

# EXPRESSION

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ON THE INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

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**THE FUNCTION OF ART:  
MEMORIZATION, COMMUNICATION, IDENTIFICATION AND WHAT ELSE?**

# EDITORIAL NOTES

## THE FUNCTION OF ART: MEMORIZATION, COMMUNICATION, IDENTIFICATION AND WHAT ELSE?

Charles Mountford, a pioneer in native Australian studies, about 80 years ago, observed an Aboriginal young man from Arnhem Land while he was painting the image of a kangaroo in a rock shelter. He asked him why he was making the painting and the reply was something like: "How can you catch a prey if you do not paint it first?" The artist's motivation was that of empathic magic:

owning the image granted to own the prey. The same motivation was attributed by scholars like the Abbé Henri Breuil for the paintings of Altamira and other Paleolithic caves of Spain and France. But could such motivation concern all the artistic expressions of early man? Some images, like those of the fat ladies in Paleolithic Europe (cover image), the Wandjina cloud-spirits in the Kimberley, (Australia),



*Rock painting of Kimberley, Australia.*

*A Wandjina spirit producing rain and living in the clouds. According to the local Aboriginal people the painting was made by the spirit itself as a testimony of its presence. The small cave in which this painting is located is considered to be a holy place.*

*What is the function of this image? (Anati Archive, AUS0027wara)*



the Moai of Rapa Nui, (Easter Island), or the Ancestral Spirits of the Plain Natives of Arizona (North America), are unlikely to have been made for the same reason. What was their function? In places like Valcamonica, Italy, a number of Iron Age rock engravings turned up to have been produced for didactic purpose: they were used for teaching myths and traditional memories to prepare young candidates for initiation rites. Some painted surfaces of hunting-gathering populations in Tanzania look like depictions of literary tales, events or myths, accounts, and many rock art sites around the world appear to be receptacles of various motivations, to enhance the sanctity of the site, to have didactic functions, to represent cult images, myths, or to commemorate subjects or events. Prehistoric art appears to have 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 entity and more.

The definition of such functions may vary from site to site and from one cultural background to another. Much has been written on the topic of motivation for art creation and in an old book of mine I listed 12 major theories and hypotheses expressed by researchers in the last hundred years (Anati, 2003: *Aux Origines de l'Art*, Paris, Fayard).

Direct information from the field, by people having ideas about the sites they are studying, is useful for reaching an overview on an important question: What was the function of art for those that made it? Why did they produce art?

E.A.

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**Front page:**

*Venus of Laussel, Marquay, Dordogne, France. This bas-relief represents a mature woman. She holds a horn in her hand, which has thirteen marks (made by three different tools) in groups of six, four and three. On her right hip there is a forked bâtonnet symbol. On the left, at the bottom of the reproduced rock surface, there is a damaged part of the bas-relief, with traces of a vertical animal figure. What is the message behind this image? What was its function?*

## EDITORIAL NOTE

**EXPRESSION** magazine is published by Atelier Research Center in cooperation with UISPP-CI-SENP, the “International Scientific Commission on the Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-literate Peoples” of the UISPP, Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques.

The goal of **EXPRESSION** is to promote knowledge and ideas concerning the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate societies. It is an open forum in conceptual anthropology, welcoming contributions. Colleagues having something to say will find space in this e-magazine, which is reaching people of culture and academic institutions in over 70 countries. Papers should have precise goals, conceived for this kind of audience, and possibly well illustrated. Letters on current topics and short notes are welcome and may be included in the section “Discussion Forum.” Authors are fully responsible for their ideas and for the information and illustrations they submit.

Publication in **EXPRESSION** magazine does not imply that the publishers and/or the editors agree with the exposed ideas. Papers are submitted to reviewers for their evaluation, but controversial ideas, if they make sense, are not censured. New ideas and concepts are welcome; they may awaken debates and criticism. Time will be their judge.

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## PRESENTATION OF PAPERS IN THE 2018 CONGRESS OF UISPP

The papers included in this issue may be presented in the above congress. Authors should confirm their intent to attend the Congress.

# DISCUSSION FORUM

The Discussion Forum invites readers to be active in debates of worldwide interest in conceptual anthropology

## THE DOMINANT THEME

Each assemblage of prehistoric and tribal art has a dominant theme.

Some ethnic groups focus their visual art on anthropomorphic figures, others on animals, or even on a specific animal, and others again on signs, symbols or ideograms. Well-known concentrations of prehistoric art display millenary sequences of different phases showing changes in the dominant theme from one period to another. In regions like Gobustan (Azerbaijan), Arnhem Land (Australia) or the Kondoa Province (Tanzania), stratigraphic successions of rock art phases show flat changes in the dominant theme, from one phase to the other. What is the meaning and function of the dominant theme? Whatever the case, totemic, magic, economic or else, it reflects the concern of the artist.

Visual art is a mirror of the mind and soul of the artist, it is the expression of his/her concerns. Visual art follows common grammatical and syntactic rules, as elaborated in a recent monographic study (*World Rock Art*, Atelier. edit, 2015). The dominant theme is one of the factors defining the identity of patterns. It turns up to be a diagnostic element to define the conceptual, economic and social structure of the artist's society. It also awakens new indications on the issue of the "dominant concern", which is a recurring social pattern in every culture and every period. A practical example, regarding the rock art of Tanzania,

is presented in issue 18 of **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal.

Dominant themes are present also in urban societies. The dominant theme will not be the same in the frescoes of a Christian church and in those of a Buddhist temple, though in both cases the dominant theme will be that of anthropomorphic images. The ideograms associated to the pictograms will clarify the different identities. In the cases of hunters-gatherers, the dominant theme will not be the same in the paintings of bison hunters and in those of snail eaters and collectors.

A forthcoming issue of **EXPRESSION** quarterly journal will focus on this topic: the dominant theme. What makes different cultures have different dominant themes in their visual art? Colleagues and friend are invited to elaborate this topic, either on specific cases or on general or comparative issues. The study of cases may help clarifying the cognitive system behind the choice of the dominant themes. A step further will be made in understanding the mind of the art-makers in different societies. Colleagues and friends having something to say are welcome to share their knowledge and ideas in this joint effort to go one step further.

If you wish to share your ideas, please let us have the title and a short abstract of your proposed paper before the 20th of May 2018, to <atelier.etno@gmail.com>.

We look forward to hearing from you.

E.A.

## THE EARLIEST EUROPEAN ART: NEANDERTAL OR PROTO-SAPIENS?

The “sensational” news reported by media on Neandertal art in Spain seems to indicate some confusion due to the lack of consideration of typology and to the widespread geocentrism. An archaic phase of Paleolithic art was identified a few years ago and defined “La Ferrassie style” (*Acts of Valcamonica Symposium XXII*, 2007). It is present in France and Spain and it has a typology different from what followed later. It was considered to be the product of a Proto-sapiens, preceding the Aurignacian horizon. This style was defined typologically in my “*World Rock Art*” (2015, pp. 92-101). A similar style is known in other parts of the world, mainly in Australia and in Tanzania. In all cases it is the earliest phase of visual art. In Australia it is attributed to the earliest human presence there, the newcomers to a previously desert land arriving with their cultural heritage. According to tentative dates, they may have reached Australia around 60.000 BP. The dates now proposed for the European examples resemble those from Australia and, likely, can be in the same general chronological frame of the earliest “Early Hunters” rock art of Tanzania (*EXPRESSION* 18, 2017). Who were the makers? Similar outputs are issues of similar mental processes. Besides the common conceptual core, could these various similar patterns have something else in common? If the various localities of this stylistic pattern are somehow the issue of common roots, made by people from an early diffusion, how can we define them? Who were these people? Did they have a common core, expanding from an African homeland over 60.000 years ago? Considering the stratigraphic context at La Ferrassie, I had tentatively proposed that in Europe, this pattern of visual expression could be related to the Chatelperron material

industry (“*Premiers Hommes en Europe*”, Paris, Editions Fayard 2007, pp. 73-78). An old debate re-emerged: who were the makers of the Chatelperron early blade industry? Homo sapiens, Neandertal or Proto-sapiens? How old are they? Do we have to reconsider the old axiom according to which the Neandertal people were the sole inhabitants of Europe during the Middle Paleolithic?

If the expressions of this peculiar style are issues of the same core, for Australia or Tanzania the term Neandertal would be inappropriate. The relation of this stylistic and typological pattern with the Chatelperron material industry has to be verified. The cultural identity of the Chatelperron material culture has to be defined. The possible common cultural roots of this archaic pattern of visual art, found in various directions of probable early migrations, has to be clarified. One thing can be guessed: that in Europe, like in Australia, this pattern is an innovative cultural element likely to have been introduced by newcomers. For the time being, rather than stating its belonging to the Neandertals, or to the Sapiens, it might be wiser to keep the old terminology and, until further clarification, consider it the issue of a not better defined Proto-sapiens.

E.A.

## THE DESTINY OF MUSEUMS: PRODUCING CULTURE ON A WORLD BASE

VIRTUAL MUSEUMS MAKE THEIR PATRIMONY  
ACCESSIBLE TO MILLIONS OF VIRTUAL VISITORS

Most of the museums around the world are important sources of education, culture and research. Some small museums may display little known but important cultural, historical or artistic treasures. Many of those located out of major urban centers tend to have a poor affluence of visitors and could become the first victims of the progressive reduction of

government support. Specific topics interest specific visitors, but they must know where to find them. Museums with an Internet website may join a world database of Virtual Museums. As a project to save the patrimony at risk, a **World Databank of Virtual Museums (VMD)** is being planned by **ATELIER Research Center for Conceptual Anthropology**. Indexes will enable millions of people to find and benefit of a patrimony that only a few were previously visiting. Each museum entry should include also a sector of "Museum shop" showing and offering what books and gadgets can be purchased by email. And also Museums Shops will reach millions of potential clients. Even the most crowded museums should have interest in reaching an audience that will learn

and enjoy their patrimony without crowding the exhibition halls.

Also collections and collectors without a museum are invited to join: by creating their Virtual Museum. Virtual presentations of archeological sites are also considered. They would reach a worldwide audience and let people discover hidden treasures that never before had an access to a vast public.

Museums, scholars, art galleries and collectors wishing to contribute to this project are invited to provide elementary information and contact <atelier.etno@gmail.com>. Kindly indicate: "Virtual Museums Project".

We look forward to world cooperation for the VMD, "Word Virtual Museums".

E. A.

## FORTHCOMING DEBATES

Readers are proposing themes for debate. Some of them may be considered in future issues:

1. **WOMEN:** their role in prehistoric and tribal art.
2. **ART AND ECONOMY:** relations between economic conditions and artistic creativity.
3. **SOCIAL STRUCTURE AS REVEALED BY PREHISTORIC AND TRIBAL ART:** how depictions reveal social relations and social organization.
4. **NEW HORIZONS OF RESEARCH:** the role of Conceptual Anthropology.
5. **DEFINING PERSONAL IDENTITIES OF ARTISTS** in prehistoric and tribal art. Can art reveal the identity of the artist?
6. **ART AS A SOURCE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS OF PREHISTORIC COMMUNITIES:** Is the choice of the themes to be represented and the associative system or syntax of the depictions revealing conceptual and social trends?
7. **BURIAL CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES** as expression of beliefs in afterlife. How did they imagine the world of the dead?
8. **IMAGES OF WARFARE AND FIGHTING IN PREHISTORIC AND TRIBAL ART: THEIR COMMEMORATING ROLE AND THEIR HISTORICAL VALUE.**
9. **SEAFARING DEPICTIONS: RECORDING MYTHS OR EVENTS?**
10. **REALITY AND IMAGINATION IN MYTHIC TRADITIONS.**
11. **REGIONAL PATTERNS IN ARTISITIC CREATIONS.**
12. **THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION**
13. **THE ORIGINS OF ART**

*Proposals for papers and suggestions on these and other issues are welcome. The Discussion Forum invites readers to be active in debates of worldwide interest in Conceptual Anthropology.*

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## CHANGING INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF THE NOMADIC BIRHOR IN JHARKHAND

*Imam Bulu (India)*  
*Director, Sanskriti Centre, Dipugarha, Jharkhand*

The Birhors are the most primitive tribe in India. Interestingly, they associate themselves with Lord Rama and his sojourn in the forest (Ramayana), and I have recorded their version of the epic. Their physical aspect is “primitive”, with long arms and bent bow-shaped short legs prominent in the men, though less so in the women. Older men and women have a pronounced stoop probably due to carrying heavy hunting nets and string bags of forest produce on their daily trapping and foraging expeditions. H. Paddington compared them with the orangutan ape of the Malay peninsula (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, xxxiv, 1855, pp. 207-210). The name Birhor comes from the mundaric words *Bir* for forest and *Hor* for man. I have personally made a long and fairly deep study of the primitive art of this tribe and find in it forms remarkably similar to our region’s Mesolithic rock art (frogs, nets, magical human figures, animals and birds but no fish; trees with monkeys, enigmatic symbols such as concentric circles, land and plant forms in iconic capsules, etc). The Birhors claim their ancestors painted our region’s rock art. Today they draw in the dust of the earth with sticks, or with charcoal on the walls of whitewashed government housing. They believe the frog or toad has magical powers and it is recorded that people having connections with toads have an unusual power over animals. That this remarkable jungle people are still living a Stone-Age lifestyle in the jungles of Hazaribagh is a unique opportunity to study them and their

beliefs, which I have done in a monograph on their lifestyle, sacred beliefs, hunting and gathering techniques, art and songs, dances, and an in-depth study of their ethnobotany which is based on the roots of plants on the forest floor, barks and epiphytes, charms and medicines from ground bones of certain small animals and birds, and the significance of black and white fowls for sacrifice by a medicine-man (*mati*).

They worship land forms. There is a recumbent landscape figure (RLF) in the form of a female lying on the back in the hill of Sitagarha called Jul-jul by the Birhors not far from Hazaribagh town, a settlement once surrounded by forests. Jul-jul means to light a fire; ; in certain times of the year like the spring during April; they gather for worshipping it. Birhor worship has very little ritual. On the south side of this hill in which the figure reclines due east to due west with the head in the west, on the south side of what would be the stomach or abdomen there is a 70-ft tall stone distinctly resembling a male human face which they worship as Mahadeva or Shiva. Once I met one of the old medicine women of a nearby Birhor settlement under whom I was studying their ethnobotany for many years. It was in the afternoon and there was no one else on the jungle road when she



Fig. 1. Birhors with their catch (Old photo 1970s)





Fig. 2. Birhor trappers with nets (Sultana 1990s)

folded her hands and pointed to this stone face solemn in the light of the evening sun and told me with a voice full of awe, "Mahadeva", as if the stone would come to life. During the first full moon of the month of May the Buddha-Purnima is celebrated by the Santals and other non-Buddhist tribes, and at this time the local people at the foot of the hill go to the top of this stone head and offer rice milk to the rising moon. This is a forest through which the Buddha passed and Buddhist relics are to be found on every part of the hill. The memories of the forest god Shiva Mahadeva and the Buddha merge.

Today the Birhor are increasingly exposed to highways being built through their forested territory. A couple of years ago I visited a settlement (*tanda*) not far from the highway where the government was trying to resettle them in cement houses. Looking about the settlement for the worship site I found it in a small cleared space amid the dense lantana bushes (*lantana camera*) and to my great surprise in the center of this cleared patch was a huge nut and bolt smeared with red vermilion. Upon my questioning one of the men told me they had found it on the side of the highway

and had brought it to worship it. An unknown power is a god.

I am fortunate in having spent most of my life on and off in intimacy with this tribe of which I am very fond for their great knowledge of animal and bird ways and forest plants, and whose songs which I have recorded are among the simplest and most direct examples of expression. The Birhor sleeps on the bare earth in his leaf hut or *kumba* as it is called. Their visual perspective is always from the ground up and in the middle of the circle is a pit where a fire is always burning, the family including the dogs and may be a goat or pet forest animal sleeping around it. Most *kumbas* contain a bamboo cage with a parrot or a partridge used to decoy other partridges when trapping.

When a Birhor child is born the afterbirth is taken out of the *kumba* from a hole in the rear, and the same sort of thing happens when a man or woman dies. There is no clear idea of belief in rebirth but it strikes someone now and then if a child is born about the time an old man dies that the old man's spirit has entered the child, but there is no set religious belief in these matters. They believe that life is breath and that when breath ceases life ceases but that wherever the breath goes life goes with it and this is shown in the creation legend in which the first man and woman are made by the creator Singbonga (sun god) out of clay and he blows breath into their faces and so they become alive and continue to raise progeny. This first man and woman were Nanga Baiga and Nanga Baigin. Nanga means naked, and Baiga is a term used for a medicine man, also a well-known tribe of central India, but above all it means "man".

The Birhors are not particularly given to decorative bodily tattoos which are an expensive luxury their more affluent agricultural neighbors indulge in conspicuously, but the belief exists among these people that the



*Fig. 3. Women with water and cooking pots in the Tanda (1980s)*

tattoo can identify a person in the afterlife, which means they must have some concept of an astral life. I think this is very important, because the idea of an astral life is an advanced Hindu idea, and very likely they heard about it from their Hindu neighbors. The Birhors do believe that there is life and soul in all things, in plants, trees, water, etc and that in the stone lies the eternal, the deity all must worship. The worship of the spring flowers at the Sarjom festival (Sarhul) and the bathing in the sacred springs where a stream starts, and the deep caves where some markings of the ancestors may be found are places of worship for them. And who would not worship here? Their knowledge of ethnobotany is vast and



*Fig. 4. An idyllic settlement of the Uthlu Birhors in the Danua jungles in Chordaha 2010*



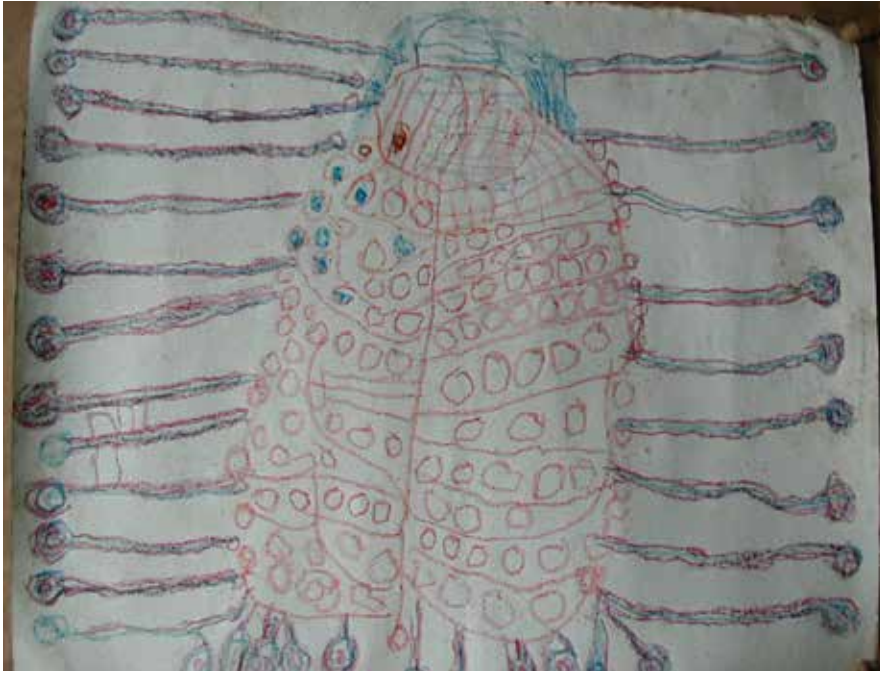


Fig. 5. Birhor artforms typical of rockart (crayons on art paper)

Fig. 6. Birhor Drawings on the settlement walls







Fig. 7. *Birhor Tanda in Chordaha (Danua, 2011)*

I spent 20 years understanding its principles in a rudimentary manner, but I can make out certain principles such as the sickness and the shape of the root or the nature of the bird or animal whose bone or hair was used in the treatment having an esoteric connection. The black or white birds sacrificed, the number of peppercorns or quantity of rock sugar added might be mere indulgences. But there is some connection physically in its shape or substance between sickness and medicine. For example, anti-venom roots are snakelike; the medicines of hydrocile are yams, resembling testicles; the root for arthritis is arthritic in shape, and so on. But the fact of the medicines working is proved by the large number of clients a Birhor medicine-man or medicine-woman has in the marketplace where they sell their dried roots on market days.

I have not found a common tradition between the soul and a bird such as between the soul and

the peacock among the Marias of Chhatisgarh. They make no memorials to their dead. They cremate if possible; when not possible they bury. There is no hard and fast rule. No memorials are erected. I do not think they believe in an individual soul. These people live a very hard subsistence forager life and have absolutely no luxuries except shade from sun and rain, food, warm clothing and clean drinking water. Their lives are elemental, so elemental that the sacred itself can be considered a luxury. And here we come to the bottom line of man's existence from earliest times and the urgency to sustain life itself the most urgent duty, and from which all later civilized social manners, customs and beliefs followed.

Because of the very rareness of such primitive societies vulnerable to sweeping industrialization and changed environment, we are on the point of losing one of the last living indicators about the past of our race.



Fig. 8. Birhor Tenda in Chordaha (Danua, 2011)

With regard to transmigration of the soul, not a single Western authority to my knowledge has commented on it in such primitive tribes. There is a lack of mention of transmigration of the soul beliefs in primitive societies by Western theosophists of the 19th and 20th centuries with regard to primitive Indian tribes, nor is there any mention of the religions of these people which are basically forms of animism and ancestor and nature worship. Their beliefs have been suppressed under the tide of vedic and brahmanical religious teachings which allow no place for tribal beliefs. However, Buddhism did not deny the primitive tribal beliefs which lie at the roots of Buddha's teachings. Although denying the existence of the personal soul or ego the belief in karma was seen as an existential human phenomenon of the race rather than the individual, in the

Buddha's own words. This has been altered and adapted by the different schools which appeared in Buddhism. There is a story of the Buddha one day when as a wild hare he met a hungry Brahmin to whom he offered his body as food, saying, "Collect wood and light a fire and I will roast myself and you may eat me." Does this then not bring to mind the old Birhor tradition of an old dying Birhor offering his body as food to his hungry family? Once when I was speaking to an old Birhor medicine-man, I brought up the matter of this old tradition which the Birhors still remember and I told him the above story about the Buddha, to which he replied: "Then what is wrong in it? Mahadeva understood the ways of animal and man and that the body has to one day die and it will make no difference." The jungle in which we were speaking was not far from the great centre

of Bodhgaya where the Buddha experienced his realization or nirvana. As I have noted earlier, the Birhors call Buddha Mahadeva. The teaching of the Buddha is that there is no personal soul and that it is but a part of the world soul which is the animate force of nature. The songs which I recorded of the Birhors in Hazaribagh include a ritual mortuary song sung when a person dies, which tells of the return of the soul to the over-soul.

*"Without It I cannot live,  
"Without It I have to die;  
"Both of us are one - Body and Breath,  
"In life It is in me, in death with It I fly."*

The foundations of the Indian spiritual culture have their sources in the primitive societies of the subcontinent. Buddhism and perhaps Jainism of all India's religious sects have drawn most heavily upon these original sources of Indian culture. Buddhist spiritual culture was molded on the nomadic system of seasonal settlements or shifting of abodes of the monks carried on in the Sramana tradition of wandering mendicants. Attachment to material things, even the body, was denied as a requirement for finding the truth, self was denied and the life of the mind was idealized. All attachments were rejected as untruth. This view of the world and the natural events of a mortal existence were accepted.

The intellectual and spiritual expressions of pre-literate societies express these truths in their recorded traditions and their way of life is the highest expression of adherence to these fundamental beliefs. The idea of karma or reward or punishment for personal actions among the Birhor is not related to rebirth, but is expressed in the idea of the good or evil that will affect the tribe as a whole because of their actions. This is the highest teaching of Buddha and he could only have found it among these simple people.

With regard to their idea of life I will recount a

talk I had now over 35 years ago with a wise old medicine-man named Babulal who was teaching me their ethnobotany. Babulal Birhor told me that the breath we inhale and exhale mixes with the breeze that mixes with all the winds of the world and gives life to everything which lives. He said that when breathing ceases in death it returns to the great soul of the world (*anima mundi*), the whirlwind, which the Birhors call *baliman*. This idea of the wind being the soul prompted me to ask this wise old man what connection there might be between the breath of life which he so eloquently spoke of and the breath which forms itself into words through which we express our thoughts. He told me that as the breath flows in the spring season from the throats of songbirds in the mating season or of young animals seeking their mothers or of mothers seeking their lost offspring, they were all natural expulsions of breath through emotional sounds and that in this first way people heard the animals and birds begin to use words and those sounds they left as signs. Later they learned to make signs which the eyes could see and so they began making marks on the earth or on stone which they associated with expressions of their feelings, and these developed into what we now call rock art so that others seeing them could understand what had been spoken.

Rock art is spoken visual sound. This observation was to be taken literally since the Birhors, like the Bushmen, associate rock art with the works of their ancestors. They place great significance on markings, be they the tracks of creatures or their own markings, and this is important to note in a people who still do not read or write. These words of Babulal Birhor made me wonder at his deep understanding of the development of speech into physically visible forms in rock art or elsewhere made by primitive people. We know the importance of rock art in conveying to us even thousands of years after the breath of the artist ceased what he was trying to express.



## X-RAY STYLE ANTHROPOMORPHS IN ROCK ART: THE CHALLENGE OF INTERPRETATION

*Ekaterina Devlet (Russia)*

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Anthropomorphic images in X-ray style are known in the rock art of different regions of the world. They are characterized by depicted ribs and vertebral column, so that the anthropomorph's chest is perceived as if it were translucent. The earliest examples probably date to the Mesolithic period. This date for the Vingen site in western Norway is based on the reliable background from excavations (Lødøen, 2015). Another even more ancient example of X-ray imagery comes from the Urals: <sup>14</sup>C dating of the Shigir wooden carved sculpture proved it to be almost 11,000 years old. Different sides of this massive wooden pole were carved with ornamentation containing elements which may be interpreted as ribs and vertebral column, as well as human-like faces (Fig. 1-2). In the Urals, anthropomorphic images in X-ray style are known from the open-air rock art site of Irbitskyi Pisanyi Kamen' on the Middle Ural River (Chernetsov, 1971, fig. 51-2, 4). In Siberia and the Russian Far East anthropomorphic figures in X-ray style are recorded at the Sikachi-Alyan rock art site on the Amur River, Basinai on the Olekma River (Okladnikov and Mazin, 1976, fig. 19), Mount Ukir in the Kuda steppes (Mikhailov, 1987, p. 97), Bol'shaja Kada and Man'zia on the Angara (Okladnikov, 1966, tables 159, 168), Aya Bay on Baikal Lake (Fig. 3) (Okladnikov, 1974, tables 21, 25, 26) and Tomskaya Pisanitsa on the Tom' River (Okladnikov and Martynov 1972, fig. 216). All of these images differ in chronology and location (Devlet, 2001).

The Sikachi-Alyan petroglyphs are among

the most well-known rock art sites in Russia. Published in the 1970s–1980s by Alexei Okladnikov, they still have a great potential for studies of rock art styles, and their archaeological and landscape context (Okladnikov, 1971, 1981). Sikachi-Alyan and Oglakhty in Khakassia are the only two open-air rock art areas in Russia included in the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List (Devlet, 2015). This place with basalt boulders on the riverside is still important not only as a cultural attraction for tourists but also for the local traditional culture of the Nanai people.

