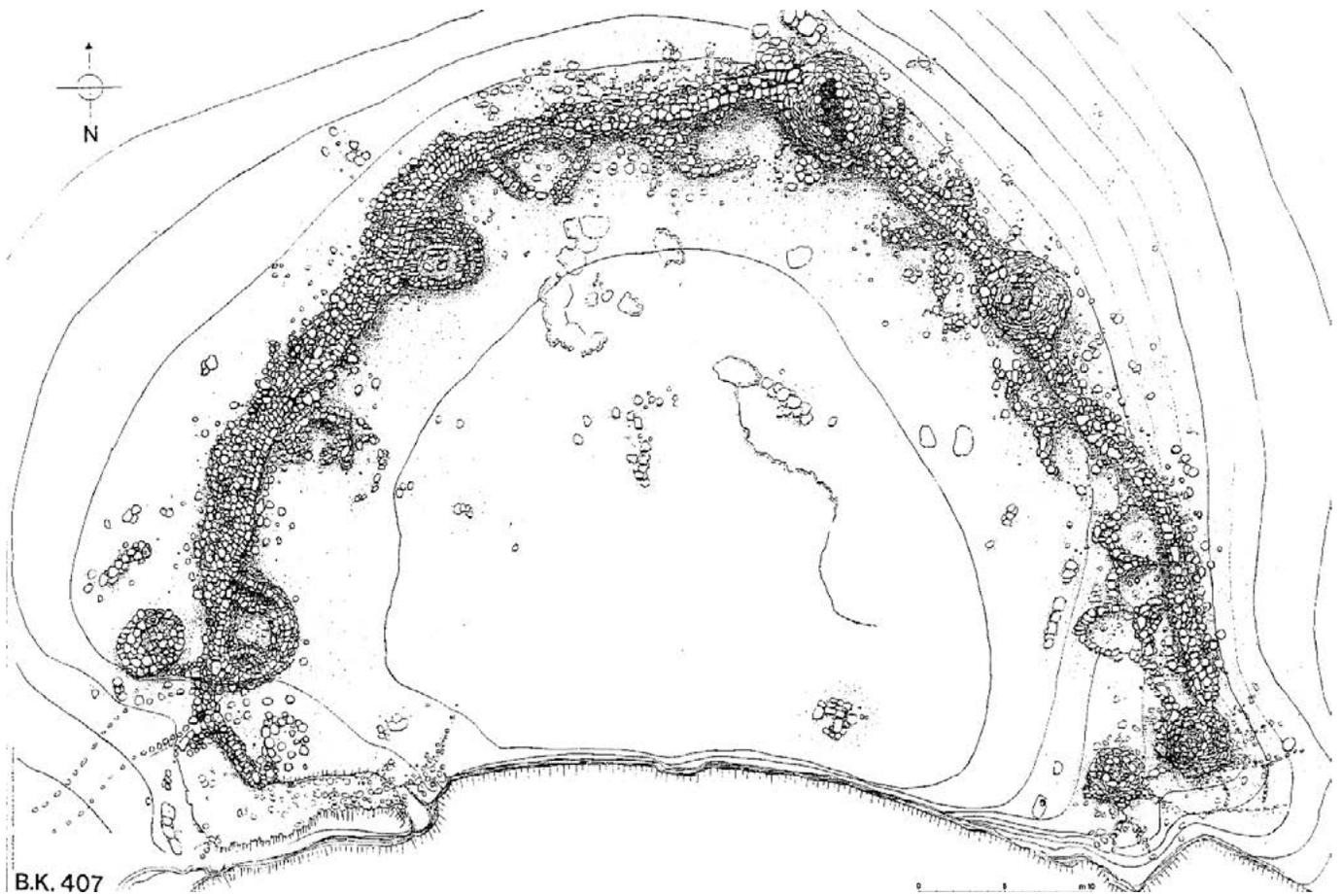


Fig. 23a, 23b. Aerial view and plan of Site BK 407. This fortified site, facing a precipice of nearly 100 m, overlooks the well at Beer Karkom (hidden by the vegetation at the left foot of the hills). On the right, along the trail that reaches the water source, are the remains of two towers, a sort of access gate to the well. Inside the fortification, lithic implements of the BAC period were found, and an Egyptian alabaster vase from the Sixth Dynasty or the First Intermediate Period (Site BK 407; photo EA98; III-8; HK Archives).



Fig. 24. Altar stone with a cup-hole on top, and rock engravings of a worshiper and an ibex. Likely the ibex was worshiped or sacrificed or both (Plaza site HK 234; photo ISR 86: LI- 17; cf. EA 1987, fig. 95).

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PREHISTORIC SEXUALITY IN THE ROCK ART OF SERRA DA CAPIVARA (PNSC/PI), BRAZIL

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Introduction

These rock records are paintings and engravings produced by the early inhabitants of Brazil who were spread throughout the country. The Serra da Capivara National Park and its surroundings is one of their major concentrations (Justamand, 2010, 2012a, 2016; Justamand *et al.*, 2017a; Oliveira *et al.*, 2018, 2019). The National Park of Serra da Capivara¹ is located between the municipalities of São Raimundo Nonato, Brejo do Piauí, João Costa and Coronel José Dias, comprising an area of 130,000 ha and 214 sq. km in perimeter (Araújo *et al.*, 1998; Guidon, 2007) (see map 1).²

1 The longitudinal and latitudinal limits of the PNSC are: N: Lat. 08°26'50.099" S; Long. 42°42'53.654" Wgr; East: Lat. 08°36'33.681" S; Long. 42°19'46.908" Wgr; S: Lat.08°54'23.365"S; Long. 42°10'21.874" Wgr.; West: Lat.08°46'28,382" S, Long. 42°19'51.316" Wgr.(Araújo *et al.*, 1998).

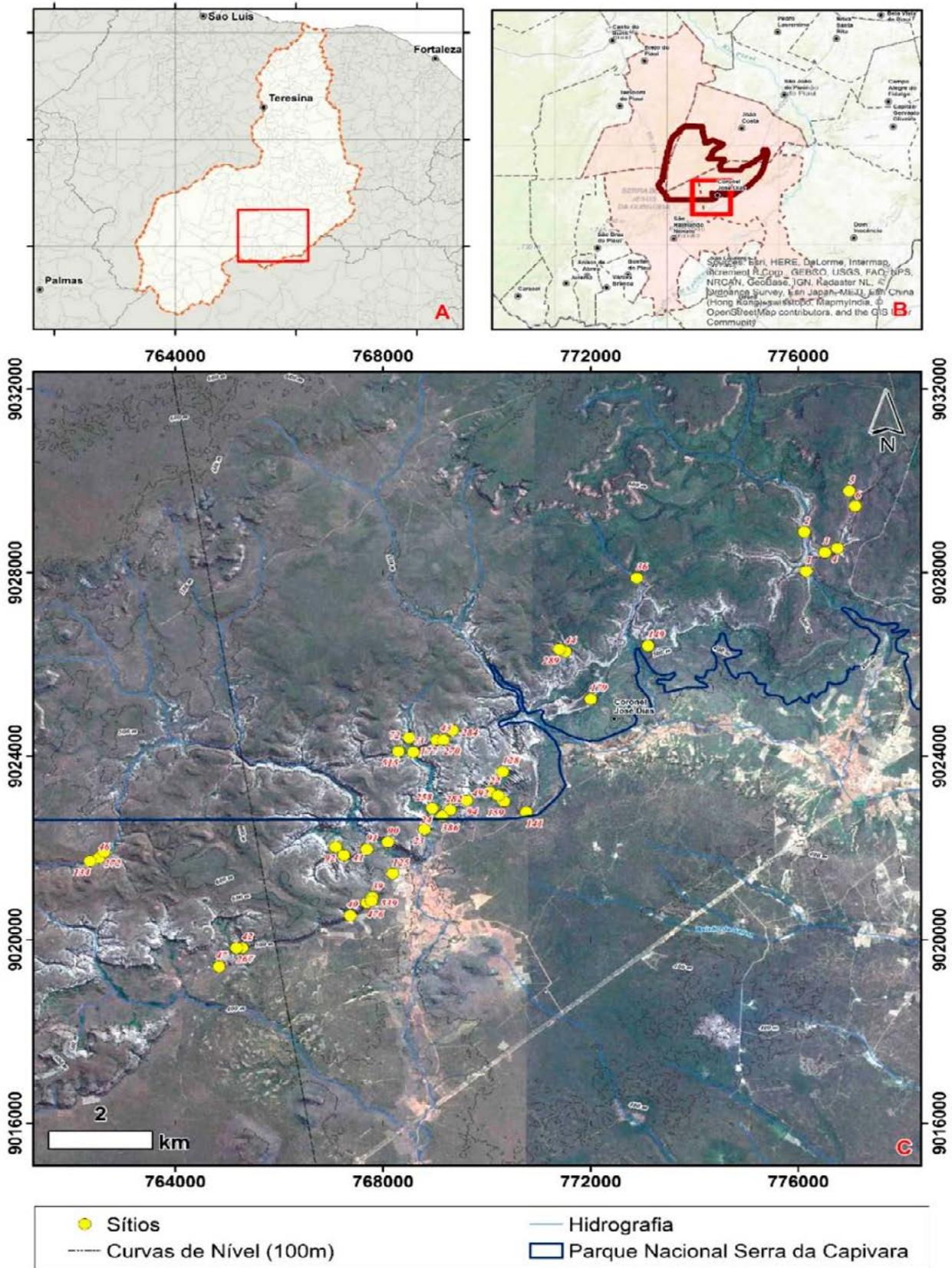
2 The PNSC was established based on Federal Decree No. 83548 of 5 June 1979, creating an area of approximately 100,000 ha of permanent environmental protection, which was later expanded by Presidential Decree No. 99,143, of 12 March 1990, in which three permanent protected areas were created: 1st Serra Vermelha/Angical, with a perimeter of 60 km; 2nd Serra do Cumbre/ Chapada da Pedra Hume, with a perimeter of 90 km; 3rd Serra da Capivara/ Baixão das Andorinhas, with a perimeter of 50 km (Guidon, 1991).

The main reasons for creating the PNSC were:

1. Tourism: the conservation unit could help in the economic development of the region, based on a sustainable tourism policy and incentives at the municipal, state and federal levels, thus, cultural and environmental tourism are ways of generating employment and income (Guidon, 1991).
2. Environmental conservation: between the climatic domains of the Caatinga and the Cerrado within the Polígono das Secas,³ characterized by a semi-arid climate in the northeast region of Brazil, with a great diversity of fauna and flora (Araújo *et al.*, 1998).
3. Archeological and paleontological research: the area⁴ has the highest concentration of archeological sites in the world, with the oldest archeological remains on the American continent, dating back

3 Polígono das Secas: region between the state of Alagoas, Piauí, Paraíba, Ceará, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, Bahia, and Minas Gerais, characterized by a semi-arid climate and low economic development.

4 Archeological Area: "As an entry category for the beginning and systematic continuation of a research, it must be fixed within an ecological unit that participates in the same geoenvironmental characteristics" (Martin, 2008, p. 89).



Map 1. The location of 51 archeological sites selected for research. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).

to over 130,000 years ago (Martin, 2008; Guidon, 2014, vol. II-A).

The paleontological remains found in the region point to the existence of extinct megafauna and lakes with an absolute age of more than 9,000 years ago (Guerin *et al.*, 1996).

Considering communicative and educational elements, the rock records are a rich source of history. This article is concerned with some significant scenes belonging to the northeast tradition (Prous, 2006; Justamand, 2007; 2010; Barreto, 2010; Funari *et al.*, 2018; Gomes Filho and Justamand, 2018; Justamand *et al.*, 2020).

The records on the rock surfaces were part of a practice of what was visible, a codification of everyday life and of customs (Thompson, 1998). Looking at this testimony of the past shows that social and natural relations were fundamental for survival.

The rock signs most likely acted as one of the forms of transmission of the accumulated knowledge. The rocks served as a kind of blackboard for the populations that produced them, showing practices maintained over time (Ki-Zerbo, 1982). Through them, the groups exchanged information, which enabled them to enjoy the conditions of life (Justamand, 2010).

The recovery of the history of precolonial peoples is related to material remains, such as lithic tools, ceramics, bone remains, and prehistoric art. Images from the past can contribute to enter the symbolic universe, and reach some interpretations that are subjective, but aim to achieve a collective memory of human groups from the past (Allen, 2006).

The cultural setting

Archeological research in Brazil began in the 19th century, with the naturalist Peter Lund, then with the encouragement and political interests of D. Pedro II, with the design of the National Museum, where an area in the museum dedicated to archeology was created. In the 20th century studies took shape closer to those of today, and especially after teams of specialists and researchers who were part of foreign missions, archeology has gained depth and more intense research (Justamand, 2019).

One of the missions that came to the country was the Franco-Brazilian one. This mission was responsible for developing and encouraging studies in the states

of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Goiás, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Piauí. Through these incentives, over 1,300 archeological sites were found in the Serra da Capivara National Park (PNSC) and in its surroundings. Among these sites 900 have rock paintings. The first dating of archeological finds, especially of rock paintings, contributed to their proper insertion in the national prehistoric cultural context (Justamand, 2010).

The PNSC is where the largest number of archeological sites with the most varied typology of rock art in Brazil are located today, transforming it into an archeological enclave, that is, an important territory for studies and research aimed at the development of knowledge in archeology. Since 1991, the park has been recognized as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a condition that guarantees the preservation of the park for future generations (Justamand *et al.*, 2018; Justamand and Oliveira, 2021).

Humans have created ways to express themselves and rock art, engravings, and paintings are socio-cultural forms of the most varied information about what concerned their makers. We take it for granted that rock art contributed to the preservation of knowledge for countless human generations, both those who produced and those who took advantage of what was exposed there. Thus, these mnemonic mechanisms served to preserve the most different cultural intent, in particular, those that were most important to them (Justamand, 2006b; Justamand *et al.*, 2021a).

By rock art is meant all inscriptions, paintings or engravings left by humans on rocks (Justamand and Oliveira, 2015b). Rock art cannot be removed from its spot (Prous, 1992, 510). In Europe, the dates can go back more than 40,000 years, in other parts of the world there are records of more than 50,000 years old, and in Brazil the oldest are close to 30,000 years old or more, as suggested by the most recent researches in the Serra da Capivara (Justamand, 2010, 2012a).

The northeast tradition (painting)

Predominantly formed of themes of anthropomorphs, zoomorphs, and phytomorphs with easy visual and thematic recognition, such as hunting, dance, religious ceremonies, and sexual scenes, covering the states of Rio Grande do Norte, Pernambuco, Bahia,

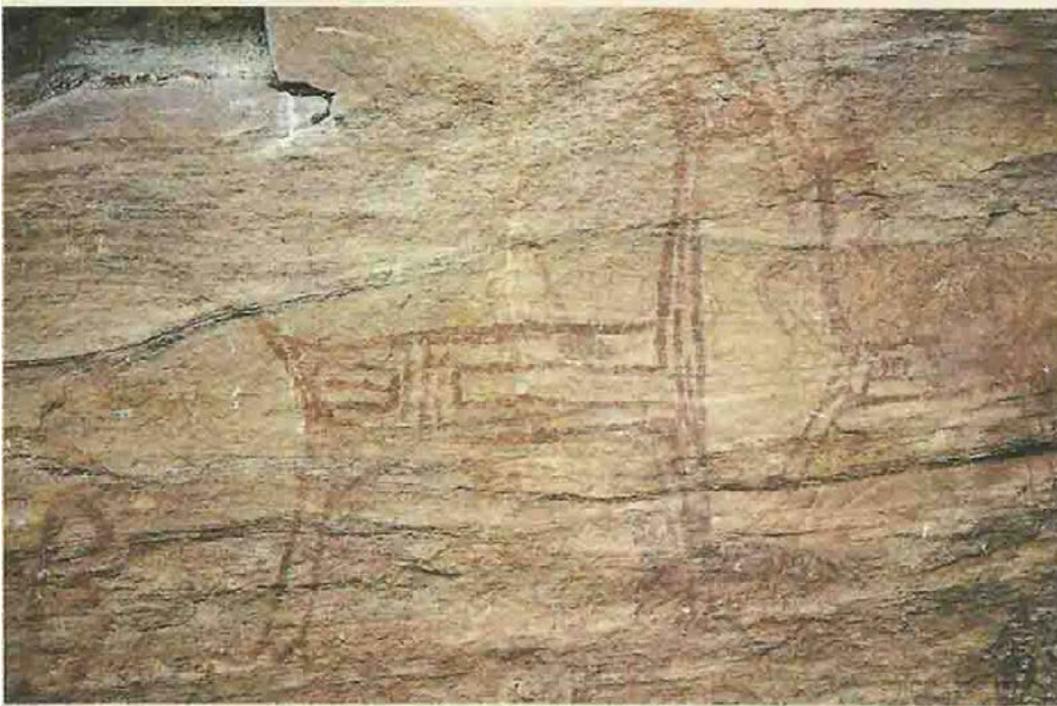


Fig. 1. Toca do Vento–PNSC, Serra da Capivara, Piauí. (Source: Guidon, 1991).

Sergipe, Paraíba, Piauí, and northern Minas Gerais, developed from the work of researchers Niède Guidon, Silvia Maranca, Anne-Marie Pessis, Susana Monzon, Laurence Ogel-Ross, and Bernadette Aranud, possibly originating from the state of Piauí (Monzon, 1978; Guidon, 1991; Pessis, 1999; Guidon; Lage, 2003; Martin, 2008; Martin; Vidal, 2014).

The main subtraditions of the northeast tradition are: Salitre and Várzea Grande, located in the PNSC; the Seridó subtradition, which covers a region between Rio Grande do Norte and Paraíba; the central subtradition, located in the hinterland of Bahia and Chapada Diamantina, existing also in the northern region of the state of Minas Gerais (Martin, 1984, 2008; Schmitz *et al.*, 1997a; Schmitz *et al.*, 1997b; Prous, 2007a; Azevedo, 2010) (see fig. 1).

The Agreste tradition (painting)

Located in the states of Paraíba, Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, Piauí, and various parts of the northeast region, probably originating in the state of Pernambuco, its main characteristics are: absence of a contour line with filling, the use of less elaborate (simple) techniques and less thematic diversity, larger vertical and horizontal graphics, static perspective, without

scene formation, “they did not have an improved graphic technique and ignored the preparation procedures of paints and the contour technique”, which were initially classified as Castelo tradition (Pessis, 1999, p.70; Guidon; Lage, 2003; Martin; Vidal, 2014).⁵

The Toca do Sítio do Boqueirão da Pedra Furada is a pre-colonial archeological site in the shape of a rock shelter, with dimensions of 70 m long, 22 m wide and 75 m high, located at the top, and its record dates back to 1973 (Ficha do Sítio Toca do Boqueirão da Pedra Furada, 2016) (see fig. 3).

It is considered one of the most important sites revealing the way of life of early human groups in Brazil,

⁵ The main subtraditions identified are: the subtradition Sobradinho, present in the Chapada Diamantina region, Sobradinho and central region in the state of Bahia; the subtradition Cariris Velhos, located between the regions of Pernambuco and Paraíba, where a survey was carried out by Professor Ruth Trindade de Almeida, who found 34 archeological sites with cave paintings (Almeida, 1979); in the PNSC region, the following styles were described: a) Serra do Tapuio, characterized by the presence of large anthropomorphs wearing clothes, absence of movement in the graphics, poor quality and imprecision in the execution of the figures, the use of red coloring, filling and use of plain ink; b) extreme, characterized by poorly designed layout, lack of movement, filling in of figures and the presence of zoomorph graphics and pure graphics; c) general style, characterized by the use of contour, reproductions of naturalistic prints such as hands, and red being the dominant color; black figures rarely exist (Guidon, 1985b; Martin, 2008) (see fig. 2).



Fig. 2. A painting of the Agreste tradition. Site Toca da Extrema II. PNSC. (Source: Buco, 2012).



Fig. 3. Toca do Sítio do Boqueirão da Pedra Furada. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).

producing lithic tools⁶ and rock art.⁷

The stratigraphy of the site allowed the identification of six cultural levels:

- 1st, Pedra Furada I (>50,0000→35,0000 years BP);
- 2nd, Pierced Stone II ($\geq 32,160 \pm 1000 \rightarrow 25,000$ years BP);
- 3rd, Drilled Stone III (>25,000–10,050 years BP);
- 4th, Cut Saw I ($10,400 \pm 180 - 8,050 \pm 170$ years BP);
- 5th, Cut Saw II ($7,750 + 80 - 7,220 \pm 80$ years BP);
- 6th, Agreste ($6,150 \pm 60 - 3,000$ years BP).

Thus is presented a set of 67 absolute datings by the

⁶ According to the Italian researcher Fábio Parenti (2014), 595 lithic artifacts were found in the excavations, with 196 pieces belonging to the cultural level Pedra Furada I; 273 pieces from the Pedra Furada II cultural level; 126 pieces from the Pierced Stone III level.

⁷ Rock art: “non-utilitarian anthropogenic marks on the surface of rocks, hechas either by an additive process (pictogram) or by a reductive process (petroglyphs)” (bednarik *et al.*, 2003, 115). Whitley (2005, 3) states that “Rock art is landscape (Whitley, 1998b). It consists of pictures, motifs, and designs placed on natural surfaces such as cliff and boulder faces, cave walls and ceilings, and grounds surface. Rock art is also sometimes referred to as cave art or parietal (wall) art. Regardless of appellation, the defining characteristic of rock art is its placement on natural rock art surfaces, distinguishing it from murals on constructed walls, paintings or carvings on canvas, wood, ceramic, or other surfaces, and free-standing sculptures.”

Technique		PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	ST 1	ST 2	AG	+++
BPF	Taille au percuteur dur	**	**	**	**	**	**	
	Taille bifaciale	**	**	*	*	*	*	
	Taille au maillet				**	**	*	
	Traitement thermique				**	**		
	Cuisson en "four polynésien"	?	?	?	*	*		
	Art pariétal			?	**	**	*	
	Broyage des pigments				*	*		
Autres	Gravure rupestre						?	**
	Pierre polie					?		*
	Céramique				*	?	?	**
	Inhumation				**	*		*
	Sépulture en urne							*
	Agriculture							*

? Possible ; * occasionnel ; ** abondant ; +++ plus récent que 5 000 ans BP.

Table 1. The main archeological remains related to cultural industries Toca Sítio do Boqueirão da Pedra Furada. (Source: Fonte: Parenti, 2001).

radiocarbon-14 dating technique, reaching 57,000–5,000–100,000 years BP (Parenti, 1996; Guidon, 2007, 2014b) (see Table 1).

The Boqueirão da Pedra Furada (BPF) rock graphic record is a mosaic of images about human groups from the past, having approximately 950⁸ figures⁹ painted in red and white, encompassing the three traditions of cave paintings in the region and correlating with the cultural levels of the excavations at the site (Serra Talhada I, Serra Talhada II and Agreste) (Parenti, 2014) (see fig. 4).

It is noteworthy that Toca do Boqueirão da Pedra Furada is not an anomaly within the archeological context of the region. Other sites have absolute dating back to the presence of pre-colonial human groups in the region, such as Meio, Toca dos Coqueiros, Toca da Ema dos Brás I, Toca do Garrincho, and Toca da Bastiana, and Toca do Antônio (Oliveira, 2014).

The period of development of the lithic tools industry coincides with that of rock art in the PNSC, when the main themes addressed in the paintings are observed, such as love, conflict, fauna, ceremonies, and hunting scenes. Rock art persisted in the PNSC

region until around 3,000 years ago, when probably new migrant human groups may have assimilated or expelled the groups that lived there, starting pottery production and the practice of agriculture, cultivating peanuts, beans, and gourd around 2,000 years BP (Guidon, 2006).

Brochado (1987) postulates that Brazilian prehistoric ceramics originated in the Amazon and spread via migrations, forming four major pottery traditions (Pedra do Caboclo tradition, Palo Branco tradition, Uru tradition, and Amazon polychrome tradition) around 5,000–3,000 years ago. These pottery groups would have spread pottery practice to the various regions of Brazil. At the PNSC, ceramic remains were found in several archeological sites, such as Limpo Grande, Toca Gongo I, São Braz, Toca do Pitombí, Toca do Morcego, Toca do Pinga do Boi, Toca do Arapuá, Aldeia da Queimada Nova, Barreirinho, Baixão da Serra Nova, Sítio do Meio, and in the municipality of São Braz (Martin, 2008).¹⁰

8 The teacher Sonia Maria Campelo carried out a survey of the BPF rock paintings, accounting for 1,083 rock graphics, 871 recognized graphics, 39 recognizable graphics, 33 pure graphics, and 140 unrecognizable graphics (CAMPELO, 1986, 29).

9 FIGURE: "a design or pattern painted, drawn, printed or engraved on the surface of a rock art motif." (BEDNARIK ET AL., 2003, 121).

10 The Teacher Silvia Maranca, a researcher at the Museu Paulista at USP, aimed to identify the ceramist tradition of the Aldeia da Queimada Nova, in the PNSC, demonstrating the difficulty of affiliating this ceramic and pointing to the possibility of it belonging to the Aratu and/or Tupiguarani ceramist traditions (Martin, 2008). Alves (2003) resumed this discussion when developing his doctoral thesis about the ceramic groups of the PNSC, analyzing the ceramics of the Aldeia da Queimada Nova, Barrerinho, and Baixão da Serra Nova sites, citing similarities with the ceramics of the Cabrobó and Coribe phases, which belong to the Tupiguarani subtradition.

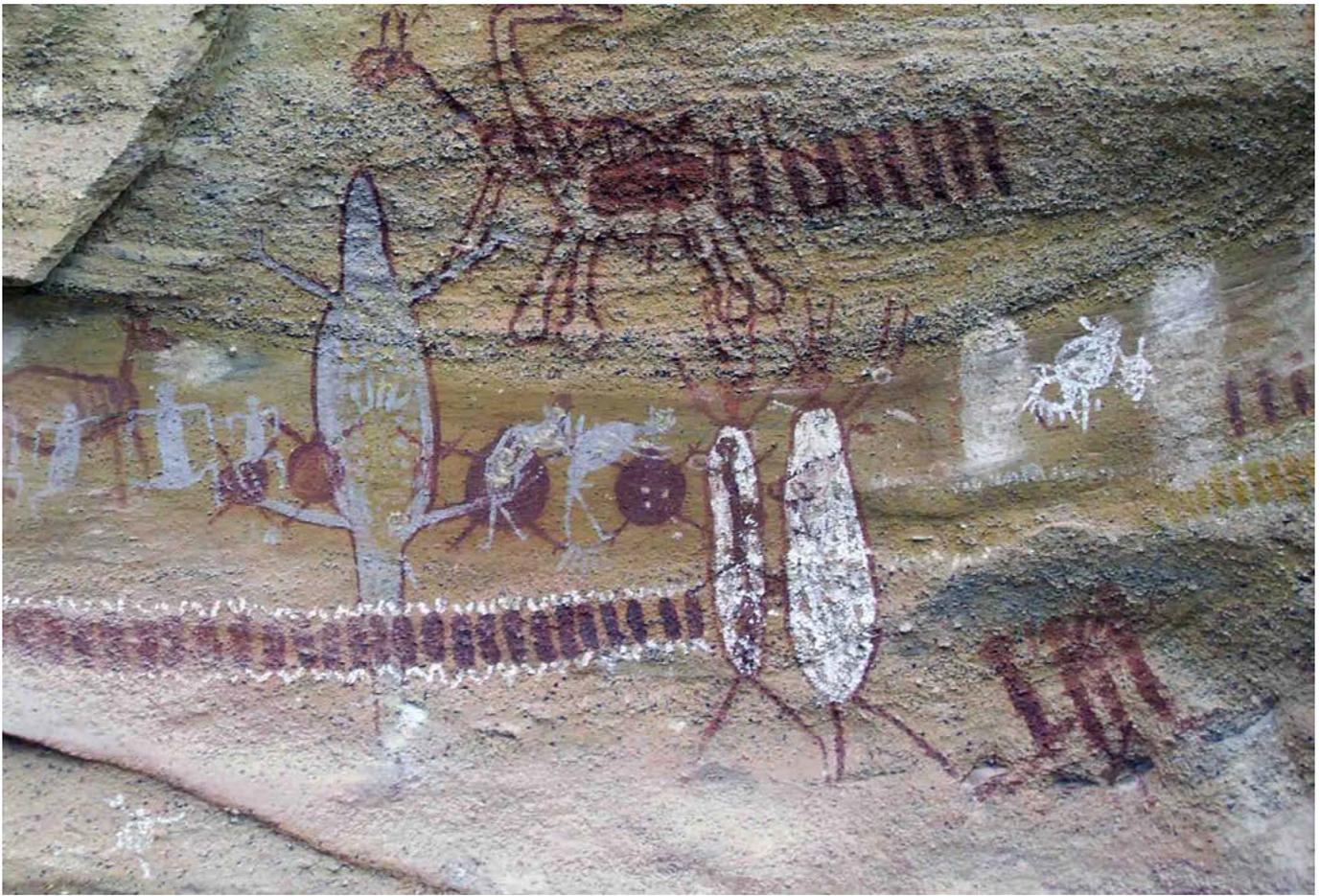


Fig. 4. Toca do Sítio do Boqueirão da Pedra Furada. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).

The geometric tradition (painting).

The main features are line graphics, concentric circles, rectangles, labyrinths, arrows, squares, astronomical graphics, and bird footprints, with yellow, dark, white and red coloring.

This tradition is called hypothetical and doubtful by Martin (2008). It is present in several states in the northeast, south, southeast, and midwest of Brazil, and it is difficult to analyze due to the abstract character of its graphics, described by archeologist Guidon and other researchers (Schmitz, 1981; Guidon, 1991, Prous, 1992, 2007a).

Within the context of PNSC, it was classified into three styles:¹¹ a) water eye, described by Laurence Ogel-Ross as having pure graphics, rare composition

graphics and many bad lines and numerous naturalistic prints of human hands found in a single site; b) Bom Jesus style, composed of pure graphics with intrusion of other styles in the rock panels of the sites, such as Toca da Pedra Solta do Bom Jesus, Toca das Letras, and Toca do Boqueirão do Saco I, also described by Ogel-Ross; c) Gameleirinha style, found in a single place in Toca Gameleirinha, composed of pure graphics and the intrusion of the Olhod'água and Bom Jesus styles (see fig. 5).

Signs or cave paintings are aesthetic representations of human life, actions, and activities. They also represent in their forms some more sensitive desires. They are expressions of the human needs of the period and were left by the first groups of sapiens inhabitants from different locations (Prous, 2006; Barreto, 2010; Justamand, 2006, 2014a).

It is believed that there was a body of specialists who

¹¹ Guidon (1983b) classified it as a subtradition; the latter was reclassified as style by Martin (2008) due to the elements necessary to meet the requirements and especially, the scope of archeological sites.



Fig. 5. A Painting of the geometric tradition, PNSC - PI. (Source: Gabriel Oliveira, 2018).

made the paintings or signs, but there may be other reasons for making them (Prous, 2006). They did not function as art professionals as we know them today (who make art for a living). Rock art was part of the community's routine, reinforcing the groups' cultural traditions and/or linking to the ritual domain (Gaspar, 2003).

The cave paintings or signs represent a series of scenes such as group and/or pair struggles, some of the survival conditions such as hunting, supposed rituals, and birth scenes. But in addition to these, especially in Serra da Capivara, multiple sex scenes are represented in large quantities, some with groups of humans acting, others still with duos and or trios, but relationships between humans and animals are also found. And in some cases the scenes show the phalluses and

vulvas of the humans represented (Justamand, 2010, 2014c; Justamand and Funari, 2016; Justamand *et al.*, 2017b, 2021b; Belarmino, 2019; Paiva, 2019).

The rock records ensured the permanence of much knowledge over time, transmitting it to other members of the human groups that coexisted in the territory now known as Brazil (Justamand, 2012c), leaving archeological traces in various sites throughout the country. They provide new understandings about the oldest human presence in the national territory, and as they are affixed to the rocks, they are the result of great technical effort.

Sexual scenes

There are many sexual scenes in rock art at the PNSC; sex was seen as a natural fact (Gomes Filho *et al.*, 2018;

Justamand and Funari, 2017). Prehistoric painters the world over showed representations of human copulation in the most varied positions. For example, in Africa, there is a series of masked men with gigantic erect phalluses, about to penetrate women in a childbirth position (Ki-Zerbo, 1982).

The representation of sexuality is a very recurrent theme in the rock art of the northeast tradition, including Serra da Capivara. Sex scenes are common between couples, with three people, in groups, with representations of zoophilia and pedophilia (see fig. 17). In fact, similar scenes also appear elsewhere (Taylor, 1997; Justamand, 2014c; Funari and Justamand, 2014; Justamand and Oliveira, 2015; Justamand *et al.*, 2020a, 2021c) (see Figures 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14).

It is possible that in the representations of collective excitement (fig. 15), the phalluses would simulate swords, that is, power, virility, and strength (Costa, 2003; Justamand and Oliveira, 2021).

The search for meaning in the study of art is a theme that varies according to the observer's reading and the historical context. Depending on the theory adopted, it can have different meanings, ranging from the description of everyday life to the desire to carry out a good hunt, or even a window to supernatural or myth-

ological beliefs. The shamanic explanation is being widely used and, with the help of neuropsychology, it has produced interesting results, combined with the ethnography of indigenous tribes (Clottes, Lewis-Williams, 1996).

