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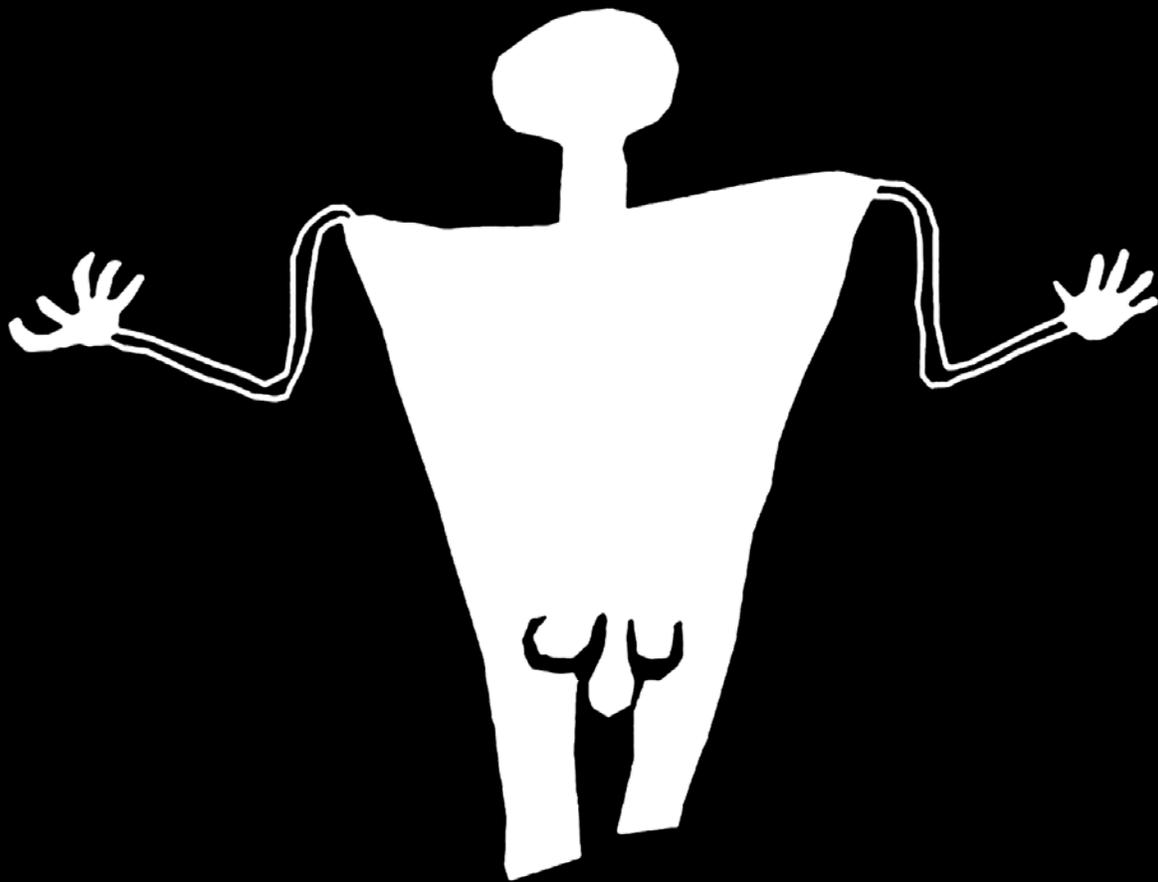
EXPRESSION

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MYTHS AND BELIEFS UNVEILED
BY ROCKS

EDITORIAL NOTES

MYTHS AND BELIEFS UNVEILED BY ROCKS

The natural forms of nature are what eyes have seen for millions of years. Nature is the source of memories, living resources, thoughts, and queries. What we see, smell, feel, touch, and hear is the source of both material and conceptual survival. The question “why?” is the essence of human mental compulsion. Why? Why does that cloud have that shape? Why has that mountain that shape, why has that rock that shape? These questions come to the minds of people who never knew the existence of disciplines called geography and geology. They are a fundamental aspect of culture. Understanding the primary expressions of human attempts to explain the natural shapes of nature opens up a window on the roots of esthetics and also on the processes leading to scientific research.

Culture shapes ideas, as also do professions. The natural reactions of our senses are wrapped in the many veils of cultural conditioning, ever since the first tool was conceived by a human hand, and even before. The meaning of a rock differs between believers that it is the shelter of an ancestral spirit, and experts who are looking for gold, petrol or precious stones. This difference of approach is still a cause of conflict, between people having diverse concerns about both material and conceptual natural resources in Australia, South Africa, Brazil, and other parts of the world. Rocks have a meaning, but not the same for everybody. As evidenced by their art, sanctuaries, and holy sites, prehistoric and tribal people have been and are constantly anxious about the question “why?”. Every shape has a meaning in the animistic conception, as it is seen to be the effect of intent.

Could it be that the shapes of rocks have no meaning? In front of a painted rock shelter in northern Australia, an old tribesman explained to us that the form of the rocks had been shaped by the ancestral spirits in the Dreamtime and are testimony of their will that wise karadji understand. In other words, we were being told that we do not understand. There was no doubt about the concept that shapes have a meaning. The doubts were about our ability to understand their message.

1,000 km to the west, in the Kimberley, an Aboriginal guide showed us a vertical rock, with a natural protrusion having the vague shape of an animal body. Just this protrusion was covered by numerous non-figurative carvings, cup-marks, and vertical incisions and marks. The guide explained that the soul of that shadowy animal rested inside

the rock, “as is evident from the external shape of the rock”. The human-made carvings were attempts to communicate with the spirit and address wishes to it: “This spirit is very powerful in stopping hurricanes.”

Years later, we assisted at a ceremony in India, where a complex liturgy helped the soul of an ancestor enter into a pillar, a standing stone. Special songs, mysterious spells, and prayers at last succeeded: the soul found its new body. Thereafter worshippers assembled in front of the pillar and offerings of food were put in a bowl at its foot. That stone had become a place of worship for the local community.

Near a village in Tanzania, a large rock is entirely covered with cup-marks. When beaten with a stone, the rock vibrates and the echo replies to the noise of the beatings. Two voices are superimposed, that of the vibrations and that of the echo. The local villagers maintain that these are the voices of the spirits sheltered inside the rock, replying to the call. The many cup-marks appear to be the results of attempts by the local people to listen to the voices of ancestors and communicate with them.

In Alaska, an Aleutian artist traveled for miles to collect a stone suitable for making a small statue. Similar stones are found all over. But to make a statuette the stone had to derive from that holy place where the ancestral spirits give the stone the power of unveiling its hidden shapes.

In different corners of the world, traditions tell of rocks sheltering spirits and rock shapes having a meaning. In different parts of the world, cracks in the rocks are considered to be the clefts where the spirits can listen to the voices of the living people and reply to them. At night the spirits come and go by the fissures. As our readers know, these sites and beliefs are described and documented in the books and articles published by Atelier Research Center.

It seems that only some urban societies believe that the natural shapes of the rocks have no meaning. The animistic faculties of rocks were transformed into sacred rocks at the Mecca and elsewhere, or in the faith in sacred statues making miracles and appreciating the offerings of ex-votos and other gifts. The concept of the sacred site is common to both tribal societies and urban societies. The concept of sacred rocks varies. Some believe that only human-made shapes may transform the rock into sacred statues with miraculous abilities.

The articles of this issue take us to visit sacred rocks and other elements unveiling myths and beliefs in a few corners of the world. From the rocks of a sacred mountain in the Negev Desert in Israel, to the enigmatic messages of rock engravings in the Karakol mountains in Kyrgyzstan, to the

myths and beliefs told by ethnographic Mexican art, to the rocks preserving mythic stories of native Americans in Utah. What all that has in common is the essential human question “why?”, which is shared by these papers on various corners of the world, their authors, and their readers. The active participation of readers is welcome. Do not hesitate to ask questions, participate in the debates, express your ideas. Good ideas are contributions to the enrichment of culture and to the advance of research, and are treasured.

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 published their studies and their ideas so far.

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. Please refrain from unnecessary references and from excessive citations. They make the reading discursive and do not make the article more scientific. Excessive quotations may unveil the inability to express your own ideas. Consider that short articles are more read and appreciated than long ones. Avoid unnecessary words and sentences. 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, contribute to research, and respect the integrity, ethics, and dignity of authors, colleagues, and readers.

DISCUSSION FORUM

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

PREHISTORIC ART: WHAT DID THE MAKERS INTEND TO COMMUNICATE?

Before the birth of art, deliberate collecting natural objects with peculiar outlines and stones with evocative forms, colors, or vaguely human features, goes back half a million years. Our early ancestors were becoming human, and they were attracted by suggestive shapes, although it is not clear what they intended to do with them.

Graphic not-figurative markings done with the intent of memorizing or communicating something, including stencils and hand-prints, have been practiced by humans for some 100,000 years. Along with the intentional ones, markings left on stones and bones may be traces of functional actions, such as the signs of cutting left by flint tools while shaping a wooden object, often arguably claimed to be works of art. Asking the question, why was this done, what did the makers intend to communicate or obtain, is unavoidable, even when hypotheses awaken debates.

Images, intentionally depicted or engraved, were a means of memorizing and communicating 50,000 years ago in a few corners of the planet. And 30,000 years ago, this graphic means of expression was present in five continents.

The ability to make conscious, graphic records and communications by deliberate images is the effect of a turning point in the conceptual evolution of the human mind. This system of memorization is currently given the name of visual art. We do not know if the term art is the proper one,



Front page image

Athapaskan rock art, see Patterson, this issue, p. 56

but it has become the conventional attribution. Prehistoric paintings and engravings are found and studied in over 180 countries of five continents. They are a major tangible expression of the human spirit. A small part of them has been recorded, but just this part counts millions of graphemes. A fraction of what has been recorded has also been decoded and understood. This is the core of a new history, a source for understanding the global identity of man and bringing many forgotten tribes and nations back to be part of history, with their events, stories, and beliefs. Scholars and fans of prehistoric art have done an immense amount of work, devoting time and energy to making records. In various countries researchers are isolated heroes, devoted to their passion, often suffering from inadequate communication and support. The information on their findings and decoding is restricted to a very limited audience. This is one of the problems limiting the diffusion of information and the progress of research on a major cultural patrimony and source of education. Making these efforts better known helps research to be more widely diffused, allows new progress in analysis and decoding reach researchers also in marginal countries, gives researchers the gratification of contributing to culture and being more widely recognized, but, more important, it produces culture and awakens the public interest.

What does art tell us about the notions and concepts of the makers? Every work of art has a conceptual background. When understood, it is a source for understanding the primary roots of thinking, knowing, imagining, seeing and believing. Understanding meaning and aims is the way to opening up new windows on the landscape of the human mind.

The orientations and goals of research vary for both scholars and fans. Some esteem the findings for their esthetic values, which are the values of the evaluator, not of the evaluated, but it is these that attract people to prehistoric art. The use of the word beautiful is frequent. Other people, while still doing valuable work of documentation, seem to consider prehistoric art as a collection of doodles, meaningless curious expressions of idle savages. It gives research an appealing romantic touch. Others are concentrating in comparisons: "This shape resembles another shape found 100 miles away". Any conclusion? Nevertheless, similarities of different findings are relevant to find out trends and patterns. Others are mainly interested in defining how old they are, often using the word oldest: the older, the better. Concern about the hypothetical age is seen as more important than understanding the content. "This dot is 30,000 years old!". Then what? But, dating them at aged thousands of years, help the finding to be conceived as part of a defined cultural context. Some concentrate on measuring. In a report we read: "This engraved human figure is 17.3

cm long, the head measures 4 x 3.3 cm. The hands each have five fingers, four of them measure 1.2 cm each, one is shorter. The image has three legs, the lateral legs measure 6.7 cm. each. The central one is much shorter...". Of course, additional data are a welcome contribution. Good documentation is the base of research, when it helps understanding and when it is useful for further research.

The artistic and esthetic aspects of prehistoric art stimulate fashion, design, taste, and imagination. There are quite a few artists and designers who have become famous through being inspired by prehistoric art.

Although esthetic values, dating, and measuring are relevant, for conceptual anthropology the main concern is the conceptual content, that is, what it reveals of the thoughts, worries, beliefs, and expectations of their producers. And, often, this is quite evident just from the typology of the graphemes. This knowledge concerns not only archeologists and anthropologists, but also psychologists, philosophers, art historians, historians of religion, sociologists, and indeed pretty much all the disciplines of the human and social sciences. It is a source of education and cultural awareness that should become more accessible to the public.

In the study of prehistoric art, as in other fields, progress in research has opened up new horizons of knowledge. Systematic studies of the associative logic of assemblages and sequences of graphemes evidenced the repetitive presence, in various art groups of hunter-gatherers, in different continents, of three grammatical forms defined as pictograms, ideograms, and psychograms, reflecting three major conceptual mental processes. A turning point in the decoding was the definition of the associative recurring patterns and logic of these three types of graphemes.

As our readers know, some research work in Paleolithic European art revealed the presence of trading systems of exchange not only of edible goods, but also of women, 40,000 years ago. Other documents report travels and journeys, mythical narratives, didactic tales, and even personal experiences of sexual relations, a variety similar to that of a modern library.

One of these sequences of graphemes, reported in a previous issue of **EXPRESSION**, tells us the story of the arrival of a group of people in western Europe, more precisely in the Dordogne, then named the Land of the Bison. They were migrants from the east, from a land which is also named and can be identified. This is a unique Paleolithic historical document some 20,000 years old, telling the story of a migration and the peopling of Europe, including the names in use at the time of the human group involved, that of the land of their origin and that of the area of arrival.

The decoding of this pictographic literature marks a turning point, revealing facts, stories, myths, agreements, and

personal relations, going back ages before the traditionally agreed beginning of writing and history.

Other groups of prehistoric art are as valuable sources for rediscovering the adventures of populations ignored by official history. So, this is a work that contributes new chapters of history to various countries and produces a new vision of world history. The results obtained by researchers around the world should become better known.

Is this research less important than the exploration of the planet Mars? It certainly is less known and disposes of less funding. Actually, it does not dispose of any concrete public funding. But even so, research is progressing and expanding. Atelier Center for Conceptual Anthropology is encouraging and promoting innovative studies of prehistoric and tribal art by publishing and diffusing them in five continents. The proceedings of nine years since its birth, are recorded in 35 issues of *EXPRESSION* quarterly journal, and in 60 published volumes. 250 authors have so far joined this challenge. The publications are diffusing not only the specific papers and their authors, they are offering knowledge and ideas the world over. Research should reach beyond its boundaries, from the restricted circle of experts to the open access of broader audiences, producing interest and opinions, and contributing to culture and awareness.

Various aspects of prehistoric art will be faced in forthcoming issues of *EXPRESSION*. The editorial team is welcoming new comers, new papers and new ideas.

ON PEER REVIEWERS

After the text on peer reviewers appeared in the previous issue, some of the comments from readers are here summarized:

“Peer reviewers are useful to verify the conformity of my articles.”
“Publications in journals applying the compulsory control of papers by peer reviewers grant me more points for my academic career.”

“Peer reviewers are a guarantee on the acceptability of ideas but are not-conformist ideas necessarily wrong? Should they be censured?”

“If peer reviewers existed when the Bible was put into writing, most of it would have never been published.”

“Peer reviewers may make political evaluations of ideas, then imposed upon authors, editors and readers. This is happening not only in Russia.”

“Peer reviewing could be a mean of conditioning the orientations of research. Several cases of authors refuted by peer reviewers, later received the Nobel Prize. Was the Nobel Prize Committee misjudging?”

“As a publisher, I welcome reviewers that protect me from my own judgments.”

The debate continues.

THE DEBATE ON SCYTHIAN ART

A letter by Dr C. Baumer (Switzerland)

Dear Colleagues,

As usual I read with great interest *EXPRESSION* journal. I have two brief comments on Papadimitriou's article, “Three Scythian Goddesses”, *EXPRESSION* 34, pp. 58-701. Regarding the caption of Figure 9, the object is not a plaque but the reverse of a mirror made of silver and decorated with sheets of electrum. And it does not come from Bolshaya Bliznitsa kurgan, but from Kelermes kurgan 4, Kuban region, Adygea, Russian Federation. Furthermore, the winged goddess holds two panthers, so to write that “that she is not framed by animals” is wrong. Since *EXPRESSION* is about rock art, I miss references to rock art in this contribution. For example, the Mistress of Animals who is depicted on the Kelermes mirror is also found in rock art. Also, rock art in typical Scythian and Saka animal style is well known.

Dr Christoph Baumer, Hergiswil, Switzerland

Reply by Dr I. Papadimitriou (Greece)

Thank you for forwarding me the comments.

Concerning the first one, unfortunately there has been a mistake in the captions. The caption of Figure 9 in the article actually belongs to Figure 8. It is a more elaborate version of the caption of Figure 8 in the text. As for Figure 9 the caption is this one. I am sorry that I did not realize this error in time: Fig. 9. Silver and electrum mirror (reverse side) from the Kelermes kurgan, 7th century, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986; Figure 48). Note the almost identical depiction of the goddess with the one in Figure 7.

As for the other comment, Dr Baumer is correct. Although the article focusses more on the western Scythian tribes than the eastern Saka ones (among which rock art is more prevalent), E. Jacobson (*The Deer Goddess of Ancient Siberia. A Study in the Ecology of Belief*, Brill 1993) examines this aspect. As to the first comment, the legend of Fig. 8 should be:

Fig. 8. Gold plaque from Bolshaya Bliznitsa kurgan, 4th century, State Hermitage Museum (Piotrovsky, Galanina, Grach, 1986; Figure 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 identi-

fied as belonging to a priestess of a mixed Graeco-Scythian religious background (see also Figure 15). As for the second comment, rock art and especially petroglyphs in Siberia and Central Asia date as far back as the Eneolithic. Though initially the themes rely almost exclusively on deer iconography, in some regions stone stelae from the Early Bronze Age show masks of hybrid animal/human (female) figures. In the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, the iconography once more shifted to deer depictions. In the Early Iron age, an anthropomorphizing of the stelae is observed (belts with hanging weapons are carved, framing the deer and other animals), especially in those stelae found in the Ponto-Caspian steppe. The Scythian and the few earlier Cimmerian anthropomorphic-phallic stelae, often termed “baba”, are thus a stage in the evolutionary process of these monuments. Most started by depicting a male figure, while further east, among Saka and other tribes, petroglyphs and stelae continued bearing mostly animal iconography.

Concerning their iconography, there are various interpretations. They have been connected with sun worship (the deer as a solar symbol) and with the passage to the underworld or scenes from everyday life such as ritual or hunting (especially when the deer are framed by human figures). The meaning as well as the iconography of the stelae changed, possibly due to interactions with other cultures. It is also noteworthy that gradually the deer (exclusively female at first) started being depicted with their antlers, and, given the emphasis on antler depictions in other forms of Scythian art, one deduces that they must have some symbolism (perhaps a reference to the tree of life, the cosmic tree). E. Jacobson argues that there is a close connection between the deer, the cosmic tree, and the enthroned goddess (identified by Jacobson as Tabiti). She argues that all these depictions were specific manifestations of a Siberian female ancestor-goddess (possibly an animal, as she initially thought). Thus, among the Scythians, the seated goddess inherited her symbolism from the deer depictions, and the deer depictions themselves remained in use, albeit stripped of their original meaning. As for the Scythian stelae, which also dropped the deer iconography, becoming purely anthropomorphic, Jacobson argues that they came to symbolize the male figure, found framing the enthroned goddess in most of her depictions. Even if we are to agree with Jacobson’s very well-formulated opinion, however, the question of what the male figure of the “baba” (and in some very rare cases the female one) actually represent – a priest, a dead aristocrat, an ancestral hero – still remains.

In any case for further information one should definitely consult the treatise of Jacobson

(E. Jacobson, *The Deer Goddess of Ancient Siberia. A Study in the Ecology of Belief*. Brill 1993) which, despite being somewhat old, still remains one of the few mono-

graphs dedicated to the Siberian and Central Asian petroglyphs and the evolution of the monument until the early centuries AD. This short reply has been mostly based on information and observations as well as the argument put forward by Jacobson in this book. The work also has some interesting and indicative illustrations

SAKA ANIMAL STYLE AND ITS APPLICATION IN ROCK ART

C. Baumer (Switzerland)

The Saka were part of the Scythian culture and closely related to the Pontic Scythians. The animal style of the steppe began in northeastern Central Asia. These images emphasize certain features of the animal that had particular symbolic content in the Sakas’ hierarchy of values, like strength, speed, resilience, and fertility. Parts of the animals like eye, ears, mouth, beak, antlers, hooves, claws, muscles, and joints were rendered in detail. Sometimes the motif in the form of an S stressed the shape of bodies. The most revered and popular animals were the stag, the feline (later also the wolf), and a bird of prey. The first two were often featured in Saka rock art, the latter only seldom. There were also hybrid animals like the griffin, which aggregated the traits of two or three animals. In the animal style, ibexes, horses, and yaks were also engraved.

The discovery of animal-style objects at Arzhan 1 (Tuva, Russian Federation) dating from c. 800 BCE refutes the hypothesis that the animal style developed first out of decisive influences from Assyria and Urartu, Anatolia or the Maeotian Kuban region. The origins of the animal style should be sought in southern Siberia, in the petroglyphs (Fig. 1) and so-called deer stones (Fig. 3) of Mongolia and in the hunting and stockbreeding cultures in northeastern Inner Mongolia. As Scythian tribes moved westward, so did the animal style. Beginning in the seventh century BCE the Scythian (Saka) animal style began to adopt iconographic elements from Urartu, Assyria and later Iran. The animal style was not only applied on metal objects, wooden carvings, felt, leather, tattooing, and possibly textiles, but also in rock art, namely in places where Saka pastoralists were roaming or along specific communication routes such as along the Upper Indus River and its tributaries, always provided that in these regions rock art was an established medium of expression. The key areas for animal-style rock art are Tuva, the Upper Yenisei region and the Minussinsk Basin, western and central Mongolia, and in the drainage basin of the Upper Indus, such as Rutok (western Tibet) and in neighboring Ladakh (Fig. 2), Baltistan, and Gilgit regions.

Christoph Baumer, 2 February 2022



Fig. 1. Petroglyphs of stylized stags at Eltsin Bulak, Arkhangai Aimag, central Mongolia, c. 900-700 BCE. (by Christoph Baumer).



Fig. 2. A feline hunts a stag at Tangtse, Pangong Region, Ladakh, India, c. 600-400 BCE. (by Christoph Baumer).

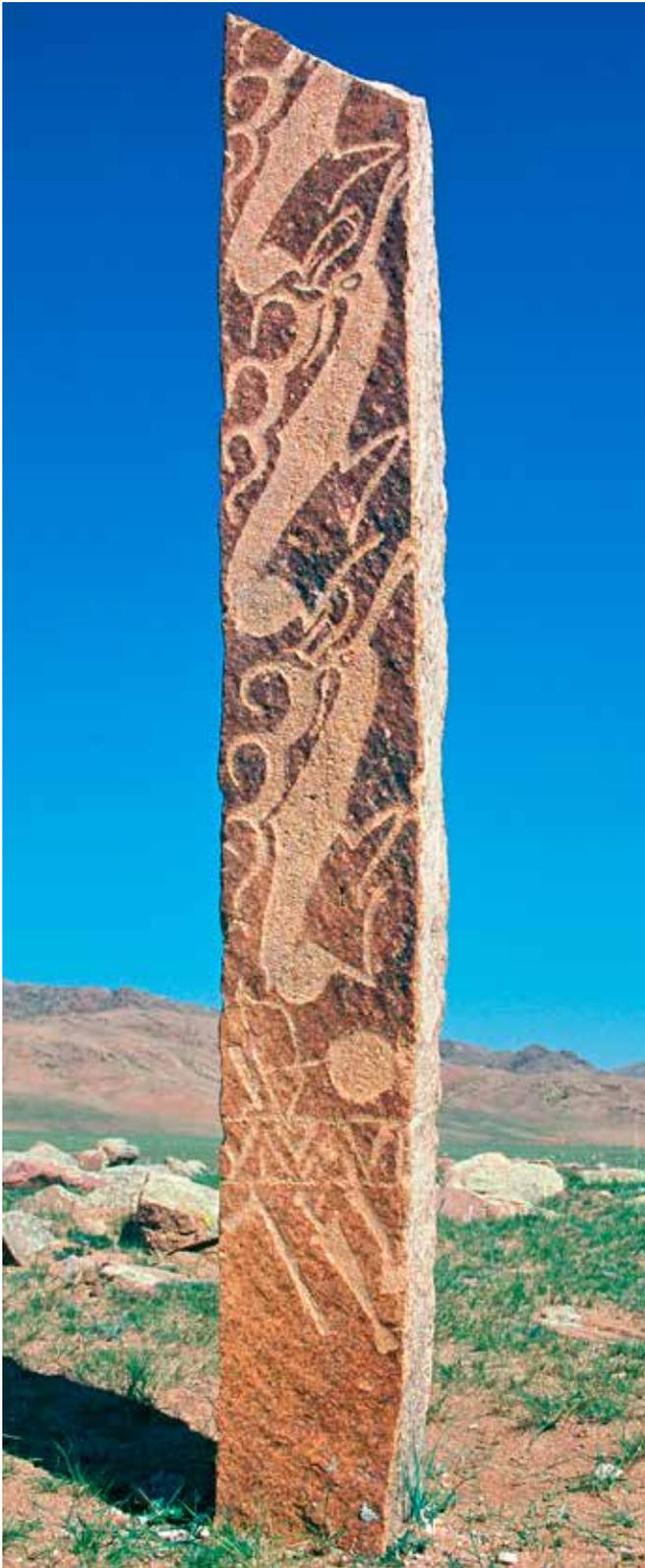


Fig. 3. Deer stone at Ushkin Uver, Khövsgöl Aimag, northern Mongolia, c. 1400-800 BCE. In the upper section stylized stags with bird-like snouts and oversized antlers “fly” heavenward; below, weapons are engraved such as bow and quiver, a battle axe, and daggers (Christoph Baumer).

SCYTHIAN ROCK ART IN CHINA

(Editorial note)

The Scythian style is recorded in Northern China, mainly in the Ningxia province and in Inner Mongolia. Did the diffusion of style indicate spread of people, of ideology, or just of esthetic fashionable values?



Fig 1a, b: Tracing of Scythian style rock art, from two different rock surfaces in Helan Shan, Ningxia, China. In the first figure, the smaller images, describing a mythical scene of a human between two animals, seem to be the original scene which was later surrounded by the larger figures. (Source: Anati, E. 1994. *Helan Shan. Arte rupestre della Cina*, figg. 68 and 69. Capo di Ponte, Edizioni del Centro).

DISCUSSION PROPOSAL ABOUT THE ARCHEOLOGICAL HIATUS IN HARKARKOM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM BCE

by Fabio Crosilla (University of Udine, Italy)

Professor Anati states in his book *Exodus, Between Myth and History* (Anati 2018: 318 that “Paleoclimate studies confirm that the relevant areas (of the Exodus, Editor’s note) were not inhabitable during a period of intense drought which lasted through nearly the entire second millennium BCE” (Frumkin *et al.*, 1991, 1994; Issar, 1995; Issar *et al.*, 1992). Citing Weiss *et al.*, 1993; Prell and Kutzbach, 1987, Anati writes (2018: p. 318), “Such a paleoclimatic event was of great magnitude and influenced Mesopotamia as well”. Finally, he says (p. 318), “If there was an Exodus and a stay at the foot of Mount Sinai and at Kadesh-Barnea, these could have taken place only before the 20th century BCE.” In a paper written by Langgut *et al.* (2015), a detailed climate analysis during the Bronze and the Iron Ages of the Southern Levant was described, based on palynological records and the level variations of the Dead Sea. The paper studies the climate variations according to some records sampled at four different stations in Israel: at Birkat Ram at the foot of Mount Hermon; along the coast of the Sea of Galilee; at Ein Feshkha on the north side of the Dead Sea; and at Ze’elim Gully, on the southern part of the Dead Sea.

Let us consider the results obtained at the Ze’elim Gully station, the most similar in its environmental and weather conditions to the Negev. The authors write (p. 227) : “More arid conditions at the end of the Intermediate Bronze Age are also evident by the lithology of the Ze’elim section, which points to accumulation of sediments in a shore environment (sands and a thin beach ridge were deposited from ~2000 to ~1800 BCE) (Langgut *et al.*, 2014; Kagan *et al.*, 2015). Drier climate conditions were also documented by (A) the declining level of the Dead Sea (from 380 to 400 bsl; yet, the drop began slightly earlier ~2200/2100 BCE and lasted about 200-300 yr) (Migowski *et al.*, 2006; Kagan *et al.*, 2015) and (B) the isotopic composition of tamarisk wood from the Mount Sedom Cave (southern Dead Sea), which also points to a prolonged drought (of >100yr) at the end of the Intermediate Bronze Age (Frumkin, 2009) The authors continue (p. 227): “Evidence for dry climate conditions in the beginning of Middle Bronze Age and more humid conditions in the later phases is also provided by the lithology of the Ze’elim record, which points to the accumulation of sediments in a shore environment (sands and beach ridge) during the Middle Bronze Age I, and therefore indicates relatively low Dead Sea stands.[

...] Indeed, according to the reconstruction of the Dead Sea levels, during the Middle Bronze Age II-III, the lake reached its highest level in the previous four millennia – up to 370 m bsl (Migowski *et al.*, 2006; Kushnir and Stein, 2010).” For this reason, the authors write (p. 228): “Wetter conditions in the Middle Bronze Age II-III (1750-1550 BCE) caused the settlement system to recover and re-expand in the south (in areas such as the Beer Sheba Valley in the northern Negev).”

As is well known, Beer Sheba is not far from Kadesh-Barnea, touched by the Exodus; the direct distance is only 54 km and almost the same weather conditions might be expected for the two localities.

Therefore, I suggest opening a discussion about the statement of Langgut *et al.* (2015) that “Wetter conditions in the Middle Bronze Age II-III (1750-1550 BCE) caused the settlement system to recover and re expand in the south (in areas such as the Beer Sheba Valley in the northern Negev)” and the statement of Professor Anati that, “If there was an Exodus and a stay at the foot of Mount Sinai and at Kadesh-Barnea, these could have taken place only before the 20th century BCE.”

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DEBATE ON THE AGE OF THE BIBLICAL EXODUS

The editors welcome the debate proposed by Professor Crosilla, on the lines of reasoning and the conclusions of the texts cited by his note. The theme is an appropriate case for the comparative analysis of texts preserved in writing for over 2,500 years, referring to traditions going back over 3,000 years, using the arguments of recent studies, the data from the archeological findings, the topography of the territory, climatic changes, pertinent ancient texts from other sources, and other available historical data. It is an excellent case for multisector analysis. Those interested in the topic are invited to send their notes of up to 1,500 words. Longer illustrated articles may also be considered. Kindly keep to the deadline of 15 May 2022 for submission.

THE DEBATE ON A PUZZLING ROCK ENGRAVING

During a recent visit to the site of Har Karkom in the Israeli Negev Desert, a debate developed on the meaning of a rock engraving in which different people recognized different images (Site HK 38). It covers the entire surface of a rock about 75 cm wide, and is an arrangement of lines engraved around a natural thin fracture of the surface, which was enclosed to be part of the configuration of lines. The

composition is surrounded by a circle of dots.

The hypotheses about this rock engraving varied. It was suggested that it might be the image of a male sexual organ, a turtle, a snake, a seated camel, a mythical animal, a magic spell, a hut, and others. Then the possibility emerged of seeing this engraving as a map of Har Karkom, an idea which had in fact been expressed already in the past.



Fig. 1a, Fig 1b. Photo and tracing of the rock engraving. The engravings on the upper right side traced in outline have a different shade of patina (Site HK 38. Photo EA95: XXVI-26; Tracing Archives HK).

A speculative debate evolved. Not even the heat and the strong wind could stop it. What could the around 40 dots surrounding the composition indicate? A sort of boundary? On the upper part of the composition a lunate line and two dots indicate a space enclosed inside the boundary line of dots but outside the outline of the mountain. What could it mean? Could it indicate the western valley where many of the ancient living sites are found?

The most puzzling aspect of this engraving, if indeed it is a map of the mountain, concerns the lines inside the main outline. Could they indicate the wadis of the plateau? Or a subdivision of the mountain in sectors? Could one of

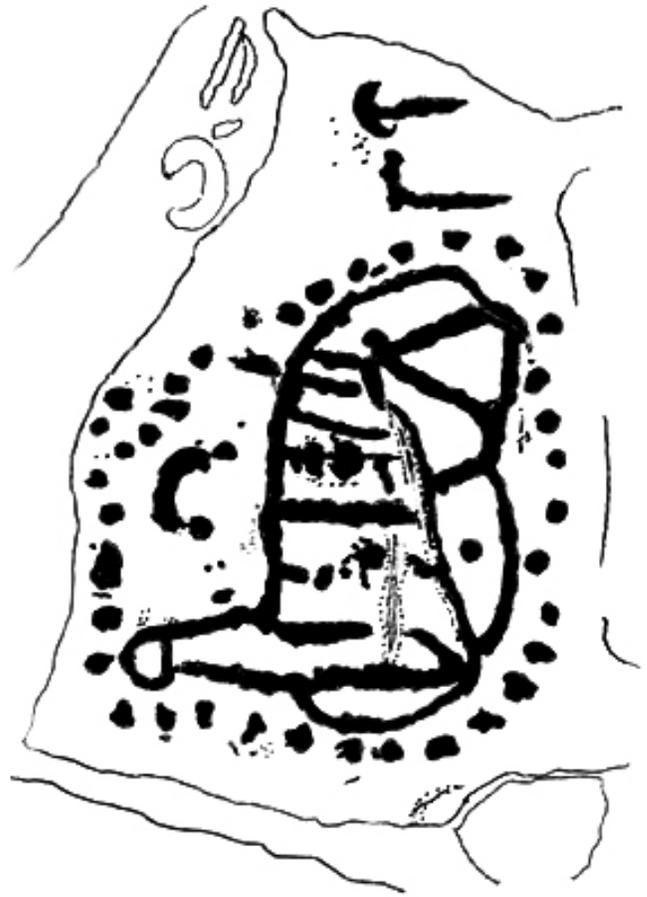
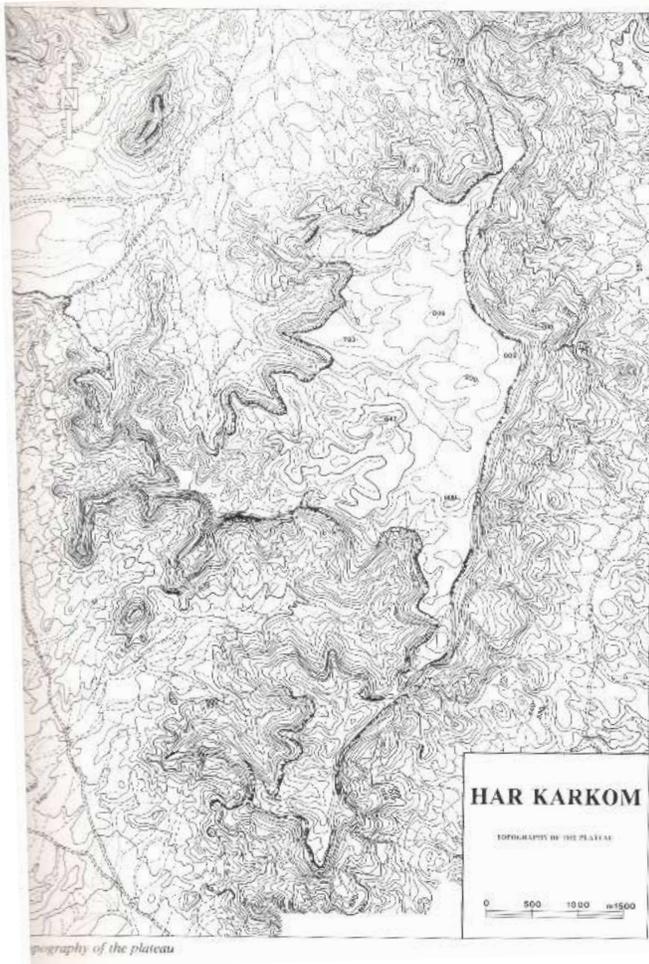


Fig. 2a, 2b. A topographic map of Har Karkom compared with the problematic rock engraving.

the lines with two dots, or another line with just one dot, indicate specific sites on the mountain? Another of the areas has one dot in the middle. Does it indicate something in particular?