At Sikachi-Alyan there are about 435 rock art motifs identified so far, and working at the site we reveal new motifs annually (Devlet,



Fig. 1. Shigir wooden idol, carved in X-ray style, almost 11,000 years old, Urals. Photo by A. Pakhunov



Fig. 2. X-ray style and other carvings on the Shigir wooden idol, Urals. From V. Tolmachev, 1914



Fig. 3. Anthropomorphic character in X-ray style from Aya Bay, Baikal Lake

2012, 2015; Devlet and Laskin 2015; Devlet and Pakhunov, 2016). A project aiming to bring together rock art motifs with materials on their mythological background was supported, RFBR # 17-01-00511a (Devlet, 2017). Anthropomorphic images form a large portion of these statistics. This group comprises 318 registered images, including 174 masks (human-like faces) of different kinds and 32 figures. The central position at the site is occupied by an almost rectangular boulder with petroglyphs. It is this boulder that carries the images of an elaborate elk figure and an enigmatic anthropomorphic character in X-ray style (Fig.3), as well as concentric circles and a human-like face mask. Different carvings have been revealed on vertical as well as horizontal surfaces, the X-ray anthropomorphic image being one of them. Recorded myths and other oral traditions of different Eurasian natives and

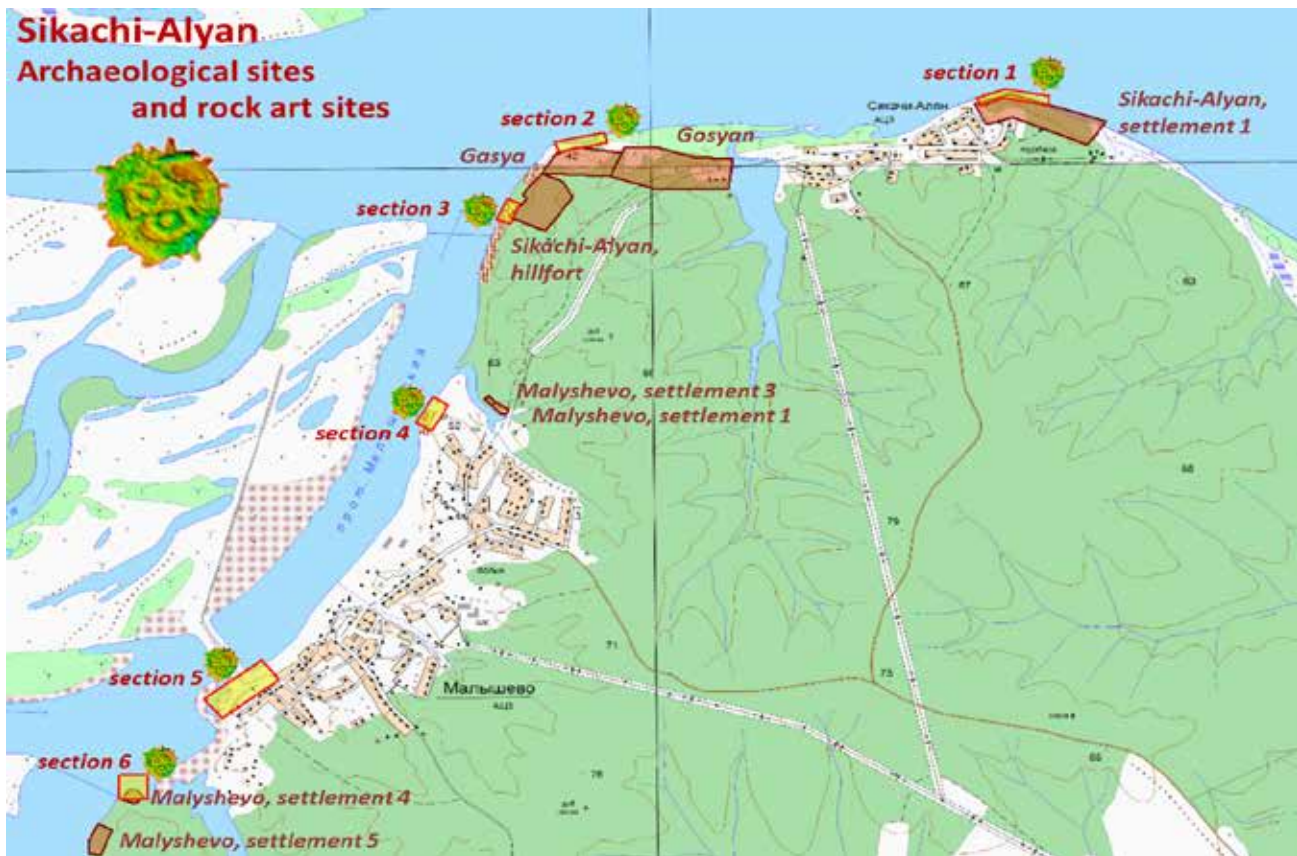


Fig. 4. The Sikachi-Alyan site with the archaeological and landscape context



ethnographical museum collections provide valuable compilations for the interpretation of X-ray anthropomorphic images (Ivanov, 1954, 1979; Lvova et al., 1989). Comparative analysis of traditional beliefs and ideas about the bone may help to clarify the concept of widespread images of X-ray style anthropomorphs.

Since the earliest times people have observed that the skeleton was the most durable and resistant part of a living being and considered it as a guarantee of rebirth for a new terrestrial life. For early hunters a bone symbolized the primary root of animal life, the matrix for constant flesh renewal. There is a recorded belief that animals and people are resuscitated from bones and that after death they are reduced down to the quintessence concentrated in the skeleton, from which they are to be revitalized again according to the cycle of eternal return.

The hunters of the Sayan-Altai region returned bones of killed animals to their natural environment so that the animals would be born again later (Lvova et al., 1989, p. 67). Turks of Southern Siberia imagine a clan, a tribe as a bone, since the skeleton is the only part that remains from a dead ancestor. Bone is that minimum link which keeps the essence of the previous and future life connected (Sagalaev and Oktyabrskaya, 1990, p. 39).

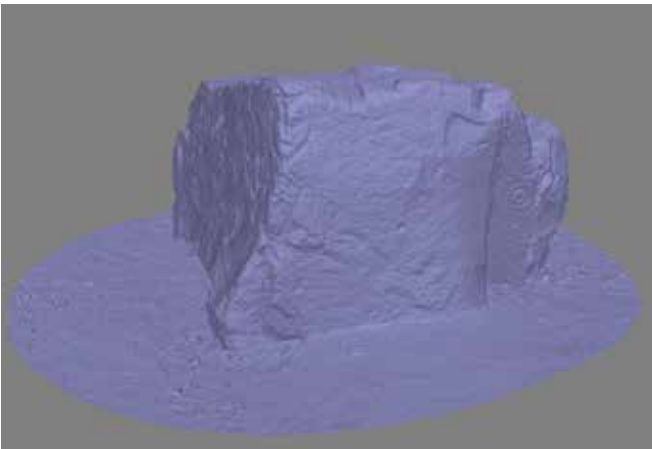


Fig. 5. 3-D model of the boulder with X-ray character at the vertical edge. By A. Pakhunov.



Fig. 6. Anthropomorphic personage in X-ray style. Specular enhancement of the RTI, by A. Pakhunov.





It is a common belief among Siberian natives that a bone is an incarnation and proof of a shaman's great vocation, his/her essence and visualization of the exceptional gift from supernatural powers. A bone proved his/her ability to be mediator between the world of the living and the world of the dead, between different spheres of the universe, as the shaman is to be. Bone was considered to be the most resistant part of his/her body and material substance of his outstanding mission (Ksenofontov, 1930; Direnkova, 1930; Popov, 1947, p. 83; Anisimov, 1963; Devlet and Devlet 2005; Willerslev, 2007).

According to Siberian ethnological materials, the body of a perspective shaman was to be dismembered, the flesh was to be scraped off the bones and divided between spirits or scattered along all roads. Then the skeleton without flesh was to be re-examined in search for a shaman bone; the bones were to be counted. Finally, the old skeleton receives new flesh. If the candidate's skeleton confirmed his high purpose, he became a shaman after his



Fig. 7-8. A rock art character in X-ray style from Sikachi-Alyan and tombs of the 16th cent. from Salisbury (UK)

mystical death. Shamans report that that they could see themselves throughout the process of dismemberment and reassembling of their bodies. A shaman lies dead, and his head sees with his own eyes the whole procedure of his body's dismemberment. The mystical death affects only the body, but not the shaman's soul. A shaman sees and feels all ordeals; at the same time spirits train his soul. Then a shaman awakes, as though he had been sleeping (Ksenofontov, 1930, pp. 46–47). The dismemberment of the shaman's body may be interpreted not only as a terrible ordeal, which could be overcome only by the worthy, nor as death in one status and rebirth into a new role, but also as a sacrifice to spirits. The shaman's ritual death experienced as a descent to the underworld and his body's dismemberment signified introducing him to the initial chaos. It is an essential step which had to be made to clear oneself of the mundane, profane essence, for one's resurrection not only into a new role, but also for a new life. Passing over the ordeals developed his abilities to a new level. Direnkova considered the initial trance experience as a transitive moment in a shaman's life. An ordinary person before this moment, now he receives the special power and abilities and becomes distinguished from all other members of the community (Direnkova, 1930, p. 285). It is these ideas that serve as a basis for common beliefs about a shaman's mental regeneration after ordeals, his physical resurrection and training of his soul by spirits. Ethnographic description of a shaman's initiation involving his necessary first experience of out-of-body travelling is essential for interpretation of the X-ray anthropomorphic figures in the rock art repertoire.

A shaman had to undergo the initiation to obtain the gift of shamanizing from spirits, receive his spirit-helpers and to be recognized as the shaman among his community. Being the mediator between the world of living and the world of the dead, a shaman had to be marked by supernatural powers, to be experienced in

mystic death and rebirth. A special bone was often considered as a sign of his great calling, as the most resistant part of his body and material incarnation of his high mission (Eliade, 1996). In different parts of the world this idea resulted in creating similar anthropomorphic images in X-ray style.

According to Siberian materials, the initiation of a shaman, his/her very first trance experience, was connected with illness; this disease affected only the shaman's body, whereas his soul was trained by spirits to be returned into the body, later upgrading it into its new status. It is a mystical experience of cutting up the neophyte shaman's body by spirits, of flesh loss and contemplation of his/her own skeleton. Based on Siberian ethnological materials, there are several stages of the shaman's initiatory trance. The most detailed description of the body dismemberment as a part of a shaman's initiation survived among the Yakuts (Direnkova, 1930; Ksenofontov, 1930; Popov, 1947; Alexeev, 1975). Coming into ecstasies a neophyte suffered torments of head cutting, tearing of the body with iron hooks, disintegration of his joints, cutting off meat from his bones, etc. Experienced powerful shamans were dismembered three times, while the weak passed through it only once (Ksenofontov, 1930, p. 52). Dismemberment and detailed examination of the shaman's body, carried out by spirits during ordeals, were aimed at establishing whether all the bones complied with his high calling. In some traditions, presence of an extra bone in the person's skeleton is an obstacle for his/her future recognition as a shaman, while in others, on the contrary, revealing a special shaman's bone was required for this. It is also possible that before a candidate shaman feels a call for shamanizing for the very first time, he has lost one of his bones (Direnkova, 1930).

The shaman's bone is a material embodiment of the candidate's spiritual abilities. Only spirits were considered to be competent in the visual identification of this special bone: in searching

for special, irrelevant, superfluous or even a broken bone, spirits had to dismember the candidate's body and after this make a decision on his selection as a shaman or rejection of this status for him; following this they reassembled parts of his body. If the spirits failed to reveal this bone, a would-be shaman had to pay the lack of it by the life of one of his relatives or to die himself. The most complete description of this practice was recorded by Ksenofontov, who argues that after the dismemberment all the bones were believed to be put together again, adjusting a joint to a joint in appropriate places. Then the shaman awoke, as though he had been sleeping. Shamans report that they could see themselves throughout the processes of body dismemberment and reassembling. They were lying as if dead and the head could see with its own eyes all the procedure of the body fragmentation (Ksenofontov, 1930, pp. 46–47).

In the story told by an old Teleut woman the reasons why she was rejected for shamanizing is explained: "She had a vision. Some people cut her body in joints and put all the pieces into the copper for cooking. Then two people came. Again they cut her flesh, eviscerated, and cooked. Then they took out meat from the copper, put it on an iron board with iron claws and were closely examining all parts of her body for a long time, determining if all the bones and the muscles conformed to the shaman's vocation. One small bone turned out superfluous, and as a result she could not become a shaman" (Direnkova, 1930, pp. 274–275).

Rock art anthropomorphs in X-ray style depicted with their ribs and vertebral column, producing an impression of their translucent chest, reflect the shamanic beliefs about the state intermediate between death and revival, the concept, which later persisted in shamans' costumes. The same idea has been preserved in details of the shaman's equipment, in bone pendants attached to his shoulders, and in decoration of breast or back textile attachments

with a skeleton motif (Ivanov, 1954; Devlet, 2001). The depiction of skeletons on the breast-plate or on the plate attached to the back of a Siberian shaman's coat is a common and remarkable feature of ritual attire (Ivanov, 1954). There are two main interpretations of these anatomic motifs. The first one assumes them to be images of the shaman-ancestor's bones that served for the owner of the garment as a shield, protection and armor, the guarantee of his/her survival. The other interpretation explains the skeleton parts of the costume as representations of a shaman, brought back to life after his initiation following his dismemberment; thus, skeleton parts on the costume represent his own skeleton (Alexeev, 1975, p. 152; Devlet, 2001). The same concept may be traced in rock art anthropomorphs in X-ray style.

Lødøen correlates rock art human-like schematic figures with depicted ribs with secondary burials or the secondary treatment of corpses. He bases his conclusion on the reliable data from the Mesolithic burial practice of southern Scandinavia and claims to interpret them as narratives linked to the cycle of death or the soul cycle (Lødøen and Mandt, 2010; Lødøen, 2015). This profound interpretation generally agrees with the ideas of the Siberian ethnological records compiled here about experience of death and rebirth as a leitmotif of all world religions, cultures and myths (Fig. 7).

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# THE USE OF ANCIENT SYMBOLS THROUGH THE AGES

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## **Introduction**

Since their creation ancient symbols, especially rock art ones, have been used for a variety of purposes. Motifs for symbol creation and the reasons they were used later have not always been the same. This applies not only to the current use of symbols, but also during the past. Rock art was created for different needs, especially for those related to human existence. At the beginning, it was a sort of ritual practice used for providing food, reproduction, social cohesion, representation of different scenes, such as sex, birth, hunting, play or ritual, as well as a way of communicating with the real world and the imaginary one. From this aspect, rock art had a magic and mystical character, mainly due to the ways of thinking in ancient times. Today, rock art symbols, in the form of engravings, depiction and paintings, are considered a very valuable part of the cultural heritage and are protected by law and other institutional and technical means; for different visitors, such as cultural tourists or students, they serve as a way to fulfill their knowledge and curiosity about traces left by ancient inhabitants; for scientific researchers, such as archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, art historians, and sociologists, they serve to understand the ways of aesthetic and symbolic expression, the methods of intellectual and spiritual expression of non-literate people; for artists, they provide motivation for their creativity in creating designs, logos, decorative elements or other artistic products.

This article explains how different social groups have used ancient symbols during different

times. As an example, we are taking Kosovo's rock art, which is rich in geometrical and abstract motifs. When we say different periods, we do not only think of well-known periods like the Stone Age, the Copper Age, Antiquity, the Middle Ages, etc, but we also think of short segments of time, not necessarily historically identified by name, but long enough to make a difference, such as human generations, various transition periods, or those inventing new models of expression or symbolic communication. On the other side, when we talk about other social groups, we think of people who share the same ethnic roots, but belong to different generations, as well as people who do not share the same origin, but through migration or some other way, have ended up in previously inhabited places where they found traces left from previous residents, in the form of drawings, depictions or paintings; they adopted holy places, but they also transformed previous symbolic expressions.

## **Some ways of reusing ancient symbols**

Through observation of rock art symbols in Kosovo and their motifs, we notice that there are several ways in which they have been reused through different time periods:

First, elements of one existing symbol are used to create a new symbol of the same kind. This mostly happens with asterisks (Figure 1), where a straight line from one asterisk connects with the center of the second asterisk, then continues to the third, thus creating the image of a multicellular structure with reciprocal interconnection. Almost all asterisks engraved on the surface of the rock in Zatriq, regardless of their size, are connected to each other. This does not mean that there is no single asterisk that stands alone or associated with another figure; such is the case with an ideogram, where the asterisk is associated with an *arbolet*, but overall, the majority is interwoven and interdependent.

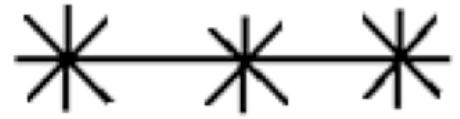


Fig. 1. Connected asterisks

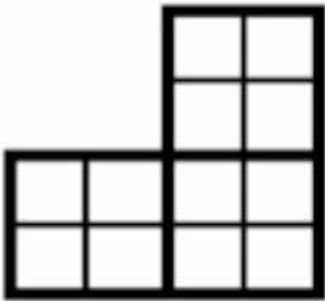


Fig. 2. Double Table

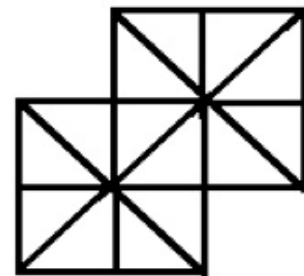
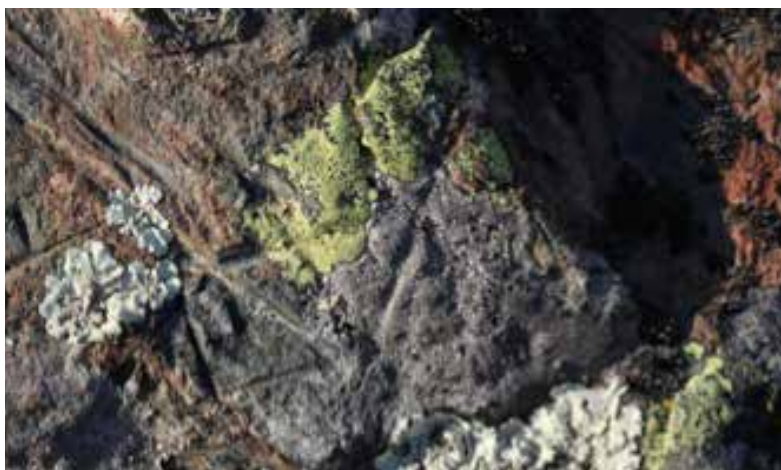


Fig. 3. Double Square



What does the meaning of this interweaving and interdependence mean? Is one line of the asterisk used to create the new asterisk more easily and more quickly? So, is it simply a matter of making the engraving process more practical and quick, or is this an attempt to present a social reality conceptually more complex and symbolically more realistic? Both cases are possible, because *Homo sapiens*, as an intelligent being, has always known how to use practical solutions and to take advantage of the work done by others or something done previously. This means that whoever created a certain figure used parts of an existing figure. On the other side, the reciprocal connection of similar figures, such as asterisks, presents a complex system or structure, similar to the human community, which is a system of interrelations and interdependence of individuals and the collective structure of the society. The question whether asterisks connected to each other represent social connections in the community is still up for discussion, but the logic of connections and interrelations is the way the human community functions, just as life in general, as well as all of nature.

Another example of the reuse of symbols is the symbol of the double table (Figure 2) and double square with crossed straight lines and diagonals (Figure 3). In both cases, one part of the first symbol is integrated with the second symbol. In the case of the table, we have a part of the first table used to create the second table, which is laid out at 90° in relation to the first table. In the case of the square, we have the situation where a part of the first square was used to create the second square. So, in both cases, we have interference between two identical symbols. The case of the double table and double square is just as complex as the case with asterisks. Here we are not going to interpret the meaning of tables or squares, but only point out the fact that an older figure is used

to create a new one. Is this a practical solution or did double figures have a special meaning in the symbolic order of ancient societies? In both cases we have a double process. On one side, we have the practical and instrumental intelligence of our predecessors; on the other side, the holistic logic, which understands real life as interwoven and interdependent, complex and harmonious, plural and unique, stable and dynamic.

The second mode of usage is when part of one symbol is used to create another symbol of different type. This usually happens by the superimposition of motifs, where previous symbols are modified by new interventions, thus changing their form and content, sometimes becoming discrete and unrecognizable. There are many such examples in Zatriq, but the best example is the pentagram, which is superimposed on the square with straight and diagonal lines, which is also superimposed on an image of a newborn. There are superimpositions in almost all the engravings, but in this ideogram, that we named the Symbol of Fertility and Protection (Krasniqi, 2017, 36-39), it is of special importance. On it there is a vulva, associated with an asterisk or symbol of the sun on one side, and with the symbol of the moon on the other side. Then we have the image of a newborn that has the square as well as the pentagram as its protector. The pentagram lines partially match with the lines of the square with crossed lines and diagonals. The third mode of using ancient symbols involves the present time. This is important, because some prehistoric symbols have become a part of today's visual experience. Society in transition, such as Kosova, aims to develop its own identity, resulting in creating a new symbolism, which expresses itself in different aspects of life. To make their products more appealing to the public, today's artists and designers use ancient decorative models and



*Fig. 4. Spirals in Kosova National Library*

*Fig. 5. Spirals in Vlashnje*



combine them with contemporary models. We can use two ancient symbols as typical examples: the spiral, and the figure from terracotta, which is called the Goddess on a Throne. The latter has been used so much, to the point that it has become a kind of Kosovar branding. Next, we

will talk about ways of reusing spirals and then the Goddess on a Throne.

Spirals found in Vlashnje near Prizren, in southwest Kosova (Figure 5), represent the only prehistoric rock painting found so far in the country. In the rock shelter there are 15



painted spirals of different sizes, two of which are connected to each other, resembling a shape of double spirals. Other spirals are scattered, but not quite sporadically. For example, in an area of the rock, there are three small spirals painted in a triangular position to each other, and near them there are two other spirals with larger dimensions in opposition to each other, one with dots (a total of 32 dots), and the other painted with an uninterrupted line.

Again, here we are not going to go into the meaning of spirals as universal symbols, prevalent in almost all cultures, civilizations, eras and continents. Also, we will not use the different interpretations or meanings that we find in symbol dictionaries and lexicons. Here we will explain some of the ways of their usage in Kosova and what are the reasons for their reuse. There are three main designing areas where spirals are used: architecture or interiors, logos for institutions or festivals, and official

documents. The most important architectural building in Prishtina, Kosova's National Library, has bronze spirals as decorating elements in all four walls of its hall (Figure 4). Spirals, considered as Illyrian symbols, serve not only as décor, but also as a reminder of the ancient origin of the Albanian population in Kosova. For the same reason, the spiral symbols are used in the logos of different institutions, such as Prishtina Municipality (Capital of Kosova), Kosova Customs, Ethno-fest, held annually in a village near Prishtina, in Prishtina Film Festival, as well as a background for official documents, such as birth and marriage certificates.

The Goddess on a Throne is another ancient symbol that has become a part of contemporary experience. It is a figurine from terracotta found in the suburb of Prishtina dating to the Copper Age, 4500 BC (Gimbutas, 1991, 27), and is considered the most valuable artefact of Kosova's National Museum. This famous

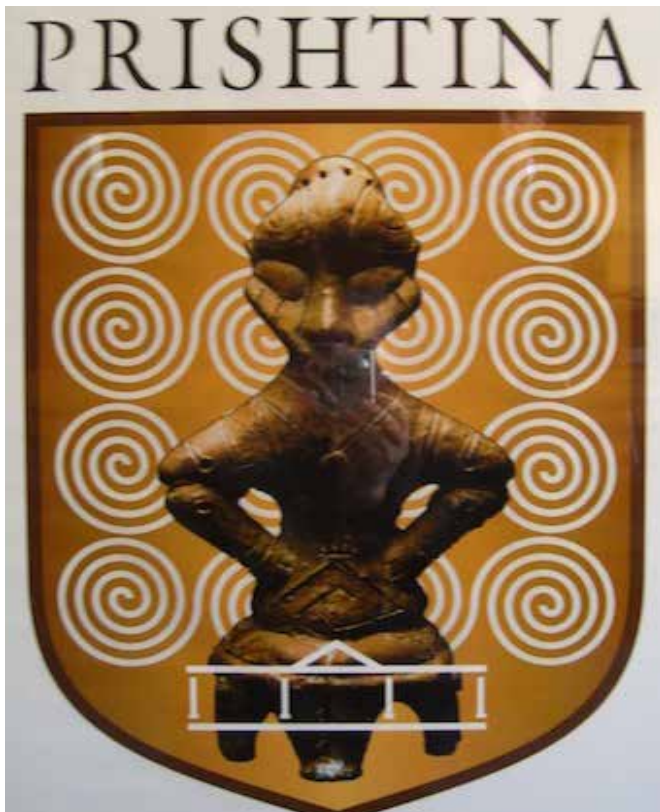


Fig. 6. Logo of Prishtina Municipality

Fig. 7. Biometric ID Card with symbol of Goddess on a Throne



figurine has become very popular in the last few years, as a national emblem for the new Republic of Kosovo (Allain Villes and Kemal Luci, 74). The image of the Goddess on a Throne was initially used as the main figure in the logo of the Prishtina Municipality (Figure 6), and soon after, it began to be used for philately, public art, clipart, souvenirs, trophies for film festival awards, a logo for the International Seminar for Albanian Language, Literature and Culture, history book covers, backgrounds in school certificates, images for bank cards (NLB Bank), and especially, in Biometric ID cards (Figure 7), thus making it a brand for Kosova.

### Conclusion

In addition to asterisks, squares, pentagrams, spirals and figurines, there are many other ancient symbols that have been used in later periods, including ours. Among those are the symbol of the tree (*arbolet*), David's star, cross, concentric circles, triangle, vulva, chevron, meander, network, zigzag line, and other solar, animal and vegetal motifs. Areas of life where ancient symbols are used are symbolic as much as practical. Their usage starts from houses or objects with vernacular architecture, then religious temples, traditional wear, working tools, musical instruments, dishes, carpets and furniture, all the way to current contemporary designers of public or private company logos. Contemporary artists in Kosova are becoming hunters of ancient motifs, and this is happening especially in the field of visual and conceptual art.

The answer to the question of why people use the same symbols at different periods is not easy and straightforward. It seems that this partly

due to practicality and imitation. This means that instead of inventing a totally new image previously unknown, an old and recognizable image is used; instead of trying to find a new expression, an old symbol is reproduced spontaneously, now legitimized by its own omnipresence, with its universal and syncretic character. Other reasons could be of a phenomenological nature. Existing symbols tell a story, they carry the spirit of the past generations and different social groups, and they are a sort of "fluid social cement" (Gurvitch, 1968, 93) that creates social cohesion and identity by interconnecting all parts of society. Just as the myth is important when it comes to understanding the spirits of our ancestors, symbols have all-encompassing power. They express what we like, feel, know and think, and that is why they also belong to us, and not just to our ancestors.

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## ATAEGINA A PENINSULAR DEITY

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### **Abstract**

This article presents lines of research for aspects that seem more relevant about the peninsular deity Ataegina. This divinity appears, in many respects, as an exceptional case of the Indigenous Iberian religion. Namely, in the variants of her nomenclature, geographical extension, iconography and iconology of the divinity. This contribution is also including the thematic of her cult, yet poorly understood, in Merida, close to Proserpina as a private worship and connected to the emeritenses elites and their appropriation of the *Lucus Feroniae*.

**Keywords:** Peninsular Divinity, Innominate Divinity, Ataegina.

### **Introduction**

Ataegina stands out, as one of the most relevant deities in the panorama of the pre-Roman religions. The extensive amount of his epigraphic testimonies, as well as the *interpretatio* with Proserpina aloud to integrate a chthonic character and make it an exceptional case in the peninsular context. The theme aroused the interest, sometimes apparently dazzled, of eminent researchers, especially since the findings of Santa Lucía in El Trampal, Alcuéscar, Cáceres, Spain. However, as we approach this task, it is important to summarize the embryonic nature of certain subjects under analysis. When we refer to the "Lusitanian religion" J. de Hoz (1986, p. 32), defines it as the set of data originating from Lusitania referring to the complex of religious beliefs that, although with some particular traits, would be shared by several pre-roman peoples of Indo-European

origin, inside and outside the Iberian Peninsula. Around 270 Portuguese epigraphs are registered in the currently Portuguese territory, which is a significant number in view of its retracted geographic extension (Encarnação e Guerra, 2010, p.96), and attests the importance of the cult. It is also worth noting that the indigenous cults of Hispania have undergone a progressive Romanization, which is evidenced by the increase in epigraphic testimonies in the II century (Lambrino, 1965, p.224). Since it will be a Herculean task to make clear what the Ataegina cult would be like in all its splendor, given the gaps that tarnish the available information, a synthesis of the present state of knowledge is presented here.

### **The Name of the Divinity**

It should be noted that although there are several lines of research where the organization of repertoires is guided by very different principles, all systematization is based on essentially linguistic criteria. Since they are the ones that determine by the rule, the integration of the different entities in their respective groups. This position, with already great antecedents, led many researchers to believe that one could adhere to the knowledge of the very nature of the deities, through the meaning of the theonym. However, several scholars, such as Unterman (1985, p.356) or Hoz (1986, pp. 33-37) warned about the difficulties and the restrictive nature of these approaches. In this way, and with respect to the sources that provide the best knowledge of the indigenous deities of Lusitania, Hoz (1986) emphasizes the potential of epigraphy, recognizing, however, the difficulties that may arise from the adaptation of the pre-Roman language to the Latin norm, as J. d' Encarnação (1975, p. 302, 1987a, p.8 and 2002) refers that epigraphic as an information source is of fundamental value in this investigation. From its linguistic analysis,

we can see that this peninsular deity appears with several names in its nomenclature, such as *Ataegina* / *Atacina* / *Adaecina* / *Adaegina* or also with the variant with 2 *tt* or 2 *dd*, being still usual to find the epithet *T* or *Turibrig* or *Dea Domina Sancta*.

Below are listed some examples:

daeae sanctae Turibrige  
 d(eae) d(ominae) s(anctae) Turibri  
 d(eae) d(ominae) s(anctae) T( - - - ) A(taecinae)  
 deae Ataecinae Turobrigae (s)anctae  
 dea Ataecina Turibrig(ae?) Proserpina  
 d(eae) Ate(cinae) Proserpinae Tu( - - - )  
 d(eae) d(ominae) (T)uri(b)ri  
 (d)o(minae) s(anctae) Tur( - - - ) A(taecinae)  
 do(minae) d(eae) s(anctae) turibri(g)e Adegine  
 domina (A)ttaegina (T)urubrigae  
 dominae Turibri (A)deginae (T)uribri  
 A(t/d)ecin(ae)

The usual junction of the epithet *Turi* - / *Turobrigensis*, also read as *Turibrigae* / *Turibri* (War, 2002b, p. 155), to the theologian has supported the hypothesis of the existence of a sanctuary to *Ataegina* in *Turóbriga*, situated by Pliny the old in the Celtic *Betúria*, in view of its Celtic connection (Vasconcelos, 1905, p.158). The location of *Turóbriga* will have been a reason for wide academic discussion, since there is no consensus as to its whereabouts, however, the Lusitanian character of *Ataegina* persists (Abascal, 2002, 57). In the time of the important portuguese academic researcher Leite Vasconcelos, the classical sources were known and there was already a high dispersion of findings (without Santa Lucía del Trampal). The work of Vasconcelos was also a milestone for the knowledge of the indigenous deities, as well as the origins of the portuguese people (Fabião, 2011, pp. 160-61). His work *Religiões da Lusitânia* (1897, 1905 and 1913), despite its considerable antiquity and the limitations inherent in it, still constitute an essential support for the investigation of these matters. What impressed Vasconcelos was not only the

dispersion, the variation of the writing, but also the epithet. *Dea Sancta* (when it appeared only with this designation was considered *Ataegina*), since, in general, the conjugation of the two determinants - *sanctus* and *dominus* - is rare for other deities. The unusual suffix "*cina*" or "*gina*", Leite Vasconcelos (1905, p. 161), understood that this was the radical and analyzed *ATAE* (repetition as a reinforcing particle), and *GINA* - Indo-European that comes from *GENOS* - the reborn, thus including the nature-bound character to the spring and the Earth's rebirth, not only by philology, but also because it is associated with Proserpine (Latin version of Persephone).