So, there was a lot to do in those ancestral times beyond

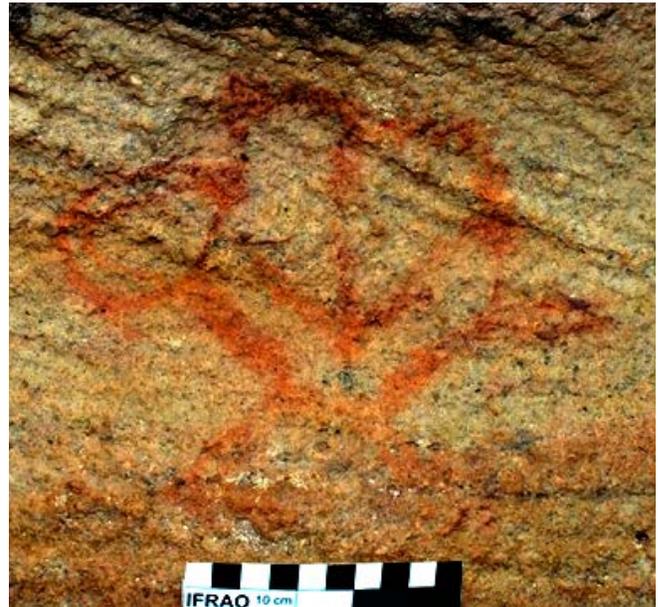


Fig. 7. Toca do Veredão VIII ou Macabeu II. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Figura 6. Toca da entrada do Baixão da Vaca. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Fig. 8. Toca do Barro. (Source: Gabriel Oliveira, 2018)



Fig. 9. Toca do Barro. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Fig. 10. Toca da Entrada do Pajaú. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Fig. 11. Toca da Entrada do Pajaú. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Fig. 12. Toca do Sítio do Meio. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Fig. 13. Toca do Boqueirão da Pedra Furada. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Fig. 14. Toca da Roça do Sítio da Fumaça I. (Source: Oliveira, 2018).



Fig. 15. Toca do Baixo do Perna IV. Scene of the supposed collective sex. (Source: Justamand).

everyday activities such as eating, self-protection, and health concerns. There were indeed ways of working. However, love and social life were also present among the groups, as evidenced by the paintings molded in the rocks of Piauí (Martin, 1984; Pinker, 2004) and other traces left by the first occupants of the Brasilis lands. In the cave paintings recorded on the rocks of the PNSC, there are dance scenes that demonstrate the sensuality of the first inhabitants. The release of sexual energy was the purpose of sexual practices, as it seems to us that the ancestors related sexually in multiple ways (Justamand, 2010; Justamand *et al.*, 2020b). Although the paintings depict scenes considered by some to be obscene, barbaric, and immoral by West-

ern observers, it is necessary to remember that primitive sexuality is separate, and considered to be differentiated. We cannot directly compare it with current religious and moral concepts; this sexuality is of another modality of connection between the human and the divine being, arranging a primordial cosmic force, as it is possible to do with the idea of the god Eros, who would have the power to harmonize the rhythms of human life with those of nature (Diawara, 1973). The paintings with scenes of group sex (fig. 15) or humans with animals (fig. 16) draw our attention, as they refer to a period apparently without the moral and ethical restrictions of Western religious tradition, based on Judeo-Christian guidelines (Colling



Fig. 16. Toca do Caldeirão dos Rodrigues. Scene of the supposed practice of zoophilia. (Source: Justamand).



Fig. 17. The Boqueirão da Pedra Furada. Supposedly sex between people with shapeless sizes, or the representation of pedophilia. (Source: Justamand).

et al., 2019).

They demonstrate a desire for liberation and transcendence, it seems to us (Martin, 1984). Thus, these rock scenes produced thousands of years ago in the rocks of the PNSC give the air of contributing to amplify the forms of communication and to increase the socialization of the groups of the period (Justamand, 2012b).

Conclusion

This art must have been important in the most varied issues of the groups' daily lives, as in the case of sexuality analyzed here. Thus, with regard to sexuality recorded in rock art, it is possible to see that ancestral groups in the region had a broad view of sex (Justamand, 2014c). They recorded varieties include group sex, in pairs, collective excitement, zoophilia, and perhaps pedophilia. Other forms are under analysis for future publications (Colling *et al.*, 2019; Oliveira and Justamand, 2021) (see fig. 17).

We hope to have shown that rock productions, whether they are called signs, records, or something else, from time immemorial contributed to the daily lives of that time and could even make suggestions about sexuality, because they have the ability to leave us this legacy of multiple knowledge of human relations, including sexual.

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GEOMETRIC ART IN THE IBERIAN SCHIST PLAQUES

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Introduction

Of the various artifacts that we find in Iberian megalithic art, the engraved schist plaques are those that immediately present a striking character in all their symbolism. It has been acknowledged that “there was a grammar for decorative engraved schist plaques” (Gonçalves, 2006 p. 46), which can be divided into several analyses to make a synthesis for the aesthetic style and the geometric motifs that allow us to establish an identity for these votive artifacts. The plaques have been found especially among the dead buried in Iberian megalithic monuments like tombs, dolmens or tumuli, but also in the *tholoi*, the funerary monuments of later date.

The material is a piece of schist, cut into varying lengths, usually between 8 and 25 cm, mainly dark blue (with different nuances) or sometimes green (serpentine). It is generally trapezoidal in shape, some-

times roughly triangular or quadrangular, rarely in another format. Its geometric art is quite informative of a phase in which the group developed another level of social organization and a more complex economy, exemplified by this synthetic geometric art. Angular motifs are rare in European Paleolithic art, which is mostly figurative rather than geometric; these patterns appear especially from the Neolithic and remain until the end of the Bronze Age.

The routes of the engraved schist slabs come from central Alentejo, and form one of the main examples of the circulation of ideas and artifacts which crystallized (Gonçalves, 2004b). To this author it has become increasingly evident that it is the transporting not just of one, but two components of a magical-religious complex: the Goddess of the Sun's Eyes and the Young God (the *Almeriense Idol*), sometimes associated, sometimes represented on their own. The rock art

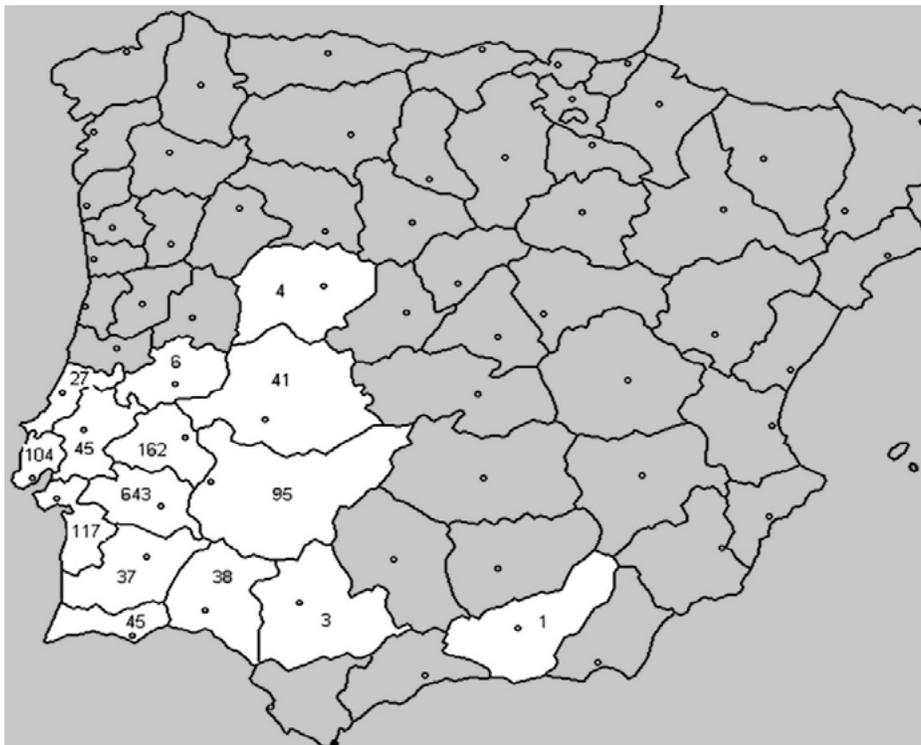


Fig. 1 – Map of distribution of engraved shale plates in the southwest Iberian Peninsula, according to database ESPRIT 2012.

Simplified nomenclature Desig

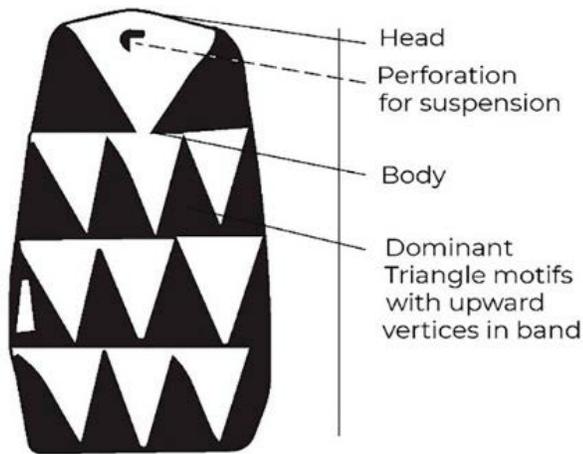


Fig. 2 – Simplified nomenclature for schist plaques made of the main features by Cristina Lopes (in Illustrator).

in Alentejo occurs mainly on river rocks, and usually rounded motifs predominate. In mobile art, on the contrary, it appears that there is a preference for the recurring angular geometric motifs. As it is with the schist plaques, and excluding the case of the eye/sun, round shapes are more or less absent.

Rules of graphic presentation: motifs, shapes, and different types of drawing

The engraved schist plaque is mostly organized in fields, from top to bottom, the first corresponding to a “head”, separated or not, then a “body” with elements differentiating the individual, crowded or not, and an area that marks the final end or bottom of the plaque.

The design of the main elements, with most of the components in analysis, and their standard nomenclature, is as follows: from the top: the head, perforation for suspension, vertical division of “head within the head”, sidebands, separator of head-body, the dominant motifs, the triangles with vertices at the top in the band, body delimiter at the bottom. The engraved schist plaques are all unique, and nowadays there are more than 2,000 in the National Archaeological Museum in Lisbon.

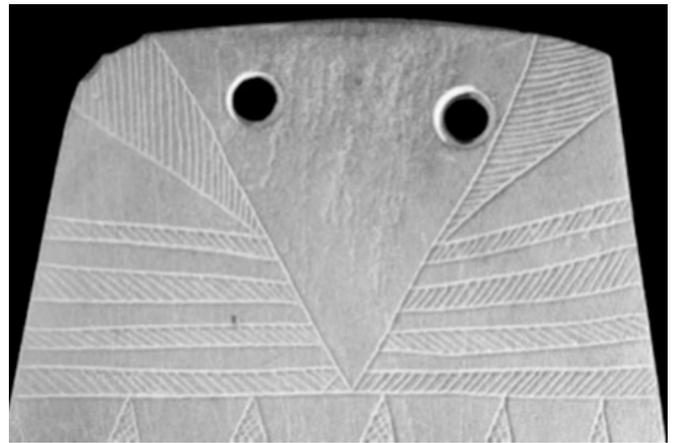


Fig. 3. Upper part of the engraved shale plate with the head attached to the body (from Gonçalves, 2004b).

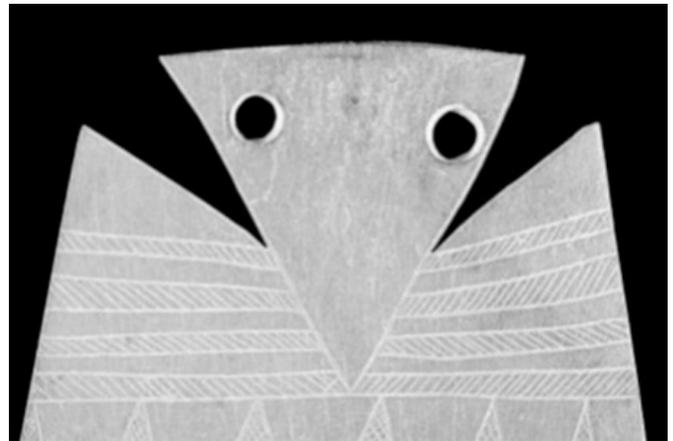


Fig. 4. Upper part of the engraved shale plate with the head separated from the body (from Gonçalves, 2004b).

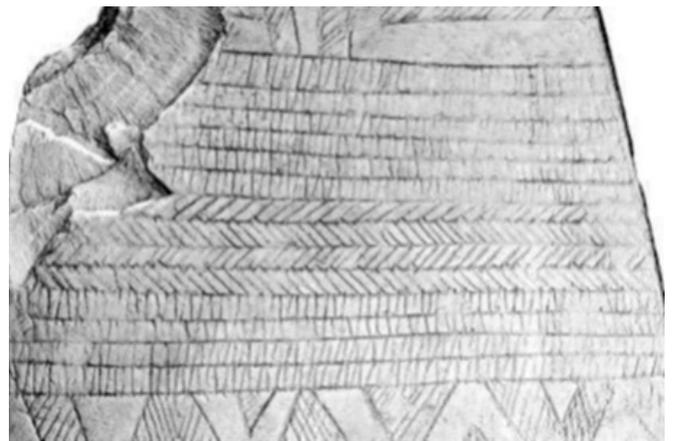


Fig. 5. Fragment of schist plaque with detail of types of geometric engravings (from Gonçalves, 2004b).

Figures 3, 4, and 5 show geometric motifs of different types:

- triangles;
- zigzag lines;
- zigzag bands;
- vertical or horizontal bands, straight or curved, usually filled.

Some have an outline to underline even more clearly the anthropomorphic character.

Engraved shale slabs present a considerable diversity in the Almeries support and the organization and interaction of the components. The organization of the space, various types of imagery, and the constructions of the spaces are immediately recognizable, like that of the face (or faces, when both are found). The first major category is those with the board treated as a single whole.

The second category is that of the plaques that have two well-defined areas and separated by more or less complex indicators, which we call head and body. The head is usually indicated in an area of about one-third of the height of the plaque. It coincides with the suspensions and usually consists of a central motif, mostly triangular or trapezoidal, with the apex low in the first case, or with the short side down in the second case.

A single line of one, two, three, or many bands, usually filled in, defines the separation. It is significantly in this area (as it should be) that the solar eyes are, radiant or not, coinciding sometimes but not always with the perforations. The body of the plaque is filled with the dominant motif, usually triangles (of different types), zigzag lines or bands. The end of the board is only sometimes marked by one or more bands with diverse fills, but the sequences of triangles, sometimes articulating with the dominant motif, are also often found. In some cases, the body of the plate also presents, in addition to the dominant motif, complementary symbols.

The head area of plates is often treated in three fields, with multiple fills and diverse effects. The simplest of the compartmental arrangements is called CTT (Placas de Cabeça Tripartida: Gonçalves, 2003c), in which the area is divided by two thin lines, defining three triangles, empty or central (vertex down). The same three fields have, however, in most known cases, another sort of organization in which the central field



Fig. 6. An engraved schist plaque found in Aljezur, documented by Estácio da Veiga in 1886.

is often an elongated trapeze. Frequently, filled bands that go from horizontal to very oblique appear in the lateral fields.

Syndrome of the crazy plaques

This is a special situation. The syndrome can be defined as an intentional rupture of the structured concept of symmetry common to the vast majority of engraved shale slabs. This rupture is registered according to two different typologies, although sharing the same designation. Variant 1 groups the plaques in which only the head registers the asymmetry of components. Variant 2 groups the plates whose body is decorated asymmetrically, resulting from plate segmentation or constructed with the same general treatment given to the surface of the support (Gonçalves, 2003c). Whatever the origin of this symmetry-breaking in the crazy plaques, it is doubtful it could provide this exclusive result. We have here lost contact with the standard decoration for the engraved slabs. But we could start with a significant aspect, that is, the geographic distri-



Fig. 7. Set of engraved schist plaques found in Aljezur; drawings by Leisner and Leisner in 1965.



Fig. 8. Drawing of engraved shale plate from Herdade da Lameira: G. and V. Leisner, 1959.

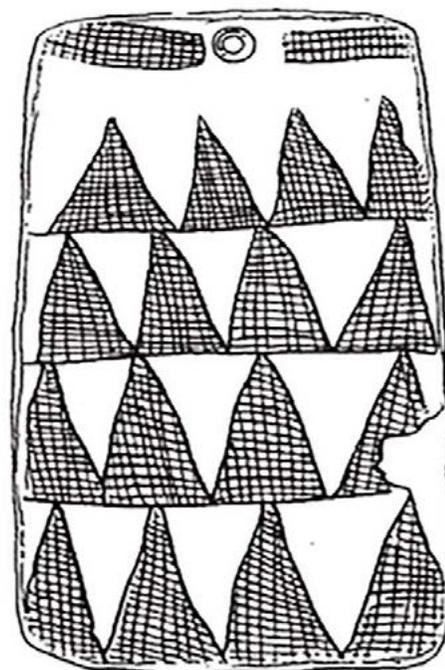


Fig. 9. Drawing of an engraved shale plate from Herdade da Lameira: G. and V. Leisner, 1959.

bution. It is found in the Alentejo region, mainly in Reguengos de Monsaraz, but also in the Setúbal peninsula and Lisbon. Thus, the extent of the area where this syndrome occurs contributes to offsetting the extreme rarity of the known specimens.

No absolute chronology is available for this syndrome. However, if the date for the large plaque j.8-667, from Herdade de Santa Margarida, Beta-166422: 2920-2870 Cal BC at 2 sigma (Gonçalves), as terminus post quem, the crazy plaque STAM H.8-3-5 corresponds perhaps to a time compatible with the timing of the deposition funeral Cm-6, which leads to the period 2870-2500 BC.

Interpretative approaches

The Portuguese project PLACA NOSTRA, coordinated by Professor Victor Gonçalves, has developed the research in these votive artifacts for decades. It has studied among others the phenomenon of reuse of the artifacts in the megalithic monuments in the region of Évora (Gonçalves, 2003), through cutting and polishing. The making of a new record can have several explanations. The pragmatic one would be the law of least effort. Or it can be assumed that the symbolism of an original old board could be implemented in a

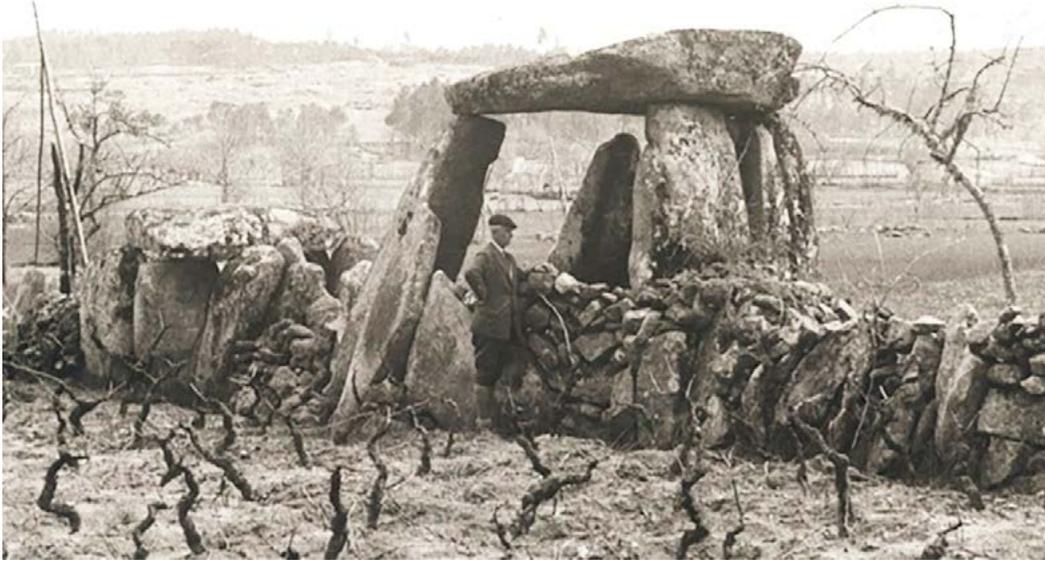


Fig. 10. Georg Leisner standing by Anta da Cunha Baixa; photo DGPC.

symbolic act again, creating a new magic-religious situation. Another line of study is the syndrome of crazy plaques.

One of the most common theories suggests that the schist plaques of the gravestones found in several burial structures in Iberia are representation of the mother goddess (Almagro Gorbea, 1973; Gonçalves, 1999, 2004a, 2006). This theory has had a great grip. We can see that the rendering of the goddess is an iconographic representation of the life force, often found accompanying the dead. In addition, the first half of the third millennium BC was a culmination of portrayals of the sun eye goddess common in metal societies of the south Iberian Peninsula. These were examples of mobiliary art, used in pottery or bone. However, in the Alentejo, including the peninsula of Lisbon, and south to the Algarve, including the areas of Huelva and Badajoz, these symbols of the goddess emerge in association with the geometric art of the schist plaques.

When talking about engraved schist plaques from the Iberian Peninsula, we should mention the researchers Georg and Vera Leisner. They began the project for the corpus of the peninsular megalithic monuments with a first phase (1932-1934), and in 1934 they published the first volume *Die Megalithgräber der Iberischen Halbinsel*, which is still a reference work today. They continued their research with excavations (Reguengos de Monsaraz, Huelva, Anta das Cabeças),

surveys in Alentejo, Viseu, Minho, and Trás-os-Montes, and the study of materials in different museums. The study of peninsular megalithism continued, whether in the form of thematic monographs, such as those carried out for the region of Évora (Leisner and Leisner, 1949), Reguengos de Monsaraz (Leisner and Leisner, 1952) Huelva (Cerdán Marquez, Leisner and Leisner, 1952) and Herdade da Casa de Bragança (Leisner and Leisner, 1955), and the publication of the second part of *Die Megalithgräber der Iberischen Halbinsel: Der Westen* (1956), which was important. For the Leisners, “the triangle in the upper field of the plate, almost never absent and whose importance is obvious, together with the body of the plate, it is the symbol of the land itself” (Leisner, 1949). The eyes of the goddess are part of another component, in the last phase of its existence (Gonçalves, 1995). The Leisners also addressed this component of the figuration. “The irradiation around the eyes could indicate that these are astral symbols, frequent, in fact, in paintings. rup-estrian rocks and that also appear in the Aeneolithic pottery” (Leisner, 1951). Gimbutas (1973) thought that the new symbol would have been brought by an Indo-European wave during the Chalcolithic period, reaching much of Europe.

For Professor Emmanuel Anati it could be a kind of *churinga*, common among the Australian Aborigines. This artifact is of modest dimensions, like the schist plaques, of oval and elongated size similar to one’s

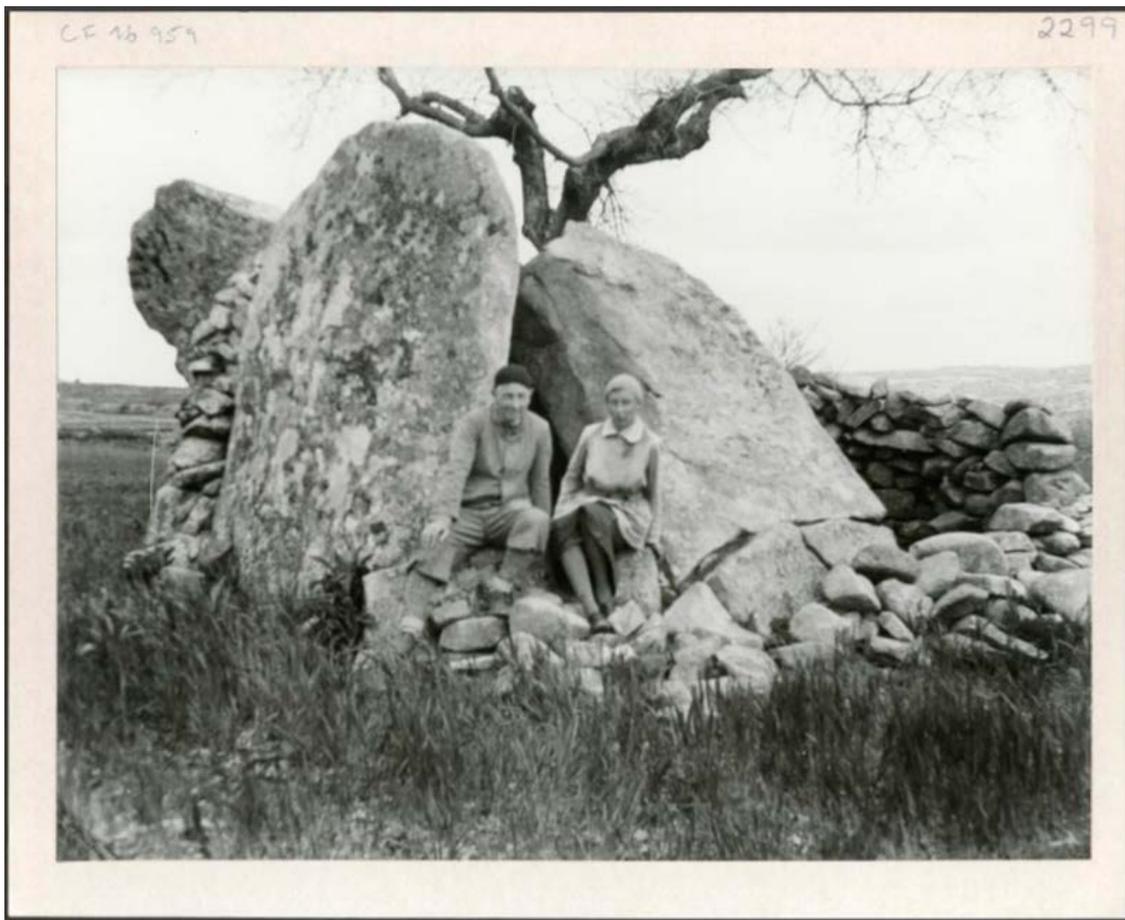


Fig. 11. The archeologists and authors of *Die Megalithgraber der iberischen Halbinsel*, Georg and Vera Leisner; photo DGPC.

palms, and engraved on or painted with the signs of ancestral identity. The raw material, wood, bone, horn or stone, comes from the sacred area, where the ancestral spirits dwell, so the object has a pedigree of provenance. According to oral tradition the *churinga* is part of their conceptual framework. The identity of an individual is determined by the *churinga*. When a woman is pregnant elders define the identity of the child, setting out which ancestor will be the reincarnation, and give it a totemic symbol. This artifact is mainly reserved for male individuals, although *churinga* for ladies were found in the central Australian desert. Anati proposed earlier dates for the stellar statues for between the fourth millennium and the second millennium B C (Anati, 1977, pp. 45-46), saying it was possible to align various cosmogonic visions, in which a superior world, the earth, and the inferior world are registered. “The superior part represents Heaven, the central zone, whether it presents a belt or the bust itself, symbolizes the earth, or rather the world of the

living, the lower part is the realm of the dead” (Anati, 1977, p. 45). The supports are different, and the ideologies there may not be the same.

According to Manuel Calado (2010), the space issues involved in comparing the geographical distribution of the plaques, its core area of origin and the distribution of rock art in Central Alentejo, including the Alqueva Dam Complex, are of paramount importance. The inspiration of the style of schist plaques may also be associated with fiber arts, in an ethnographic/anthropological approach, as an anthropomorphic character is suggested. At the site of Águas Frias, Alandroal, the excavation, led by Calado, found all stages of production well represented, and established new perspectives. He advanced the possibility of a single production center, associated with the rock sanctuary of Alqueva, that could fit with an interpretation of the plaques as icons “including any mother-goddesses, other deities or even ancestors,” that worked in parallel with the other idols recognized in the Iberian south



Fig. 12. Materials from dolmens of Alandroal, Santiago Maior, and Herdade dos Galvões; drawing by Leisner and Leisner.

(Hurtado, 2010). It can be assumed that the designs of the plaques could be decided by customers (based on an established iconographic program) and executed by the artists.

They also may have been ethnic markers (Bueno, 2010; Hurtado, 2010), through the representation of iconographic specialized pantheons. It is plausible if we consider their specific entities with specific graphic representation in determined areas. That clearly demonstrates the importance of geometric art preserved in the memory and identity of the Iberian schist plaques.

The interpretative model advanced by Isabel Lisboa and further developed by Katrina Lillios, as heraldic

type records (Lisboa, 1985; Lillios, 2002, 2003, 2008), is quite systematic and important, although it is set apart from the magical-religious approach and the co-relation with other approaches that derive from it. For Lillios, if today we identify ourselves with an identity card, our Neolithic ancestors also decided to identify people, at least when they were buried. After analysing the data on the manufacture and distribution of the plaques, she considers that most of the Iberian plaques are genealogical records of the dead, that served as durable markers of identity of local and regional groups. These records were to legitimize and perpetuate an ideology of social difference in the late Neolithic, in what the author calls heraldry for

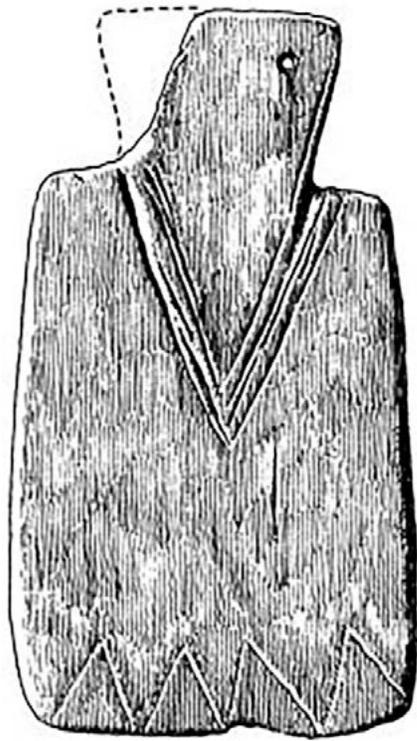


Fig. 13. Drawing of engraved shale plate of Vega del Guadancil: G. and V. Leisner, 1959.

the dead. These records were made by recording geometric patterns on stones to secure lines of peninsular clans and identify members of their elites, a system of social communication obviously practiced long before the introduction of alphabets. The systematic analysis of graphic codes, held in more than 1,100 plaques, collected in south Iberian megalithic tombs, is published online, at the ESPRIT (Engraved Stone Plaques Registry and Inquiry Tool) (<http://research2.its.uiowa.edu/iberian/>). The shale slabs deciphered by Katrina Lillios are the first conscious and deliberate manifestation of enduring identity records fabricated by the clans of the great megalithic culture. The geometric designs engraved on the plates could reveal which clan a deceased belonged to and what was his line of descent, his generation, and so on.

I think we cannot fail to notice that some plaques are cut out to explicitly suggest an anthropomorphic outline, although the engraved components are exclusively geometric and almost always non-figurative. In the social complexity that we can unveil from the

archeological record, the possible relationships between schematic art and the patrons are kept in the memories and identities of these schist plaques. The magical-religious subsystem, in which the engraved schist slabs originated and which were made in central Alentejo, shared the routes of metallurgists, which were permeable to new practices. These artifacts can certainly be considered part of the magical-religious system from the beginning, but they also served to elaborate records from and for the megalithic clans, as Lillios showed.

Concluding remarks

Within the big framework of megalithism there coexisted in time (between at least the middle of the fourth to the middle of the second millennium BC) and in space (mainly south of the Tagus) monuments that reveal different structural and ideological options that can only be understood if we posit the existence of a multifaceted society, with different magical-religious conceptions.

The context correlation of engraved shale slabs is very poor. Like many of the monuments that were excavated in the 20th century, today we consider the methodology to be not very scientific. It is for this reason that

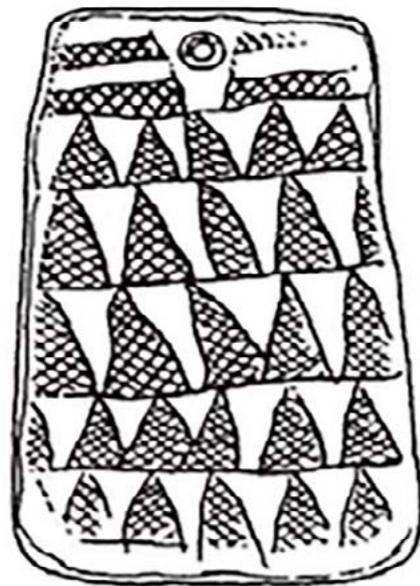


Fig. 14. Drawing of engraved shale plate of Herdade da Lameira: G. and V. Leisner, 1959.

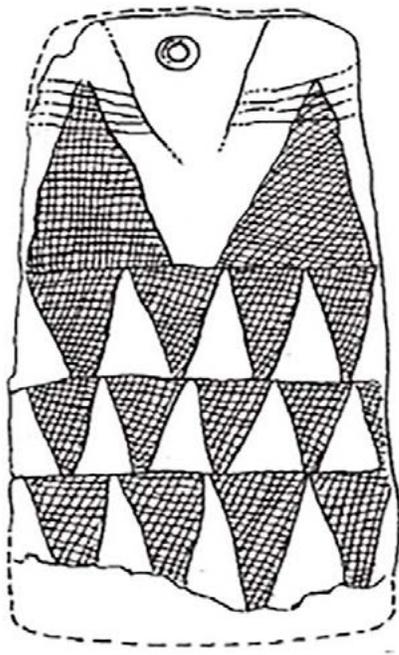


Fig. 15. Drawing of engraved shale plate of Herdade da Lameira: G. and V. Leisner, 1959.

finding a correct correlation between the plaques and deposited bodies, and other artifacts, that could help to interpret the geometric inscriptions, is very hard. We look at previous collected data, and many things are lost or useless, above all, contexts, stratigraphic records, and collections of organic and inorganic material that would provide new readings. Anyway, steps have been made to proceed, at the beginning of the 21st century, and the south of Portugal presents a strong dynamic in terms of archeological research.