To the right of the composition, two ideograms, like similar marks in other engravings of the mountain, could indicate the name of the maker or that of the subject represented. They belong to the kind of signs defined as indicators. They seem to represent an ax and a dagger: could they be a name, a signature, or a caption for the image?

The age of the engraving is not clear. Its patina is light, which may indicate a recent time, or the kind of rock, or its degree of exposure to the sun, or its having been covered by earth or sand for a certain period. If the two indicator signs are indeed an ax and a dagger, their shape could be a hint of the age of the engraving.

Another aspect of the debate turned on what could have been the motivation for the selection of that specific rock surface. Some claimed that it was because the rock was handy, but hundreds of rocks around were handy. Another suggestion was that the engraving was related to the rock fissure in its middle. In fact, other rock engravings on the mountain appear to be connected to natural rock fissures. Still another hypothesis claimed that the very shape of the rock resembling, at certain hours of the day, the outline of the body of an animal, could have attracted the executor of the engraving to that specific surface.

Yet all these hypotheses do not explain the motivation. If indeed it is a map of the mountain, what could its function have been, in the middle of the mountain? The debate continues and new ideas are welcome.

HAR KARKOM: A PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT

A press conference at Har Karkom, in the middle of the Negev Desert, was held on the 21st of December 2021, and several newspapers reported on it, including a full page in the New York Times (31/12/2021). An impressive light effect of sun reflection on a rock, appearing for a few days in December, was proposed to be the biblical “burning bush” of Moses’ revelation. This arguable hypothesis attracted the

public interest more than the many material discoveries. However, several journals reported on the debated question, on whether is Har Karkom the biblical Mount Sinai. The visit to a few of the cult and worship sites provoked a debate on what rituals and what ceremonies could have hosted such sites. In the present issue an article is further considering the topic.



Fig. 1. Prof. Anati meeting the press at Har Karkom in the Negev Desert (Photo by I. Keinan).

WHY DID PREHISTORIC PEOPLE PRODUCE ART

Why did prehistoric people produce visual art? What did they want to communicate and to whom? **EXPRESSION** journal is interested in your ideas and in specific cases. Short notes are welcome.

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.

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Authors are responsible for their ideas and for the information and illustrations they submit. Publication in EXPRESSION quarterly journal does not imply that the publisher and/or the editors agree with the ideas presented

THE HAR KARKOM CULT SITES

Emmanuel Anati

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Fig. 1. Aerial view of the Paran desert with the plateau of Har Karkom in the background. (Photo ISR85:CI-6).

1. Introduction¹

The Har Karkom mesa-mountain, framed by cliffs, appears from the distance as a rectangular elevation in the middle of the wasteland. Located in the Israeli Negev Desert, near the border with Egypt, it reaches 847 m above sea level and about 300 m above the adjacent valleys. It is a low mountain overlooking the surrounding Paran Desert. The main mesa-plateau covers about 5 sq.km. Since 1980, the area has been the object of archeological research by an Italian-Israeli team, and 1,350 archeological sites have been recorded in the research concession of 200 sq. km.²

The large number of cult sites soon suggested that it had been a sacred mountain in the heart of the desert,

a major religious center reaching a peak of activities in the Bronze Age. The idea that Har Karkom could be the biblical Mount Sinai came later, in 1983.

Major concentrations of sites belong to two periods, the Middle and Upper Paleolithic, and the BAC period (Bronze Age Complex, a cultural horizon corresponding to the Chalcolithic to Middle Bronze Age of the Fertile Levant, c. 4500 to 1950 BC). The Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods (in this area, c. 5th century BC to 7th century CE) count numerous sites but mainly in the surrounding valleys and without clearly defined cult sites (Anati, 1986, Mailland and Anati, 2018).

The present paper is considering the cult sites of the BAC period during which human activities on this mountain and at its foot considerably surged, as evidenced by the quantity and variety of cult structures on the plateau and of living sites in the surrounding

1 Thanks to Dr. F. Mailland for the research and selection of the illustration.

2 The present article is a summary of the book: Anati, E. 2022, *The Bronze Age Sacred Sites of Har Karkom*, Capo di Ponte (Atelier).

MAIN ANCIENT ROUTES CROSSING THE SINAI PENINSULA

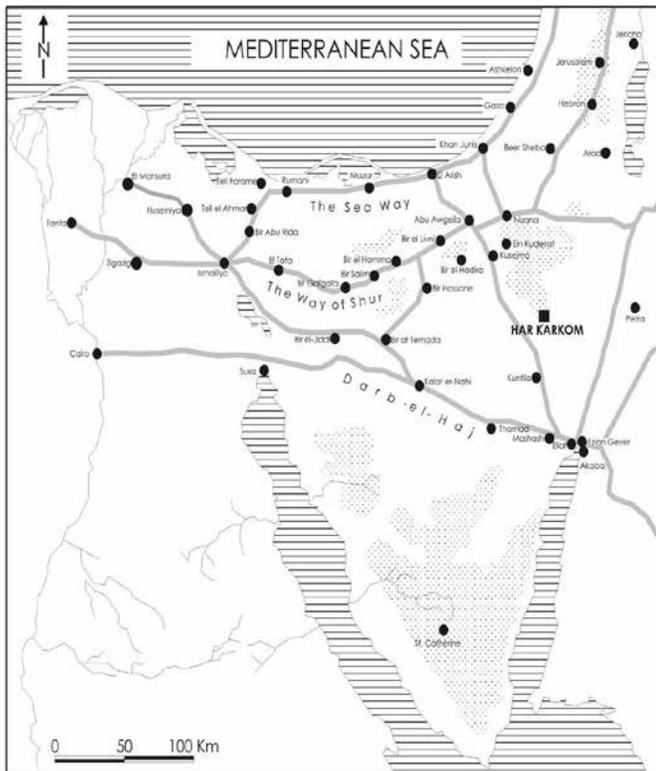


Fig. 2. The main ancient routes crossing the Sinai Peninsula, between Africa and Asia, and the location of Har Karkom (HKArchives).

valleys. The research on the result of the survey is in progress. The Paleolithic cult sites were recently examined (Anati, 2020), as were the types of habitation sites (Anati, 2021). Preliminary studies of the rock art are available (Mailland and Bastoni, 2015; Anati, 2015a). The hypothesis of Har Karkom being the biblical Mount Sinai evolved and has been updated (Anati, 1984, 2013, 2015b, 2018a).³

2. The Context

In the BAC period the valleys at the foot of the mountain hosted a large number of settlements while the mountain plateau was cluttered with cult sites; and an exceptional concentration of rock art (over 40,000 engravings) was spread all over the area. A large part of it belongs to the BAC period (Anati, 2015a).

The BAC lithic industry is of a Chalcolithic tradition though the rare pottery that goes with it displays ty-

pologies spanning from the Chalcolithic to the Middle Bronze Age (Anati, 2017, 2021). While in the fertile regions of the Levant different cultural horizons succeeded each other, in this region of now deep desert, the BAC material culture persisted, with minor variations, from ca. 4500 to ca. 1950 BC. Then a hiatus in human presence took place, likely due to climatic variations (Anati, 2017, pp. 205ff.). The hiatus of archeological findings lasted from ca 1950 to ca 1050 BC. With a sample of 1,350 sites, it is sharply evident: not a single site can be related to these 900 years.

A specific detail of the archaeological data suggests a peculiar scenario: out of 267 Paleolithic sites in 100 sq. km., 198 are on the mountain plateau; they display practically intact hut floors, fireplaces and flint workshops. Flint cores and their flakes can occasionally be found near each other in the flint workshops, allowing the process of flint manufacture to be reassembled. Fireplaces of Paleolithic sites are still visible at the surface. Remains of Paleolithic hut-floors are well defined and small trails interconnect them. In short, the Paleolithic sites remain in an outstanding state of preservation despite the extensive human activity and the number of living sites at the foot of the mountain, in the BAC and later periods.

It seems unlikely that the multitudes inhabiting the BAC living sites at the mountain foot walked on the soil of the plateau. In fact, modern visitors to Har Karkom, in the last 20 years, have done more damage to the Paleolithic and other sites than all the visitors of the last 20,000 years. When this research started in the early 1980's, the sites were intact and fortunately had been extensively documented photographically.

It is reasonable to assume that in the BAC period the populations of the many hamlets below, did not have access to the plateau, which may have been a restricted ground, accessible only to selected few people. The Paleolithic sanctuary, the older gigantic geoglyphs and other thought-provoking features of the mountain plateau, were probably not accessible to be seen by the majority of the people camping at its foot.

Considering that Har Karkom is located in the area of the biblical Exodus stories, preserved in writing for 2,500 years, and referring to memories over 3,000-year-old, their sources may help to envisage the cultural background of the archeological findings. The biblical stories are a rare instance in which archeolog-

³ We apologize for having to refer to our own publications but, unfortunately, we are the only team having studied Har Karkom for over 40 years and disposing of the pertinent documentation.

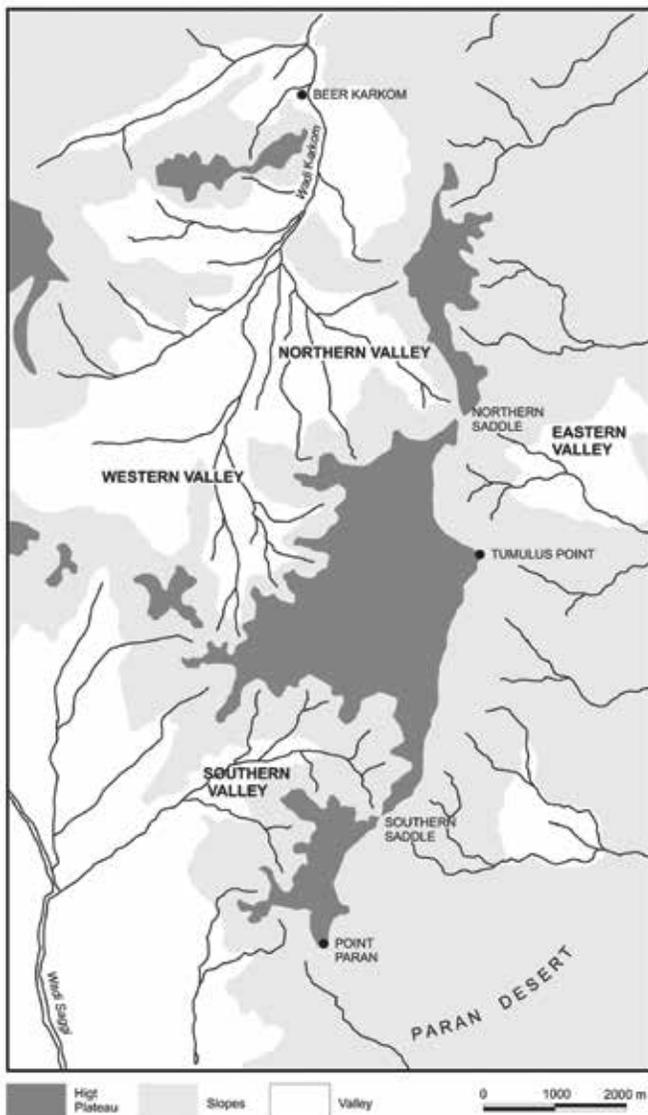


Fig. 3. Har Karkom, the plateau and the surrounding valleys. (HKArc).

ical findings of pre-literate periods can benefit from surviving traditional memories.

3. Fallen Boulders and Ceremonial Trails

A few trails lead to the mountain plateau from both west and east. One of the eastern trails (reaching just below the plateau at site HK 106), has several impressive BAC cult stations along it.⁴ A flat area, along the trail, was occupied by boulders which had evidently fallen from the mountain. A man-made row of stones surrounded one of them. The upper part of the boulder

⁴ Full description of the sites, their location and their geographic coordinates are recorded in the two volumes of the survey report (Anati and Mailland, 2009; 2010).

der has the natural shape of a monstrous face. From traces of artificial scraping, the eyes seem to have been enhanced, as well as other parts of the boulder likely to represent arms. It is not clear whether some dark spots could be traces of artificial coloring. This boulder marked a station along the trail. It was not an isolated expression of human action.

Along the same trail, spaced some 400 m. apart, there are two other sites with standing stones, both presenting a cleared area in front, defined by rows of stones. This seems to be a ritual BAC trail with ceremonial stations. Surprisingly, it does not reach the plateau but ends up in a small flat area very near to it, facing an almost vertical rock of a few tens of meters. Apparently, people reached that rock wall and did not go any further. Likely that rock had a meaning, though no traces of human action have been recorded on it.

Along another trail, which is still used by visitors, on the western side of the mountain (from site HK 2B to HK 23B) there are rock engravings representing worshippers, and a “testimonial tumulus” (biblical *gal-ed*) burying an altar. A boulder along the same trail had smaller stones with engravings arranged at its foot. The western trail ends up in front of a circle of seven standing stones, likely a gate-station to the plateau (site HK 23B).⁵ The evidences of human actions connected to these fallen boulders are part of a complex setting of ceremonial actions which left behind their traces. This trail also does not reach the plateau but ends up just a few hundred meters before. It was recently managed for the use of visitors, altering the original trail which, luckily, had been previously documented.

Other boulders that had cleaved away from the mountain and tumbled down its slopes, have received special attention. Sometimes human actions helped nature by engraving on them signs that may be identified as eyes, or other physical features. Stone circles or stone heaps were created around some of these boulders. In a few cases, worn paths lead directly to them and/or turn around them.⁶

As regards the conceptual roots of this contexts of fallen boulders, considering analogous cases in recent tribal societies, we may suppose that animistic concepts attributed them immaterial faculties (Anati, 2018b).

⁵ For the full illustration of the mentioned monuments see Anati, 2022.

⁶ For the full illustration of the mentioned monuments see Anati, 2022.



Fig. 4a. Group of fallen boulders, along the eastern trail between the Paran Desert and the mountain plateau. One of them, with a heap of stones at its foot, is surrounded by a circle of stones. Only one out of several boulders in the same area received special attention. Its natural shapes were artificially enhanced. (Site HK 106d; Photo EA99 XVIII-19).

Fig. 4b. Boulder with an anthropomorphic face, partially natural, completed by human scratching. (Site HK 106d; Photo EA99 XVIII-20).



Figs. 5 a, b. A stone positioned along the trail leading to the mountain plateau from the western valley. It displays the engraved image of a worshipper with an abstract sign next to it. Worshipping what? Although we do not know the meaning of the vertical sign, this image is strong in its simplicity, reflecting an essential concept. (Site HK2; ISR82: EA-1).



Fig. 6. Large boulder surrounded by a heap of stones. It is located near a courtyard site of the BAC period. The form of an anthropomorphic face is natural though the eyes may have been accentuated by scraping. (Site HK 122; photo EA93: XLIII-30).

4. Private Shrines

Private shrines are simple stone structures though each one is different from the other. Most of them consist of a main standing pillar or a boulder, often less than 1 m. high, surrounded by smaller stones. Twenty-four private shrines are concentrated in a limited area in the northern sector of the plateau. Each one seems to have been created by one or two people at most, as individual actions, likely for private use.

The main stone has anthropomorphic features, such as a vague resemblance to a human face. Sometimes,



Fig. 7. One of the “private shrines”. A vertical stone leans against a rock. A series of stones form a small repository in front of the pillar, where a few flint implements were recorded. To the right of the structure is a collection of stones having natural shapes resembling human faces. They were obviously brought and collected there by human hands. (Site HK 13; photo EA96; VI-18).



Fig. 8. A private sanctuary with a rounded orthostat resembling an anthropomorphic face. Eyes have been enhanced by intentional carving. Also, the upper round edge was artificially shaped. The orthostat is part of a semi-circular row of stones. At the interior some small lining stone were probably once set in a vertical position. (Site BK 776; photo EA91: LXVII-26).

the anatomical details were enhanced, by the engraving of eyes. Another common element of these mini-sanctuaries is a contiguous basin, a crater or a large cup-stone.

Tribes in India, Central Asia and Siberia, help the soul of ancestors and other deceased or imaginary beings to enter a standing stone as their new ‘body’, thereby allowing people to address to them through their assigned stone (Anati, 2020b). This may be one of the possible conceptual functions of these private shrines. A different kind of private shrine consists of a small circle of flat stones set vertically which may measure around 1-2m in diameter, within which there are a few neatly aligned stones about 15 to 25 cm. high. Related to it, is a flat area, just a few square meters, clean of stones and surrounded by rows of small stones. The first one was found as the corner of the stone basement of a rectangular building in site 1b at the foot of the mountain, which did not provide any dating element. In other sites, like BK776 and BK607b, similar clusters of small stones are related to BAC flint implements.

In previous publications it has been suggested, that the small row of stones in the inner circle may identify with what the Bible calls *terafim*, or ‘family idols’: stone (or wooden?) objects that embody family progenitors or spirits (*Genesis 31:19-36*). Sort of *churinga* of deceased ancestors (Anati, 2018b).

What all of them have in common is their roughly similar elongated shape and size, and the fact that they are found in small groups. The idea that these



Fig. 9. A small circle of stones placed in the corner of a vaguely rectangular enclosure. Inside the circle are four stones in a line. This kind of structure including rows of small stones is found both on the mountain plateau and in the western valley (Site HK1b; photo: ISR 84: XLIV-14).

“*terafim*” stones may have had something painted on them cannot be discounted, but so far does not find a convincing confirmation.

The private shrines are an elusive aspect of desert archaeology, hardly noticeable. They are however a meaningful phenomenon of individual ceremonial behavior. Their implications contrast with the concept that ceremonies and other religious expressions must be socially shared events. These small structures are built for individual functions, reflecting an intimate mystic relation between the worshipper and his stones.

5. Anthropomorphic Stones

Stones with natural shapes of anthropomorphic (and rarely zoomorphic) heads were heaped or assembled in as many as 77 sites out of which 50 on the plateau and in the western valley. In 24 out of 50 cases, these collections of anthropomorphic stones are located in or near BAC structures, or related to BAC flint implements.

In site HK 173c three large flat stones were placed vertically against each other to form a sort of table or ‘altar’. Upon it there was an anthropomorphic stone. A semi-circle of small stones at their foot had BAC flint tools, two scrapers and two blades: some action was performed and the used tools were left on the spot.

In another case (site HK 130E), a stone with a natural shape of an animal head was located at the center of an



Fig. 10. A standing stone has two small carved dots, likely to represent eyes. It is related to a basin-stone. Such basin-stones are usually found near anthropomorphic pillars and in private shrines. (Site HK 214b; photo EA91: XX-31).



Fig. 11. A standing stone with eyes artificially scraped. A rough circle of smaller stones surrounds it. (Site HK 7b; photo EA96: XVIII-33).



Fig. 12. An anthropomorphic stone with man-made schematic brows and nose. (Site HK 23b; photo EA93: XV-24; E.A. 1994, fig.26).

anthropomorphic geoglyph, probably as a sort of offering to the entity drawn in pebbles on the ground.⁷

At site HK 146B a zoomorphic stone representing an ibex or other wild goat, displays small rounded horns, eyes and mouth. These various details have been produced or enhanced by human hands. There is an area paved with flat stones in front of it.

Anthropomorphic standing stones are sometimes surrounded by circles of stones and in a few cases, these display traces of having been affected by fire. Flint implements are often found at the base of these standing stones.

In one case, an anthropomorphic stone, shaped as a

⁷ As in other cases, for the full description and illustration of the mentioned monuments see Anati, 2022. Regrettably, this article could only include a limited number of illustrations.



Fig. 13. Deeply eroded rock displaying the shape of a monstrous face, with eyes, nose and a large mouth. This anthropomorphic stone is near the BAC sanctuary of site HK 1b. (Site HB 1b; photo EA96: I-24).



Figs. 14 a, b. Anthropomorphic stone of a human face in an unusual naturalistic style. It is heavily worn by the action of wind carrying sand, as other anthropomorphic stones. On the forehead of the image, the figure of an antelope or ibex is carved. It is likely to represent a divinity or another mythological figure. (Site HK 64b; drawing: HK Archive; photo EA93; XIX-9).

head in a particularly naturalistic style, has the engraving of a caprine on its forehead (Site HK 64B). It was suggested that it might be the image of the moon god Sin (Anati, 2017).

All these various expressions of anthropomorphic stone have in common their having natural shapes that caused men to collect them and often correct or complete their natural features. Also, they are usually found in groups. Some of the private shrines also have a small collection of anthropomorphic stones. In other cases, anthropomorphic stones are located near paved platforms or near basin-stones.

This widespread phenomenon of collecting stones with an anthropomorphic natural shape is the effect of a peculiar aspect of animistic conception: attributing an *anima* or soul to inanimate matter. The resemblance to human features was not seen as a pure coincidence, it was considered to reveal the *anima* of the stone. Physical shapes were considered to be indicators of the intangible contents of the container (Anati, 2020c, see chapter on animism).

6. Menhirs and Stone Circles

Standing pillars, or menhirs, are found isolated, in alignments, in clusters or in circles, on the plateau and in the surrounding valleys. In a few cases rock engravings are located at the bases of these pillars, representing abstract signs and caprines, mainly ibexes.



Fig. 15. A cluster of standing pillars at the foot of the summit of Har Karkom. In the foreground is a large stone basin. (Site HK 212d; photo EA96: XXII-21)



Fig. 16. A row of standing stones. A large round basin in partly visible in the foreground. (Site BK552a; photo EA96:X-25, 26).

Most of these erected pillars are not monumental, being 0.5-1.5m high. When they are in clusters, one is usually larger than the others. For these monuments, their builders preferred to select stones with natural anthropomorphic shapes, and some details, such as eyes, were sometimes added or enhanced.

The erection of pillars must have been a frequent ceremony. Not all of them may have had the same meaning and purpose. In the Bible, these standing stones are known as *masseboth* (singular *massebah*), frequently translated as ‘pillar’, as in *Genesis 28:22* “...and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house ...”. Yes: a standing stone is considered to be God’s house even in the Bible.

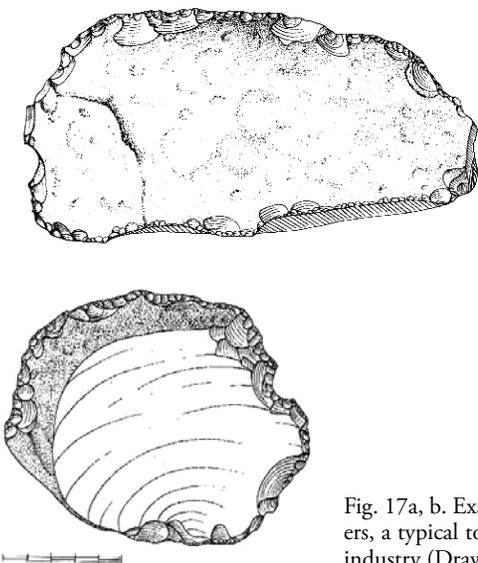


Fig. 17a, b. Examples of fan scrapers, a typical tool of the BAC flint industry (Drawings by IM).

7. Testimonial Tumuli

Over 80 tumuli are spread around the surrounding valleys and in the slopes of the mountain. But strangely enough, large areas of the plateau are totally void of tumuli.

Some of them had a funerary function, others turned out to be testimonial heaps, likely to commemorate agreements and events. As described in the Pentateuch, such monuments, named *gal-ed* (literally translated as: testimonial heap), were erected to commemorate an event, as a record of an agreement, or as a special dedication (*Genesis 31:43-54; Joshua 7:25-26* and *8:28-29*). A funerary tumulus (Site HK48a), was the burial of a child and had a vertical pillar on its top. Another of the excavated funerary tumuli (site HK 22) sheltered a cyst grave, a small receptacle defined by vertical flat slabs.



Figs. 18 a, b. A tumulus in the northern sector of the plateau. It has a short corridor facing a standing stone engraved with the image of an ibex with idealized rounded horns. The tumulus appears to be dedicated to this image. The excavation did not find any trace of burial or anything else: just a heap of stones with a shaped access corridor to the stone with the image of the ibex. (Site HK 32b; photo HK VII-3, Anati Archive).



Fig. 19 a, b. A tumulus along the trail leading from the western valley to the plateau (Site HK6a) A circle of dark stones was filled in with white stones. A black stone on top of the tumulus had the engraving of 6 circles. The white stones were removed in the course of excavations. The black stones turned out to be a stone circle built on the mother rock. An irregularly shaped square stone, on the base rock in the middle of the circle, displayed signs of fire. (Site HK6a; photo: EA99: XXIV-11).

The grave included a few flint blades, a bone bead and fragments of a pottery jar of a type known as metallic-ware, from the late third millennium BC. The bones of an adult were not in an anatomical position. The long bones of legs and arms were laid together, which implies a secondary burial, that is, the bones had been collected and relocated after the body decomposed.

Secondary burials are reported in the Bible in connection to the narrations about the Patriarchs and Moses. According to the narrative, the bones of the Patriarchs were transported from Egypt and buried in the land of Canaan (Genesis: 49: 29- 30; Genesis 50:13-14; Exodus 13:19). This habit of secondary burials is evidenced by archaeology in the third millennium BC. This may indicate an old tradition behind the cited biblical narratives. (Anati 2018a, see chapter “*The Age of Exodus*”, pp. 293-230).

A peculiar testimonial tumulus was excavated along the trail leading from the western valley to the plateau (Site HK6a). It is located at the very point at which the top of Har Karkom becomes visible for the first time while ascending the trail, a fact which may not be a mere coincidence. A circle of dark stones was filled in with white stones. A dark stone engraved with six circles was on top of the tumulus.

The white stones were removed during the excavations. The dark stones turned out to be a stone circle built on the mother rock. An irregularly shaped square stone was in the middle of the circle, lying on the base rock. Besides a few heavy artificial flaking, its form appeared to be natural. Signs of fire indicate that something had been burned on the square stone and at its foot. The only findings of material culture found on the altar-stone was a fan scraper, a typical tool of the BAC culture.

The hypothesis of reconstruction is that the altar stone was brought in and positioned by the side of the trail leading to the plateau. The choice of location may be related to the landscape and arguably to the first sight of the mountain top for those climbing the trail. One can see the top of the mountain for the first time just there!

The altar was then surrounded with a stone circle of black stones. Some sort of ceremony took place, which included the use of fire. The flint tool was left on the spot. Thereafter the circle of black stones was filled in by white stones, covering the altar, and probably, whatever else that was not preserved. The black stone



Fig. 20a, b, c. The tumulus on the prominent protrusion of the eastern edge of the plateau. The excavations unearthed a rectangular altar-stone on top of which was lying a tabular white stone intentionally modeled as a semi-circle, likely representing a crescent moon (Site HK87a, Anati Archive).

with the carving of the six circles was then positioned on top of the tumulus.

Another stone tumulus was excavated in the eastern border of Har Karkom (site HK 87a). It is located on a prominent protrusion of Har Karkom, on the edge of the eastern precipice, and its profile can be seen for miles in the reaches of the Paran Desert. On top of the tumulus there was a black stone having a natural zoomorphic or monstrous shape.

In the course of the excavation, a rectangular monolith emerged, positioned on the ground rock. Spots on the stone were traces of fire. The possible use of hallucinogenic plants in these fires remains a hypothesis (Samorini, 1986).

On top of the rectangular altar stone, there was a BAC flint fan scraper, and a white, calcareous, tabular stone which had been intentionally modeled into a semi-circle (a crescent moon?).⁸

It should be noted that in both this case and the previously described one, the altar had a natural square shape. In both cases, a flint fan scraper was left behind on the spot where it had been used. What they may have done with a scraper is unclear. Other kinds of tools were necessary for the shaping of the half-moon stone.

From the external shape it is not always possible to

⁸ Size of the moon-stone: sixty centimeters long, eight to ten centimeters thick and weighing 44 kg. The kind of stone is not local of the spot.



Fig. 21a, b. Four paved platforms are located near a hamlet site in the Wadi Karkom valley, north of the mountain. Each one has an altar looking east, toward the mountain profile. Aerial view and detail of the largest platform having a diameter of 15m. (Site BK426a. Photo EA90: VIII-9 and EA99: XXXV-10).

guess the function of the tumulus, as testimonial tumuli and burial tumuli apparently look alike. Also, as we have seen, testimonial tumuli may have different functions. One could be dedicatory to the moon or to the ibex, another may just be commemorative of an event, like the first sight of the top of the mountain. Excavating the over 80 of them on record, would probably provide additional information.

8. Platforms

Platforms paved with gravels, are present in the western and northern valleys and along the Wadi Karkom between Har Karkom and Beer Karkom. The survey recorded them in 13 sites, also in groups of two and four platforms near to each other. They are related to

both, courtyard sites and hamlet sites. Most of these platforms have a stone structure, a sort of table or altar, on one side.⁹

Two sites of platforms are particularly spectacular, although both, the kind of the platforms and their functions, are different. In site BK426 four paved platforms in a row each have a built structure, likely an altar, looking east, facing the profile of Har Karkom. They are near a hamlet site. These platforms, being just about 20 to 30 cm above the surrounding soil, were probably covered by a level of beaten earth. They were floors surrounding the altar on three sides. The function of these platforms may be assumed to be some sort of ritual ground for the altar or sacrificial

⁹ For full descriptions see Anati and Mailland, 2009.

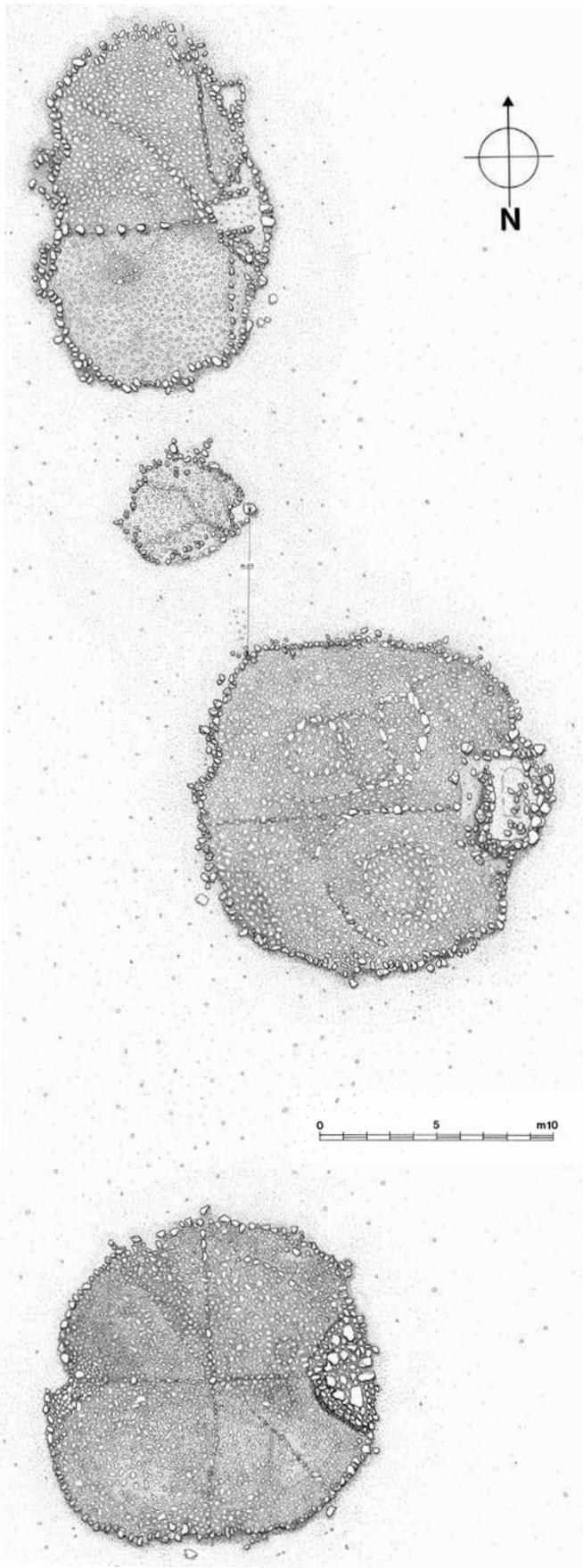


Fig. 21c. Plan of the four platforms. The orientation of the altars in the direction of the mountain top is repeated also in other monuments. (Site 426a. Plan by GC).

structure. A curious fact is that four such platforms are near to each other. They have different sizes, the largest having a diameter of about 15m. They form a ceremonial compound where different groups of people could have each had their own platform.

Another group of four stone platforms is located on top of a peak, overlooking the Paran Desert, forming a sort of tail to Har Karkom, c. 2.5km south of the main plateau (site HK 301). They do not have an altar and differ from those just described. They are flat platforms but more elevated from the ground. The largest is 10 m in diameter. Similar platforms are known from the archaeological excavations of Early Bronze settlements of fertile areas, such as Megiddo or Arad, though they may not necessarily have had the same functions.

The few lithic implements in this site are all from the BAC period. One of these platforms was excavated down to the bedrock. No burial or other remains were found. The filling was just stones. The top of these platforms had stones cemented together (actually melted) due to powerful fire. They were described as burned platforms.

Traces of large fires were also found on the Har Karkom plateau. It seems that fire had an important role on both, the Paran mountain and the Har Karkom plateau, where there are no traces of the necessary wood or other resources for such fires. On the plateau no similar stone platforms have been found. The burned platforms, as other traces of burned surfaces, may have been the base for producing fire and smoke visible from miles away.

The described platforms are of two different kinds and had different functions. Those on the Paran mountain are related to ceremonial fires. Various questions remain unsolved: what kind of flammable material could have been used. And, what was the purpose of these fires from the top of the mountain?¹⁰

The platforms with the altar-like structure found in the western and northern valleys and in the valley of Wadi Karkom, may have had ceremonial cult functions. The size of some of them, and the fact that several platforms form a compound, imply the social role of the events they hosted.

¹⁰ For details see Anati 2022.



Fig. 22a, b. The four burned platforms of the Paran mountain. A circular area between the two major platforms, on the top of the mountain, has a peculiar arrangement of small stones, likely related to social or ceremonial activities. (Site HK 301; photos EA98: IV-4; ISR 86: XXXIV-14, ISR 86 EA XXXIX-14).

9. Temples and Sanctuaries

In the vast flat area of the northern sector of Har Karkom plateau, the only existing stone structure includes a courtyard, a paved room to the west and a stone platform, likely an altar, to the east, facing the mountain summit (Site HK 24). Two pillars are to the right of the altar platform. The site, nick-named the Midianite Temple, has been described in previous publications (Anati, 2017). Small heaps of stones and rock engravings surround it, including footprints oriented toward the top of the mountain.¹¹

The only other built structure on the mountain is located in the northern edge (Site 7a). The site was nick-named the House of the Warden, because of its dominant position overlooking two of the main access trails to the mountain plateau. For those coming along these trails it is the gate of the plateau. Several heaps of stones are around this structure. One of these heaps was excavated and nothing was found. It was not a burial, it was just a heap of stones. A few small stone circles are adjacent to the main building. One of them was excavated and only a few BAC flint implements were found. Part of the building, which was first considered to be the base of a tower, appears to be an elevated platform. Tentatively it is considered to be a cult site although its function is not clear.¹²

In the valleys at the foot of the mountain several sites include structures considered to be shrines. Four of them, respond to a typology named “spiral-sanctuaries”, because of their planimetry. They are related to courtyard sites (Anati, 2021). A spiral wall leads to a courtyard where a small elevated platform raises in front of a standing pillar. In one of these spiral-sanctuaries (site HK54), traces of fire are present on the stones of the platform and in a fireplace in the middle of the courtyard. It was the location of the largest flint scraper found in the area, weighting over 5 kg., likely a ritual, not functional tool.