It would have been adopted in Mérida from *Turobriga* and would have been distributed along Lusitania, due to the displacements of indigenous people, especially as *Ataegina Turibrig Proserpina* (Garcia Bellido, 2001, pp. 55-58). Prosper (2002, p.300) attributes the origin to the place name "*Ataiko*", as well as the protective function of the *Ataecini* people, or the *Vetões*. Other authors such as (Untermann, 1987: 66) sought to link the theology with the archaic Irish word "*adaig*", with the meaning of "*Night*," from which an assimilation of *Ataegina* to the Roman Proserpine of a chthonic nature emerges (Prosper, 2002, p.294). However, Abascal (2002, Luquuntur saxa, p.54) warns that at the present state of knowledge the said Irish word is only attested from the eighth century and therefore temporarily exceeds the pre-Roman and Roman times.

### The Cult of *Ataegina*

As far as his sanctuary is concerned, from what has been previously stated, it would have had a considerable importance in pre-Roman times, an importance which has been translated into Romanity. In addition, *Ataegina* is the only Paleohispanic deity worshiped outside the Iberian Peninsula. And just Ilurdeda,



another paleo-Hispanic deity will also have peregrinated, but with a smaller number of found epigraphs. In the present state of knowledge its cult is dispersed by a great geographical area, that covers approximately from Beja to Toledo, or in the triangle Norba -Turgalium -Emerita, however, there are controversial cases that can extend this territory.

In the eighties, the excavation conducted by Caballero Zoreda in the Mozarabic church of Santa Lucía de El Trampal in Alcuéscar, Cáceres, allowed to recover 50 votive and funerary epigraphs reused in the building. 15 were altars dedicated to Ataecina Turibrigensis, about 20 without inscriptions and another group with the name of the deceased in which no deity is mentioned, possibly because they were in the sanctuary of that divinity. This place is situated among the mountains, in the valley that is supplied by ferruginous and healthy waters, ideal for a sacred grove dedicated to a salutary and infernal deity that protects the water, the nature, the population, the agricultural goods, and the afterlife. The privileged geographical situation shows that is located in a place of passage that certainly would have been favored since Tartessian times and that united *Norba* to *Metellinum*. This point is favored by the confluence of five peoples, the *Lusitans*, *Vetões*, *Celts*, *Turdulus* and *Celtiberians*.

García Bellido (2001) found that in the classical sources in relation to Mérida, it is mentioned that at one end of its territory there was a "*Lucus Feroniae*", that is, a sacred grove. It was nestled among mountains in a valley that was fed by salutary ferruginous waters, ideal for a sacred grove dedicated to a salutary and infernal deity. There is every reason to believe that worship in Roman times had specificities, according to specific place and chronology, which is understandable and attested by the epigraphy. We have evidence of a more simplified cult of Ataegina, in Mérida and

surrounding areas, has a special situation in which Ataegina is worshiped assimilated to Proserpine, certainly bound up with Mérida elites and their appropriation of the *Lucus Feroniae emeritensis*. The Mérida elite will have appropriated the local cult, but with more fluid repertoires, that most certainly would have covered aspects of the indigenous cult, to which it overlapped.

As for the chronology of the inscriptions, there are some that may be included in the first century, but most are from the second century and there are still some from the third century. What is constant is the name, the epithet and the goats. The goat is the animal that associates with Ataegina. We know that cattle were sacrificed to Proserpine, but we do not know if they were goats. There are in the region the *former-vows* and supposedly connected to the cult, has there are epigraphic monuments with a fitting on the top, as well as goats that have a type of foot that serves to fit on the top of said monument. As evidence, two pieces appeared in Malpartida de Cáceres, *former-vows* for the goddess Santa Turi Adaegina, a bronze inscription with the goat on top, as well as *former-vows* and more bronze or terracotta goats in other places of worship. The epigraphic testimonies, according to Abascal Palazón, led to the supposition that there were several centers of worship, at least three sanctuaries, as could be the case of Mérida and its surroundings, another near El Trampal in Alcuéscar and Dehesa Zafrilla de Malpartida, Cáceres, where the two *former-vows* were found in the form of a goat. In the current state of knowledge, we find that there is no standard of reference for defining the devotees of Ataegina (Lopes, 2014, p.99).

### **Santa Lucía del Trampal**

The site of Santa Lucía del Trampal is located at 441 m, on the middle slope of the Sierra de Centinela, on the valley where the Aljucén River

runs in Spain. Several streams flow from the mountain to the river, and near the Mozarabic church there is one of them. For Garcia Bellido, it will not be surprising after knowing the source that comes from the land next to El Trampal and that contains ferruginous and salutary waters, as well as its geographical location, that this will have been an important place for the election of a sanctuary. Place where the chthonic deity meets the earth's surface and fertilizes it. The epigraphic monuments of this place are, as observed by Abascal, identical to the SO stelae in size and morphology, measure roughly 220 cm and are found mainly in Extremadura and in the valleys of the great rivers, but here the "usual" corresponding necropolis was not found. The funerary stelae also found together with votive altars in the Mozarabic church were generically dated by Abascal, from the first century to the beginning of the third century, based on the shape of the altars and their comparison with others in the region (1995, p.15), the new tombstones of Alcuéscar to Ataegina, recovered in the excavation of this place, changed the previous panorama and allow to think of this has a important place of cult. Caballero surmised that, owing to the profusion of finds, to his super-referenced situation, as to the confluence of five peoples, as well as their physical and economic characteristics, this might be the chief sanctuary of the deity. Associated with Ataegina, the goat would be its consecrated animal. Having recovered two copies of bronze goats and a plate with reference to the goddess. Most of the stelae of El Trampal contain the holes for what should be the adjustment of the said representations of the goats. El Trampal is located four kilometers from the Roman road that connected *Emérita* to *Asturicam*, at the point that joined the *Meseta* with the Guadiana basin river, and another route, supposedly one of the most important in Extremadura, that united

*Metellinum* to *Norba* passing through the valley that separates the Mountain of Montánchez of El Trampal.

Nearby, in other place called *Arroyo Molinos* exists the remains of the place of *Los Trampales*. These ruins have architectural vestiges of the Roman period and also ferruginous mineral water. Further northwest, at the site of *Las Torrecillas* in Alcuéscar, Abascal Palazón and Caballero supposed that it could be the place of provenance of the materials reused in Santa Lucia. At 250 m from Santa Lucia, there is another hermitage to Santiago, around which the stelae were collected and less than 1 km away is S. Jorge, another place with iron slag, *sigillatas* and late Roman remains. In fact, in the surrounding area there is a wide dispersion of finds including the place of *Montánchez* and important archaeological remains have been recovered, although important structures that could be classified as urban have not been detected. There are many tombstones reused in the church, as well as marbles and shingles, which led Caballero to assume that these materials would be close at the time of construction. Abascal, however, argued that 50 funeral wreaths and stelae could have been taken to *El Trampal* from the site of *Las Torrecillas*, which he considers having been Turobriga and therefore seat of worship. Garcia Bellido thinks that it is difficult to maintain that the 50 blocks could have come from *Las Torrecillas* because the used funerary stones are monumental, so it is more credible that the material reused in *Santa Lucia* would had be *in situ*. Nor does it subscribe to Turobriga's proposal to have been there because it establishes that a place name in "brigga" describes a city. The Christianization of the pagan site may be another element in favor of the transformations marked by the religious fervor that also happened in Italy in the primitive centers of cult of *Feroniae*. It is concluded that there is no certainty for the

provenance of the materials of Santa Lucia and, therefore, for the exact valuation of the *Lucus Feroniae* (Garcia Bellido, 2001, pp. 58-60).

### Divinity Iconography

It is possible that the cult of Ataegina had supplanted or accompanied another cult of a very ancient deity who had the goat as the representative animal. The evidence to support this hypothesis comes from Cancho Roano in Badajoz, among the *former vows*, was found the rest of a bronze goat that measures more than 50 cm, and abundant faunistic remains of goat, probably of ritual banquets. Ataegina would thus be one of the successors of this important unnamed peninsular divinity.

Despite the gaps we can assume that centuries later, the presence of *Vetões* in the area would have denominated and made official the cult to Ataegina. In that special *Lucus* of that would maintain the sacred content of the previous deity, including the use of goats, now with the innovation of the inscribed monuments, and with the name of Ataegina. If the former goddess was the one described by Strabo as the unnamed nocturnal Goddess, then this was a fertile field for *interpretatio* with any deity of similar characteristics, which seems to be the case. However, we found that it maintained its minimalist character in the image, character that remained in the interpretation of *Feroniae* and *Magna Mater*.

In Santa Lucia, next to the 11 stelae of Ataegina, there are 12 anepígrafas, that according to Garcia Bellido, would possibly be of another group that yields cult to the divinity of the *Lucus*. It would, therefore, be the presence of other forms of worship in a frontier sanctuary. Also differing from the cult attested to the designations of *dea domina sancta*, which Bellido thinks is a functionally similar goddess, but not necessarily Ataegina.

Abascal Palazón subscribes this position and

says that also the epithets *sanctus / sancta* cannot be inscribed in a single cult, as *dea domina sancta* is documented in the zone of Cáceres for the deities Mercury and Bellona. Bellido also points out that it is impossible to understand the complexity of a shrine of such longevity that had involved so many people in continuous territorial and spiritual transformation. If we assume that Ataegina had not monopolized the service and we will not be able to reconstruct the complexity of the major deities, for which the classical culture had no direct *interpretatio*. In this way we can only resort to specific facets of his personality through its specialized deities, as with Astarte and Tinite, who became Demeter, Aphrodite, Atenae or Juno, Venus, Minerva, or also cases of Eastern deities, as Cybele and Isis.

The population of Mérida presented itself as a heterogeneous population of italics, people from outside the Iberian Peninsula and indigenous people. In this crossing of traditions, we find many deities of different origins and pleonastic functionality, different in myths, but with identical functionalities, in an enormous cultural broth. They are not religions of mystery, for they did not need initiation and sometimes we find worship of mysterious deities outside the context of the initiatory cycle. Garcia Bellido concludes that the Roman interpretation of the deity of the *Lucus* with *Feroniae* must have happened has to be a greater divinity. It also emphasizes the importance of water, from which results the consequent association with the nymphs, who, although they are secondary figures of the Roman mythology, seem to have played an important role, because they resorted to them to include them in the currencies of the Emerita foundation.

None of the stelae with *dea dominae sancta* has figuration, this non-figuration seems to be concentrated in *Beturia* and *Lusitania* in



pre-Roman times, where there are almost no representations of human figures. There are essentially goats and some *stelae* have crescent moles. A stele was found in Malpartida with a figure who seems to be praying and Abascal (2001, p.56) proposes to be related to Ataegina, but Garcia Bellido argues that it is not, and that this is a phenomenon identical to that which led a Lusitanian to place in Sardinia, in a Ninfeu, an inscription to Ataegina. Thus, there does not appear to have existed figurations of the divinity in the *Lucus Feroniae*. But by the Romans who since the foundation of Emerita have integrated her as an adoptive goddess, in a common act of domination attested in the numismatic figuration of the first emeritensis coinage. A monumental sculpture in the museum of Merida can represent the goddess Ataegina. Is a goddess enthroned with the feet on flowers, next to the throne arise two serpents that mark the chthonic character, although the head and the hands have not been preserved. It was found near the sanctuary at Mithra, where the mystical and chthonic cults were associated, and where the native's deities were often welcomed. We do not know the name that the emeritensis attributed to designate this deity, although the functionality was certainly similar as that given to Ataecina (Garcia Bellido, 2001, pp. 6870).

Ataegina is, as previously mentioned, sometimes identified with Proserpine (Lambrino, 1965, 231, Vasconcelos, 1905, 154), for its infernal but also propitiatory attributes, including the attribution of the epithet sancta to Proserpine, given as well as a characteristic of Ataegina (Vasconcelos, 1905, 155). Following this assimilation, there would have been a transfer of attributes, not only productive ones but also infernal from Proserpine to Ataegina. J. d'Encarnação (1975, p. 117) emphasizes the infernal character of Ataegina, rejecting the attribution of the agrarian characteristics that

Vasconcelos (1915, pp. 154-157) was so found of, considering it to be a Goddess of rebirth and spring and associating it with another deity, namely Libera. J. Abascal (2002, p. 55) further emphasizes the character of lunar deity and the possibility of worship given to Santa Eulalia in Mérida be the survival of that formerly dispensed to Ataegina.

As far as ritual is concerned, it was possibly normal the practice of sacrifices, although the knowledge on these matters is still very laconic. In one of Emerita's dedications, reveals itself as an infernal deity to which a *devotio* is made (Vasconcelos, 1905, 165). The scarce documentation from Lusitania, especially about available material in the area of the pantheon, as well as the lack of organization and systematization of it (Hoz, 1986, p.46) makes it difficult to envisage a deeper knowledge. However, sacrifice was a practice clearly documented in Lusitanian religiosity since Strabo descriptions. The practice of sacrifices, as is well known, include offerings of goats, sheep and bulls, in rituals called *suovetaurilia*, in which these animals are successively slaughtered (Hoz, 1986, pp. 47-48).

### Concluding Remarks

Ataegina emerged as an indigenous divinity whose cult survived quite prominently during the Principality (Abascal, 2002, 53), claiming to be the second most deified indigenous divinity in the peninsular South, after Endovélico (Encarnação, 1984, pp.50 -80), which emerges as an exceptional case in the panorama of the pre-Roman deities, as advocated by Schattner, Guerra, and Fabião, (2005). Also the Synthesis of Religions of Lusitania - *Loquuntur Saxa* at the National Archaeological Museum in Lisbon, and the edition of the book, coordinated by J. Cardim Ribeiro (2002), which contains contributions from several researchers dedicated to this theme, where important

additions to this knowledge. He stated that Ataegina is considered to be by some investigators, the “pair” of Endovélico, and that her cult presupposed the making of animal offerings, which could be a common aspect of the Endovélico cult (Vasconcelos, 1905, p.169), as emphasized the chthonic character of both. Garcia Bellido (2001) considered that we can attest to the Roman interpretation of the *Lucus* goddess under names like Ataecina, Proserpina, Feroniae, Dea Domina Sancta or Salus Augusta, certainly as versions of the divinity that had had a much earlier cult, and which was so important that when the foundation of *Emerita*, capital of the province of Lusitania, went to the pantheon as Proserpina / Ataegina. This one has a notorious diversity of attributes, in its various epithets (dea, dominates, sancta ...), thus witnessing the great importance of the cult (Vasconcelos, 1905, 173). According to J. Abascal (2002, p. 53), in some inscriptions, its attribution is supported by the presence of the epithet *dea sancta*, which is not a sufficiently valid criterion since the elements *sanctus / sancta* and *deus / dea* do not appear exclusive of a deity, and its use in the peninsular West is frequent. It is quite possible that, as Abascal affirms, the initial cult was of the *Vetões*. There is controversy over whether Santa Lucia was the original place of worship that would have housed this large collection of votive altars. Bellido thinks that Turobriga may be located in Talavedra La Vieja where the epigraphs of Ataecina appeared without others names and where the tomb of *bassus turobrigensis* comes from. But where the cult and numerous vestiges materialized, more numerous was in the sanctuary of Alcuéscar. With an exceptional geographical situation, because it was in the enclave of five different peoples and in the connection between the basin of the river Tagus and the river Guadiana.

We may suppose at this stage, the cult particularized with various epithets that never reached us, possibly one of the great sanctuaries gained great importance and it is at the dawn of the romanity that this cult crystallized in epigraphy and expanded with the concrete epithet of that special Sanctuary, while the others disappeared, dilating in a vast region. The chain Feroniae - Persephone - Proserpina - Ataecina seems to be well attested, although it is necessary to keep in mind that the cult in question covers a long period of time of at least four centuries, from the first century until the III century and that therefore it underwent considerable mutations. The origin of the phenomenon would be first in the religious environment proper to the Celtic populations of the Peninsula (Almagro -Gorbea and Alvarez -Sanchis, 1993, Mantas, 1984, p. 364).

Ataegina was thus possibly the recipient of a previous nocturn and innominate deity, an Iberian feminine deity that traversed the dawn of distant ages. In the four corners of the world, the firsts divine figures were women as was the case of the so-called Mother Earth, or Earth Mother of Çatalhoyuk, or Astarte/Ishtar worshipped from the Bronze Age through classic times, or *Ísis* from the polytheistic pantheon of Egypt throughout the Greco-Roman world and today in diverse religious contexts. In ancient societies, they represented the beginning and the end of everything. On contemporary contexts they enlance the understanding of the distant past of mankind.

In the beginning were the Goddesses...

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# WHY OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE EMERGENCE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF PICTURES IN ONTOGENY MUST UNDERGO A REVISION, AND WHAT REVISION MAY OFFER FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF EARLY PREHISTORIC PICTURES

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## **Abstract**

On the basis of a comprehensive phenomenological investigation of early graphic expressions in ontogeny, first, basic aspects of the characteristics and status of early pictures in ontogeny and associated clarifications are discussed. Second, with regard to early pictures as such and including phylogeny, four suggestions are made:

- (i) a picture concept referring to the pragmatic perspective of Peirce (1902);
- (ii) systematic differentiation of produced visual forms, understood as two-dimensional, as representing the primary character of early pictures;
- (iii) graphic form precedes, enables and parallels graphic analogy formation, depiction, denotation and other types of graphic referencing as a structural formula for early picture development;
- (iv) early picture production as a phenomenon of a layered concept in which aspects such as syntactic structure and production procedure possess a semi-autonomous status. In these terms, the thesis of a picture-inherent agency in early graphic manifestations is exposed.

## **Introduction**

The question of whether or not the very early development of pictures in ontogeny – drawings and paintings in the first years of life, true to

tradition termed early children's drawings, although such terminology needs revision – can be compared with or is even parallel to that in phylogeny, has been discussed ever since picture development in ontogeny became the subject of a scientific investigation in the late 19th century. Yet, to date, no uniform view has emerged on this matter, mainly for two reasons. First, concerning ontogeny, different descriptions of the character and the development of early pictures related to different picture concepts and different empirical foundations exist in the literature side by side, and second, with rare exceptions, there is no archaeological record for the time of early pictures in phylogeny. (Note that, as pointed out by many scholars, the prehistoric pictures from about 40,000–10,000 BCE we know of have to be understood as high art, and they have nothing to do with the emergence and early development of pictures, which probably has to be traced back to *Homo erectus* (Joordens et al. 2014.) Against this background, we have undertaken a long-term and comprehensive phenomenological investigation of the morphology of drawings and paintings produced by children in their first years of life – morphology in terms of the assessment of single qualities, structural formations, and developmental tendencies in early pictures – including cross-contextual comparison (often termed “cross-cultural”) and including the examination of the early picture process. The empirical record created consists of a picture archive of European children (c. 25,000 pictures of c. 200 children), a picture archive of Asian children (c. 31,200 pictures of 150 Indonesian and Indian children) and a video archive documenting the early graphic process (184 videos of 43 European children; all archives are open access). As for the methodology of such a phenomenological and descriptive approach to early pictures, an extensive catalogue of picture attributes and

attribute classes was created and related to rules of assignment. This catalogue includes both aspects of graphic manifestations as such and their relation to non-graphic aspects (figures, objects, actions, scenes, symbols, emotions, impressions, indices). Finally, the examination of the picture and video archives allowed for a clarification in terms of a revised description of how pictures emerge and how they develop in the first years of life. (For references to extensive documentations and publications, see the References section.) At an earlier date we made some reflections on the status of early pictures in ontogeny and their indications for picture genesis in general (Maurer, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; see also Maurer et al. 2009). Here, these attempts are taken up and extended in terms of speculations on early picture characteristics which are at least in part not at the will of the producer but “emanate” from the picture itself and may therefore structurally be comparable for ontogeny and phylogeny. To avoid misunderstandings: we do not take the stand that early pictures in ontogeny can be compared directly with very early prehistoric pictures (for details, see below). However, having examined early pictures in ontogeny, we argue that there are some important conclusions on basic and structural aspects to be considered, possibly governing picture genesis as such. Thus, in this paper, we first outline the major clarifications concerning the understanding of early pictures in ontogeny which we have established by means of our empirical re-examination. (For references to exemplary illustrations of the course of early graphic development, see the References section. For a few paradigmatic illustrations, see the Appendix.) On this basis, and with regard to early pictures as such, we propose:

(I) a picture concept referring to the semiotic –more precisely to the pragmaticistic– perspective of Peirce (1902);

(II) systematic differentiation of produced visual forms understood as (not exclusively, but in inalienable terms) two-dimensional, as representing the primary character of early pictures;

(III) “graphic form precedes, enables and parallels graphic analogy formation, depiction, denotation and other types of referencing” as a structural formula for early picture development;

(IV) early picture production as a phenomenon of a “layered” concept in which aspects such as syntactic structure and production procedure possess a semiautonomous status.

### **Early pictures in ontogeny: a synopsis and clarification of their morphology and developmental tendencies**

It is often assumed that the first characteristics and the first development of drawing and painting in early childhood consist of sensomotoric traces and marks (hence termed scribbblings) and that only when the first figurative manifestations appear can there be a production of graphic forms that do not directly reflect the sensomotoric apparatus. This view corresponds to a structuralistic understanding of syntactic differentiations imperatively related to semantic differentiations (see e.g., Vinter et al. 2008), in which the syntactic manifestation, here the picture, stands for something other than itself, here the depicted. (For other assumptions, see below.) Yet the above-mentioned re-examination of early drawings and paintings of children in their first years of life contradicts such a view, as will become evident in the following synopsis of the graphic development. Early picture development from its beginning is not primarily driven by the sensomotoric apparatus but it is predominantly motivated by a systematic differentiation of visual forms, abstract in kind and self-referred in their status.

This differentiation already starts with the contrasts or even oppositions of basic effects of color application such as representations of strokes, strikes, pendular or push-pull and circling movements. (Note that because of the representative and categorical status of these manifestations, labels can be associated.) Immediately after these first elementary graphic contrasts in terms of first-form contrasts, the line itself is discovered and differentiated, accompanied by first variations and arrangements of graphic manifestations. Thereby, early line formations witness an overcoming of the rhythmic impulses which the sensomotoric apparatus spontaneously tends to impose. Early line formations thus witness for the tension between visual ideas and sensomotoric execution: the former is advanced, and its graphic realization is therefore clumsy or gawky. In parallel with the more drawing-directed development of line formation, form variation and form arrangement, first painting-directed differentiations of the effect of color alteration and color contrasts can also be observed. The progress with conducting and differentiating a line, varying single tokens of a type of graphic manifestations, differentiating topological types of graphic arrangement, and the progress with first attempts to link single forms lead to the idea of bringing the end of the line to its own beginning as a closed form. At the same time, first fragments of structure formations such as fragments of grids (based on approaches of quasi-parallel and quasi-orthogonal lines) and first references to the form of the drawing four-plane and its borders and edges can be observed. Further, painterly characteristics such as extended and often monochrome painting of parts or of the entire picture plane appear, with no specific contours that would refer to a form type or class. Most importantly, children start to comment on these graphic

differentiations by naming them as purely abstract or formal – directly form-related, form-conscious – manifestations, and adults can understand that they are aware of the graphic characteristics as such and that they are able to categorize the graphic aspects they produce. Besides, they also sometimes give a comment on a relation to non-graphic aspects (e.g., to figures, objects, actions, scenes, events, etc). In part, these comments are not understandable for adults by looking at the picture, the reason why such comments were called romancing in the literature. In part, however, if adults participate in the picture process, they sometimes can understand the referencing made by the acting child, often made in terms of a simple analogy formation between one or two graphic characteristics and one or two characteristics of the signified (including actions; see Matthews 1984), and sometimes being read off (Golomb 1974). This indicates that the child in its first graphic referencing does not always include the concept of adults in understanding pictures and in building up analogy formations as a basis for subsequent depiction (and the fictions that run parallel) and designation. From now on, the pictures become very rich in graphic variety and also in aesthetic and compositional quality. They manifest the creation of a quasi-geometrical form repertoire (circles, ovals, trapezoids, rectangles, squares, triangles, polygons, odd shapes, etc), including geometric subdivisions, of form compositions, form complexes, aggregates, structure formations, and patterns, of all elementary topological arrangements (intentional gap, scattered, abutting, adjacent, overlapping, overlaid, into one another, reciprocally aligned including parallelism, reciprocally adapted in size or form including proportions, sequencing, angular, orthogonal, concentric, mirror symmetry). They further express the development of painterly aspects such as specific color relations and



circumscribed surfaces painted in. Finally, this most remarkable graphic expansion culminates in formal picture compositions, in which individual graphic aspects are subordinated to a predominantly graphic overall concept and aesthetic quality of the entire picture plane. (Many adults may name these pictures abstract compositions.) In parallel, step by step, children achieve analogy formations between graphic compositions or complexes and non-graphic aspects which can be understood by the adults looking at the pictures. First, the adults must also know the child's comment in order to visually recognize the intended analogy, but in the course of development, the analogies become visually evident even without a verbal comment. At the same time, first attempts to copy letters and numbers can also be observed. Following (and then paralleling) the abstract or formal picture compositions, and on the basis of the developmental process of analogy formations, figurative compositions of the entire picture plane emerge, in which depictions predominate, the borders and edges of the canvas are used to coordinate them in terms of a quasi-consistent arrangement, both according to the relationships of single depictions and to rudimentary spatial orientations and positions in terms of left-right and bottom-top of the depicted (orthogonal projection: see Willats 1997).

**Early pictures in ontogeny: process-related, in part cross-contextual, often heterogeneous, and discontinuous in development**

The synopsis of the morphology of early graphic manifestations and developmental tendencies needs many additions and extensions. However, here, only three of them will be given, the first concerning the early graphic process, the second concerning cross-contextual and context-specific aspects, and the third concerning the homogeneity-heterogeneity of

early picture characteristics and continuity-discontinuity of their development. If the realization of visual form contrast related to their understanding as two-dimensional is the first agent of early pictures, the differentiation of graphic manifestations refers not only to the visual effect but in parallel also to characteristics of the graphic process of production. Thereby, some important processual aspects are as follows:

(I) part of the graphic intention does not exist prior to the graphic act but emerges in the act itself;

(II) part of the expressed meaning and referencing of the acting child is not recognizable any more in the finished product (in fact, many picture processes have no picture-related end, but other motives lead to an abandon of graphic acting);

(III) however, this often does not disturb the child in question, because it seems to be only in part interested in whether or not the picture as a product is understood in the same way as it was intended and produced;

(IV) this parallels the observation that the intentions of the acting child are often of fragmentary kind, and that they often change in the process both with regard to the formal as well as the depicted (or as other kinds of referencing);

(V) the same holds true concerning the attention of the child; thus, early picture making often includes heterogeneity in intention and attention, additive and step-by-step realizations, and shifts in the graphic and referencing related focus;

(VI) graphic processing is difficult to acquire and demands an extensive development of conceptual competence and executive skills (this may explain the difficulties of young children in expressing themselves through pictures compared with their verbal abilities; this also explains why young children

understand pictures made by others, including adults, in a much more advanced way than they are able to produce pictures themselves); (VII) children are aware of what their intention is and what their skills allow or do not allow them to realize, and they verbally express their valuations; thereby, they explicitly differentiate between graphic manifestations as such and graphic referencing such as analogy formation, depiction, symbolisation, expression, and so on;

(VIII) early graphic referencing is complex, not limited to depiction in its narrow sense, and often related to rampant story-telling and, as said, it often evolves or changes during the picture process; therefore, after the process, many pictures cannot be related in a simple way to a specific meaning. In these terms, the development of conceptual abilities and skills of realization as well as purely process-inherent experiences, intentions, understandings, and feelings of the acting child make up a part of the structural reference the entire early graphic development refers to. To say that early pictures are primarily motivated by a systematic differentiation of visual forms, abstract in kind, and self-referred in their status, does not contradict the simultaneous influence of the context, above all the effects of context-related picture culture, picture praxis and art education of young children, of available material and utensils, of influences exerted by peers and adults, of copying and of being taught. To the contrary, every increase in the variety of graphic manifestations and of related conceptual abilities and processual skills opens and widens the field of adaption, imitation, and copying. Thus, as will be discussed in a more direct way below, we are asked to understand early pictures as an indissociable development of picture-inherently and picture-externally (although picture-related) motivated manifestations. Indeed,

the investigation and comparison of early pictures produced in very different contexts strongly supports this claim, with evidence given, however, for cross-contextual and thus picture-inherent graphic characteristics and developmental tendencies as being dominant for the very early pictures (Maurer et al. in press).