The greatest diversity in the use of funerary architectures is seen in the fourth and third millennia BC, and the latter is characterized by a major use of negative architecture. Natural caves show opposite trends, and they seem to have been preferred only until the fourth millennium. Also, the dolmen monuments were used for several millennia, which will certainly be related to their monumentality and visibility in the landscape over time.

It is also important to mention that in most of the southern monuments of Portugal, the headboards are oriented to the east. Several authors, including Manuel Heleno, the Leisners, and Calado (2004) found that many of the dolmens are oriented towards sunrise.

It could be observed that in the history of the en-

graved schist plaques, there was initially a symmetric geometric representation, in a second phase the syncretic fusion with the iconographic and aesthetic associated with the goddess with sun eyes, and in a third the degeneration of the structure in a terminal point of the process.

In the current state of knowledge, it seems that the diversity of graphic solutions, using the same geometric art, evokes questions concerning the social dimension of the subsystem and the magical-religious agency, among others. Artifacts and magical-religious practices, including the architecture of death and funerary rites, were of sufficient significance and volume in the fourth and third millennia to be registered as archeological features in today's real world. And if we are sure of anything, it is that engraved schist plaques are one of the most impressive western peninsular prehistoric manifestations of the sacred.

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THREE SCYTHIAN GODDESSES

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Introduction

The Scythians, a group of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, produced a fairly homogenous civilization and dominated a great part of the Eurasian steppes from the seventh to the second centuries BC (fig. 1). Yet little is known about such a long-lasting and geographically extensive civilization. Like most ancient nomads, they lacked a written language and so left no written records behind. Their impression on the classical world, however, was so great that many scholars from neighboring areas devoted extensive parts of their work to the Scythians. The most complete account belongs to Herodotus of Halicarnassus (fifth century BC).

But Herodotus's text is not the only source for the Scythian mythology and religion. The Scythians themselves left a great number of artifacts, rich in elaborate depictions. Although most depict animals, the human figure is also present. The aim of this short paper is to examine if the human figures – especially the female ones – in Scythian art may be identified as the three goddesses mentioned by Herodotus. Since the Scythians did not inscribe their artworks, any correlation can be based on speculation only.

The reason that the most detailed account of the Scythians comes from a Greek is not surprising. The Greek civilization was the one that influenced the nomads the most.

Neighbors since the seventh century, the Scythians were attracted to Greek art and initiated a system of cultural interactions, active even during turbulent times (Ustinova, 1999: 1).

Placing orders or hiring Greek artists, Scythian art to an extent is better defined as Graeco-Scythian, especially after the fifth century, when eastern influences were mostly dropped. However, syncretism did not stop there. Notably, many Scythian religious elements are heavily inspired by the ancient Greek pantheon (Vinogradov, 2000), and even cases of the direct adoption of a god are well documented. But

again, the lack of temples¹ or a written language leaves us solely with their artifacts and Herodotus's account to draw any conclusions.

Herodotus's text

When naming the Scythian gods, Herodotus tries to provide the name of the Greek god/goddess he perceives as the equivalent. Thus, Zeus, Gaia, Hestia, Apollo, Aphrodite, and Poseidon correspond to the Scythian *Papaios*, *Api*, *Tabiti*, *Goitosyros*, *Argimpasa*, and *Thagimasadas* respectively.² Heracles and Ares were also worshipped but no Scythian names are given. Heracles may be identified as the figure of *Targitaus* (see below) and Ares is mentioned as "Scythian Ares," a god perhaps distinct from the Greek one (IV.59). Herodotus notes that the most important god was Ares, but scholars today are more concerned with the three goddesses than the rest of the pantheon. Archeologists have safely identified at least three major groups of female depictions and a correlation seems promising. At least, it is clear that three particular women, often depicted together, were important to the Scythians (Hasanov, 2018).

Since Herodotus's testimony is considered more or less valid,³ the figures may indeed represent female divinities. His text on the Scythian genealogical myth may help even further. Although he provides a more realistic explanation of how the Scythians came to dominate the north Pontic steppes, via a chain reaction that displaced tribes inhabiting Central Asia (IV.11), he still records two variations of a relevant

1 The horse-drawn carriage with the shaman's tent would be used perhaps as a place of worship.

2 These names are of course not random and Herodotus himself offers slight variations. Scholars today have tried to explain each god's symbolism based on the Iranian root of his/her name.

3 For example, it has been proven that the motif of seven gods constituting a pantheon is common among Indo-European religions. Also, the Nart myths of the Ossetians, the only surviving descendants of the Scythians, do bear some similarities to the Herodotean narration (Raevskiy, 1993: 17; Ustinova, 1999: 13).



Fig. 1. The major Scythian and Saka tribes, c. 5th-4th centuries BC. In purple, the Ponto-Caspian steppe.



Fig. 2. Piece of horse-harness from the Tsimbalka kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Schiltz, 2008: 171).

legend. The first one speaks of Targitaus, forefather of the Scythians, son of Zeus and Borysthenes's (local river-god) daughter. Targitaus in turn had three sons (whose mother is not mentioned), who became the progenitors of the three major Scythian tribes (IV.5). The second – Greek -- version replaces Targitaus with Heracles. During his 12 labors, Heracles arrives in the land of Scythia where a local goddess (Echidna), half woman-half snake, bears him three sons (IV.8/9). Among them, successor to Heracles and forefather of the Scythians, would be the one who could string his father's bow. The son who managed it was named Scythes.⁴ Thus, the two versions in Herodotus's passage bring two goddesses on to the scene: Zeus's wife/Targitaus's mother and Heracles's wife/Scythes's mother.

We do not know which version is the original one and other classical authors have recorded more variations on the myth (Cunliffe, 2019: 267). Though Herodotus states that he finds the Scythian version hard to believe (IV.5), this is most probably the original since the nomads would have a genetic myth of their own (Lincoln, 2014). It was later appropriated by the Greeks (even Herodotus himself) and harmonized with the Greek mythology. Alternatively, and under multiple influences, the myth could have been adopted by the Scythians and adapted, so as to better express their views of the world. They might have heard about Heracles from the Greeks in Crimea, and attempted to accommodate the hero into their own mythology (Piotrovsky *et al.*, 1986: 12), thus establishing a genealogical link with the Greeks (Lincoln, 2014).

⁴ He obviously also gave the Scythians their name. However, Herodotus writes that the nomads called themselves Skolotai. The name Scythians then is probably the outcome of Greek or Assyrian corruption.



Fig. 3. Gold plaque from the Kul Oba kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986: fig. 203). Here the goddess holds a severed head and perhaps has wings.

The depictions

Regardless of the validity of the Herodotus narration, by the fifth century BC the original Scythian mythological and religious archetypes may have well been transformed, forgotten or corrupted, as expected from a society lacking a written language and relying on oral tradition. On the contrary, Scythian art was always a medium for expressing social, religious, and mythical common beliefs. Variations in otherwise similar motifs may reflect variations on such beliefs among various tribes (Yatsenko, 2012), but even so, art provided a common means of expression, a language, even for the most remote of them (Schiltz, 2008: 35).⁵

The Scythian artifacts are decorated primarily with scenes from the animal world. Nevertheless, human figures – male and female – appear on artworks dating as early as the seventh century, such as petroglyphs, though they remain conspicuously rare before the fifth

⁵ For example, in the fourth-century King Ateas's efforts to unite the Scythian tribes is parallel with a rise of mythological depictions in the art of the nomads (Raevskiy, 1993: 137). Perhaps the king wished to promote the idea of; the tribes' common origin and heritage.

century. Since – even with Herodotus's work – adequate information on early Scythian religion is sparse, many scholars have sought answers in the mythologies of other nomadic and Indo-European societies with similarly animistic religions in which various natural elements, including animals, would have been associated with the divine (Piotrovsky *et al.*, 1986: 15). For the Scythians, influences from the Middle East must also be taken into account (eastern Saka tribes may have been fire-worshippers). After the fifth century, the human figure becomes much more prevalent, as do narrative scenes. This may be the result of increased interaction with the Greeks, who favored an anthropocentric art (Schiltz, 2008: 95).

The human figure is thus mostly Greek in style but not necessarily Greek in conception or meaning. Gradually, religious syncretism would even replace the original Scythian symbolism. But initially, the imported representation of a god would have alluded to a Scythian and not the depicted Greek one. In such cases, an animal, until then symbolizing a divinity, would have been replaced by an actual human figure.⁶ The more advanced Greek skills (especially concerning the human image) allowed the Scythians to decorate artifacts with actual scenes from their mythology, bypassing conventions and obviating the need for symbolism. Even so, the topics depicted remain largely undeciphered to us today. To further complicate the task, after the fourth century Scythian art would focus more on projecting the social status of the artifact owner than expressing a topic familiar to all. Therefore, since the most elaborate artifacts were always connected to an elite, we may wonder how accessible in general these pieces of art were to the common people and if they indeed conveyed a message to everyone. Gradually the attention to aesthetics would completely overshadow the communicative potential of art (Piotrovsky *et al.*, 1986: 91). In any case, the Greek influence widely expanded the Scythian art repertoire, introducing new motifs or replacing older ones.

⁶ Based on the opinion that the Scythian religion was animistic, it may be assumed that originally the Scythians perceived the gods as animal-like and not human-like. On the other hand, it was perhaps due to their limited artistic skills that they widely adopted the animal figure and did not try to experiment with the human one, even if their gods were human-like from the beginning (Ustinova, 1999: 21). It is also possible that the Scythians, influenced by the Persians, preferred a symbolic rather than a realistic depiction of a god.



Fig. 4. Gold plaque from the Kul Oba kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Schiltz, 2008: 172).



Fig. 5. Plaque from the Chertomlyk kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986: fig. 258). A fire is shown right next to the seated figure.

The insistence of scholars on interpreting a depicted figure as a religious or mythological one is mainly based on the assumed ritualistic function of the artifact depicting it. However, this concept may be arbitrary, since many artifacts have not been found *in situ*. And even if an object was ultimately utilized in a ritual, it does not mean that it was produced or decorated with this function in mind (as with the ritualistic breaking of ceramics in a funeral: Namerova, 2011). Besides, many depictions have survived incomplete (Yatsenko, 2012) or might have been extracts of larger depictions that have not survived. Moreover, the explicit Greek or other foreign influences put in doubt that the depictions reflect purely Scythian worldviews or that an entirely adopted figure would transmit to the Scythians the message perceived by Greeks or Persians. But, even presented with a Greek style, if the scene was completely alien to the Scythian mind it is doubtful that anyone would have ever purchased the art piece (Cunliffe, 2019: 254). Just like in all ancient societies, mythological/religious scenes were more popular among the Scythians than those inspired from everyday life. And a slight standardization of the human figures – especially the female ones – also favors the hypothesis of a heroic or divine than an ordinary character. Thus, male figures are almost always identified as kings, warriors, or ancestors. The females (appearing slightly more standardized) are thought to represent a goddess or a priestess.

The first figure to be identified as a goddess comes from the early period of Scythian art, when Middle Eastern influences were still strong. She is snake-limbed, obviously reminiscent of Echidna (fig. 2), Hercules's wife in the Greek version of the myth. Due to the possible common origin of the two versions mentioned above, the serpent-like figure has also been recognized as Zeus/Papaios's wife and Targitau's mother (Raevskiy, 1993: 25). However, if Hercules is to be identified with Targitau, the half-snake goddess would be his wife (not mentioned in the *Histories*) and not his mother. In such a case, we ignore the fact that a corruption might have taken place between the two versions (after all, the Greeks knew who Hercules's parents were) and the correlation is based purely on guesswork. Another opinion holds that the mother and wife of Targitau was the same person, thus implying incest (Raevskiy, 1993: 33). Her identification with Api is



Fig. 6. Gold plaque from the Siberian Collection of Peter the Great, 4th-3rd century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Minns, 2011: 279).



Fig. 7. Gold plaque from the Alexandropol kurgan, 3rd century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986: fig. 260). Probably the archetypal portrayal of the winged goddess (Argimpasa).

also debatable. If so, her union with Zeus/Papaios from which the first man, Targitau, was born may add a cosmological component to the myth (Lincoln, 2014), a notion supported by Api's identification as Gaia. Then, her union with Zeus/Papaios might symbolize the union of sky and earth, i.e., the creation of the world. But if Api was the daughter of a river-god (Borysthenes), she would have been linked to water (as her Iranian-derived name implies). In any case, just like earth, water is a primordial element which



Fig. 8. Gold plaque from Bolshaya Bliznitsa kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986: fig. 208). A variation in the depiction of the winged goddess.

means that she held an outstanding place in the Scythian pantheon. So, was Api the snake-limbed goddess of the artifacts and, accordingly, was she among the goddesses (or the goddess) in the genealogical myth? Scholars today tend to give a negative answer to both questions, naming Argimpasa as the mythical half-snake figure (see below) and arguing that the severed head she sometimes holds also testifies to that (fig. 3).⁷ Perhaps we should neither consider Api as a goddess in the myth nor assume that all goddesses in the myth are the same person. This does not mean that Api was not Papaios's wife. It rather indicates that Papaios had an affair with Borysthenes's daughter. After all, Papaios's counterpart Zeus was infamous for these promiscuous relationships.

Another group of depictions of a female figure comes from the fifth and fourth centuries BC. She is sitting on a throne, accompanied by a male figure, perhaps a servant or the king himself (Khazanov, 2016), or a warrior-hero seeking union with her (Cunliffe, 2019: 281). She holds various accessories, notably a mirror, a vessel, or a cornucopia (fig. 4). She is also depict-

⁷ This was perhaps the head of a shaman or a captured enemy, beheaded as a sacrifice to the goddess. This ritual, originating in Central Asia, is connected more to the worship of Argimpasa.



Fig. 9. Gold plaque from Bolshaya Bliznitsa kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986; fig. 208). A variation in the depiction of the winged goddess. She is not framed by animals and the figure, at least stylistically, betrays heavy Greek influences. Since the figure is undoubtedly a variation in the set of depictions of the goddess, it is a clear indication of the fact that, irrespective of any cultural influences or alterations in their myths, the Scythians maintained their own distinct religious identity. This is even more evident given that the Bolshaya Bliznitsa burial has been identified as belonging to a priestess of a mixed Graeco-Scythian religious background (see also fig. 15).

ed in symposia scenes⁸ or just with two other female figures (perhaps the other two goddesses or, simply, attendants) and it is this feature that led many to identify her as Tabiti. Tabiti, probably of a Central Asian origin, was the head of the Scythian pantheon.⁹ Cunliffe (2019: 268) believes that her identity may be better inferred through the symbolism/depiction of fire alone but, in fact, the enthroned figure is often shown next to a fire (fig. 5). Tabiti, i.e., Hestia, might have been connected therefore to Persian fire-or sun-wor-

ship, justifying her place as head of the pantheon. It is also believed that Tabiti was associated with the royal power. She might have been the king's divine concubine after a symbolic ritual every king had to attend (Raevskiy, 1993: 44) and this is what the depiction might refer to. It is only logical that the supreme goddess would be the king's patroness, although again this function has been attributed to Argimpasa (Ustinova, 1999: 87). Thus, she might also have been the actual concubine of the first Scythian king, Targitau, and the attendant depicted might be Targitau himself or the respective king. But again, this interpretation is arbitrary and poses problems. Why was Tabiti and not the snake-limbed goddess the head of the pantheon? Was a wife considered more important than a mother in Scythian society? In any case Tabiti might have been indeed the Scythian symbolic queen without necessarily being the wife of Targitau. There is an-

8 See a gold plaque (piece of a headdress) from the Sakhnovka kurgan in the Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine (Yatsenko, 2012, figure 9.2).

9 According to Herodotus, the pantheon had three tiers. Tabiti was in the top with Papaios and Api in the second. All other gods were of the third rank. This tripartite system is frequently encountered when examining the Scythian phenomenon (Raevskiy, 1993: 20-21). The fact that the head of the pantheon was female attests to the relatively equal social position of women in a nomadic society. For the Scythians, this was certainly the case (Hasanov, 2014, 2018).

other opinion on the whole composition. The seated figure may represent a priestess and the servant a dead aristocrat, seeking passage to the afterlife (Windfuhr, 2006). Even if the figure is indeed a goddess, the composition could still allude to a dead person seeking union with her in the afterlife and many scholars have thus linked the seated goddess with the underworld (Yatsenko, 2012). Last, the scene may be a variation on the one depicting a Scythian sitting on the lap of a woman, found somewhere in south Siberia. In this depiction, the tree of life is also present (fig. 6).

The most varied set of depictions though, belongs to a goddess identified as Argimpasa. Her images closely resemble those of Api (the snake-limbed one), to the point that many believe they actually relate to a single goddess. However, if they are to be differentiated, the depictions of Argimpasa portray her as a winged goddess, often accompanied by animals and tendril-limbed (figg. 7, 8).¹⁰ Perhaps her very first depiction is to be found on the golden mirror from the Kelermes kurgan, dated to the seventh century (an indication that mirrors had a ritualistic function) (fig. 9). Just like Api, her oldest depictions come from a time when eastern influence was prevalent. She could have originated from Ishtar or, as Herodotus states, the Greek Aphrodite-Cybele.¹¹ Apart from animals,

10 According to Buiskikh (2007), the serpent heads that stem from the lower body of the goddess identified as Api are only a secondary motif to the tendrils that also stem from her. Indeed, in most depictions, both tendrils and snakes comprise the lower half of the figure. In other words, perhaps there was never a snake-limbed goddess, with the rare cases of the figure being solely snake-limbed, alluding to a variation in the depiction of the tendril-limbed Argimpasa.

11 In the Kingdom of Bosphorus there was an important local cult of Aphrodite-Ourania which might have helped spread her worship among the nomads. Other scholars believe that she is a Scythian evolution of the Middle Eastern *Rankenfrau*, from whose depictions the winged and the snake-limbed goddess probably originated. At times, the winged goddess's lower limbs comprise floral (tendril) motives and, in rarer cases, animal heads, perhaps analogous to snake limbs (Buiskikh, 2007). Both the floral and the animal/snake-head icons are almost identical to the form of *Rankenfrau's* limbs. Contrary to Herodotus's Hellenocentrism, it is indeed likely that even Aphrodite herself originated from *Rankenfrau*, with or without the Scythian intervention (since it is also possible, although less likely, that it was the Scythians who introduced Aphrodite or helped popularize her worship among the Greeks). The image of Scylla in Greek art is also strongly reminiscent of *Rankenfrau*, being perhaps an adaptation of the snake-limbed goddess (although the Greeks clearly differentiated between Echidna and Scylla). A piece of horse-harness bearing a depiction of Scylla (or a strongly reminiscent figure) has also been found in Babyna Mogila, although this motif is extremely rare among the nomads.



Fig. 10. Gold earring from the Kul Oba kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Minns, 2011: 195). The figure depicted is identical to Athena.

she is often shown surrounded by motifs from the natural world, such as the cosmic tree, with her hands raised as in uttering a prayer. Her depictions outnumber those of other goddesses. This led most scholars (Cunliffe, 2019: 277-279, Ustinova, 1999: 72) to support the idea that all depicted goddesses actually portray Argimpasa, in each separate case emphasizing one of her identities or elements she symbolizes, the most important of which apparently being material and immaterial wealth (Raevskiy, 1993: 20-25). Other goddesses may not have been depicted at all or,



Fig. 11. Gold plaque bearing Medusa's head, from the Chertomlyk kurgan, 4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986: fig. 259).

most likely, depicted via different figures or symbols. In support of this option, Yatsenko (2012) notes that the throne of the seated goddess incorporates animal figures, though rarely. We are certainly not allowed to exclude the possibility that all depictions refer to the same person and that later variations reflect changes in the original myth or that a particular goddess gradually absorbed the worship and features of another. On the other hand, if Argimpasa (instead of Api or another divinity) is indeed the snake-limbed figure, this implies (but does not prove) that she too featured in the genealogical myth¹² (see below). Another interesting fact to be taken into account is that there existed a group (perhaps a social caste of priesthood but most probably the shamans of the tribes) entirely committed to Argimpasa's orgiastic worship. Called Enareis, the shamans were male but dressed and behaved as women. Herodotus notes that this was due to a divine retribution for the Scythian sacking of a temple dedicated to Aphrodite (Gardiner-Garden, 1987: 36), whose worship furthermore was also associated with gender fluidity in other regions (Ustinova, 1999: 38).

12 Ustinova (1999: 40) notes a variation of the genealogical myth, in which it is Aphrodite (i.e. Argimpasa) who meets Heracles in Scythia.

Thus, the enthroned goddess accompanied by female figures, traditionally perceived as imaging Tabiti, as mentioned above, may in fact refer to Argimpasa and her disguised Enareis priests. In any case, Argimpasa was so influential that many of her depictions were widely circulated among the Greeks of the Crimea.

More goddesses?

The Scythian pantheon underwent continuous changes throughout the centuries. There was great variation among tribes: Herodotus cites the example of the god



Fig. 12. Gold plaque (piece of a head-dress) from the Karagodeouashkh kurgan, 4th-3rd century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Minns, 2011: 218). This unique composition in Scythian art probably depicts Tabiti or Argimpasa in the lower frieze accompanied by various figures. Instead of a single male servant in the depiction, at least two can be identified. Perhaps they refer to the Scythian equivalent of the divine twins.



Fig. 13. Mural from the Bolshaya Bliznitsa burial (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986: 6).

Thagimasadas, worshiped in a single tribe only. Similarly, a closer look at the artwork leads to an option mostly ignored until recently: that there were probably more goddesses, at least among some of the Scythian tribes.

Some clues derive from Scythian sculpture, i.e., crude anthropomorphic stone creations, believed to have evolved from the Central Asian deer stones (or, alternatively, from more primitive but similarly anthropomorphic stelae, found in the North Pontic steppes already in the third millennium). They present a male figure and rarely female ones (Reeder, 1999: 38), interpreted as depicting Targitaus and one or more unidentified goddesses (Piotrovsky *et al.*, 1986: 17).¹³ But since they have been used as gravestones (marking a kurgan burial), the sculptures were more likely associated with the deceased, male or female (Gleba, 2008). Because both male and female figures bear arms, the dead may have been a male or female warrior, perhaps analogous to an Amazon. In some places, these stelae resemble Greek ones, another indication that it is the deceased who is depicted (Raevskiy, 1993: 16).

While the Scythians tried to avoid male and female nudity in art, nude female figures, probably goddesses, are found among the later Sarmatian tribes (Davis-Kimball, 2006). Though we do not know who these divinities were, it may be of relevance that in

some of the Argimpasa's depictions the figure appears naked to the waist. From the fourth century onwards, Greek-inspired depictions on earrings and the frequently-encountered *gorgoneion* (Medusa's head) motif may refer to Athena or her Scythian equivalent, in which the snake symbol persists (figg. 10, 11). Both before and after the fifth century, there are plenty of hunting scenes, often with a mythological context (Yatsenko, 2012). Yet it is surprising that no mention of Artemis is found. Only in the fourth century, King Ateas minted coins stamped with an Artemis-like figure (for details see Stolyarik, 2001). It is possible that the worship of both Apollo/Goitosyros and Argimpasa absorbed that of Artemis. Finally, also, the motif of the divine twins accompanying a goddess – commonly but not unanimously seen as Tabiti – is rare but not entirely absent (fig. 12).

A burial in Bolshaya Bliznitsa, close to ancient Phanagoria, is thought to accommodate the body of a priestess in service of a goddess reminiscent of Demeter. The female figure in the mural in the kurgan has been identified with either Demeter or Persephone (Piotrovsky *et al.*, 1986: 6) (fig. 13). Apart from a clear indication of Graeco-Scythian religious syncretism (Minns, 2011: 482), the findings pose a question about the ethnicity of the buried priestess. Greek and “barbarian” priests and priestesses coexisted and even worshiped the same gods in the Greek colonies of Bosphorus. At least some of the Scythian tribes were agriculturalists (Ustinova, 1999: 15), meaning that they likely worshiped a goddess of agricultural wealth, like Demeter. Alternatively, Argimpasa might again have been the goddess depicted, given her relation to human and natural fertility. Being also our main source on the tribes residing in the periphery of the proper Scythians (royal Scythians), Herodotus notes that the Taurians in the Crimean Peninsula, a Scythian or Cimmerian tribe, worshiped another goddess, perhaps related to Iphigeneia. But again, it may have been the Greeks who identified her as Iphigenia from their own mythology (Khrapunov, 2018).

Since Herodotus, who knew of Api and Argimpasa, does not mention them in his versions of the Scythian genealogical myth, it has been proposed that the snake-limbed goddess corresponds to Borysthenes's daughter and not either of the other two goddesses (Ustinova, 1999: 92). Thus, we may obtain an indica-

¹³ See one of the rare female-depicting Scythian balbals (crude stone statues), found in Pregradnaya in Geba, 2008, figure 2.6.

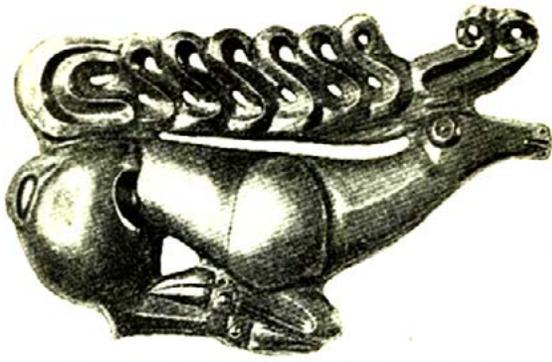


Fig. 14. Gold plaques (probably shield bosses) from the Kostromskaya kurgan, 7th century, and the Kul Oba kurgan, 5th-4th century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Minns, 2011: 226 and Schiltz, 2008: 152).

tion for the worship of another anonymous goddess, perhaps the Scythian foremother herself. So, it is possible that many more divinities, male and female, were worshiped by the Scythians. Even Dionysus, according to Herodotus despised by the Scythians due to his degrading rituals, might have been actually worshiped among some tribes. Undoubtedly, there was a dynamic exchange of cultural elements between Greeks and locals (Vinogradov, 2000). But, despite any similarities, this does not necessarily imply that an image reminiscent of a Greek god/goddess actually depicts a Scythian equivalent.

The animals

It is possible of course that the females on the artifacts did not represent goddesses altogether. Gods and goddesses alike were likely symbolized, personified or otherwise connected with the very popular animal images (Windfuhr, 2006): Tabiti for example with the deer, and Apollo with the gryphon. Given the dominance of

horse and deer depictions, it is possible that these two alluded to the primary gods. There are of course countless opinions on what the two (and other depicted) animals could symbolize. It is an art characterized by its animal style, which despite its influences remained a clear, unique, and distinctive characteristic of Scythian art (Schiltz, 2008: 42). In some tribes, remaining faithful to older conventions, human figures may have never been adopted (Burkhardt, 2014). Moreover, as stated earlier, Herodotus may have arbitrarily correlated the Scythian with the Greek gods so that his text would appear less alien to his audience. Perhaps, only the primary gods were perceived as human while minor deities were perceived as animals. But most probably the human form did indeed replace the animal depiction in Scythian religious iconography (Schiltz, 2008: 76). The animals' connection and correlation with a god however persisted, at least during official processions, such as horse sacrifices (Mallory, 1999: 162) or other shamanistic rituals where the animal played a central role (Hasanov, 2014).

That the deer bore some symbolism is not only evident due to its wide usage, but also because it is the primary figure in the deer stones, the precursor of Scythian art. It



Fig. 15. Pole top from the Alexandriya kurgan, 3rd century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Minns, 2011: 154). The winged goddess is depicted.



Fig. 16. Tapestry from the Pazyryk kurgan (in Saka territory), 3rd century BC, State Hermitage Museum (Schhiltz, 2008; 232). The climate of the region allowed the preservation of otherwise perishable materials such as this cloth. Here, the seated figure -goddess- holds branches, a symbol perhaps of the “Cosmic tree”, while the attendant is depicted mounted. She also wears a headgear, same as her western “relative”. It is clear that the figure belongs to the set of depictions of the seated goddess, perhaps Tabiti, revealing however a variation in the myth, or at least of the myth’s representation between Scythians and Saka tribes.

was an animal linked with the sky, the afterlife, and divine power, both in Indo-European and in Turko-Mongolic religions (Makkay, 2006). It is also worth mentioning that, contrary to other animals, the deer is mostly depicted alone and not framing a human figure. Likewise, the prevalence of other depicted animals also alludes to their importance. That hybrid animals would bear some mythological or religious connection is also evident, their sanctity testified through Iranian and Greek mythology (Burkhardt, 2014). Scenes of fighting animals may represent a clash of the elements each animal represented (Farkas, 1977). Moreover, each tribe seems to have had a close connection with a specific animal (protector? mythical ancestor?). The fact that depicted animals bore a symbolism is certain because they were carefully chosen over other

species and attention was paid to the detailed imaging of specific parts of their bodies (Reeder, 1999: 38). It is also very interesting that animals connected to religious beliefs seem to have been female, as far as gender can be distinguished in images (Burkhardt, 2014). Of course, we can only speculate on what the animals symbolized, even if we accept that a specific animal constantly represented a single notion, unaltered through the centuries (Ustinova, 1999: 19). In the end Scythian art transitioned through various phases but never lost some of its characteristics. The style – and perhaps meaning – of the shield boss from Kostromskaya (seventh century) may be completely different from that of the equivalent boss from Kul Oba (fourth century), but both depict the persistently beloved deer (fig. 14).

The priestesses

According to a different interpretation, the female figures may represent priestesses. Although Herodotus says nothing about female priestesses, archeology has proven that such persons did exist, especially among the Sarmatian tribes. For a society in which women were treated – almost – equally to men, artistic images of women of a high social status are to be expected. The Scythians certainly showed great respect to their queens, priestesses, and female warriors, even if the process of Hellenization gradually limited the women's freedom. (Ustinova, 1999: 16). In fact, women warrior depictions are comparatively few (Hasanov, 2018). But for the Scythians this image might not have been as exotic as it was for the Greeks. Thus, they were perhaps less interested in depicting an everyday phenomenon in art.¹⁴

Women's burials are rich in ritualistic artifacts, many with elaborate decoration (like head-dresses¹⁵, whips, scepters, mirrors, or other accessories of a priest/shaman). Of course, it is not certain whether such objects were used exclusively in rituals (Bakkay, 1971: 84). Some bear figurines of animals (mostly deer) and humans (fig. 15). Thus, we may think that the burials probably belonged to a member of the elite or the clergy, and, in male burials, even the king, being ex-officio the chief shaman (Bakkay, 1971: 112). We should always remember that the Enareis could have been an imitation of a purely female priesthood from earlier centuries or from the eastern Sarmatian tribes. Maybe they were eunuchs, along a process of feminization (Davis-Kimball, 2000). In any case, it is clear that the priesthood was closely linked to femininity.

Conclusions

It is perhaps wrong to look for correlations. No matter which theory one chooses to support, problems and counter-arguments are bound to arise. After all, in a society which survived for so long any perception of religion and mythology was subject to change. In this short

paper an attempt was made to present some influential opinions and not put forward a new one: every new theory is bound to be arbitrary. Even Herodotus contradicts himself or does not elaborate on things he considers well known or has no knowledge of. Archeologists today are engaged in comparative studies with images from the art of the eastern Saka tribes but the wealth and diversity of new finding has further complicated the issue, instead of giving more solid results (fig. 16).

When it comes down to the depictions and their utilization as a testimony on religion, the most important point to consider is whether they were nothing more than an aesthetic expression of the elite. After the fifth century, an increasingly Hellenized elite would be more enticed by Greek cultural elements, immediately adopting them through its own beliefs but without filtering them. But even then, even when an artifact was produced exclusively by a foreign artist, the theme would remain mostly Scythian.

Finally, regarding the debate on whether all of the depictions allude to a single goddess (Argimpasa), despite this being the most influential opinion, there is an aspect not yet considered. To my knowledge there is no ancient polytheistic society that depicted only one of its gods in the art it produced: nearly always all, or at least most, of the pantheon gods are encountered. This however does not exclude the possibility that Api and Tabiti might have been represented through other symbols or animals and not necessarily through the human figure.

Acknowledgements

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14 Although Herodotus seems to be the first author to associate the Amazons with the Scythian tribes (Ivanchik, 1999), for the Scythians and especially the Sarmatians, the myth – or most probably the reality – of the Amazons was already well known.

15 Elaborate head-dresses are considered to have been worn exclusively by priestesses. Since the enthroned goddess often wears one, it is inviting to associate the depiction with a priestess.

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NOTES AND NEWS

ATELIER, RESEARCH CENTER FOR CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PREHISTORIC AND TRIBAL SOCIETIES

“The Role of Women in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies” has just appeared; the book is concerning women, therefore men as well. Sixteen authors take us through different societies for a journey to traditions related to the role of women, as recorded by prehistoric and tribal art, from Azerbaijan to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, to India, Arabia, the Sahara, Italy, France, the USA and Brazil: different habits in different times provide a significant landscape on the role of women, a topic as actual today as it has always been. The understanding of the role of women in specific context and in the human species in general is a vital aspect of social awareness. The topic is worth receiving more interest, as is proposed in the mentioned book, which is the printed version of two issues of **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal (Issue 26, December 2019 and Issue 27, March 2020). In the last few years the Atelier Research Center has awakened a renewed interest in the topic by producing some books (so far in Italian), like *Iniziazione e riti di passaggio* (2011), *Nascere e crescere da nomadi* (2013), *Ordine e caos nelle società primarie* (2014) and *Amore e sessualità* (2018). The new book is further widening the existing thematic archives on the role of women in prehistoric and tribal societies.