Near a BAC living site, at the foot of the mountain, there is a group of twelve pillars. They are organized in two rows of six each, arranged in front of a stone platform, an altar with a vertical stone having a lunate, sharp cutting upper edge (site HK 52). When

¹¹ For practical reasons, different sites were given nick-names by the expedition's members. These names have no exegetic implications.

¹² As in other cases, for the full description and illustration of the mentioned monuments see Anati, 2022.

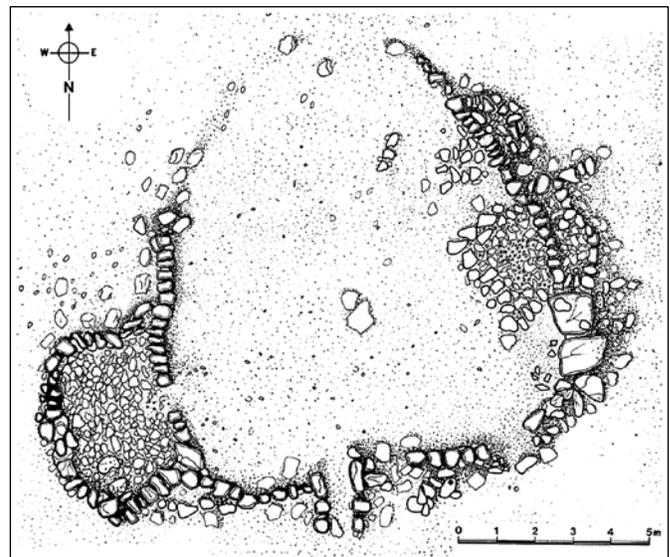


Fig. 23a, b. The so-called “Midianite Temple” on the plateau. (Site HK24; aerial photo EA93: XXXI-12. Plan by GC).

this monument was found in 1983 it brought to our mind for the first time the hypothesis that there may be a connection between Har Karkom and the biblical Mount Sinai, due to a surprising coincidence.

This site recalls the biblical passage referring to Moses in *Exodus* 24:4: “[...] he rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and put up twelve pillars, for the twelve tribes of Israel”. An altar and 12 pillars actually are at the foot of Har Karkom, near the remains of a Bronze Age camping site. The first reaction was: “Too evident to be true!”. Nevertheless, the coincidence had to be recorded.

The plateau of Har Karkom has two summits. One is narrow and long, the other is rounded. The narrow



Fig. 24. Rock engraving of an ibex and foot prints at the foot of the summit of Har Karkom. The foot prints are seen as a sign of worship of the ibex. The position of the engraving, just at the foot of the summit, looking at the summit, awakens queries about the possible relation between the ibex and the mountain. (Site HK38; photo ISR84: XX-37).



Figs. 26a. General view of the paved altar and the 12 pillars at the foot of the mountain. (Site HK 52; photo ISR 84: XXXIII-22).

Fig. 26b. A close up of the stone in the center of the front side of the paved altar. It is deeply buried into the soil. Its upper part has a crescent-shaped sharp edge. The base of the stone is about 40 cm. (Site HK 52; photo ISR 84: XXXVII-30).

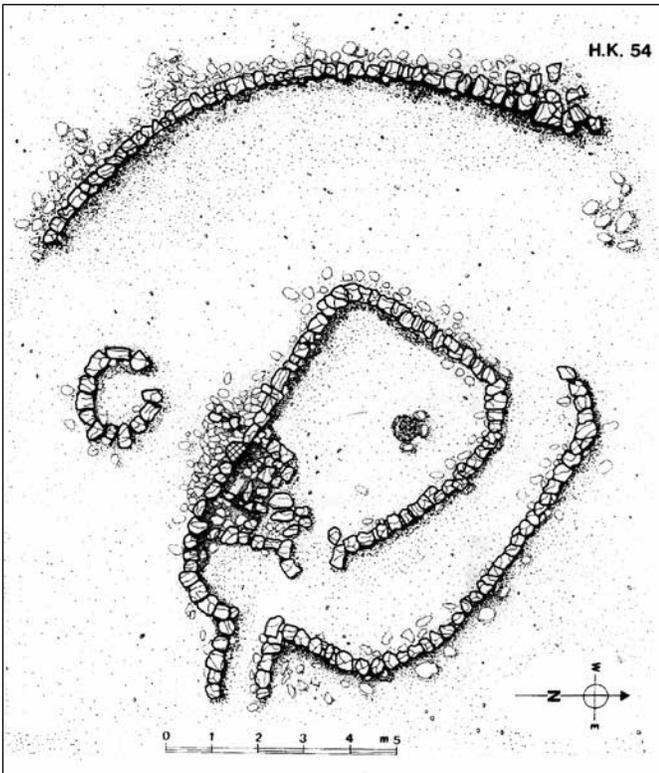


Fig. 25. Plan of a spiral sanctuary in the western valley, at the foot of the mountain. In the internal courtyard an orthostat leans against the wall, in front of it is a rectangular platform. Remains of a fireplace are the middle of the courtyard. (Site HK 54; plan by GC; cf. EA. 1984, fig.41. HK Arc).

and long summit, named Male Summit (Site HK40) has, as the only presence of human action, a standing pillar and three short rows of stones. There are no hints for their dating. The more rounded summit, named Female Summit (Site HK42), has a small stone circle (diameter ca 1,70 m.) and a row of stones (ca. 4 m. long). Again, there are no hints for their dating. It is not clear whether they could be considered geoglyphs, thus drawings on the surface: a circle and a line possibly are symbolizing female and male.

The summits of a mountain full of shrines and sanctuaries, was left practically untouched. We did not find there a cathedral, though it might have been the holiest place of a holy mountain.

There is also a small natural little cave (c. 1.1 m. high



Fig. 27a. Aerial view of the two summits of Har Karkom named by the expedition, the male and the female summits, because of their shapes. The male summit has a standing pillar; the female summit has a small cave. (Sites HK 41 and 42; photo EA95: CVI-219).

Fig. 27b. A view of the summit with the entrance to the small cave (Site HK 42; photo EA 93: XX-28).

and 1.6 m. deep). The presence of the rock shelter on the summit of a mountain is a rather unique feature for a mountain in this region and again it recalls a biblical text. The book of Exodus describes a similar detail on the top of Mount Sinai (*Exodus* 33:21- 22). It is a topographical characteristic that the Bible attributes to Mount Sinai.

Though archaeology does not have the purpose nor the ability to verify visions, revelations or miracles, the

reference to topographical elements can be relevant. The biblical text indicates the tradition of the presence of a cleft of the rock on the top of Mount Sinai. We have no knowledge of any other mountain in the Sinai Peninsula, having a cleft on its top. Again, it could be a mere coincidence.¹³

The lack of any structure on the summits is intriguing.

¹³ For full description see Anati 2022.

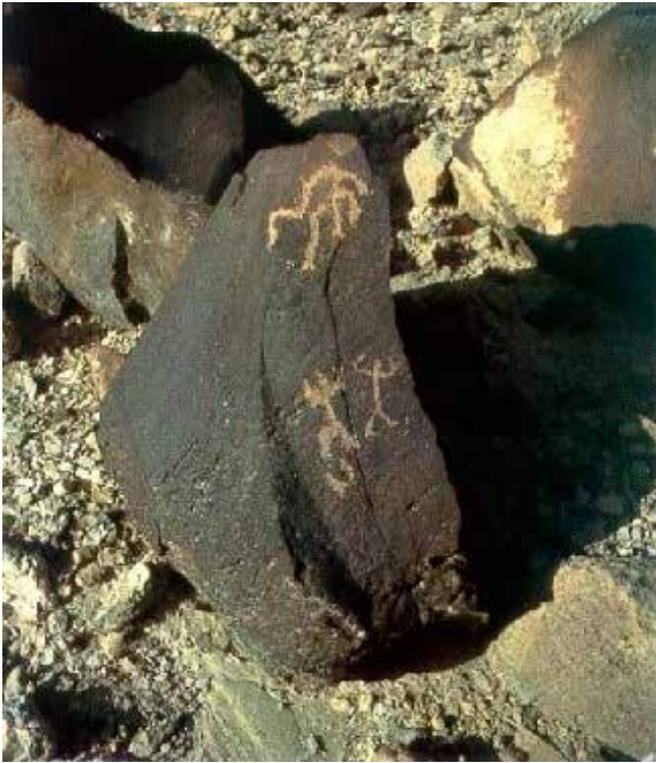


Fig. 29. A rock engraving representing a worshipper wearing a ceremonial dress with a prominent collar. It is engraved on the edge of a fracture of the rock and likely related to it. It appears to be masked or to have an animal face with two horns or other protrusions on the head. Below the left arm, an ideogram could indicate his identity or the signature of the engraver. On his right, an ibex with a lighter patina, was later added in a less refined technique. This second phase provides the image of the ibex in front of the worshipper. Likely originally his worshipping was intended to something else. The added ibex modified the original concept, creating a scene of worship of the ibex which was not the intent of the first engraving. (Site HK 36; tracing HK Arc; ref. photo 95-XXVI-5).



Fig. 28a, b. Engravings of worshippers on a black rock alongside the access trail from the western valley. This stone is engraved with two worshipping figures beneath an abstract engraving, possibly representing the object of worship. At the foot of the worshippers there is a U-shaped ideogram, likely the signature of the engraver or other indicator. (Site HK 3b; photo ISR 82 C-16).

Equally puzzling is the fact that most of the cult sites on the plateau are concentrated in the northern sector, while half of the plateau is void of any built structure: there are no BAC archeological traces south of the summits, with the exception of a few anthropomorphic stones likely to have been positioned in the BAC period. Also, BAC rock art is practically absent in the same sector. The area has Paleolithic stations and the Paleolithic shrine, but no BAC remains. Could we advance the hypothesis that what was considered to be the most sacred areas of a holy mountain were left untouched by material interventions? Could the empty areas be the *sancta sanctorum*?

The landscape in this gently sloping, almost shapeless area, void of any visible archeological remain, is that of the endless view of the desert around, the two tops of the mountain in a corner and just the immensity of a dominant sky. At night, the emptiness around, under a sky crowded with stars, may provoke an even stronger psychological effect. The significance of emptiness is not always evident to researchers of material evidence and the desert scenery invites reflections on the intangible contents of space.

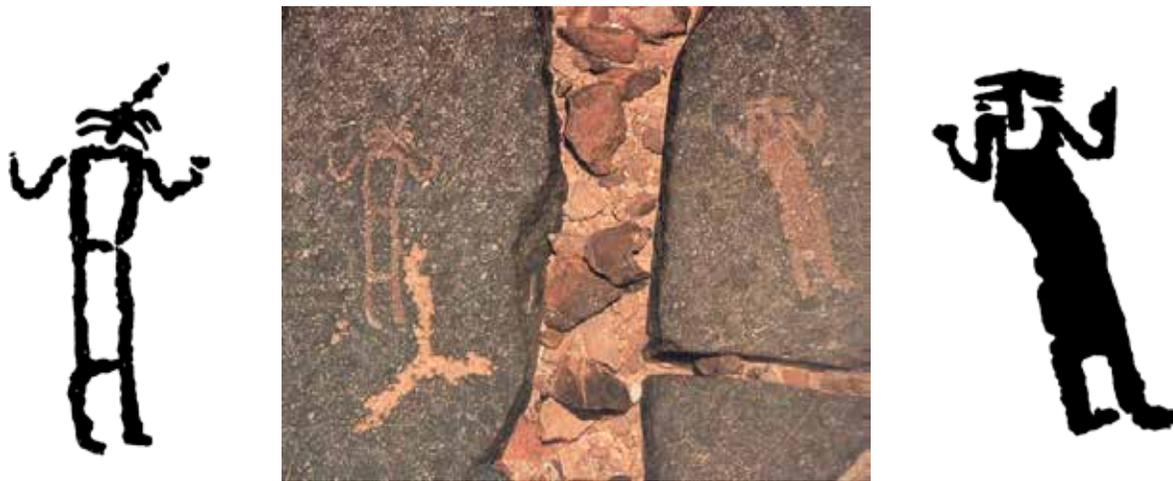


Fig. 30a, b, c. Two masked or imaginary anthropomorphic figures are in a worshipping posture by the sides of a fissure in the rock. One of them has the body fully pecked while the other has it outlined. This difference may have a meaning. Who are they? And what is the meaning of the rock fissure? Is something expected to come out of it? Or is it a channel of communication with what the rock is supposed to hide? This rock engraving, as many others, is evidencing the relationship of the man-made images to the natural shapes of the rock surface. The engraving with a lighter patina is a later addition. (Site HK45g Anati Archive).

10. Conclusions

The cult sites considered in the present paper cover a period of 2500 years. Some of them are older than others and, undoubtedly, they belong to different social and ethnic groups. The possible relation between types of living sites at the foot of the mountain and type of cult sites on the plateau, despite some indications mentioned in previous texts, may require further thinking (Anati, 2017).

What happened in this mountain? Time neither preserves the sound of music nor the voices of worshippers. Only stone structures were preserved and, no less relevant, empty spaces in a crowded environment. Sometimes stones may 'talk' to us with their silent voices, revealing bits of their story and function. Also, the empty spaces may convey their silent voices.

Menhirs, geoglyphs, tumuli, altar-like structures and paved platforms, remains of shrines and temples, groups of anthropomorphic stones, ritual trails leading to the mountain plateau and to altars and to boulders, alignments and clusters of standing monoliths and a major concentration of Bronze Age rock art, indicate that Har Karkom was a paramount cult site. Different people with different beliefs and cult practices left their traces.

All these apparently non-utilitarian structures constitute a rather unique concentration of cult and worship remains. One of the emerging questions is: why just

this mountain? It is neither the highest nor the easiest to be reached, and might well have been, yesterday as it is today, one of the poorest areas of water and other living resources of the entire Sinai Peninsula. We do not know how so many people, as evidenced by the living sites, could have survived in this area.

As we have seen, Har Karkom was a sacred mountain for millennia, and its religious activities reached a peak in the third millennium BC. The hamlet sites, plaza sites, courtyard sites, row sites and other camping sites at the foot of the mountain, bear testimony of the massive presence of human groups (Anati 2021). They represent different cultural entities, even though all of them are concentrated at the foot of the same mountain. The plateau had no living quarters in the BAC period, it was a sacred ground likely accessible only to a limited number of privileged people.

Har Karkom is a significant source of information concerning the Bronze age tribal world described in the biblical book of Exodus. However, most of the altars, platforms, private sanctuaries, shrines, temples and standing pillars do not provide direct information about the ancestral spirits or divinities to which they may have been dedicated, or about the kinds of rituals and worship performed there.

Among other considerations, a relevant element emerges regarding the biblical narrations of Exodus, supposed they have a historical base. All the differ-



Fig. 30. Traces of large fires are present on the plateau of Har Karkom. In this photo, the light area surrounded by black area is where the pyre was standing. The size of the pyre was ca 10 x12 m. Traces of minor fires are all over. What may have been the fuel? And what the purpose? Such fires would be seen from considerable distance. The edges of the mountain have deep crevices. Still today, large rock boulders are detaching and fall down along the edges of the plateau. This often happens at night or early morning, making the noise and the vibrations of an earthquake. Crevices and large breaks along the edges of Har Karkom seem to explain the biblical name *Har Horeb* which means 'mountain in the process of collapsing' (Photo ISR84: LVI-13).

ent peoples and tribes encountered by the Israelites: Midianites, Amalekites, Edomites, Horites, Amorites and others, could not have lived in the area in the period of heavy drought that traditional biblical studies attribute to the events of Exodus. If indeed such events took place, and if these tribes were present at that time, their traditionally accepted dating is unlikely. The relation of the Exodus to the Raamse-side period, and even to the entire Late Bronze Age, requires serious rethinking. Despite the different opinion of biblical scholars, if the biblical Exodus

relies on historical memories, it could only relate to a chronological context of the end of the third millennium BC, as already amply discussed in previous publications (Anati, 1986, pp.255-256; 2017, pp. 205 to 222; 2018, pp.293-320).

Regarding a major issue considered in former studies, the cult sites alone do not identify Har Karkom as the biblical Mount Sinai, nor do all the other findings. They only indicate that during part of the Bronze Age Har Karkom was a holy mountain and a major center of gathering in the biblical desert of Exodus. Theoretically, similarities may simply be coincidences.

Nevertheless, if this is not the biblical Mount Sinai, it is legitimate to ask whether it is conceivable that the Bible would ignore such a site in the desert of Exodus. The Pentateuch defines and describes numerous sites; a sacred mountain with so many cult sites could hardly have been ignored by biblical texts. If it were not Mount Sinai, what other of the many sites mentioned could it be?

If this is the biblical Mount Sinai, the Bible tells us only a small portion of its story: the part concerning the people to whom the text was addressed. But the mountain has witnessed gatherings of different peoples. As analyzed elsewhere, the remains of their camping sites reveal the variety of their social and economic structures. Who were they? Are they related to the tribes and people mentioned in the biblical narration? (Anati, 2021).

Research does not confirm that miracles were witnessed in the shadow of this mountain, nor if the divine will was revealed on its heights. It has not even confirmed, so far, that the biblical children of Israel ever camped at its foot. All we can say is that Har Karkom, its location, its topography and some of its archeological remains, fit the biblical descriptions of Mount Sinai (Anati, 2013). Its social and spiritual role acquires the dimensions of what the findings brought to light. Whether the mythical stories did or did not take place is an issue of theology or faith, not of anthropology or archaeology.

The main purpose of the present paper is to awaken reflections on the variety of cult sites concentrated on this mountain and on its religious role in the Bronze Age. The fallen boulders were worshipped. Pillars, menhirs or standing stones were erected; they are non-functional structures related to cult practices.

Private shrines and anthropomorphic stones reveal the presence of concepts related to the cult of stones as recipients of spirits.

Most of the cult expressions concern ancestors, and animistic concepts of natural or supernatural powers. They reveal the wealth of intellectual adventures of desert people and pose new queries to the history of religion. A relevant fact is that the concept of god or of gods is almost missing, with the possible exception of an image which may represent the moon god Sin. Traces of big fires display their unexplained large size, we do not know what was their function or even what kind of fuel could have alimented them. Sacrificial altars are mute evidence, since we do not know what kind of sacrifices took place, to whom and for what. Many of the cult sites have stone basins likely used for offerings: we do not know what kind of offerings.

The rock art illustrates the cult of the ibex, the cult of the moon, the cult of the mountain, and the cult of cracks in the rocks. Some of the numerous images of the dog attacking the ibex may be just hunting scenes, others seem to refer to a myth. But we do not know what the canine and the ibex symbolized in these scenes. The relation of the rock engravings to the shapes of their rock surfaces may suggest a conceptual vision of the rock natural shapes as expressions of their immaterial content. The collections of anthropomorphic stones are a meaningful example of proto-art (Anati, 2020d). A few rock engravings, may hint at the cult of an abstract entity, represented by the strike of a simple line near the worshipper, or by conceptual ideograms above the worshippers.

The collected data are taking us to a trip in a conceptual world of diversified beliefs and practices all concentrated on one mountain and its surrounding valleys, a multifaceted spiritual world in the middle of nowhere. All this is just a preliminary gathering of data, which is further elaborated in a book form (Anati 2022). It is an introduction to the understanding of what may have happened on and around this mountain, densely crowded by cult sites, surrounded by a large number of living sites, in the deep heart of a deep desert, where nature is extremely miserly in survival resources. To the best of our knowledge, multitudes did not come here to gather material resources or to enjoy vacations. They came to the foot of the worshipped mountain whose heights, a holy

ground likely reserved to the high shamans, they were forbidden to ascend. Could it be that only the few ones, then allowed access to the plateau, knew secrets that present research has not yet unveiled?

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KARAKOL ROCK ART, KYRGYZSTAN: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PETROGLYPHS AND LANDSCAPE

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Animal depictions and their spatial distribution in the rock art of the Karakol Region (Chuy and Naryn Oblasts) in Kyrgyzstan

A. Location and research history

The Karakol Region of Kyrgyzstan is located 30–50 km south of Bishkek, 1,800–4,800 m asl in the Tien Shan Mountains. The north of the region is part of the Kyrgyz Ala-Too chain, while the south is attached to the Jungal Too chain. As several Kyrgyz valleys and towns are named Karakol, this region should not be confused with the town southeast of Lake Issyk-Kul nor with the valley in the Talas province in which rock art has also been documented (Hermann 2017).

The Karakol region can be divided into two main parts due to the fact that the eastern part of the region is separated from the western zone by the Karakol Ashuu pass (at 3,485 m high). The western zone touches the frontier of two Kyrgyz provinces: the Chuy and Naryn Oblasts. Both parts are crossed by a valley west–east oriented with the Karakol river Zapadny (western) Karakol in the western part and Vostochny (eastern) Karakol in the eastern zone. Furthermore, the western and eastern parts can be divided into northern and southern zones: numerous valleys oriented north–south or south–north are located north and south of both parts of the Karakol river. These valleys are still used by shepherds in the summer.

The rock art was done on moraines situated along wa-



Fig. 1. Kashka-Suu valley in the Karakol Region, Kyrgyzstan.

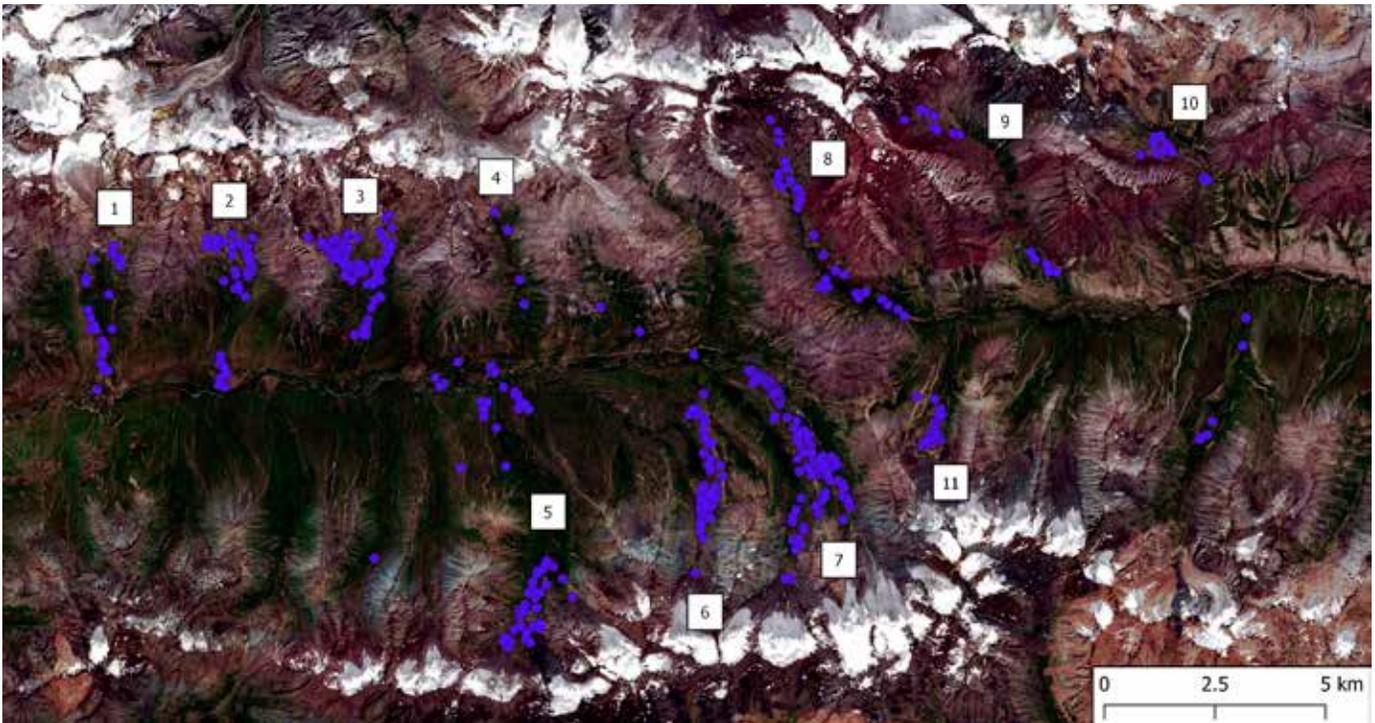


Fig. 2. Location map of the petroglyphs in the Karakol Region. 1. Kashka Suu valley; 2. Chaar Tash; 3. Chong Chikan; 4. Jor Bulak; 5. Kashka-Tor; 6. Takyr Tor; 7. Iiri-Suu and Sary-Kol; 8. Kara-Tor; 9. Pyty; 10. Dunguruma; 11. Jalak Tor.

tercourses 2,800–3,200 m asl, as well as on summer pastures at the valley summits 3,200–3,750 m just below glacial moraines (fig. 1). Ten main groups of petroglyphs were inventoried, as well as other disparate stones in different valleys (fig. 2).

Even though the region's rock art was well known to locals, no prospection had ever been carried out before a group of zoologists from Bishkek photographed and recorded with GPS many of the engraved rocks between 2015 and 2019. They recorded engraved rocks seen during expeditions carried out with the organizations Biosphere Expeditions and NABU in the Karakol Region while studying the snow leopard (Tytar *et al.* 2017). For this rock art documentation, Amadeus DeKastle, together with his colleague Marc Foggin, developed a smartphone application (Lapis Guides), so that local guides could also document engraved rocks: each photo is thus added to a database with GPS coordinates. Even if the documentation is not perfect (for example, absence of a scale on many pictures, lack of information on the orientation of the panels, or quality of the pictures), we should be grateful for their work to make local

populations aware of the importance of preserving the rock art heritage, as well as the creation of a database. A preliminary report about the results of their efforts was published in *INORA* in 2020 (Hermann *et al.* 2020).

B. Presentation of the petroglyphs groups

895 engraved rocks with 3,851 petroglyphs were documented in the Karakol region. The rock art is essentially concentrated in ten valleys with a total of 805 rocks with 3,504 engravings. Furthermore, 91 stones with 347 depictions were also disparately inventoried in ten small groups or on isolated stones over the whole region.

In the western Karakol Region, the main valleys with rock art are Kashka-Suu, Chaar-Tash, and Chong Chikan in the northern part and Kashka Tor, Takyr Tor, and Iiri Suu in the southern part. In the eastern Karakol Region, the main valleys with rock art are Kara-Tor, Pyty, and Dunguruma in the northern part and Jalak-Tor in the southern part.

The most important group is Iiri Suu with 229 rocks and 950 documented engravings located at 3,160–

3,570 m altitude. Chong Chikan is the second largest group with 162 rocks and 665 rock carvings, most of them situated 3,100–3,650 m altitude. Takyr Tor is the third group of importance, with 113 engraved rocks and 523 drawings located 3,180–3 510 m altitude. The most important groups and the main concentrations of petroglyphs are located in the western part. In comparison, the most important group in the eastern Karakol Region is Kara-Tor with 162 engravings on 54 rocks located at 3,000–3,750 m. Altogether, there are 763 rocks with 3,317 petroglyphs in West Karakol and only 132 rocks with 535 petroglyphs in East Karakol.

	Rocks	Engravings
Western part		
Kashka-Suu	36	190
Chaar-Tash	82	369
Chong Chikan	162	665
Kashka Tor	75	377
Takyr Tor	113	523
Iiri Suu	229	950
Others	66	242
Total	763	3316
Eastern part		
Kara-Tor	54	162
Pyty	12	77
Dunguruma	15	106
Jalak-Tor	26	85
Others	25	105
Total	132	535

This discrepancy in the total amount of petroglyphs in both parts is not only due to the fact that the prospected area in West Karakol covers c. 100 km², while it only covers c. 60 km² in East Karakol. Even if some valleys in the eastern part were less prospected during expeditions than in the western part because the base camp of the expeditions was in West Karakol, we observe that the documented valleys in East Karakol were poorer than in West Karakol in terms of quantity and the thematic diversity of petroglyphs. Valleys in West Karakol are often better suited for pasture than in the eastern zone, but also rocks in West Karakol are of better quality for engravings. Another plausible

explanation is that two of the three valleys in West Karakol with the main concentration of petroglyphs are Iiri Suu and Takyr Tor, which are directly located at the foot of the Karakol Ashuu pass, making these pastures ideal for travelers waiting to pass to the eastern zone. In contrary to this, on the other side of the pass, there is no ideal valley for spending time with livestock or herds. For this reason, the large number of petroglyphs in Iiri Suu and Takyr Tor could also be explained by the location at the foot of the pass and by their hospitable environment.

C. Themes of the rock art

Among the 3,851 documented engravings, animal depictions significantly dominate the repertoire with 3,570 petroglyphs (92.7%). Among the zoomorphic depictions, Caprinae (mostly domestic goats, but also some ibexes) are predominant with 2,870 depictions, that is, 80% of the animal drawings, followed by Canidae (dogs and wolves *Canis lupus*) which represent 6% of the animal petroglyphs (215 drawings). Other species such as camels (2.9%), horses (1.8%), deer (0.9%) or Felidae (0.4%) are marginal. However, among the 7% of the zoomorphs which could not be determined, most of them show features of horses, canids or felids, meaning that the average of these three species should probably be higher. There are also some



Fig. 3. Tamga and anthropomorph, 17th-19th centuries, Kashka-Tor.

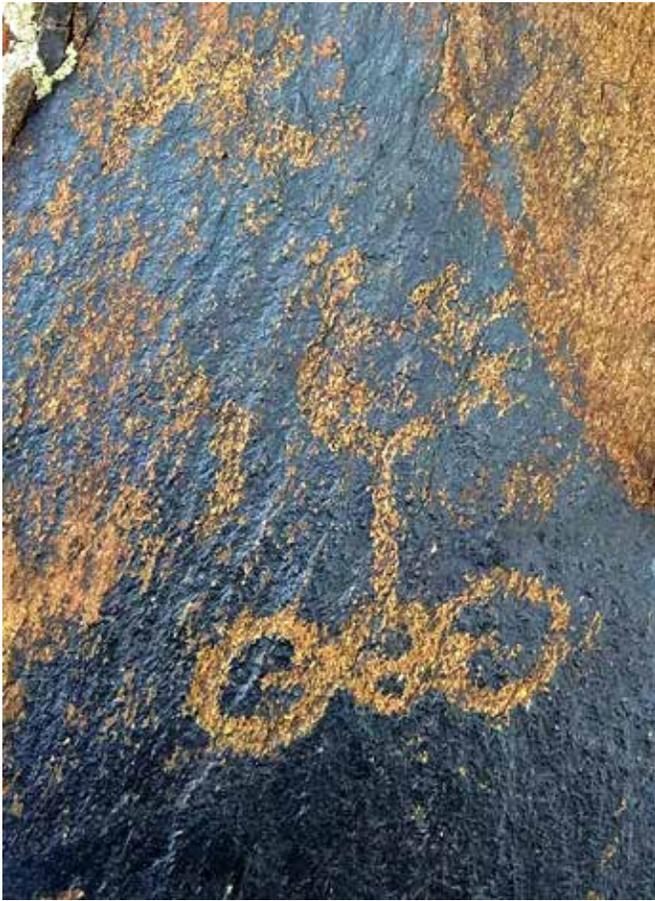


Fig. 4. Chariot, Turkic times?, Kashka-Tor.

animals in Karakol with only one or two depictions, such as bovids, birds, wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), or snakes. At other Central Asiatic sites, bovids usually constitute one of the main depicted species (Hermann 2020: 176-177).

Anthropomorphs are relatively rare (141 depictions, that is, 3.7% of the petroglyphs): 22 of them are riders on a horse and seven are riders on a camel. Riders are counted both as anthropomorphs and zoomorphs (horses or camels), thus the statistics could seem incorrect in terms of the total number of engravings. The 112 other anthropomorphs are present in hunting scenes or as isolated petroglyphs.

Signs or geometric lines which were impossible to interpret reach 80 depictions. There are additionally 36 *tamgas* (clan signs from the Turkic times and the Kyrgyz tribes) (fig. 3), 42 Cyrillic inscriptions, four podomorphic motifs, a chariot (fig. 4), a pattern of a yurt, likely one of a sword, two recent depictions of mountains, a Soviet star, and a sun.

D. Chronology of the engravings

The chronological attribution is a kind of interpretation based on a chronology of the rock art of Central Asia as established by many Russian and Kazakh archeologists (Baipakov *et al.* 2005; Beisenov and

	Bronze	Iron	Turkic	Kyrgyz	Undetermined	Total
Drawings	49	932	2,140	295	435	3,851
Animals	40	872	2,013	235	410	3,570
Human	6	48	76	4	7	141
Signs	3	15	36	7	19	80
Tamgas	0	0	33	3	0	36
Other subjects	0	0	7	46	0	53
Caprids	28	725	1,592	206	319	2,870
Canids	5	54	142	7	7	215
Deer	1	14	16	1	0	32
Camels	0	7	(mounted 7) 87	5	3	(mounted 7) 102
Horses	2	(mounted 3) 15	(mounted 18) 42	3	(mounted 1) 3	(mounted 22) 65
Bovids	0	1	1	0	0	2
Felids	0	9	7	0	0	16
Undetermined animals	4	46	124	13	78	265
Other animals	0	wild boar 1	snake, 1 bird 1	0	0	3



Fig. 5. Hunting scene, Bronze Age, Iiri Suu.



Fig. 6. Hunting scene, Iron Age, Dunguruma.



Fig. 7. Camel, Turkic times, Iiri Suu.



Fig. 8. Rock 386, Camels, Turkic times, East Karakol Region.



Fig. 9. Deer, 17th-19th centuries, Iiri Suu.

Maryashev 2014; Kasanov *et al.* 2017; Rogozhinskii *et al.* 2004; Rogozhinskii 2011; Samashev 2012; Sher 1980; Shvets 2012). The engravings can be dated by stylistic analogies with petroglyphs found on some stone slabs in Bronze Age tombs or with animal depictions on so-called deer stones and from jewelry found in Iron Age kurgans, but also with goat depictions on stone slabs from the Turkic period. For this period, the chronology was also established by the presence of tamgas or of runic inscriptions. However, in the Karakol Region, many depictions could not be attributed with certainty to a period due to the lack of specific stylistic elements. 435 petroglyphs (410 animals, among them 319 goats, and seven anthropomorphs) are for this reason undetermined. Most of the goats are probably from the Turkic

or the Kyrgyz period, but it was questionable to which of them they belong. It was also unclear to determine some other depictions between the Late Iron Age and the Turkic times.

Only 28 stones could be interpreted as being from the Late Bronze Age. There are 49 petroglyphs: 40 animals (28 caprines, five canids, two horses, a roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and four undetermined) and six anthropomorphs, some of them hunters (fig. 5).