The above synopsis describes early pictures in ontogeny as a systematic building up of single graphic forms and qualities, of interrelating them in terms of temporary graphic systems – as pictorial systems in a wide sense – and of extension and progression in forms, qualities, and system building. However, this description is only meant to outline the field of early pictures and their development, but it does not allege that, in an actual and specific developmental course, all single attributes named can be observed, all attributes occur in the same temporal order, and progression is continuous. To the contrary, specific graphic developments are often characterized by the realization of only a selection of the described graphic manifestations and types of graphic referencing, and progression and regression, often combined with citations and stylizations of graphic forms or form complexes (realizations of graphic manifestations already developed much earlier in life, often combined with mastered realization or even with explicit model building and related to an aesthetic quality) are common. Further, as already indicated, early picture production is in part additive and heterogeneous, and so is the early picture itself. Finally, some children express themselves with an extensive variation of abstract, figurative, and other types of pictures, while others prefer a single type, often focussing on depiction in the course of development.

The synopsis given so far represents a purely phenomenological description of early pictures derived from looking at drawings and paintings

produced outside experimental conditions and with no production task. Thereby, no embedding of the graphic development in the general course of developmental psychology is carried out, including references to the conditions and limitations given by the sensomotoric and cognitive constitutions of young children. However, even in its limited version, the synopsis represents a sufficient basis for theses and speculations on early picture characteristics which are inherent in picture genesis as such, and which may therefore structurally be comparable for ontogeny and phylogeny. Yet, before directly addressing these characteristics, a post-modernist objection to a cross-cultural (note our avoidance of this term) description of the early graphic development is addressed, the revision of our understanding of early pictures in ontogeny called by the above re-examination is discussed, and a thesis of how to understand the motivation and agency of the course of the development in question is brought forward.

**Early pictures in ontogeny: in part cross-contextual, but not universal in all manifestations and developmental tendencies**

Before considering the implications of the course of development described, a principal objection of postmodernist argumentation and, at the same time, a possible misunderstanding of our undertaking has to be discussed. Wilson (2004, pp. 321-322) states: "Every visual artefact produced by a young person is a product pervaded by culture. The very possibility that children might engage in artlike behavior is a cultural construct, and children's early mark-making, modeling, and constructing activities are frequently initiated by adults and then viewed by and classified by them through cultural lenses." And: "To state the obvious conclusion from my observations, stage-based developmental accounts based on a natural

unfolding fail to stand up to scrutiny. Feldman (1980) has offered a brilliant theoretical and empirical critique of developmental stage theory in which he demonstrates that even with Piaget's cognitively grounded levels of map drawing [...] children perform on several levels simultaneously. In short, the levels do not exist; nor do stages of artistic development. Moreover, young people's development in the realm of visual culture is non-linear, non-hierarchical, multidimensional, and multipurposeful (Kindler and Darras 1997)." Such a reflection is related to an understanding of pictures as artefacts and therefore pictures being cultural in principle, that is, entirely to be understood as consequence of coding (on this matter, see Eco 1972, Goodman 1976). In consequence, it is based on a deep suspicion of any human production of artefacts not being considered as fully pervaded by various influences, above all by forms of practice, teaching, codes, and related ways of producing, understanding and handling pictures, and any indication of a culturally independent natural reference of picture making is rejected. With regard to early pictures, we also assume extensive context-specific picture affection and we do neither refer to a naturalness of graphic characteristics and development nor to a simple concept of a universality of early pictures. Indeed, we question the dualism nature - culture or nature - nurture, and we consider the principal rejection of graphic development as such as not substantiated. Concerning the former, an argument is provided below. Concerning the latter, evidence for a cross-contextual similarity of not only general graphic structures and principles but in part also single graphic manifestations and their age-related order of appearance strongly supports the notion of an early graphic development as a phenomenon of early picture making, however the details of this development and its conditions may



empirically be assessed (Maurer et al. in press). The same holds true for the question of early analogy formations (see, e.g., Maurer 2014). It is for these reasons that we do not discuss here in more details the position of pictures as entirely coded cultural phenomena and a correspondent full rejection of a developmental character of early pictures.

### **Early pictures in ontogeny: a clarification of perspective**

As outlined earlier (see Maurer, 2013), apart from the above post-modernist understanding, literature offers us three perspectives and related descriptions on pictorial development in ontogeny, corresponding to three concepts of pictures as such. The first one assumes that pictures come into being with depiction. Correspondingly, the development is described as a succession of sensomotoric traces or marks, followed by first single depictions (often related to early human figure drawings) and then developing more differentiated and varied depictions (elaborated in exemplary fashion by Luquet 1927, Lowenfeld 1952, Golomb 2002, 2004, Cox 2005, Willats 2005; cf. in this context Wallon 2007, pp. 29–31). The concept thus opposes sensomotoric manifestations and pictures, the latter equal to depictions. According to the second concept, after the sensomotoric traces or marks, the drawing is developed preceding the depiction. Correspondingly, the development is described as a succession of sensomotoric manifestations, followed by abstract forms in terms of the differentiation of a graphic vocabulary, which subsequently is used for depictions. However, if depiction is occurring, abstract forms are assumed to disappear: the drawing permits the depiction and subsequently merges with it (elaborated in exemplary fashion by Widlöcher 1995; see also Lurçat 1979). This concept thus differentiates sensomotoric manifestations, “abstract

drawing, and subsequent transformation into depiction. According to the third and more open concept, sensomotoric traces or marks only make for the very beginning of graphic expressions. The main part of early graphic development is then of an abstract kind and, in its course allows for depiction but does not merge with it (elaborated in exemplary fashion by Kellogg 1959, 1967, 1970; cf. Stern 1978). This concept thus differentiates between sensomotoric manifestations at first, then, abstract manifestations, and subsequently, abstract and figurative pictures coexisting at the same time. As our re-examination shows, the first two concepts and descriptions of early pictures are empirically contradicted, and only the third one is confirmed in its general perspective, even if the details and the status of the described graphic characteristics and development have to be critically reviewed. This conclusion drawn from a comprehensive phenomenological examination of early pictures represents the starting point of any further reflection on picture genesis.

### **Early pictures in ontogeny: a thesis of how to understand their motivation, agency, and logic**

But what motivates and drives the early graphic development? What is the logic of the course of observable early graphic manifestations and pictorial systems? Again, the literature offers us different suggestions. Scholars adhering to the above first perspective assume that the intention to depict is the principal agent of picture making and picture development. Scholars adhering to the second perspective generally assume the same but accept an intermediate phase in graphic development, in which the hand follows the eye in a purely formal way, conceding that the subsequent attempts to depict make use of previously differentiated graphic forms which cannot be

understood as being of primarily sensomotoric kind. Thereby, the shift from the sensomotoric traces or marks to visually dominated graphic forms is understood to originate from the increase in the control of the acting hand. However, no explanation then is given for the systematics of the forms created. Some scholars adhering to the third perspective assume that early pictures relate to fundamental structures of visual sensory function and perception (e.g., phosphenes and Gestalts; see Kellogg 1959, 1970; Kellogg et al. 1965), while other scholars understand them as expressions of individual or depth-psychological processes and developments, occasionally incorporating ante-natal experiences (see e.g., Grötzinger 1952; Stern 1966, 1978; Lefebure 1994; Gier 2004). However, first, the above resumed re-examination calls to reject depiction intention as the primary motor of early picture development. Further, such understanding does not take into account that there is no form differentiation and no related conceptual ability and skill of realization for any graphic analogy formation at the beginning of drawing. (Note in this context the statement of Gombrich 1960, p. 116: “making comes before matching”.) Second, explaining abstract forms only by an increase of the ability to control the hand and to allow for a dominance of the eye may hint at a condition of picture production but does not explain the course and the systematics of observable graphic form production. Third, explaining the first graphic manifestations as related to phosphenes again suffers from not taking into account that there is no conceptual ability and skill of realization to copy any picture-external percept at the beginning of drawing, and explaining the subsequent development of abstract pictures as related to Gestalts is not based on compelling evidence of observable graphic variation matching with a definition of Gestalt and the systematics of

Gestalt characteristics. Understanding early pictures as representations of individual or depth-psychological processes and developments in their turn suffers from not taking into account that any analogous graphic representation needs abilities and skills of production, and that the latter are not given but have to be acquired before they can be taken into service. Besides, we understand such suggestions as an attempt to fantasize about another type of meaning than depiction but still having some motivated relations between graphic manifestations and the signified, instead of abiding graphic appearances which do not satisfy the solicitation that, as representations, they have to refer to something other than themselves, to point beyond themselves (for such understanding of prerequisite of representations, see Golomb 2004, pp. 15–16). We take the stand that the phenomenology of early pictures in ontogeny calls for a reflection on a possible genuine picture-inherent and directly picture-related motivation of early graphic development: that an indispensable part of early pictures cannot be derived from something outside, beyond themselves—from the sensomotoric apparatus, from visual sensory function and perception, from individual or depth-psychological processes and developments, from intensions to depict the visual (or the outer) world, from culturally exerted rules and codes – but that early pictures originate and are motivated by the notion of the picture as such. Our re-examination led us to suggest that graphic differentiation according to the visual contrast of single graphic forms, form arrangements, and form compositions, colors, surfaces painted, compositions related to the entire canvas, and so on, always related to their character understood as two-dimensional, drives the development in terms of an inherent logic, that is the graphic rationale of differentiating single graphic forms and qualities, of temporary pictorial

systems, and of extension and progression in forms, qualities, and system building as a basis of the early "consistent generation of sense and meaning with picture-inherent and picture-related means" (Boehm 2004, p. 28; translation by the author; original quotation: "Unter Logik verstehen wir: die konsistente Erzeugung von Sinn aus genuin bildnerischen Mitteln"). Thus, on the basis of a phenomenology of early pictures in ontogeny, the thesis of and reflection on picture-inherent and picture-related logic is opposed to existing concepts, whose rationale of the motives and agency of early pictures and their development is appraised as fragile and is therefore called into question.

### **Widening the field of reflection**

Having obtained evidence that: (I) the early characteristics and developmental tendencies of pictures in ontogeny are first of an abstract kind;

(II) they subsequently allow for different modes of analogy formations (not restricted to figurative modes), for coded manifestations and for other types of referencing;

(III) the further picture development corresponds to a parallel differentiation of many different types of pictures, including abstract ones, thus not in principle teleologically culminating in depiction;

(IV) for a substantial part, all these observations prove to be cross-contextual phenomena. Having then proposed that the course and logic of early pictures in ontogeny may have to be understood as a phenomenon of a picture-inherent agency, this perspective and understanding will be widened in terms of some considerations and speculations on basic conceptual aspects of early pictures as such.

### **Picture concept, part I: visual product, flat, two-dimensional, physically useless, perceptible and ideational, icon, sign character, representational status**

To put it in short terms, both the abstract and the observed cross-contextual beginning of pictures in ontogeny cannot be understood in a perspective, in which any form differentiation of the signifying is supposed to be directly related to a differentiation of the signified, the latter pointing beyond the former, referring to something other than itself, and in which any parallel syntactic and semantic differentiation is said to be ruled by codes and their teaching. In widening the field of our considerations, we thus assume that early pictures as such, including early graphic manifestations in phylogeny, cannot be understood in a structuralistic way. However, a pragmaticistic perspective does offer a concept to understand their characteristics, their status, and their course of development, as is reflected on here.

Early pictures are visual products. They are made by looking at and to look at. They are appearances of color application or engraving on flat surfaces. These appearances are understood - not exclusively, but in inalienable terms - as being of a two-dimensional kind. They are of no use in physical terms. They are a phenomenon of understanding by producing and looking at, and that is at the core of their intention. (However, they subsequently may be imbued with other functions.) Thus, they are phenomena of merged perceptual and ideational aspects, named here graphic manifestations. This is what Peirce defines as an icon (although with the specification of a visual character of the icon discussed here): "An icon is a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object



had no existence; such as a lead-pencil streak as representing a geometrical line.” (Peirce 1902, CP 2.304) Noteworthy, the definition of an icon as given by Peirce in general terms is not that of an analogy formation or depiction, but that of any likeness and similitude, here of the likeness of a token to a type, the latter being an idea. Thus, early pictures are graphic manifestations of ideas, representations of the understanding of two-dimensionality, presumably not derived from the outer or inner world, but emerging with the notion of pictures as such. In these terms, sign character and representational status appertain to all graphic manifestations.

### **Picture concept, part II: attention, intention, contemplation**

Considering that pictures are of no physical use, and assuming that the communicative character of early pictures is also a matter of development, the communicative function of pictures cannot be a prerequisite and primary motivation that makes for the beginning and the characteristics of early graphic manifestations, leading us to suggest that pictures come into being in a state of mind where, at least in part, attention and intention are led aside from picture-external objectives and functions, what can be understood as a kind of contemplation. This state of mind may be tightly interrelated with explorative and playful behaviors, although we do not consider early picture production as a play in a narrow sense because, in its course, the entire basis of cultural behaviors may be affected and even change (modern picture development and digitization is the most recent example of this).

### **Picture concept, part III(early) pictures are impregnated with a logic in their development, and thus (early) pictures are essentially genetic**

Referring to the definition of the icon given by Peirce, it is the shift from the understanding of a visually perceptible trace or mark on a flat surface to the understanding of a produced and realized manifestation of a graphic idea, which is related to two-dimensionality, that makes for the picture. And this shift in its first and early occurrence is of an abstract or formal kind. Further, the systematics of early picture development mirrors the building up of basic characteristics and differentiations of manifestations understood in relation to two-dimensionality. This building up makes for their picture-inherent and directly picture-related structural reference of specific graphic aspects and specific types of graphic referencing to appear in the course of graphic development, as their graphic logic: any specific graphic aspect represents a contrast to another specific graphic aspect, and as soon as the first contrasts are established, any new graphic aspect contrasts already existing contrasts; any set of differentiated graphic aspects are interrelated and build a pictorial system, as fragmentary, only temporarily existing and only in part consistent it may be; any actual pictorial system will be transformed into another system by a substantial increase of occurring new graphic manifestations and improved skills; some systems allow for a referencing (action representation, analogy formation, depiction, symbols in terms of coded signs, and so on); some systems allow for compositional realisations related to the entire picture plane. This sheds light on the

development we have described: no graphic contrast formation without a categorization of produced manifestations on a flat ground according to their visual appearance and effect and to their understanding as of being of a two-dimensional kind; no discovery of the line and no differentiation of line types without avoidance of the directions and rhythmic effect caused by the sensomotoric apparatus; no effect of a painted surface without contrast to a line (a non-surface); no development of types of graphic arrangements, compositions, structures, patterns, aggregates without a set of single graphic forms; no specific relation between different colors without their intentional alteration; no visually recognizable analogy formation without a set of abstract forms and their topological arrangement; no depiction without its counterpart, the abstract; no composition related to the entire canvas without interrelations of single graphic manifestations, and so on. In these terms, the characteristics and development of early pictures are understood here as appertained with a picture-inherent and picture related logic which, in its turn, expresses an inherent genetic character of early pictures and probably of pictures in general. That said, early picture development is a manifestation neither of a natural unfolding nor primarily of a nurture. It is a phenomenon for which picture agency has to be reflected on.

**Graphic form precedes, enables and parallels graphic analogy formation, depiction, denotation and other types of graphic referencing as a structural formula for early picture characteristics and development**

This all comes down to the thesis of graphic form differentiation preceding and enabling graphic-related analogy formation, depiction, denotation, symbolism, and other referencing, and also to the thesis of a subsequent

coexistence – synchronicity or parallelism – of graphic manifestations different in their kind and pictorial status, and from here to the notion that any actual differentiation of single attributes and of types of pictures expresses, precedes, and calls for future attributes and types, a reason why pictures grew to multiple kinds. This formula meets recent general reflections on pictures, which attribute “energeia” and “potentia” and thus activity to pictures, as is developed in a paradigmatic way by Bredekamp in “Der Bildakt” (“Picture Act”, Bredekamp 2015a; in this context, see also “What Do Pictures Want”, Mitchell 2004). Of specific interest is the “intrinsische Bildakt” (“intrinsic picture act”), the agency and “Kraft” of the “gestaltete Form als Form” in terms of an effect and impact originating and exerted from the picture, and conceived, adhered to, and reflected on by the picture maker and spectator. (For Bredekamp directly addressing the question of aesthetic artefacts in prehistory and discussing them in the perspective of “form allows for function”, see Bredekamp 2014, 2015b; in this context, see also Lorblanchet 1999; Hensilwood et al. 2002; Henshilwood and d’Errico 2011, Le Tensorer 2012.)

**Early picture production and perception as a phenomenon of a layered concept in which aspects such as syntactic structure and production process possess a semi-autonomous status**

Early pictures are understood here as being a manifestation of a layered concept, in which different aspects, in part of very different kinds, are intertwined or merged, above all. These consist of motivations related to the picture as a product, and motivations related to the picture process; motivations of effects of visual contrasts, and motivations of production-related planning and skill; motivations of forming single graphic entities, and motivations of composing the entire picture

plane; motivations of graphic differentiation and composition as such, and motivations of other types of referencing; and picture-inherent form agency and picture-affection by context-related influences. In addition, the embedding of early pictures in the context of other types of expression and of artefact making and the corresponding interrelations have to be taken into account. However, in all this, early abstract or formal characteristics and developmental tendencies of pictures, often named as the syntactic aspects of pictures, as well as directly process-related aspects and significations are in part autonomous and impose themselves on to the picture-making.

### Remarks on terminology

In developing the thesis of a substantial – although not exclusive and not isolated – picture-inherent agency of early graphic expressions, no explicit clarification of the terms was given. Such clarification needs extended discussion and a proper framework of argument and, therefore, it must be given in a separate text. However, on the basis of our considerations, a few indications on the terminology adhered to in this text are given in short here.

The adjective “graphic” is used to denote any color application or engraving on a flat surface, motivated by a differentiation of visual forms and understood – not exclusively, but as a condition – as two-dimensional. (We are aware that, e.g., Mitchell [1987] uses the attribute “graphic” in a more general way for pictures, statues and designs, and not in a restricted way for pictures only, as we do.)

The adjectives “abstract” and “formal” are used to denote any aspect of early graphic manifestations which are self-referred, that is, which cannot be derived from an affection of

the picture mentioned above. However, the two attributes are commonly used in terms of either a negation of or contrast to “meaningful” or “realistic” or “worked-out” depictions (including imaginations, phantasies, dreams, and so on) or coded signs. All this sometimes leads to the opposition of “ornaments versus pictures versus signs”, or they are used to assign syntactic aspects as opposed to semantic aspects. Yet in the context of early pictures, it is important to note that what is named here “abstract” and “formal” is not opposed to or contrasting with “concrete”, “realistic”, “depiction-related”, “worked out” characteristics; and simplification, abstraction, ornamentation, and syntactic function opposed to semantic function or supplemental role are not at issue. The “abstract” and the “formal” discussed here precede such oppositions or contrasts. However, future reflection has to address a more appropriate terminology which allows for the separation of different concepts of “abstract” pictures as well as for a “form-related semantics”.

“Picture”, denoting here any type of graphic product, is not equated with “depiction”, denoting a specific type of graphic product (note the distinction of the German expressions “Bild” and “Abbild”). The same holds true for the adjective “pictorial”, here used in general terms as a synonym with “graphic”, and not equated with “depiction-related”. Where “syntactic” and “semantic” aspects are not denoted in a structuralistic sense as principally opposed to each other, the corresponding terms are set in quotation marks. Even if the former may be considered as a “syntactic” kind because of their character of being produced and perceptible manifestations, their “semantics” are understood here as referring to themselves as such.



## Afterword

As indicated above and as explained earlier (Maurer 2016), we do not want to insinuate that early pictures in ontogeny and phylogeny are not related to and not impregnated with other kinds of artefact productions, techniques, and expressions, their conceptual basis and the corresponding needs to survive in a specific environment, or that they are not related to historical epochs, the age of the picture makers, their physical and mental conditions, social and communicative motivations and aims, context-related picture praxis, teaching, and tradition. On the contrary, the emergence of graphic manifestations is of course related to all of this and, in consequence, there must be correspondingly substantial or even crucial differences in the course of early picture development when comparing ontogeny with phylogeny. However, because of the demonstrated cross-contextual character of early pictures in ontogeny, here we speculate on an underlying general structural and picture-inherent agency of early graphic manifestations, above all, their initial characteristics as being of the “abstract” or “formal” kind, their initial pictorial status as self-referred, and their role in enabling graphic analogy formations, depiction, denotation, and other types of referencing, which may shed light on their appearance and development in phylogeny. (The bias of the text to focus on the “abstract” and the “formal” of the emergence and first characteristics has to be understood according to this perspective.) To end, we again want to emphasize that, however marginal early graphic manifestations may seem and contrary to the scant attention they receive, they may provide direct and fundamental access to the origin of pictures and they concern a core of human symbolic and aesthetic behavior (see Maurer 2013).

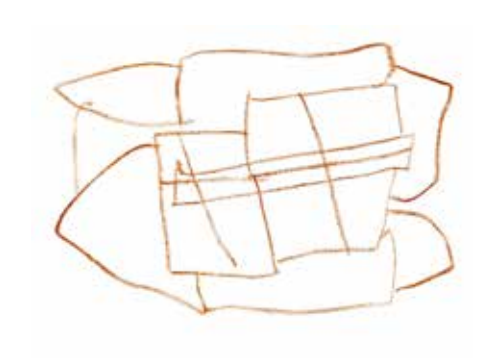
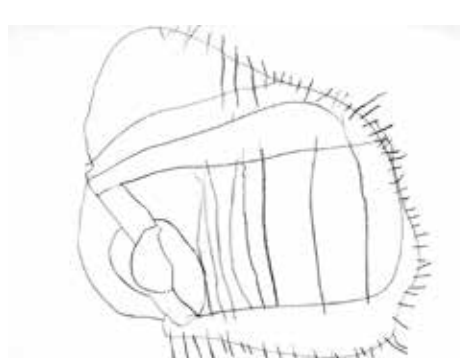
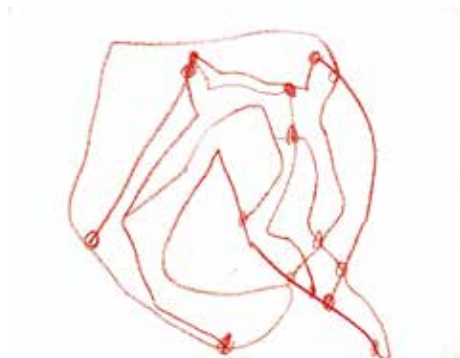
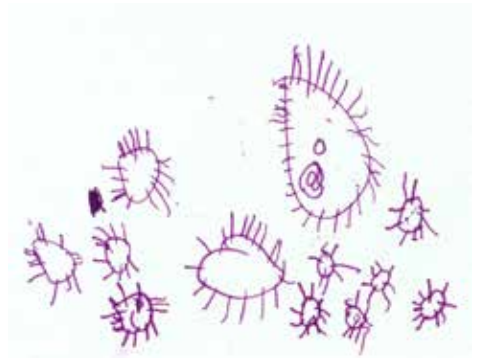
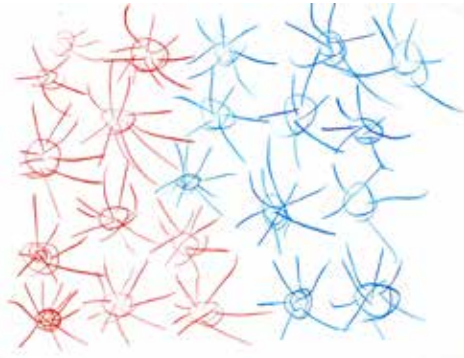
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## Appendix: Illustrations

Because of the limitation of the present contribution, reference is made here to earlier exemplary illustrations of the course of early graphic development (see the References section). However, four comparisons of pictures produced by children living in India (rural region in the south of India; mostly communities of Indigenous People; pictures on the left), in Indonesia (region in the mountains of Bali, pictures in the middle), and in Europe (regions of Switzerland, Germany and France; pictures on the right; age range of the children = c. 2-6) are given below in terms of paradigmatic illustrations of form-related and cross-contextual early graphic expressions, supporting the thesis of a picture-inherent agency. (For the “figurative” pictures, occurring in parallel, see also the References section.)





## UNBRIDLING THE PAST: THE VISUAL LANGUAGE OF ANIMACY IN PALAEOOLITHIC CAVE PAINTING AT CHAUVET

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Ph.D. Professor Emerita, Sonoma State University and  
the International Institute of Archaeomythology  
Sebastopol, California

*"Our relationship with land cannot heal until we hear its stories ... in Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as 'the younger brothers of Creation'. We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn – we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way that they live. They teach us by example. They've been on the earth far longer than we have been, and have had time to figure things out."*<sup>1</sup>

1. Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass* (Canada: Milkweed Editions), x, 7-9. Kimmerer is a scientist, a member of the Potawatomi nation, distinguished professor of Environmental Biology at SUNY, and also founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment.

### Introduction: Reconstructing the Past

Given climate change, the looming Sixth Great Mass Species Extinction,<sup>2</sup> diminishing water and food sources and other life-altering threats that have become our global reality, we must reconsider our anthropocentric guiding beliefs and our foundational concepts of human history that have contributed to this dire situation in order to find an alternative pathway. As the 21st century unfolds, science, history, aesthetics, environmental elements, and cognition are finally being viewed together as interconnected and interdependent aspects of understanding cultural expressions. This is not a new concept. It is at the heart of almost all belief systems of indigenous cultures across time. This study will reconsider the foundations of human identity, constrained by inherited frames of reference and Eurocentric views and biases with their Cartesian opposition of nature to human civilization, that presumes humans have culture but anything else does not.<sup>3</sup> It

2. Elizabeth Kolbert, 2015, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (Picador).

3. Clive Gamble, 1999. *The Paleolithic Societies of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 27-28 and more recently, Michel Lorblanchet and Paul Bahn, 2017, *The First Artists: In search of the world's oldest art* (London: Thames & Hudson) 9 notes the study of early art must strive to recreate how the people of the past perceived and used the images.



Fig. 1. Panorama of animals to right of central recess: lions, aurochs, mammoths, bison, rhinos, horse in niche. Chauvet cave, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche. France. Black charcoal and pigment on stone. Aurignacian (Photo: Courtesy of Stephen Alvarez)



Fig. 2. Aerial View of Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche and surroundings. France. (Photo: Courtesy of Stephen Alvarez)

will focus instead on the reciprocal interactions of animals and humans and the expansion of personhood to include all “being of the living earth,”<sup>4</sup> the behavior and role of lead females in herds, and other aspects of locale, climate and context.

The study of animal behavior itself is relatively new. It contrasts with prevailing views of everything non-human as passive objects of human agency that privilege the needs of humans above all others.<sup>5</sup> Strict behaviorists preclude any study of animal behavior, considering it an anthropocentric projection of human consciousness. For them culture

4. Kimmerer, 2017. “Speaking of Nature: Finding language that affirms our kinship with the natural world,” in *Orion*, March/April, Vol. 36. No. 2, 23. The Potawatomi word for “being of the living earth” is *Aakibmaadiziwin*.

5. Molly Mullin, 2002. “Animals and Anthropology,” in *Society and Animals*, 10:4 (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV), 387-393.

is the product of the active engagement of humans who interact to organize themselves within a context. The inclusion of animals, the natural world, and humans does not usually factor in this equation, and most charismatic or large animals are denigrated as beasts. With the current life-threatening weather patterns and the collapse of ecosystems, human exceptionalism is being reconsidered, using the interrelationship of all being in nature, including animals, as essential to ecological balance: “In this sense it represents a continuum between animals and humans, early and modern hominids, ourselves and our ancestors” (Gamble, 1999). This intersection between animals and humans is poignantly expressed in the parietal images discovered in 1994 at Chauvet Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche (Fig.2).



### **Collaboration, adaptation and climate change**

There is now scientific proof that animals are complex, emotional creatures with highly developed intellects and perceptive abilities, capable of sensitive communication.<sup>6</sup> Describing a tightly knit, continuous web of life, physicist Fritjof Capra and biologist Pier Luigi Luisi, incorporating foundational beliefs of indigenous cultures, conclude: “the material world ultimately, is a network of inseparable patterns of relationships, that the planet as a whole is a living, self-regulating system.”<sup>7</sup> When applied to the remote past this inclusive world view revitalizes the relationship between our indigenous human and animal ancestors, particularly those who adapted to survive climactic change and hardship during the last Ice Age, offering us a useful “grammar of animacy”<sup>8</sup> to confront dramatic 21st-century changes.

Forty millennia ago Palaeolithic cave paintings and incised and carved images indicate animals were a revered and respected part of the inclusive sentient biological family that constitutes all life and that they shared similar emotions and feelings as humans. The skill and sensitivity with which humans made these visual images that function as vessels of meaning are evidence that they learned much from living with and closely observing animal interactions and behavior. The need to survive required that the cognitive ability of Palaeolithic humans be far more developed than that of

urban humans today. They recognized and learned sustainable behavior from the seasonal patterns of animals such as migration and foraging, as well as their herd interaction and mating rituals. Cave depictions of diverse species at Chauvet, including predators and prey animals, indicate Palaeolithic humans celebrated animal migration, sacred matrifocal birth-death-regeneration cycles and social behaviors, while adapting to global climate change at the end of the Ice Age. Humans paid homage to their interaction with many animal neighbors, but particularly the horse, *Equus caballus*, the cave bear, *Ursus spelaeus*, and the rhinoceros, *brontotheres*, representing them on rock surfaces in caves and carving their images into tools and other artifacts.