What can we learn from the available documentation? Some 20 engraved stone blocks from La Ferrassie and the surrounding countryside in Dordogne, France, reveal the practice of exchanging women between clans some 40,000 years ago. Apparently, women were traded like goods (*Decoding Prehistoric Art*, Atelier, 2015). Until 100 years ago some hunter-gatherer Aboriginal tribes in the Central Australian desert used to perform the marriage of a girl by making her have sexual relations with all the totemic brothers of the husband-to-be (*Iniziazione e riti di passaggio*, Atelier, 2011). Some 50 years ago among the Bedouin tribes of the Sinai desert, a virgin girl could be acquired with five camels; a non-virginal woman would cost one or two cam-

els (*Amore e sessualità*, Atelier, 2018). In some regions of Tibet, women may have several husbands at a time, while in Arabia men may have exclusive harems with many women. In an area of southern India, women are the owners of the house and the land, and they may have guest-mates; men are either sons or guests (*Radici della cultura*, Atelier, 2017). Information is accumulating on the variety of possibilities in the simplest and most natural relation ever, that between the two genders. How such relations developed in different societies and how can they teach us about the reality of today and the nature of male-female relations yesterday, today and tomorrow?

In certain countries women have to hide their faces under a burka or some other covering. The rock art of these same areas shows that once women, as men, dressed in just a short skirt; not only their faces but also their breasts were exposed. How did new habits come into use? Miniskirts and bikinis were introduced in other countries where previous traditions imposed on women to be fully dressed. Again, how was it that new habits came in?

Millions of anthropomorphic images are present in the figurative art of five continents. They represent women and men, they have been made by people, men and women of distinct human societies, in the course of millennia. What can we learn from that about gender relations and in particular the role of women in various societies? In some prehistoric and tribal art images of women are dominant, in others they are ignored. In some rock art, female divinities and female worshippers are represented, in others women appear as sexual objects; in others again, they appear in dancing and ritual scenes, to be socially active, or taking care of children, or cooking food. In more recent images, in some countries, they also appear as artists, scholars, astronauts and political leaders.

Males and females have different roles, not only among humans, also among other primates and other mammals. The variability of gender roles in human societies derives from the very nature of males and females, but also from different experiences and social trends. The feedback provided

by archeological and prehistoric research is certainly useful for gaining a panoramic vision. The book is inviting to debate and to additional contributions of facts and ideas. **EXPRESSION** journal will welcome comments and papers.

AN INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY¹

PREMISE

Conceptual anthropology is the discipline studying the spirit of culture, arts, beliefs, traditions, and other intellectual and spiritual expressions. It is the subject topic of **EXPRESSION**, a quarterly journal published in English, and of books issued by ATELIER, Research Center for Conceptual Anthropology. ATELIER is an experimental laboratory created and directed by Prof. Emmanuel Anati. The headquarters are in the Alpine village of Capodiponte, Camonica Valley, Italy, a major center of prehistoric rock art, which is on the UNESCO list of the world's cultural heritage, and where the scientific discipline of rock art research was conceived and implemented over half a century ago.

HOW CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY WAS BORN

The idea of creating a unique base for the study of art, religion, social relations, and other intellectual and spiritual aspects of human culture had been maturing for some time. It took a first formal step during the International Congress of Prehistory at Florianopolis, Brazil, in 2011. The debate at first concerned the need to change the basic orientation of prehistoric studies. Traditional archeology is a discipline mainly based on recording, describing, and dating. The new archeology had to go further, treasuring the findings recorded by the old archeology, using them to understand their spirit, motivation, and conceptual context.

But was it easier to change the orientation of a traditionally well-established discipline or to create a new discipline? In the fields of prehistoric archeology and anthropology, the presence of different orientations is a healthy factor to be preserved. Within this frame, a new discipline was born. First it was proposed to name it new archeology and in fact this is what it is. However, ultimately, the name of conceptual anthropology was agreed upon.

Participants at the session of CISENP (International Scientific Commission on the Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-Literate Peoples) chaired by Prof. Anati decided to recognize the fledgling discipline of concep-

tual anthropology as a commitment of the commission. With CISENP collaboration, the ATELIER research center started operating in 2013, organizing meetings and debates, with an editorial section producing books and **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal. To date, October 2021, 250 authors from 50 countries in five continents have contributed texts in the 34 issues of **EXPRESSION** and in the 60 books published so far by Atelier. They form the basis of the new discipline, conceptual anthropology, alias the new archeology.

THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW DISCIPLINE

The purpose of this new discipline is the understanding of the spirit and conceptual background of human behavior, its context, and the processes of change and development. It combines the experiences and methods of different disciplines, from psychology to history, from archeology and anthropology to sociology, art history, philosophy, and the history of religions.

Each discipline of the humanities is a fount of conceptual enrichment for the others. Multidisciplinary research is proving to be a source of innovation for each one of the single traditional disciplines. Aimed at first at studying the intellectual and spiritual expressions of prehistoric and tribal communities, conceptual anthropology is opening up to new sectors such as trends in contemporary societies, opinions, and the conceptual phenomena that characterize them, as emerging from Atelier's recent books.

THE CONCEPT OF CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Conceptual anthropology studies the concepts and motivations of human behaviors emerging from archeology, anthropology, history, sociology, and other subjects of the humanities. The aim is to understand the meanings of patterns and trends. Every event and every detail express part of a wider reality. Humanity is the set of humans; culture is the set of cultures. Conceptual anthropology opens up landscapes in the dynamic vision of values that are evolving and changing, but always remain the core of human identity. Awareness in the processes of affirmation, stabilization, or change and evolution, followed by art, religion, human relations, and social and economic trends helps us to understand tendencies which determine behavioral patterns and collective identity.

Each discipline has its own memory that is the basis of research and forms the advancement of the discipline itself. The combination of disciplines is also the union of memories on which to draw for a wider research landscape. Today the media and encyclopedias make some types of technical data easily available. But the human mind is still

¹ A revised and updated version of a text which appeared in **EXPRESSION** 29, 2020

irreplaceable in its instinct, intuition, imagination, association, and emotions. Traditional research in archeology and anthropology usually avoids a concern with emotions, imaginations, and intuitions. Conceptual anthropology does not ignore these aspects. Research is a human ability and relies on the natural functioning of human minds. Every discipline, like every being, focusses on certain sectors of memory and neglects others. The memory of various disciplines grants a wider visualization than that of a single discipline and is an aspect of the research system applied by conceptual anthropology. Trial and error are not only the main causes of the advancement of scientific research, they are also the source of emotional aspects that make research alive and stimulate minds to do research.

In the face of extreme specialization which reduces researchers to technicians, conceptual anthropology goes against the current. It tends to encourage the acquisition of broad humanistic values and to train intellectuals, a derogatory term for a kind of experts, but relevant to conceptual anthropology. Technicians and intellectuals have different backgrounds, different roles, and different mental orientations. No doubt technicians are needed and this is the trend of higher education in many cases: to create specialists, trained with technical knowledge to be employed in a given functional sector. The conceptual anthropology scholar is also a specialist, with different criteria, with a broad-minded humanistic, philosophical orientation, contributing to human intellectual existence.

Conceptual anthropology is a mental gym. Vast ranges of knowledge open wide horizons and promote a panoramic insight into understanding the spirit of man in his conceptual conditioning, decision-making, feelings, emotions, loves, and imagination. Knowledge is supposed to generate the acquisition of consciousness. The degree of understanding determines decision-making faculties as well as human relations and actions.

NEW GOALS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Both archeological and social anthropological research are evolving. Detecting, describing, and dating objects, traditions, and habits has led to knowing them or their apparent aspects. Thanks to this demanding work, today we enter a new era of research, in which we reach the thoughts, intentions, dilemmas, messages, minds, and actions of those who produced them. This is particularly relevant and rewarding for prehistoric and other little-known or forgotten societies. The object and the fact become the raw material to produce the history of past ages and of people so far considered to be prehistoric or practically ignored by history. Knowledge is a guide to understanding; understanding determines behavior; behavior determines human relations;

human relations determine life.

The finding of material elements in archeology and anthropology is usually followed by study. Recording and descriptions are usually followed by the conjectures and conclusions of the researchers. A major conceptual step was that of conceiving to move on from the level of knowing to the level of understanding: understanding not only the logic and conjectures of the researcher and his/her scientific conclusions, but also the logic and conjectures of those who produced what the researcher is describing and evaluating, visual art, material culture, shrines, and so on. The new archeology is changing the goals and perspectives of the discipline, from the knowledge of remains of the past to the thoughts, purposes, and emotions of the people that produced them.

The initial main efforts of conceptual anthropology were devoted to reading, or rather deciphering, prehistoric and tribal art, a target and challenge of the new archeology. Most of what we know of prehistoric art is painted or engraved on rock surfaces. Rock art is a great history book, produced by past cultures in 200 countries of five continents. It is the medium that its authors have left behind as testimony of their thoughts and feelings, revealing thousands of years of life and history. When analyzed with appropriate methods and concepts, it reveals the thoughts, events, and material and spiritual adventures of a past that is the source of the present. Decoding prehistoric art was the initial main motivation behind the development of this new discipline.

Conceptual anthropology is creating the foundations for a new history of mankind, digging deep into what is considered to be prehistory. It explores chapters of history of people who never had a history before: facts, moods, and feelings of populations are being added to world history. And it does not concern lists of the names of kings or leaders and their exploits, conquests, and victories, as they are not chapters of history written by court or regime scribes, but the expressions of the direct protagonists, that is, individuals.

HOW TO SPECIALIZE IN CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1 Specialized publication as an educational means

Specialized publications are the main educational and training means, accessible to everyone in all countries, free from the dependence on the four walls of the classroom. The classroom is the planet earth. And such is also its geographical area of concern. **EXPRESSION** is a quarterly journal, carrying on a continuous discourse, an accumulation of data and concepts, in a global overview. It is the

main educational tool for conceptual anthropology. Back issues may be easily consulted. A general index of authors, including the titles of their texts, helps to find topics. About 250 authors from different world regions make it a natural encyclopedia that is enriched with each issue: it promotes culture, collaboration, dialogue, and intellectual progress, connecting readers in over 80 countries. It is relevant that this journal also reaches native communities, in various continents. Other ATELIER publications, monographs, analytical books, and research reports are expressions of this new discipline. They are conceived to be scientifically reliable, didactically efficient, pleasant and interesting to read, suitable for students, scholars, and fans, without limits of age, culture or ethnic identity. **EXPRESSION** journal is in English. Books are published in English and Italian. A few of them are available in French as well. The publications are designed for the level of university students, and they are easy for everyone to read.

Education and training are carried out through an open formula, available at a world level, that is, reading and consulting. The traditional lecture in a classroom affects at most a few dozen students; education through publications, both printed and online, reach multitudes without displacing them and is accessible everywhere in the world. Internet and Zoom cannot fully replace direct personal contacts, but allow human and scientific relations all over the planet and favor the participation of both groups and isolated researchers. Surely there are many thousands of potential acolytes who are ignorant of even the existence of conceptual anthropology. An important target is reaching them and granting them access. For conceptual anthropology, all of us members of the human species are potential students. Aimed at the conceptual aspects of human creativity, imagination, socialization, artistic expression, and spirituality, the publishing project proposes new horizons of teaching and stimulates innovative, creative ways of anthropological and archeological studies and research. The diffusion of the publications is diffusion of knowledge and conceptual anthropology; it is an essential cultural operation at an initial stage and requires further development. While in other fields the decrease of the use of books is recorded, in conceptual anthropology books and reading are considered to be the main tool to promote in-depth knowledge, understanding, and participation.

2 Acquiring practical experience in conceptual anthropology

In addition to the slow but expanding process of education through the diffusion of publications, training in conceptual anthropology is carried out with practical work: learning by applying the discipline effectively. Compared with

education in the classrooms of university courses, the new trend goes against the current. The concept of apprenticeship is based on the individual training of each student, a personalized school to guide each student to discover not just the practical application of research but also her/his potential, personality and identity.

Today's students are the teachers and scholars of tomorrow. Since there are no university courses in conceptual anthropology, the training is based on the individual practical work of each candidate. Graduate students in anthropology, archeology, and other disciplines of the humanities are the main type of candidate. In addition to individual practical training, there are also group activities: seminars, conferences, and joint research projects.

3 Seminars

Specific themes are addressed, with written contributions from various participants, some of which find space for publication and dissemination in **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal. The common language of 80 different countries is English. Case studies on specific topics, local matters like local trends, and local artistic expressions like rock art or local social and cultural issues are used as experimental topics for both research and teaching. The main means of cooperation remains the call for specific topics that attract authors to contribute articles to **EXPRESSION** journal. Each issue is a sort of seminar, opening debates and relations between authors, fellow scholars, and other readers.

4 Conferences

To facilitate meeting and keeping alive the dialogue between followers of the new discipline, specific sessions are organized on the occasion of international congresses in archeology and anthropology, that bring together a number of participants from various countries and have a limited impact as educational tools.

5 Research teams

Researchers joining in teams have access to laboratories, databases, and other resources of the ATELIER research center. Topics suitable for teams bring together researchers from different disciplines with common targets. Purely theoretical research is not excluded but as of the present, the tendency is to prefer specific practical, well-defined themes having concrete results as their target.

6 Exhibitions

The organization of exhibitions has the double aim of training students and researchers to communicate with schools and the public, involving educational entities and

the general public. The cultural and educational slant of exhibitions refers to the principle of knowing the past to discover the present. Themes in art, anthropology and archeology unite in common effort different disciplines of the humanities as well as graphic designers, architects, artists, educators, and communications experts to provide a deep conceptual penetration into specific areas for the public.

ATELIER has been geared to an autonomous identity, aimed at open horizons of research and teaching, and also proposing new types of a concrete conceptual tendency, sustainable, active, open, and conscious, without barriers. It makes research by producing research. It makes culture by producing culture. Teaching is done by spreading knowledge and awareness. The classroom is the planet earth. The results are what matters and they are made accessible to all. Knowledge is producing curiosity and curiosity is producing knowledge.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The research carried out is published and disseminated worldwide. Results are not meant to be stored in academic cellars or in the drawers of shy scholars. They reach institutions and researchers and produce new ideas and new horizons of research.

Some multidisciplinary research projects in progress:

- Making history of prehistory
- Decoding prehistoric art
- Migration and colonization
- The role of women in prehistoric and tribal societies
- Sedentarization and urbanization

The results are published even if preliminary or partial. The diffusion of information arises interest in the topics exposed, provokes debates and criticism and invites evaluation and external contributions. Researchers and students may join and/or present their projects and results in these and other research topics. Concrete innovative results are granted publication. Articles appearing in EXPRESSION journal are widely consulted in over 80 countries. Research is meant to awaken interest in research, attract new minds to research, and produce communication and cooperation. Some of the specifically monographic research projects:

- The meaning of typological and thematic changes in prehistoric and tribal art
- Variable characteristics and functions of the decorations on the tapa cloths in the Pacific islands, Melanesia and Polynesia
- The significance of the monuments relating to the cult at Har Karkom in the Negev desert, Israel
- The meaning of changing dominant pictograms in the period sequence of prehistoric rock art of Valcamonica,

Italian Alps

- The megalithic temples of Malta and their conceptual meaning

The results reached so far have appeared in the form of books and/or articles, and are listed in the Atelier books catalogue and the general index of authors in EXPRESSION journal. They are available the world over, widening the public interest in research.

FUTURE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Themes are proposed and carried out by the researchers. The results are presented in writing. Discussions and insights, further progress in research, and further contributions are the source of the constant movement and confrontation of ideas.

AN EXAMPLE, ONE OF THE TOPICS IN PROGRESS: MAKING HISTORY OF PREHISTORY

One of the research projects in progress concerns the acquisition of historic notions in prehistoric times: making history of prehistory. The method is a new system of analyzing prehistoric art to decode the intention behind the depictions of the early artists. The outcomes promote discussion and produce texts, and some are published in the series of Atelier books or in articles in EXPRESSION journal. It is a dynamic system that combines research, teaching, and diffusion.

A conceptual analysis of Australian Aboriginal art has led to the reconstruction of cultural evolution processes, events, migrations, the arrival of new populations, and changes in cultural and historical influences in the millennia previous to Europeans' rediscovery of the Australians. The results, though so far partial, are presented in a book on Australian rock art, a study in conceptual anthropology (*Arte rupestre dell'Australia, uno studio di antropologia concettuale*, Atelier, 2019, 234 pp.) (available in an Italian edition).

Other research in conceptual anthropology, on the rock art of Valcamonica in the Italian Alps, has collected data and studies of half a century of research to reach a decoding of images representing 10,000 years of events. Each rock engraving has a motivation behind it, and therefore also different depths of reading, from the physical definition of the image and its chronological context to its meaning in the mind of the maker, to the motivation for depicting it, to what it tells us about the society that produced it.

For ten millennia the Camunni peoples recorded their history through rock art: what did they intend to communicate? And what is the history of the ages that they are conveying to us? A purpose of the new trend of research in

conceptual anthropology is to transform the archeological findings into historical documents, to reconstruct the history of what had been prehistory until now. Valcamonica offers Europe the history of its formative ages through the conceptual decoding of rock art. Europe is rediscovering 10,000 years of its own history. The results are presented in the book *The Rock Art of Valcamonica* (Atelier, 2015).

Similar studies are being carried out on the prehistoric art of Tanzania, Azerbaijan, and other corners of the world. Each one of these research projects adds new chapters to local history. Together they are not only contributing to a new kind of world history, they are also building up a new vision of conceptual evolution and an understanding of human intellectual and spiritual behavioral trends.

Another research with a similar vision concerns the decoding of western European Paleolithic art, which had been brought to light and described for over a century. The methods of conceptual anthropology permitted the deciphering and reading of what had been considered mute beauties. This research led to results of exceptional significance, by decoding certain paintings and engravings that contain messages in a pictographic writing system being used 30,000 years before the invention of the alphabet. During 100 years of research, many scholars imagined their content, but no one went beyond hypothesis. Now these same works of visual art are decrypted historical documents. They reveal trading systems of exchange not only of edible products, but also of women. Other documents report on travels and migrations, and even personal records that include sexual relations. In addition to the disruptive information of these innovations, they open up new chapters of history ages before what had been considered the beginning of history and writing. They bring new light on periods in which the possibility of obtaining historical documents had been a utopia. The decoding of these documents brings back the origin of writing to millennia earlier than previously thought. New chapters are being added to the history of mankind. The first results were published in the book *Decoding Prehistoric Art and the Origins of Writing* (Atelier, 2015). The revolutionary results of this and other studies are producing debates and this is one of the positive results of research. Some traditionally minded researchers find it difficult to accepted these innovative results at first sight, but the debate is awakening academia and new methods and new concepts are being diffused.

The resulting publications clarify the discovery of new aspects of human conceptual evolution and human mental processes. Already, in the first nine years of its life, conceptual anthropology concretely presents its tangible results and innovations.

AND THEN?

The fathers of humanistic studies explored and studied the world. In recent years the tendency in the disciplines of anthropology and archeology was to concentrate on local studies, the society and territory of the researcher. Researchers have concentrated on urgent political issues such as the waves of migrations or the effects of epidemics. Again, conceptual anthropology sails against the wind, developing research into general problems and patterns, enquiring into human conceptual nature at large and into a deeper understanding of human patterns, habits, and these conceptual adventures. Even specific topics of research tend to explore the universal behavioral trends of man, a species of the family of primates. Man is provoking the major concern and curiosity of men. New chapters of world history and new analytical historical concepts are emerging.

Ever since the first human migrations out of the African nest, two million years ago, human beings have been busy discovering the world, meeting other people and asking the same questions: who are they, who are we, who am I? Conceptual anthropology is continuing this eternal research. Is this discipline a new acquisition of the human sciences or is it a two-million-year-old concern of the human mind?

DEFINITION OF RELATED INSTITUTIONS WHAT IS “ATELIER”?

WHAT IS ATELIER?

Atelier Research Center for Conceptual Anthropology is a workshop for research, experiment, and debates on intellectual and spiritual expressions: traditions, art, religion, and other social and conceptual aspects of human society. It is a meeting place for the human sciences, where artists, philosophers, anthropologists, semioticians, psychologists, and students of other disciplines find a common language. Atelier organizes meetings, seminars, and exhibitions; it has a space for exhibitions, a laboratory and meeting facilities in the Camonica Valley, in the Italian Alps. It has a publishing department producing books and the quarterly journal **EXPRESSION**. It is open to all those wishing to participate and share knowledge, ideas, and debates. Link to the catalogue of publications (Aug. 2021)

WHAT IS CISENP?

CISENP is the International Scientific Commission on Research into the Intellectual and Spiritual Expression of Non-literate Peoples, an organ of UISPP, the *Union International des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques*

ques. Being a UISPP commission, UISPP members are the main core of the commission. However, CISENP is a free association. Anyone may join by asking <atelier.etno@gmail.com> to be registered as associate. Associates receive the **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal for free. They are contributing papers and/or editorial activities to the **EXPRESSION** journal and the books of Atelier. Their membership ceases if they are inactive for a second consecutive year. Membership is free: no formal charges or fees are imposed.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UISPP

UISPP is the International Union of Prehistoric Sciences: *Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques*. It is the organ of professional operators in this sector. **EXPRESSION** quarterly e-journal is produced by Atelier Research Center for Conceptual Anthropology, with the cooperation of UISPP-CISENP, an organ of the UISPP. UISPP also offers other facilities, including participation in its World Congress. For membership application contact the office of the General Secretary at: rzmrt@unife.it

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EXPRESSION

GENERAL INDEX OF AUTHORS:

VOLUMES 1 TO 34

Acevedo Agustín

Vol.8, pp. 63-68, *Hunter-Gatherer Rock Art in Two Regions of Central-Southern Patagonia: Contrasting Visual Themes, Techniques and Landscapes* (with Dánae Fiore)

Al-Malabeh Ahmad

Vol.18, pp. 33-41, *Cult Sites and Art* (with Stephan E.J. Kempe)

Alves Da Mota Leidiana

Vol.14, pp. 54-64, *First Americans: Changes of Places, Changes of Theories* (with Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimaraes)

Amâncio Martinelli Suely

Vol.21, pp. 33-39, *the Dominant Morphological Rock Art Theme in 47 Archaeological Sites in the National Park of the Serra da Capivara, Pauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani De Oliveira)

Anati Emmanuel

Vol.6, pp. 3-24, *Decoding Prehistoric Art: the Messages behind the Images*

Vol.13, pp. 7-14, *The Question of Fire: how is it Represented in Prehistoric and Tribal Art?*

Vol.14, pp. 7-10, *Travel and Migrations Tales in European Paleolithic Art*

Vol.15, pp. 7-13, *Decoding Prehistoric Art: Meaningful Examples of Gender Relations*

Vol.16, pp. 9-23, *Decoding Paleolithic Engravings on Bone*

Vol.18, pp. 8-20, *Forgotten Myths and Memories: the Art of Early Gatherers from Tanzania to a World Pattern*

Vol.20, pp. 4-8, *Menhir-Statues: What Was their Function?* (Discussion Forum)

Vol.21, pp. 7-9, *Dominant Themes in the Rock Art of Azerbaijan*

Vol.22, pp. 9-20, *Changing Themes in Valcamonica Rock Art*

Vol.23, pp. 7-23, *The Typology of Rock Art*

Vol.25, pp. 8-19, *Religions in Prehistoric Valcamonica*

Vol.26, pp. 8-18, *Male and Female Variability in the Rock Art of Azerbaijan*

Vol.27, pp. 13-19, *Reconsidering the Vulvar Stones of La Ferrassie (Dordogne)*

Vol.28, pp. 10-31, *Cultural Diffusion and Cultural Introversion in the Alps. Rock Art as a Source of History*

Vol.29, pp. 12-15, *Decoding Paleolithic Art and the Origins of Writing*

Vol.29, pp. 72-77, *Suliman the Bedouin, Dilemmas of a Society in Transition*

Vol.30, pp. 10-19, *Rethinking Jericho and the Birth of the World Earliest Town*

Vol.31, pp. 8-26, *Death: Eternal Confrontation Between Knowledge and Beliefs*

Vol.32, pp. 9-30, *The Neolithic Temples of Malta: a Ceremonial Urbanization*

Vol.32, pp. 76-79, *On Religious Faith And Identity*

Vol.33, pp. 10-28, *The Rock Art of Central Arabia*

Vol.34, pp 9-30, *Desert Settlement Patterns*

Anderson Shenandoah

Vol.21, pp. 16-22, *Understanding the Art of Rock Writing*

Arroyo Joaquín

Vol.6, pp. 134-146, *The rock art of Saracabi River Basin: the El Arco and Blanca de la Pulsera caves, Sonora (Mexico)* (with Neemia Santos, Beatriz Menéndez, Quijada César, Antonio Hernanz, Mercedes Iriarte and Ramon Vinas)

Arsenault Daniel

Vol.4, pp. 3-4, *Canadian Shield Rock Art and its Spiritual Dimension: an Informed Approach to the Tangible and Intangible Dimensions of Rock Art Sites in the Canadian Shield*

Vol.7, pp. 5-13, *The Canadian Shield Rock Art and Its Spiritual Dimension: Finding Some Tangible and Intangible Aspects of Rock Art Sites in the Canadian Shield through a Contextual Approach*

Arzarello Marta

Vol.14, pp. 11-15, *The Bifacial Phenomenon across Time, Space and Variability*

Baghdasaryan Vard

Vol.21, pp. 40-48, *Linguistic Data on Old Armenian and Norse Intercultural Communication and the House of Being* (with Vahan Vahan, Gregori Vahanyan)

Balbino Ana Cristina Alves

Vol.34, pp. 31-46, *Prehistoric Sexuality in the Rock Art of Serra da Capivara (PNSC/PI), Brazil* (with Michel Justamand, Vanessa da Silva Belarmino, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira)

Baldari Luigi

Vol.32, p. 4, *The Concept of Death Between Anthropology and Psychoanalysis*

Banerjee Ruman

Vol.26, pp. 42-50, *The Women of Central Indian Rock Art: Discovery, Documentation and Interpretation* (with Somnath Chakraverty, David W. Robinson)

Basile Mara

Vol.8, pp. 8-14, *Images in Time: an Overview of Rock Art Manifestations in the Fiambalà Region, Catamarca, Northwestern Argentina* (with Norma Ratto)

Bednarik Robert G.

Vol.12, pp. 8-10, *Questions and Answers about Art and Rock Art*

Vol.14, pp. 16-21, *Pleistocene Maritime Colonizations*

Vol.16, pp. 24-29, *Reading Messages into Palaeoart*

Vol.24, pp. 7-8, *No Greener Grass in the Arctic*

Belarmino, da Silva Vanessa

Vol.26, pp. 28-34, *Female Representations in Rock Art Scenes, São Raiumundo Nonato-PI, Brazil* (with Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Michel Justamand, Pedro Paulo Funar)

Belfer-Cohen Ana

Vol.5, p. 20, *A Natufian Mask Face Figurine: an Insight into the Nature of the Supernatural Being*

Bender Herman

Vol.28, pp. 32-45, *Sacred Numbers in Plains and Woodland Indian Cultures and Cosmologies*

Ben Nasr Jaâfar

Vol.8, pp. 15-20, *The Rock Art of Tunisia: When, Why and to Whom?*

Vol.10, pp. 7-9, *Sandal Engravings in the Village of Guermessa (Southeast of Tunisia): a Graphic Memorizing of a Forgotten Berber Ritual?*

Benavente Martha E.

Vol.5, pp. 16-17, *The Set of El Arroyo de las Flechas Rock Art Engravings: Symbolic Associations in the Sierra El Alamo; Caborca in Sonora, Mexico*

Vol.6, pp. 109-120, *The Set of El Arroyo de las Flechas Rock Art Engravings: Symbolic Associations in the Sierra El Alamo; Caborca in Sonora, Mexico*

Berriet Margalit

Vol.5, p. 6, *Arts and Cultures are a Journey in the World of Mankind*

Vol.6, pp. 24-29, *Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-Literate Societies: Art and Culture, a Journey through the World of Mankind*

Vol.11, pp. 7-12, *Male + Female: Humanity: Male and Female in Prehistoric and Tribal Art*

Vol.13, pp. 16-21, *Abstract Signs and Symbols in Prehistoric to Modern Art*

Vol.18, pp. 21-28, *Memories: Grounds for Myth*

Vol.22, pp. 21-23, *The Arts and Society*

Berrocal Emilio G.

Vol.16, pp. 30-33, *The Forgotten Perception*

Bertilsson Ulf

Vol.4, p. 4, *Carved Footprints and Prehistoric Beliefs: Examples of Symbol and Myth - Practice and Ideology*

Vol.6, pp. 9-46, *Carved Footprints and Prehistoric Beliefs: Examples of Symbol and Myth - Practice and Ideology*

Bettencourt Ana M. S.

Vol.5, p. 7, *Grid Patterns in the New Iberia Rock Art Iconography, Context and Interpretations*

Binant Pascale

Vol.6, p. 46-56, *Sexual Human Representations of the Paintings of Serra da Capivara, Brazil: Relations in Action, Narrative Relations?*

Vol.11, pp. 17-20, *Men, Women, Children, Anthropomorphs and Animals*

Vol.13, 9, Discussion Forum

Bloch David

Vol.34, pp. 5-6, *The Grey Salt and Red Salt of Jericho and the Dead Sea*

Bjork Carl

Vol.11, pp. 13-16, *Not Always the Male*

Bo Cao

Vol.5, p. 8, *Research and Study on the Guizhou Rock Art Heritage*

Bo Xiao

Vol.5, pp. 26-27, *Discussion of Reproduction Worship in Chinese Rock Art* (with Zhang Jiaxin and Wang Zhaohui)

Bonanno Anthony

Vol.14, pp. 22-30, *The First Inhabitants of Malta*

Vol.28, pp. 46-55, *Hiatus or Continuity in Prehistoric Malta? From Early Neolithic to Temple Period*

Vol.29, pp. 7-9, *Further Debate on the Cultural Identity of the Neolithic Temples of Malta*

Vol.33, p. 5, *Comments on the Maltese Megalithic Temples*

Bonnet-Balazut Amélie

Vol.22, pp. 24-32, *Understanding the Art of Rock Writing*

Vol.30, pp. 20-29, *Paleolithic Art: the Animal Beginnings of History*

Boro Luigi J.

Vol.8, pp. 21-24, *Lluta Valley, Atacama Desert, Chile*

Bouissac Paul

Vol.4, p. 6, *Patterns and the Dawn of Cosmological Knowledge*

Vol.6, pp. 57-61, *The Stargazers: the Evolution of Knowledge, Beliefs and Rock Art*

Braun Ingmar M.

Vol.10, pp. 10-14, *Interdisciplinary Interpretations of Anthropomorphic Composite Beings in European Upper Palaeolithic Cave Art: an Approach*

Britten Brian

Vol.11, pp. 21-25, *Bedford Barrens Petroglyphs*

Buco de Andrade Cristiane

Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Albérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva)

Burley Paul D.

Vol.4, p. 7, *The Stonehenge Sacred Landscape, Pathway to the Stars*

Vol.7, pp. 14-25, *As Above, So Below: Unveiling the Truth about Stonehenge's Sacred Landscape*

Bury Rick

Vol.13, p. 8, Discussion Forum

Chakravarty Kalyan Kumar

Vol.12, pp. 11-15, *Is Art Necessary for Human Survival?*

Chakravarty Somnath

Vol.7, pp. 26-39, *Pre-literate Art in India: a Source of Indigenous Knowledge, Ethnohistory and Collective Wisdom*

Vol.26, pp. 42-50, *The Women of Central Indian Rock Art: Discovery, Documentation and Interpretation* (with Ruman Banerjee, David W. Robinson)

Chies Monia

Vol.9, pp. 13-17, *Celebrating Three Hundred Years of Mani Stone Carving at the Tibetan Buddhist Site of Gyanak Mani, Yushu TA P(PRC)*

Chippindale Christopher

Vol.8, pp. 25-28, *Meaning in the Axe-Carvings on Stonehenge*

Christie Jessica Joyce

Vol.8, pp. 29-33, *Layered Messages Through Time: a Case Study of Blue Bull Cave, Canyon De Chelly, AZ, United States*

Vol.11, pp. 26-32, *Gendered Stone Cults in Pre-contact O'ahu, Hawai'i*

Coimbra Fernando

Vol.6, pp. 62-70, *Archaeology, Rock Art, Archeoacoustics and Neuroscience: What Kind of Relation?*

Vol.8, pp. 34-36, *Semiotics in the Rock of the Signs (Barcelos, Portugal)*

Vol.13, p. 8, Discussion Forum

Vol.23, pp. 24-28, *Rock Art as a Mnemonic Process among Non-literate Societies*

Clottes Jean

Vol.13, pp. 22-24, *The Lascaux Shaft*

Vol.13, p. 8, Discussion Forum

Vol.25, pp. 20-26, *The Mythic Theme of the Fawn With Bird in the Pyrenean Magdalenian*

Da Fonseca Azizo

Vol.13, p. 9, Discussion Forum

Dahl Ivar

Vol.8, pp. 37-38, *Danish Viking Marks on Stone?*

Dash Jagannath

Vol.13, pp. 25-32, *Text, Context and Symbolism in Saora Art: an Anthropological Analysis*

De Almeida Vitor José Rampaneli

Vol.34, pp. 31-46, *Prehistoric Sexuality in the Rock Art of Serra da Capivara (PNSC/PI), Brazil* (with Michel Justamand, Vanessa da Silva Belarmino, Ana Cristina Alves Balbino, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira)

De Bie Marc

Vol.21, pp. 49-55, *Settlement Spatiality Reflecting Spirituality: Searching for High-order Cultural Expressions of Final Palaeolithic Communities in Northwestern Europe* (with Jessie Van Cauwer)

De Figueiredo Sofia Soares

Vol.8, pp. 39-43, *Paintings from Northeast Portugal: beyond Script and Art*

Delforoos Behrooz Barjasteh

Vol.32, pp. 31-43, *Newly Discovered Pictograms at Mil River Rock*

Shelter in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Southeast Iran (with Samira Narooyi, Safoura Kalantari)

Delnoy David

Vol.9, pp. 18-20, *The Petroglyphs of Huancor, Peru: Form and Meaning* (with Marcel Otte)

de Oliveira Gabriel F.

Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra Da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Albérico Queiroz, Matteus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva)

Vol.34, pp. 31-46, *Prehistoric Sexuality in the Rock Art of Serra da Capivara (PNSC/PI), Brazil* (with Michel Justamand, Vanessa da Silva Belarmino, Ana Cristina Alves Balbino, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Matteus Freitas de Oliveira)

de Oliveira Matteus Freitas

Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra Da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Albérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva)

Vol.34, pp. 31-46, *Prehistoric Sexuality in the Rock Art of Serra da Capivara (PNSC/PI), Brazil* (with Michel Justamand, Vanessa da Silva Belarmino, Ana Cristina Alves Balbino, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Gabriel F. de Oliveira)

Devage Dinesh

Vol.25, pp. 70-85, *A Review of Rock Art Studies in Sri Lanka* (with Raj Somadeva, Anusha Wanninayake, Resta Fernando)

Devage Nandadeva Bilinda

Vol.9, pp. 67-71, *Rock Art of the Vedda People of Sri Lanka: When, Why and to Whom?*

Devlet Ekaterina

Vol.16, pp. 34-44, *The Skull Motif in Rock Art of Far East: Symbol of Death, Rebirth and the Link Between the Generations*

Vol.19, pp. 18-24, *X-Ray Style Anthropomorphs in Rock Art: the Challenge of Interpretation*

Dieter Maurer

Vol.13, pp. 33-41, *In Picture Genesis, the "Abstract" Precedes and Enables Depiction and Coding, Some Arguments and Speculations Based on the Investigation of Early Pictures in Ontogeny*

Vol.19, pp. 33-47, *Why Our Understanding of the Emergence and Early Development of Pictures in Ontogeny Must Undergo a Revision, and What This Revision May Offer for the Understanding of Early Prehistoric Pictures*

Domingo Sanz Inés

Vol.8, pp. 44-49, *LRA? (Levantine Rock Art)*

Dos Santos Gomes Filho Antoniel

Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra Da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Albérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matteus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva)

Drabsch Bernadette

Vol.8, pp. 50-57, *The Wall Art of Teleilat Ghassul, Jordan: When, Where, Why, to Whom and by Whom?*

Dubey-Pathak Meenakshi

Vol.27, pp. 20-37, *Women in Indian Rock Art*

Vol.29, pp. 16-25, *Ancient Myths Narrated by the Rock Art of Chhattisgarh State in India*

Dubal Léo

Vol.6, p. 71-77, *Heralding the Sun*

Vol.23, p. 29-31, *Tracing Back the Ages of Myths behind Calendar Eras*

Vol.31, pp. 27-33, *Coinage, the Coin Age and Creeds*

Faradzhev Arsen

Vol.6, pp 78-83, *The Treasures from the Russian City of Zaraysk*

Farruja De La Rosa José

Vol.14, pp. 31-37, *Neighbouring Lands ... Neighbouring Cultures? The North African (Amazigh) Roots of the Canary Islands*

Vol.16, pp. 45-53, *Reading the Message? The Problem within the Interpretations of Rock "Art" in the Canary Islands*

Felding Louise

Vol.8, pp. 58-62, *Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom? Two Danish Examples*

Ferraro Lorena

Vol.11, pp. 82-88, *Engraving Gender in Talampaya Rock Art, Argentina* (with Aixa Vidal and Maria Teresa Pagni)

Filho, dos Santos Gomes Antoniel

Vol.26, pp. 28-34, *Female Representations in Rock Art Scenes, São Raiumundo Nonato-PI, Brazil* (with Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Michel Justamand, Vanessa Belarmino da Silva, Pedro Paulo Funar)

Fiore Dánae

Vol.8, pp. 63-68, *Hunter-Gatherer Rock Art in Two Regions of Central-Southern Patagonia: Contrasting Visual Themes, Techniques and Landscapes* (with Agustin Acevedo)

Fradkin Ariela

Vol.6, pp. 3-24, *Decoding Prehistoric Art: the Messages Behind the Images*

Fradzhev Arsen

Vol.4, p. 9, *The Treasures of the Third Millennium from the Russian City of Zvenigorod*

Franklin Natalie R.

Vol.8, pp. 69-73, *The Venus of Hohle Fels and Mobiliary Art from Southwest Germany* (with Phillip Habgood J.)

Frechiani De Oliveira Gabriel

Vol.21, pp. 33-39, *The Dominant Morphological Rock Art Theme in 47 Archaeological Sites in the National Park of the Serra da Capivara, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (With Michel Justamand, Suely Amâncio Martinelli)

Vol.24, pp. 18-25, *The Climate Change Occurring in the National Park Serra Da Capivara -Pi, Brazil, Seen Through the Rock Art of Pre-Colonial Human Societies: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Pedro Paulo Funari)

Vol.26, pp. 28-34, *Female Representations in Rock Art Scenes, São Raiumundo Nonato-PI, Brazil* (with Michel Justamand, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Vanessa Belarmino da Silva, Pedro Paulo Funar)

Funari Pedro Paulo A.

Vol.15, pp. 26-35, *Sexual Scenes in Serra Da Capivara Rock Art, Brazil* (with Michel Justamand)

Vol.24, pp. 18-25, *The Climate Change Occurring in the National Park Serra Da Capivara -Pi, Brazil, Seen Through the Rock Art of Pre-Colonial Human Societies: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira)

Vol.26, pp. 28-34, *Female Representations in Rock Art Scenes, São Raiumundo Nonato-PI, Brazil* (with Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Vanessa Belarmino da Silva, Michel Justamand)

Furter Edmond

Vol.9, pp. 21-25, *Göbekli Tepe, Between Rock Art and Art*

Vol.10, pp. 15-21, *Art is Structural Magic, Not Illustration*

Vol.13, pp. 42-53, *Abstract Signs in Art are Shorthand for Cultural Structure*

Vol.14, pp. 38-47, *Colonial Artists Re-style the Same Characters*

Vol.15, pp. 19-24, *Pregnant is the Most Consistent Typological Gender*

Vol.16, pp. 54-62, *Recurrent Characters in Rock Art Reveal Objective Meaning*

Garcês Sara

Vol.21, pp. 22-32, *We, the Deer!?: Assessing a Nonlinear Visual System in the Tagus Basin, Portugal* (with Luiz Oosterbeek)

Garfinkel Alan P.

Vol.13, pp. 54-70, *Patterned Body Anthropomorphs of the Cosos:*

How Might Concentric Circle Psychograms Function in Ethnographic Schemes (with Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay)

Vol.16, pp. 126-144, *Neuro-ethological Messages from Rock Pictures* (with Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay and Merchan Villalba Luis Ramon)

Gassowski Jerzy

Vol.18, pp. 28-32, *Early Medieval Slavs in their Myths and Archaeology*

Ghilotti Francesco

Vol.6, pp. 84-95, *Earth and Subterraneity in Early Sumerian Sources*

Giorgi Marisa Dawn

Vol.8, pp. 74-78, *Chalawong: a Forgotten Site*

Habgood Phillip J.

Vol.8, pp. 69-73, *The Venus of Hohle Fels and Mobiliary Art From Southwest Germany* (with Nathalie R. Franklin)

Hayden, Brian

Vol.24, pp. 8-18, *Why Ideologies and Values Changed: the Role of Aggrandizer Strategies and Secret Societies*

Hameau Philippe

Vol.8, pp. 79-82, *A Commemorative Schematic Iconography in the Neolithic Period*

He Biao

Vol.5, pp. 13-14, *Survey of the Status and Protection Strategy for the Ancient Rock Paintings in Guizhou*

Hegg Chris

Vol.9, pp. 26-28, *My First Petroglyph Language Symbols Deciphered in West Central Nevada*

Hermann Luc

Vol.25, pp. 27-42, *Music and Dance in Rock Art from Southeastern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*

Vol.27, pp. 38-55, *Sexuality in Rock Art from Southeastern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*

Vol.28, pp. 56-78, *Depictions of Felidae in the Rock Art of Kyrgyzstan and Southeastern Kazakhstan* (with Annik Schnitzler)

Hernanz Antonio

Vol.6, pp. 134-146, *The rock art of Saracahi River Basin: the El Arco and Blanca de la Pulsera caves, Sonora (Mexico)* (with Neemia Santos, Beatriz Menéndez, Quijada César, Joaquín Arroyo, Mercedes Iriarte and Ramon Vinas)

Hodgson Derek

Vol.12, pp. 26-47, *Why is Rock Art so Evocative? Affective Depiction of Animals from Coso Range Petroglyphs, Southwest California, and Isco, Hazaribagh, India* (with Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay)

Hochroth Lysa

Vol.4, pp. 10-11, *From Survival to Conatus: Comparative Axiology from Engraving to Painting*

Holt Deb

Vol.11, pp. 39-46, *Sex and Gender in Wanjina Rock Art*, Kimberley, Australia

Honoré Emmanuelle

Vol.9, pp. 29-33, *Pastoralists' Paintings of Wg35, Gilf El-Kebir: Anchoring a Moving Herd in Space and Time*

Hua Qiao

Vol.4, p. 15, *Research on File Construction System of Rock Art* (with Hui Liu and Li Bin Gong)

Huang Yaqi

Vol.5, p. 27, *Agricultural Worship in the Rock Art of Jiangjunya, Lianyungang City, East China* (with Zhang Jiixin)

Imam Bulu

Vol.4, pp. 11-12, *Changing Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of the Nomadic Birhor in Jharkhand*

Vol.7, pp. 40-44, *The Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of a Nomadic Tribe, the Birhor (of Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, Eastern India)*

Vol.9, pp. 34-38, *What Kind of Society Produced the Rock Art of My Region (Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, East india)? Why Was It Produced, and to Whom Was the Rock Art Addressed?*

Vol.19, pp. 12-17, *Changing Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of the Nomadic Birhor in Jharkhand*

Vol.22, pp. 33-38, *The Dominant Theme in Prehistoric and Tribal Art in Jharkhand, India*

Iriarte Mercedes

Vol.6, pp. 134-146, *The rock art of Saracahi River Basin: the El Arco and Blanca de la Pulsera caves, Sonora (Mexico)* (with Neemia Santos, Beatriz Menéndez, Quijada César, Joaquín Arroyo, Antonio Hernanz and Ramon Vinas)

Jairoce Vitalina

Vol.32, pp. 44-57, *Urban origins in Mozambique: Manyikeni and Niamara, Two Divergent Architectural Styles of the Second Millennium AD* (with Solange Macamo, Arlindo Zomba, Laurinda Mutimuciuo)

Jin Yanqing

Vol.5, p. 21, *Research of Classification and Staging of Rock Art on Usen Mountain in Qinghai* (with Zeming Shi)

Vol.7, pp. 101-108, *Research of Classification and Stages of the Rock Art on Usen Mountain in Qinghai* (with Zeming Shi)

Justamand Michel

Vol.15, pp. 26-35, *Sexual Scenes in Serra da Capivara Rock Art, Brazil* (with Pedro Paulo A. Funari)

Vol.21, pp. 33-39, *The Dominant Morphological Rock Art Theme in 47 Archaeological Sites in the National Park of the Serra da Capivara, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Gabriel Frechiani De Oliveira, Suely Amâncio Martinelli)

Vol.24, pp. 18-25, *The Climate Change Occurring in the National Park Serra Da Capivara -Pi, Brazil, Seen Through the Rock Art of Pre-Colonial Human Societies: a Case Study* (with Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Pedro Paulo Funari)

Vol.26, pp. 28-34, *Female Representations in Rock Art Scenes, São Raimundo Nonato-PI, Brazil* (with Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Vanessa Belarmino da Silva, Pedro Paulo Funari)

Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra Da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Alérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva)

Vol.34, pp. 31-46, *Prehistoric Sexuality in the Rock Art of Serra da Capivara (PNSC/PI), Brazil* (with Ana Cristina Alves Balbino, Vanessa da Silva Belarmino, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira)

Kalantari Safoura

Vol.32, pp. 31-43, *Newly Discovered Pictograms at Mil River Rock Shelter in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Southeast Iran* (with Samira Narooyi, Behrooz Barjasteh Delforooz)

Kempe Stephan F.J.

Vol.18, pp. 33-41, *Cult Sites and Art* (with Ahmad al-Malabeh)

Khan, Majeed

Vol.24, pp. 25-35, *Deities and Gods: a Perspective on Prehistoric Religions in Arabia*

Vol.26, pp. 35-41, *Women in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies of Arabia*

Kiotsekoglou Stavros D.

Vol.30, pp. 30-40, *Parallel Lives of Two Districts' Cultural Landscapes: Albano di Lucania (Italy) and Lagyna (Greece)*

Kolber Jane

Vol.13, p. 10, *Discussion Forum*

Lambert Arnaud F.

Vol.8, pp. 83-85, *The Olmec-Style Rock Paintings of Oxtotitlán Cave: New Insights and Interpretations*

Vol.10, pp. 22-28, *Sorcerer-Kings in the Olmec Rock Art of Preclassic Mesoamerica*

Vol.11, pp. 47-52, *Exploring the Symbolic Expression of Gender Fluidity among the Potbelly Sculptures of Southeastern Mesoamerica*

ca: a Sociological Approach
Vol.13, p. 13, Discussion Forum

Lambert Georges-N. (Joel)

Vol.9, pp. 124-129, *Elements to Approach the Magdalenians' Motivations, Who Lived in the Fontalès' Rockshelter* (with Anne-Catherine Welté)

Lbova Liudmila

Vol.12, pp. 16-25, *Anthropomorphic Figurines of Ice Age Art in Siberia: New Data and Perspectives on the Function of Prehistoric Mobile Art (Tarn-et-Garonne, France)*

Vol.23, pp. 35-44, *Ornamental Artefacts as a Way to Transfer and Store Information in the Upper Palaeolithic: the Mal'ta Collection (Siberia)* (with Tatyana Rostyazhenko)

Lenoir Michel

Vol.15, pp. 43-51, *Roc-de-Marcamps (France-Gironde): Sexual Human Representations* (with Anne-Catherine Welté and Marc Martinez)

Leone Maria Laura

Vol.10, pp. 29-35, *Meanings of the Deer Cave (Porto Badisco, Italy): Neolithic Art*

Vol.27, pp. 56-66, *The Woman in Ancient Daunian (Apulia, Italy): Considerations Inferred from Steles, Sources and Ceramics*

Lewis-Williams J. D.

Vol.8, pp. 91-96, *San Rock Art*

Vol.10, pp. 36-40, *Art, Religion and Myth: Were They Interrelated in Upper Palaeolithic Times?*

Li An

Vol.5, pp. 3-4, *Primitive Religious Information Embodied in Human-face Images of Rock Art of Zhuozishan Mountain, Wuhai, Inner Mongolia* (with Wu Junsheng)

Li Gang

Vol.4, p. 13, *Several Understandings on the Cave Paintings on the Turtle Stone in Anshan* (with Ni Xifeng) Vol.5, p. 13, *Discovery and Pilot Study of the Jinsha River Chiselled Rock Art in Shangri-La*

Li Hao

Vol.5, pp. 13-14, *Survey of the Status and Protection Strategy for the Ancient Rock Paintings in Guizhou*

Vol.5, p. 25-26, *Research on the Development and Utilization of the Guizhou Ancient Petrography Research* (with Wu Xiaoping)

Lødøen Trond

Vol.9, pp. 43-47, *Rock Art as Mortuary Practice in the Late Mesolithic of Western Norway*

Lopes Cristina

Vol.9, pp. 48-51, *The Rock Art for Art's Sake; an Aesthetic Approach*

Vol.16, pp. 73-78, *Symbolism in Navajo Rock Art*

Vol.19, pp. 25-32, *Ataegina: a Peninsular Deity*

Vol.34, pp. 47-56, *Geometric Art in the Iberian Schist Plaques*

Lu Xiaohong

Vol.5, pp. 28-29, *Image Classification and the Symbolic Structure of the Rock Art at the Zuojiang River, Guangxi* (with Zhang Yasha and Wang Mingshui)

Luo Xiaoming

Vol.5, pp. 23-24, *Manipulation Tactics: Cultural Interpretations of Rock Art Images Massed in South-west China* (with Wang Liangfan)

Lyster Kenneth

Vol.8, pp. 97-101, *The Prehistoric Petroglyphs of Terekty Aulie in Central Kazakhstan*

Vol.17, pp. 32-36, *Rock Art and Local Religious Practices in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*

Macamo Solange

Vol.32, pp. 44-57, *Urban origins in Mozambique: Manyikeni and Niamara, Two Divergent Architectural Styles of the Second Millennium AD* (with Vitalina Jairoce, Arlindo Zomba, Laurinda Mutimucuo)

Magnotta Angelina

Vol.9, pp. 52-54, *Rock Art in High Lunigiana (Ms, Italy) Rock Art Park of Lunigiana*

Vol.10, pp. 41-47, *The Myth of Cygnus and Ancient Carvings of the Archaic Apuan Ligurian People Near Pontremoli (MS, Italy)*

Vol.11, pp. 53-57, *Moon Worshipping in Prehistory: Fertility God or Goddess?*

Vol.15, pp. 40-42, *Male and Female in Symbolic Depiction in High Lunigiana*

Mailland Federico

Vol.5, pp. 14-15, *Lifestyle of Human Groups during Palaeolithic at Har Karkom*

Vol.9, pp. 54-56, *Rock Art and Pebble Drawings: Different Ways to Communicate the Same Message?*

Vol.10, pp. 48-52, *Ibex, Crescent and Swastika as Symbols of a Lunar God in the Rock Art of the Ancient Near East and Central Asia*

Vol.11, pp. 53-57, *Moon Worshipping in Prehistory: Fertility God or Goddess?*

Vol.20, pp. 11-23, *The Har Karkom Rock Art from the Hellenistic to Late Byzantine Period: Man as the Centre of the Universe*

Marler Joan

Vol.20, pp. 24-33, *Iconography and Orality: Mnemonic Patterns of Meaning in the Neolithic Societies of Southeastern Europe*

Martin Michel

Vol.9, pp. 62-64, *Comparative Study Megaceros-Rennes*

Martinez Marc

Vol.15, pp. 43-51, *Roc-de-Marcamps (France-Gironde): Sexual Human Representations* (with Anne-Catherine Welté and Michel Lenoir)

Meaden Terence

Vol.6, pp. 96-108, *Aspects of the Nature and Purpose of Specific Symbols and Images in the Non-literate World of Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain and Ireland, including Stonehenge*

Vol.15, pp. 52-57, *Phallic and Vulvar Petroglyphs at Drombeg Stone Circle, Ireland, together with a Proposed Explanation Involving the Hieros Gamos*

Vol.16, pp. 79-91, *Shadows of Stone, Shadows of Ancestors - Studies Unveiling the Planned Sexual Drama of the Hieros Gamos, the Sacred Marriage*

Vol.18, pp. 42-47, *Paired Megaliths with Sculpted Images Facing Sunset at the Summer and Winter Solstices and the Implication of Paradisiacal Belief*

Vol.29, pp. 26-41, *The Sunrise Planning of 50 Irish Stone Circles and Comments on the Summer Solstice at Avebury and Stonehenge*

Vol.31, pp. 42-61, *The Hieros Gamos Worldview and Its Expression by Sunrise Drama at Irish and British Stone Circles of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages*

Vol.33, pp. 29-42, *Neolithic Art and Animism on the Avebury Hills of Southern England*

Menardi Noguera Alessandro

Vol.29, pp. 42-58, *Anoa-1 and The Body Proportions of the Niola Doa Corpulent Figures (Ennedi, Chad)*

Vol.31, pp. 62-78, *Idiosyncratic Paintings From a Distant Past in Sivré I (Ennedi, Chad)*

Menéndez Beatriz

Vol.6, pp. 109-120, *The Arroyo De Las Flechas' Rock Art Engravings: Symbolic Associations in Sierra El Alamo (Aborca, Sonora, Mexico)* (with Ramon Vinas, César Quijada, Albert Rubio, Alejandro Terrazas and Neemias Santos)

Vol.6, pp. 134-146, *The rock art of Saracachi River Basin: the El Arco and Blanca de la Pulsera caves, Sonora (Mexico)* (with Neemia Santos, César Quijada, Albert Rubio, Joaquin Arroyo, Antonio Hernanz, Mercedes Iriarte and Ramon Vinas)

Vol.7, pp. 64-74, *A Ritual Space with Paintings and Engravings in the La Calera Rock Art Set, Caborca, Sonora, Mexico* (with Ramon Vinas, César Quijada, Albert Rubio and Neemias Santos)

Vol.7, pp. 64-74, *A Ritual Space with Paintings and Engravings in the La Calera Rock Art Set, Caborca, Sonora, Mexico*

Merchan Villalba Luis Ramon

Vol.16, pp. 126-144, *Neuro-ethological Messages from Rock Pic-*

- tures (with Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay and Alan P.Garfinkel)
Monamy Elisabeth
 Vol.9, pp. 65-66, *Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom? The 'King' from Jubba (Saudi Arabia): a New Interpretation*
- Mooketsi Cynthia Ontiretse**
 Vol.16, pp. 92-97, "This Is a Butterfly and It Identifies a Water Container": the Relevance of Indigenous Knowledge in Archaeological Interpretations
- Moulton Susan**
 Vol.19, pp. 48-62, *Unbridling the Past: the Visual Language of Animacy in Palaeolithic Cave Painting at Chauvet*
- Munoz Fernandez Emilio**
 Vol.7, pp. 45-56, *Colonization of the Upper Miera and Asón Valleys (Cantabria, Spain) in the Late Pleistocene and the Early Holocene* (with Mercedes Perez Bartolomé)
- Mutumucuo Laurinda**
 Vol.32, pp. 44-57, *Urban origins in Mozambique: Manyikeni and Niamara, Two Divergent Architectural Styles of the Second Millennium AD* (with Solange Macamo, Vitalina Jairoce, Arlindo Zomba)
- Mykhailova Nataliia**
 Vol.10, pp. 53-58, *Deer Offerings in the Archaeology and Art of Prehistoric Eurasia*
 Vol.15, pp. 58-68, *Sex as Transition Between Worlds in Deer Hunting Society (Mythology and Rock Art)*
 Vol.20, pp. 34-41, "Celestial Deer" – the Flight from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages
- Nankela Alma**
 Vol.9, pp. 72-77, *Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom? Rock Art of Omandumba Farm on Erongo Mountain, Namibia*
- Narooyi Samira**
 Vol.32, pp. 31-43, *Newly Discovered Pictograms at Mil River Rock Shelter in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Southeast Iran* (with Behrooz Barjasteh Delforooz, Safoura Kalantari)
- Nash George**
 Vol.9, pp. 8-81, *Secret Signs: Mechanisms behind the Construction of Later Prehistoric Rock Art in Western Britain*
- Navarro Alexandre Guida**
 Vol.16, pp. 63-72, *The Feast of Animals: Art and Images on Prehistoric Eastern Amazonian Stilt Houses*
- Neumayer Erwin**
 Vol.13, p. 10, Discussion Forum
- Nezar Moghadasi Abdorreza**
 Vol. 17, pp. 49-51, *Neuromythology: Relationship between Brain, Evolution, and Mythology*
- Nhamo Ancila**
 Vol.9, pp. 82-85, *Encoding Identity: Spatial Motif Variation as an Answer to When, Why and for Whom Rock Art was Produced in Zimbabwe*
 Vol.12, pp. 48-56, *Male Versus Female: Variation in Representations of Males and Females in the Hunter Gatherer Rock Art of Southern Africa*
- Nisi Domenico**
 Vol.19, pp. 78-82, *New Interpretative Hypotheses on a Fresh Interpretation of the Venus à La Corne, a Palaeolithic Bas-Relief Figurine* (with Marta Villa)
- Ni Xifeng**
 Vol.4, p. 13, *Several Understandings on the Cave Paintings on the Turtle Stone in Anshan* (with Li Gang)
- Nykonenko Dmytro**
 Vol.24, pp. 49-62, *Rock Art from the Western Edge of the Steppe: Engravings Inside the Bull Grotto at the Kamyana Mohyla Site* (with Simon Radchenko)
- Ogawa Masaru**
 Vol.9, pp. 86-87, *Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom? Rock Art from Temiya and Fugoppe Caves*
- Oosterbeek Louiz**
 Vol.4, p. 15, *Symbols as Persona in the Dawn of Food Production in the Alto Ribatejo, Portugal*
 Vol.21, pp. 22-32, *We, the Deer!? Assessing a Nonlinear Visual System in the Tagus Basin, Portugal* (with Sara Garcês)
 Vol.33, p. 5, *Malta and the Mediterranean*
- Orefici Giuseppe**
 Vol. 30, pp. 41-57, *The Geoglyphs: Open Spaces and Collective Ceremonies in the Nasca World*
- Otte Marcel**
 Vol.4, p. 16, *The Prehistory of the Portrait*
 Vol.7, pp. 57-60, *The Portrait in Prehistory*
 Vol.9, pp. 18-20, *The Petroglyphs of Huancor, Peru: Form and Meaning* (with David Delnoy)
 Vol.12, pp. 57-60, *Duality in Arts*
 Vol.14, pp. 48-53, *The Chauvet Masks*
- Pagni Maria Teresa**
 Vol.11, pp. 82-88, *Engraving Gender in Talampaya Rock Art, Argentina* (with Aixa Vidal and Lorena Ferraro)
- Paiva Leandro**
 Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra Da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Albérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matteus Freitas de Oliveira)
- Palma Dias Jacinto**
 Vol.16, pp. 98-111, *Circular Architectures and Cyclical Eternities in Archaic Portugal*
- Palonka Radoslaw**
 Vol.16, pp. 112-125, *Shamans, Spirals and Warriors - Rock Art in Castle Rock Pueblo Community, Colorado, USA through Native American Oral Traditions and Archaeological Interpretations*
- Papadimitriou Ioannis**
 Vol.34, pp. 57-69, *Three Scythian Goddesses*
- Patterson Carol**
 Vol.22, pp. 39-49, *Cultural Affiliations of the Western Basketmaker II Style Petroglyphs of American Southwest: Keres*
 Vol.25, pp. 43-69, *Cultural Affiliations of the Western Basketmaker II-PIII Style: Petroglyphs of the American Southwest: Zuni*
 Vol.27, pp. 67-82, *Mythical Women in the Prehistoric Art of South-east Utah*
 Vol.29, pp. 59-71, *Katsina Runners in the Prehistoric Art of the American Southwest, 1000 BCE-CE 1300*
 Vol.33, pp. 43-64, *Clouds in the Prehistoric Art of the Colorado Plateau*
- Pengcheng Hu**
 Vol.6, pp. 121-134, *Review of Guangxi Cliff Drawing Research*
- Pérez Crespo Armando**
 Vol.24, pp. 35-49, *The Tlaloc Prototype: Depictive Practices in Rain-Praying Cultures of del Bajío, the Southern Fringe of Arid-america* (with Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay)
- Pérez Bartolomé Mercedes**
 Vol.7, pp. 45-56, *Colonization of the Upper Miera and Asón Valleys (Cantabria, Spain) in the Late Pleistocene and the Early Holocene* (with Fernandez Emilio Munoz)
- Pisipaty S. Rama Krishna**
 Vol.33, pp. 65-77, *The Origin and Development of Urbanization in South India*
- Prasad Awadh Kishore**
 Vol.9, pp. 88-96, *Rock Art of Southern Bihar and Adjoining Jharkhand in Eastern India: When, Why and to Whom?*
 Vol.20, pp. 42-51, *Predominant Ritual and Ceremonial Trends in the Rock Art of Eastern India, with Special Reference to Southern Bihar and Adjoining Jharkhand*
- Qian Sheng You**
 Vol.5, p. 26, *Using the Montage Technique to Read Various Cave Painting Sites in Guizhou Plateau*

Queiroz Albérico

Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra Da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva)

Quijada César

Vol.6, pp. 109-120, *The Arroyo De Las Flechas' Rock Art Engravings: Symbolic Associations in Sierra El Alamo (Aborca, Sonora, Mexico)* (with Beatriz Menéndez, Neemias Santos, Albert Rubio, Alejandro Terrazas and Ramon Vinas)

Vol.6, pp. 134-146, *The rock art of Saracahí River Basin: the El Arco and Blanca de la Pulsera caves, Sonora (Mexico)* (with Neemia Santos, Beatriz Menéndez, Albert Rubio, Joaquin Arroyo, Antonio Hernanz, Mercedes Iriarte and Ramon Vinas)

Vol.7, pp. 64-74, *A Ritual Space with Paintings and Engravings in the La Calera Rock Art Set, Sonora, Mexico* (with Beatriz Menéndez, Neemias Santos, Albert Rubio and Ramon Vinas)

Radchenko Simon

Vol.24, pp. 49-62, *Rock Art from the Western Edge of the Steppe: Engravings Inside the Bull Grotto at the Kamyana Mohyla Site* (with Dmytro Nykonenko)

Radhakant Varma

Vol.9, pp. 120-122, *Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom?*

Rampaneli de Almeida Vitor José

Vol.31, pp. 34-41, *Rock Art Representations and Possible Zoophilia Themes at Serra Da Capivara National Park, Piauí, Brazil: a Case Study* (with Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Albérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva)

Ratto Norma

Vol.8, pp. 8-14, *Images in Time: an Overview of Rock Art Manifestations in the Fiambalá Region, Catamarca, Northwestern Argentina* (with Mara Basile)

Rebay-Salisbury Katharina

Vol.11, pp. 58-62, *Male, Female and Sexless Figs of the Hallstatt Culture: Indicators of Social Order and Reproductive Control?*

Resta Fernando

Vol.25, pp. 70-85, *A Review of Rock Art Studies in Sri Lanka* (with Raj Somadeva, Anusha Wanninayake, Dinesh Devage)

Rifkin Riaan F.

Vol.9, pp. 97-101, *Pleistocene Figurative Portable Art from Apollo 11, Southern Namibia*

Robertson John H.

Vol.16, pp. 5-6, Discussion Forum

Robinson David W.

Vol.26, pp. 42-50, *The Women of Central Indian Rock Art: Discovery, Documentation and Interpretation* (with Somnath Chakraverty, Ruman Banerjee)

Rocchitelli Andrea

Vol.7, pp. 61-63, *The Dynamics of Mental Movements as a Base for the Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-literate People and the Origin of Development of the Human Being*

Vol.32, pp. 5-6, *Beyond Professional Thinking*

Rodighiero Sandro

Vol.32, p.5, *Anati's Text on Death*

Ronen Avraham

Vol.9, p. 102, *Why Art?*

Ross Jane

Vol.11, pp. 39-46, *Sex and Gender in Wanjina Rock Art, Kimberley, Australia*

Rostyazhenko Tatyana

Vol.23, pp. 35-44, *Ornamental Artefacts as a Way to Transfer and Store Information in the Upper Palaeolithic: the Mal'ta Collection (Siberia)* (with Liudmila Lbova)

Rubio Albert

Vol.6, pp. 109-120, *The Arroyo De Las Flechas' Rock Art Engravings: Symbolic Associations in Sierra El Alamo (Aborca, Sonora, Mexico)* (with Beatriz Menéndez, César Quijada, Ramon Vinas, Alejandro Terrazas and Neemias Santos)

Vol.6, pp. 134-146, *The rock art of Saracahí River Basin: the El Arco and Blanca de la Pulsera caves, Sonora (Mexico)* (with Neemia Santos, Beatriz Menéndez, Quijada César, Joaquin Arroyo, Antonio Hernanz, Mercedes Iriarte and Ramon Vinas)

Vol.7, pp. 64-74, *A Ritual Space with Paintings and Engravings in the La Calera Rock Art Set, Caborca, Sonora, Mexico* (with Beatriz Menéndez, César Quijada, Ramon Vinas and Neemias Santos)

Vol.11, pp. 73-75, *Are Men only Active in the Post War? Truth in Light of the Folklore of the Kaimun Tribes*

Vol.18, pp. 56-63, *Ethno Rock Art: Beliefs, Rituals and Experiences, the Study of Ferocious Depictions inside Khoh in Light of the Beliefs of Kaimur Inhabitants*

Vol.7, pp. 75-89, *The Rock Art of Indo-European Cultures: Concordances, Logics and Possible Common Values*

Sansonni Umberto

Vol.9, pp. 103-106, *Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom? Atlantic Rock Art in Galicia and Northern Portugal*

Santos Estévez Manuel

Vol.6, pp. 134-146, *The rock art of Saracahí River Basin: the El Arco and Blanca de la Pulsera caves, Sonora (Mexico)* (with Beatriz Menéndez, César Quijada, Albert Rubio, Joaquin Arroyo, Antonio Hernanz, Mercedes Iriarte and Ramon Vinas)

Santos Neemias

Vol.7, pp. 64-74, *A Ritual Space with Paintings and Engravings in the La Calera Rock Art Set, Sonora, Mexico* (with Beatriz Menéndez, César Quijada, Albert Rubio and Ramon Vinas)

Vol.28, pp. 56-78, *Depictions of Felidae in the Rock Art of Kyrgyzstan and Southeastern Kazakhstan* (with Luc Hermann)

Schnitzler Annik

Vol.9, pp. 107-108, *Oum La Leg, a Rock Art Site in the Moroccan Anti-Atlas: Who Did the Engravings, When and Why?*

Vol.10, pp. 59-61, *Engravings of Sacred, Ideological or Symbolical Signs in Imaoun, a Prehistoric Tribal Meeting Place in Southern Morocco*

Vol.11, pp. 63-67, *The Representation of Males and Females in the Rock Art of Moroccan High Atlas Mountains*

Vol.5, p. 20, *A Natufian Mask Face Figurine: an Insight into the Nature of the Supernatural Being*

Sharpe Kate E.