For the Iron Age, 218 rocks with 932 petroglyphs were inventoried. Animals constitute 93.6% of the depictions (872 engravings). There are also 48 anthropomorphs, among them three horsemen. Caprines represent the majority of the bestiary with 725 depictions, that is, 83% of the zoomorphs (fig. 6). Furthermore, there are 54 canids (6%), 15 horses (1.7%), 14 deer,

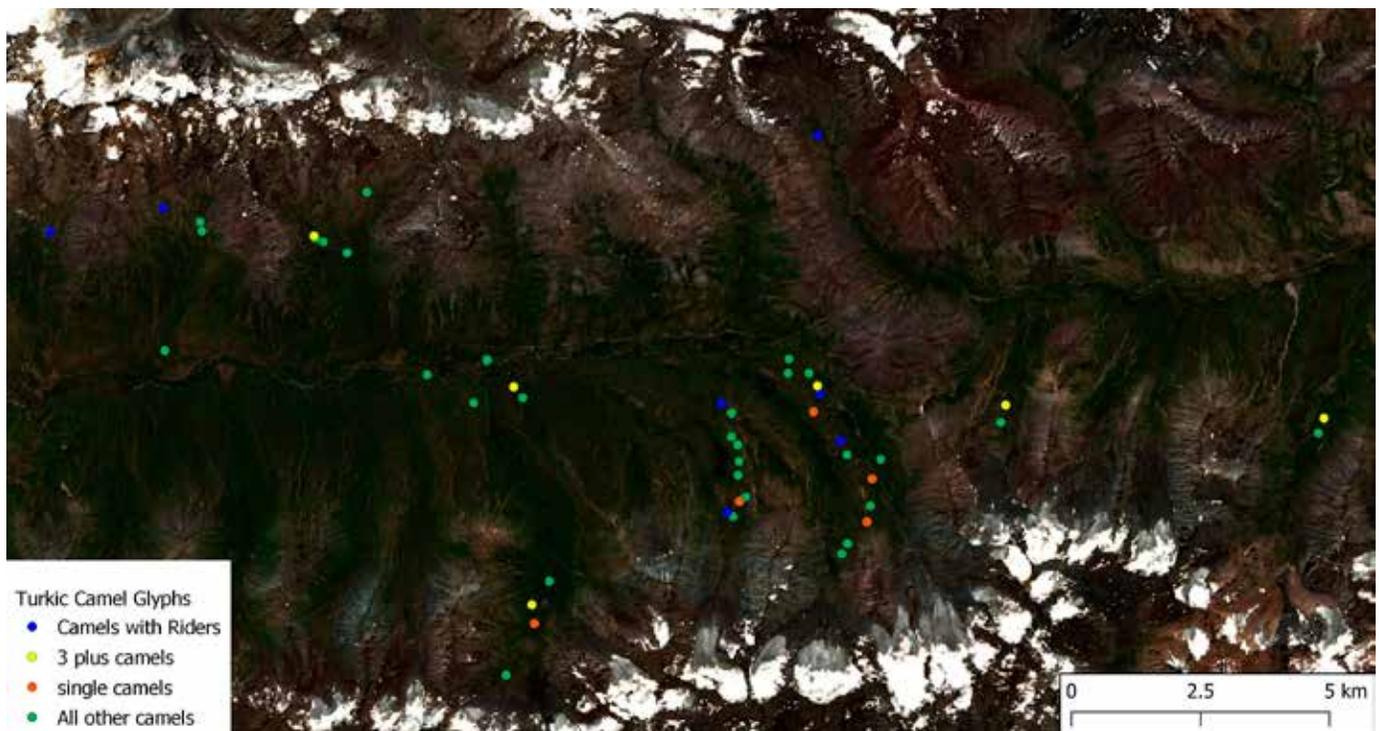


Fig. 10. Spatial distribution of the camels from Turkic times.

nine felines (probably snow leopards *Panthera uncia*), seven camels, a cow, a wild boar, as well as 46 undetermined animals (5.3%).

Concerning the Turkic medieval period, 2,140 engravings on 442 stones were documented. Once again, animals are dominant with 2,013 petroglyphs (94%). Furthermore, 76 anthropomorphs (including 18 horsemen and seven camel-riders), 33 *tamgas*, 36 undetermined signs, four podomorphic signs, a probable sword and a yurt can be attributed to this period. There is also a chariot depiction which seems to be from the Turkic times, but this question will be discussed in a further paper (fig. 4). Caprines make up 79% of the bestiary (1,592 petroglyphs), followed by 142 canids (7%), 87 camels (4%) (Figs. 7-8), 42 equids (including four donkeys), 16 deer, seven felines, a bull, a bird, and a snake. However, 124 zoomorphs could not be identified (6%). For this period, there is a higher proportion of camelids compared with the Iron Age (4% instead of 0.8%). The average of caprines is probably higher due to the fact that many caprines not attributed to a precise period are probably from the Turkic medieval period or the following one.

The Kyrgyz period (from the 16th century to the 20th century as a general time period (or ethnographic period) has 129 stones engraved with 295 petroglyphs: 235 animals (80%), 42 Cyrillic inscriptions from



Fig. 11. Rider on a camel, Turkic times, Iiri Suu.

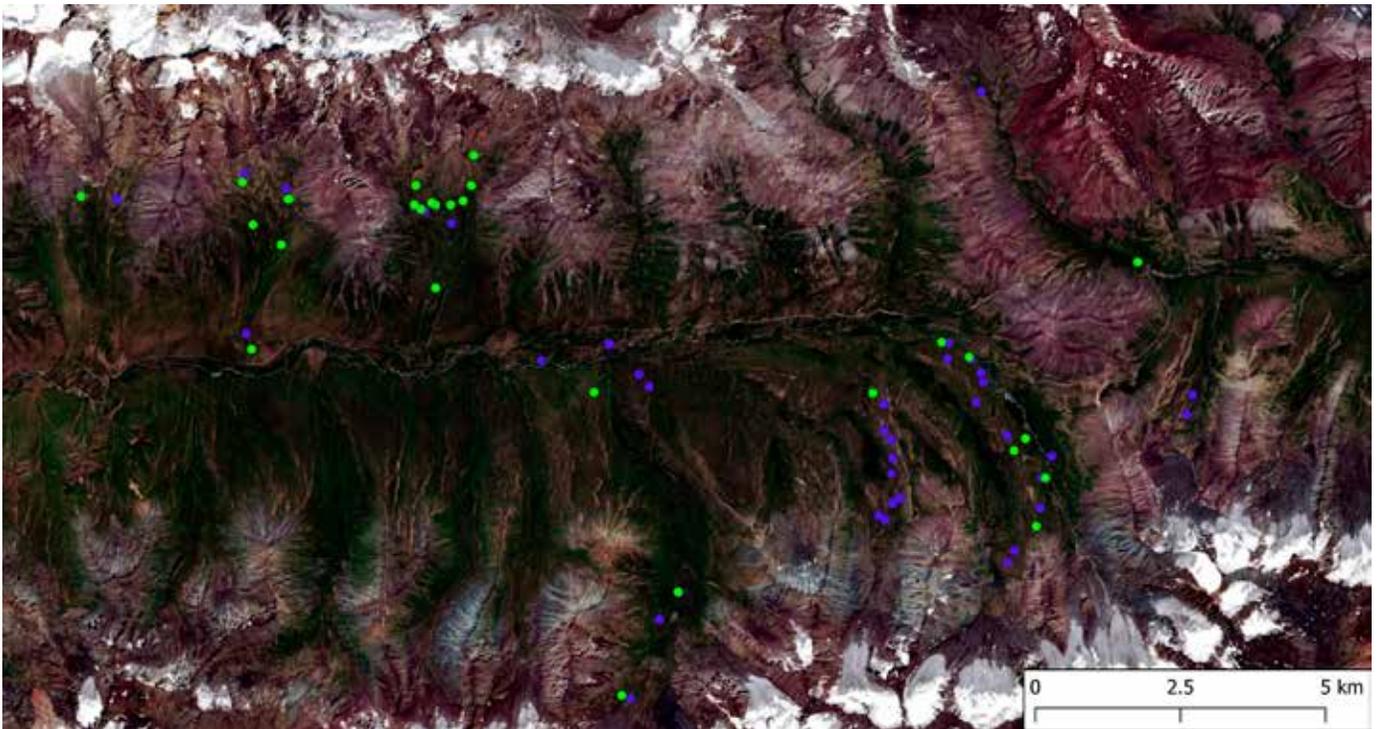


Fig. 12. Spatial distribution of the camels (blue) and tamgas (green) from Turkic times.

the second half of the 20th century, seven signs, four anthropomorphs, but also three *tamgas* (fig. 3), two mountains, a sun, and a Soviet star. 87.7% of the animals are caprines (206 petroglyphs). There are also seven canids, five camels, three horses, a deer (fig. 9), and 13 undetermined animals (5.5%), most probably canids or horses.

E. Analysis of the spatial distribution of some animal depictions

In the following, we analyze the spatial distribution of some animal depictions over the Karakol Region. Caprines (goats, ibexes, etc) are the most important species in terms of quantity, with 80% of the depicted bestiary. Goat petroglyphs are distributed in the whole area and correspond to the global distribution of engravings. For this reason, an analysis of their spatial distribution would most probably not provide any further information.

This kind of analysis will be relevant for the spatial distribution of wolf depictions. However, it is impossible to differentiate wolves and dogs on many panels. Furthermore, many undetermined animals are probably canids, but do not show any relevant features

to interpret them as canids with certainty. For these reasons, an analysis of canid depictions would only be partial and without knowing if the topic is wolves or domesticated dogs.

With 57 depictions in the Iron Age and Turkic times, horses represent c. 2% of the animal engravings, with around the same percentage in both periods. We do not analyze the spatial distribution of this species in this paper for two reasons: first, mounted and non-mounted horses should be differentiated, but here the percentage largely differs between the Iron Age (three mounted horses, or 20%) and Turkic times (18 riders, or 43%). However, the number of riders in the Iron Age is too small to be sure to have relevant data. The second reason is, again, the large number of undetermined animals, at 5% in the Iron Age and 6% in Turkic times. Although many of these petroglyphs are probably canids, some could also be horses: the indistinct features of strongly stylized animals do not allow for differentiation between canids and horses. A specific paper on horse depictions and their spatial distribution would be interesting, but at other sites with more relevant data and fewer undetermined animal engravings.

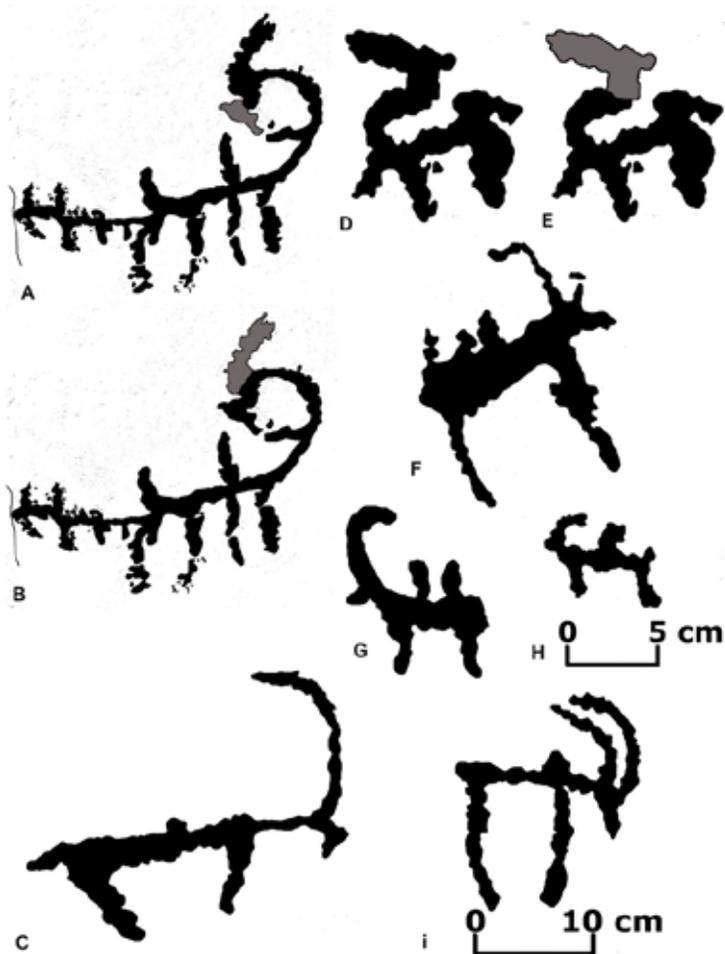


Fig. 13. Composite zoomorphs: “camel-goats”, Turkic times.

E.1. Spatial distribution of camel depictions from Turkic times (fig. 10)

Camel depictions are easily recognizable with their hump(s) as well as their long necks and heads (fig. 7). It is less probable that some undetermined animals are camels. Only five camels have one hump and are probably *Camelus dromedarius*, whereas all others have two and belong therefore to the species *Camelus bactrianus*. There are 87 depictions of camels from Turkic times on 55 rocks. Camels constitute 4.3% of the bestiary in this period, while there are only seven camel engravings in the Iron Age (0.8%) and five in the Kyrgyz period (2%). Only three camels could not be attributed to a specific period (either Turkic Kyrgyz). For these reasons, data are relevant to analyze the spatial distribution of Camelidae, but only during the Turkic period. Seven camels are mounted by an anthropomorph (fig.

11). Four of them are in both valleys at the foot of the Karakol Ashuu pass, whereas the three others are on rocks in the high alpine pastures (fig. 10). On six panels, there are three or more camels (one panel with five camels), depicting perhaps a caravan: some animals seem to be tied to each other (fig. 8). Two of these panels are directly at the foot of the pass and one in the main valley along the West Karakol river. However, the three other panels are at high altitude. Furthermore, none of these “caravan” camels has a rider, so it is difficult to draw the conclusion that these rocks really depicted caravans.

Six camels are on a panel with a tamga. If we observe the spatial distribution of tamgas and camels, it is difficult to see any correlation between both depictions (fig. 12).

Many camels were executed on panels near each other: if it could be interpreted as due to the presence of camels on these pastures, it could also be the result that the depiction of a camel on a rock inspired another “artist” to depict a camel as well.

Six camels were depicted alone on a rock without any other kind of engraving (fig. 7), but 44 panels show camels with other animals, mainly goats, and sometimes deer, horses, or canids. Is it because camels were raised for their milk and their meat along with other animals such as goats and were for this reason also present in the high pastures?

Camels were an important animal for transportation on the Silk Road in an environment of steppes and for this reason played an essential role in the economy, which explains why during the Oxus civilization they had already acquired a symbolic position of power and prestige (Francfort 2020: 50). The same can be said about Turkic times and it is probably the reason for the higher average of camel depictions in comparison with other periods in the Karakol Region, but also at other Central Asiatic sites (Hermann 2020: 179). However, if camels were used for transportation, we observe in Karakol that only a few of them were mounted or perhaps depicted in a caravan. Most of the panels depict camels among caprids or other animals, as if this animal was mainly raised for its food and not for transportation. The Karakol Region is at high altitude and was probably not the easiest route for caravans, even if it was a possible route between the Kochkor plain on the way to China and the Sususmyr plateau

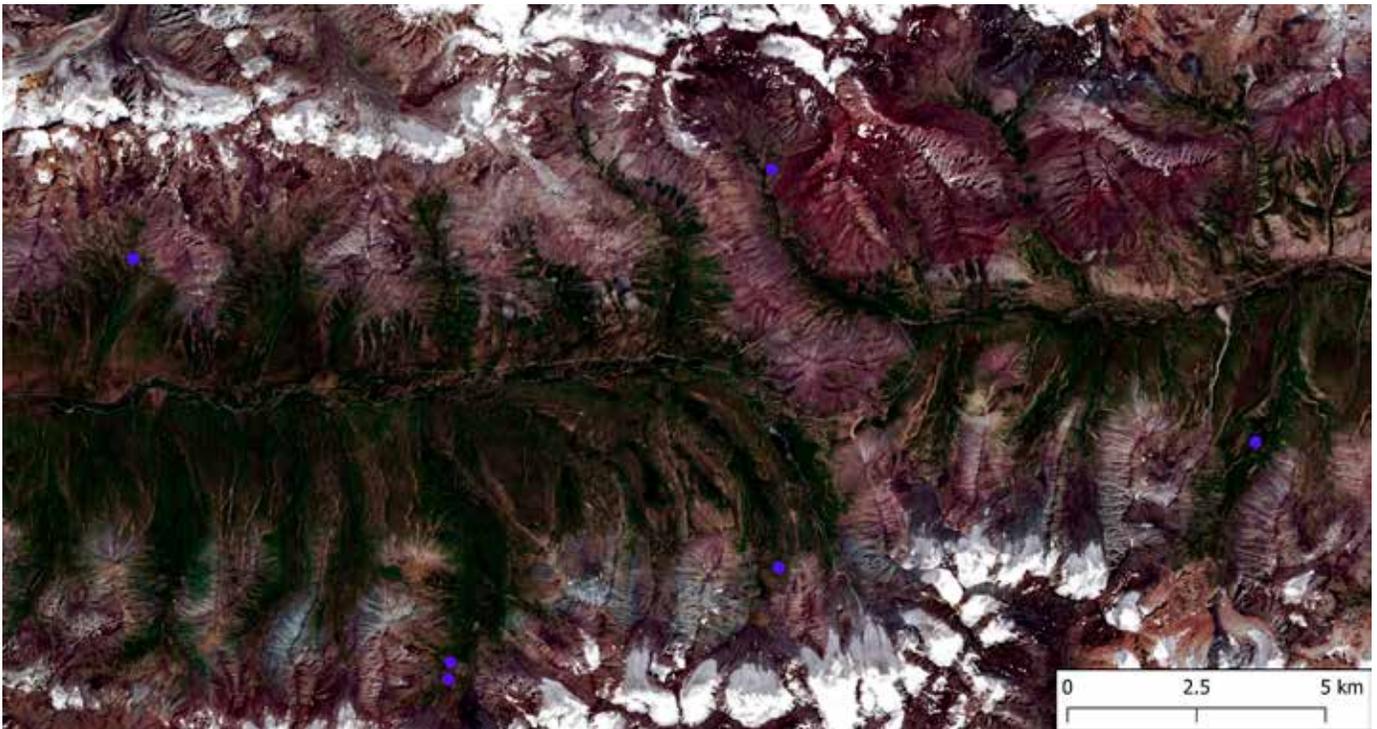


Fig. 14. Spatial distribution of the “camel-goats”.

leading to the Ferghana valley and to Uzbekistan. However, we cannot confirm that this valley was really used as a travel artery on the Silk Road. There is no caravanserai or other archeological evidence to assume that it was on the way between Uzbekistan and China. Furthermore, the lack of engravings with caravans depicting camels transporting goods tends to prove that the Karakol Region was not part of the Silk Road but was mainly used by shepherds, who depicted camels to reflect that they were raised among goat flocks. Another explanation is that camels were present on pastures among other animals because they were used by shepherds in order to transport their yurts, which is still the case in Kyrgyzstan, whereas in Kazakhstan camels are also raised for their meat and their milk.

E.2. Depictions of a composite zoomorph: the “camel-goat” from the Turkic medieval period (fig. 13)

Seven petroglyphs of a composite zoomorph with features of a goat and a camel were found among the engravings from the Turkic medieval period in Karakol. It is a very unusual subject which has not yet been documented at any other Kyrgyz or Kazakh sites.

This subject was spread over the whole region with five panels located in West Karakol and two in the eastern zone (fig. 14). These zoomorphs were engraved in the higher part of the valleys and do not seem to have any spatial connection among them, with the notable exception of two panels located in the Iiri Suu valley with a distance between them of c. 8 m at an altitude of 3,409 m. In the Kashka Tor valley, two other panels were also near each other, but with a distance of c. 330 m at 3,474 m and 3,513 m asl. The analysis of these drawings and of the other petroglyphs on the same panels shows that these “camel-goats” were executed by different hands, even the panels near each other in the Iiri Suu and Kashka Tor valleys.

In some cases, the zoomorph seems to be a goat with an additional hump (Figs. 13C, H and I) or with two humps (fig. 13G). On rock 522 from Kashka-Tor, it seems that a camel head was added on to a goat (Figs. 13D-E and 15). In this engraving there is no depiction of a hump, but the head is very typical for Camelidae. If we remove this camel head, the picture is clearly caprine. On rock 386 there are many camel depictions, but one of them seems to have acquired goat’s horns (Figs. 8 and 13A-B). In a last case, on rock



Fig. 15. Rock 522, Two goats and a “camel-goat”, Turkic times, Kashka-Tor.

620 from Iiri Suu (fig. 13F), the composite zoomorph is still more complex: two humps are clearly visible, but neither the head nor the neck depicts features of a camel but rather those of a horse. In this case, the humps could be interpreted as the pommel and cantle of a saddle, even if they do not really look like a saddle depiction. In any case, this zoomorph has an additional horn, metamorphosing it into a kind of a goat.

By analyzing the patina and the technique of execution it seems that these composite animals were done all at once. It means that these complex engravings were not created by additional features done later by another hand, but were directly created with that intention.

E.3. Spatial distribution of deer petroglyphs (fig. 16)

Deer depictions are also easily identifiable by their antlers and most probably belong to the species red deer (*Cervus elaphus maral*). Depictions of roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) or doe are more problematic to identify due to the lack of antlers or their smaller development. For this reason, some roe deer and doe have likely been grouped with the undetermined animals. But it is also reasonable to think that red deer

depictions were favored due to the symbolic stature of their antlers (Shvets 2012: 144).

In Karakol, one roe deer was documented and attributed to the Bronze Age; 12 deer, a doe and a roe deer on 12 rocks are from the Iron Age; 16 deer on 14 rocks are from Turkic times and one is from the Kyrgyz period (fig. 9). Deer from the Iron Age are easy to differentiate from those from the Turkic times due to their folded legs and the depiction of only one antler (Rogozhinskii *et al.* 2004: 80; Baipakov *et al.* 2005: 97ff).

Deer only represent 1.6% of the Iron Age bestiary and 0.8% of the Turkic one. The small number of deer depictions is also typical at other Central Asiatic sites, even if some sites on the northern shore of the Issyk-Kul Lake in Kyrgyzstan sometimes have a higher average (Hermann 2020: 178-179). Deer bones are also rare as osteological material in excavations in Kazakhstan (Shvets 2012: 142) and Kyrgyzstan (Motuzaitė Matuzeviciute *et al.* 2019: 9).

Isolated deer on a rock without any other depiction are almost an exception, but is the case with the roe deer engraving from the Bronze Age as well as two

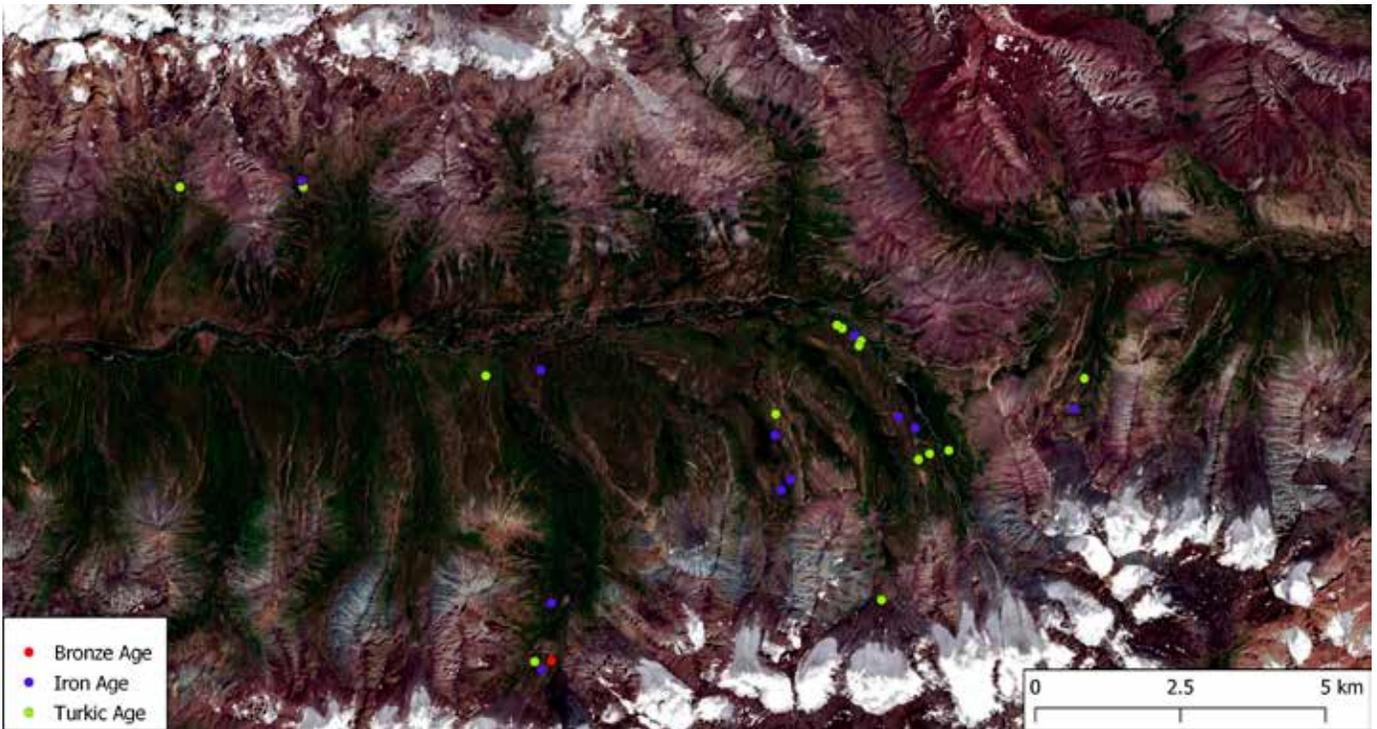


Fig. 16. Spatial distribution of the deer engravings.

panels from the Iron Age and two from Turkic times. Deer are mainly depicted with other animals, essentially goats, but also some camels, horses or canids: this is the case in nine out of twelve panels from the



Fig. 17. Deer with three goats, Turkic times, Iiri Suu.

Iron Age and in twelve out of 14 panels from Turkic times (fig. 17). Two deer simultaneously on the same panel (and with other animals) were found once in the Iron Age and twice in the Turkic period. Furthermore, there is an Iron Age panel with a deer, a doe, and an anthropomorph but without any other zoomorph. Hunted deer panels are also rare and are found only once in the Iron Age and Turkic times. However, a hunter was added later during the Turkic period on another panel with an Iron Age deer (fig. 18).

The deer antlers of Fig. 17 are peculiar because they have the shape of the so-called Omega tamga from Turkic times. This figure comes from the Iiri Suu valley and this kind of tamga was also found in two other valleys in the western part (Chong Chikan and Chaar Tash).

The spatial distribution of deer engravings shows that these petroglyphs were both located in high pastures near the summits (one panel from the Bronze Age, four from the Iron Age and five from Turkic times) and in the lower valleys near rivers (seven panels from the Iron Age and nine from Turkic times) (fig. 16).

Both areas are appropriate for deer, and it is possible that the “artist” could have directly seen the animal



Fig. 18. Hunting scene with deer, Iron Age deer and Turkic archer, Takyr Tor.

in that area and then carved a depiction. Deer do a seasonal migration between summer and winter. Due to the very difficult conditions in the alpine zone during winter, many animals (like deer) come down to find easier food sources. In summer when there is no (or less) snow in the alpine areas, those same animals return to the high alpine pastures. So it is possible that, depending on what season the petroglyph was carved in, the animals could have been seen either in the higher alpine areas or in the lower parts of the valley. Currently, red deer are not found in this area, although roe deer were seen in the Chaar Tash valley in 2019.

Furthermore, the spatial distribution map reveals that 14 of 26 panels with deer depictions are located near each other in six small groups. It suggests the idea that either deer were often sighted in this area or that a panel with a deer depiction influenced other “artists” to also depict deer.

E.4. Spatial distribution of Felidae engravings (fig. 19)

Felidae are difficult to determine due to the similarities of their features with those of wolves. The general morphology of their body, their tails, and rounded ears are generally the main features to interpret them

as Felidae instead of canids (Hermann and Schnitzler 2020: 56) (fig. 20). Some of the undetermined animal depictions are probably Felidae but were not precise enough to differentiate from canids.

With 16 Felidae on 12 panels, the Karakol Region is in any case one of the most important sites for the depiction of this species. Not counting these depictions, only 104 documented depictions of Felidae were known from Kyrgyzstan. 65 of these depictions were from the Bronze Age, 33 from the Iron Age, and 6 from Turkic times (Hermann and Schnitzler 2020: 76). In Karakol, there are nine Felidae attributed to the Iron Age and seven to the Turkic times, that is, there are more Felidae from the Turkic period in Karakol than in all other Kyrgyz sites. Thus, with the addition of 16 more Felidae engravings, we have a new total of 120 Felidae depictions in Kyrgyzstan, with 13% of them coming from the Karakol region.

The Felidae depicted on the Karakol panels are likely snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*): their tails are long enough to exclude lynx and their heads are not those of male lions but could possibly fit with female lions. Furthermore, their morphologies are incompatible with those of cheetahs. To interpret them as snow leopards makes sense with the general geography and environment where the petroglyphs are located: this

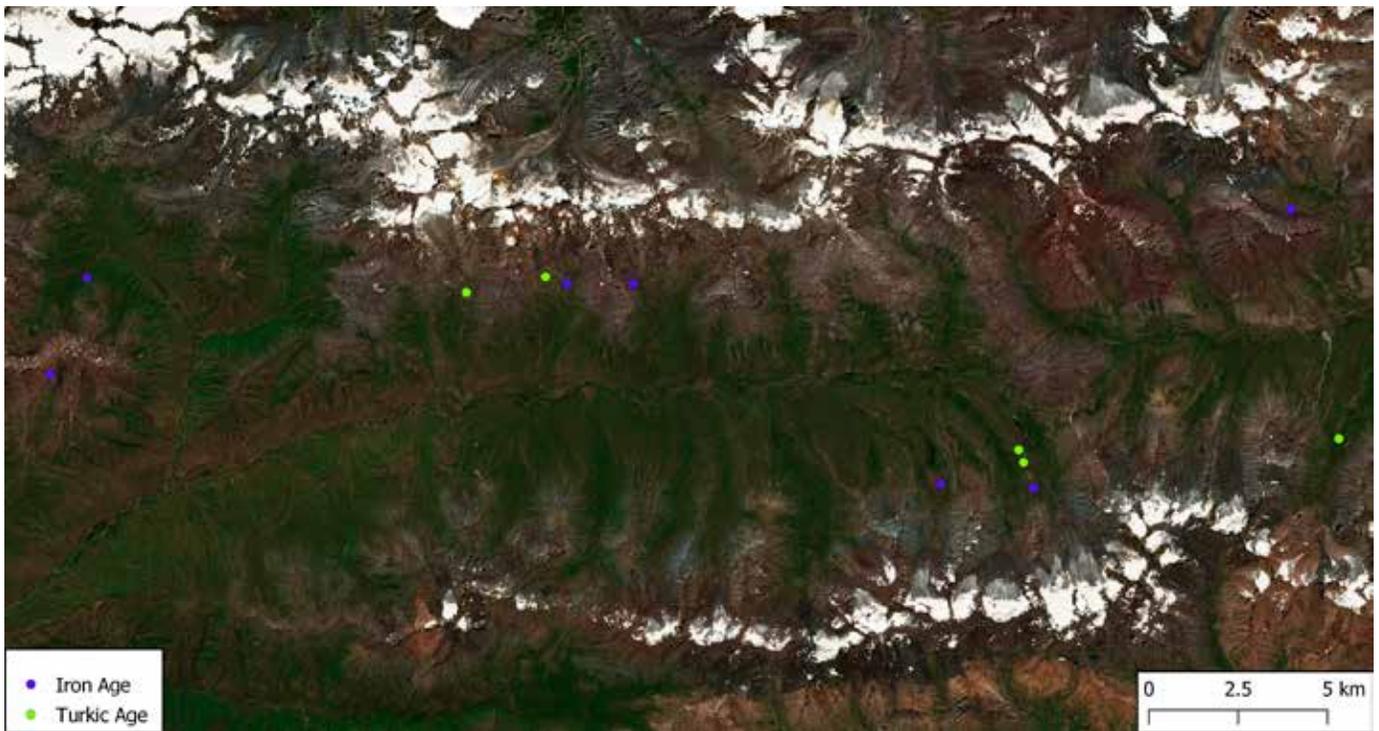


Fig. 19. Spatial distribution of the feline engravings.

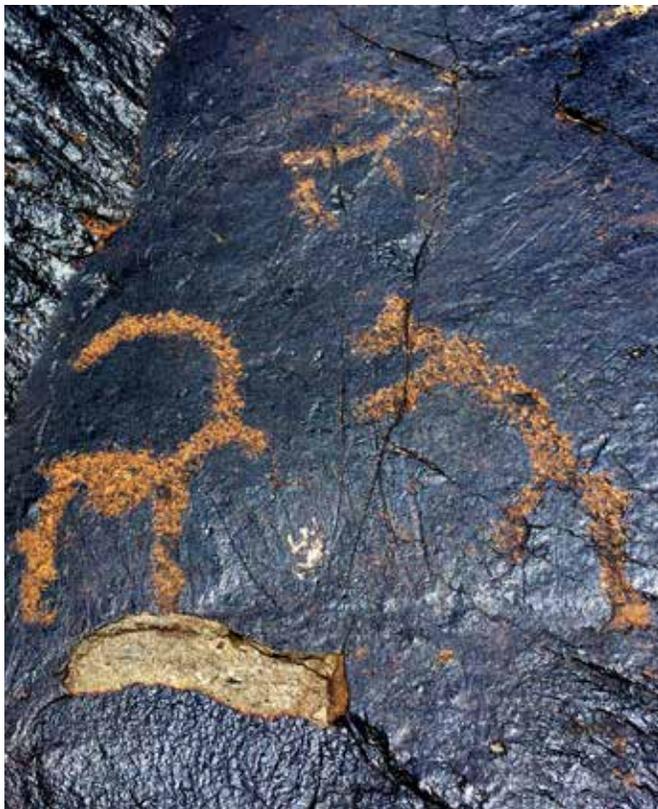


Fig. 20. Goats with feline, Turkic times, Iiri Suu.

region of Kyrgyzstan is still nowadays one of the last biotopes where snow leopards live (Tytar *et al.* 2020). The spatial distribution of the Felidae panels in Karakol shows that they are essentially concentrated near the summit: one panel is located at 3,094 m high, eight are between 3,290 m and 3,480 m asl and three are between 3,530 and 3,620 m (fig. 19). The location of the panels globally corresponds to the appropriate area of the snow leopards, so that the engravings could have been directly carved where the animal was sighted.

Even though there is a relation in nature between deer and their predators, with the predators following their prey to the valleys in winter and to the high alpine pastures in summer, there are no panels depicting a deer being predated by a feline. In addition, the analysis of the spatial distribution of deer and Felidae depictions does not clearly show any relation (fig. 21): even if we observe that panels with deer and with snow leopards are in the same area in three cases, they are actually between 35 m and 190 m away from each other. Furthermore, there are panels with felines in some valleys without deer depictions and panels with deer in other valleys without feline depictions.