The 10,000 years from the end of the last phase of the Ice Age to the present day have generally been described as a time of variable climatic conditions, dating from 60,000–24,000 years ago. While temperatures may have fluctuated, the average temperature in July near Chauvet was around 16–22 degrees Celsius. While Neanderthal populations appear to have been shrinking, open steppe grasslands were expanding, and grazing or browsing animals and their predators during the Last Glacial Maximum learned to adapt.<sup>9</sup> Habitable climate and expanding grasslands also made possible the emergence and development of complex animal and human societies with a flourishing environment to support them. Hundreds of caves, timeless repositories of information, help us understand the essence of the Palaeolithic condition.<sup>10</sup> Discovered in 1994, the stunningly intact Chauvet Vallon-Pont-d’Arc, Ardèche depictions provide evidence that animals were central to the lives and belief systems

9. Dimitra Papagianni and Michael Morse, 2013-2015. *The Neanderthals Rediscovered: How Modern Science is Rewriting their Story* (London: Thames and Hudson), 173.

10. Jens Lorenz Franzen, 2010. *The Rise of Horses: 55 Million Years of Evolution* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 165.

6. Cary Wolfe, ed., 2003. *Zoontologies: the Question of the Animal* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press), Introduction and Ch. 1.

7. Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi, 2014. *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), xi. For a micro-view, see also Colin Carlson, 01 September 2017, “Parasite biodiversity faces extinction and redistribution in a changing climate,” in *Science Advances*, Vol. 3 No 9. Parasites hold ecosystems together and play an important overall regulatory role.

8. Kimmerer, 2017, 14-27.



of those who created remarkably perceptive and intimate images, in homage to their interconnected circle of being. Radiocarbon dating of the cave walls indicates “that there were two episodes of painting at Chauvet about 31,000 BP and 26,000 BP and that the cave was closed some 21,000 years ago preserving the oldest intact and undisturbed imagery and evidence to date”.<sup>11</sup>

Animal models adapting to both seasonal as well as ecological changes were observed living in close proximity and interacting with *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthals. Indigenous peoples live in relationship with the sacred exchange of life around them. Human tribes

were likely influenced by observation of collaborative matrifocal herds that revolved around a dominant female lead, shared food and developed communities with a fluid hierarchy, facilitating and enhancing their ability to survive threats from predators and climate change. Traditionally, most archaeologists have considered these animals as fearful beasts, objects of the human hunt or in relation to shamanic rituals. Given climate change today, these parietal images may have more immediate and practical associations, providing us with models of inclusion, reciprocity, adaptation, and collaboration.

### Herd dynamics

Like the primal need of humans to belong to a social group, in nature wild animal herds are elaborately structured yet flexible; each animal has a function that contributes to the welfare of the whole. Herd movement, if not migration, is seen at Chauvet in the panorama of animals moving collectively in response to fear or surprise (Figure 1), as many still do today in game preserves like the African Serengeti. For some animal groups social networks are layered and extensive.<sup>12</sup> Male protectors maintain the safety of the females and offspring and guarantee procreation of the species with herds organized around a dominant wise, older female. After 55 million years of evolution, one of the most adaptable of the Palaeolithic animal species was the horse, whose herd dynamic may be much like unmanaged feral equine herds today. Male stallions, for example, typically have a herd consisting of one or more mares, but many adolescent or aged males may remain on the periphery as bachelors who functioned as additional protection for the herd. The dominant stallion or a bachelor may be illustrated in the isolated “horse in a niche” (Figure 3). Herds average 3–5 mares and foals each with one stallion, which come together

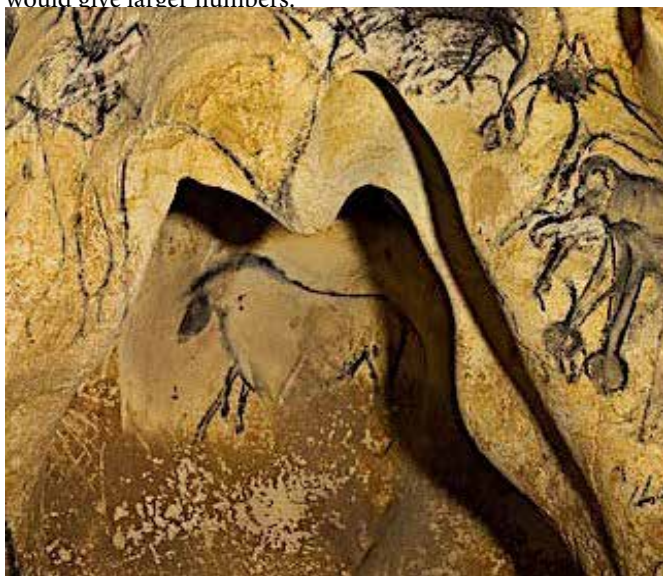


Fig. 3. End Chamber, Chauvet Cave (Vallon-Pont-d’Arc, Ardèche, France): Lone horse in recessed niche: Stallion or Lead Mare (black charcoal on rock) c. 100 cm. long. Aurignacian (Photo: Courtesy Stephen Alvarez)

12. Carl Safina, 2015. *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* (New York: Henry Holt), 36-37.

seasonally to form larger bands. Independent bachelor stallions enhance the defense against predators, especially lions that target young foals.<sup>13</sup> The culling of these bachelors as part of herd management today and our cultural focus on a dominant male have rendered this supportive function invisible. The essential protective shadow role of bachelors is documented in other herd animals like mule

13. I spent time tracking “unmanaged” wild mustangs in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains in the Montgomery Pass Wild Horse Territory in June, 2017 with a group sponsored by U.C. Davis (Craig London, DVM and Jan Roser, PhD, animal behaviorist). In one band, of 29 horses 9 were stallions and of those 5 were “bachelor” stallions who routinely challenged the dominant stallions for control of mares. Given the prevalence of mountain lions in this region, the herd populations are kept within acceptable limits by predation. The lions prey on deer in the spring, foals in the summer and return to deer predation in the fall. Rarely are grown horses killed by lions unless they are sick or weak. The prevalence of “bachelor” stallions very likely was true for the Palaeolithic era, since this seems to be a fairly natural arrangement. The Bureau of Land Management monitors and “manages” herd populations of horses across the U.S. with some 65,000 horses currently in BLM holding pens. See David Philipps, 2017. *Wild Horse Country: The History, Myth, and Future of the Mustang* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co.) Chapter 10.

deer and elephants.

Herds are directed by a wise, older lead female. She organizes the herd dynamic. Palaeolithic *perissodactyl* ungulates like *Eohippus/Equus caballus* (horses) or *brontotheres* (rhinoceros), and *proboscideans* (mammoths), or *cervidae* and *megaloceros* (deer) undoubtedly followed this central, older female lead pattern, as their modern equivalents do today.<sup>14</sup> The authority of the lead female supersedes that of other herd members, including the stallions. Often standing apart like the stallion (Figure 3), she has knowledge of the pathways and seasonal conditions to guide the herd safely to food, water, shelter, and protected places for birthing, essential for survival. Her control of the herd is done through nuanced movement, gesture, and subtly communicated intention and thus is not as obvious or dramatic as the theatrical actions of a stallion fighting off predators or suitors or breeding with his mares. Collectively, it is a mental and visual language animals and some humans understand. Dominant mares in each

14. For similar herd behavior in Mule Deer, see Joe Hutto, 2014. *Touching the Wild: Living with the Mule Deer of Deadman Gulch* (New York, NY: Skyhorse Press).

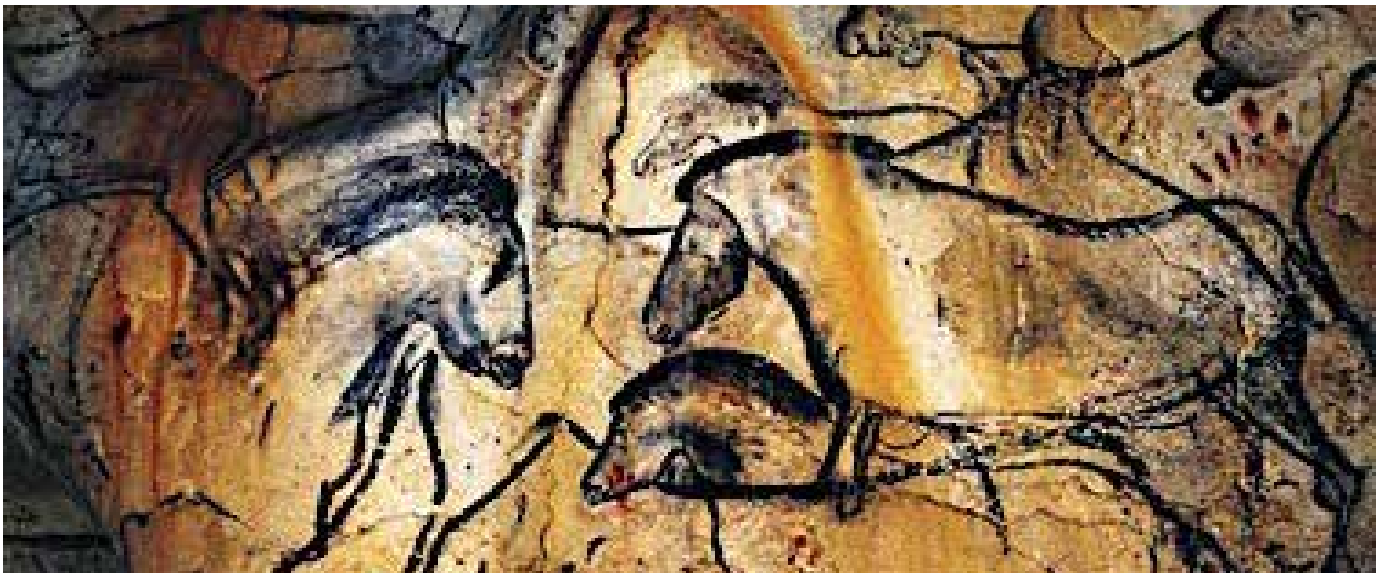


Fig. 4. Chauvet, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche. France: Panel of the “Communicating” horses with lead mare on left and Cave Lion in background. (Charcoal drawing on rock) 67 cm. Aurignacian (Photo: Courtesy Stephen Alvarez)





*Fig. 5. Hillaire Chamber, Chauvet, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche, France. Horses and rhinoceros. Black charcoal on rock. Aurignacian. (Photo: Courtesy Stephen Alvarez)*



*Fig. 6. Chauvet, (Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche, France). Detail of rhinoceros fighting, mating or playing. Black chalk on stone. 200-300 cm. long. Aurignacian. (Photo: Courtesy of Stephen Alvarez)*



herd enforce the direction of the lead mare, educate the foals and maintain order within the herd, a relationship that appears to be depicted in the “communicating” horses (Figure 4.) For herd members this language includes subtle movements, sounds, projections of mental pictures and looks, to create a shared herd mind. Herds also rely on the behavior of other animals in their environment to reciprocally inform and react collectively to threats and dangers, as groups of animals move together through visual, if not actual, space (Figure 1). Younger herd members learn from the lead mares, dominant mares, and stallions and as they get older, eventually move into their own positions of responsibility in behavior that may have functioned as a model for human groups. Scientific study has confirmed the wisdom of indigenous people living in nature who know this herd behavior and respect that animals are highly sentient and that they share emotions we have only ascribed to humans, such as sadness, joy, playfulness, and recognition of family members by smell and sound (for elephants, even bones from those long deceased).<sup>15</sup> Misogyny and the unwitting culling of older female animals by modern hunters and poachers who value youth and males over age and females has had a disastrous impact on the ability of herds to survive, while also obscuring the key herd model of matrifocal collaboration and communication.

More solitary animals like the rhinoceros, cave bears, and lions that live in smaller groups

15. Cynthia Moss and M. Colbeck, 1993. *Echo of the Elephants: The Story of an Elephant Family* (New York: William Morrow), 166-184. See also Caitlin O’Connell, 2007. *The Elephant’s Secret Sense: The Hidden Life of the Wild Herds of Africa* (New York: Free Press) and Carl Safina, 2015, Part I: “Trumpets of Elephants: Motherhood Happens,” 42-49 who commented on the institutional repudiation of animal sentience: “My own initiation into formal training included the classic directive: Do not attribute human mental experiences—thoughts or emotions—to other animals...the whole subject became verboten...Description and only description became “the” science of animal behavior...Suggesting that other animals can feel *anything* wasn’t just a conversation stopper; it was a career killer.” 26-27.

also appear prominently in Chauvet imagery. For example, the double horned white rhino is herbivorous (Figure 6). Both horses and rhinos evolved from the same progenitor, although physically distinct by the time of the Palaeolithic. Stallions and male rhinos seasonally fought for mating dominance, but rarely, if ever, was it a fight to the death. Young animals engaged in similar play activities. As adults the weaker male usually ceded to the more powerful, after what was often an elaborate display of strength and dominance. In their habitat, males routinely claimed their territory and pathways with liberal piles of dung and urine spray.<sup>16</sup> Even before physical interaction, male horses and rhinos identified the stronger animal by smelling manure or urine traces, so that any fighting was usually pro forma. These mating rituals and/or contests for access to females were depicted on the walls at Chauvet as play, fighting males or pre-mating ritual interaction seen in Figures 5 and 6. Like feral mares, female rhinos will often fight off a male suitor for days before allowing him to mate, if they allow it at all.<sup>17</sup> Since the gender of the rhinos depicted is not indicated, this particular female aspect of mating behavior and the fact that young rhinos play at combat in this posture as well, may indicate the image is polysemic, rather than limited to the usual assumption of rival males vying for mating privileges.<sup>18</sup>

Horse herds and rhinos also had in common a keen ability to find water. Unlike the horse, massive rhinos plowed direct routes through

16. Northwest Inuit and Tlingit peoples believed that scat should be avoided, stepping around it rather than over it out of respect when they found it on the trail. Personal discussion with tribal elders at the Sitka Nature Writer’s Symposium, Sitka Alaska, June 1987.

17. Malcolm Penny, 1988. *Rhinos: Endangered Species* (New York, NY and Oxford, England: Facts On File, Inc.). This behavior in feral horses was also witnessed and reported by Mackenzie Davis and Craig London during the June 2017 UC Davis “Mustangs: Living Legacy” experience.

18. Penny, *ibid*. It is difficult to study the behavior of the wild rhinoceros today to extrapolate aspects of their behavior. All of the species are near extinction, their population decimated because of the Asian belief that their horn is an aphrodisiac.

dense underbrush, like bulldozers creating direct pathways to water that other animals and humans could easily follow.<sup>19</sup> Palaeolithic humans were certainly aware of the rhino's road-building, as were the other animals that utilized these pathways through dense vegetation to access water sources. Unlike horses, rhinos were mostly solitary, except for seasonal mating behavior, with no natural predators once they reached adult size. The recurring presence of rhinos on the cave walls at Chauvet indicates they may have been symbolic models of collaboration for finding water, as well as visual metaphors of the ritual behavior of play and of procreation in the sacred life-death-regeneration cycle of nature.

### **The language of animacy and mytho-poetic fusions**

Closely observing the flora and fauna of their local ecosystems, early indigenous humans learned to live in community, share food and shelter, and guide future generations in collective behavior, or what we term culture. This included stories and aesthetic expressions to create an enduring common identity and sacred ecological exchange, visually encoded in an inclusive language of animacy or being on the walls of caves or on objects, and embodied as rituals or dance. Supporting the role of painted images, certain folk dances have ancient roots celebrating animal behavior and movement, such as the crane dance in central Europe, which in its own way is a ritual fusion

19. Penny, *ibid.* *Rhinos: Endangered Species*, 19, 25. "The tracks which black rhinoceroses use as they travel through the bush are followed by many other species, either to go to and from the same watering hole, or just as convenient passages. There is often a groove in the ground about 20 in wide, and as much as 14 in deep, beneath a tunnel through the bushes 6 feet high. Following an already cleared track saves them effort, but it also enables them to move quietly and less conspicuously. The rhinos depicted at Chauvet probably weighed between 5,000 and 6,000 pounds and were of the African "white rhino" species. See: Owen-Smith, Norman, Macdonald, D., ed., 1984. *The Encyclopedia of Mammals*. New York: Facts on File. pp. 490–495. See also: [www.livescience.com/27439-rhinos.html](http://www.livescience.com/27439-rhinos.html).

of animal and human behavior, analogous as a movement-based language.<sup>20</sup>

A preponderance of archaeological evidence from later Palaeolithic and Neolithic sites indicates that when human forms are depicted, most often they display female characteristics, with many appearing to be gravid or with a focus on the reproductive parts of the body, indicating its role as a sacred metaphor for life-death-regeneration, of which the Neolithic Venus or goddess type is a well-known example. In the Neolithic human female forms are frequently combined with animal masks or conflated with bodies of animals, like the Lipinski Vir fish goddess (Figure 12, p.57). Jean Clottes in the Epilogue to *The Dawn of Art: The Chauvet Cave*, notes the depiction of humans is extremely rare in Palaeolithic art. At Chauvet it consists of negative red hands in the entrance chambers and five detailed pubic triangles with engraved vulvas. The human hand markers are located at the entrance and various places inside the cave, similar to the cave bear claw markings (Figure 7).<sup>21</sup> A logarithmic study of the finger measurements of the 32 handprints in the cave in 2013 found that 75% of them were female,<sup>22</sup> suggesting a significant role for women in the creation of this Palaeolithic cave imagery. The hybridization of animals and humans at Chauvet is found in an unprecedented depiction of a human female lower torso with prominent

20. See Anna Ilieva and Anna Shturbanova, 1997. "Zoomorphic Images in Bulgarian Women's Ritual Dances in the Context of Old European Symbolism," in *From the Realm of the Ancestors: An Anthology in Honor of Marija Gimbutas*, ed. Joan Marler (Manchester, CT: Knowledge, Ideas and Trends, Inc.), 309-321.

21. Lorblanchet and Bahn, 2017, note a "constant rapport between the animal engravings and the bear clawmarks..." 16.

22. In Rachel Nuwer's *Smithsonian Magazine*, article, October 9, 2013 "Women artists may be responsible for most cave art," she notes that "women tend to have ring and index fingers of about the same length, whereas men's ring fingers tend to be longer than their index fingers." Using a logarithm designed to evaluate the 32 handprints found in the Chauvet Cave, 75% were female (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/ancient-women-artists-may-be-responsible-for-most-cave-art-1094929/?no-ist>.)



Fig. 7. Chauvet,  
Red hand, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche. France.  
Pigment on stone. (Photo: Courtesy of Stephen Alvarez)

genitalia on a hanging rock pendant, outside and opposite the Lion Panel, “with two black felines and a horse on one side, and, on the other side, a black creature, upright and leaning slightly forward: the top of its body is that of a bison, and the bottom that of a human, with the two legs well indicated ... It is this figure that one sees when one arrives in the chamber”<sup>23</sup> (Figure 9 plus general view). This hybrid image is strategically placed at the end of the cave system deep in the gallery farthest and lowest from the entrance on an isolated pendant or stalactite. Facing the cavalcade (also called “chaos”<sup>24</sup> of animals, human female genitalia and the lower part of her body are merged

23. Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel Deschamps and Christian Hillaire, 1996. *Dawn of Art: The Chauvet Cave* (London: Henry Abrams and Thames of Hudson), 110.

24. *Chauvet Cave: The Art of Earliest Times*, 2003, ed. Jean Clottes (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press) passim.

with animal imagery.<sup>25</sup> The profile figure of a bison on one side, which some identify as a male and shamanic, is juxtaposed with a lion on the other. The back of the pendant is undecorated. Both male and female bison and lions at this time had similar features: bison had thick, dark coats, broad chests and horns, while the male cave lion lacked the shaggy mane we associate with African lions. It has been assumed that the animals are male, yet there is no detail that confirms gender. The bison’s eye looks outward, creating a direct and inclusive visual bridge to the observer. This early animal human hybrid is in the position of a sentinel, like the lead female in a herd, visually connected to the cavalcade of animals behind, but physically apart.

The bison head is positioned above the female with its front legs becoming part of the genitalia and lower torso while the figure of a lion emerges from the other side. Millennia later in the Neolithic the conflating of humans and female reproductive elements with animals is a frequent metaphor for life-death-regeneration and spiritual transformation.<sup>26</sup> Strategically located, this image and other incised and drawn Vs or symbolic vulvas in the cave affirm the metaphorical generative function of the female in nature at the heart of the overall meaning of the cave decoration.

#### **Human-animal relationships and co-habitation behavior**

Palaeolithic ecologies in diverse regions in what is now the south of France and north

25. Four other references to female genitalia exist in the form of the pubic triangle, located at the entrances of adjacent niches and cavities. See Jean Clottes, 2001. “The Salle du Fond Chamber: Venus and The Sorcerer,” *International Newsletter on Rock Art*, 29 at: [bradshawfoundation.com/chauvet/venus\\_sorcerer.php](http://bradshawfoundation.com/chauvet/venus_sorcerer.php)

26. See Marija Gimbutas, rev. ed., 1982. *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: Myths and Cult Images* (Berkeley Los Angeles and New York: University of California Press) and her 1991, *Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publisher).





Figgs. 8-9. End chamber, Chauvet, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche, France. General view and detail of vulva on hanging stone facing the Panneau des Lions: Hybrid female pubic triangle and vulva; bison with leg/arm; cave lion. (black charcoal on stone). Aurignacian. (Photo: Courtesy Stephen Alvarez)

of Spain saw *Homo sapiens sapiens* evolve as distinct species in different habitats, like the Neanderthals in southern Europe, Africa, and Asia.<sup>27</sup> Grave evidence, however, indicates both *Homo sapiens sapiens* and Neanderthals were buried with animal bones more than 100,000–60,000 years ago, indicating a special relationship, and that respect for animals was integral to spiritual beliefs even before these cave decorations (Papagianni, 115-119).

Reflecting modern values, most studies of the remote past have focused on the role of the privileged, dominant male in human evolution, subordinating or marginalizing the role of women, indigenous populations, and animals. It is not uncommon to find animal species denigrated as wild beasts by scholars, who considered them primarily as a source of food and material prestige for human exceptionalism.<sup>28</sup> Many anthropocentric studies have included passing reference to animals, but consideration of coeval human-animal relationships is comparatively recent.

27. Dimitra Papagianni and Michael Morse, 2015. *The Neanderthals Rediscovered: How Modern Science is Rewriting their Story* (London: Thames & Hudson, Inc.) 20-21.

28. Brian Fagan, 2015. *The Intimate Bond: How Animals Shaped Human History* (New York: Bloomsbury Press), xi attempts to outline the complex, dynamic relationship between animals and humans but claims that: “The endless debate over the humanity of animals is, however, irrelevant to these pages.” Throughout the book he refers to both predatory animals and their prey as “beasts.” His frame of reference, perhaps unwittingly, denigrates animal sentience as “anthropomorphizing” because we “attribute human emotions and feelings to them.”

Cognitive ethologists study consciousness and adaptation, including moral and ethical questions relating to animals,<sup>29</sup> in contrast to traditional studies that viewed animals as resources for human development and domination. With dramatic species extinction and the loss of natural habitats, few animals today are able to function as wild creatures, making it difficult for observers to understand their natural interactions and behavior, and thus, serve as models for their actions in the remote past.

The view of Chauvet as an inclusive social landscape in which all living beings are considered relations aligns with nature-based

29. T. Ingold, 1988. "The animal in the study of humanity." In T. Ingold (Ed.), *What is an Animal?* (pp. 84-99). London: Routledge. See also T. Ingold (2000). *The Perception of the environment: Essays in livelihood, dwelling, and skill*. London: Routledge.

indigenous practices.<sup>30</sup> By 40,000–35,000 BCE *Homo sapiens* predominated in Europe, as Cro-Magnon, after the cave where bones anatomically similar to 20<sup>th</sup>-century humans were found.<sup>31</sup> It was likely these early humans decorated the walls and ceilings of caves and made useful objects with images. The aesthetic sensitivity, perceptive ability, and artistic skill found in animal images from Chauvet has

30. Mitákuye Oyás'iny is a Lakota phrase that translates as "we all are related" in a world view of interconnectedness. This concept and phrase is notably found in many Yankton Sioux prayers as well as by ceremonial people in other Lakota communities. The prayer describes the oneness and harmony of all forms of life including people, animals, birds, insects, trees and plants, and even rocks, rivers, mountains and valleys. See: Thomas Constantine Maroukis, 2005 *Peyote and the Yankton Sioux: The Life and Times of Sam Necklace* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press), 160.

31. J.-M. Chauvet, E. B. Deschamps, and C. Hillaire, 1996. *Dawn of Art: The Chauvet Cave* (New York: Harry N. Abrams).



Fig. 10. Chauvet, (Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche, France). Recess of the bears: *Ursus speleus*, Cave Bear: (red pigment on rock, near the original entrance to the cave). c. 120 cm. Aurignacian (Photo: Courtesy Stephen Alvarez)





Fig. 11. Cave lion (*Panther leo spelaea*) with claw marks. Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardèche. France. Red and black pigment on rock. Aurignacian (Photo: Courtesy of Stephen Alvarez)

challenged our traditional view of the level of sophistication and training of Palaeolithic humans and the place of animals in their lives. Most discussions of these images revolve around symbolism, aesthetics, shamanism, or the hunt. Rarely mentioned are practical issues involved with animals, like mutual coexistence in a landscape, or for Chauvet, the year-round habitation of the caves by *Ursus spelaeus*, the cave bear (Figure 10) or the cave lion, *Panther leo spelaea* (Figure 11). The distilled essence of the bear and lion are masterfully captured in simple, expressive line drawings and profile images.

### *Ursus spelaeus*

These caves were the hibernation, birthing and sometimes death sites of the cave bear, the largest of the *ursidae* species, towering over the *Ursus arctos* or grizzly bear of today and much larger than the Aurignacian cave lion and wolf, *Canus lupus*. The later brown bear did not hibernate in caves like *Ursus spelaeus*, which

disappeared between 15,000 and 12,000 BCE.<sup>32</sup> While the bear was not the main focus of any painted bestiary in Chauvet, accounting for only 10% of the animals most frequently depicted, they and the lions that also frequented the caves were nonetheless a looming presence.<sup>33</sup> They not only hibernated in the caves, but also

32. See Martina Pacher, 2002. "Polémique autour d'un culte de l'ours des caverns," in *L'Ours et l'Homme*, ed. Thierry Tillet and Lewis Roberts Binford (Liège: Editions de l'Université de Liège.), 235-246, cited in Michael Pastoureau, 2011. *The Bear: History of a Fallen King* (Cambridge MASS, and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 12-14 and note 2, 256. In another cave in France, La Balme-à-Collomb, three to four thousand skeletal remains of *ursidae* were found indicating the cave was frequented by bears for several dozen, if not several hundred millennia. This proliferation and other considerations have led many pre-historians to consider a "cult of the bear," a religious concept still widely debated today. 17-20.

33. Pastoureu, 2011. "The cave bear was significantly larger (up to eleven-and-a-half feet for an upright male), more massive, and heavier (1,100 to 1,300 pounds) than the brown bear, who grew to nearly seven to seven-and-a-half feet and weighed between 550-660 pounds)" and Cave Bear teeth indicate it was vegetarian. 12-14.





*Fig. 12. Goddess of Lipinski Vir (Northern Yugoslavia) with fish mouth, woman's breasts and vulva and bird of prey claws instead of hands. Stone. Found in Temple No. 44. H. 51 cm. c. 6000 BCE (Photo: Courtesy of Institute of Archaeomythology, Marija Gimbutas Archives)*

spent time there during hot summer days. Parallel claw markings on the walls made by bears, some scratched over pre-existent images, are similar to territorial claw marks bears make on trees today to identify and claim territory. The act of claw marking may have inspired the numerous handprints (Figure 7), finger flutings and etchings mentioned earlier at the entrances and in strategic locations in caves as indications of human presence. While not as prolific in number as horses, cave bears figure prominently, including the strategic placement of bear skulls and bones within the cave, some intentionally arranged on “altars,” indicating a ritual significance. The cave bear stood erect on its hind legs like a human when it perceived a threat was near or it was scanning the distance; and the female nursed her babies sometimes holding them like humans as depicted in a later not uncommon Neolithic image (Figure 13). The cave bear, like the later *Ursus arctos*, was something of a living metaphor, with its regenerative human-like maternal practices and death-like hibernation. Even today, the bear continues to be respected



Fig. 13. Bear Masked Mother holding a baby. Vinca culture. Terra-cotta. From Fafos at Kosovska Mitrovica, S. Yugoslavia. C.4500 BCE. H. 5.7 cm. (Photo: Courtesy International Institute of Archaeomythology, Marija Gimbutas Archives)

by many indigenous tribes who tell traditional stories of young women who ran off and mated with shape-shifting bears (Pacher, 2002). Folk mythology in central Europe still refers to a young mother as a little bear” (Gimbutas, 1982). The earlier human burials with animal remains are evidence of direct, close contact and mutual respect. Similar to animal rescue efforts today, a young abandoned animal during the Palaeolithic could have been adopted by a compassionate human who befriended it, beginning a sensitive and more intimate animal/human relationship.<sup>34</sup> Veterinarian Robert M. Miller’s method of imprinting, or human exposure to newborn horses as well as zoo animals, has shown that a baby animal imprints what it sees within an hour or so of its birth and thus it has no fear of the imprinted human, object or activity to which it is exposed. Animal behaviorist horse trainer Brimhall McCord believes the first horse/human contact occurred when a child found an abandoned foal. In her experience, “Horses will talk if we will listen. They have the ability to see and feel on a level that is unknown to us.”<sup>35</sup> To assume animal domestication occurred only millennia later in response to human needs, overlooks the possibility of relationships that were purely a result of chance encounter, mutual respect and affection and with no expectation of human utility other than behavioral models.