Vol.9, pp. 109-115, *Connecting the Dots: Cupules and Communication in the English Lake District*

Shems Krasniqi

Vol.4, p. 13, *Some Aspects of the Contemporary Use of Ancient Symbols*

Vol.5, p. 21, *Investigation and Research into Dahongyan Rock Art in Zhenfeng County, Guizhou Province* (with Zhang Xiaoxia)

Vol.5, p. 21, *Research of Classification and Staging of Rock Art on Lusen Mountain in Qinghai* (with Jing Yanqing)

Vol.7, pp. 101-108, *Research of Classification and Stages of the Rock Art on Lusen Mountain in Qinghai* (with Jing Yanqing)

Vol.9, pp. 39-42, *The Reflection of Social Structure through Rock Art: the Case of Zatriq, Kosovo*

Vol.15, pp. 36-39, *Symbols of Fertility and Protection*

Vol.19, pp. 63-67, *The Use of ancient Symbols through the Ages*

Smith Benjamin

Vol.13, p. 9, Discussion Forum

Sognnes Kalle

Vol.12, pp. 61-66, *From Where to Why: Some Examples of Rock Art Locations in Scandinavia*

Vol.18, pp. 48-55, *Rock Art at Bardal in Trøndelag, Norway: Myths and Memories?*

Somadewa, Raj

Vol.25, pp. 70-85, *A Review of Rock Art Studies in Sri Lanka* (with Anusha Wanninayake, Dinesh Devage, Resta Fernando)

Soukpova Jitka

Vol.9, pp. 116-120, *Tassili Paintings: Ancient Roots of Current African Beliefs?*

Vol.11, pp. 68-72, *Leading Role of Male Hunters in Central Saharan Prehistoric Rituals*

Vol.12, pp. 67-72, *Saharan Rock Art Sites as Places for Celebrating Water*

Vol.15, pp. 69-76, *Penis only for Gods? Sexual Imagery in the Earliest Central Saharan Rock Art*

Vol.26, pp. 51-64, *Women and Prehistoric Rituals in the Round Head Rock Art of the Sahara*

Vol.28, pp. 79-90, *Rain and Rock Art in the Sahara: a Possible Interpretation*

Vol.30, pp. 58-73, *Prehistoric Colonization of the Central Sahara: Hunters Versus Herders and the Evidence from the Rock Art*

Steiner George F.

Vol.12, pp. 73-94, *The Goddess and the Copper Snake: Metallurgy, Star-Lore, and Ritual in the Rock Art of Southern Levant*

Subhash Chandra Malik

Vol.9, pp. 57-61, *Rock Art: a Universal Creative Act*

Sun Xiaoyong

Vol.5, p. 22, *Field Survey and Analysis of Mask Worship in the Xiliaobe River Basin* (with Zhang Jiabin)

Tanda Giuseppa

Vol.7, pp. 90-100, *The Use of Burial Space and Social Relations between the Late Neolithic Age and the Copper Age in Sardinia*

Terrazas Alejandro

Vol.5, pp. 109-120, *The Arroyo De Las Flechas' Rock Art Engravings: Symbolic Associations in Sierra El Alamo (Aborca, Sonora, Mexico)* (with Beatriz Menéndez, César Quijada, Ramon Vinas, Alberto Rubio and Neemias Santos)

Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay

Vol.12, pp. 26-47, *Why is Rock Art so Evocative? Affective Depiction of Animals from Coso Range Petroglyphs, Southwest California, and Isco, Hazaribagh, India* (with Derek Hodgson)

Vol.13, pp. 54-70, *Patterned Body Anthropomorphs of the Cosos: How Might Concentric Circle Psychograms Function in Ethnographic Schemes* (with Alan P. Garfinkel)

Vol.16, pp. 126-144, *Neuro-ethological Messages from Rock Pictures* (with Alan P. Garfinkel and Luis Ramon Merchan Villalba)

Vol.24, pp. 35-49, *The Tlaloc Prototype: Depictive Practices in Rain-Praying Cultures of del Bajío, the Southern Fringe of Aridoamerica* (with Armando Pérez Crespo)

Tsoni Tsonev

Vol.6, p. 146-158, *3D Reconstructions of the Sculptured Emotions in the Copper Age Eastern Balkans*

Vol.12, pp. 95-100, *Art and "Primitive" Cultures*

Vol.13, pp. 71-77, *Conceptualizing the Nature of Abstract Representations in Prehistory*

Ulbrich Hans-Joachim

Vol.10, pp. 62-65, *Communicating with the Gods: Superstition on Fuerteventura and Lanzarote*

Vahanyan Gregori

Vol.6, p. 158-164, *Beginning of Natural Philosophy and Metaphysics in the Rock Arts of Armenia*

Vol.10, pp. 66-68, *The Role of Rock Art Clusters in Mythology, Religion and Magic: the Concept of the Knowledge Spiral*

Vol.16, pp. 145-156, *Frigg, Astghik and the Goddess of Crete Island*

Vol.18, pp. 64-70, *New Perspective on the Theory of the 'Main Myth'*

Vol.19, pp. 68-77, *Sixteen Wonders of World Visual Art*

Vol.21, pp. 40-48, *Linguistic Data on Old Armenian and Norse Intercultural Communication and the House of Being* (with Vahan Vahanyan and Vard Baghdasaryan)

Vahanyan Vahan

Vol.16, pp. 145-156, *Frigg, Astghik and the Goddess of Crete Island*

Vol.21, pp. 40-48, *Linguistic Data on Old Armenian and Norse Intercultural Communication and the House of Being* (with Gregori Vahanyan and Vard Baghdasaryan)

Van Cauter Jessie

Vol.21, pp. 49-55, *Settlement Spatiality Reflecting Spirituality: Searching for High-order Cultural Expressions of Final Palaeolithic Communities in Northwestern Europe* (with Marc De Bie)

Van Gelder Leslie

Vol.13, pp. 78-86, *Finger Flutings, Tectiforms, and the Audacity of Hope*

Van Hoek Marten

Vol.11, pp. 76-81, *It's all about the Head. Morphological Basis for Cephalic Differences in Male and Female Anthropomorphic Imagery in Desert Andes Rock Art*

Varela Gomes Mario

Vol.32, pp. 58-73, *Castelo Belinho, a Pristine Neolithic Village on the Southwestern Iberian Peninsula: Spaces, Structures, Functions, and Symbols, at the Rise of Urbanization*

Vetrov Viktor

Vol.5, p. 23, *A Complex Research of Paleolithic Art in Ukraine*

Vialou Denis

Vol.13, p. 8, Discussion Forum

Vidal Aixa

Vol.11, pp. 82-88, *Engraving Gender in Talampaya Rock Art, Argentina* (with Lorena Ferraro and Maria Teresa Pagni)

Vol.23, pp. 45-48, *Memories of the ocean*

Villa Marta

Vol.19, pp. 78-82, *New Interpretative Hypotheses on a Fresh Interpretation of the Venus à La Corne, a Palaeolithic Bas-Relief Figurine* (with Domenico Nisi)

Vinas Ramon

Vol.5, pp. 109-120, *The Arroyo De Las Flechas' Rock Art Engravings: Symbolic Associations in Sierra El Alamo (Aborca, Sonora, Mexico)* (with Beatriz Menéndez, César Quijada, Albert Rubio, Alejandro Terrazas and Neemias Santos)

Vol.7, pp. 64-74, *A Ritual Space with Paintings and Engravings in the La Calera Rock Art Set, Caborca, Sonora, Mexico* (with Beatriz Menéndez, César Quijada, Albert Rubio and Neemias Santos)

Waller Steven J.

Vol.9, p. 123, *Communicating with the Spirit Artists Who Pre-dated Sound Wave Theory Selected Echoing and Reverberant Environments to Depict Echo and Thunder Spirits in Attempts to Communicate with These Spirits*

Vol.10, pp. 69-72, *Thunder Gods in Prehistoric Art, Mimicking Thunder for Rainmaking Rituals and the Psychoacoustics of Reverberation*

Wang Liangfan

Vol.5, pp. 23-24, *Manipulation Tactics: a Cultural Interpretations of Rock Art Images Massed in Southwest China* (with Luo Xiaoming)

Wang Mingshui

Vol.5, pp. 28-29, *Image Classification and the Symbolic Structure of the Rock Art at the Zuojiang River, Guangxi* (with Zhang Yasha and Lu Xiaohong)

Wang Xiaokun

Vol.5, pp. 27-28, *Research on Face Rock Carvings in Northern China* (with Zhang Wenjing)

Wang Xu

Vol.5, pp. 30-31, *Petroglyphs on the Pacific Rim: the Rock Art of the Xiliaobe River and the Amur River* (with Zhu Lifeng)

Wang Zhaohui

Vol.5, pp. 26-27, *Discussion of Reproduction Worship in Chinese Rock Art* (with Bo Xiao and Zhang Jiabin)

Wanninayake Anusha

Vol.25, pp. 70-85, *A Review of Rock Art Studies in Sri Lanka*

(with Raj Somadeva, Dinesh Devage, Resta Fernando)

Warland Jacinta

Vol.20, pp. 52-61, *The Answers are Living in the Stones*

Welté Anne-Catherine

Vol.9, pp. 24-129, *Elements to approach the Magdalenians' motivations, Who Lived in the Fontalès' Rockshelter, Tarn-Et-Garonne, France* (with Lambert Georges-N. Joel)

Vol.15, pp. 43-51, *Roc-De-Marcamps (France-Gironde): Sexual Human Representations* (with Michel Lenoir and Marc Martinez)

Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães Santiago

Vol.11, pp. 33-38, *Feminine Sexuality in Prehistoric Rock Art: a Path toward Structures of Mind*

Vol.14, pp. 54-64, *First Americans: Changes of Places, Changes of Theories* (with Leidiana Alves Da Mota)

Vol.18, pp. 71-76, *The Neanderthal Construction in Bruniquel Cave, France: the Origin of Myths through a Discussion of Anthropological Structuralism*

Vol.23, pp. 32-34, *Human Memory as Archetype: Implications for Rock Art*

Vol.26, pp. 19-27, *Gender in Prehistoric Rock Art: the Case of Seridó, Brazil*

Wu Jiakai

Vol.5, pp. 24-25, *Discovery and Study of Two Groups of Writing on the Cliff in the Hongshan Culture Area*

Wu Junsheng

Vol.5, pp. 3-4, *Primitive Religious Information Embodied in Human-face Images of Rock Art of Zhuozishan Mountain, Wuhai, Inner Mongolia* (with Li An)

Wu Xiaoping

Vol.5, pp. 25-26, *Research on the Development and Utilization of the Guizhou Ancient Petrography Research* (with Li Hao)

Yu Zhuoran

Vol.4, p. 20, *On the Disciplines of Taking Images in Chinese Rock Art* (with Zhu Yuan)

Yuan Zhu

Vol.4, p. 20, *On the Disciplines of Taking Image in Chinese Rock Art* (with Yu Zhuoran)

Zeming Shi

Vol.7, pp. 101-108, *Research of Classification and Stages of the Rock Art on Lusen Mountain in Qinghai* (with Janqing Jing)

Zhang Jiaxin

Vol.5, p. 27, *Agricultural Worship in the Rock Art of Jiangjunya, Lianyungang City, East China* (with Huang Yaqi)

Vol.5, pp. 26-27, *Discussion of Reproduction Worship in Chinese Rock Art* (with Bo Xiao and Wang Zhaohui)

Vol.5, pp. 27-28, *Field Survey and Analysis of Mask Worship in the Xiliaohe River Basin* (with Sun Xiaoyong)

Zhang Li-Na

Vol.5, pp. 17-18, *The Special Characteristics of the Zhenfeng Rock Art in Guizhou*

Zhang Xiaoxia

Vol.5, p. 21, *Investigation and Research into Dahongyan Rock Art in Zhenfeng County, Guizhou Province* (with Shi Zeming)

Zhang Wenjing

Vol.5, pp. 27-28, *Research on Face Rock Carvings in Northern China* (with Wang Xiaokun)

Zhu Houqiu

Vol.5, pp. 29-30, *An Ancient Sacrificial Place: Research into Rock Art in Xianju*

Zhu Lifeng

Vol.5, pp. 30-31, *Petroglyphs on the Pacific Rim: the Rock Art of the Xiliaohe River and the Amur River* (with Wang Xu)

Zhu Qiuping

Vol.5, p. 31, *Significance of the Stabilization Works Which Protect the Rock Art Painting in Ningming District*

Zomba Arlindo

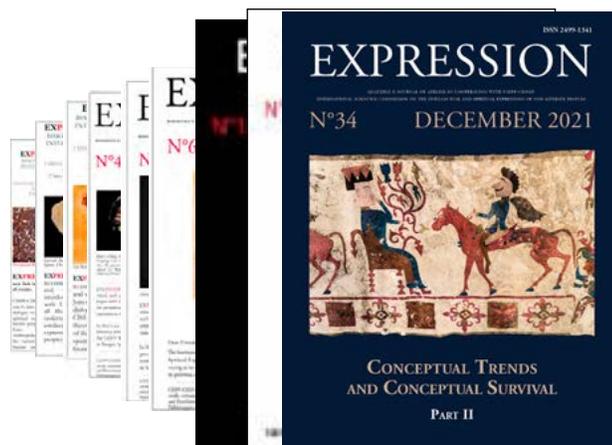
Vol.32, pp. 44-57, *Urban origins in Mozambique: Manyikeni and Niamara, Two Divergent Architectural Styles of the Second Millennium AD* (with Solange Macamo, Vitalina Jairoce, Laurinda Mutimucuio)

EXPRESSION
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250 AUTHORS from 46 COUNTRIES

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Armenia	3	Malta	1
Australia	9	Mexico	6
Austria	3	Morocco	1
Belgium	6	Mozambique	4
Botswana	1	Namibia	1
Brazil	19	Netherlands	1
Bulgaria	1	Norway	2
Canada	5	Perù	1
China	31	Poland	2
Colombia	1	Portugal	9
Czech Republic	1	Russia	5
Denmark	2	Saudi Arabia	1
France	13	South Africa	4
Germany	1	Spain	10
Greece	2	Sri Lanka	5
Hungary	1	Sweden	2
Israel	4	Switzerland	4
India	12	Tunisia	1
Iran	3	UK	9
Italy	16	Ukraine	4
Japan	1	USA	17
Jordan	1	Zimbabwe	1

EXPRESSION

N°34 December 2021



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ISSUES OF EXPRESSION: CONTENTS

ISSN 2099-1341

EXPRESSION, No. 1, September 2013
 BIMONTHLY E-LETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

UISPP-CISENP was founded in 2006 as an international scientific commission of The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques) President, UISPP-CISENP: Emmanuel Anati



EXPRESSION is a new link in the human chain of events.

UISPP-CISENP is now inviting you to join our interdisciplinary dialogue on the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-

CISENP aims at debate and creative discussion – to encourage comparative study. The idea is to invent together new ways of sharing insight and consider issues emerging from this burgeoning, interpretative field of research.

EXPRESSION is first focusing on *human expressions* – all traces emanating from ancient, modern, and contemporary non-literate peoples to unlock the nature of human language, cognition and spiritual thinking. Pre-literate children, prehistoric *homo sapiens*, and traditional tribes

Expression 1

September 2013

An Introduction to Conceptual Anthropology

and topics to be discussed in the following issues of Expression Magazine

EXPRESSION, No. 2, November 2013
 BIMONTHLY E-LETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

UISPP-CISENP was founded in 2006 as an international scientific commission of The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques) President, UISPP-CISENP: Emmanuel Anati



EXPRESSION invites us to consider the human mind and spirit. Join our interdisciplinary dialogue with UISPP-CISENP and all those thirsty for an understanding of the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate

We note with pleasure the productive discussions held at the **XXV Valcamonica Symposium**, from the 20th to the 26th of September, 2013 in Capo di Ponte, Italy. Many speakers participated in increasing understanding about “*Art as a Source of History*”. Many plan on submitting papers for the Burgos meeting at the “*Atapuerca*” UISPP World Congress in 2014.

EXPRESSION is herein publishing the Valcamonica Symposium conclusions as well as excerpts from the new *Andlor* publication in English “**What caused the**

Expression 2

November 2013

What Caused the Creation of Art?

Conclusions of the XXV Valcamonica Symposium. With papers by Massimo Minini (Italy), Fernando Coimbra (Portugal), Johannes Loubser (USA), Tang Huisheng (China), Claudine Cohen (France), Michael Francis Gibson (Belgium), Robert Bednarik (Australia), Emmanuel Anati (Italy).

EXPRESSION, No. 3, January 2014
 BIMONTHLY E-LETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

UISPP-CISENP was founded in 2006 as an international scientific commission of The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques) President, UISPP-CISENP: Emmanuel Anati



EXPRESSION invites us to consider the human mind and spirit. Join our interdisciplinary dialogue with UISPP-CISENP and all those

We note with pleasure the birth of the new *Center for Desert Archaeology and Anthropology* in the Negev, in Mitzpe Ramon, about 100 kilometers from the site of Har Karkom. Take a look, in this issue, at Emmanuel Anati's announcement and call for collaboration from international researchers.

In this, our third issue of **EXPRESSION**, we seek to clarify that are the **NON-LITERATE PEOPLES** referred to in

Expression 3

January 2014

Discussion about the Targets of Expression Research Group

EXPRESSION

BIMONTHLY E-LETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

N°4 April 2014



EXPRESSION invites us to consider the human mind and spirit. Join our interdisciplinary dialogue with UISPP-CISENP and all those thirsty for an understanding of the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate peoples.

In this issue of **EXPRESSION**, we present a preliminary selection of the abstracts of participants in the UISPP World Congress “*Atapuerca*” to be held in Burgos, Spain from 5-7 September 2014.

UISPP-CISENP was founded in 2006 as an international scientific commission of The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques) President, UISPP-CISENP: Emmanuel Anati

As always, we are interested in your comments and look forward to an exchange of questions, views, and papers on the CISENP Discussion Group, which will help prepare fruitful discussions for the congress. In our next issue, the web before we begin, we will publish contributions sent to the Editor or blog correspondents.

As a preliminary overview, CISENP will be presenting our all geographical regions and from a number of disciplines and interdisciplinary perspectives. The spiritual and intellectual expressions of non-literate peoples constitute a particular focus in the research of such an and interdisciplinary, interdisciplinary, the cognitive neuroscience, psychology, and genetics – we would see perhaps the enrichment of the emerging field... on the interdisciplinary field of “conceptual anthropology”.

We work to investigate intellectual and spiritual expressions as one into a fundamental which to discover the human mind. Decoding the significance and purposes of visual images, signs and symbols means decoding our collective memory built over thousands of years in the present. CISENP offers to focus your queries and input regarding your own research directions. Let us know what path you are on, our way at Atapuerca.

Candidate abstracts.

Expression 4

April 2014

A Selection of Abstracts for Session a the Uispp World Congress “Atapuerca”, Burgos, Spain

With articles by Emmanuel Anati and Ariela Fradkin (Italy), Daniel Arsenault (Canada), Ulf Bertilsson (Sweden), Pascale Binant (France), Paul Bouissac (France), Paul D. Burley (UK), Fernando Coimbra (Portugal), Léo Dubal (France), Arsen Faradzhev (Russia), Francesco Ghilotti (Italy), Lysa Hochroth (France), Bulu Imam (India), Shems Krasniqi (Kosovo), Gang Li and Xifeng Li (China), G. Terence Meaden (UK), Louis Oosterbeek (Portugal), Hua Qiao/Li Bin Gong and Hui Liu (China), Marcel Otte (Belgium), Andrea Rocchitelli (Italy), Umberto Sansoni (Italy), Tsoni Tsonev (Bulgaria), Gregor Vahanyan (Armenia), Huiling Yang (China), Yuan Zhu and Zhuoran Yu (China).

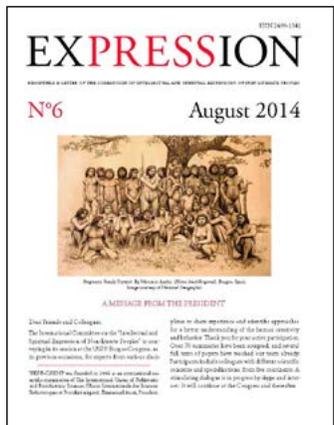


Expression 5

June 2014

Additional Abstracts for the UISPP World Congress “Atapuerca”, Burgos, Spain

With articles by Li An and Junsheng Wu (China), Aoyungerile and Ying An (China), Beatriz Menéndez/Quijada César/Vinas Ramon/Albert Rubio and Santos Neemias (Mexico, Spain), Margalit Berriet (France), Ana M.S. Bettencourt (Portugal), Bo Cao (China), Chakravarty Somnath (India), Manuel Edo/Ferran Antolin/Pablo Martínez/M^a Jesús Barrio, Elicinia Fierro/Trinidad Castillo/Eva Fornell/Georgina Prats/Remei Bardera and Concepció Castellana (Spain), Pengcheng Hu (China), Yanqing Jin and Xiaoxia Zhang (China), Fei Li (China), Gang Li (China), Hao Li and Biao He (China), Federico Maillard (Switzerland), Xiaomei Mu and Li-Na Zhang (China), Dana Shabam and Anna Belfer-Cohen (Israel), Zeming Shi/Xiaoxia Zhang and Yanqin Jing (China), Xiaoyong Sun and Jiaying Zhang (China), Viktor Vetrov (Ukraine), Liangfan Wang and Xiaoming Luo (China), Jiakai Wu (China), Qiuping Zhu (China), Liefeng Zhu and Xu Wang (China).

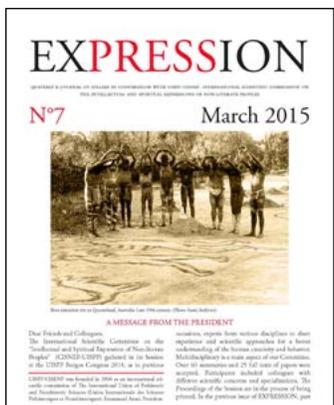


Expression 6

August 2014

Summaries of the Session at the UISPP Burgos Congress

With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Joaquín Arroyo (Mexico), Martha E. Benavente (Mexico), Margalit Berriet (France), Ulf Bertilsson (Sweden), Pascale Binant (France), Paul Bouissac (Canada), Fernando Coimbra (Portugal), Léo Dubal (France), Arsen Faradzhev (Russia), Ariela Fradkin (Italy), Francesco Ghilotti (Italy), Antonio Hernandez (Spain), Mercedes Iriarte (Spain), G. Terence Meaden (UK), Beatriz Menéndez (Spain), Hu Pengcheng (China), César Quijada (Mexico), Albert Rubio (Spain), Neemias Santos (Spain), Alejandro Terrazas (Mexico), Tsoni Tsonev (Bulgaria), Gregor Vahanyan (Armenia), Ramon Viñas (Spain)

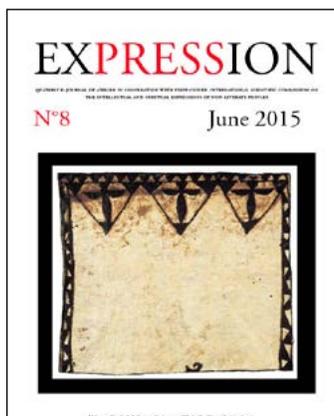


Expression 7

March 2015

Spiritual Dimensions of Rock Art

With articles by Daniel Arsenaault (Canada), Paul D. Burley (UK), Somnath Chakraverty (India), Bulu Imam (India), Mercedes Pérez Bartolomé and Emilio Muñoz Fernández (Spain), Marcel Otte (Belgium), Andrea Rocchitelli (Italy), Ramon Viñas/Albert Rubio/César Quijada/Joaquín Arroyo/Beatriz Menéndez and Neemias Santos (Mexico, Spain), Umberto Sansoni (Italy), Giuseppa Tanda (Italy), Zeming Shi and Yanqing Jing (China).

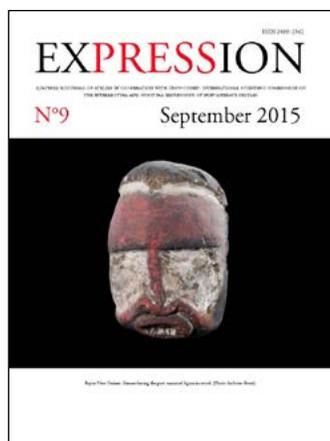


Expression 8

June 2015

Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom?

With articles by Mara Basile and Norma Ratto (Argentina), Jaâfar Ben Nasr (Tunisia), Luigi J. Boro (USA), Christopher Chippindale (UK), Jessica Joyce Christie (USA), Fernando Coimbra (Portugal), Ib Ivar Dahl (DK), Sofia Soares de Figueiredo (Portugal), Inés Domingo Sanz (Spain), Bernadette Drabsch (Australia), Louise Felding (Denmark), Dánae Fiore and Agustín Acevedo (Argentina), Natalie R. Franklin and Phillip J. Habgood (Australia), Marisa Dawn Giorgi (Australia), Philippe Hameau (France), Arnaud F Lambert (USA), Arnaud F. Lambert (USA), J. David Lewis-Williams (South-Africa) and Kenneth Lymer (UK).

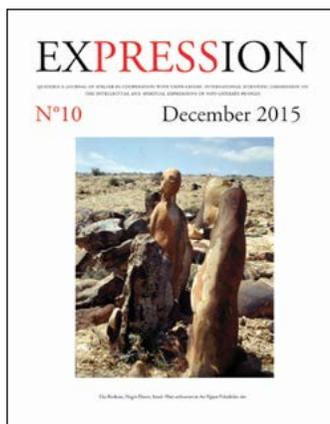


Expression 9
September 2015

Tribal and Prehistoric Art: When, Why and to Whom?

Presenting the WWW Project.

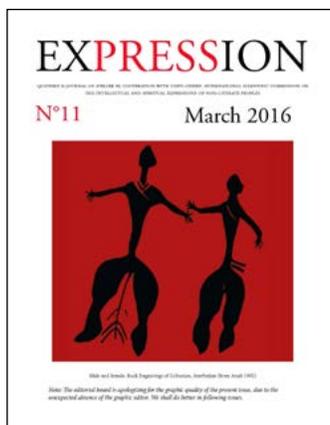
With articles by Monia Chies (Italy), David Delnoy and Marcel Otte (Belgium), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Chris Hegg (USA), Emmanuelle Honoré (UK), Bulu Imam (India), Shemsi Krasniqi (Kosovo), Trond Lødøen (Norway), Cristina Lopes (Portugal), Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Federico Mailland (Switzerland), Subhash Chandra Malik (India), Michel Martin (France), Elisabeth Monamy (France), Bilinda Devage Nandadeva (Sri Lanka), Alma Nankela (Namibia), George Nash (UK), Ancila Nhamo (Zimbabwe), Masaru Ogawa (Japan), Awadh Kishore Prasad (India), Riaan F. Rifkin (South Africa), Avraham Ronen (Israel), Manuel Santos Estévez (Portugal), Susan Searight-Martinet (Morocco), Kate E. Sharpe (UK), Jitka Soukopova (Italy), Radhakant Varma (India), Steven J. Waller (USA), Anne-Catherine Welté and Georges-N (Joel) Lambert (France).



Expression 10
December 2015

The Role of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

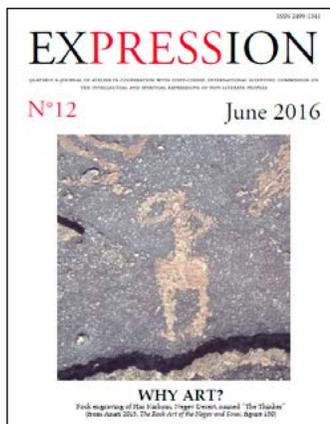
With articles by Jaâfar Ben Nasr (Tunisia), Ingmar M. Braun (Switzerland), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Arnaud F. Lambert (USA), Maria Laura Leone (Italy), J. D. Lewis-Williams (South Africa), Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Federico Mailland (Switzerland), Nataliia Mykhailova (Ukraine), Susan Searight-Martinet (Morocco), Hans-Joachim Ulbrich (Austria), Vahanyan Gregori (Armenia) and Steven J. Waller (USA).



Expression 11
March 2016

Male and Female in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

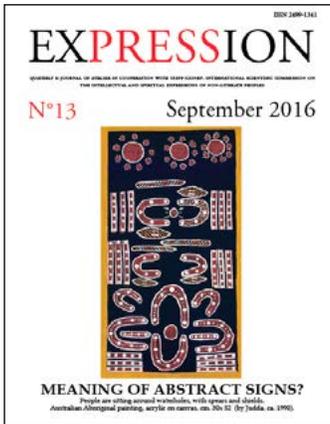
With articles by Margalit Berriet (France), Carl Bjork (Usa), Pascale Binant (France), Brian Britten (Canada), Jessica Joyce Christie (Usa), Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimaraes (Brazil), Deb Holt and Jane Ross (Australia), Arnaud F. Lambert (Usa), Federico Mailland and Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Katharina Rebay-Salisbury (Austria), Susan Searight - Martinet (Morocco), Jitka Soukopova (Italy), Sachin Kr Tiwary (India), Maarten Van Hoek (Holland), Aixa Vidal/Lorena Ferraro and Maria Teresa Pagni (Argentina).



Expression 12
June 2016

Why Art?

With articles by Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty (India), Liudmila Lbova (Russia), Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay (Mexico) and Derek Hodgson (UK), Ancila Nhamo (Zimbabwe), Marcel Otte (Belgium), Kalle Sognnes (Norway), Jitka Soukopova (UK), George F. Steiner (Switzerland) and Tsoni Tsonev (Bulgaria).

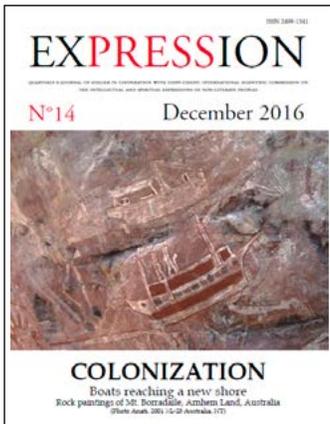


Expression 13

September 2016

Abstract Signs in Prehistoric and Tribal Art: Meaning and Problems of Interpretation

With articles by Margalit Berriet (France), Jean Clottes (France), Jagannath Dash (India), Maurer Dieter (Switzerland), Edmund Furter (South Africa), Thirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay and Alan P. Garfinkel (Usa), Tsoni Tsonov (Bulgaria) and Leslie Van Gelder (Usa).

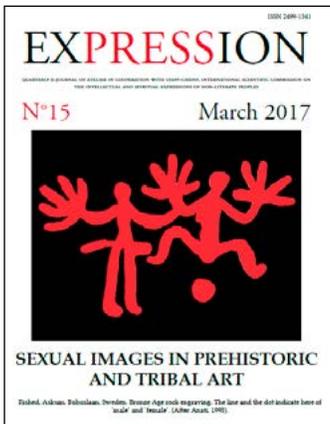


Expression 14

December 2016

Colonization: How Did Humans Reach All the Lands of the Planet?

With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Marta Arzarello (Italy), Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Anthony Bonanno (Malta), José Farruja de la Rosa (Spain), Edmund Furter (South Africa), Marcel Otte (Belgium), Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimaraes and Leidiana Alves de Mota (Brazil).



Expression 15

March 2017

Sexual Images in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Leo Dubal (France), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Michel Justamand and Pedro Paulo A. Funari (Brazil), Shensi Krasniqi (Kosovo), Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Marc Martinez/Michel Lenoir and Anne-Catherine Welté (France), Terence Meaden (UK), Nataliia Mykhailova (Ukraine) and Jitka Soukopova (UK).

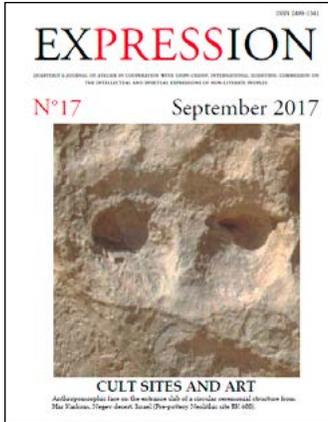


Expression 16

June 2017

The Message Behind the Images in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Emilio G. Berrocal (Italy), Ekaterina Devlet (Russia), A. José Farruja de la Rosa (Spain), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Alexandre Guida Navarro (Brazil), Cristina Lopes (Portugal), Terence Meaden (Uk), Cynthia Ontiretse Mooketsi (Botswana), Jacinto Palma Dias (Portugal), Radoslaw Palonka (Poland), Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadyay (Mexico), Alan Garfinkel (Usa), Luis Ramon Merchan Villalba (Colombia), Vahan Vahanyan and Gregori Vahanyan (Armenia).