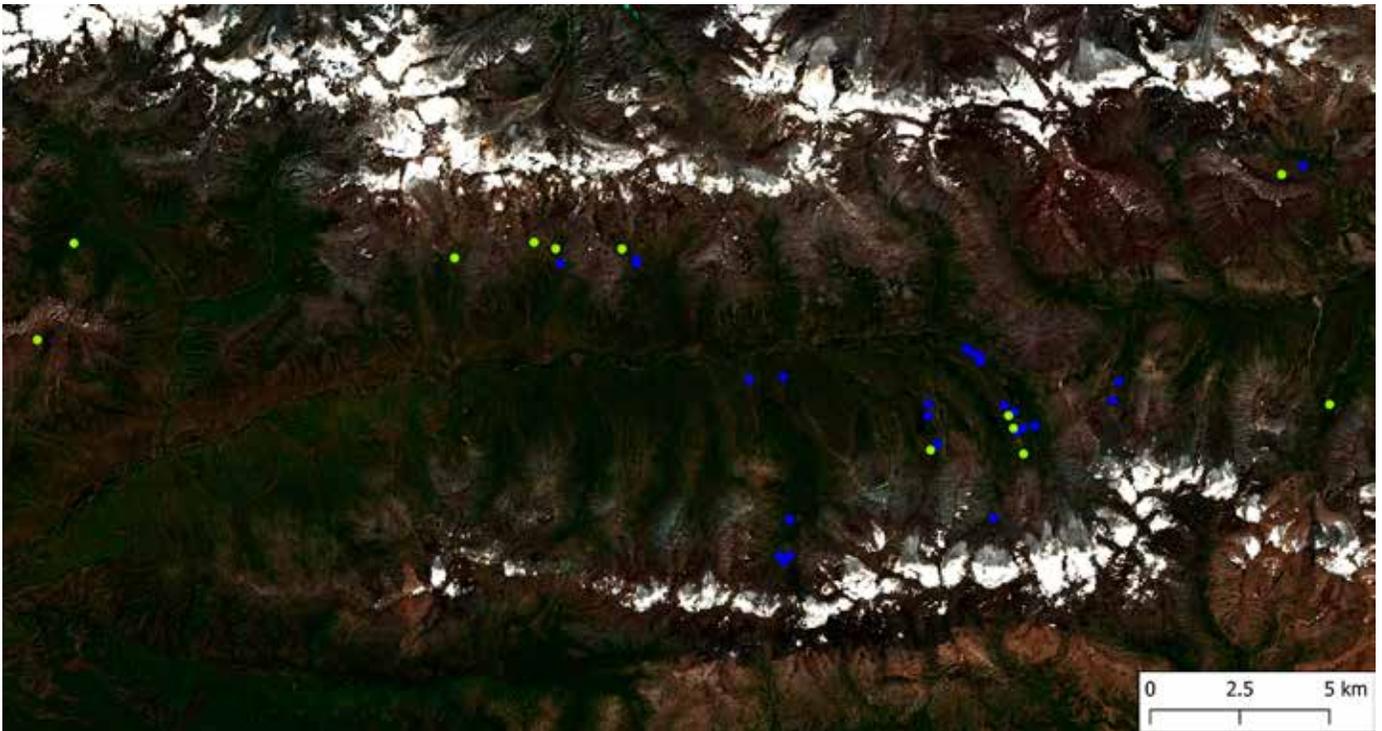


Fig. 21. Spatial distribution of deer (blue) and felines (yellow) engravings.

F. Conclusions

The Karakol Region presents a large number of petroglyphs essentially from the Iron Age and the Turkic period. The engravings' theme is less ritualistic than being tied to the pastoral world mainly with goats and their predators (canids and felids). In the Turkic period, even if camels were perhaps used for transporting yurts to the pastures, we observe that camel depictions are the reflection of this animal being raised than of its use in caravans on the Silk Road. The depiction of a composite animal, the “goat-camel”, seems to reveal this confusion of both species in the pastoral world: camels are, like goats, raised for their milk and their meat.

Furthermore, the spatial distribution of deer and felids in Karakol seems to show that some rare species were depicted where they were sighted. However, this conclusion is only available in this region devoted to pastoralism. The animal depictions could also have a ritual significance at other sites with more ritual themes among the petroglyphs. It does not seem that this is the case in Karakol. The rock art of this region reveals the conceptual world of herders predomi-

nantly dominated by goats and where even camels are a source of food, and not a symbol of prestige.

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Illustrations

All pictures and maps: Amadeus DeKastle
 Drawings Fig. 10: Luc Hermann (after pictures)

ATHAPASKAN SOCIAL IMAGERY IN THE UINTA BASIN: INTERPRETATION THROUGH ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALOGY

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Introduction

The Fremont archeological era (c. AD 400-1250) is a name given to a culture that is somewhat similar to and in other ways different from the Basketmaker III-Pueblo II of roughly the same period (Cole 1990). The state of Utah is peppered with Fremont occupation sites, which extend into western Colorado. There are four petroglyph style variants within the Fremont culture areas.

Over the last half century there have been lively debates as to what linguistic groups were associated with the Fremont. Schlesier (1994: 332) writes: “The origin of Fremont is essentially unknown although three theories have been explored: derivation from the Plains, from the Southwest, and an *in situ* develop-

ment.” They left behind great galleries of rock images for generations of archaeologists and researchers to record as Fremont style.

Steward (1937) said that he believed the Fremont were Athapaskan. And Schlesier (1994: 333), who followed up on this theory nearly 60 years later, writes: “The evidence indicates the Fremont was neither a peripheral Anasazi ... not a mysterious Uto-Aztec branch (it was replaced in toto by Uto-Aztecs). The only reasonable option left is that the Fremont were Apacheans; because all variants shared in an essential Fremont identity, *all* were Apacheans.”

It is undisputed that Athapaskan migrations from the north split into what we see today as the Northern, the Pacific Coast and the Southern groups. The open spa-

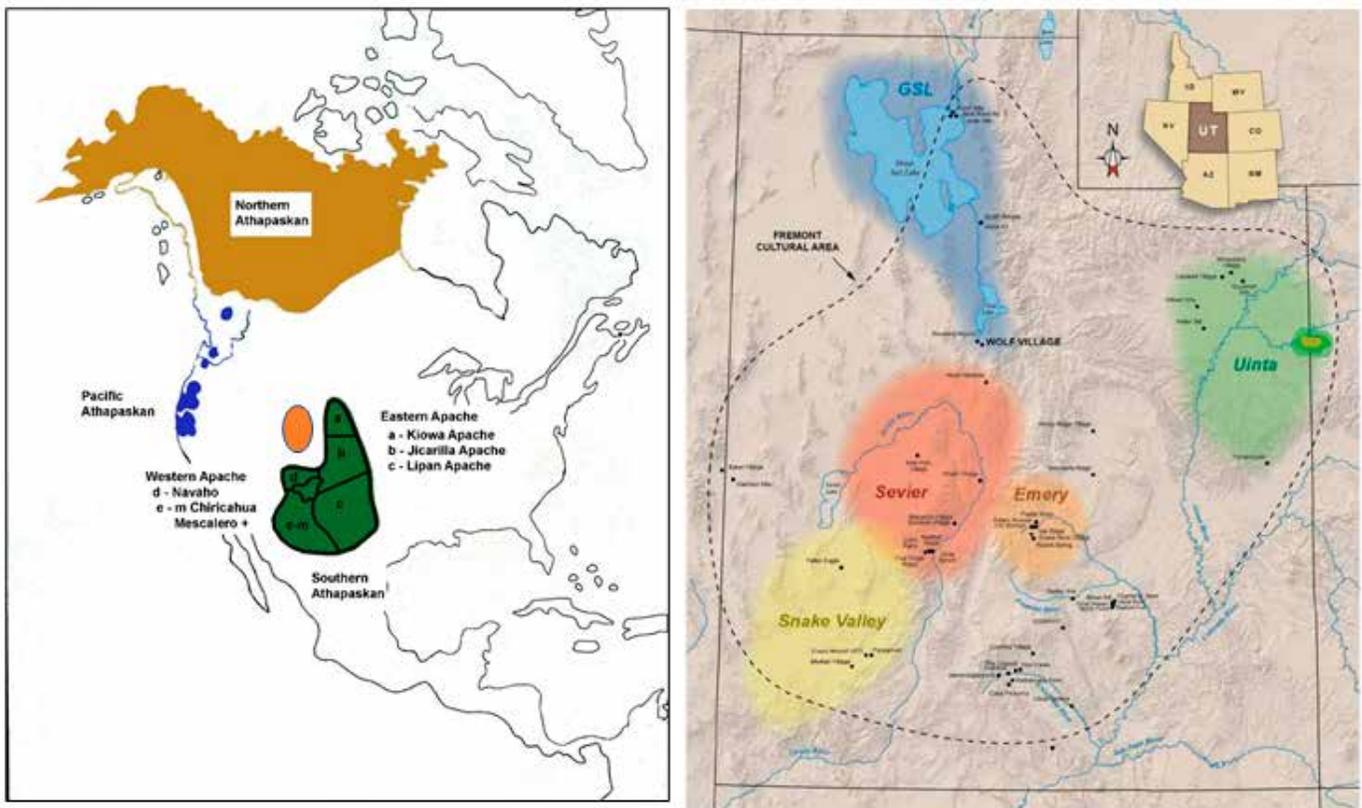


Fig. 1. Linguistic map of the Athapaskan groups. The Jicarilla are of the Eastern Apache group, of the Southern Athapaskans. The Fremont culture area is represented by the orange dot (after Haskell 1987).

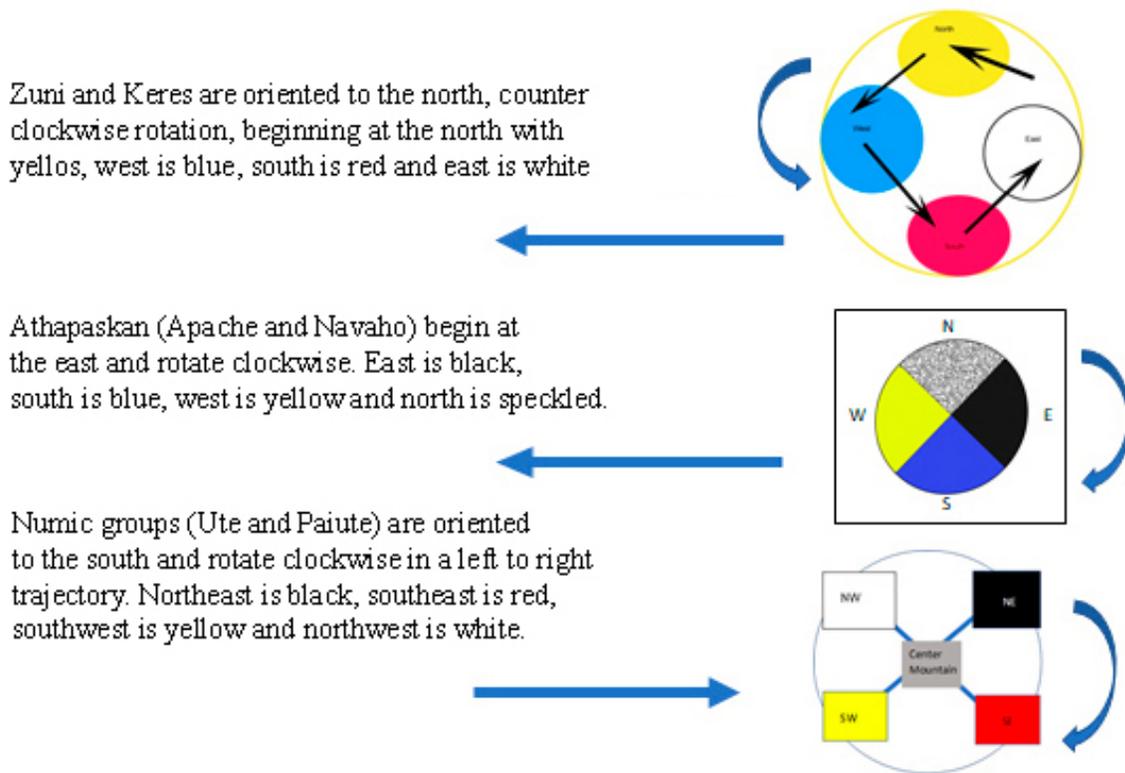


Fig. 2. Particularism in color preferences, cultural direction, and cultural rotation for the Pueblo groups (Keres, Zuni), compared with the Athapaskan (Jicarilla Apache, and Navaho of the southern Apache) and the Numic of the Uto/Aztecan family (Ute, Paiute, and Shoshone). The Hopi are dualistic in preferences for cultural direction and not shown here.

ce between the border of Canada and the state line of Arizona and New Mexico is in question (fig. 1a). The Fremont culture area covers most of Utah and part of western Colorado (fig. 1b). The green area represents the Uinta Basin in eastern Utah. The dark green ring with a yellow dot marks the area within the Dinosaur National Monument along Cub Creek adjacent to the buried pit-houses and ancient garden plots of the Fremont villagers. The focus of this study is an enclave (Eiselt, 2012) of elaborate petroglyphs that straddle the mountain cliff face and surrounding boulders.

Figure 1b is a map of Fremont culture areas, (from Richardson 2021). The Great Salt Lake (blue) variant is dated AD 400-1350; Sevier (red), AD 880-1250; Parowan or Snake Valley (yellow), AD 900-1250; Uinta (green), AD 650-950; and San Rafael or Emery, (orange), AD 700-1250. A dark green with yellow dot in the Uinta Basin marks the Cub Creek enclave.

I believe the cultural identity of the Fremont can be theorized by comparing the foundation myth and religion of each language group that is considered a candidate for cultural affiliation. The Fremont pe-

troglyphs have never been subjected to ethnographic analogy with the Athapaskan culture group. Their worldviews are founded on the concepts of animism and metaphor, the antithesis of the Western European view that sharply divides the animate and inanimate. Athapaskan ethnographies describe a world in which everything is imbued with spirits or gods, called *Hactcin*. Everything! Animals, objects, clouds, rivers, mountains are sentient.

Within animism are three subcategories that lead to the identity of individual cultures and language groups. The first is particularism. Every culture has a preference for sacred numbers such as 4 (Apache), 5 (Ute), or 6 (Zuni), and sacred colors for the cardinal directions. There are proper names for the major creators, culture heroes, and traditional ceremonies. These particulars are cultural diagnostics that I use as a tool to identify cultural affinity. Figure 2 is an example of the particulars within three different culture groups.

The second category are cultural metaphors that convey concepts that are associated with a physical form. For the ancestral Pueblo, the Katsina masked dances



Fig. 3. Masks that are worn by an impersonator of a spirit, from two different language groups. Left is an old Zuni Katsina mask with rain beard (photo by Joe Kozlowski). On the right is an old Apache Gaan mask of a mountain spirit (Masks of the World website).



Fig. 4. Northern Tewa Pueblo Deer Dancers impersonating the deer and becoming the deer in mind and spirit (*Transition*, by David M. Little, San Juan Pueblo, author's collection).

are cultural diagnostics for Pueblo culture. Masked dancers are impersonators of spirits that include cloud beings called rain bringers, otherwise known as Katsinas. For the ancestral Apache, the Gaan dancers are masked impersonators of the *Hactcin* who are the spirits within everything (fig. 3).

The third category are the ceremonies that reenact the mythical texts that contain the metaphors that are particulars of each culture. They dictate the behavior and social structure of a society.

Pueblo and Apache groups have ceremonial cycles that dramatize the personal relationships they have with

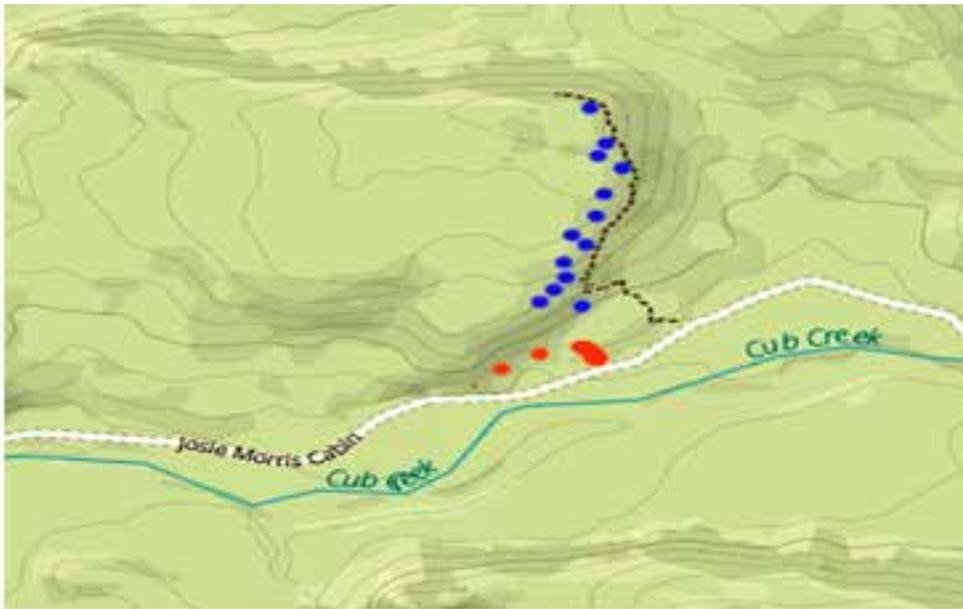


Fig. 5. Site map of the Cub Creek petroglyphs, an enclave of Jicarilla iconography featuring the mountain spirits of moisture and rain shown here in blue dots. The parking lot is a theatrical setting with the very weathered portraits of the primary creators Black Hactcin and White Hactcin along with Spider and Fly. Their location is shown with red dots.

the spirit entities in their environment. These include Cloud Beings with Rain Dances (Keres), and Mountain Spirits with Gaan Dances (Apache), and Corn Maidens with Corn Dances (Zuni). Pictured here are the Deer Dancers in transition to the spirit of the deer (Tewa) (fig. 4).

Ceremonies within the paradigm of animism give us a better understanding of the role of masked dances. By impersonating the spirit and behavior of the deer, a reciprocal relationship is formed. The dancer prays for gifts of nourishment from the deer.

The petroglyphs of Cub Creek are faint and weathered due to their antiquity, which corresponds to the age estimated of AD 600–1100. They are situated at the foot of a large escarpment called Big Mountain. The parking lot is like a stage setting, complete with unique style renderings of anthropomorphic figures which are nearly life-size. To the north is a boulder at the base of the mountain with an ancient panel depicting a spider-like motif and whorl image, along with lightly pecked birds and sheep. They were presented on a boulder of the same shape as the mountain itself. From there a trail leads up the escarpment where mask-like figures dot the cliff side, (fig. 5, site map).

My first impression of these panels was as a display of mythical events. But from what culture? This iconography did not resemble that of ancestral Pueblo or Uto/Aztec, that I was familiar with. But it was Karl

H. Schlesier (1994) who suggested the Fremont were Athapaskan, and the Uinta Basin Fremont were ancestral Jicarilla Apache. So, for over a year I read all of the available ethnographic literature on the Athapaskan groups, most notably the writings of Morris Opler (1938), who steadfastly believed that the Jicarilla were the most traditional of all the Apache bands he had studied. Their mythology was unaltered from what he believed to be a very ancient tradition.

Opler was also struck by the asymmetry of paired mythical characters, such as Spider and Fly, Bear and Snake, Enemy Slayer and Child of Water, and that through their awkward pairing created a balance. They all partake in mythical dramas that reflect the reality of Apache life, a constant struggle correcting man's digressions and calling on the gods to fix things. They do so, but with conditions requiring respect and humility. The myths dramatize ritualized ceremonies and acts of reciprocity that are built into Apache social structure to this day.

I found descriptions in Opler's Jicarilla mythical text correlating with the images at the Cub Creek site. These petroglyphs are clustered consecutively following the events of the Creation and the Emergence script. They form what is called an enclave of Jicarilla Apache iconography (Eiselt 2014). These petroglyphs represent mythical events that are indeed social imagery. The photographs and drawings of each panel accom-



Fig. 6. Sky Father is located high above the other boulders that surround the stage below. He sits above the large boulder called the Emergence Mountain panel.

pany the Jicarilla Apache mythical text following the events of creation and emergence into this world. I point out the cultural particulars including the metaphors, the gestures, and the actual words in Apache, as Opler recorded it.

The Apache call their deities *Hactcin*, that means spirit or god. The mythical text record by Opler (1938, 2-12) goes like this. I am paraphrasing parts of it.

In the beginning there was darkness, water, and a cyclone. No people, no other living things. All the Hactcin were there from the beginning. They made the first earth, then the underworld, then the sky. The earth was in the form of a woman called *Mother* and the sky in the form of a man and called *Father*.

Figure 6 may represent the Sky Father. He is situated on a high knob above the Emergence Mountain that comes into play in the next sequence of events. He is a simple figure, unlike any other characters, wearing a single feather with arms arched like the sky and hands pointing downward.

Sky Father and Earth Mother create Black Hactcin and White Hactcin. They are the leaders and in charge of the creation of all living things (Opler 1938, 12,

ftn 3). Black Hactcin made the animals with four legs and the birds with two legs. He also made the water animals, frogs and fish.

There are two very old and weathered panels depicting a nondescript style of anthropomorphs at the edge of the parking lot at Cub Creek. Along the west side is a large boulder engraved and partially spalled with what I believe to be a portrait of Black Hactcin. He is fully pecked in with the exception of his arms. They are bent, and his hands are lifted upwards toward the sky. The text describes this gesture, as he is asking for rain from the sky (fig. 7).

Opler writes:

Black Hactcin held out his hands and asked [White Hactcin] for water to come to his hands. A drop of rain fell into his palm, and he mixed it with mud. He made the head, body, wings and two legs that turned into a bird. He made many different kinds of birds ... [But eventually the birds needed something to eat] ... Black Hactcin held his hands up to the east, the south, the west and the north, and because he had so much power, seeds fell into his hands. He scattered them before the birds ... He made Turkey in charge of the crops and of corn (1938, 2-3).

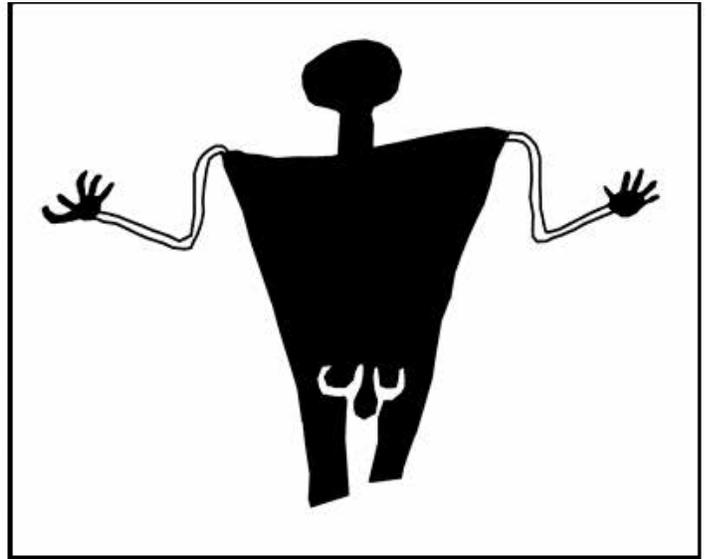


Fig. 7. Black Hactcin creates the moon. He is most powerful. He creates all the birds and animals and asks for rain to grow plants for seeds to feed the birds. He is shown with bent elbows and palms up for receiving the rain from White Hactcin.

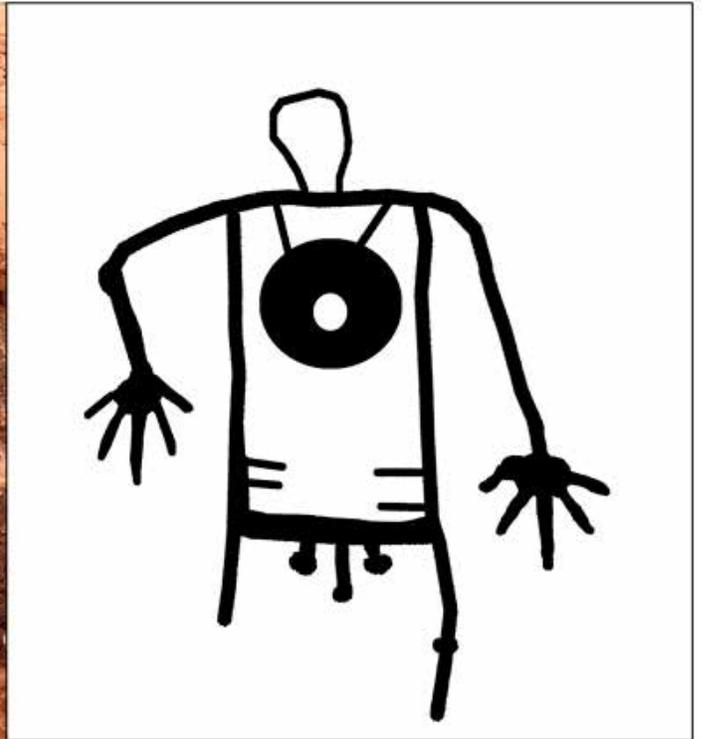
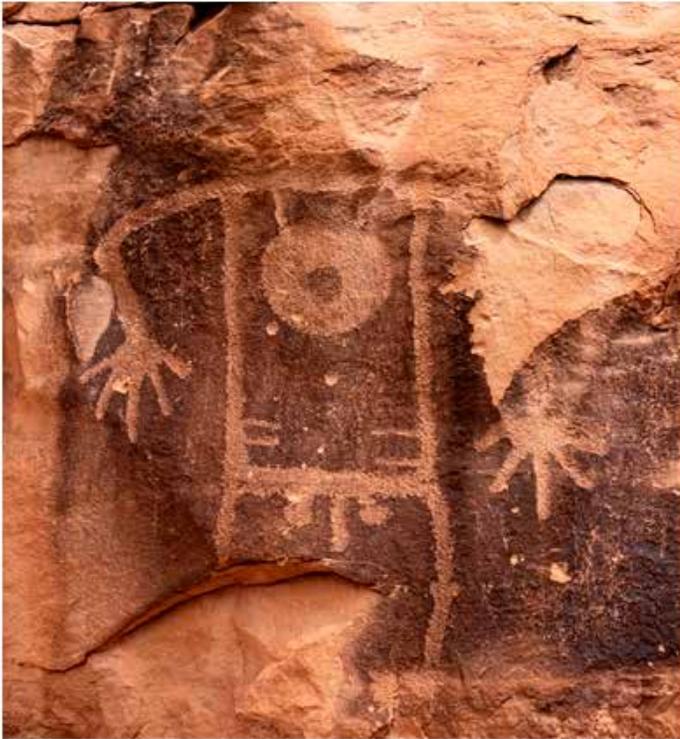


Fig. 8. White Hactcin is of daylight sky and creates the sun. He wears the sun disk around his neck. He provides rain from the sky and is gesturing downward towards the earth with fingers open, as if casting light and rain down on everything.

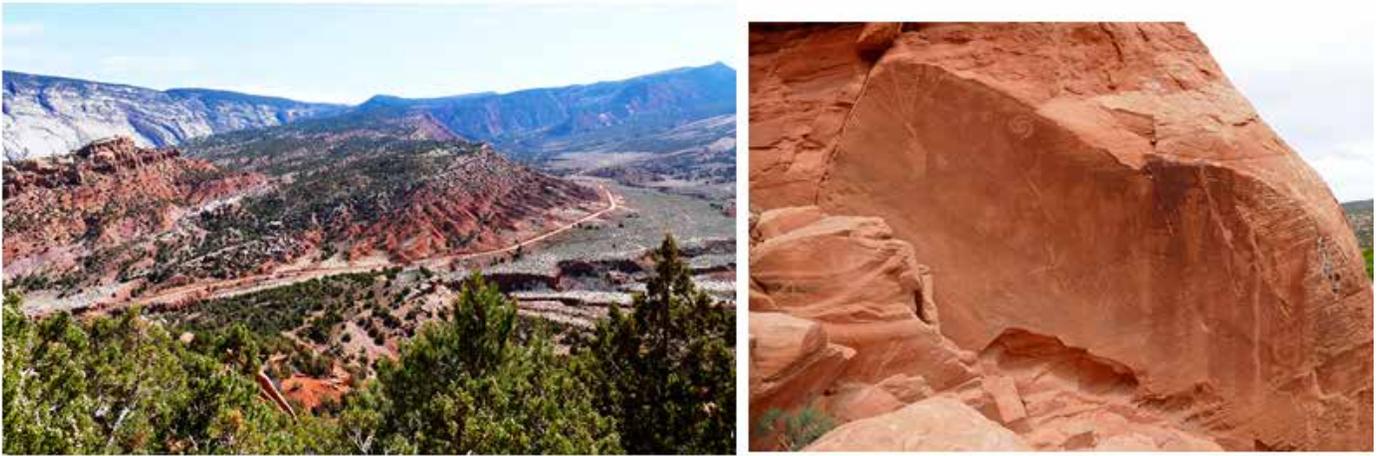


Fig. 9. Photograph showing the profile of Big Mountain along Cub Creek. At the base is the Emergence Mountain petroglyph panel. It represents the mythical mountain in the emergence sequence of the creation myth of the Jicarilla Apache.

On the east side of the parking lot is a boulder engraved with who I believe is White Hactcin. He is outlined with a fully pecked-in shield emblem on his chest (fig. 8).

White Hactcin is in possession of the sun and provides sunlight. The disk hanging on his chest may represent the sun. His hands are gesturing downward toward the earth. He provides moisture and rain when it is requested.

Black Hactcin made frogs and fish and all things that live in water. He made Man too, but they all lived in darkness before there was light. The *Hactcin* came together and talked about what to do. Holy Boy was not satisfied either. He thought there should be more light. He tried to make a sun all by himself. But Little Wind came by and told him that White Hactcin had a sun. He said, "But don't tell him that I told you so." So Holy Boy went to White Hactcin and asked him for the sun. "How did you know I had one?" he asked. Then he remembered that Little Wind visited him often. It was Wind that told him. So White Hactcin gave Holy Boy the sun (Opler 1938, 10-11).

Wind also told Holy Boy that Black Hactcin had a moon. Black Hactcin is possessor of the night sky, the stars, and the moon. So Holy Boy asked Black Hactcin for the moon and it was given to him. Wind is a messenger or spy for the supernaturals and also appears in different parts of the creation myth and folklore of the Apache (Opler 1938, 11).

The Emergence Mountain

The profile of Big Mountain is mimicked by the shape of the boulder on which is engraved the figures of Spider and Fly, the Hactcin, Wind, and the birds and animals who all participate in making the mountain grow. For this reason, I call this the Emergence Mountain panel (fig. 9).

The myth continues with the people wanting to emerge from a lower world into an upper world where there is more light. The Creator Hactcin are asked to make the mountain grow tall enough to reach the sky hole for the people to climb up to the next world. But the mountain stops growing, so the Hactcin send Spider and Fly to help (fig. 10).

Spider puts his web all around it and Spider and Fly go up the Emergence Mountain and through the sky hole, to the Sun. Opler writes; "They took 4 rays of the sun, each a different color and pulled on them as if they were ropes. They pulled them down to the mountain top. The ropes came down, black, blue, yellow and glittering, from each corner of the opening" (1938, 19).

The Hactcin go up the mountain again, but they see that the top is still a little way from the sky hole through which they can see the next world. So, they all held a council to decide what to do. They need the birds and animals with their own special powers to make the mountain grow taller. The Hactcin call the birds and animals forward (Opler 1934, 11-26) (fig. 11).



Fig. 10. Enhancement of the Emergence Mountain panel, showing Spider and Fly and two Hactcin that climb up to the next world on Spider's ropes. Wind is present also, represented by the whorl symbol. The spirits of the birds are lightly pecked.

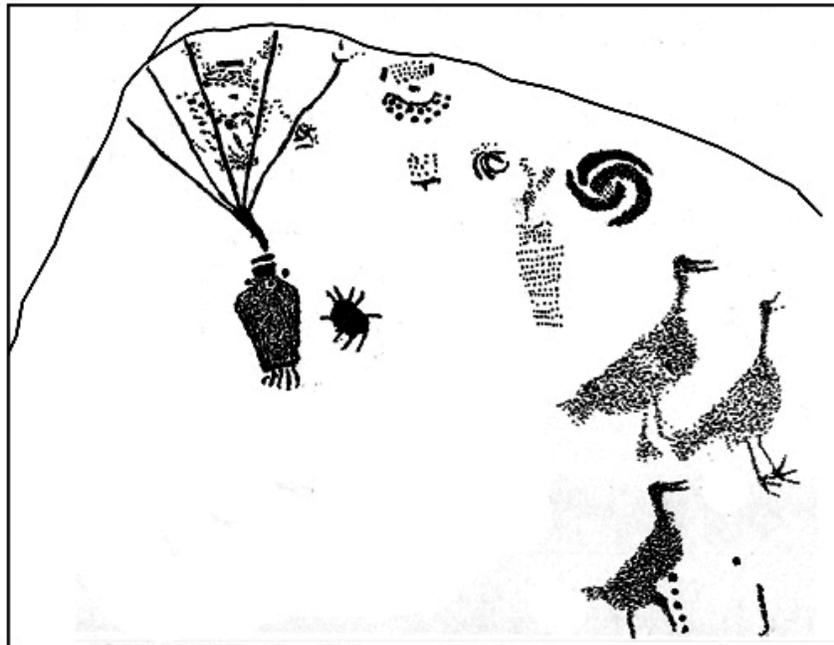


Fig. 11. The drawing shows Spider with three eyes and multiple little legs, with Fly alongside. They are sent to bring down the ropes from the sun. The two *Hactcin* are depicted in dots that form their necklaces and upper half of their bodies. One is behind the ropes with his hand reaching out to hold a rope. They climb up to the sky hole. The whorl emblem is Wind. The lightly pecked birds represent their spirit power that is needed to make the mountain grow taller.

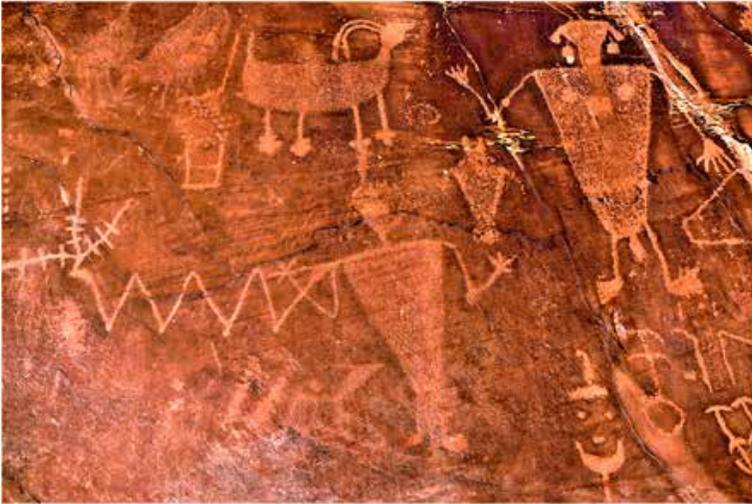


Fig. 12. Photograph of the lower part of the Emergence Mountain panel showing the birds and animals approaching the *Hactin*, identified by his two feathers, ear ornaments and stone necklace. He is beckoning to them with an arm gesture to come to the mountain (outline) he is touching with his other hand. In the center is a generic figure with arms bent at the elbows. One arm is incorporated with a zigzag line symbolizing the gesture called *Tsanati*. At the end is a Gaan wand waving back and forth.



Fig. 13. Gesturing with a Gaan wand attached to the figure's arm. It is drawn and even re-pecked to illustrate the back and forth and up and down movement of the *Tsanati*, used to amplify the power from the birds and animals summoned to make the mountain grow (drawing by Lawrence Perkins @lawrence3667).



Fig. 14. The Swelter Shelter is an alcove with three panels depicting Gaan dancers and the shamans picked to create a dance troupe to impersonate the Hactcin.

The lower part of the panel shows the birds and animals coming toward a figure with a shell necklace and ear ornaments. I assume it is a Hactcin. He is beckoning toward the animals with his arm gesture, bent elbow and open palm, calling on the power of each animal to help make the mountain grow taller. His other arm is pointing down to an outline of an area similar in shape to the mountain itself.

The central figure lower down to the left of him is demonstrating the gesticulation of moving his arms back and forth. This gesture is called *Tsanati* and is used to amplify power. In his hand is an Apache Gaan wand, also being waved back and forth (fig. 12).