34. Sandra L. Olsen Susan Grant, Alice M Cheeky and Laszlo Bartosiewicz. 2006. “Horses and Humans: The Evolution of Human-Equine Relationships,” BAR International Series 1560. Franzen, 2010 notes horses were supposedly domesticated about 5000 years ago. Most scholars use evidence of “bit wear” to determine human “control” of horses, but Native Americans and those today practicing “Natural Horsemanship” know from experience that horses will respond to riders without the need for bridles and other agencies of control.

35. 2015 Conversation with author at Clinic, Gilroy, CA., See: <http://inspirationalhorse.com>

### **An adaptive and interdependent language of animacy: *Equus caballus***

Intimate knowledge of a landscape allows animals to live in reciprocity with a place and its natural balance and to adapt to seasonal or ecological changes with predictable regularity, giving some a seasonal time-marking function. Birds fly thousands of miles seasonally to arrive at the same place on the same day year after year. Elephant matriarchs know the paths to water and forage leading their herds, season after season across hundreds of miles. Beluga whales learn to imitate human speech and communicate emotion and meaning.<sup>36</sup> Palaeolithic humans observed and reciprocated animal behavior around them, weaving that knowledge into songs, dances, and stories, depicting it on the walls of sacred spaces to be visited for mutual remembrance, ritual purposes, and as evidence of regeneration and survival. The perceptive realistic depictions of animals found at Chauvet reveal intelligence, sensitivity, and a sophisticated aesthetic in the hundreds of horses, cave bears, cave lions, aurochs, and bison depicted. Equally unprecedented is the representation of complex, nuanced consciousness shared by animals of the same species and with other species.<sup>37</sup> Early humans living amidst dense herds of wild animals may well have communicated with them, and certainly relied on the acute sight, hearing, and sense of smell of their animal neighbors, having observed them for generations in their natural habitats. The thrall of this reality, however, was not lost on Palaeolithic humans, who experienced

the coordinated, intertwined energy of wild herds quietly grazing, communicating among themselves; sensing the deafening sound of their moving hooves pounding the earth; or their calls, alerting others to potential changes and dangers in the environment. Indigenous people living in intimate relationship with a place develop an encyclopedic, nuanced knowledge of the life around them, its flora and fauna, fully aware of the useful interconnections and interdependence experienced by all species.<sup>38</sup>

One of the most adaptable animals was the *Equus caballus*, which evolved across 50 million years from the early Eocene as a dog-size animal of about 50 lb with four hooved toes on its front legs and three on the rear, related to the other odd-toed ungulate mammals, the rhinos and tapirs.<sup>39</sup> Remains of this dawn horse, *Eohippus*, have been found on almost every continent, their global distribution occurring during the Cenozoic era when travel across continents was facilitated by the connected land masses of North America, Greenland, and the British Isles. *Eohippus* transitioned from browsers to grazers with the changing flora and fauna of the European continent and continued to thrive for over 30 million years in North America. Over time they evolved into the larger, stronger, smarter animals of the Palaeolithic era,

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38. Jean Clottes, 2009 . "Forward" to David Whitley's *Cave Paintings and the Spirit: the Origin of Creativity and Belief* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books): "It is a safer bet to wager that Paleolithic hunter-gatherers' ways of thinking were closer to those of early Native Americans or Australian Aborigines rather than to ours today...An understanding of Native American (and other traditional non-Western) cultures provides a kind of prism by which the ancient past can be examined and explored, beyond the heavy intellectual weight imposed by our Western worldview." 15, 19.

39. Richard Owen, "Description of the Fossil Remains of a Mammal (*Hyracotherium leporinum*) and of a Bird (*Lithornis vulturinis*) from the London Clay," in *Transactions of the Geological Society of London*, Series 2, VI: 203-208. See also Lawrence Guy Straus, 1992, repr. Ed. 2011. *Iberia Before the Iberians: The Stone Age Prehistory of Cantabrian Spain* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press), 146.

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36. Janine Benyus, 2014. *The Secret Language of Animals: A Guide to Remarkable Behavior* (New York, N.Y.: Black Dog & Leventhal).

37. Safina, 2015 describes what the San people called the "Old Way" before white people changed the dynamic. The San people (formerly "Bushmen) from the Kalahari Desert, for example, did not hunt lions but spoke with them respectfully and were never killed by nor killed a lion. 180.



developing in size, strength and agility up to the present.<sup>40</sup> Horses accommodated Miocene changes from forests to grasslands. Abundant grazing fodder led to diverse species of horses in North America and Europe that developed more complex digestive systems, stronger teeth and longer jaws that allowed them to grind the prairie grasses more efficiently and thus grow in size and weight like the *tarpan*, similar to those at Chauvet.<sup>41</sup> Horses migrated westward into Eurasia across the Bering Straits before global warming at the end of the last Ice Age. Extinct in North America for an unknown reason about 10,000 years ago,<sup>42</sup> the horse, notably, found its way to the lush prairies of the Russian steppes where most scholars believe they were domesticated around 4,000–3,500 BCE, based on evidence of bit wear.<sup>43</sup> Questions regarding the first horse–human contact and intentional interaction remain open, but some of the oldest visual images from Chauvet help us reconstruct their relationship to each other and to humans, confirming a horse–human

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40. Recent examination of physical evidence indicates the horses depicted on the walls of Chauvet derived not from the tarpan or Prezwalski horse, but the *Equus antunesi*, a horse well suited for fast running across open spaces. Franzen, 2010, 170-171.

41. Franzen, 2010, 104-106. See also: Steve Price, 2017. *America's Wild Horses: The History of the Western Mustang* (New York, NY: Skyhorse Publishing), 2-4.

42. Lecture by Ross McPhee, Ph.D, curator of the division of vertebrate zoology and of the international exhibit, "The Horse," at the Museum of Natural History, New York City, N.Y., "The Archaeology and Paleontology of the Horse," May 2016, sponsored by the Bentley Foundation, San Francisco, CA.

43. David Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton, N.J and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007) 40-41. Anthony, David W., Brown, Dorcas R., George, Christian, 2006. "Early horseback riding and warfare: the importance of the magpie around the neck," in Olsen, Sandra L.; Grant, Susan; Choyke, Alice; Bartosiewicz, Laszlo. *Horses and Humans: The Evolution of the Equine-Human Relationship*. British Archaeological Reports International Series. 1560 (Oxford: Archaeopress), 137–156. They acknowledge that a hackamore does not affect the bones or teeth of a horse and may have been used much earlier.

interrelationship that predated by millennia human control and dominance.

Primatologists like Jane Goodall and cognitive ethologists have helped us understand that the creatures behaviorists considered "beasts, workhorses, household companions, or sources of food are deeply sentient creatures who feel sorrow, bliss, experience anxiety, build relationships, develop languages among themselves that can be translated into human understanding and are capable of complex, often reasoned thought. Many animals and insects are able to develop and use tools.<sup>44</sup> Natural horsemanship practitioners and Native Americans have shown that intimate bonding, special affection and communication can develop between animals and humans and that control of animals does not require dominance. Brimhall McCord explains horses communicate by thinking in pictures and projecting intention that humans can experience and use to communicate with them. The earliest communication between horses or other animals and humans may have followed this pattern,<sup>45</sup> which would account for the stylistic realism of the imagery at Chauvet, a universal visual language. People who live and work with animals today have experienced a similar visual exchange or intuitive communication with animals when mutual respect and ethical treatment characterizes their relationship.

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44. Evidence that attitudes toward animals and their improving status in our human world today is found in *Time Magazine* special summer 2017 edition of "The Animal Mind: How They Think. How They Feel. How to Understand Them" and in *Scientific American's* special collector's July 11, 2017 edition of "Secret Lives of Animals: Strange True Tales from the Wild Kingdom." The *Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness* written by Philip Low and edited by Jaak Panksepp, et al was publicly proclaimed in Cambridge, UK, on July 7, 2012, at the Francis Crick Memorial Conference on Consciousness in Human and non-Human Animals, signed by the conference participants with Stephen Hawking, and memorialized by CBS 60 Minutes.

45. January 2015 Conversation with author at Inspirational Horse Clinic, Gilroy, CA., See: <http://inspirationalhorse.com>

## Conclusion

Modern values have limited our ability to understand what it is to live intimately within nature and to closely observe its integrated web of life, particularly as it is depicted at Chauvet. Palaeolithic humans like Native Americans with a deep understanding and awareness of nature know that there can be mutual respect and interaction without domination. The matrifocal integrated systems view of being may best describe Palaeolithic life, but it has been obscured during the intervening millennia by a singular focus on human exceptionalism and male privilege that view animals solely with regard to human needs. From approximately 40,000 BCE to 20,000 BCE when the Chauvet cave was accessible to humans, the concepts that denigrate the female, that sanction slaughtering animals for recreation or profit, or that debase or consider them solely as tools or resources were in the far distant future. For millennia indigenous peoples lived in reciprocity with all life, adapting to change, protecting, respecting, and nurturing those things upon which they depended for survival, using aural and visual languages consisting of verbs “to describe vital beingness,” rather than objectified nouns (Kimmerer, 2017, 17).

The Palaeolithic paintings in Chauvet and elsewhere express a collaborative matrifocal, lead female, culture of inclusion, and of reverence for all aspects of nature, focused on animals and their behavior essential for collective survival amidst changing conditions. The striking realism of the images at Chauvet convey this sense of mutual respect and sensitivity, in stark contrast to modern *homo economicus* who marginalizes anything except abstract profit and status, the lens through which we have traditionally viewed the past. This restrictive ethnocentric view has contributed to the slow destruction of the global web of life, the rapid extinction of species, widespread misogyny and the loss of sustainable natural habitats, all leading to human-caused global climate change and possible collapse. So, it is timely to return to these ancient Palaeolithic images created by a culture that survived across millennia living in balance with nature. The images of Chauvet offer an alternative to our human exceptionalist thinking. By using its universal language of animacy, we can begin to unbridle the remote past and recognize the animal imagery at Chauvet as vessels of meaning that honor their and our sacred relationship to a living earth.

## SIXTEEN WONDERS OF WORLD VISUAL ART

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### 1. Genesis

Figure 1 shows various layers, cognitive illustrations of chronological divisions, projections on a plane, showing days, according to the multidimensional picture of genesis in biblical chronology. The first four days are marked with four curves at the bottom of the figure.

The first day: the creation of light and darkness ("And there was evening and there was morning", Genesis 1:1-5). Light appears and its curves descend (Fig. 1).

The second day is the creation of the dome ("God called the dome sky", Genesis 1:6-8). Armenian hieroglyphic or ideographic symbols of heavenly and earthly domes (spiral and circle with hooks) are depicted from the right. The sun is depicted stylized (divine in its beautiful nature) with its curling rays, a "spurt of waves", reaching the earth, its water surface coming from the sky.

The third day is the creation of the dry land and earth, the waters and vegetation. The figure depicts the dry land, a double-peaked mountain, the sea and vegetation.

The fourth day is the creation of lights in the dome of the sky ("God made the two great lights - the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night - and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness." Genesis 1:14-17). This is presented as the sun in the sky.

The fifth day is the creation of reptiles, fish and

birds, presented in the form of symbols of fish and birds.

The sixth day is the creation of animals and man ("Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Genesis 1:24-26). The sixth layer is presented as the depictions of a goat and a man. The birth of the son of God, the cultivated hero, the first man (Vahagn), is presented in the image of a stylized figure of a man, born near the double-peaked volcanic mountain (*glxatun*); there is a circle atop it, his fingers and toes are wide open. The figure depicts an angel in a squatting position. The heavenly semicircle above his head symbolizes fertilization and fertility.

The seventh day is blessing and sanctification of the seventh day, the whole picture in a synergy of all its layers and days.



Fig. 1. Genesis: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Gegham Mountains, Armenia.



## 2. Illustration of the motif of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life

This is a unique depiction, illustrating the motifs of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. For the first time a prehistoric man used the visual form of describing natural phenomena in the form of a stylized tree on the body of a serpent (modeling lava, volcanic eruption). The picture demonstrates the knowledge of the ancient people regarding the world and the forces of nature.



Fig. 2. Illustration of the motif of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Gegham Mountains, Armenia.

## 3. Hero archer, Hayk the archer, in the Old Armenian tradition

This is a stylistically and compositionally unique depiction of a hero (in the Armenian tradition Hayk, who defeated Bel), defeating the forces of evil, chaos, and darkness.



Fig. 3. Hero archer, Hayk the Archer in the Old Armenian tradition: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Gegham Mountains, Armenia.

## 4. Constellation Cepheus and Draco

The petroglyph depicts the images of the constellations of Cepheus and Draco (S. Petrosyan).

## 5. Swastika-shaped hero, fighting a heavenly bull; Vahagn fighting a dragon

The hero, swastika-shaped, left-facing, carries death to an enemy (the dragonslayer, thunderer, Vahagn in the Armenian tradition). Harmonic and remarkably symmetric in its shape and content, the man-shaped swastika symbolizes and embodies the unity of the forces of nature – thunder and lightning, fire and flame, earth and water. The composition reflects the features of the hero, such as courage and bravery,



Fig. 4. Constellation Cepheus and Draco: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.



Fig. 5. Swastika-shaped hero, fighting a heavenly bull; Vahagn fighting a dragon: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.

valor, resolution, and volition. This motif is transformed into the picture of Hayk (Fig. 3). In Armenia various crosses are widespread: *arevkhach* (sun-cross), *kerkhach* (crooked-cross), *chankakhach* (hook-cross), *khachatev* (winged-cross), *armnkakhach* (arm-cross), eternity sign, the cross of war (*paterazmakhach*), shaped as swastikas. Right-facing and left-facing swastikas are identified, which are mostly depicted in the Geghama and Syunik Mountains, on weapons, armor, jewelry, and cult and household items.

### 6. Depiction of the spherical earth in throes

The petroglyph "Genesis" illustrates the earth (Fig. 6). This shows the level of cognitive abilities of the ancestors, who presented the earth as a sphere with a winged cross (symbol of birth and growth). It is in the throes of the birth of the moon. Human figures, illustrating the four races, the four cardinal directions, hover equidistantly over it. It is widely known that at different times there were various theories about the shape of the earth. The church rejected the sphericity of the earth.

"And He (God) created it (the earth) on water" (Psalm 23:2). Shirakatsi stated the spherical

shape of the earth. "I think the earth is of an egg-shaped form," he wrote, "the ball-shaped yolk is in the middle, the egg-white is around it and the eggshell surrounds everything; the same way the earth is in the centre like the yolk, air is around it like the egg-white and the sky surrounds everything like the eggshell." [3] In this way Shirakatsi expounds his view on the shape of the earth, contradicting other points of view (including the Bible).

"Some good pagan philosophers," he wrote,



Fig. 6. Depiction of the spherical earth in throes (Ararum) and birth of the moon: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.

“state that it [the Earth] is of spherical shape. The others [state] that it is a six-sided cube – raised up and fixed in the middle of the sky...” [3] “Thus, the upper sky, which the Greeks call ether and the Chaldeans dense fire ... enclosed in itself, its indivisible essence, natural composition, like the vault, by proper coverage of plain round (form) it stretches around the spherical earth (with its) incessant and inseparably fast rotation, invisible materiality, cognized only through the mind.” [3]

In *Geography* Shirakatsi sharply criticizes the approach according to which the earth has a quadrangular flat form and is located on the sea: “Insane pagan philosophers state that wall-shaped sea surrounds the earth, and the earth, like an island, is located in the middle of sea, and water rests in the air.” “It is said that ocean surrounds not only the hot zone but the earth itself. In his *Christian topography* Constantine of Antioch states on this basis that the Ark came from the eastern countries. Ptolemy states that it is not ocean that surrounds the earth. “And that is a right statement,” states Shirakatsi.

The question of the spherical shape of the earth is closely related to the problem of the antipodes. Christian cosmography denied the existence of human beings and living creatures on the opposite side of the earth. Shirakatsi writes: “according to the prophets, the Holy Scripture and church teachers, there are no creatures inhabiting the lower part (of the earth), but I admit existence of the antipodes.” [3] Following this view, he tells of a dream of how he met the sun and asked him about the antipodes, and the sun answers that there are no antipodes on the opposite side, as it “gives light only to the mountains, ravines and lifeless caves”.

Following the ancient scholars, Shirakatsi states that the sensual realm and all things are composed of the four elements, earth, water,

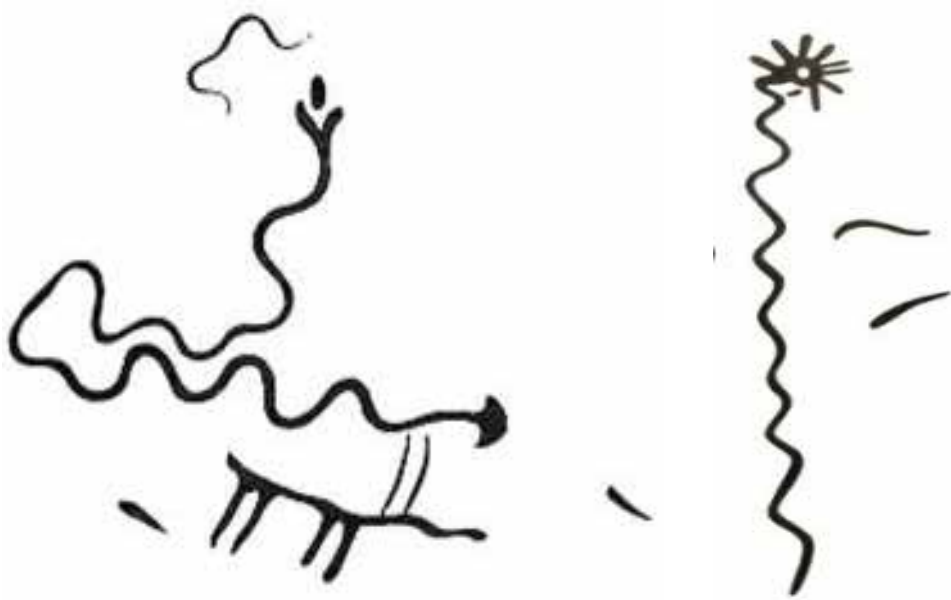
air and fire. All animals, plants, trees, fruits, and man also comprise compounds of these four elements. According to him, the world is a specific composition of mixed elements. These elements have both created and acquired features. Their diversity depends on size, heat, cold, water, and dryness. “And he (the Creator) forms the four: first is fire, second wind (air), third earth, fourth water... They interact due to the common qualities they share. The nature of fire is heat and dry, air – heat and wet, water – cold and wet, earth – cold and dry. While interacting, they (the elements) acquire the qualities of each other.” [3].

## **7. Metaphysical (natural philosophic) illustration of volcanic eruption and solar eclipse**

Shirakatsi presents nature in motion and conversion: all things with no exception are in motion and are changeable; through time, the existing old units decompose and new ones are formed. “Creation is the beginning of decomposition; and decomposition is the beginning of creation. And due to this opposition the world is created.” [3] In the material world nothing can be created or destroyed, rather, it transforms from one form to the other.

This petroglyph is a unique composition, in an expressive eloquent form, in an unambiguous style, stylized and abundant in its content. The elements of the figure creatively represent the concept of the oldest motif of a serpent/dragon fighting the sun in its terminal phase, depicted as an illustration of a solar eclipse: the sun is in the jaws of the serpent (the sky is ideographically depicted). The other half of the serpent does black deeds on the earth; it symbolizes lava flow on the earth that sows death, destroying the animals (depicted as deer and plant elements). These visual imprints of knowledge about the world and natural phenomena illustrate profound the cognitive abilities of the early hunters and herders.





*Fig. 7. Metaphysical (natural philosophic) illustration of volcanic eruption and solar eclipse: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.*



Fig. 8. Hero sitting astride a huge lion: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.

### 8. Hero sitting astride a huge lion

Here are shown the strength, mighty power, and athleticism of the hero, who distinguishes himself in battle against the mighty lion. The main features and character of the invincible hero is outlined with fine artistic taste. His formative plastic and almost perfectly balanced figure symbolizes a matchless example of a winner, who has performed a heroic deed, defeating the previously unconquered king of the beasts. The hero is standing in his glory with his legs wide apart. The great artist managed to reflect a new alliance, a synthetic image of the hero and the conquered lion. It bends its huge front paws in a sign of obedience, recognition of might, and the strength and power of the hero. The lion moves forward its neck of incredible length and size, which underlines the absolute obedience of the predator.

"Today I was in a foreign country, near a mountain rising high above the earth. Its top seemed to be covered with ice. They say it was the land of the Haykids [the Haykazunis]. As I stared at the mountain, a woman came into sight sitting atop it in a crimson/purple dress with a sky-blue veil, she has got big eyes and was strapping and ruddy; she was in travail.

Astonished, I stared at the sight, and the woman suddenly gave birth to three god-like heroes perfect in their shape and nature. The first one jumped on a lion and rushed to the west; the second one made his way to the north on a leopard; the third one, riding a dragon monster, attacked our country." [2]

This is the cosmic model of worshipping the sky - the father, the creator (Fig. 10). The first man is depicted in a unique stylized form, illustrating the concept of the motif of the world tree, the home from which the spirit arises. The figure is characterized as having an integral character, reflecting the unity of spiritual and material natures, illustrating the integral picture of the world. He is created "in the image and likeness".

### 9. The spirit of the first man, the kneeler

The petroglyph is an artistic description of the three-component cognitive figure of a man in a synthesis of home, with a visual corporeal shell and invisible spirit. Halves of the sacred apple are depicted on the trunk of the tree of spirit, symbolizing the harvest. From the man's corporeal shell (namely, from his chest) arises the tree of the spirit, which is transformed into



Fig. 9. Spirit of the first man, the kneeler: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.

the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Biblical Adam eats the apple – the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and he is punished, deprived of immortality.

The trident atop the tree of spirit of the first man reminds us of the symbol of the trinity (as well as the Old Armenian ideogram “𐎎”, the symbol of royal power and immortality) and characterizes man’s power. He tends to the house in heaven from the house on earth.

### 10. Man symbolizing the unity of the houses in heaven and on earth

“The perception that the heaven and the earth gave birth to the god of thunder is quite natural” (Max Muller). The hero with a bow and arrow and a snake-shaped long phallus symbolizes the unity, connection, and interaction of spiritual and material worlds, the kingdoms of heaven and earth. The picture emphasizes the exclusive role of a man (motif of the song “Birth of Vahagn”), hovering above the earth: first, he is in the centre of the composition; second, he combines the heavenly and earthly worlds; third, he is the result of a union. The role of man

is presented as the main systematical factor of macro- and microcosm as an artistic model of the triple notion of birth, death and resurrection.



Fig. 10. Man symbolizing the unity of the houses in heaven and on earth: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.



Fig. 11. Antipodes and the equilibrium law: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.

### 11. Antipodes and the equilibrium law

This shows a confrontation scene in the animal world, displaying the eternal struggle and the role of man mastering flora and fauna, judging the plant and animal worlds. The picture expresses man’s power, emphasizing the dominance of spiritual values and knowledge. This worldview gives human activity an organized, conscious, and purposeful character.

### 12. Tsovinar

Thus, after the very first great flood the earth was formless and empty, and the spirit of God (the eye of God) was hovering over the waters seeking something. What was he seeking? And God said, “Let there be light”, and there was light. And all the dark waters were lightened and first God saw the goddess of water sources, Tsovinar, who was conceived from water and gave birth to two sons.

And when God saw Tsovinar and her sons, His spirit rejoiced and exulted, and He said: “Water will be the origin of life this time!” Tsovinar called her sons Sanasar and Baghdasar. And after God arranged the vault, He did all that is known. And when the Creator proceeded to the creation of man, Tsovinar asked the





Fig. 12. Tsovinar: rock art (8<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.

Almighty not to inhabit the earth with horrible beasts, aggressive monsters and cyclops this time, and to create man in His own image, as there is no more beautiful and perfect being than He is. And she asked to embed a piece of divine light and spirit and to evoke thought in man, which originally and eternally will serve in immortal and perfect harmony what He created. The entreaty of the goddess of water sources was after the Creator's own heart, and He created man, choosing water (the primary element of Tsovinar) as the basic constituent of his essence.

Later, He gave body to Sanasar and Baghdasar, and placed them in the centre of the Ararat plain, calling them Sis and Masis. And He told Tsovinar, queen of waters, "As there is Surb Sar (holy mountain) named after Sanasar, my throne on the earth will rest on his shoulders, and men I have created will inhabit the whole country at the foot of the mountain and will

spread across the world." [1] Tsovinar Tsovyan (Armenian "*marine*") is the spirit of thunder in Armenian mythology, the personification of lightning and heat lightning. According to myths, Tsovinar is a furious fiery woman, who rides a fiery horse in the sky during thunder; she sends people life-giving rain or harmful hail.

Astghik (Armenian "*little star*") is the goddess of love and water sources in Armenian mythology, beloved of Vahagn. Her major temple in Ahtishat (located north from Mus, a city in modern Turkey) was called Vahagn's bedroom. According to myths, every night beautiful Astghik had a swim in the Euphrates (where it flows from a narrow rocky ravine in the Gurgur region). To admire the naked goddess, the young people lit fires on Mount Daghonats (Taron mountain, located in modern Turkey). To hide from them, Astghik covered Taron valley with fog and mist.

According to the Armenian calendar, in the middle of summer (by the end of the old year and on the eve of the new year) the Vardavar (Armenian "*vard*", rose or water) festival was held. On the day of this festival people presented roses to the goddess, released doves and sprinkled water on each other.

### 13. Baptism in the cradle and the fertility symbol

The petroglyph entitled "Baptism in the cradle" is a unique expression of knowledge and the creativity of human genius. The thinker artist depicts his vision of the world on the stone: the relationship of the godfather (sun god, creator shown by the big cross on the left) with his son, his messenger on the earth (the small cross in the cradle). The godmother, sitting in a squatting position, is holding the cradle with a cross, the newborn. In Armenian tradition, this godmother is Saint Maruta, singing a lullaby.



Fig. 13. Baptism in the cradle and the fertility symbol (on the right side, at the top of the image): rock art (8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.

The big cross symbolizes the father (in Armenian tradition Mets (Big) Mher from the epic poem "Daredevils of Sassoun"), and the small cross is Little Mher, who entered the rock and did not come out. The cow symbolizes life (full mammary glands symbolize prosperity). According to old customs, the Khachapashts baptized their children in a cradle. A lyre is depicted on the left side, a little star and cows on the right side of the composition.

*In travail were heaven and earth,  
In travail, too, the purple sea!  
The travail held in the sea the small red reed.  
Through the hollow of the stalk came forth smoke,  
Through the hollow of the stalk came forth flame,  
And out of the flame a youth ran!  
Fiery hair had he,  
Ay, too, he had flaming beard,  
And his eyes, they were as suns!*

#### 14. Relief depiction of Vahagn on a stele from Commagene

After his birth, Vahagn fights and defeats vishaps (origin of the epithet "vishapaqagh", vishap slayer). Vahagn fighting a vishap symbolizes the battle against the consequences of volcanic eruptions and avalanches, the "thunder fight" of the god against the evil personification of storm, whirlwind and thunderstorm clouds (vishap-demon).

During the Hellenistic period Vahagn was identified with Zeus and Heracles. Vahagn is the first man. In his honor temples were built in Ashitshat, Aghevakan, and Little Aghbak (in modern Turkey). According to Shirakatsi, it was Vahagn who confronted the Semitic god Bel.



Fig. 14. Relief depiction of Vahagn on a stele from Commagene



Fig. 15. Dragons/vishaps and a solar eclipse: rock art (8th–4th millennium BC), Armenia..

### 15. Dragons/vishaps and a solar eclipse

In Armenian mythology, vishaps are dragons, chthonic creatures. They have a zoomorphic (frequently serpent-shaped) and anthropomorphic appearance, personifying volcanic eruption, avalanche, thunderstorm, whirlwind or thunderstorm clouds. According to myths, a big Vishap swallows the sun, which results in an eclipse. Vishaps inhabit high mountains, large lakes, the sky and the clouds. Rising to the sky or descending beneath (into lakes), they rumble, sweeping away everything on their way. A thousand-year-old Vishap can swallow the whole world. Frequently during thunder the old Vishaps rise to the sky from high mountains or lakes, and the sky-Vishaps descend to the earth.

The myths about fighting a dragon are based on a widely spread mythological motif of chaos fighting cosmos. According to the Christian approach, the myths about vishaps have undergone modifications. The vishap-slayer Vahagn was replaced by the angel Gabriel and other angels: they fight vishaps, who together

with evil spirits try to swallow the sun during thunder (fiery thunder clouds symbolize the fiery vishap bodies, thunder their cry, and lightning Gabriel's arrow or angels' crook). Angels raise vishaps to the sun, whose rays incinerate them and they fall to the earth.

Vishaps are beasts who seize water sources; they make people sacrifice girls. Fighting vishaps, the heroes liberate water sources and girls. In the epic poem "Vipasank", vishaps live at the foot of Masis.

### 16. Hamspyur flower (Haoma), the twelve month-brothers

The start of the Armenian calendar is associated with Hayk (according to Shirakatsi). Armenian chronology starts in 2492 BC, denoting the date ("the cycle of Hayk") when Hayk defeated Bel. The names of the Armenian months correspond to the names of Hayk's sons and daughters. Shirakatsi wrote that Navasard, Ori, Sakhmi, Meheki, Aregi, and Mareri were Hayk's daughters, and Tre, Kakhots, Arats, and Rirots his sons.