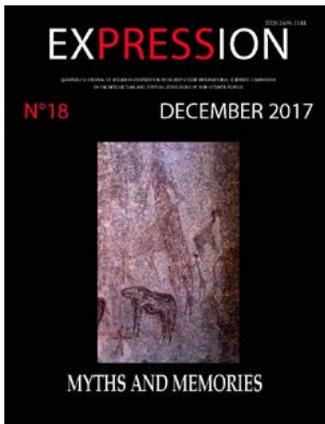


Expression 17

September 2017

Cult Sites and Art

With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Margalit Berriet (France), Jerzy Gassowski (Poland), Kempe Stephan F.J. and Al-Malabeh Ahmad (Germany, Jordan), Terence Meaden (UK), Kalle Sognnes (Norway), Sachin Tiwary (India), Gregori Vahanyan (Armenia), Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães Santiago (Brazil).

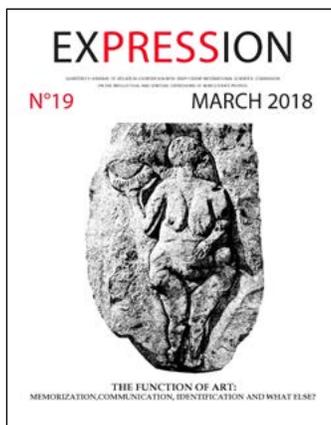


Expression 18

December 2017

Myths and Memories: Stories Told by Pictures

With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Margalit Berriet (France), Gassowski Jerzy (Poland), Kempe Stephan F.J. and Al-Malabeh Ahmad (Germany, Jordan), Terence Meaden (UK), Tiwary Sachin (India), Kalle Sognnes (Norway), Gregor Vahanyan (Armenia) and Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães Santiago (Brazil).



Expression 19

March 2018

The Function of Art: Memorization, Communication and What Else?

With articles by Bulu Imam (India), Devlet Ekaterina (Russia), Kraniqi Shemsi (Kosovo), Lopes Cristina (Portugal), Maurer Dieter (Switzerland), Moulton Susan (USA), Vahanyan Vahan (Armenia), Villa Marta and Nisi Domenico (Italy).



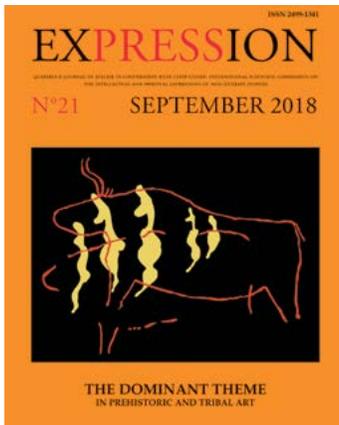
Expression 20

June 2018

The Function of Art: Memorization, Communication and What Else?

Part II

With articles by: Mailland Federico (Switzerland), Marler Joan (USA), Mykhailova Nataliia (Ukraine), Prasad Awadh Kishore (India), Warland Jacinta (Australia).

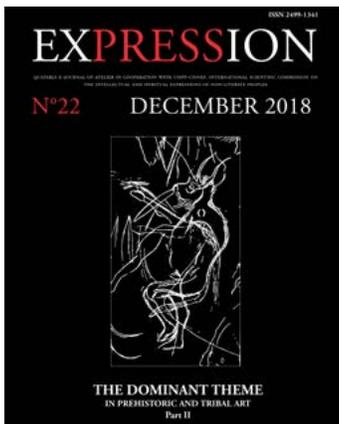


Expression 21

September 2018

The Dominant Theme in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Shanandoah Anderson (USA), Sara Garcês, Luiz Oosterbeek (Portugal), Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Suely Amâncio Martinelli (Brazil), Gregori Vahanyan, Vahanyan Vahan, Baghdasaryan Vard (Armenia), Jessie Van Cauter, Marc De Bie (Belgium).

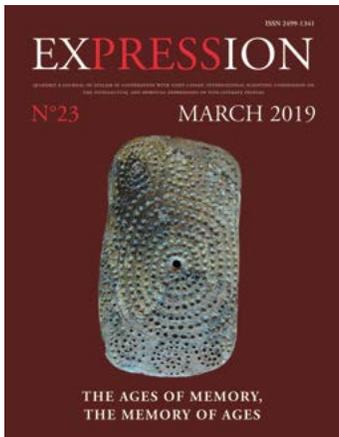


Expression 22

December 2018

The Dominant Theme in Prehistoric and Tribal Art - Part II

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Margalit Berriet (France), Amélie Bonnet-Balazut (France), Bulu Imam (India), Carol Patterson (USA).

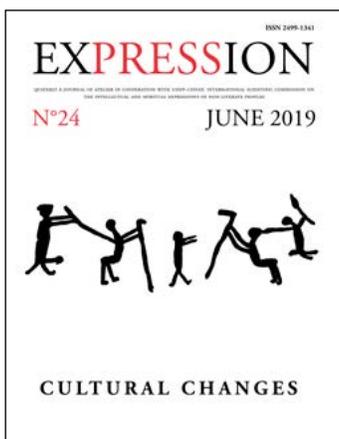


Expression 23

March 2019

The Age of Memory, the Memory of Ages

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Fernando A. Coimbra (Portugal), Leo Dubal (France), Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães (Brazil), Liudmila Lbova, Tatyana Rostyazhenko (Siberian Federal District, Russia), Aixa Vidal (Argentina)

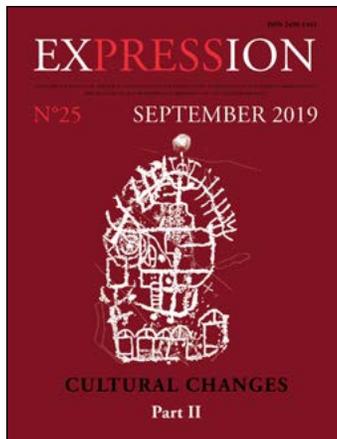


Expression 24

June 2019

Cultural Changes

With articles by: Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Brian Hayden (Canada), Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Pedro Paulo Funari (Brazil), Majeed Khan (Saudi Arabia), Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay, Armando Pérez Crespo (Mexico), Simon Radchenko, Dmytro Nykonenko (Ukraine)

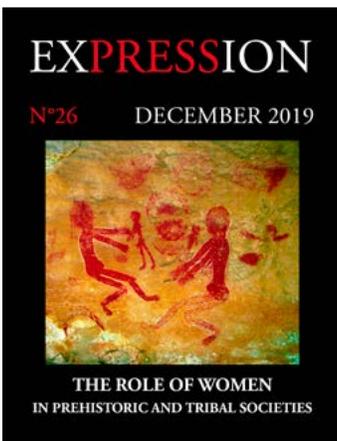


Expression 25

September 2019

Cultural Changes - Part II

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Jean Clottes (France), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Carol Patterson (USA), Raj Somadeva, Anusha Wanninayake, Dinesh Devage, Resta Fernando(Sri Lanka)

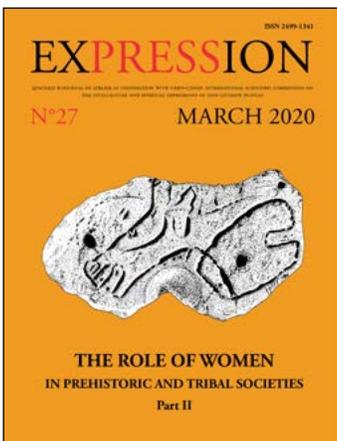


Expression 26

December 2019

The Role of Women in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), JSantiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães (Brazil), Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Vanessa Belarmino da Silva, Pedro Paulo Funar (Brazil), Majeed Khan (Saudi Arabia), Ruman Banerjee (India), Somnath Chakraverty (India), David W. Robinson (UK), Jitka Soukopova (UK)

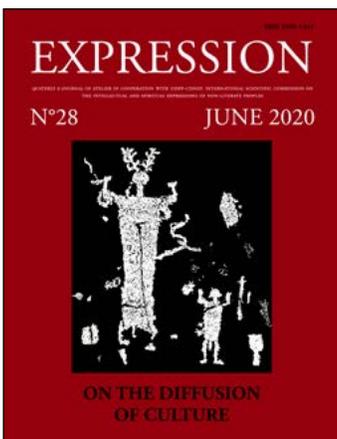


Expression 27

March 2020

The Role of Women in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies - Part II

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Meenakshi Dubey-Pathak (India), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Maria Laura Leone (Italy), Carol Patterson (USA)

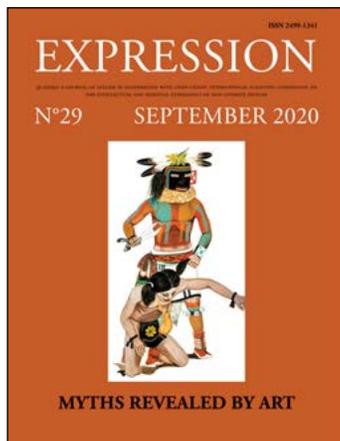


Expression 28

June 2020

On the Diffusion of Culture

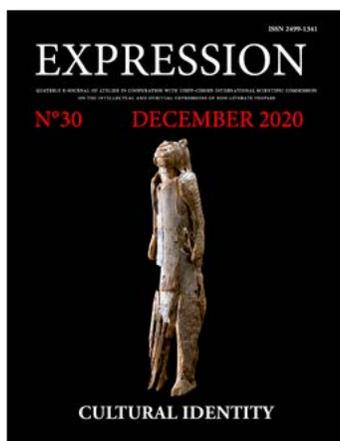
With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Herman Bender (USA), Anthony Bonanno (Malta), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Annik Schnitzler (France), Jitka Soukopova (UK)



Expression 29
September 2020

Myths Revealed by Art

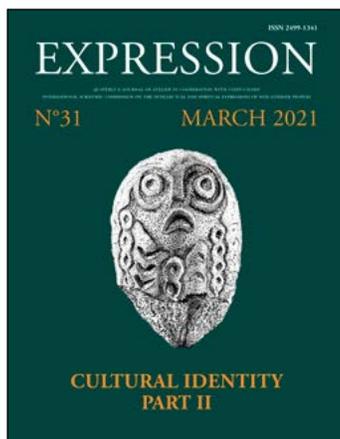
With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Meenakshi Dubey-Pathak (India), Terence Meaden (UK), Alessandro Menardi Noguera (Italy), Carol Patterson (USA)



Expression 30
December 2020

Cultural Identity

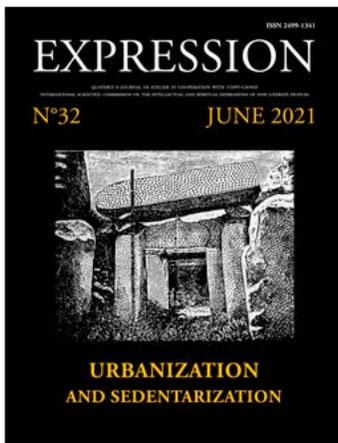
With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Amélie Bonnet Balazut (France), Stavros D. Kiotsekoglou (Greece), Giuseppe Orefici (Perù), Jitka Soukopova (Czech Republic)



Expression 31
March 2021

Cultural Identity - Part II

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Léo Dubal (France), Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Albérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Matheus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva (Brasil), Terence Meaden (UK), Alessandro Menardi Noguera (Italy)

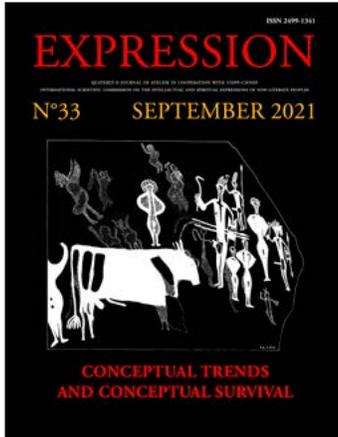


Expression 32

June 2021

Urbanization Origins

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Behrooz Barjasteh Delforoos (Sweden), Samira Narooyi, Safoura Kalantari (Iran), Solange Macamo, Vitalina Jairoce, Arlindo Zomba, Laurinda Mutimucuo (Mozambique), Mário Varela Gomes (Portugal)

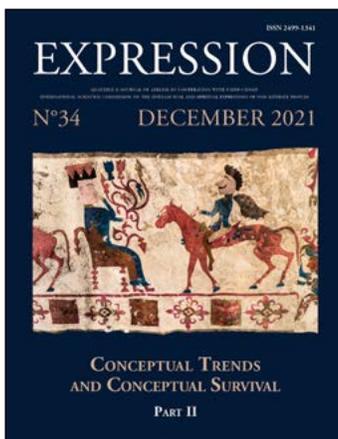


Expression 33

June 2021

Cultural Trends and Conceptual Survival

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Terence Meaden (UK), Carol Patterson (USA), S. Rama Krishna Pisipaty (India)



Expression 34

December 2021

Cultural Trends and Conceptual Survival - Part II

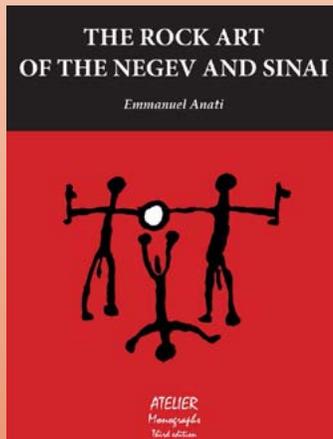
With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Michel Justamand (Brasil), Ana Cristina Alves Balbino (Brasil), Vanessa da Silva Belarmino (Brasil), Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida (Brasil), Gabriel F. de Oliveira (Brasil), Matteus Freitas de Oliveira (Brasil), Cristina Lopes (Portugal), Ioannis Papadimitriou (Greece)

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Atelier is pleased to present

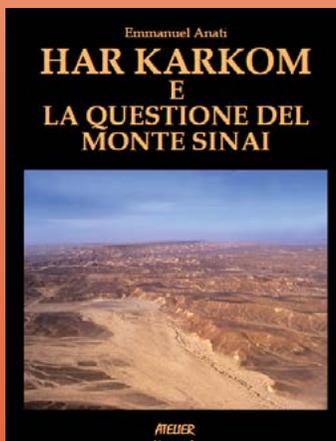
ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE DESERT EXODUS: NEW DISCOVERIES RELATED TO BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY

From excavations and explorations in the deserts that separate the land of Canaan from Egypt, Emmanuel Anati, the scholar who for half a century is exploring these deserts, sums up new discoveries in the following volumes. Richly illustrated books bring new light on the events that inspired the Biblical narrative.



Anati, E., 2015, *The Rock Art of the Negev and Sinai*, Third English edition
Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 248 pp.248; 196 ill., €20,00

The book deals with a new theme of Neareastern archeology: the rock art of the Negev and Sinai. It presents new discoveries and reconsiders contents and assumptions of previous articles and of a book by the same author that dates back to 1979. The richly illustrated book is offering a new vision of this immense archive engraved and painted on rocks that reveals events and beliefs of the desert. The rock art of the Negev and Sinai illustrates stories and customs of the Sinai Peninsula over the past 10,000 years. Some depictions of the Bronze Age may refer to people mentioned in the Pentateuch. Others, of Roman-Byzantine times, illustrate life and customs from the age of early spread of Christianity.



Anati, E., 2016: *Har Karkom e la questione del Monte Sinai* (*Har Karkom and the Question of Mount Sinai*), Italian edition

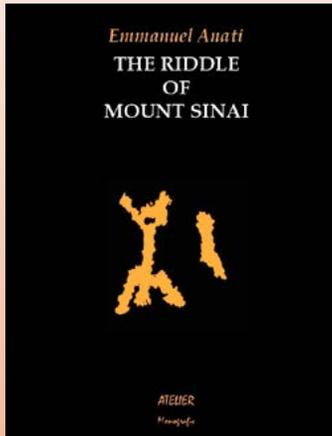
Capo di Ponte (Atelier), pp 220; 138 ill., €30,00

The findings of shrines and encampments of the Bronze Age at Har Karkom, a mountain located in one of the driest places and inhospitable parts of the Negev desert, in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, arouses a global debate on the hypothesis that this mountain can identify with the biblical Mount Sinai. The book presents a summary of the discoveries; it calls into question previous assumptions about the reliability of the Exodus Biblical narrative, both on the location of the mythical Mount Sinai, and on the chronological discrepancies proposed by various researchers. The book is richly documented by photographs, maps and other illustrations, it updates on recent discoveries, analyzing their possible historical significance, suggesting a new vision of the events narrated in the Bible.

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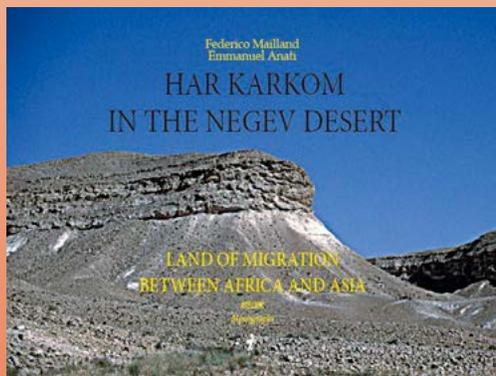
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Anati, E. 2017, *The Riddle of Mount Sinai*, Second English Edition
Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 260 pp. 141 pls. € 40

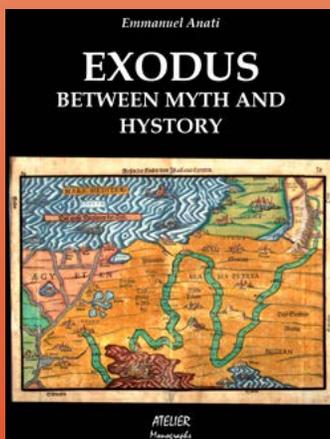
What is the true story behind the biblical narration of Exodus? The discoveries of the Italian archaeological expedition at Har Karkom, in the Negev Desert, tell the hitherto unknown story of the sacred mountain in the heart of the desert of Exodus, reflecting surprising similarities to the events and conditions described to us, albeit in mythicised form, in the Old Testament. The mountain was a paramount cult site and the archaeological discoveries go far beyond the expectations. This well documented volume also helps to clarify a major question: to what extent may we consider the biblical narration as a source of historical documentation.



Anati, E.; Maillard F., 2018, *Har Karkom in the Negev Desert. Raw Material for a Museum on Two Million Years of Human Presence*

Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 130 pp., 534 pls., € 110, English Edition

A mountain located in the land-bridge between Africa and the rest of the world yielded traces of ages of human presence ever since the first steps of the human ancestors out of Africa. The archeological discoveries tell us of two million years, from the earliest stations of archaic Pebble Culture, to recent Bedouin camping sites. The site became a holy mountain with shrines and other cult structures already in the Paleolithic; it developed into an immense cult site in the Bronze Age, likely to be the biblical Mount Sinai. The present book is displaying the results of over 30 years of fieldwork, the raw material of the sequence of ages, for a museum on Har Karkom in the Negev Desert, presenting the story of humankind as concentrated in a mountain of a few square miles in the middle of one of the most arid and nowadays most inhospitable spots in the Near East.



Anati, E., 2018: *Exodus Between Myth and History*, English edition
Capodiponte (Atelier) pp. 388; 138 pls., Analytical Appendix., € 40,00

Different opinions divided the academic world about the historic reliability of the biblical narrative of Exodus. The events in Egypt, the wanderings in the desert under the leadership of Moses and the events at the foot of Mount Sinai are they based on facts or are they just legend? Broad and systematic explorations on the ground and new archaeological discoveries open up the possibility of tracing back the geographical and environmental context, by providing elements that bring new insight on the historical roots of this magnificent epic passed down from the Bible.

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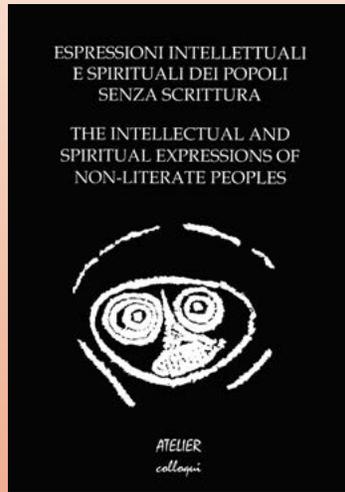
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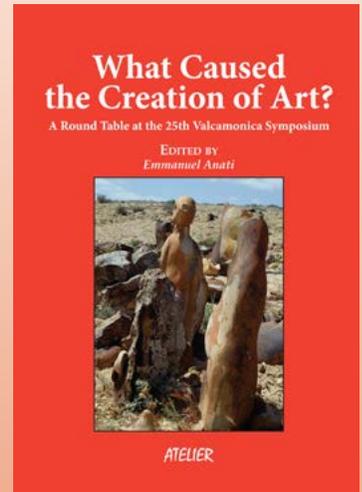
Il segni originari dell'arte (In Italian)

Proceedings of the Colloquium held at the University of Urbino in 2010. Essays by nine authors who deal with the theme seen from various disciplines: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art History, Semiotics, Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Sociology.



Espressioni intellettuali dei popoli senza scrittura (In Italian, English, French)

Proceedings of the Colloquium organized in Valcamonica by the International Union of Prehistoric Sciences in 2012. Essays by 30 authors from 11 countries on the intellectual expressions of the primary societies.



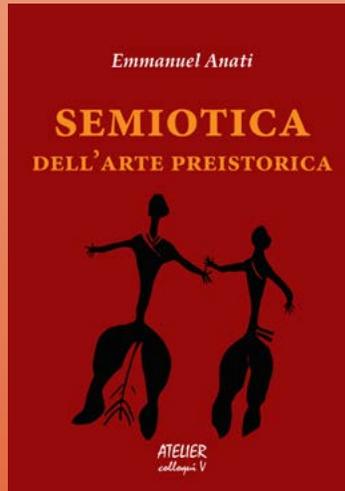
What Caused the Creation of art? A Round Table at the 25th Valcamonica Symposium

'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.



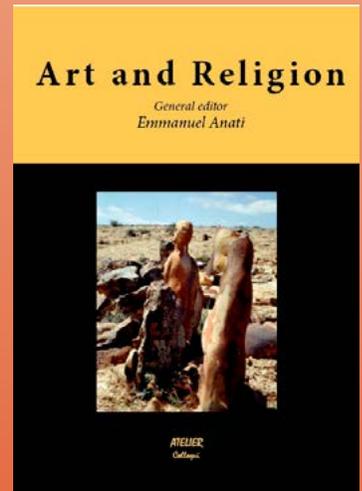
Sogno e memoria: Per una psicoanalisi della Preistoria (In Italian)

A series of papers presented at Congresses of Sociology, Psychology and Psychoanalysis concern. The analysis of human behavior and of graphic art externalizations is opening new perspectives to the social sciences and multidisciplinary cooperation.



Semiotica dell'arte preistorica (In Italian)

The conceptual meaning of the forms, the metamorphosis of shapes into sounds, sounds in forms, ideas into images, thoughts in words, it is the very basis of identity of the intellectual being, of 'Homo intellectualis'. This mechanism stimulated, over the years, some of the author's papers and lectures in congresses and conferences of semiotics, sociology and psychology.

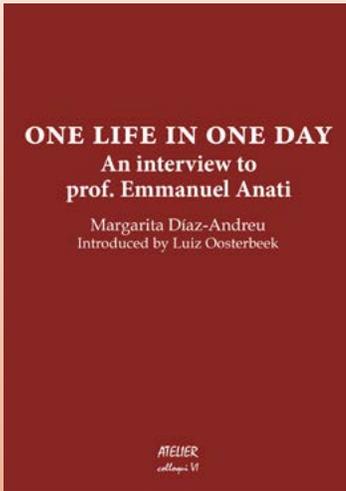


Art and Religion

What is the role of religion, magic and witchcraft in prehistoric and tribal art? The intellectual and spiritual motivations of art produced various theories since the first attempts to explain prehistoric art over a century ago. Recent research is revealing more complex conceptual connections. In this book, authors of different backgrounds and countries, from four continents, present examples of specific aspects, providing first-hand data.

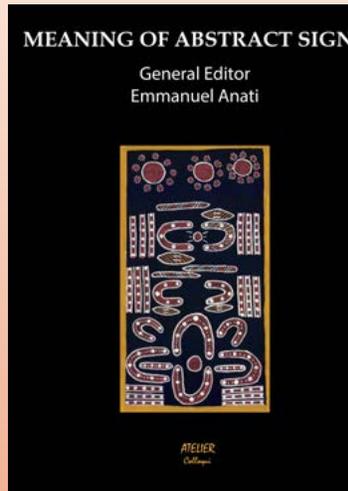
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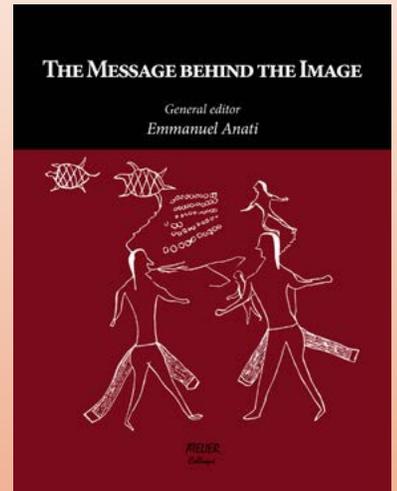
One Life in One Day. An interview to prof. Emmanuel Anati

In the gardens of the campus of Burgos University, while delegates were moving from sessions and lectures to coffee breaks and back, Margarita Díaz-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. It concerned just one aspect of Anati's life, that of his experiences as a scholar in the human sciences.



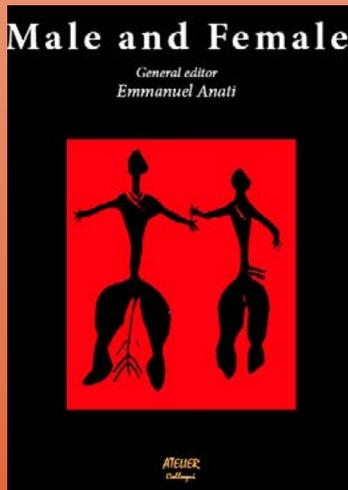
Meaning of Abstract Signs

The clan was planning a fight against another clan that had abused hospitality hunting kangaroos in a reserved ground. The painter recorded the gathering of the elders to decide the expelling of the guest clan. He represented the elders and the warriors by standard signs. The art-dealer sold the painting as an "Aboriginal abstract composition". The meaning came from the people of the clan who saw the painting explaining the recorded event. Other examples and studies attempt at defining the meaning of abstract signs.



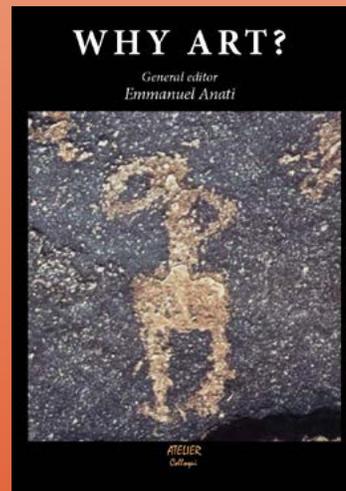
The message behind the image

Prehistoric and tribal people have left behind millions of images, in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Was their purpose just that of embellishing rock surfaces? What pushed people from all over the world to record their memories throughout the ages? This immense heritage, whether intentional or not, is full of messages to be read and understood.



Male and Female

The book includes papers of 20 authors from five continents. It considers human representations in prehistoric and tribal art presenting a broad landscape of different views and cases. In each age and culture a specific choice is emerging in the visual arts, between preferring male or female images, and between having or not the human figure as the main concern. The book presents different cases and views from experts of five continents.



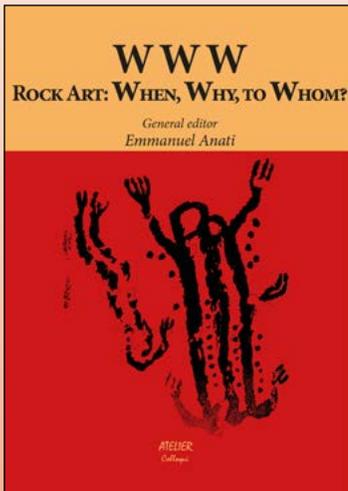
Why Art

The volume presents a search of contents by scholars from different continents with different experiences. Prehistoric art is like the literature of more recent times, some depictions may concern science, others religion, some may be school textbooks and others fiction. The decoding of prehistoric art helps to approach the understanding of contents and motivations

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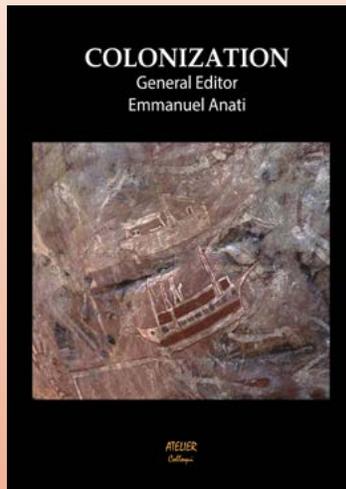
Colloqui



WWW - Rock Art:

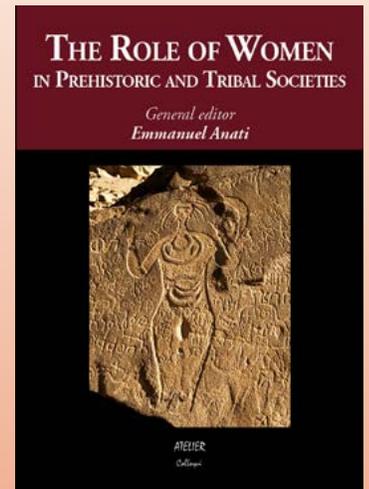
When, Why and to Whom

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?



Colonization

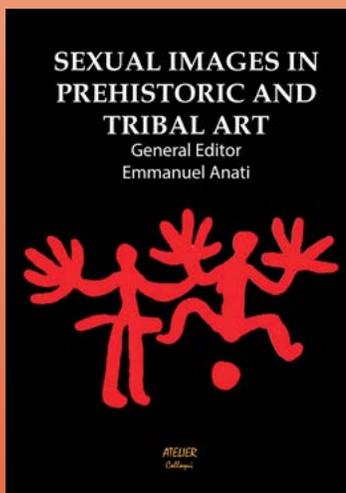
From an original land of origins, likely to have been in Africa, the ancestors of humankind colonized all corners of the globe. Other primates still survive in their limited habitat; humans live in the equatorial regions as well as near the Arctic pole. How did such colonization take place? Authors from five continents replied to this question: a selection of their papers appears in this volume.



The Role of Women

in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies

The social roles of women, as those of men, are subject to biological, social, economic and cultural factors. Such roles are not the same among clans of hunters, tribes of rice growers, or complex urban societies. They are not the same in urban Kabul and in urban Las Vegas. Some societies allow more variability than others.



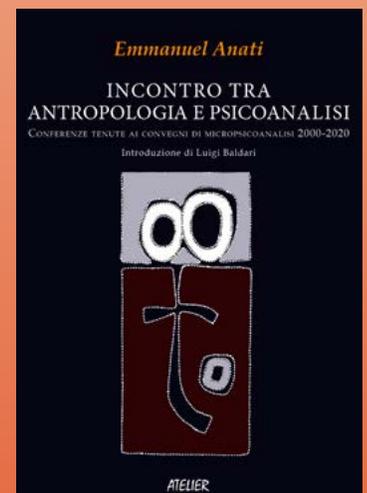
Sexual Images in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

Since the earliest figurative art, sex appears to be a theme of primary concern in every corner of the world. Why were such depictions made? In some cases oral traditions allow us to identify the cause or the inspiration. Can we trace back the stories behind the images? Sharing knowledge is favoring an overview on images, myths, rituals and customs related to sex, in prehistoric and tribal art.



Etnogastronomia La cucina dei popoli (In Italian)

Tra le 10.000 popolazioni che vivono negli oltre 200 Paesi del pianeta Terra, abbiamo scelto le cucine di undici punti del globo, descrivendole nelle loro caratteristiche essenziali, fornendo ricette accettabili dal gusto occidentale, e realizzabili con prodotti facilmente reperibili. Capire il sapore del diverso, è saper apprezzare non solo i cibi, ma anche i sorrisi dei popoli.

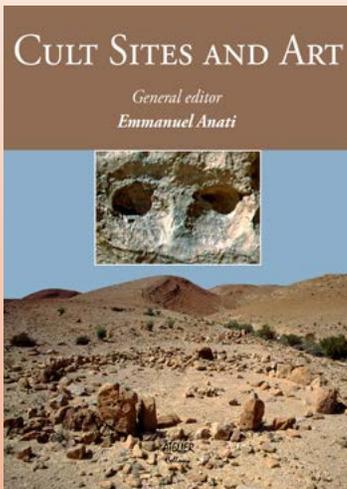


Incontro tra antropologia e psicoanalisi (in Italian)

The volume collects 16 lectures by Anati at conventions of psychoanalysts on his conceptual system to overcome the frontiers that separate different disciplines, for a new vision of research in the human and social sciences.