Opler writes:

They [Hactcin] pick out special men who have performed acts of power [shamanism]. They were painted and made to appear like *Tsanati* (ritual gesticulation dancers). In order to be effective in this rite of growing the Emergence Mountain these shamans have to transform into a *Gaan* dance group. Gaans are masked impersonators of power. They use *Tsanati* to enhance or generate power, which still functions in the traditional Gaan ceremonies of today, (Opler 1938,17).

The Gaan wands used in the Gaan dances are illustrated in fig. 13.

A separate site down the road about half a mile away (c. 750 m) has three panels depicting a ritual of the Gaan dancers (See fig. 14).

The story continues:

They dressed them up in spruce branches and yucca leaves, using the narrow leaf yucca and the broad-leaf yucca too. They wove the yucca and made a short skirt of it for men to wear. They stuck spruce branches in around their waists. They tied yucca at the wrist and lower part of the arm and spruce at the upper arm. Six represented the summer and six the winter. Therefore, six were painted blue all over and six were white all over. Yucca was tied to their ankles and to a place above the knee and spruce branches were stuck in these circles of yucca (Opler 1938, 18).

In the upper right area of this panel are what I believe to be the selected shamans. On the right side are painted and pecked anthropomorphs, some with horizontal bands and head feathers. They proceed down the panel toward the left, and transform into Gaan dancers (fig. 15).



Fig. 15. Swelter Shelter, depicting the shamans on the top row that are picked to be transformed into the Gaan dance group shown on the left side of the panel.

The shamans are picked to form the Gaan dance group that is needed to generate the power to make the Emergence Mountain grow taller. As the images progress toward the left and down, they take the shape of masked Gaan impersonators. A close-up of this panel with a drawing overlay shows the horned masked dancers. In the center is the striped clown that also takes part in the dances (fig. 16).

Opler writes:

Six clowns were painted white all over except for 4 black stripes; one across the face; one across the chest; one across the upper leg; and one across the lower leg. The stripes went around the whole body. Each arm had 4 black stripes of narrow yucca around the wrist and neck ... Out the top was an eagle feather (1938, 18).

The third panel (fig. 17) is the depiction of a Gaan dancer similar to the Gaan masks of today. The arm

gestures of *Tsanati* dancers dominate the scene, and they are all wearing Gaan masks.

Figure 18 is a drawing of both panels, along with an illustration of a contemporary Apache Gaan dancer. The similarities are striking considering the centuries that separate these petroglyph depictions and the historic Gaan dancer.

Other events in the Jicarilla Apache creation story describe the Mountain Spirits (Hactcin) who live inside the mountain. They are associated with wind, rain, and moisture. On the cliff side of the escarpment just above the Emergence panel are the engravings of dozens of mountain spirits. Each has their own unique necklace of stone, or shell, or bone that distinguish them as high-ranking spirits that bring moisture and prosperity to the people, fig. 19.

One large portrait of a mountain spirit has the triangle symbol of mountains beneath him. Alongside him is



Fig. 16. A close-up showing the men picked to be *Tsanati* dancers. The panel shows the horned supernatural figures. The small white figure in the center may be a clown. He has two horizontal stripes and a tall feather out the top of his head.

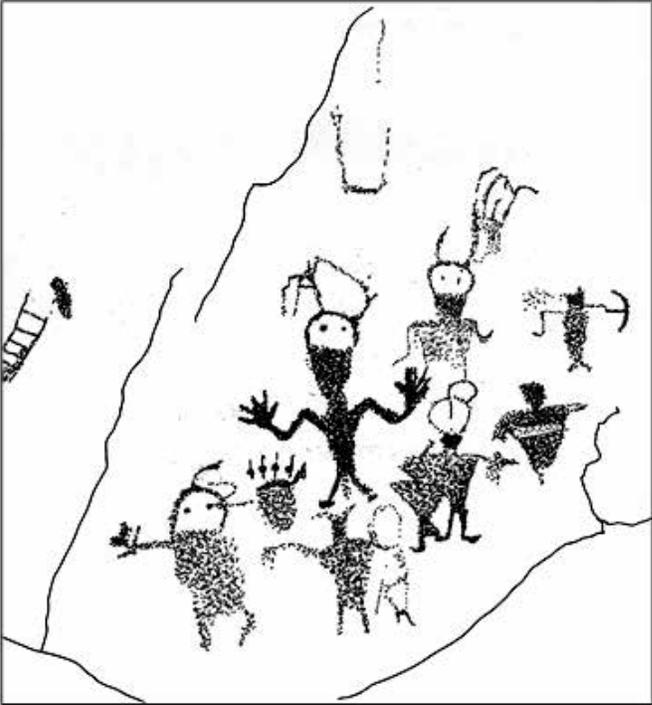


Fig. 17. The far left panel depicts a central Gaan dancer with the characteristic arm gesture called *Tsanati* or ritual gesticulation. The Gaan masked dancers are similar to the Gaan masks of today.

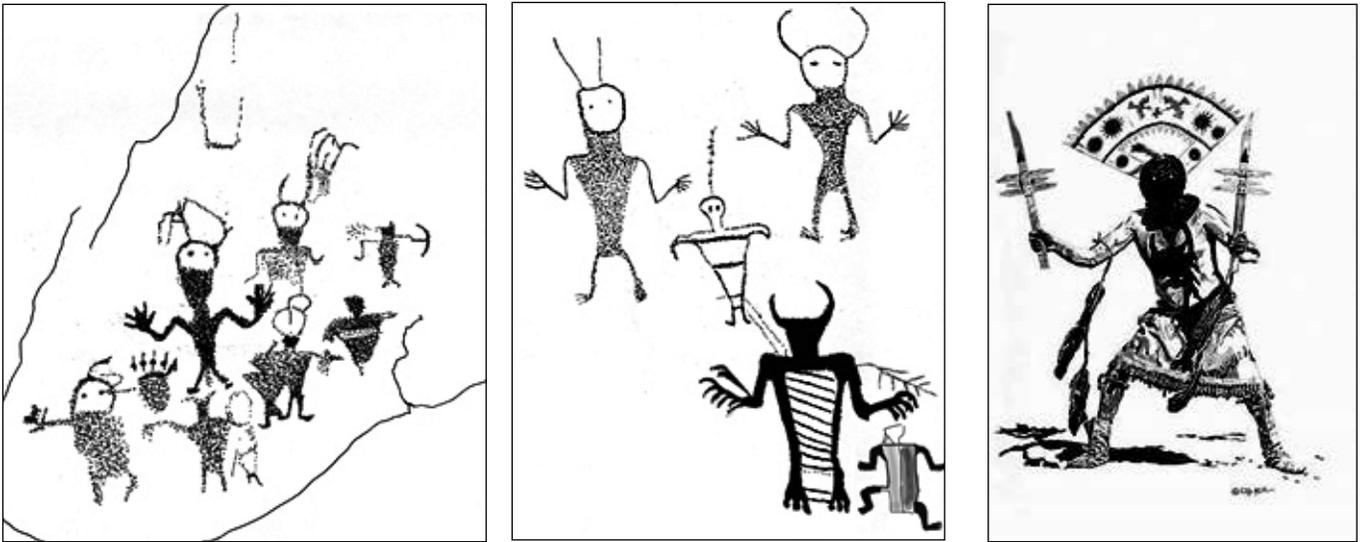


Fig. 18. Drawings of panels with Gaan dancers and clown figures. Note the bag-like mask and bent elbow gesticulation called *Tsanati* (drawing by Lawrence Perkins @lawrence3667).

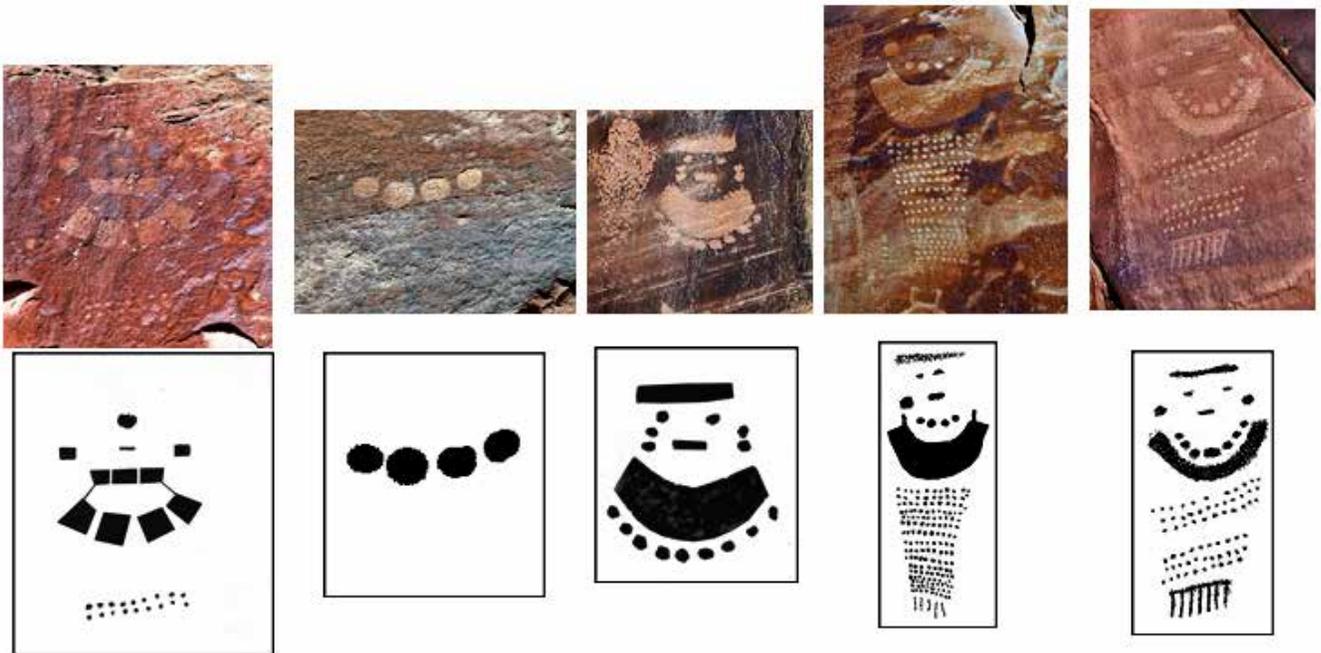


Fig. 19. Portraits of *Hactin* wearing a turquoise stone necklaces, a round shell necklaces and a broad bone necklace. Tapered fields of dots and a rain symbol identify these mountain spirits as rain bringers.

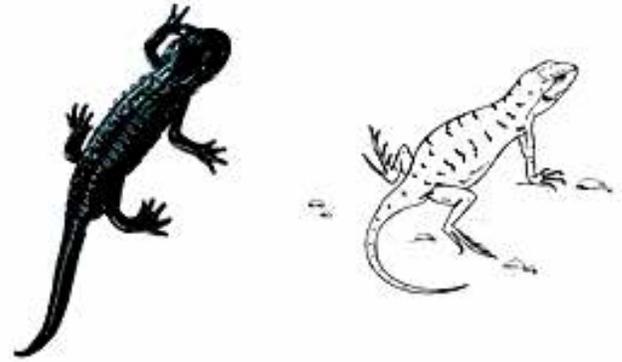
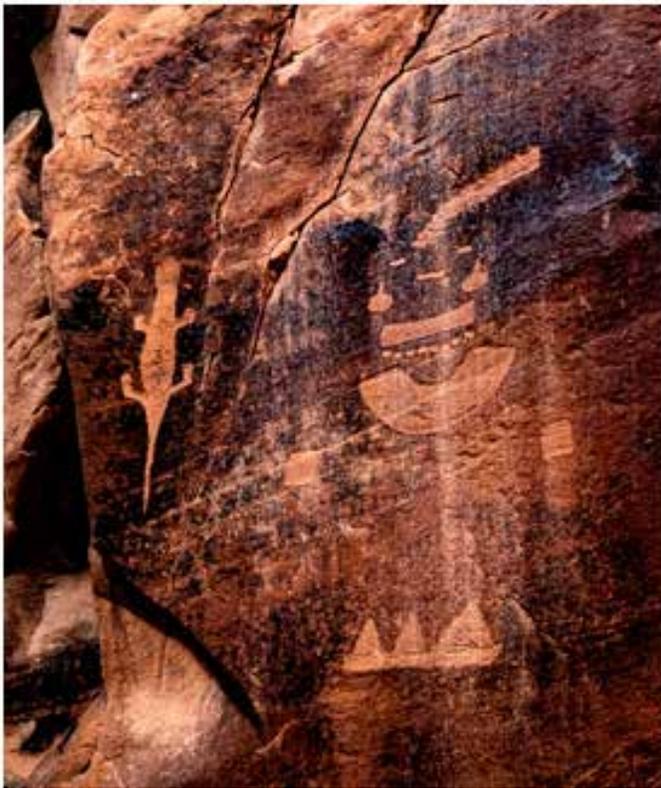


Fig. 20. Portraits of Hactcin (mountain spirits) engraved high up on the cliff face. Symbols for mountains accompany this Hactcin and a salamander, associated with bringing rain in the Apache rain ceremony (Opler 1994, 217). The salamander's front feet are blunt, and the hind feet point forward. The lizard has long fingers and thrusts its back legs out and the hind feet point to the side.

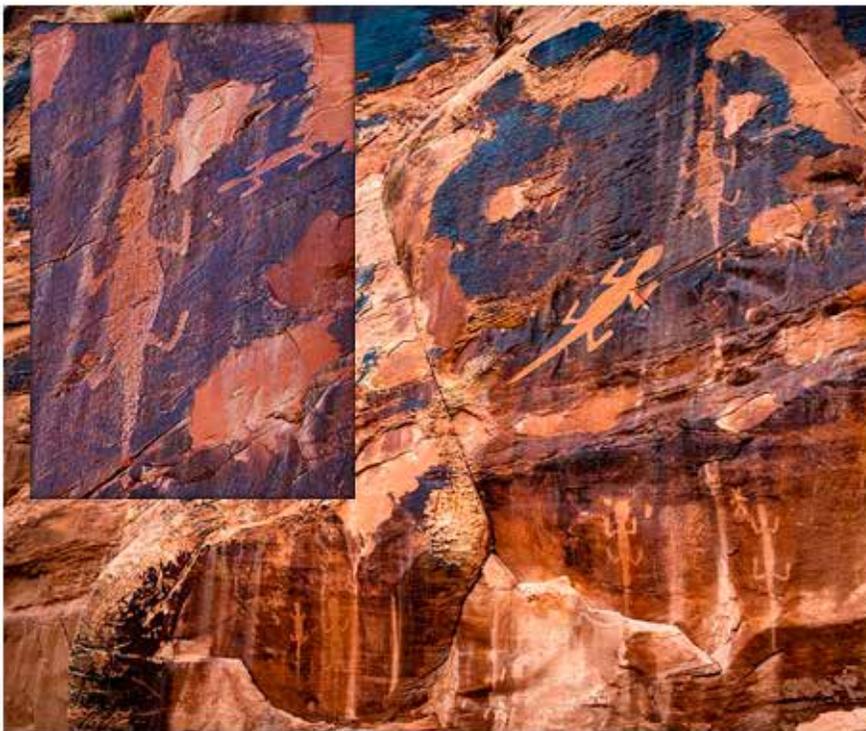


Fig. 21. This panel has seven salamanders headed toward a human figure at the top. A close-up in the left-hand corner shows the human figure gesturing to the salamanders to come toward him, as if inviting them to a rain ceremony.



Fig. 22. View of the approach to Split Rock site on the right. Inside the Split Rock site are the engraved outlines of Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman facing each other.

a reptile like a lizard but with the hind feet pointed forward. The Apache ethnography gives no special significance to lizards, but the salamander is always included in rain ceremonies. Compare the profiles of a salamander (left) and a lizard (right) (fig. 20). Further up the mountain is a panel with seven salamanders of different sizes. They are positioned vertically, facing a lone Hactcin figure at the very top. He is gesturing with arms toward the creatures and seems to be engaging their power to bring rain (fig. 21).

The creation of Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman

The creation of man takes place in an area where the rock formation sets the stage for this event. The creation story dictates the cardinal direction that each gender faces, that is, men face the east and women face the west. There is a monolithic rock outcropping within view from the Emergence panel (fig. 22).

The myth states that First Man was created by Black Hactcin, as he drew the outline of himself in the sand. He did the same for First Woman. On the walls inside of the vertical crack called Split Rock are the images of First Man facing east and First Woman facing west (fig. 23).

Black Hactcin makes the First Man and asks him to get up and walk. Then he creates First Woman and does the

same for her. The names of these first two were Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman. The creation of First Man and First Woman is explained in detail:

So, all the birds and animals gathered all different objects: pollen, specular iron ore, water scum, all kinds of pollen, from corn, tule, and the trees ... They put these all together. They added red ochre, white clay, white stone, jet, turquoise, red stone, Mexican opal, abalone, and assorted valuable stones. They put all these before Black Hactcin. He told them, "You must stay a little distance from me. I don't want you to see what I make."

He stood to the east, then to the south, then to the west, then to the north. He traced an outline of a figure on the ground, making it just like his own body, for the Hactcin was shaped just as we are today. He traced the outline with pollen. The other objects and the precious stones he placed around on the inside, and they became the flesh and bones. The veins were of turquoise, the blood of red ochre, the skin of coral, the bones of white rock, the fingernails were of Mexican opal, the pupil of the eye of jet, the whites of the eyes of abalone, the marrow in the bones of white clay, and the teeth, too, were of Mexican opal. He took a dark cloud and out of it fashioned the hair. It becomes a white cloud when you are old.

This was a man who Black Hactcin was making. And

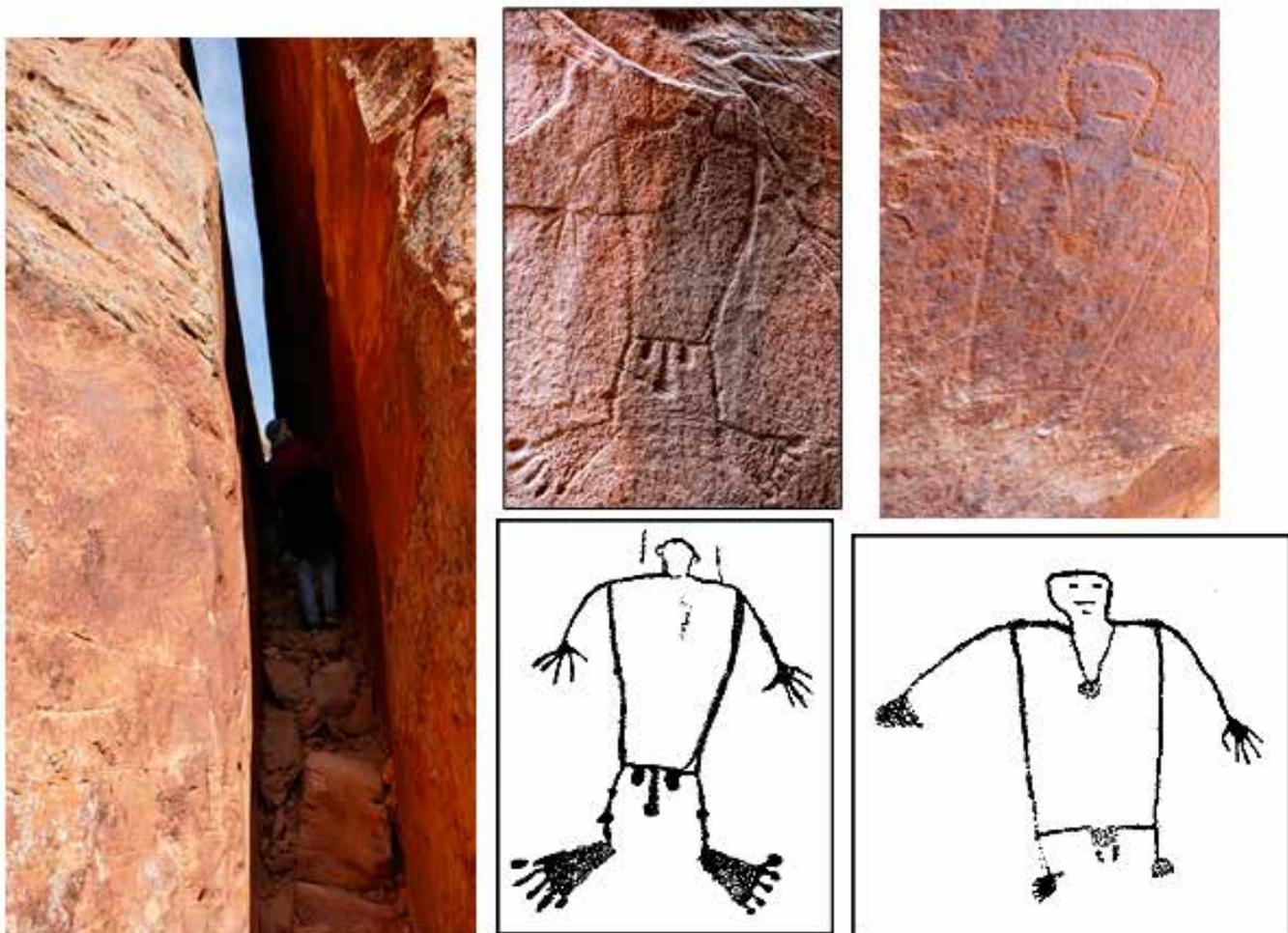


Fig. 23. Photograph showing the scale of the slot as one enters. Inside are large engraved outlines of First Man facing east on the left, and First Woman facing west on the right side.

now the man came to life.¹

Along the wall preceding the Split Rock feature is a simple stylized line engraving of a generic anthropomorph in different postures (fig. 24).

The single figure at the top has a round head with an outline body with feet and hands as he was drawn in the sand. The series of anthropomorphs below him have distinguishing features and postures. The one on the left is sitting down. The second one is standing with a solid pecked head indicating that hair has been added. The third one is outlined and the fourth one fully pecked in showing a transition from

outline to full body. On the far right is a full body figure with one foot pointed horizontally and one foot pointed down. I personally believe the outlined figures are stages of Man as he was drawn in the sand, and the solid pecked figures are “finished” Man, as he learns to walk and step away on the right foot first. The description of this transaction is described in the myth like this.

He was lying down, face downward, with his arms outstretched. The birds tried to look but could not make out what it was. “Do not look,” said Black Hactcin ...

“Sit up,” commanded Black Hactcin to the man, and he was sitting up now...

Now Black Hactcin was teaching him to walk. “Step forward,” he said and made him step with his right foot first, and then his left again.

¹ Hactcin sent Wind into the body of the man to render him animate. The whorls at the ends of the fingers indicate the path of the wind at the time of the creation of man. For at death breath or Wind is said to leave the body from the soles of the feet, the whorls at the bottoms of the feet representing the path of the wind in its exit) (Opler 1938, 4).

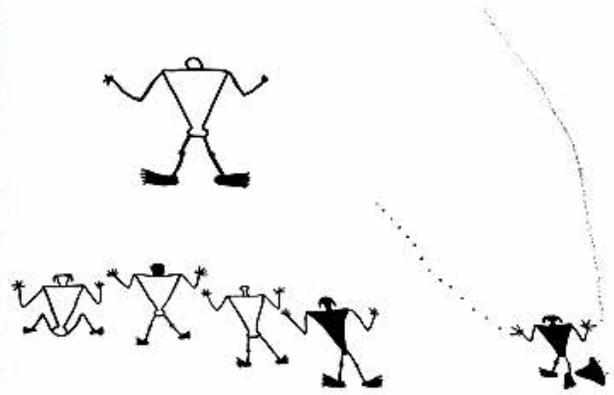


Fig. 24. Photograph of the side panel with the narrative creating First Man. He is shown face down. Then he is told to sit up and is shown with his knees bent sitting. Then he is shown with his head pecked in full with “hair from a cloud” on his head. Then he is shown from an outline to a fully pecked “finished man”. Then he is told to walk by stepping forward with his right foot and always circulating to the right. The same process is repeated in making First Woman.

... in ceremonial context the right foot, hand, or side takes precedence over the left (Opler 1938, 5 and fn 2).

The creation of Ancestral Man and Woman are both traced in the sand, in the image of Black Hactcin. Their outlines on the wall appear with large genitals to identify their gender. Black Hactcin adds material of greatest value for their flesh and eyes and hair. This happened in the lower world, and soon after the people needed to climb up to the next world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, ethnographic analogy is a valuable addition to the interpretation of prehistoric art, if the correlation with mythical text can be demonstrated. The foundation myths of Jicarilla Apache have survived relatively free of outside influences. Animism with Apachean particulars includes cultural preferences of color and directions, gestures, masks, spirit beings, and geological formations that add additional support for the interpretations presented here. This is the first in a series of chapters about the petroglyph panels of the Uinta Basin. They include the culture heroes, the warriors, and the runners interpreted through ethnographic analogy with the Jicarilla Apache.

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- Figure 3, Zuni mask and Apache Gaan mask: At: zuni katsina masks - Bing images; Native American Apache Gaan Dancer Mask – Masks of the World
- Figure 13, 18. LawrencePerkins@lawrence3367. *Apache Mountain Spirit Dancer*, Apache Native American Drawings.

ETHNOGRAPHY REVISITED: WHY HALLUCINOGENIC MEDIATION OFFERS A DEEPER CONSCIOUSNESS OF RITUAL ART

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Limitations of post-Enlightenment ethnography

Hence, for us the question is: what is ethnography? More specifically the question is whether ethnography is able to explain the cultural formation of art. First let us consider what ethnography means. Generally speaking, ethnography is the analysis of cultural phenomena that manifest in a tribe or population with respect to the graphical references and discourse analysis of the speakers who belong to the groups whose culture is studied. In other words, ethnography refers to a set of scientific and interpretative techniques, both reference and analysis, that scholars use to understand human culture and human behavior. It includes observation, immersion, conversation with the members of a community or a cult, and keeping a register of information, with annotation, photographic record, and data related to the community or group. Ethnographic projects thus generate a lot of scientific information about cultures which had hitherto not been known or discovered. The first ethnographers in history set out to learn more about tribes and ethnicities which were not known to the modern world – especially, to exploring European scholars who had already succeeded in instituting a common body of education and learning all over the world, and especially in the European colonies. Modern education and research, especially anthropology, was already conditioned by European imperial expansion, trade mercantilism, and the industrial revolution. Colonial maritime expansions began in the 16th century, which is the same as when science and rational positivism were introduced in anthropological studies, such as in the pioneering work of German scholars like Muenster (Hodgen 2011). From the Renaissance itself emerged the problem of hoarding ethnic curiosities and the construction of

the “savage” other. Hogden points to this attitude of early anthropologists towards distant ethnic cultures in her essay *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, which is relevant also to the ethnographic attitude of the early anthropologists of Aridamerican (northern Mexico and American Desert West) cultures:



Fig. 1. For the Huichol culture the Wixaritári or Huichol art has symbols that include the deer (here the head of the deer's carcass), as a source of prosperity. Deer it is said, mythologically in ancient times, led them to the discovery of peyote, which is both food and its spirit guide. This example of the *chaquirá* technique in Huichol art uses peyote-induced vision for artistic communication, but the depth of the process is generally hidden from the tourist's views.

The questing spirit of the [European] Renaissance was displayed in the multiplication of collections in all the capitals of Europe, most of the collectors themselves were unaware of their importance. Few, relatively speaking, attempted by classification or other scientific procedures to ferret out the meaning of their treasures. The addition of new items as quickly as possible, the expansion of their stores of “curios,” was about all they asked.
(Hodgson 2011)

We highlight on the Renaissance to show that colonial academism (and anthropology) could also be traced back to cartographically regulated transoceanic voyages by European sailors of the 14th-16th centuries, who often functioned under imperial support and sanction. Contemporary colonization processes that started with this late version of maritime mercantilism is more complex than any earlier navigational expansions in prehistory. We are living within that continuum. Ethnographic studies developed in

the peripheries of a Eurocentricly constructed map of human cultures, one which continues to dominate material culture evaluations in the contemporary academy. This is evident in the lack of regard for the kind of art that the Mexican Huichol practiced for thousands of years.

In the scientific academy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries ethnography referred to a branch of anthropology which sought to register and describe the habits, conventions, customs, and the way of life of ethnic groups in the more remote parts of the world, especially regions that often belonged to tribal and non-literate or non-glyphic ethnic groups. Ethnographers collected relevant cultural semiotic information for interpretation of cultural elements and social codes and behaviors. Yet these ethnic cultures were already confronting the expansionist invasions of imperial cultures. This burden of cultural invasions can nev-



Fig. 2. Detail of popular Huichol textile handicraft with deer. The cosmogony of the Huichol culture considers the deer as the sacred animal par excellence, a symbol of sustenance and fertility. The sacrificial blood of the corn will render the earth wet for new planting.



Fig. 3. Detail of bird (a hummingbird) in artistic textile; the *Yuimakwáxa* drum party is a preventive medicine ceremony for children from one to five years of age, so that they grow healthy and strong; being which, the children who participate are supposedly turned into small birds. The ceremonies are entheogenically causal for the production of such imagery.

er be separated from modern ethnographic study, for the graphic portrayal of another culture through the lens of a foreign culture or discourse is bound to be tainted by an intruder culture and the assumptions of the science which it carries. Initially ethnography was contented to record the customs and cultural practices of ethnic groups from a racially independent and politically unbiased point of view. Yet the ethnographic project of German scholars of the 18th century, and then other great anthropologists whose views continue to dominate over cultural studies, all seemed to be directly and incontrovertibly conditioned by positivism. Hence from its beginnings, and then continuing to this day, ethnography cannot be separated from positivist science and methods that are germane to scientific observation. Classification, deduction, and inference are based on data collected from field work. Ethnographic analysis depends heavily on field work and collection of speech records, history, and the peoples' awareness of their own culture and tradition. In this sense ethnography is closely allied to the social sciences which developed in the 20th century. As we shall see, this scientific positivist bias in field observation constitutes at once the strength and the weak-

ness of the discipline of ethnography. Its strength lies in the possible reproduction of a lot of relevant data about culture and tradition, but its weakness lies in its inability to address the most intuitive formations of ethnic art. Ethnographic analysis ignores the psychic inspiration which lies at the foundation of what we today call art in the (Eurocentric) academy.

Ethnography (including material cultural anthropology) is therefore unwittingly blind to the question about art, namely, the beauty and moral value of art. We would go to the extent of saying that ethnography explains culture in a way that is detrimental to the very notion of art. In recent years ethnographic methods are used in what is called human ecology for the collection of anthropometrical and medical data among racially similar clusters or ethnicities. The ecological perspective is justified to the extent that ecological information helps in choosing or utilizing relevant diagnostic tools and drug regimens of modern medicine. But community health behavior may be a problematic question, since early societies were informed by very local medicinal knowledge systems. There are also questions of illegal use and appropriation of ecological information by big pharma. Ethnic entities often have



Fig. 4. *Oje de Dios* or the quadrangular and centric motif of 'the eye of God, a Huichol shamanic symbolism of entry into the heart of alternate consciousness.

a different system of medicine, especially a knowledge base, that is often exploited by pharmaceutical industries without proper acknowledgment of their debt to ethnic sciences. Again, though these methods (of human ecology) have their utility, which is indeed very valuable for health and well-being, they do not have any relevance for understanding subjective processes, like the evaluation and role of art objects in a ritual culture. Data collection retains its validity for a frame of biological references, but not when it comes to art, since art effects are appropriated on another definitive frame of reference, one which is based on semiotic values understood by the members of an ethnic groups and its divisions. Some recent research has stridently applied ethnography to art-like processes but not to processes that demonstrate exactly how artists value art, that is, as a transcendent object which elicits spe-

cific feelings associated with expression. Ethnographic analysis has been applied to fashion, film, and photography, and even to popular or mass culture retinues, in order to understand the meaning and social function of sets of symbols and to check how they are reified in socioeconomic contexts to maintain functional equilibrium.¹ But our emphasis is neither on equilibrium, nor on efficacy. Efficacy and social order and harmony are preconditions in the cultural sphere and are not of major concern to the artist. What is of concern is the inner soul, psyche, and vision – call it whatever one will – or affective imagination that produces the arts, as if it is some unconscious strategy of feeling and seeing things in a certain way, at once within and beyond a collective form of life.

Has Mexico ever been unknown?

The ethnographic project has produced a jeopardized vision of ethnic cultural elements. Ethnography requires respect, not distance, immersion and not scientism. Ethnographic literatures have failed to appropriately psychologize ethnic cultures and its precious artifacts. The German anthropologist Carl S. Lumholtz, who wrote *Mexico Desconocido* (1904), created a classic narrative of expressions of the Uto-Aztec populations of northern Mexico. But Lumholtz's narrative begs sympathy and concern for a proper immersionist view of a culture, revealing his partial understanding of the Uto-Aztec world view and the depth of their arts. I shall briefly cite Lumholtz to demonstrate how this alienation of cultures take place in the name of a positivist and descriptive science. It is time for the academy in the independent and democratic world to raise consciousness of this history of abasement through the ethnographic narratives of the early 20th century. In the Project Gutenberg text with English translation of Lumholtz's book *Mexico Desconocido* (Mexico Unknown) (Vol. 1) we find Lumholtz saying: "I became so interested in these primitive people that the study of savage and barbaric races has since become my life's work..." The Norwegian ethnographer continues his elevated "civilized" perspective and projects himself as the savior of the culture of Tarahumaras and Huichol of the Sierra Madre.

1 Kris Rutten, "Art, ethnography and practice-led research", *Critical arts* 30, no. 3 (2016): 295-306.



Fig. 5. Textile composition that expresses the Huichol cosmogony, with the deer (in the center), sacred animal par excellence, symbol of sustenance and fertility; the corn that is to be sown and fertilized is wetted with its blood; other deities will be the water mothers of the different cardinal points, *Utianáka*, goddess of the earth, *Niwetukáme*, divine mother for children, *Nakawé*, “The little old woman who put order in the world”, mother of the gods and vegetation.

In the present rapid development of Mexico it cannot be prevented that these primitive people will soon disappear by fusion with the great nation to whom they belong. The vast and magnificent virgin forests and the mineral wealth of the mountains will not much longer remain the exclusive property of my dusky friends; but I hope that I shall have rendered them a service by setting them this modest monument, and that civilized man will be the better for knowing of them.²

² <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/16426/pg16426-images.html#d0e5295>. Retrieved 2 November 2021.