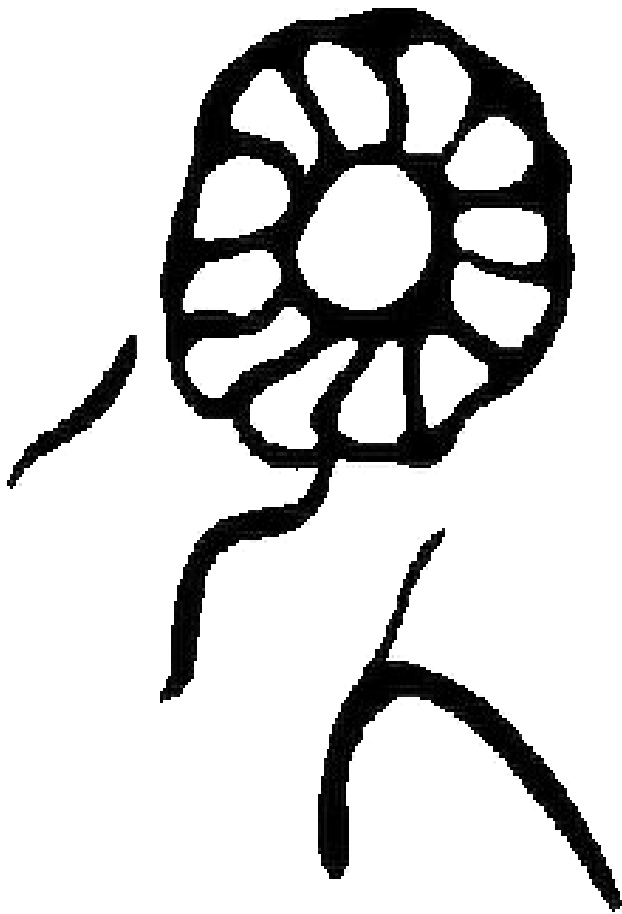


Fig. 16. *Hamaspur flower (Haoma), the twelve month-brothers: rock art (7<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC), Armenia.*

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## NEW INTERPRETATIVE HYPOTHESES ON A FRESH INTERPRETATION OF THE VENUS À LA CORNE, A PALAEO-LITHIC BAS-RELIEF FIGURINE

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Starting from the hypothesis that by changing the perceptive approach there is a chance of collecting additional significant information, we tried to reinterpret the artefact of the Venus à la Corne, dating back to 25,000 years ago and discovered in France in 1911 by Gaston Lalanne, by mainly using the right hemisphere of the brain, the part which controls the drawing abilities of combining lines, spaces and shapes.<sup>1</sup> The result was the recomposition of the entire carved figurine which was obtained by pinpointing elements most probably overlooked in previous research, which could establish a new interpretative frame for it.

The first to decodify this representation was J. Campbell. In his article he seems to suggest a different approach for prehistoric representations: "One is not prepared in any way by such touristic, literary or archaeological experiences of the comparatively recent past, however, for the great leap, the real leap backward that the mind and heart must take, and do take, in the sacred caves of the Dordogne."<sup>2</sup>

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1. For the interpretation with the right hemisphere of the brain, we refer to Edwards B., *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, St. Martin Press, New York 1979; Bateson, G., *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1972; Debray R., *Vie et mort de l'image. Une histoire du regard en Occident*, Gallimard, Paris 1992.

2. Campbell J., *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*, Viking

This leap is necessary and today we think it is still possible if we change our habits, if we use the glasses we have been given as humans but which we often do not use with ease.

Campbell referred to the sensations felt in these prehistoric caves: "Their absolute, cosmic dark, their silence, their unmeasured inner reaches, and their timeless remoteness from every concern and requirement of the normal, waking field of human consciousness can be felt even today - when the light of the guide goes out. The senses, suddenly, are wiped out;

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Press. 1959. p. 343.



Fig. 1. Venus à la Corne. (C) Mairie de Bordeaux, photo Lysiane Gauthier.

the millenniums drop away; and the mind is stilled in a recognition of the mystery beyond thought that asks for no comment and has always been known (and feared), though never quite so solidly experienced before. And then suddenly, a surprise, a visual shock.”<sup>3</sup> Precisely due to this shock, other interpretations may arise.

Campbell describes the *Venus à la Corne* as a bas-relief of a nude female figure, carved in a cave which was considered a hunter’s temple. Anati gave another interpretation of the place: it was a sanctuary dedicated to fecundity, fertility and reproduction, and we also agree with this second opinion, to the point that we can suppose it may have been a nuptial temple. In fact, all the figurines represented at Laussel do not represent hunting scenes or shamanic figures related to such practices, but instead reproductive scenes (there is a probable birth, as Lalanne<sup>4</sup> had also supposed) with no hints of eroticism. Campbell identifies the typical features of a mother goddess (big hips, abundant belly and swollen breasts) in the female figure holding a wisent horn in her hand. It was Abbé Breuil who set a date for the figures discovered and traced them back to the Aurignacian and Perigordian periods.

If we carefully observe the carved figure from a front view, without taking into consideration its single elements, we could capture the continuity of the line that defines what has been codified as the “head” and which goes to form an acute angle on the bottom right corner, and

3. Campbell J., *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*, Viking Press, 1959. p. 350.

4. Lalanne G., *Bas-reliefs à représentations humaines*, *L’Anthropologie*, 1911; Lalanne G., *Bas-reliefs à figurations humaines de l’abri sous roche de Laussel (Dordogne)*, 1912.



Fig. 2. *Fratrercula Arctica*. Richard Bartz. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

then continues towards the upper left, closing the cranial turn with a circle.

The so called “head” therefore appears as a circle which ends with a point and it is rather difficult to think, as described in the past, that it is a “female head with flowing hair,” conceived and carved in that way by our ancestors: we find no other representation of the mother goddess with a similar peculiarity. Our suggestion is therefore to expand the vision towards the animal world: in his analysis on mother goddesses, Gimbutas<sup>5</sup> recalls that there are many female divinities formed by a series of animal features. The heads of diurnal and, mainly, nocturnal, predatory birds are very common; even the skull of the *Venus à la Corne* can almost certainly resemble the morphology of an animal.

5. Gimbutas M., *The Language of the Goddess. Unearthing the Hidden Symbols of Western Civilization*, Harper & Row, San Francisco 1989.





Fig. 3. Comparing detail of Venus à la Corne (head) et *Fratercula Artica* (head). Reworking graphics of the original photos by the authors.

The profile, which gazes down and opposite to the hand holding the horn, is not that of the famous owl, but a bird with a very large and strong beak, the *fratercula arctica*, also known as the Atlantic puffin. In the Palaeolithic age, this animal would spend time on the French coasts during the migration season and could fly across the Atlantic Ocean (just as they do today). Currently, their route has moved towards Ireland and Iceland due to climatic changes, but the archaeozoologists have found bones of this bird species in various French and Spanish caves.<sup>6</sup> It is most probable that

6. For the the presence of avifauna in prehistory we refer to Bengston S.A., Breeding ecology and extinction of the Great Auk (*Pinguin impennis*): anecdotal evidence and conjectures, *Auk*, 101, 1984, pp. 1-12; Cassoli P.F., Avifauna del Pleistocene superiore delle Arene Candide, Praia e grotta Romanelli (Italia), *Quaternaria Nova*, 2, 1992, pp. 239-246; Chauvet J.M., Deschamps E.B., Hilaire C., *La grotte Chauvet. Seuil*, Paris 1995; D'Errico F., Birds of the grotte Cosquer: the Great Auk and palaeolithic prehistory, *Antiquity*, 68, 1994, pp. 39-47. Especially for *fratercula arctica*, we refer to Sánchez Marco A., Avian Zoogeographical Patterns During The Quaternary In The Mediterranean Region And Paleoclimatic Interpretation, *Ardeola* 51, 2004, pp. 91-132.

Palaeolithic hunters fed on this species, very similar to a large pigeon, as still happens today in Iceland during a big festival where the birds are slaughtered.<sup>7</sup> Besides the beak, which clearly stands out (see picture), another clue leads us to this interpretation: the female hand is not human, but is clearly a webbed foot (identical to that of the *fratercula*). If we carefully observe the head we can distinguish a cupelliform shape, which may be a simple involuntary breakage of the rock, or a fracture used and purposely fixed to symbolize the bird's breathing valve, a very strong symbolic element for identifying the species. Red, used to color the entire figurine and that, as we have learnt from archaeological and anthropological literature, is also a significant pigment in the perception of our ancestors, identifies the color

7. For puffins as food we refer to <http://www.seriousseats.com/2012/04/guide-to-food-iceland-fish-whale-skyr-hot-dogs.html>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icelandic\\_cuisine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icelandic_cuisine); <http://www.viaggioinisola.it/pulcinella-di-mare-a-pranzo>; <http://www.agrodolce.it/2016/06/20/gusti-forti-e-insoliti-la-cucina-islandese>.



Fig. 4. Comparing detail of Venus à la Corne (hand) et Fratercula Arctica (foot). Reworking graphics of the original photos by the authors.

of the beak which is bright in the male and used as a courtship strategy for the females.

This seabird, today dangerously threatened and protected by specific laws and associations, has a very interesting ethology and this seems to have also struck our ancestors. Today, exactly as in the past, this bird migrates and returns to the same place after a solar year or 13 lunar months. The horn held in the hand of Venus is notched 13 times. As many scientists have written, these notches may refer to half the moon's cycle (26 days), to menstruation or, in our opinion more appropriately, to the yearly lunar calendar (in fact, it should be remembered that most of the existing hunter-gatherer populations and nearly all the farming populations we know about base their yearly accounting on the moon and not on the sun), testifying to the return of the *fratercula* to European beaches after 13 lunar months.<sup>8</sup>

8. For migratory species used as calendar we refer to Bahn P., Vertut J., Journey through the ice age, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1988; Eastham A., The season or the symbol: the evidence of swallows in the palaeolithic of western Europe, *Archaeozoologia*, 2, 1988, pp. 243-252.

In addition, this species is monogamous, forming families of only two individuals, which last a lifetime, and has a very particular courting ritual: the couples seem to kiss each other with their beaks. The bird's behavior on land closely resembles that of humans: it walks on two feet while rocking from side to side, builds its nest in small caves, constantly takes care of the egg and, once it hatches, the puffing, recalling in this way human parental care. Palaeolithic hunters had surely noted these elements, as they would study their prey with great attention, and most probably found a similarity between this species and their own: they had identified a representative totemic animal. This mechanism was studied by Freud<sup>9</sup> and is still testified to today by cultural anthropology in different human populations. Apart from the wisent horn, the Venus à la Corne also possesses another part of this animal: the apparently uncompleted

9. Freud S., Totem und Tabu. Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker, Hugo Heller & Die., Leipzig und Wien 1913.

feet are carved to resemble the cloven hooves of this bovid.

If this can be the new interpretation of the Venus, consistent with the ideology of its manufacturer, we find ourselves facing the most ancient representation of an anthropozoomorphic figure of the mother goddess, a symbol of nature that, thanks to the animals, allowed our ancestors, who considered it a totemic symbolic element, to survive.



Photo 5. Details of Venus à la Corne. Bison Paws. Reworking graphics of the original photos by the authors.



Fig. 6. Details of Venus à la Corne. Bison Horn with thirteen notches. Reworking graphics of the original photos by the authors.



# NOTES AND NEWS

ATELIER, RESEARCH CENTER FOR CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

## NEW TRENDS AND OLD MISCONCEPTIONS

Synthesis derives from analysis, and analysis from knowledge. Knowledge without analysis is just as unfruitful as analysis without knowledge.

The process “knowledge > analysis > synthesis” has been and still is the basis of the cognitive process. Facing the trend of standardization and technological hegemony, conceptual anthropology is looking for the “soul” of things. Pre-confectioned conclusions should not be taken for granted. The synthesis of facts or trends is the base for the following step: understanding the motivations, understanding the nature of the human soul behind facts and trends. Understanding is the goal of research, but not only: it is the goal of every reasoning of the human mind.

Each happening, each fact, is a fragment of a broader reality. Mankind is made of individuals and also culture is made of a plurality of sub-cultures. The human sciences are composed of different disciplines that join experience and knowledge for the study of Man. To know what makes a culture or a society different from the others we have to know the ‘others’. Each culture is different and each person is unique. Conceptual Anthropology opens up broad views on a dynamic concept of culture, which is constantly evolving but at the same time remains the core of human identity. You are different, I am different, he/she is different. This is a major privilege of our species: each human being is equal, but each one is different. Each human being, like each culture, like each discipline, even a new one, is an issue of the

past. Understanding the trends and evolutions of the past is essential to discover the sense of the present.

Sharing the experiences of more disciplines is widening analytical abilities. Each discipline has its own memory, which is the base of its research and progress. The union of more disciplines is the union of their memories, which creates a broader base for research and culture, and provides a wider range of analytical abilities.

Media and encyclopaedias can take care of technical memories, but the intuitions and associations produced by the human mind are still irreplaceable. By widening the typology of memories, the conceptual range is being widened. Conceptual Anthropology requires new orientations in the formation of scholars and in research goals: broad cultural knowledge makes broad analytical abilities.

The development of computers and the Internet have shown that it is useful for scholars to devote their energies to those notions, intuitions and experiences that the computer cannot provide. It is not worthwhile to compete with Wikipedia but it is worthwhile to enrich Wikipedia and other sources of cultural diffusion.

Technicians should acquire the technical knowledge and perform the important task of solving technical problems and producing the fundamental raw material for research, in the forms of technical inventories and banks of data. Scholars should have a humanistic thinking to open up new horizons. In the field

of urban building a similar difference applies to engineers and architects. Being both may not allow excelling in one of them.

EXPRESSION quarterly magazine and the books published by ATELIER, Research Centre for Conceptual Anthropology, are the expression of this new discipline, which is engaging students, scholars and other thinkers across five continents.

Its English and Italian publications, conceived for university students but easy to read for everyone, face problems and topics that are usually perceived as a “reserved to experts.” In Conceptual Anthropology the experts are all of us, sons and daughters of the human species.

Those who do not know about ATELIER yet may try reading one of its books.

Thanking you for being a reader of EXPRESSION magazine.

E.A.

### WHAT IS CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

Conceptual Anthropology is the discipline concerned with the arts, rituals, beliefs and other intellectual and spiritual expressions; it combines various sectors of the human and social sciences in respect to behavior, habits and other cultural manifestations, using experiences of the past to understand the present and conceive the options for the future. The concept gestated for some time until it was formalized during the UISPP Congress in Florianopolis, Brazil, in 2011, setting new horizons for human sciences. The participants in the session CISENP “International Scientific Committee on the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate peoples” decided to make of the newly proposed discipline, Conceptual Anthropology, the concern of the Committee.

The goal of this new discipline is to understand human behavior and cultural trends, recurring and isolated phenomena, predictable and unpredictable evolution and change not only in economy and technology, also in social, intellectual and spiritual life, relying upon a vast assemblage of knowledge and concepts from various disciplines, from psychology to history, from archeology to sociology. It is a permanent journey of discovery and emotions.

Archaeology and anthropology, the history of art and history of religion, can benefit enormously from cooperation with sociology, psychology, semiotics and other sectors of the human and social sciences. Each discipline has its own memory as the basis of research and the advancement of the discipline itself. Combining disciplines is also a union of memories and concepts for a broader base of research and culture. Today media replace technical and historical memory. But the human mind’s insights and associations are still irreplaceable. Our being and our actions are rooted in memory.

Human behavior relies on memory. When mistakes are made, they often derive from the darkening of memory. On the other hand, positive results come from its good use. Here we are not talking about an electronic memory, but that kind of memory that turns into intuition and rediscovery, the memory coming from the deep well of human minds.

Every human being, like every discipline, focuses on certain aspects of memory and neglects others. Together, various disciplines share wider dimensions of memory. As it becomes clear from the contributions of nearly 200 authors from about 40 countries, in the issues of EXPRESSION magazine of the last five years, such an approach offers an immense contribution to the study of the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate peoples.

One of the purposes is the common commitment to the understanding of intellectual and spiritual expressions, with the shared support of multidisciplinary research. As students of various disciplines, anthropologists and archaeologists, psychoanalysts, educators, sociologists, semioticians, philosophers and historians, we all wish to face questions which a shared commitment can help clarify. The meeting of different disciplines offers a new dimension of knowledge and greater capacity for analysis and synthesis. Faced with the fashion of extreme specialization, which risks reducing scholars to technicians, Conceptual Anthropology goes against the tide.

No doubt technicians are needed, but we seek a cultural vision and a broad overview in the common work of the humanities and social sciences. Let technicians and intellectuals be aware of their different roles, let them do their own jobs and then enrich each other through the output of their efforts.

Research has a real social function when it produces culture. When culture is creative and innovative, it promotes the growth of intellect and stimulates new thought. The dialogue is open to all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences as well as to those who do not identify themselves with any specific discipline or who just want to listen. Each listener is a potential transmitter of ideas and ideas grow and spread not only through those who produce them, but also through those who listen. The dialogue does not stop and is a source of growth and enrichment, and also of cooperation and friendship. Research is a provocative, stimulating and inspiring source of awareness.

The world crisis is a cultural crisis, a crisis of values and wisdom that has economic, social and political consequences. Economic

problems may find solutions but without strong cultural bases society will not solve the cultural crisis and the long-range problems of social and economic stability. Reviving the role of culture is our modest joint effort to contribute to overcoming the crisis.

## RETHINKING EINSTEIN

### KNOWLEDGE VS. IMAGINATION

*"The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination"* (Albert Einstein). May we claim that both of them are needed? Imagination without knowledge and knowledge without imagination are the two extremes of dullness.

E.A.

## APPRENTICESHIP IN

### CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The apprenticeship, under the guidance of Prof. Emmanuel Anati, the founder of Conceptual Anthropology, may last from a minimum of two months to a maximum of one year. It grants the apprentice the title of Research Assistant. The apprenticeship is oriented to the acquisition of practical operational abilities and conceptual formation; it includes participation in research, editorial activities, compilation, organization and layout of exhibitions and publications, the arrangement and cataloguing of ethnological collections, and the planning of cultural and scientific projects. It is a way to touch with your hands and your mind the practical work of producing culture.

Traditional learning as an accumulation of theoretical notions is enhanced by applying the notions in practical activities, learning to do by doing.

During their stay in the Camonica Valley,



the student will have access to self-catering accommodation on campus, at a student fee. Preference is given to graduates and other seriously motivated young people with knowledge of the English language and operational abilities on a database. Application in an informal letter should specify the motivations and skills of the candidate, and be accompanied by a curriculum vita; a copy of record of studies; a copy of identity card or passport; a recent passport-standard photo; and a letter of presentation or recommendation from a university professor or a previous employer. Applications should be addressed by email to: [atelier.etno@gmail.com](mailto:atelier.etno@gmail.com).

#### **LEARNING TO BE AN EDITOR**

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#### **POSITION OF ASSISTANT CURATOR OF ETHNOGRAPHY**

Graduate students in anthropology and ethnography are given the opportunity for training as curator of ethnography. The engagement consists in classifying old ethnographic collections of art objects from Oceania and Africa. The expected result is the compilation of a catalogue of a given collection, eventually to be published under the name of the compiler. The successful experience gives

the apprentice two important additions to his/her curriculum vitae: the publication of a scientific work, and the position of Assistant Curator of Ethnography for the period of time of his/her engagement. The experience takes place in the Camonica Valley, northern Italy, and is expected to last a minimum of three months. Candidates should have mastered the English language and possess a university degree in human sciences.

During their active presence the accepted candidates have access to self-catering accommodation on campus at a student fee. Applications should include a letter expressing motivation, a record of studies, a copy of an identity document and any other document worthy of consideration. Applications should be addressed by email to: [atelier.etno@gmail.com](mailto:atelier.etno@gmail.com).

#### **HOW TO BECOME**

##### **A MEMBER OF THE UISPP**

EXPRESSION, this e-journal, is produced by ATELIER, the Research Centre in Conceptual Anthropology, in cooperation with the UISPP-CISENP (the International Scientific Committee on the Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-Literate Societies), an organ of the UISPP (International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences). UISPP also offers other facilities, including participation in its World Congress. Membership of the UISPP will ensure your official status as a UISPP Active Member of CISENP. If you are a member of UISPP, please confirm your status to [atelier.etno@gmail.com](mailto:atelier.etno@gmail.com).

If you are not yet a member, and you wish to attend the World Congress, first become a member of the UISPP. For further information contact the office of the General Secretary: [loost@ipt.pt](mailto:loost@ipt.pt).

## HOW TO BE A MEMBER OF CISENP

Very simple! Be active and you are a member. You express your ideas, participate in debates, develop dialogues with other members orally, by email, or through the pages of *EXPRESSION* magazine. If you have something to say this is your home. Membership to CISENP is free of material charges, no fees requested; it just implies your active conceptual presence. Membership is not exclusive to prehistorians; it is open to all the human and social sciences. It is advisable, but is not compulsory, to be a member of UISPP. CISENP is a free association, free also from bureaucratic procedures.

## THE INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

SESSION XXIX AT THE UISPP  
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Paris, 4-9 June 2018

*CISENP: Commission Internationale Scientifique 'Les expressions intellectuelles et spirituelles des peuples sans écriture' (President Prof. Emmanuel Anati)*

The visual arts, music, dance, rituals, myths, traditions and other aspects of the human conceptual expressions, reveal the peculiarities of each society and, at the same time, the common intellectual and spiritual heritage that unites humanity. The CISENP (International Committee on the Intellectual and Spiritual Expression of Non-literate Peoples) is conveying its session at the forthcoming UISPP Congress 2018. As in previous occasions, colleagues from various disciplines are invited to share

experience, ideas and scientific approaches for a better understanding of the human creativity and behavior, for a broad-minded study and understanding of what makes the roots of the present.

Prehistoric archaeology is in urgent need of this new landscape of "Conceptual Anthropology", for a step forward. It is a new academic approach for building up a solid future for the study of man. Archaeology, both prehistoric and historic, needs a constant and open dialogue with other disciplines. The study of man includes anthropology, sociology, psychology, human geography, semiotics, art history, and other disciplines that have to join efforts. This is the aim of Conceptual Anthropology.

What is to be the image of prehistoric sciences in the future? How can we convey to a large public the notions and wisdom accumulated in the study of the roots? Understanding the past is necessary to build a future. And not only: it is necessary to understand the present, our present. The knowledge of the roots is the elementary base of culture. In the tribal world young people have been and still are being initiated to the knowledge of their past. The study of prehistory has to awaken interest and passion in the public: there is nothing more fascinating than discovering the background of human behavior, the emotions and passions that have caused the intellectual and spiritual adventures of humankind. This is the message that we can convey to our society. Let us join efforts to develop public awareness, education, formation, engagement, research, for a broader understanding of our past and our present. We can convey this passion only if we have this passion. You are welcome to join:

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The recommended average size of each paper is 1,500 to 3,000 words. Illustrations should be calibrated to the resolution of 300 dpi with a base of 14 cm. Each illustration should have a pertinent, explanatory caption, including source where relevant. Illustrations should be presented separately from the text. All the material presented, texts and illustrations, should be free from copyright and any other obligation, and possibly not yet published elsewhere. Authors are fully responsible for the submitted text and illustrations.

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Vol.5, pp.29-30, *An ancient sacrificial place: research into rock art in Xianju*

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Vol.5, pp.30-31, *Petroglyphs on the pacific rim: the rock art of the Xiliaohe river and the Amur river* (With Wang Xu)

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Vol.4, p.20, *On the disciplines of taking image in Chinese rock art* (With Yu Zhuoran)

**EXPRESSION**  
**NUMBER OF AUTHORS PER COUNTRY**  
**VOLUMES 1 - 19**

**173 AUTHORS from 40 COUNTRIES**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>NUMBER OF AUTHORS</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>NUMBER OF AUTHORS</b>
Australia	8	Kosovo	1
Austria	3	Malta	1
Argentina	7	Mexico	3
Armenia	2	Morocco	1
Belgium	3	Namibia	1
Botswana	1	Netherlands	1
Brazil	6	Norway	2
Bulgaria	1	Poland	2
Canada	4	Portugal	7
China	29	Russia	3
Colombia	1	South Africa	4
Denmark	2	Spain	8
France	11	Sri Lanka	1
Germany	1	Sweden	1
Hungary	1	Switzerland	4
Israel	3	Tunisia	1
India	8	UK	9
Italy	14	Ukraine	2
Japan	1	USA	13
Jordan	1	Zimbabwe	1



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September 2013

**An introduction to Conceptual Anthropology and topics to be discussed in the following issues of Expression Magazine**



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### 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 3

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**Discussion about the targets of EXPRESSION research group**



## Expression 4

April 2014

### A selection of abstracts for Session at the UISPP World Congress "Atapuerca", Burgos, Spain

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

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

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# NEW BOOKS

Dear Friends,

two important books will come out soon.

The first one will be about the religious beliefs of the aboriginal australians; the second one will concern the rock art of Tanzania.

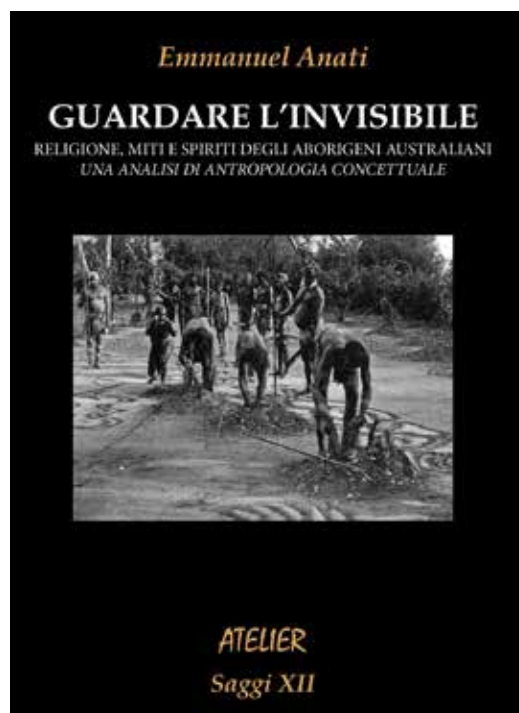
## GUARDARE L'INVISIBILE RELIGIONE, MITI E SPIRITI DEGLI ABORIGENI AUSTRALIANI UNA ANALISI DI ANTROPOLOGIA CONCETTUALE

(SEEING THE INVISIBLE: RELIGION, MYTHS AND SPIRITS OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA: A STUDY IN CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY, Italian edition)

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. Religion is as old as Homo sapiens, if not earlier, but how was their religion? This book tells us even more: not only on the origins of religion, also on the origins of philosophy. The immense wealth of myths, the vision of genesis, the search of reasons, of cause and effect in life and nature, bring us back to the oldest roots of beliefs and way of thinking. It is surprising how primal beliefs resemble those of some modern religions.

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- II- Religione e magia (Religion and magic)
- III- Concettualità e ideologia (Conceptuality and ideology)
- IV- Dreamtime, l'epoca dei sogni (Dreamtime, the epoch of dreams)
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- VII- L'animismo e la mito-storia (Animism and myth-history)
- VIII- Gli spiriti ancestrali (The ancestral spirits)
  - 1. Il primo uomo: Dara-mulun (The first man: Dara-mulun)
  - 2. Gli spiriti curiosi: Ngurunderi (The inquisitive spirits: Ngurunderi)
  - 3. Il mito delle sorelle Djanggau che fecero molti figli (The myth of the Djanggau sisters, who gave birth to many sons)
  - 4. La matrona Kunapipi (Kunapipi the matron)
  - 5. Il Serpente Arcobaleno: Nga-lyod (The rainbow snake: Nga-lyod)
  - 6. I gemelli lancaifulmini (Lightning Brothers)



- 7. Gli spiriti Mimi, folletti della foresta (The Mimi spirits)
- 8. Gli spiriti del vento che impongono disciplina: Nadjurlum e Nagorrgho (The wind spirits, who impose a discipline: Nadjurlum e Nagorrgho)
- 9. Gli spiriti delle nubi, i Wandjina (Wandjina, the cloud spirits)
- 10. Gli spiriti malefici: Nam-arrordo e Nam-ornde (The evil spirits: Nam-arrordo e Nam-ornde)
- 11. La grande madre vegetariana: Warra Mara Ngundj (The ancestral vegetarian mother: Warra Mara Ngundj)
- IX- Genesi dei miti (Genesis of myths)
  - 1. A quando risale l'attuale mitologia aborigena? (When was the actual aboriginal mythology born?)
  - 2. L'archivio della memoria e il meccanismo della concettualità (The archive of memory and the dynamic of conceptuality)
- X- Conclusioni (Conclusions)
- Bibliografia (Bibliography)

2018, Anati Emmanuel, *Guardare l'Invisibile*, Capo di Ponte, Atelier, 140 pp. 29 tavv. 20€

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# NEW BOOKS

## 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.

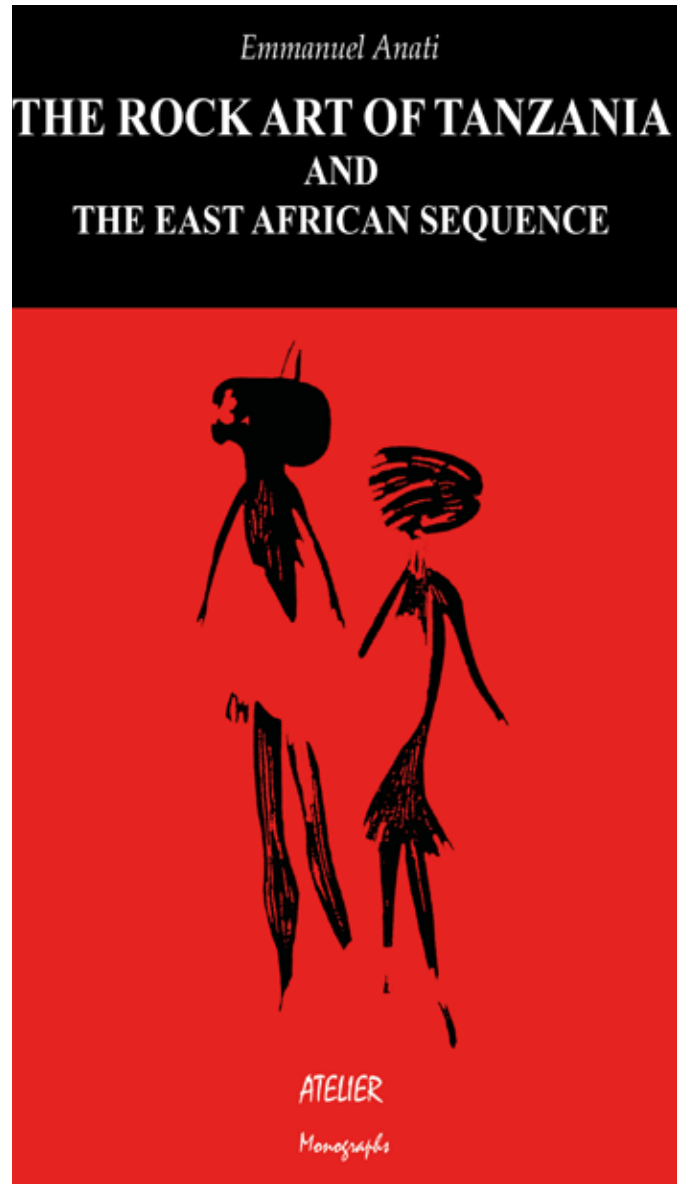
Stylistic phases and periods are covering millennia.