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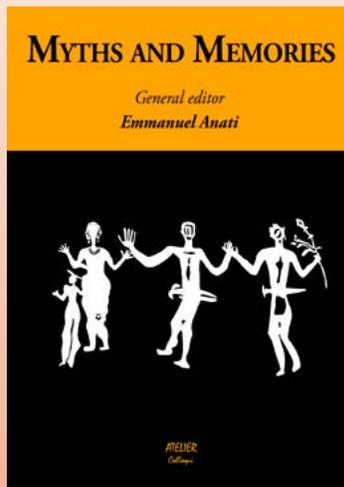
Colloqui



Cult Sites and Art

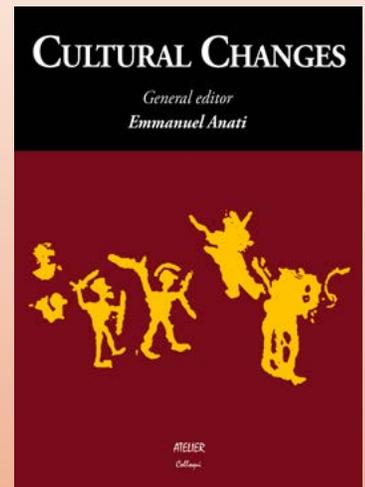
The volume is the printed version of number 17 (2017) of EXPRESSION, the quarterly online journal on conceptual anthropology. Sites of worship have had religious images and symbols since prehistoric times.

The relationship between religion and art emerges in its variants and in its purposes. Significant examples are presented by the authors, in Israel and the Middle East, in Armenia, Tunisia, Europe, Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, showing a conceptual archetype that has persisted since distant prehistoric times.



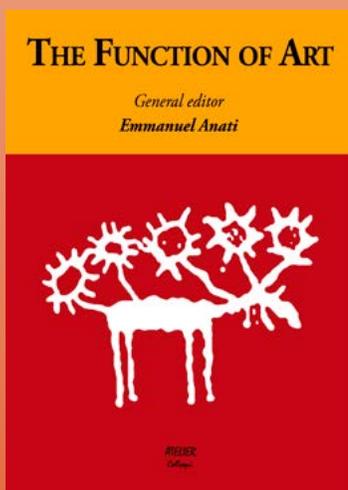
Myths and Memories

Was the mind of early man much different from ours? Decorated caves, megalithic monuments, early shrines, sites of rock art, are the containers of the myths and memories, the testimony of the immense variety of beliefs and habits, the source for an as yet unwritten history of mankind: the existential expressions of people's real and imaginary, myths and memories. Different facets of the theme are considered by nine authors of nine different countries of three continents.



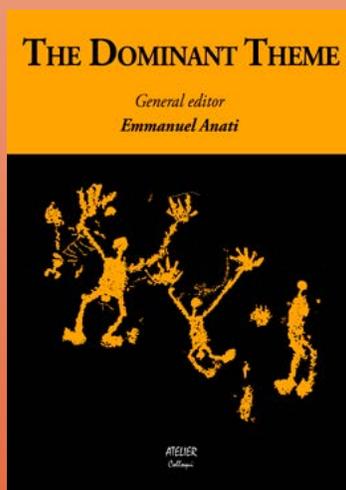
Cultural Changes

By its own nature culture moves and changes. The reasons that led to these changes are not always evident. When available, the causes help us to conceive what the past can teach us about understanding the present and attempting figuring out the future. Eighteen authors from ten countries in five continents present different aspects of cultural changes. Each article contributes a small but meaningful tessera of the fascinating mosaic of cultural changes in a world perspective.



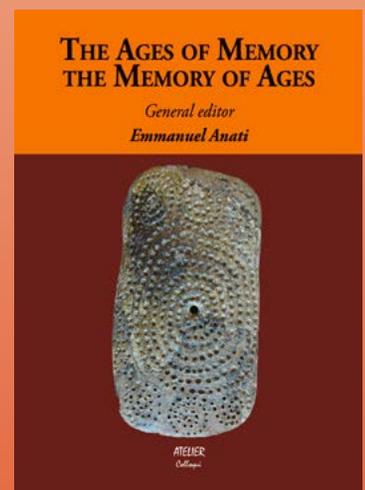
The Function of Art

Recent studies are stressing that prehistoric art had as many different purposes as those of more recent written literature, religious and not, historical or imaginary, aimed at memorization, communication, magic, commemoration, recording, affirmation of cultural or ethnic identity and much else. Such functions may vary from site to site and from one culture to another.



The Dominant Theme

Like any other style or period of visual art, each assemblage of prehistoric and tribal art has a dominant theme. Some focus on anthropomorphic figures, others on animals, others on signs, symbols or ideograms. Well-known sites of prehistoric art display millenary sequences of different phases showing changes in the dominant theme from one period to another. What is the meaning and function of the dominant theme? Visual expressions are a mirror of the mind and soul of their makers.



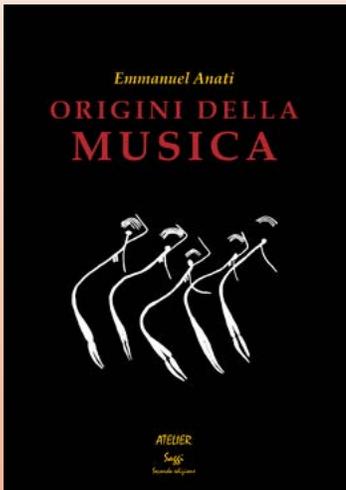
The Ages of Memory The Memory of Ages

When prehistoric art is decoded it becomes an invaluable cultural source in itself. An additional step is attempting to use it as a document to reconstruct the cause of its creation. What did actually happen, what were the reasons that brought about the graphic production that has reached us, and what story does it tell? "This is not the task of archaeology!" Right! It is the task of conceptual anthropology.

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Essays



Origini della Musica (in Italian)

How and why did music originate? What function did it hold for the individual and for society? The book presents the oldest documentation of prehistoric art and archeology on the presence of music, dance and musical instruments. The text is accompanied by figures of the oldest musical instruments known to date and images depicting music and dance.



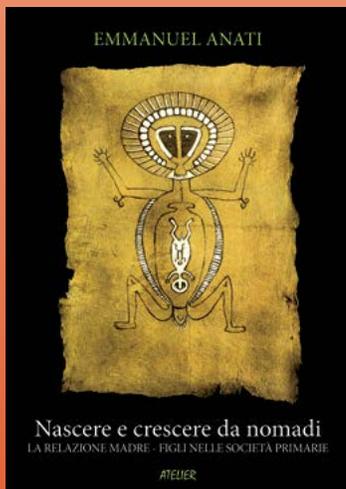
Iniziazione e riti di passaggio (in Italian)

What are the origins of baptism, circumcision, marriage and burial? The practices of initiation and rites of passage of certain Aboriginal clans of Arnhem Land, Australia, reveal the archetypes of accepted practices which are still common to many peoples of the world. The ritual has the dual role of educating and socializing. It has maintained stable their life of clans for millennia, serving as the glue between individual and group.



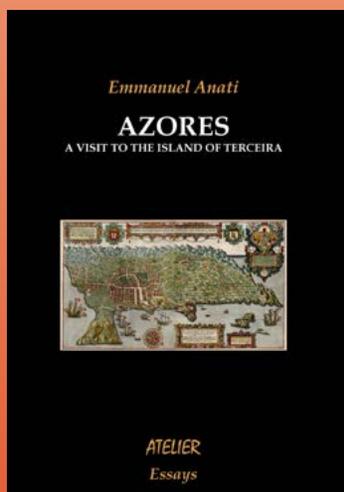
Chi sei? Chi sono? Alla ricerca dell'identità (in Italian)

The problems arising from the search for identity begin in the infant and accompany the human being to the last breath. Defining the identity of the person, of the nation or "race", concerns all people from the Early Hunters to the most advanced urban, literate cultures. The present study is proposing a historical dimension to an archetype of the cognitive system. When does the need to define the identity start, and why?



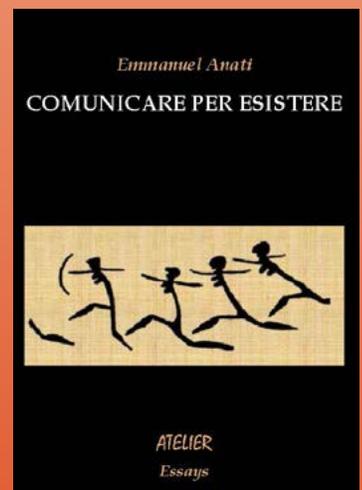
Nascere e crescere da nomadi. La relazione madre-figli nelle società primarie (in Italian)

A study of constants and variants between human societies of hunters-gatherers and urban societies in the mother-child relationship reveals archetypes and variants. The mother-child relationship is the backbone of all species of mammals and acquires special rules in primates.



Azores: a Visit to the Island of Terceira

When did man first arrive to the Azores islands? The Portuguese colonization in the 15th century marked the beginning of the official history. Is there a history before this history? The controversy, between the traditional history and the advocates of a previous human presence, finds partial solutions in the dating and decoding of traces indicating ancient human presence.



Comunicare per esistere (in Italian)

This text, inspired by travel notes of about 40 years ago, seems now to refer to prehistory. Aboriginal people have made a jump of millennia in two generations. Today they speak English, live in houses, drive cars and use the shotgun. Their lives changed since the 70s of the last century.

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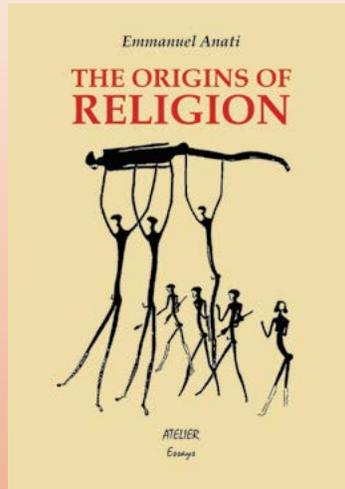
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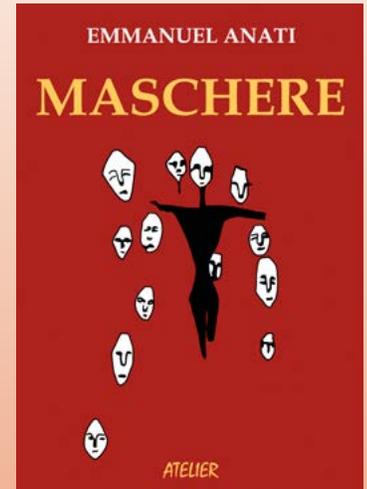
Mito tra utopia e verità (in Italian)

How do myths originate? The production of myths proves to be a constant of the cognitive process of all human societies. Parameters of this process are examined: the roots of a distant memory, the itineraries of idealization, sublimation and structuring. Similar myths from different cultures reveal recurring conceptual criteria. From the beginning man feeds the myth and the myth feeds the man. Myths feed myths.



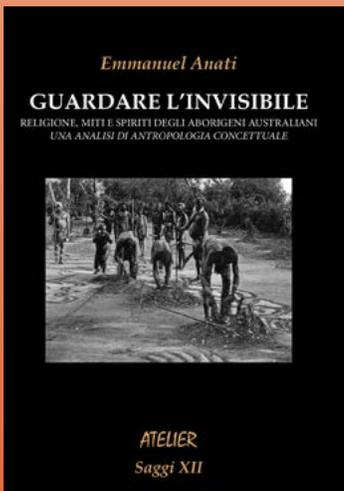
The Origins of Religion

How and when did religions originate? The study of prehistoric art is bringing a revolution to our knowledge of the origins of religious thought. Rock art sites have held for millennia the function of places of worship and tribal identity, serving as archives of myths, beliefs and rituals. Visual art, however, is not the oldest evidence of the presence of religion. Burial customs and other material traces are bringing us further back to the origins of religious behaviour.



Maschere (in Italian)

What is behind the mask? The mask can hide the identity, but can also reveal an identity submerged, both as an object-mask or a conceptual-mask. Going back to the roots, an aspect of the cognitive process of the mask awakens questions on the comparison of human tendencies, between globalization and individualism. Tracing the history of the mask reveals recurring phenomena of man's relationship with his own identity.



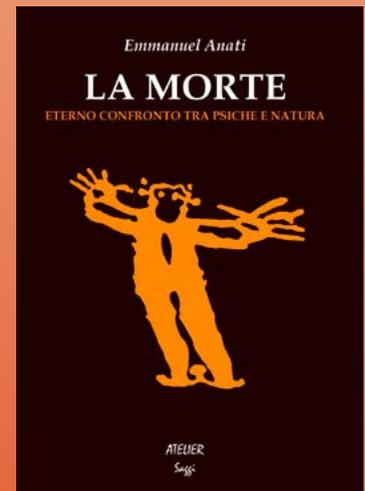
Guardare l'invisibile. Religione, miti e spiriti degli aborigeni australiani. (in Italian)

Some scholars in the history of religions affirm that religion was born in the Neolithic age. People coming directly from the Paleolithic bluntly contradicts this preconception.



Amore e sessualità (In Italian)

Love and sexuality, a theme of all lives and many books, is considered under the aspect of conceptual anthropology. Biological impulses, cultural rules and individual feelings meet in different cultures, in different formulas and lead to a vision of how they work and interact socially, psychologically and emotionally on the human being and on the social context.



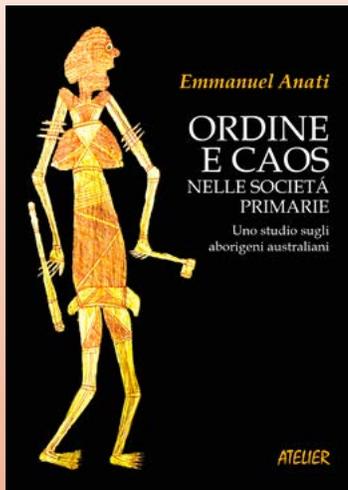
La morte (In Italian)

Knowledge and beliefs about death and the afterlife generate the formation of similar conceptions in different cultures and populations. Similar anxieties and fears cause similar speculative effects in combining the real with the imaginary. The idea of the soul's survival after the death of the body turns out to be at the origins of both religions and philosophy. Conceptual analysis defines elementary processes of cognitive logic, in the constant confrontation between knowing and believing.

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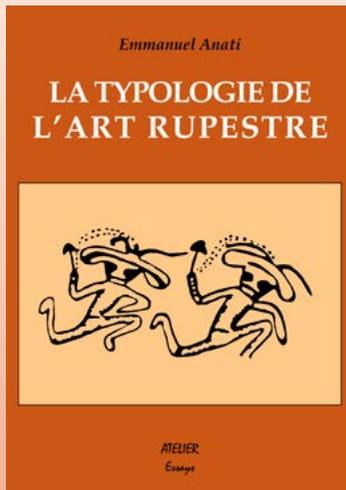
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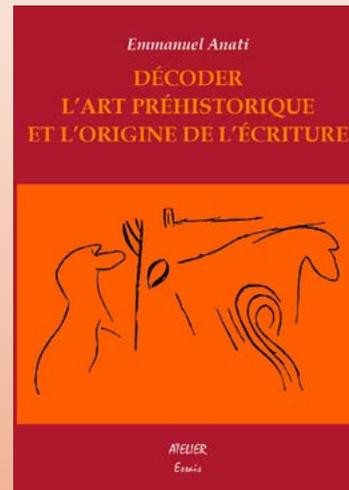
Ordine e Caos nelle società primarie. Uno studio sugli aborigeni australiani. (in Italian)

Order and chaos are compared as a principle of the binary concept that characterizes the search for an elementary logic of what man is able to hypothesize about the behavior of the world around him. To what extent does the order of nature determine social order in primary societies?



La typologie de l'art rupestre (In French)

Rock art is a human expression, produced over the millennia, on five continents. In the frame of the UNESCO "World Report on Rock Art: the state of the art" (2008), the author presented a typological structure of rock art, which has since been updated and revised.

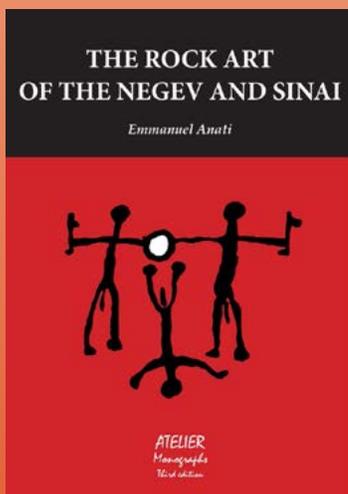


Décoder l'art préhistorique et l'origine de l'écriture (In French)

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 give a new vision for the beginning of writing.

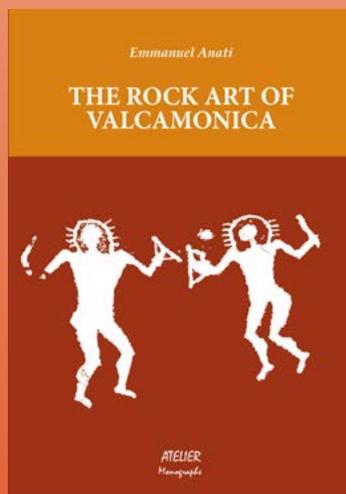
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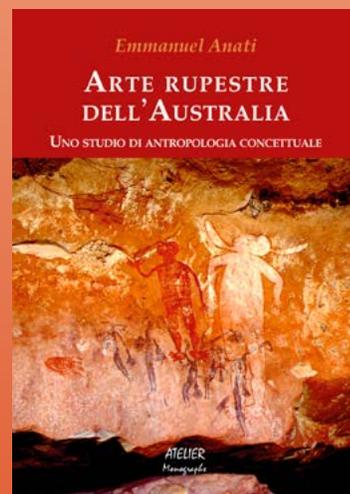
The Rock Art of the Negev and Sinai

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.



The Rock Art of Valcamonica

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.



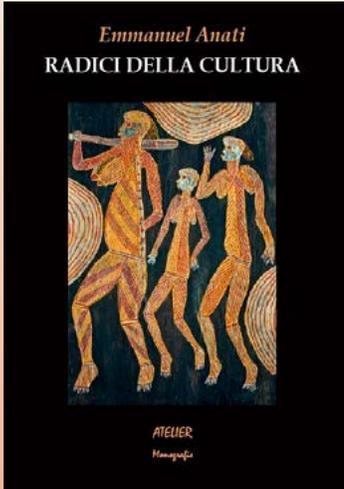
Arte rupestre dell'Australia (in Italian)

The Australian aborigines until yesterday were hunter-gatherers, creators of visual art according to ancient traditions and beliefs. The rock art tells their story and the history of art of 50,000 years.

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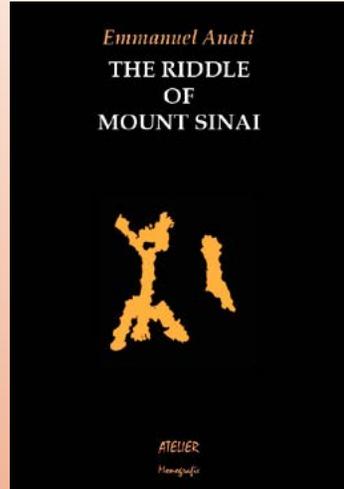
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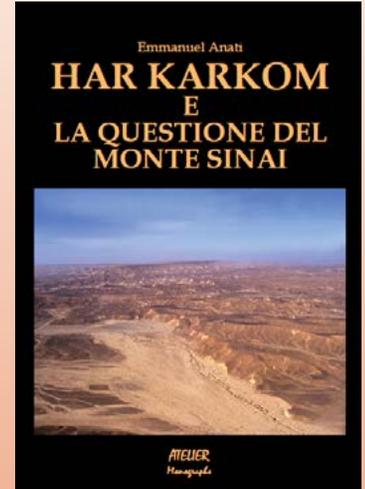
Radici della cultura (in italian)

The history of culture is the history which unify the whole humankind. As Yves Coppens wrote in the preface, from the very first flint tool four million years ago to the conquest of space, the human adventure shows an hyperbole, which from the beginning of history, through the ages, builds the reality of present and project us to the future.



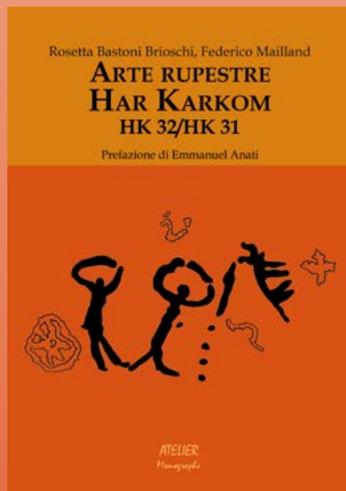
The Riddle of Mount Sinai

What is the true story behind the biblical narration of Exodus? The discoveries of the Italian archaeological expedition at Har Karkom, in the Negev Desert, tell the hitherto unknown story of the sacred mountain in the heart of the desert of Exodus, reflecting surprising similarities to the events and conditions described to us, albeit in mythicised form, in the Old Testament.



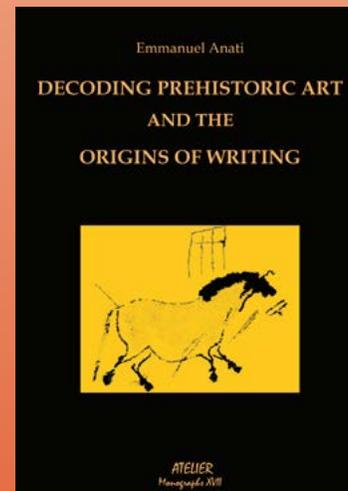
Har Karkom e la questione del Monte Sinai (in Italian)

The findings of shrines and encampments of the Bronze Age at Har Karkom, a mountain located in one of the driest places and inhospitable parts of the Negev desert, in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, arouses a global debate on the hypothesis that this mountain can be identified with the biblical Mount Sinai.



Rock Art - Har Karkom HK 32/HK 31 (in Italian)

Within the frame of the Archaeological Italian Expedition in Israel, the present book is a record of rock art in two adjacent sites on the plateau of Har Karkom. The rock art is in the same area with tumuli, altar stones, stone circles and other megalithic structures. Some of the rock engravings are on these monuments. The rock engravings are described and illustrated by numerous photos and tracings.

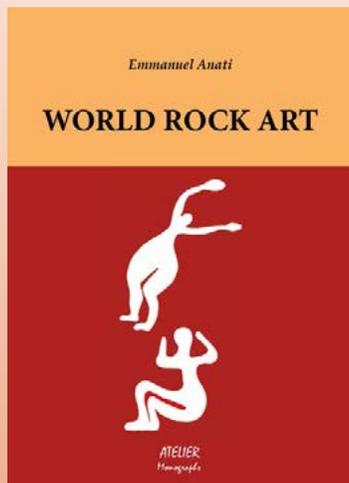


Decoding Prehistoric Art and the Origins of Writing

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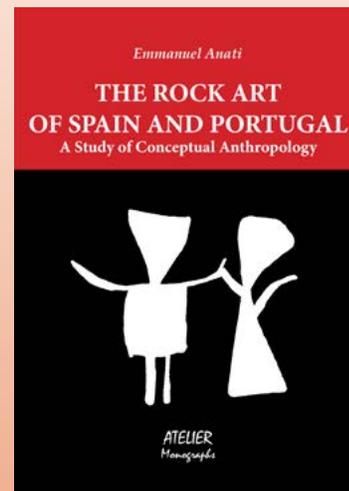
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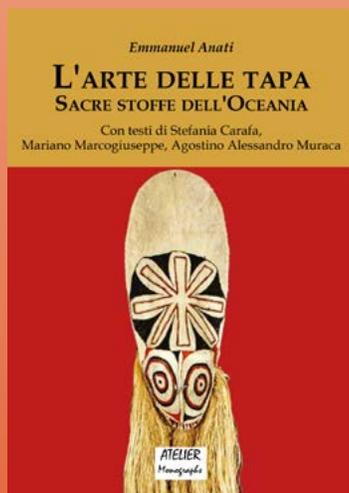
World Rock Art

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. It can be seen at the beginning of a new discipline, the systematic study of world rock art.



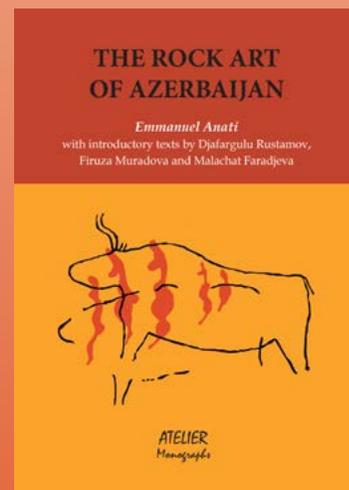
The rock art of Spain and Portugal

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.



L'arte delle tapa. Sacre stoffe dell'Oceania (in Italian)

The tapa is a non-woven fabric, a kind of felt produced from the bark of some species of trees. Their origins are much earlier than the invention of weaving. Their roots go back to the Old Stone Age. Indirect testimony of their antiquity are provided by the discovery of tools used for the manufacture of tapa in archaeological layers and by figures of tapa cloths in the rock art.



The Rock art of Azerbaijan

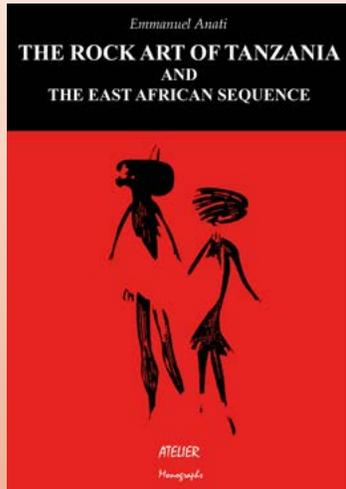
Over the course of centuries, Azerbaijan, was a great centre of rock art.

This gateway of Europe, between the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea, was a major way of migrations from Asia to Europe.

Showing influence and connections with both Europe and the Near East, the succession of phases of rock art illustrate the movements of cultures and ideas from Paleolithic to recent times, shedding new light on the early movement of *Homo sapiens*.

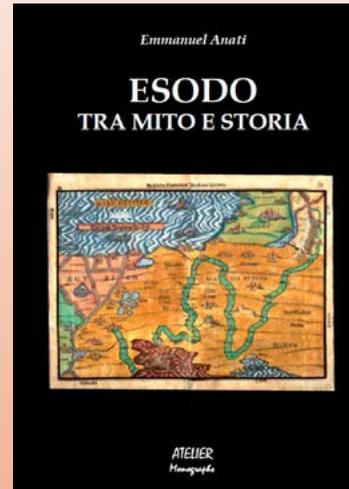
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The Rock Art of Tanzania and the East African Sequence

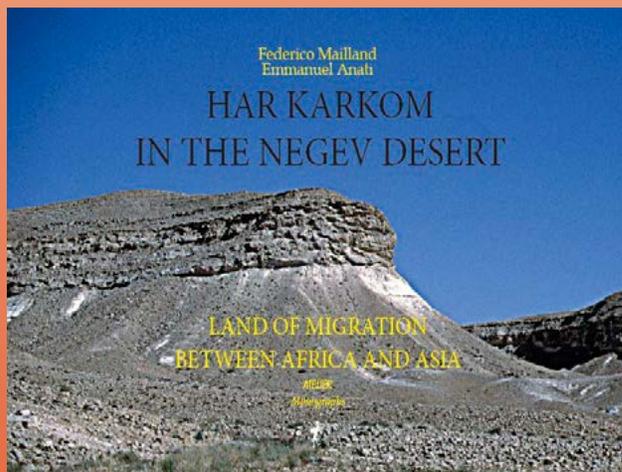
The rock art of Tanzania, in over 200 caves and rock shelters, is presented in this book using the analytical method of Conceptual Anthropology. Stylistic phases and periods are covering millennia.



Exodus

Between Myth and History

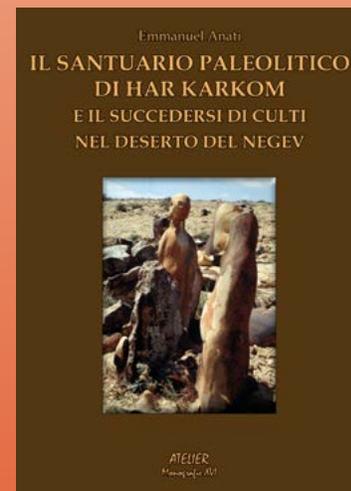
The epic of Moses: is it myth or history? The Biblical narrative of the exodus and the revelation of Mount Sinai are a monumental literary work that has been passed down for well over two millennia, after being transmitted orally for centuries. What would have really happened during the Exodus? How did monotheism emerge? Who were the mentioned people of the desert met by the children of Israel? The central episode of the epic is the revelation at Mount Sinai.



Har Karkom in the Negev Desert

A mountain located in the land-bridge between Africa and the rest of the world yielded traces of ages of human presence ever since the first steps of the human ancestors out of Africa.

The archeological discoveries tell us of two million years, from the earliest stations of archaic Pebble Culture, to recent Bedouin camping sites.



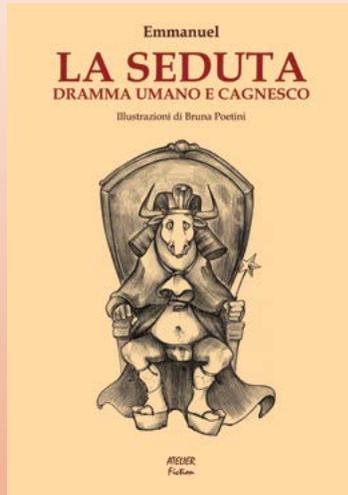
Il santuario paleolitico di Har Karkom (in italian)

The discovery of a Paleolithic sanctuary, the oldest known, in the middle of the desert, and right in the desert of the biblical Exodus and the perennial exodus, along the great migratory route between Africa and Asia, awakens questions about the spiritual and conceptual world of the origins of religion. The surprise of this volume is that it reveals how and why. Concepts and beliefs emerge that gave rise to one of the oldest religious expressions in the world: it adds a new chapter in the history of religions.

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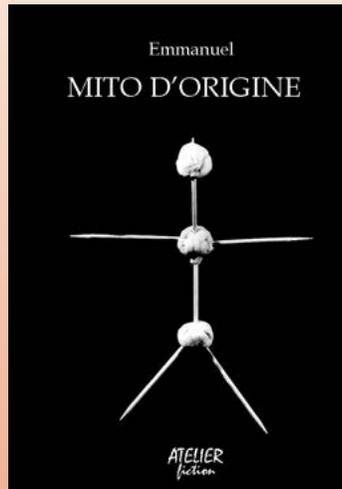
Fiction



La Seduta (in Italian)

This work of the author's youth reflects a biting social commentary that after half a century seems to have not lost its charge.

It was written in the 60s of the last century, in the climate of postwar youth revolt. It was published for the first time in 1979 in a bi-monthly magazine. It now comes out in a revised edition.

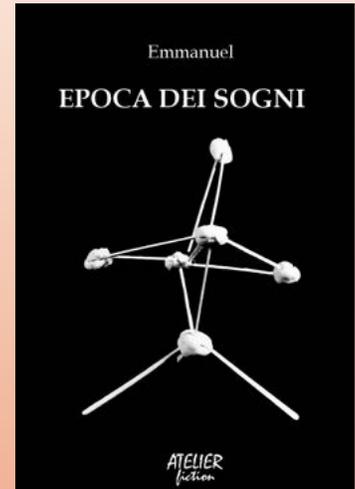


Mito d'origine Epoca dei Sogni (in Italian)

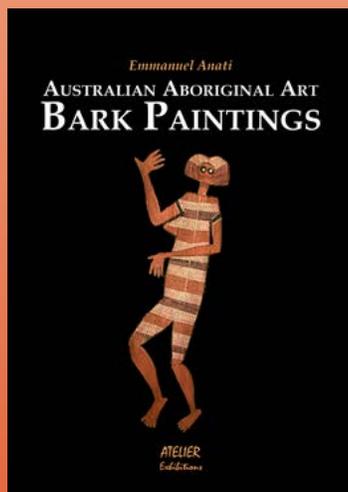
The first works of Atelier Fiction, Mito d'Origine and Epoca dei Sogni, tell stories that at first sight seem to come from another world.

Between reality and dream, realism and myth, symbols and metaphors, they accompany us in the space of flooded memories. Balls and sticks wander, meet and multiply in black space, always accompany the shadows and the lights of thought.

They are works created by the author at a young age now published for the first time, a few decades after since they were first conceived.

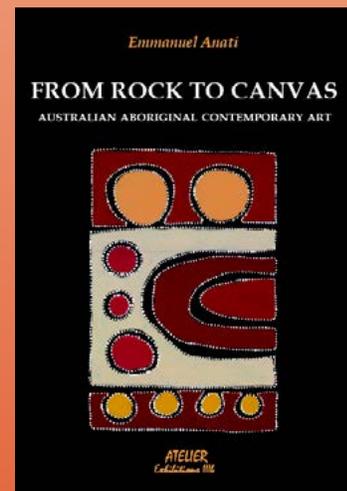


Exhibitions



The Art of the Australian Aborigines Bark Paintings

Australian Aborigines have produced paintings on tree bark that, in addition to being remarkable artworks, store myths and memories, emotions and human relations. What remains today of authentic bark paintings, made by Aborigines for themselves, is an extremely small group.



From Rock to Canvas Australian Aboriginal Contemporary Art

Turning from the Stone Age to the age of air-conditioning in a generation is an experience which leaves its mark on artistic expression. The canvas paintings made by contemporary Aboriginal artists, whose fathers painted on rocks or tree bark, display a momentous revolution in the spirit of a generation that has leapfrogged millennia.

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