Lumholtz tries to emerge as a savior by commemorating the cultural artifacts of the Sierra Madre, which he predicts will soon vanish because of the contact of these peoples with the Spanish conquerors, though in fact the territory had already been conquered for 400 years when Lumholtz visited them. The Europeans had not been able to obliterate the beauty and humanity of Tarahumara-Huichol to the day Lumholtz “discovered” them, and nor today after Norwegian-German anthropology has been already questioned to its very core. This is a simple polarity of consciousness that yet became a part and parcel of the mainstream perception of Lum-



Fig. 6. Peyote flower with its arrangement of the whorls as they are reflected in common Huichol art forms like collar garlands made from bead.

holtzian projections of Mexico for the wider world. But the most interesting paradox that sustains Lumholtz's so-called ethnography is the reference to *hikuli* (or *hikuri*) in Chapter 19 of *Mexico Desconocido*, where he speaks of peyote and other psilocybin substances with an ignorant curiosity and a condescending wonder about the presence of a drug which is "believed" to cure certain diseases and mental states. *Hikuli*, he says, is a plant that is considered as a god by the native peoples. A condescending, satirical, bantering reflection of the people's beliefs then informs Lumholtz's narrative, demonstrating that the ancient people could only harbor a sense of ignorant credulousness of peyote and its medicinal properties. In the following chapter Lumholtz starts to talk about the spiritual beliefs of the Tarahumara, saying that the spirits that they believed in were "lonely", and ones whom they "feared", and whom they tried to ignorantly revere. Ethnographic methodology is associated with civilization in Lumholtz, so then the narrative of

Tarahumara beliefs are relegated to an illogical mythical level. For Lumholtz ethnography means science. The Tarahumaras (on the other hand) are comical, romantic, exotic and irrational believers in the after-world. The *hikuli* provokes bizarre behavioral effects, hangover, distaste; it prompts a Tarahumara to walk deludedly on the edge of rocks without fear of falling, since it deprives the Tarahumara of reason and civilization. The Tarahumara are sensitive toward natural objects that start talking to them after they consume *hikuli* or peyote and other hallucinogenic substances. This kind of ethnographic record of the Tarahumara could hardly be considered as cultural patrimony of a people who are represented in a decidedly inferior light by the founders of that discipline. Hence on the one hand we have the centric and irreconcilable discourse of ethnographers like Herodotus who describes Scythians and Central Asians in the most awkward and deformed manner. Herodotus's Greek view of the outer civilizations is similar

to Lumholtz's characterization of the Tarahumara. Yet ethnography has the immense potential of revealing the most profound aspects of culture, if there is clarity and immersion, if the ethnographer takes the trouble of actually practicing the religion of an ethnic group and living the life. Indeed, examples of ethnic immersion and self-conversion are not new or unheard of in ethnography. In fact, such questions on the polemical history of art are raised by Emmanuel Anati in his book *Azores: a visit to the Island of Terceira*, although Anati is using field work to propose dating issues in the arts of the island of the Azores.

The entire tradition of ethnographic field work in the 19th century may be tainted with racial bias, religious elitism, pseudo-positivism, and the unconscientious alienation of some of the most profoundly visionary cultures in various corners of the unexplored world, from Polynesia, to Mesoamerica, India and Southeast

Asia to Africa. Hence, we may invoke a reversal of the European ethnographic project. Indeed, we could think of those foreigners who came to a new land as immigrants and became one of them. Reverse ethnography or immersion is academic salvation for the student and the practitioner of art, since there could be no art without engagement, immersion, passion, and self-conversion. The ethnographic self remains a debatable entity in the contemporary auto-reflexive assessment of European ethnography (Branchesi 2019; Rutten 2016). It is only through a recognition of the transformed self, somewhat like a butterfly, that the ethnographer can begin to understand the nature of the other culture from its core. What is then reverse ethnography? Reverse ethnography is a reversal of the self, a complete turning inside out of the personality and a process of appropriation of culture that is achieved after the ethnographer is completely



Fig. 7. Huichol bracelets configured with the *chaquiras* technique: both images above illustrate the peyote or *hikuri*, an element of the symbolic trilogy along with the deer and corn. The yellow color expresses the dye obtained from the crushed root *'uxa*, used by the peyoteros to paint their faces in their rituals (Lumholtz, 1900, 196-203).



Fig. 8. A talking animal handicraft motif of the jaguar but rendered in unexpectedly brilliant and unrealistic colors. The folk-art form is called *alebrije*, a carving rendered in *papier mâché*.

and empathetically unified with the objects of culture. The notion of hallucinogenic art may be cited as the best test of a true ethnographic understanding of art. We interviewed many practicing artists from Nayarit, Jalisco, and Guanajuato, who are tethered to their Huichol world view. Art teachers in schools, sellers of handicrafts, and simple people who ingested peyote and entheogenic substances for therapeutic effects were consulted for this project. We tried to touch the heart of Huichol expressions and visual forms. In our experience, artists always tended to believe credulously and yet profoundly in the merit of their substance-induced visions. The substance endows and enlightens the Huichol's artwork. Again, the received idea of art as a commodity of the museum, or the market could never do justice to our line of enquiry, since a humanist artist would still believe in the humility and transcendence that produced art, even before it made its entry into a museum. The simple transcendence of handicrafts and folk art is completely lost in an artificial and disconnected museum.

The Latin word "art" is more allied to the sense of *techné*, which means that for Greek philosophers, and in the sense in which the word has been widely used in modern European languages, art refers more to craft

or the activity that produces artworks. The sense of art as commodity is therefore inherent here; indeed in the real world art is now, as of today, linked to a market. Real artists, who take art as a profession, try to live by selling their product in an open market. Sale of art depends on promotion and marketing strategies. Museums, galleries, boutiques, and fashion houses are spaces or a forum for exhibiting and inviting an audience for artwork so that they could appreciate and learn about the artist and her or his work. Again, some art gets sold through marketing platforms, both offline and online. Yet real art does not depend on this economic trajectory for its existence. Art is something beautiful, emotionally significant and presocial. Art is created by artists, or practitioners who devote a long time to the vocation and gradually develop skills which produce a perfect form, one that includes considerations of symmetry, geometry, flow, and continuity of perception, and as in the case of Huichol, self-administration to psychic states induced from drug and fantasy. If we look at certain patterns consistently generated in arts that are inspired by the *peyote*, we see how ethnographic immersion might actually help the process of criticism and phenomenological recovery. André Breton's reflections on the effects of Mexican mainstream



Fig. 9. A badger (cat) which incorporates geometrical shapes and patterns typical to mental imagery evoked by peyote and other psilocybin ingestives. A badger or jaguar motif rendered in ceramic displayed at the state museum of Guanajuato, Mexico. Photography copyright of authors.

art in revolutionary Mexico, and on Surrealist artists like Salvador Dali, may be an example of the reverse ethnographic method of artistic analysis. But we could go beyond Breton to study not just institutionally acknowledged masters.³ Dali exercised a privilege of a point of view that holds him faithfully anchored to nature and visions that could only emerge in Mexico. Similarly, the simple art of common people, unknown “pueblo” artists working in their humble studios and engaged in a journey like that of the shaman, could explain the true value of art, the preference for color and outcomes of shape or configuration. As the Huichol art shows, color sensitization, hallucinogenic mental imagery, fluidity of perception, blur, obtrusive continuities, all help determine the typical forms of art and aesthetics. Some of the mystery of a Huichol symbolism like that of the *ojo de dios* or the “eye of god” motif (fig. 4 below), is reified as a cultural code in simple artistic expressions, and in the decorative objects and adornments they create and sell in a roadside stall. The vast world of symbolism is thus illumined through a hidden depth in the mind, created by the *hikuli* or peyote and the strange connections of social solidarity that give them validity.

³ Courtney Gilbert, “Surrealism in the new world: André Breton, Mexican art, and ethnography” (1999).

Entheogens help looking from inside

The debate concerning ethnographic interpretation is best resolved by acknowledgment of the effects created by psilocybins, i.e., psychoactive substances which are now designated entheogens (Ruck and Hoffmann 2012). Entheogens lead us directly to consider how ethnographic perspective might be reversed – as it were – through the reversal of the enquiring self. The ingestion of entheogenic psilocybins (like the peyote) changes the position of the viewer of culture and cultural artifacts. Reversal does not refer to something essentially opposed to ethnographic practice but a correction of the ethnographic perspective through self-abnegation and empathy. A corrective implies switch of faith, of willful self-displacement and the gaining of intuitive stance, even if it compromises rational certitude. Reversal implies replacement of the the older ethnographic attitude with an initiatory attitude, the moving out from within, just as the experience of peyote itself affords and enables it for a visionary artist. Once we start looking at the world from an entheogenic point of view the end-product of perception gets to be visible through a transformation of sensorial modularity.

Indeed, it is not enough to say that the changes are all sensorial, since they are also emotively heightened or mediated. The mood changes affected and caused by

psilocybins have been studied in cognitive behavior in terms of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) effects that this substance, including its variants like peyote, cannabis, and certain rare Oaxacan fungi, has on the functional reflexes. THC is a derivative of cannabis. Peyote particularly uses the compound called mezcaline, whose

pharmacological name is trimethoxyphenethylamine. The medical literature suggests that the peyote-effect is ultimately conditioned by the conversion of the TNPEA into dopamine which then acts as a neurotransmitter and combines with receptor cannabinoid cells. Distinctive uses of mezcaline are marked for pain

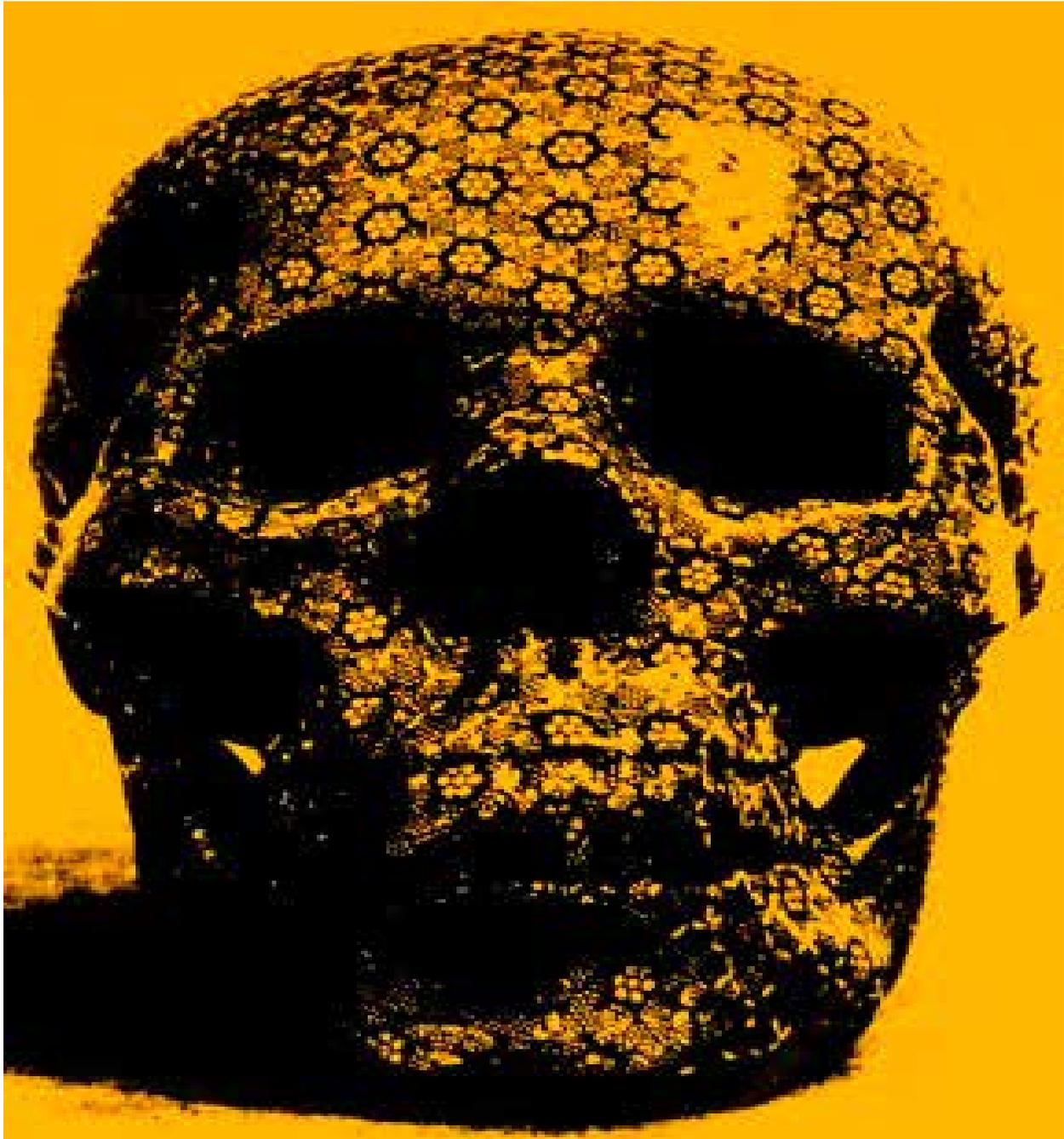


Fig. 10. Expo of popular contemporary art at the state bicentennial, Guanajuato, Mexico. The gods in the Huichol indigenous cosmogony are like people, but have power and seniority. Cultural transmission of religious objects like the skull above refers to the spirits of great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, and older relatives; therefore, the dead are alive in an analogy of something that can be one thing. The peyote-induced decoration only highlights the mystery of this belief.

relief and for anxiety. The Canadian Drug Agency, for example, actively recommends THC for patients of cancer. The medicinal property of direct ingestion is also known to induce artistic effects (Winkelman 2021). These artistic effects are paradigmatic expressions of the same dopamine-induced effects and related substance effects that create the sensation of “high” (see figs. 7 and 8 below). In the context of visual representation, the effects are visible in terms of fresh expressions of: color, in both deeper and exotic levels of warmth and saturation connectedness, or the character of “talking to” of objects geometrical or fractal shapes which are essentially hallucinographic images characterized by repetitive geometry, mandala, and fibonacci forms.

These three basic expressive characteristics may qualify as deconstructed ethnography, one acting in reverse, and as essentially immersive and empathetic, as when seen from inside out rather than from outside in. These exotic expressive states also point to another very important perception that has been hitherto neglected in the analysis of art. The idea that, in art, simple shapes can exist independently of human emotions, is a fallacy of judgement. Any configuration itself can have psychologically moving, emotive properties (Bartl and Dörmer 1998). Not all lineations are emotively meaningful. Perhaps the emotional validity or value or weight – so to speak – of visual geometrical contours are enabled by the specific structural ontology of forms. The basic Darwinian thesis of certain natural and evolutionary emotions being reflected in bodily gesticulations that has been celebrated theoretically in the literature of “basic emotions” as that of Paul Eckman (1999), demonstrates how facial action coding behavior of the higher animals and sexual behavior among others, become emotively configured for sexual behavior. Much of the prehistoric art because of its simplicity and matrix resilience communicates neuro-ethological emotion in this sense that these shapes are not ordinary, non-emotional states. The shapes of rock art are emotively valenced shapes which are accessed and utilized by ritual shamans and artists as acquired wisdom. Arts induced by the peyote dopamine neurotransmitter visions reflect images with “high” like euphoric content and exhibit lines, dots and mandalas in a state or combination of talking to. Natural objects like animals, flowers, leaves, fruits, rocks, and stones

tend to acquire a sense of life of their own and start talking to the shaman (figs 8 and 9).

What peyote endows is a sense of color, emotive geometry, and communicative accent to the visual forms. The ethnographer cannot expect to have known about the cultural process of arts until this immersion and the conversion of self, and the resultant appropriation of the knowledge that is produced by the hallucinogenic or entheogenic substance, is completed (fig. 9).

If Ott’s (1996) classification of hallucinogens as entheogens is accepted, then it is well worth noting that art can only become significant when it communicates theogenetic reality that lies hidden beneath the surface of our rational perception. To the Tarahumara or Huichol belief in the possibility, or reality, of a superior energy level, an ephemeral state of pleasure and excitement, a connected vision of things all framed by order, symmetry, harmony, and transcendence, is the first step in the process of ‘art’.

Geometric frames combine with hallucinogenic forms

Perhaps the most powerful entheogenic form in all of human culture is the geometric mandala. We shall fittingly conclude this brief assessment of entheogenic art forms from the consciousness of mandala and geometric art, especially as seen in earliest prehistoric inscriptions. By textbook definition art is conditioned by longstanding socially accepted rules, consensuality about forms and patterns and the semiotic effects they produce. But in what ways have hallucinogenically induced art forms been produced in early societies and how have they been appropriated? There is no realistic answer here. We can formulate this question, however, from a phenomenological perspective. How are certain geometrical representations amenable to hallucinogenic effects? This way of asking introduces to us the phenomenal (or perceptive) reality of the effects that a visual pattern has on the mind. At least two pattern types are very evident: the concentric circle exhibiting the Fibonacci pattern, and second, the mandala, which incorporates multiple two-dimensional, geometrical superimposition and accommodation. In both cases, as is the normal feedback to this evidence, cognitive overload creates hallucinatory effects of dizziness and swimmy vision, and also sentiments of unfixatedness and perceptive uncertainty. Langdon (2011) has done

extensive research on the Yagé effects of drawing following ingestion of the *Banisteriopsis* “among the Siona Indians of the northwest Amazon basin with reference to the cultural influences on the yage experience” (Langdon 2011). Recent work by Hodgson (Froese *et al.* 2014), Helvenston (2014), Mukhopadhyay and Hodgson (2016), Langdon (2011) and Branchesi (2019) are discovering the secrets of the arts that may have been inspired by hallucinogens. The same simple science of image perception was uniquely employed by the Huichol shamans of the last two millennia.

Conclusion

The evolution of ethnic art may be traced through layers of history and political organization in Aridamerican history of the Uto-Aztecs. The inner, insider’s view of this art can be appreciated on close association: pattern after pattern, animal shapes, cosmic entities, anthropomorphs, and the geometrical circle in its mathematical variations demonstrate – in the case of the Aztec, Huichol or Mixtec arts – the creative power of herb-induced hallucination and its efficacy for psychic liberation through expression and ritual. Hence, this artistic technique can only be appreciated through an inner ethnography of the people, a new revised proactive ethnography that does not need to justify positivism and ideology, fad words of post-Enlightenment academy. In this article we restore an insider’s view of Central American Huichol art, in place of the ethnographic interpretation of that art by post-Enlightenment Eurocentric ethnographers like Lumholtz. The inner, insider’s view of this art is revisited by means of a series of interviews, conversation, and dialogs with the practitioners of this art. In real life these ethnically conscious expressionists are artists, handicrafts personnel, teachers of art, psychologists, and also clear and simple smokers or substance takers. Yet they could talk about their experience of euphoria and altered states of vision, such that directly connected them with the culture of entheogens and their ancestral beliefs and ways of life. This inner ethnography develops without a regimented regard of positivism and ideology, but it seemed to inspire us to look at the art through the same eyes as the Huichol. Some examples of Huichol art, obtained from practitioners of that art are given here. They tend to exemplify the real glory of that art.

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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 tribes of hunter-gatherers 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 cam-

els; a non-virginal woman would cost one or two camels (*Amore e sessualità*, Atelier, 2018).

In some regions of Tibet, women may have several husbands at a time, while in Arabia and in other Middle-eastern and African countries, 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 prehistoric and tribal 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 case 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 differ-

ent 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 is welcoming comments and papers.

WHAT IS CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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.

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 conceptual anthropology as a commitment of the commission. With CISENP support, the ATELIER research center started operating in 2013, organizing meetings and debates, with an editorial section producing books and **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal. To date, 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 At-

elier. They form the basis of the new discipline, conceptual anthropology, alias the new archeology.¹

DEFINITION OF RELATED INSTITUTIONS

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.

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 International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences.

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.eto@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. Donations are welcome.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UISPP

UISPP is the International Union of Prehistoric Sciences. 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

1 For the description of aims, methods and results see a fuller text in **EXPRESSION** 34.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PAPER FOR EXPRESSION JOURNAL

EXPRESSION quarterly journal is addressed to readers in the human and social sciences. Your paper will reach academic institutions, libraries and cultured people in over 85 countries of five continents. Both, your text and your illustration should appeal to these readers, also to people who may not be specialists in the same field as yours. If you wish them to enjoy your writing you should be the first one to enjoy it. Be simple, direct, and express clear goals and innovations. Be stimulating and awaken curiosity and queries. Make sure your text is supported by reliable documentation. Articles should have a specific topic, understandable from the title. Avoid irrelevant references and other unnecessary displays of erudition. Tents of unnecessary references do not make you more scientific but makes your

article heavier and less fluent to read. Avoid dry technical reports or inventories. The journal does not publish purely descriptive chronicles and tries to avoid theoretical general disquisitions. The publishing language is English (American spelling). Articles are submitted to reviewers. The recommended length of a paper is 1,500 to 5,000 words. Articles counting less than 1,500 words may be considered for the Notes and News or for the "Discussion Forum". Illustrations should be pertinent to the content. They should have the resolution of 300 dpi, with a base of 14 cm. Each illustration should have an explanatory caption, including its source when relevant. Illustrations should be presented separately from the text. Both text and illustration should be free from copyright and any other obligation, and preferably not yet published elsewhere. Authors are fully responsible for the submitted text and illustrations.

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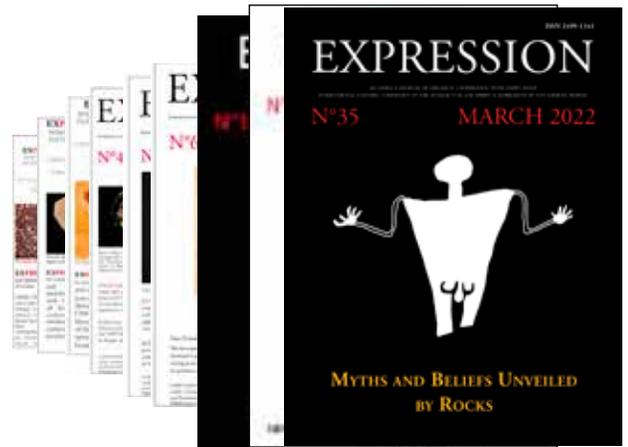
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VOLUMES 1 - 35

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Armenia	3	Malta	1
Australia	9	Mexico	7
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
Kyrgyzstan	1		

EXPRESSION

N°35 March 2022



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ISSN 1099-1331

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

EXPRESSION was founded in 2006 as an international scientific journal of
 The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences
 (l'Union International de Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques) President: UISP/CISENP, Emmanuel Anati



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

EXPRESSION is first focusing on human expression – 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 human signs, and traditional tales

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 man.

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 JOURNAL OF THE COMMISSION ON
 INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF
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EXPRESSION was founded in 2006 as an international scientific journal of
 The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences
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We now with pleasure the productive discussions held at the XXV Valcamonica Symposium, from the 20th to the 26th of September, 2013 in Capri di Ponte, Italy. Many speakers participated in increasing understanding about "Art as a Journey of Hanes". Many plan on submitting papers for the Burgos meeting at the "Atapuerca" UISPP World Congress in 2014.

EXPRESSION is hence publishing the Valcamonica Symposium conclusions as well as excerpts from the new *Art* publication in English. *What caused the

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

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 JOURNAL OF THE COMMISSION ON
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We now with pleasure the birth of the new Centre for Dawn – Archaeology and Anthropology in the Nişan, at Mezpe Ranova, about 100 kilometers from the site of Har Kharom. Take a look, in this issue, at Emmanuel Anati's announcement and call for collaboration from international researchers.

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

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

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Discussion about the Targets of Expression Research Group

EXPRESSION

N°4 April 2014



The theme of an abstract is to present a concise and clear statement of the main points of a research project. It should be self-contained and should provide a clear and concise summary of the project's objectives, methods, results, and conclusions. It should be written in a clear and concise style, using simple and direct language. It should be written in a clear and concise style, using simple and direct language. It should be written in a clear and concise style, using simple and direct language.

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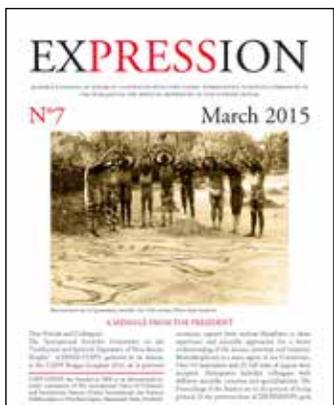


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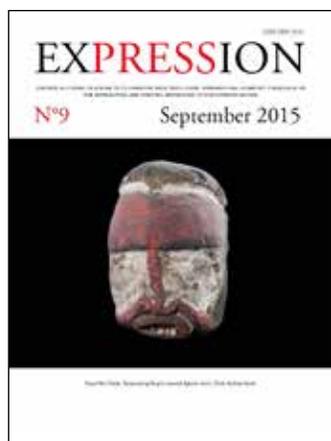


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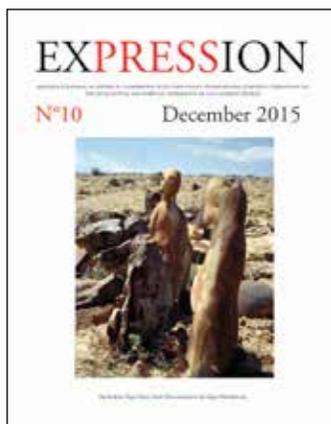
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September 2015

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).

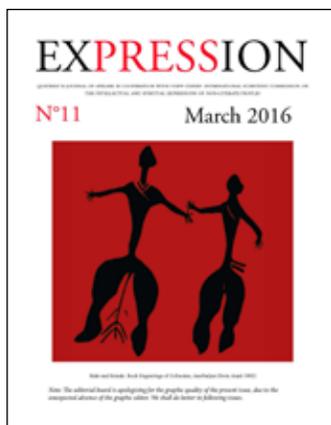


Expression 10

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).

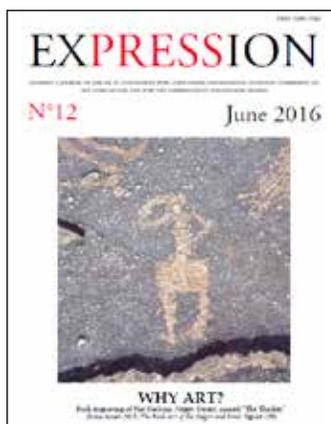


Expression 11

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).

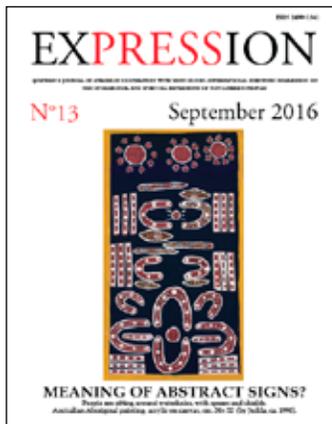


Expression 12

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).

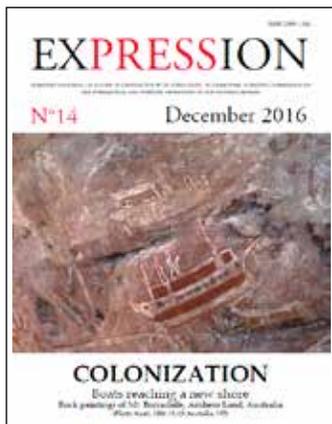


Expression 13

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).

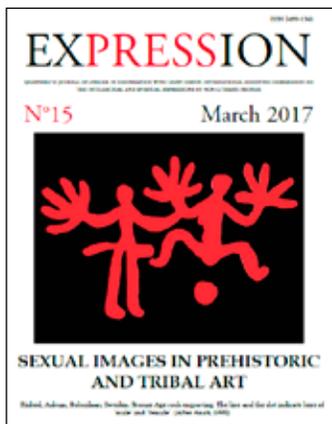


Expression 14

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).

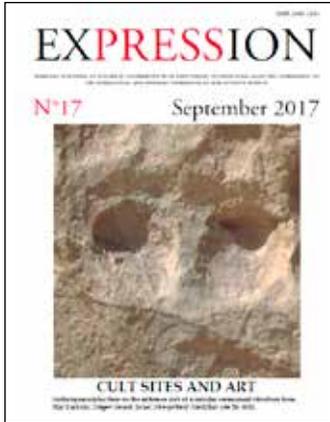


Expression 16

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).

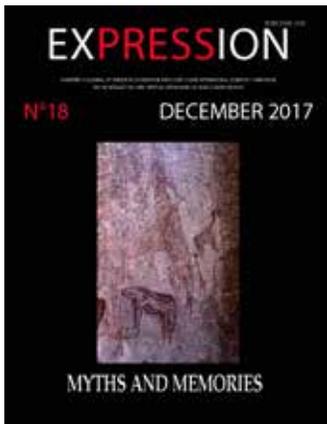


Expression 17

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 Ferreina Guimarães Santiago (Brazil).

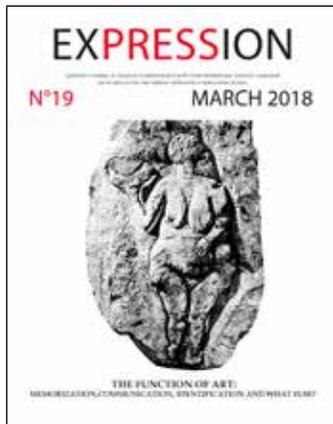


Expression 18

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).



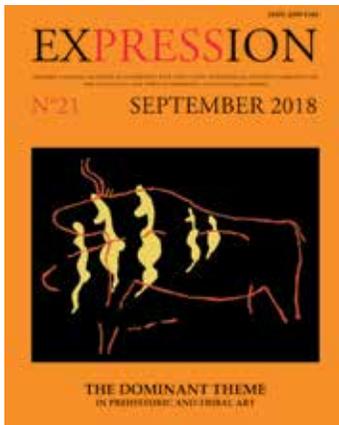
Expression 20

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).

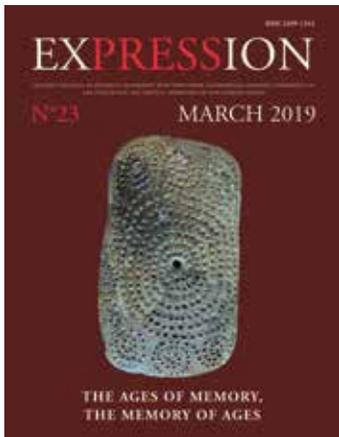


Expression 22

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)

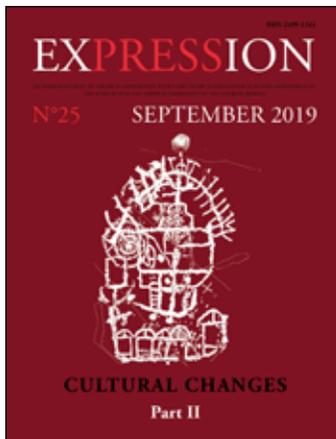


Expression 24

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)

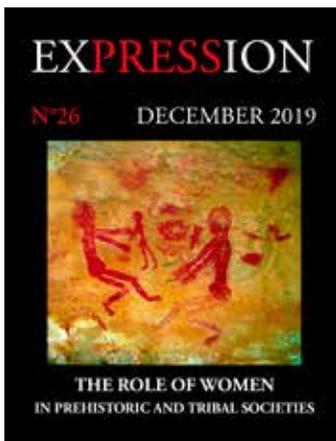


Expression 25

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)

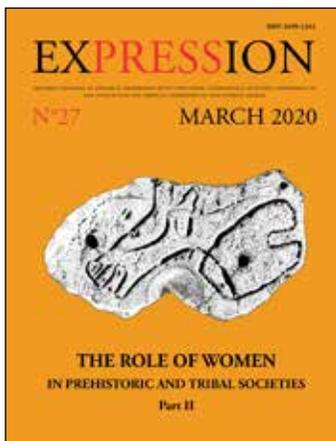


Expression 26

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)

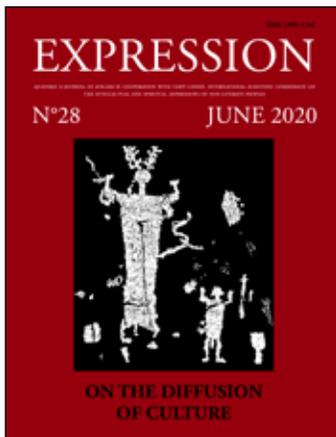


Expression 27

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)

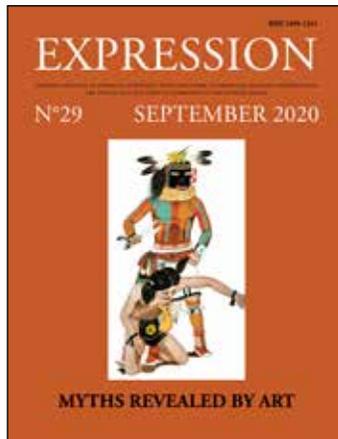


Expression 28

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)

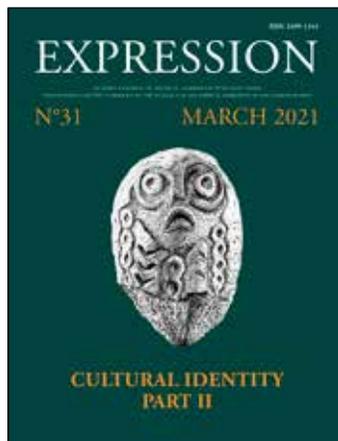


Expression 30

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)

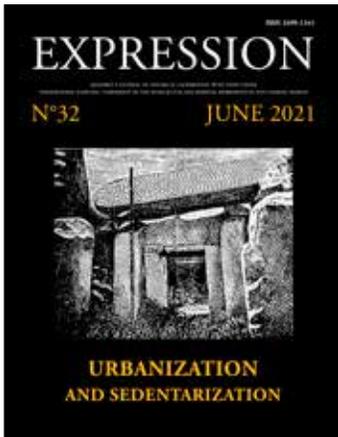


Expression 31

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, Matteus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva (Brasil), Terence Meaden (UK), Alessandro Menardi Noguera (Italy)

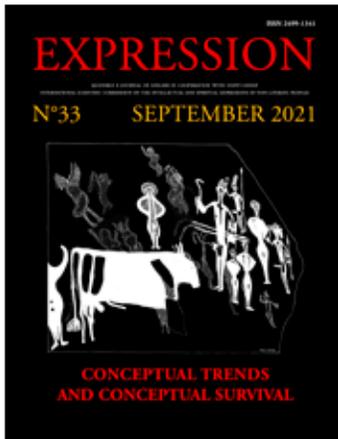


Expression 32

June 2021

Urbanization Origins

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Behrooz Barjasteh Delforoos (Sweden), Samira Naroyi, Safoura Kalantari (Iran), Solange Macamo, Vitalina Jairoce, Arlindo Zomba, Laurinda Mutimucuo (Mozambique), Mário Varela Gomes (Portugal)

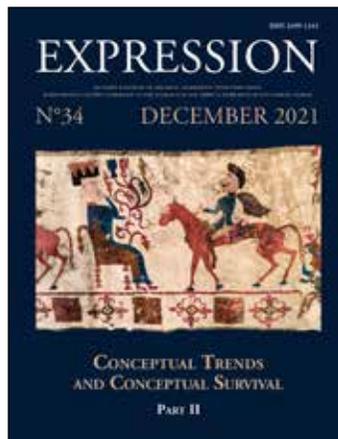


Expression 33

June 2021

Cultural Trends and Conceptual Survival

With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Terence Meaden (UK), Carol Patterson (USA), S. Rama Krishna Pisipaty (India)

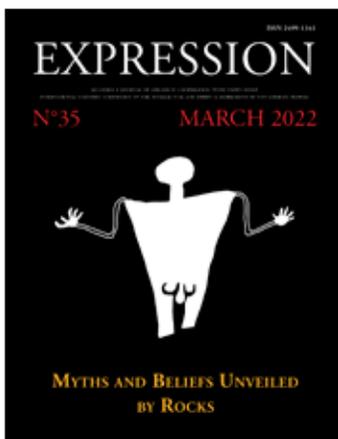


Expression 34

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)



Expression 35

March 2022

Myths and Beliefs Unveiled by Rocks

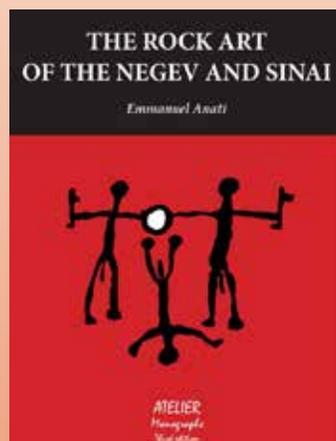
With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Amadeus DeKastle (Kyrgyzstan), Carol Patterson (USA), Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay (Mexico), Armando Perez Crespo (Mexico), Reynaldo Thompson (Mexico)

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Atelier is pleased to present

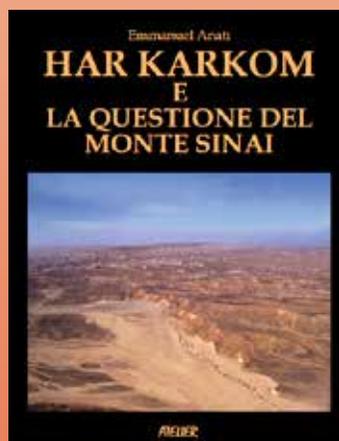
ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE DESERT EXODUS: NEW DISCOVERIES RELATED TO BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY

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

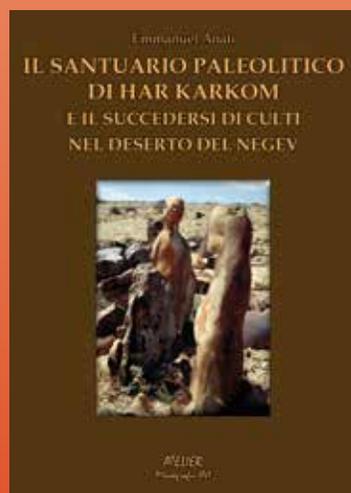
The book deals with a new theme of Neareastern archeology: the rock art of the Negev and Sinai. It presents new discoveries and reconsiders contents and assumptions of previous articles and of a book by the same author that dates back to 1979. The richly illustrated book is offering a new vision of this 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.