Each phase is defined, revealing the variations of memories and beliefs. Chapters of a newly discovered history describe the art of the Bantu farmers, and that of previous human groups, of Nilotic pastoralists, of different groups of hunters and of peculiar vegetarian food gatherers.

New light is shed on the most explored and least known continent.

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10. THE ROCK ART OF TANZANIA IN THE EAST AFRICAN CONTEXT
- BIBLIOGRAPHY



2018, Anati Emmanuel, *The Rock Art of Tanzania and the East African Sequence*, Capo di Ponte, Atelier, 142 pp. 107 tavv. 20€

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# 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., 2016: *Har Karkom e la questione del Monte Sinai* (*Har Karkom and the Question of Mount Sinai*), Italian edition

Capodiponte (Atelier), pp 220; 138 ill., €30,00

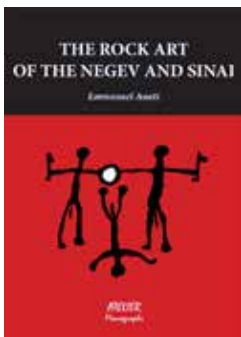
The findings of shrines and encampments of the Bronze Age at Har Karkom, a mountain located in one of the driest places and inhospitable parts of the Negev desert, in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, arouses a global debate on the hypothesis that this mountain can identify with the biblical Mount Sinai. 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



Anati, E., 2016: *Esodo tra mito e storia* (*Exodus between myth and history*), Italian edition

Capodiponte (Atelier) pp. 340; 138 ill., 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.



Anati, E., 2015, *The Rock Art of the Negev and Sinai*, Third English edition, Capodiponte (Atelier), 248 pp. 196 ill., €20,00

The book deals with a new theme of Near-eastern archeology: the rock art of the Negev and Sinai. It presents new discoveries and reconsiders content 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. 2017, *The Riddle of Mount Sinai*, Second English

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

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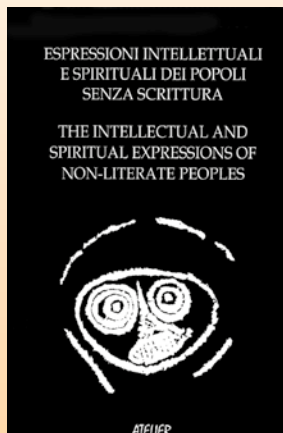
# ATELIER' PUBLICATIONS

## colloqui



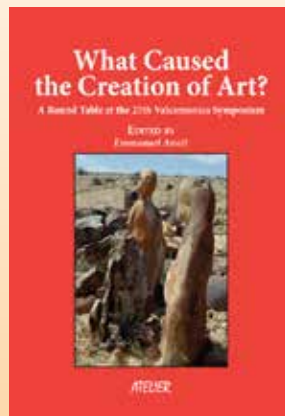
### The Original Signs of Visual Art. Semiotic reflections from Anati's works (in Italian)

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 and Sociology.



### The intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate peoples (in Italian, English and 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 Edited by Emmanuel Anati

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 generations.



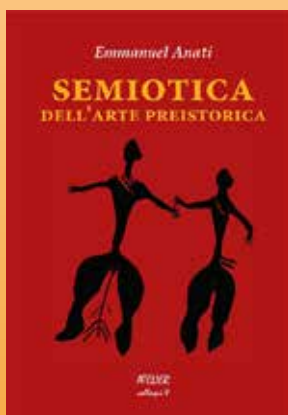
### Art and religion

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. The confrontation of different ideas and methods is contributing to a reconsideration of some past simplifications.



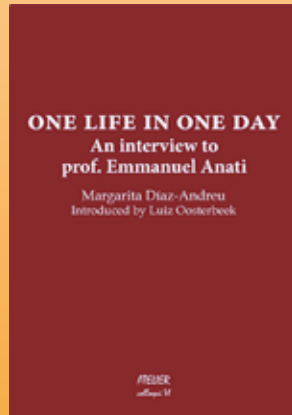
### Sogno e memoria (Dream and Memory: for a Psychoanalysis of Prehistory) (in Italian and French)

A series of papers presented at Congresses of Sociology, Psychology and Psychoanalysis. The analysis of human behavior and of graphic art expressions is opening new perspectives to the social sciences and multidisciplinary cooperation. The meeting attended by scholars of various disciplines, promoted the exploration of unusual trails in the forest of the humanities.



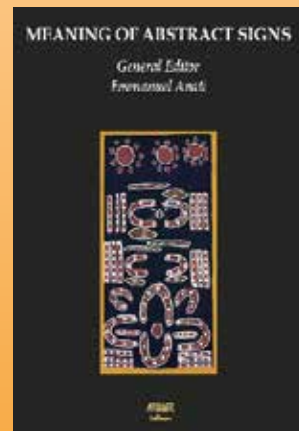
### Semiotica dell'arte preistorica (Semiotics of Prehistoric Art) (in Italian and French)

The conceptual definition of forms, the metamorphosis of shapes into sounds, and of sounds in forms, of ideas into images, of thoughts into words, and other intellectual processes, are present from the early times of human evolution. These recurring patterns stimulated, over the years, some of the author's papers and lectures in congresses and conferences of semiotics, sociology and psychology.



### 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 Diaz-Andreu recorded, for hours, the words of Professor Emmanuel Anati. It was the 5th of September 2014 and when the electric lights of the evening replaced the sunlight, a life-long story was drafted. It concerned just one aspect of Anati's life, that of his experiences as a scholar in the human sciences. It is a story full of messages that should interest every young scholar intending to devote his/her life to the humanistic sciences.



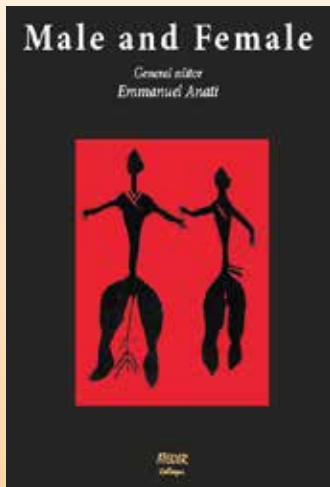
### Meaning of Abstract Signs

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



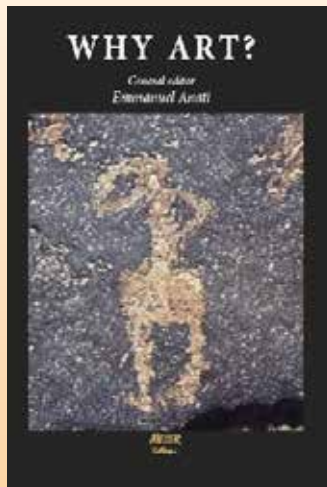
# ATELIER' s PUBLICATIONS

## colloqui



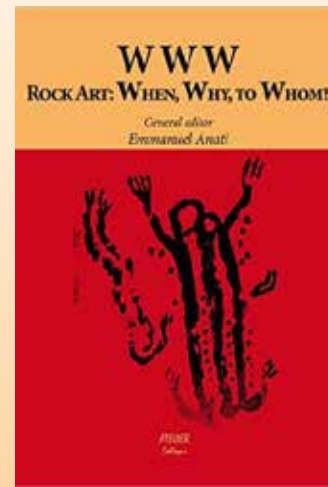
### Male and Female

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



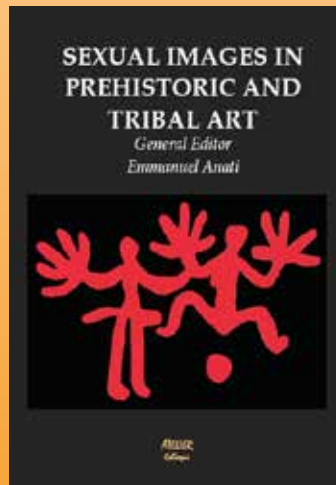
### WWW - Rock Art: when, why and to whom

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? Fifty authors from five continent face the query: when, why and to whom



### 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



### 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



### Etnogastronomia - La cucina dei popoli

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. Questo libro ha un duplice scopo, quello di introdurre l'etnogastronomia come tema di ricerca che suscita l'interesse e la simpatia di molte persone, e quello di permettere al lettore di acquisire una visione di similitudini e diversità ed anche di sperimentare cucine e gusti diversi, per un ampliamento non solo del proprio gusto, ma anche della conoscenza e dell'apprezzamento del prossimo. Capire il sapore del diverso, è saper apprezzare non .solo i cibi, ma anche i sorrisi dei popoli

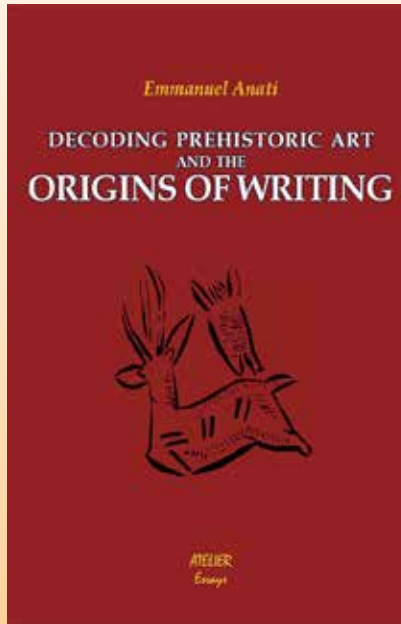
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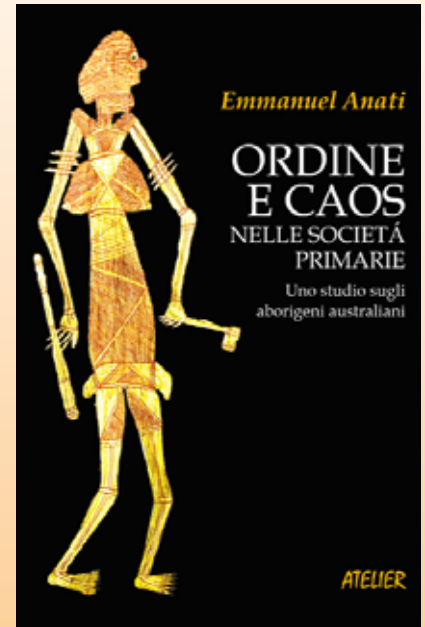
## essays



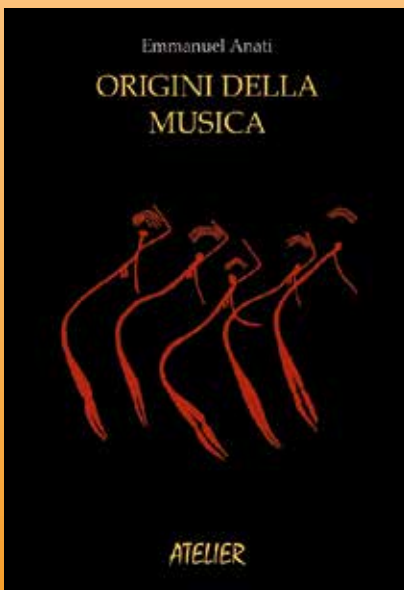
**Nascere e crescere da nomadi.**  
**La relazione madre-figli nelle società primarie**  
**(Living as Nomads, the Relation Mother-Child in Primary Societies) (in Italian)**  
A study of constants and variants between human societies of hunters-gatherers and urban societies in the mother-child relationship reveals archetypes and variants.  
The mother-child relationship is the backbone of all species of mammals and acquires special rules in primates.  
Humans developed peculiar trends. In human societies variations of such roles are affected by economic and social roles taken by the mother and by her social status in the various cultural setting.



**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.



**Ordine e Caos nelle società primarie. Uno studio sugli aborigeni australiani. (Order and Chaos in Primary Societies. A study on Australian Aborigenes)(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?



**Origini della Musica**  
**(The Origins of Music) (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**  
**(Initiation and Initiation Rites) (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.

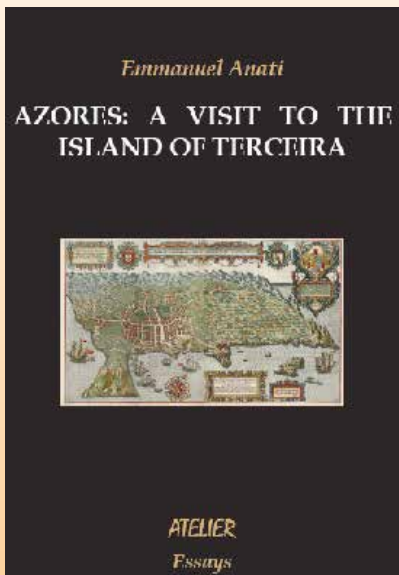


**Chi sei? Chi sono?**  
**Alla ricerca dell'identità (Who are you? Who am I? A search for identity) (in Italian)**  
The problems arising from the search for identity begin in the infant and accompany the human being to the last breath. Defining the identity of the person, of the nation or "race", concerns 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?

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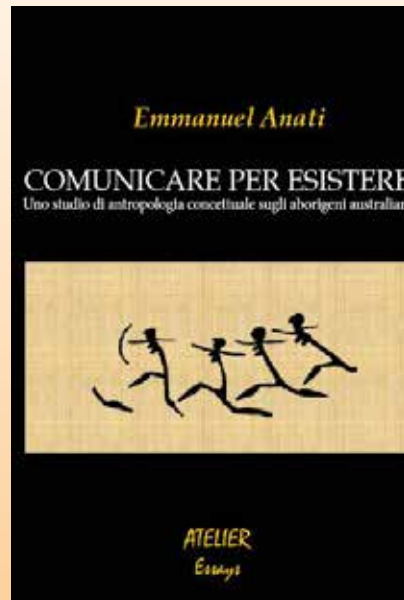
# ATELIER's PUBLICATIONS

## essays



### 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

Uno studio di antropologia concettuale sugli aborigeni australiani (Communicate for survival. A study of conceptual anthropology of Australian Aborigens) (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. Then we could still meet small clans moving from a bivouac to a bush camp, naked, holding their spears and their boomerangs, hunting and gathering day to day what nature offered.

They lived in a boundless Garden of Eden that is no longer the same. Communication was as



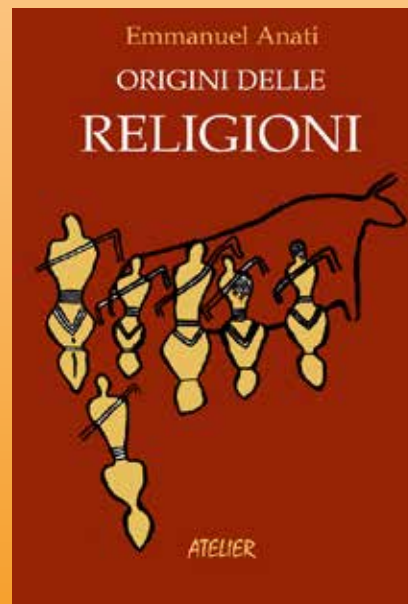
### Maschere (Masks) (in Italian)

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.



### Mito tra utopia e verità (Myth between utopia and truth) (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.



### Origini delle religioni (The Origins of Religions) (in Italian)

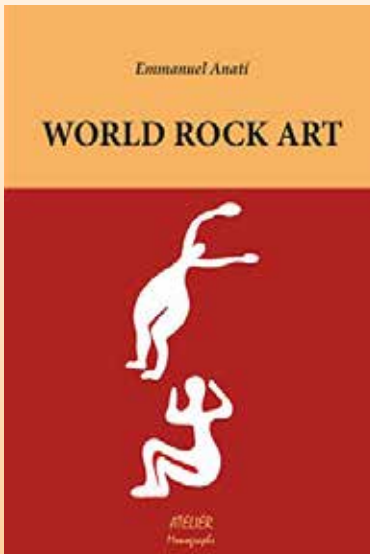
How and when did religions originate? The study of prehistoric art is bringing a revolution to our knowledge of the origins of religious thought. Rock art sites have held for millennia the function of places of worship and tribal identity, serving as archives of myths, beliefs and rituals. Visual art, 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.

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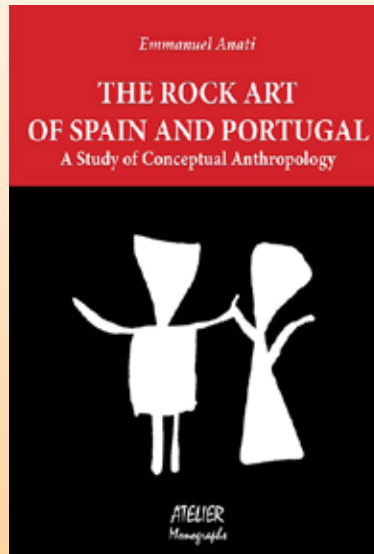
# ATELIER' s PUBLICATIONS

## monographs



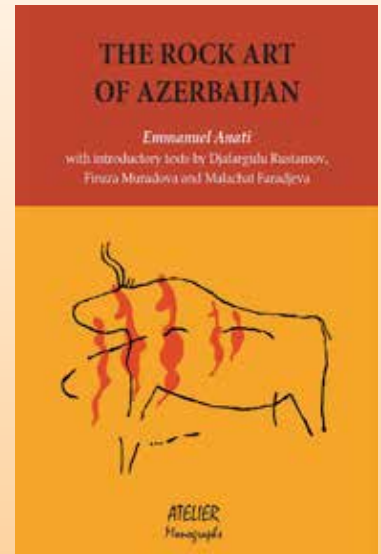
### World Rock Art

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



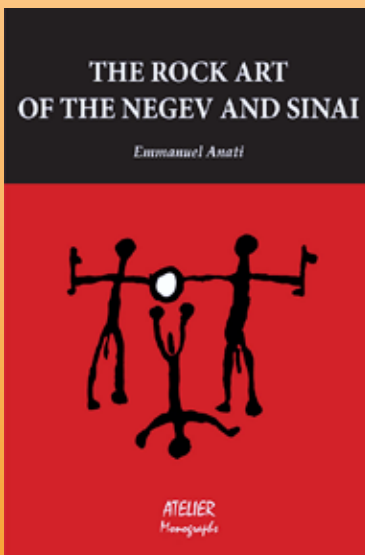
### The Rock art of Azerbaijan

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.

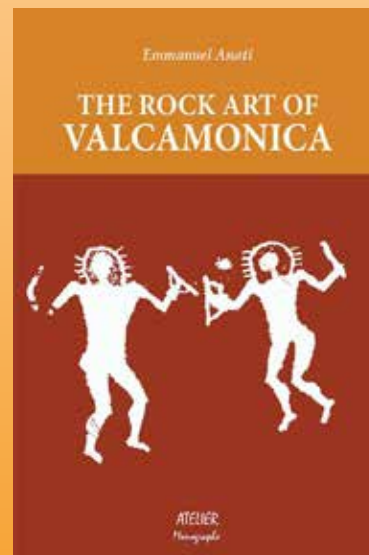
Showing influence and connections with both Europe and the Near East, the succession of phases of rock art illustrate the movements of cultures and ideas from Paleolithic to recent times, shedding new light on the early movement of *Homo sapiens*.

New chapters in the history of art are revealed by beautiful design and stylization.



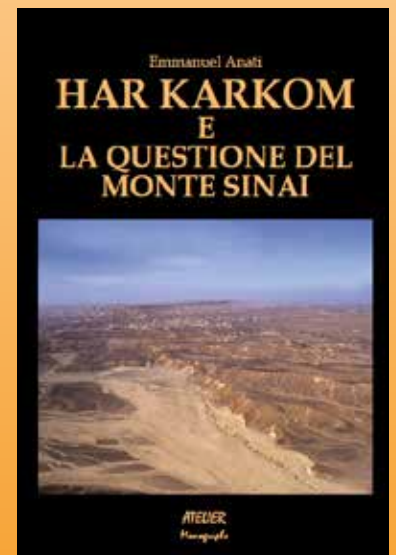
### The Rock Art of the Negev and Sinai

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



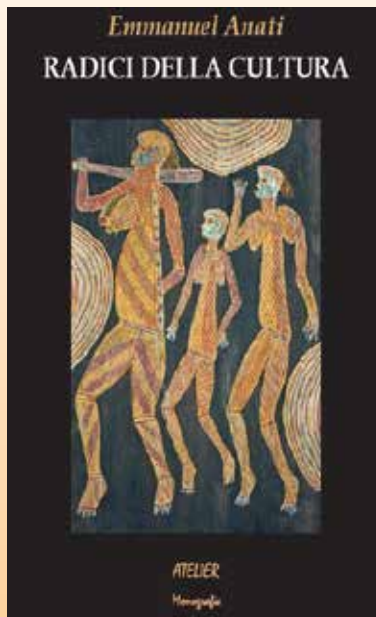
### Har Karkom and the Question of Mount Sinai (in Italian)

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. 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 illustration. It updates on recent discoveries, analyzing their possible historical significance, and suggesting a new vision of the events narrated in the Bible.

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## monographs



### Radici della Cultura (Roots of Culture) (in Italian)

The history of culture is the history which unifies 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 projects us to the future.

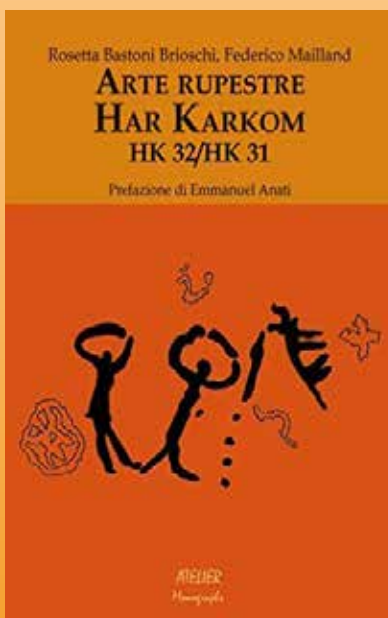
This book is a synthesis of the wonderful conceptual evolution of our species, which sets the actual reality in the evolutive dynamic, defining the identity of this species, of which we are sons and protagonists.



### The Riddle of Mount Sinai

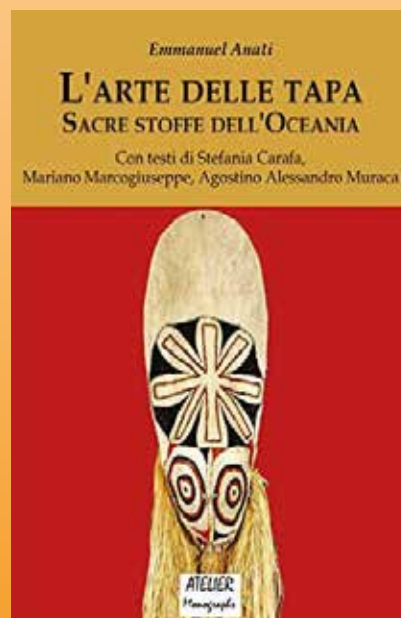
What is the true story behind the biblical narration of Exodus? The discoveries of the Italian archaeological expedition at Har Karkom, in the Negev Desert, tell the hitherto unknown story of the sacred mountain in the heart of the desert of Exodus, reflecting surprising similarities to the events and conditions described to us, albeit in mythicised form, in the Old Testament. 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.



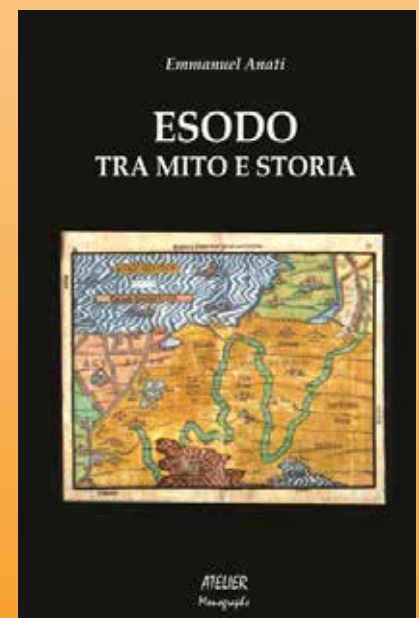
### Rock Art - Har Karkom HK 32/HK 31 (in Italian)

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.



### The Art of Tapa Sacred Clothes of 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 manufacture of tapa is an art that has been passed down for thousands of years and survives nowadays, although incorporated in social systems that are adapted to modern society.



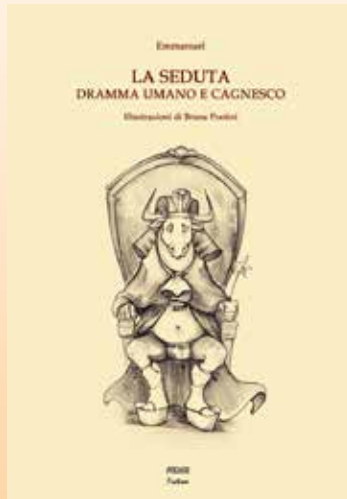
### Exodus Between myth and history (in Italian)

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. The location near the Saint Catherine's monastery is a Byzantine proposal that many scholars believe baseless. New archaeological discoveries suggest a reconstruction of the route of exodus and its historical context.

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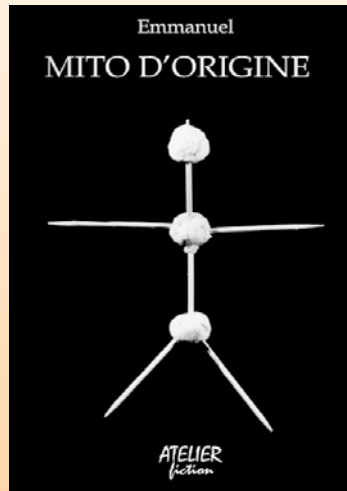
## fiction



### La Seduta (The meeting) (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.

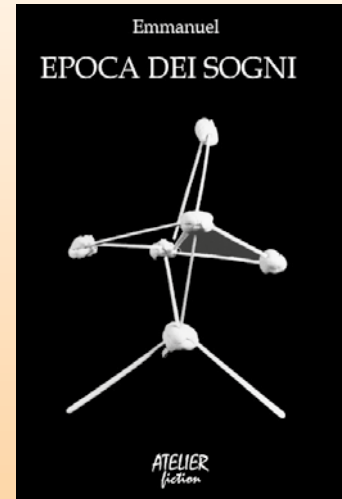


### Mito d'origine Epoca dei Sogni (Myth of Origin/ Epoch of Dreams) (in Italian)

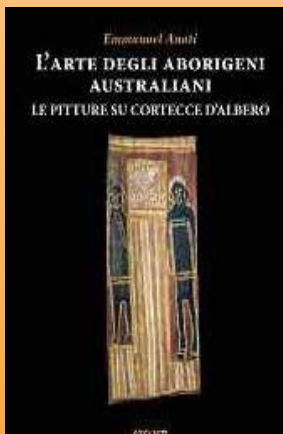
The first works of Atelier Fiction, Mito d'Origine and Epoca dei Sogni, tell stories that at first sight seem to come from another world.

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



## exhibition

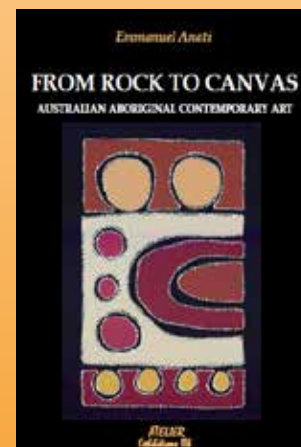


### The Art of the Australian Aborigines Bark Paintings (in Italian)

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.

It constitutes a direct contact with a way of thinking, seeing and believing, of the last surviving Paleolithic people and provides an immense amount data on mythology, conceptualism that sometimes is philosophy, and the search for contact with the natural and supernatural world in which they are immersed.



### 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.

This volume presents works with great artistic value, made by Aboriginal artists. How is it possible to explain that in the turn of a single generation, styles, themes, goals, all has change?

It is an extraordinary case for art history, while for psychology it is a window opened on mental processes. These spiritual changes are reflected in their art, which is the mirror of their changing soul.

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