Anati, E., 2020, *Il santuario paleolitico di Har Karkom*

Monografie XVI (in Italian)

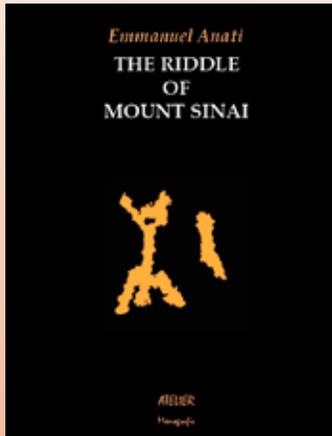
Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 104 pp. 54 figg. € 20

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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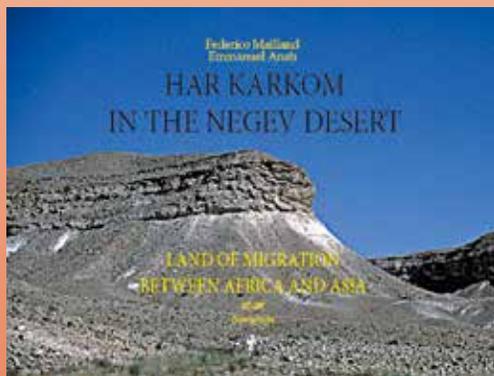
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Anati, E. 2017, *The Riddle of Mount Sinai*, Second English Edition

Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 260 pp. 141 pls. € 40

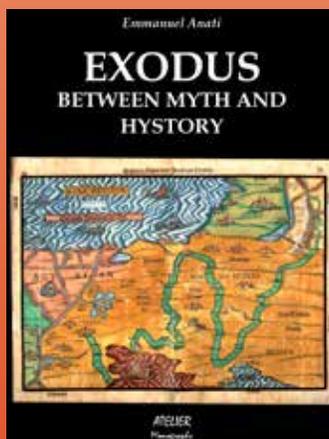
What is the true story behind the biblical narration of Exodus? The discoveries of the Italian archaeological expedition at Har Karkom, in the Negev Desert, tell the hitherto unknown story of the sacred mountain in the heart of the desert of Exodus, reflecting surprising similarities to the events and 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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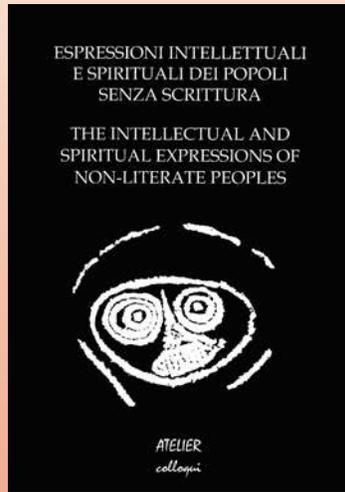
ATELIER' PUBLICATIONS

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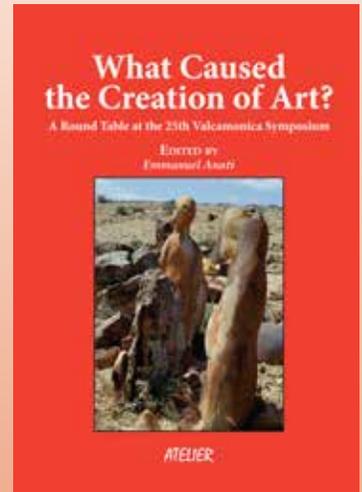
Il segni originari dell'arte (In Italian)

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.



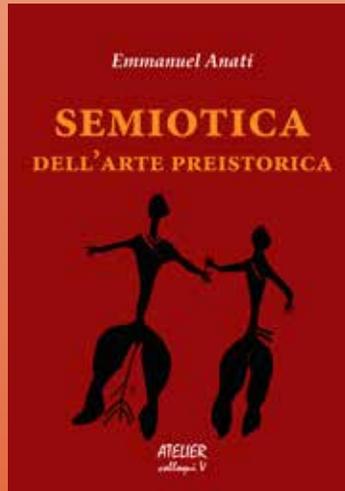
What Caused the Creation of art? A Round Table at the 25th Valcamonica Symposium

'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.



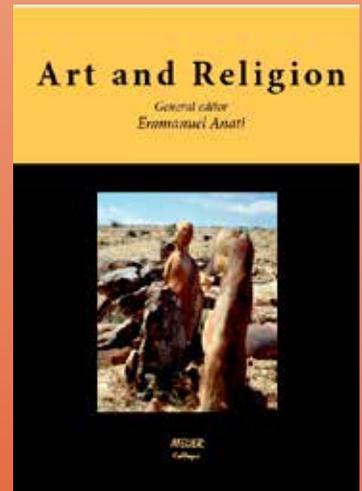
Sogno e memoria: Per una psicoanalisi della Preistoria (In Italian)

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.

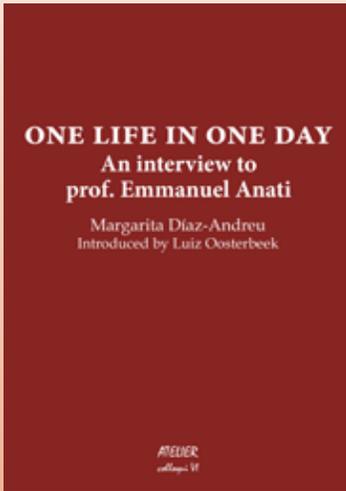


Art and Religion

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.

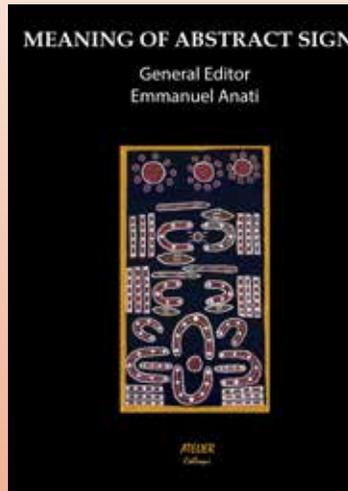
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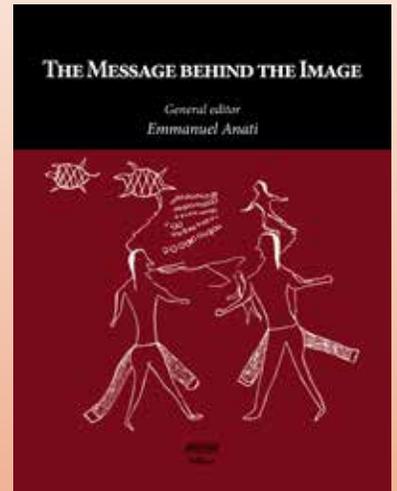
One Life in One Day. An interview to prof. Emmanuel Anati

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

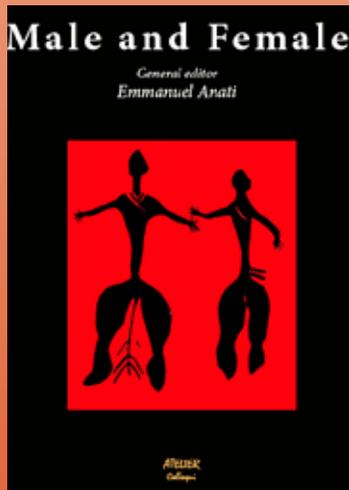
The clan was planning a fight against another clan that had abused hospitality hunting kangaroos in a reserved ground. The painter recorded the gathering of the elders to decide the expelling of the guest clan. He represented the elders and the warriors by standard signs. The art-dealer sold the painting 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

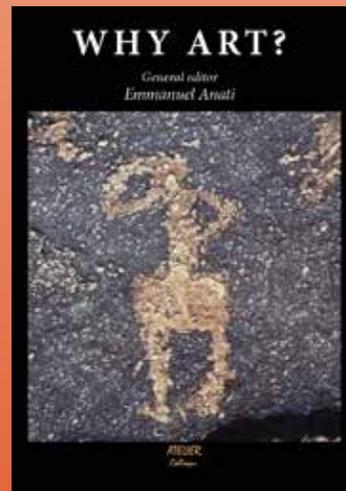
Prehistoric and tribal people have left behind millions of images, in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Was their purpose just that of embellishing rock surfaces? What pushed people from all over the world to record their memories throughout the ages?

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.



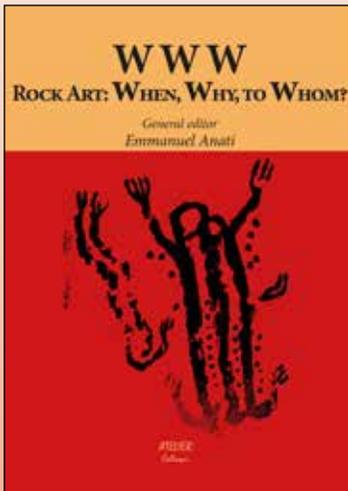
Why Art

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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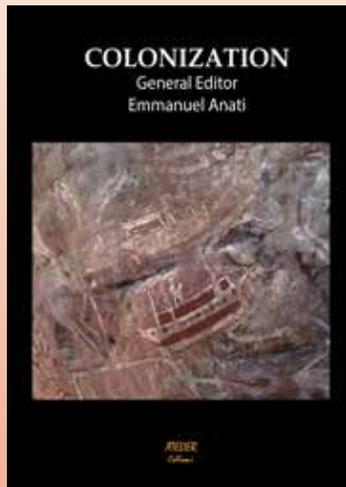
Colloqui



WWW - Rock Art:

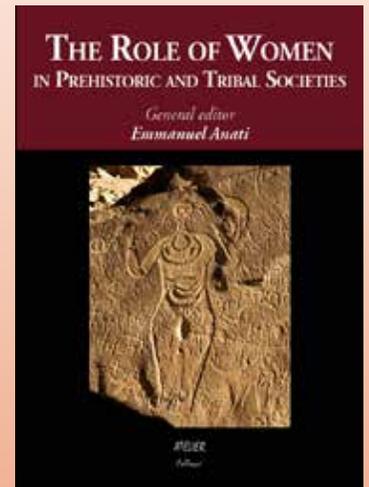
When, Why and to Whom

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

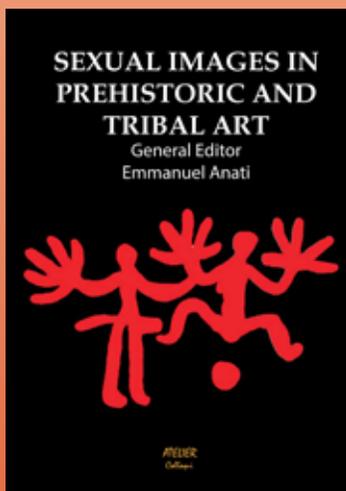
From an original land of origins, likely to have been in Africa, the ancestors of humankind colonized all corners of the globe. Other primates still survive in their limited habitat; humans live in the equatorial regions as well as near the Arctic pole. How did such colonization take place? Authors from 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.



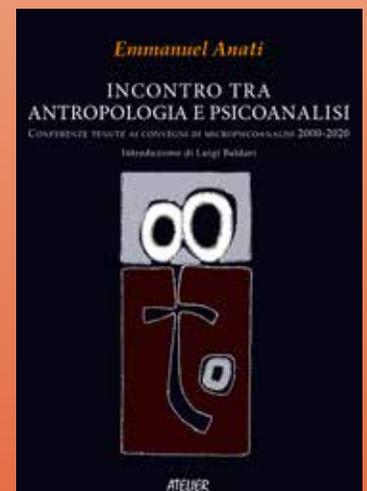
Sexual Images in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

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.



Etnogastromonia 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.

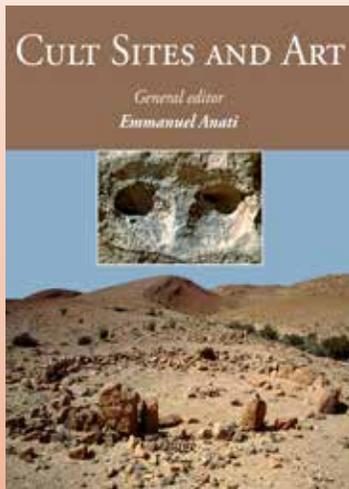


Incontro tra antropologia e psicoanalisi (in Italian)

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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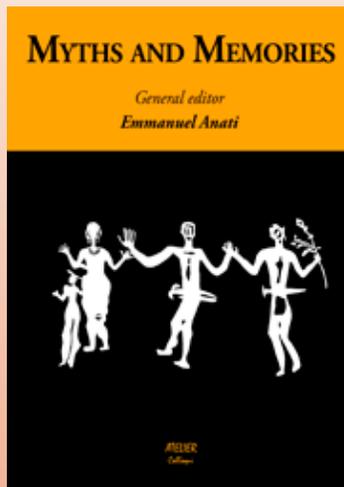
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Cult Sites and Art

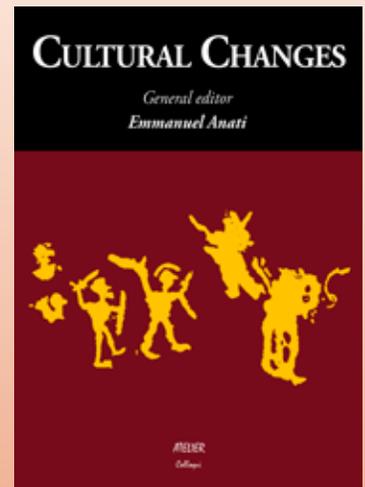
The volume is the printed version of number 17 (2017) of *EXPRESSION*, the quarterly online journal on conceptual anthropology. Sites of worship have had religious images and symbols since prehistoric times.

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.



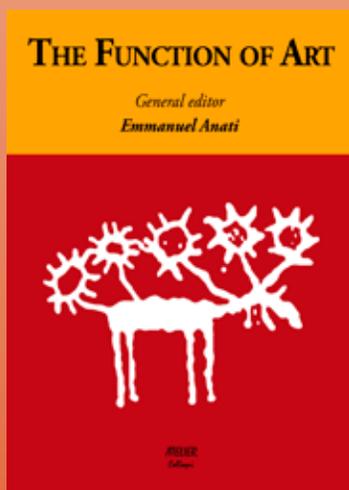
Myths and Memories

Was the mind of early man much different from ours? Decorated caves, megalithic monuments, early shrines, sites of rock art, are the containers of 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.



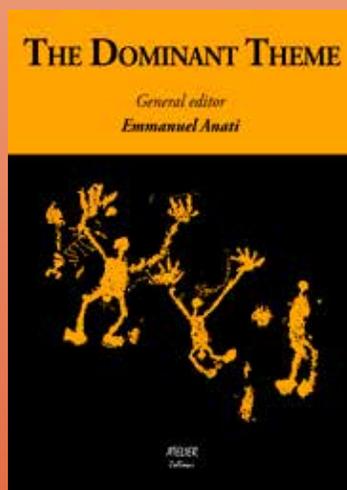
Cultural Changes

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.



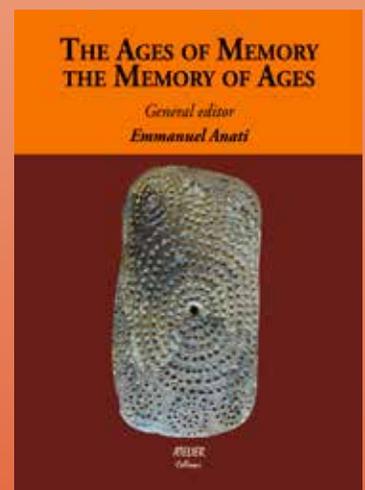
The Function of Art

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.



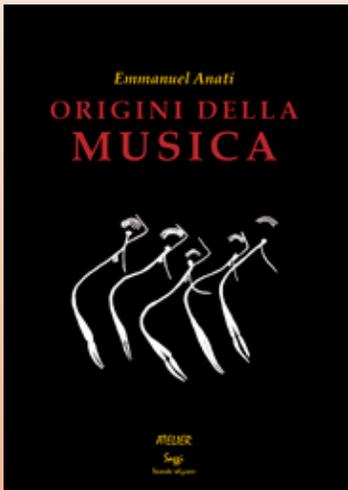
The Ages of Memory The Memory of Ages

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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ATELIER's PUBLICATIONS

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.



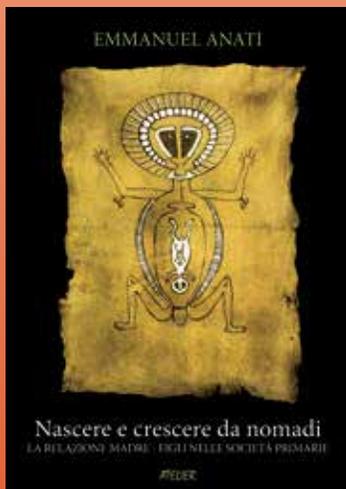
Iniziazione e riti di passaggio (in Italian)

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.



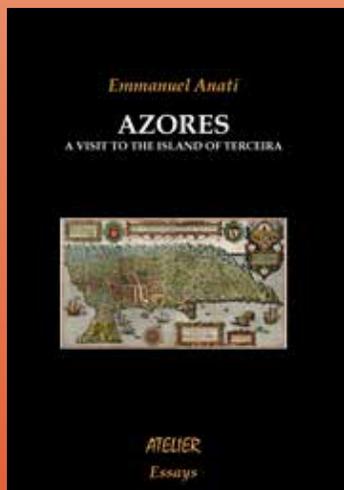
Chi sei? Chi sono? Alla ricerca dell'identità (in Italian)

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?



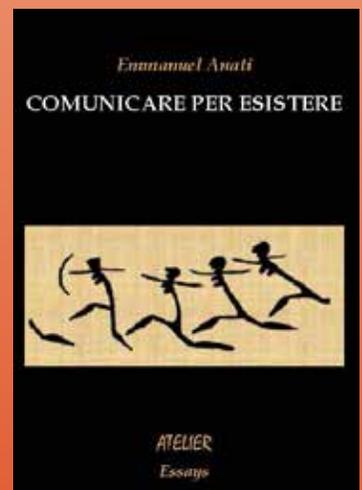
Nascere e crescere da nomadi. La relazione madre-figli nelle società primarie (in Italian)

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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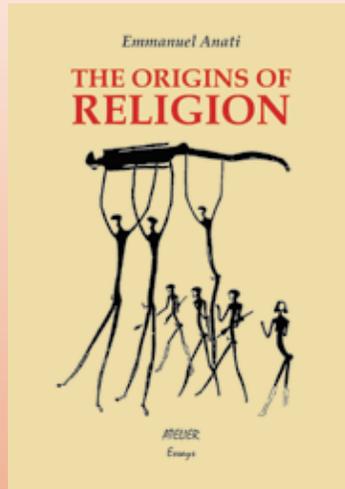
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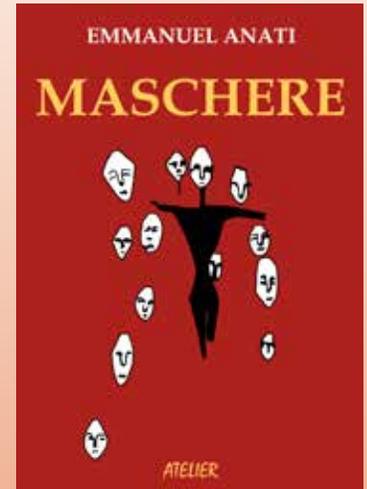
Mito tra utopia e verità (in Italian)

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.



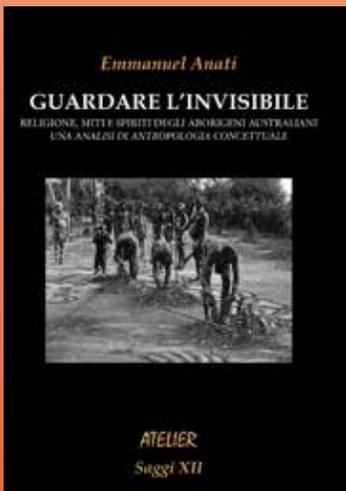
The Origins of Religion

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.



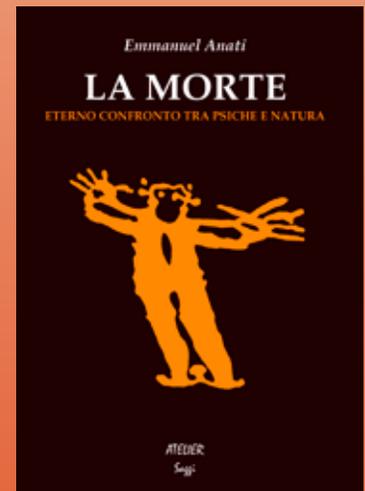
Guardare l'invisibile. Religione, miti e spiriti degli aborigeni australiani. (in Italian)

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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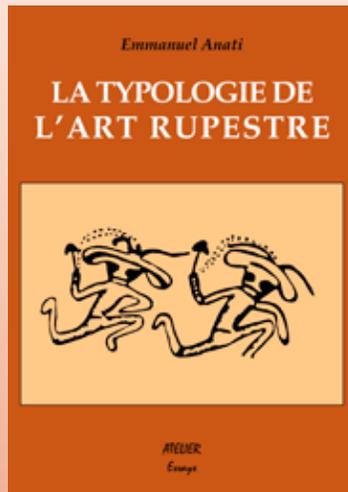
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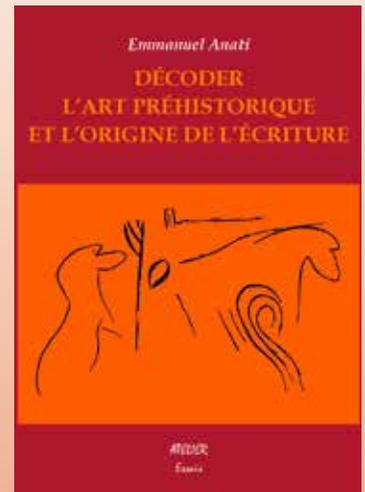
Ordine e Caos nelle società primarie. Uno studio sugli aborigeni australiani. (in Italian)

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.

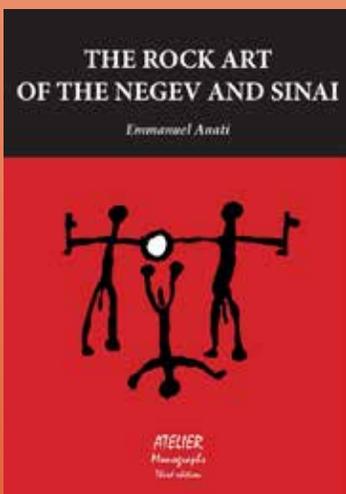


Décoder l'art préhistorique et l'origine de l'écriture (In French)

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.

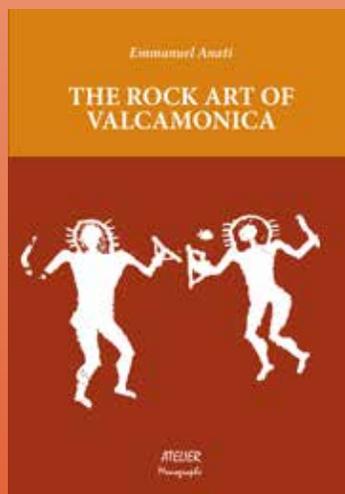
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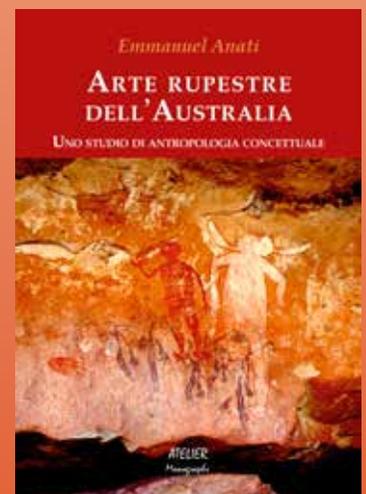
The Rock Art of the Negev and Sinai

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.



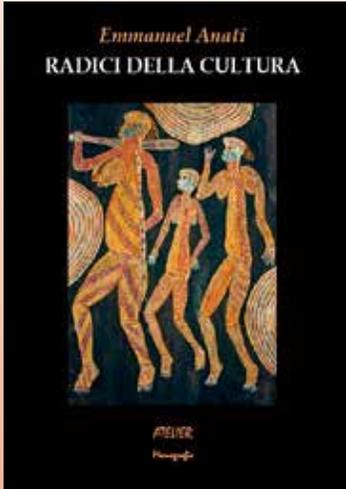
Arte rupestre dell'Australia (in Italian)

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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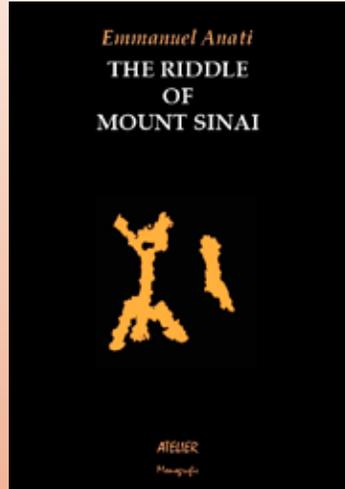
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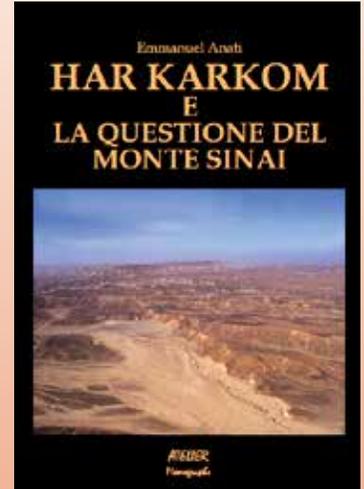
Radici della cultura (in italian)

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.



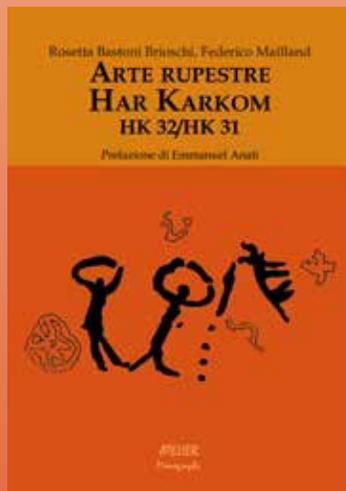
The Riddle of Mount Sinai

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.



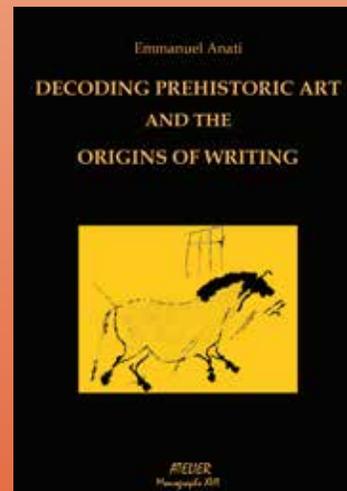
Har Karkom e la questione del Monte Sinai (in Italian)

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.

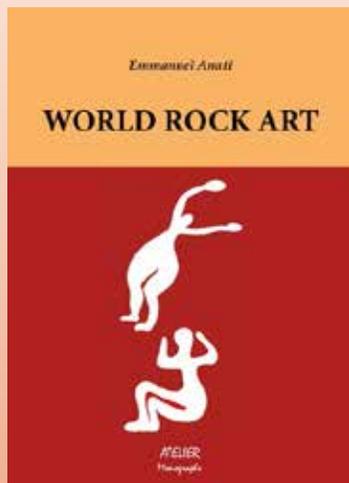


Decoding Prehistoric Art and the Origins of Writing

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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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.



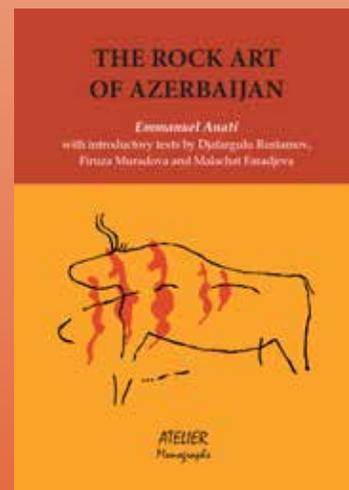
The rock art of Spain and Portugal

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

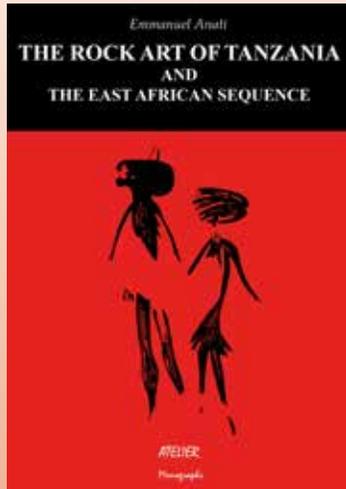
Over the course of centuries, Azerbaijan, was a great centre of rock art.

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*.

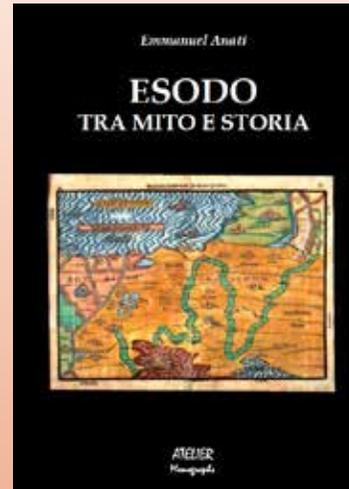
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The Rock Art of Tanzania and the East African Sequence

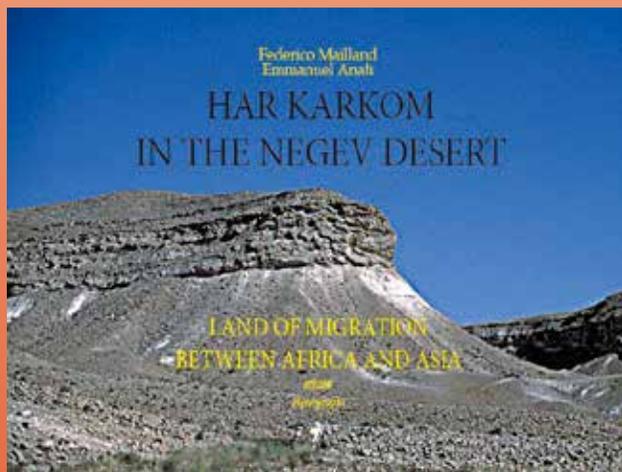
The rock art of Tanzania, in over 200 caves and rock shelters, is presented in this book using the analytical method of Conceptual Anthropology. Stylistic phases and periods are covering millennia.



Exodus

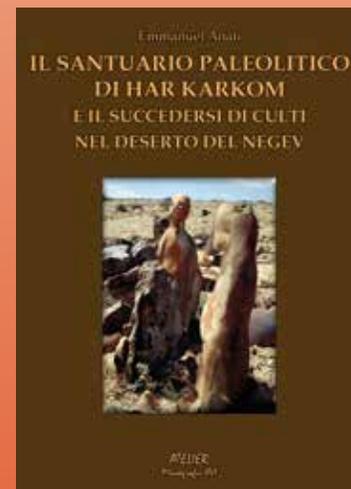
Between Myth and History

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.



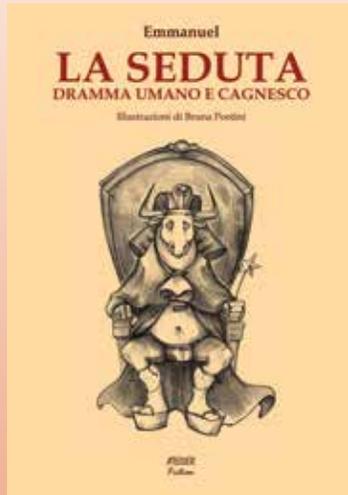
Il santuario paleolitico di Har Karkom (in italian)

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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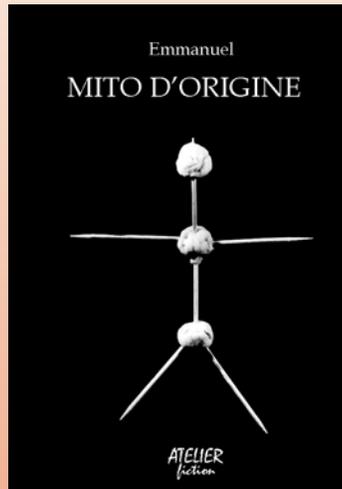
Fiction



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.

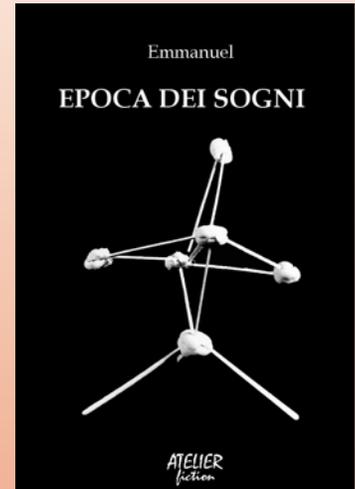


Mito d'origine Epoca dei Sogni (in Italian)

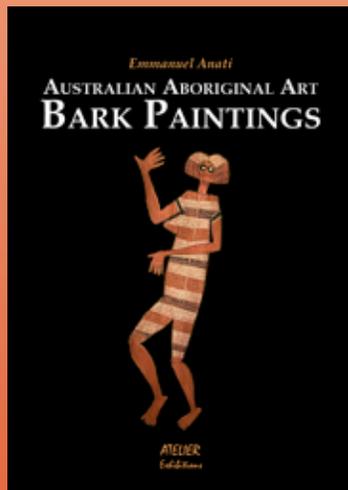
The first works of Atelier Fiction, Mito d'Origine and Epoca dei Sogni, tell stories that at first sight seem to come from another world.

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.

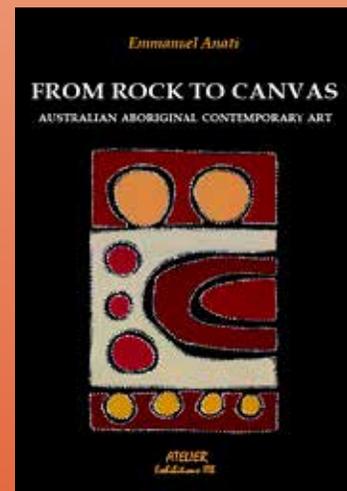


Exhibitions



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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