

ISSN 2499-1341

# EXPRESSION

QUATERLY E-JOURNAL OF ATELIER IN COOPERATION WITH CISNEP  
INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION ON THE INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

N°39

MARCH 2023



READING THE LANGUAGE  
OF PICTOGRAMS

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# EDITORIAL NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

Reading the language of pictograms is a major challenge of the new archeology and this issue of *EXPRESSION* journal is displaying a variety of its aspects, new trends of old topics. The Discussion Forum opens with a provocative question by a reader, probably intended to be teasing. It awakens the function that the knowledge of the past has in predicting the future. Can we predict the future? A debate persisting from past issues of the journal makes the point on the origins of religion, by reading the language of pictograms. It faces a major question concerning archeology, psychology and the history of religion: why, when and how did man invent religion? Another topic of discussion again continues debates of previous issues: can the location of mount Sinai be identified? How come that the three main monotheistic religions cannot locate the mountain claimed to be the sacred site of revelation of the basic element of their faith? New ideas are proposed on another theme: the reading of a twenty thousand years old engraving from the prehistoric Altamira cave in Spain.

The main articles follow. They take us from the decoding of Eurasian Paleolithic pictograms, to the puzzling anthropo-zoomorphic images of Kyrgyzstan, to the reading of symbols produced by the native tribes of Colorado, in North America, to the search of meaning of the Southern Africa native paintings. It is a journey to the four corners of the world and to different human expressions and different ages.

No less interesting are the notes and news that follow, dealing with actual problems and queries of current archeology, anthropology and art history. The present issue of *EXPRESSION* offers news on old topics, concerning the reading of ancient human messages left behind as pictograms, from different spots of this world.

To our forefathers, the first colonizers of the planet, it took over one million years, from Africa to reach five continents and they did not know where they were heading to. Today five continents are reached in one instant, from the pages of a journal. Do we know where we are heading to? Can we predict the future?

E.A.

## A NOTE FOR THE AUTHORS

*EXPRESSION* is a quarterly journal on conceptual anthropology addressed to readers in over 85 countries. The readers are cultured scholars and students in anthropology, archeology, the arts, and other sectors of the humanities, eager to keep alive the dialogue, to communicate, to learn, and to contribute in opening up new trends of humanistic studies.

This journal offers space for expression and communication to researchers and authors from all over the world. Published papers are intended to produce culture: they are addressed to a world of learned and open-minded people. If you wish to contribute a paper, try to make it enjoyable to people who are not specialized in your specific research field. You talk to them not just to your restricted circle of experts. Articles are expected to be stimulating and pleasant to read. The target of *EXPRESSION* is to promote dialogue, knowledge, and ideas concerning the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate societies. It is an open forum in conceptual anthropology, where over 250 authors from 50 different countries have so far published their research and their ideas. Papers should be conceived for an audience involved in various fields of the humanities, mainly anthropology, archeology, art, sociology, and psychology. Your ideas, even if related to a local or circumscribed theme, should awaken the interest and curiosity of an international and interdisciplinary audience. The visual aspect is important for communication with the readers: quality images and text should complement each other.

Authors should talk openly to the readers, avoiding long descriptions, catalogues, and rhetorical arguments. Please refrain from unnecessary references and excessive citations. They make reading discursive and do not make the article more “scientific”. Excessive quotations may unveil an inability to express your own ideas. Consider that short articles are more read and appreciated than long ones. Avoid unnecessary words and sentences. Communications on current topics and short notes may be included in the ‘Discussion Forum’ or in the ‘Notes and News’ sections.

Publication in *EXPRESSION* quarterly journal does not imply that the publisher and/or the editors agree

with the ideas expressed. Authors are responsible for their ideas and for the information and the illustration they present. Papers are submitted to reviewers, not to judge them but to help authors, if needed, to better communicate with their readers. Controversial ideas, if they make sense, are not censured. New thoughts and concepts are welcome; they may awaken debate and criticism. Time will be their judge. *EXPRESSION* is a free journal, independent and not submitting to formal traditional regulations. It offers space for ideas and discoveries, including debatable issues, healthy discussions, and imaginative and creative papers, if they contribute to research, are conceptually reliable, and respect the integrity, ethics, and dignity of authors, colleagues, and readers. Additional information on how to submit a paper are found in the 'Notes and News' section.



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**Front page image**

Lena River Valley, Central Asia, Russian Federation. Rock engraving of association between bovid and antelope (see Anati, p.31, this issue)

# DISCUSSION FORUM

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

## CAN WE PREDICT THE FUTURE?

A reader asked a provocative question: “*EXPRESSION* is a journal in conceptual anthropology. Can you tell me if this new discipline can predict the future?” We are not sure we understand the purpose behind this query, but answering it offers an opportunity to consider the concept of prediction. The main concern of conceptual anthropology, so far, has been to follow the concept of ‘recovering the past to discover the present’. The aim of conceptual anthropology is to understand the available data on human cultural and conceptual expression and their background and motivations, that is, understanding more about human ways of thinking and behaving (see *EXPRESSION* 38, 2022, pp. 68-72). But can anyone avoid predicting the future? Prediction is guessing but it is a matter of survival. Every act involves prediction of the possible consequences: the human mind is trained to constantly try to shape a vision of the future, and these attempts determine behavior and action. Of course, like every other discipline, conceptual anthropology may predict the future, but cannot know in advance whether the predictions are right or wrong. We predict that the number of followers of conceptual anthropology will grow. Only the future will tell us if this prediction is right or wrong.

According to the conceptual tendencies of each individual and each society, some may predict perfection others imperfection, some order, others chaos. Predictions vary from realistic to utopian. Both predictions and events depend on mental attitudes. And further, reality, every reality, can only be what is seen as such by the human mind.

Figuring out the future is part of the human mental structure and different visions of the forthcoming are constantly being conceived, not only in Washington, Beijing or Moscow, but also in a tribal hamlet in the tropical forest of Congo; not only by experts in economy, politics, sociology or, as you ask, conceptual anthropology, also by young people having hopes, doubts and visions of their future. Attempts at predicting are an essential aspect of the human mental function. Predictions are present already in new-



borns, when they cry to get attention.

Trying to predict the future is the daily concern of most people, caused by worries, expectations, auspices, needs and hopes: it is a conceptual process throughout life, from childhood to old age. And it is accompanied by beliefs and evaluations which may be right or wrong. The dimensions of predicting go from the concern of what may personally happen next, to that of social and economic planning of states and world organizations, to predicting natural phenomena.

Predictions of incisive historical personalities, like Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, or Gadhafi turned out to be wrong, causing disastrous consequences. Major present-day predictions are clouded by uncertainties. Predictions of social order, world economy, climatic changes, scientific evolution, human relations, war and peace, are accompanied by many ifs....

Can we predict that the industry producing military weapons will grow? Or, will it become useless, change, and start producing toys for children? Can we predict that climatic changes will turn Antarctica into a summer resort for billionaires? Or could new technologies turn the Sahara Desert into urban and agricultural areas with plenty of water and vegetation?

What kind of existence can be predicted for future generations? The evolution of technology is occupying the minds, the programs, strategies and investments of people, companies and nations. To what extent can technical evolution provide happiness, love, confidence, emotional and sentimental fulfillment, mental and physical health, better living conditions, cooperation and socialization, conceptual abilities of imagination and creativity? Can the future produce machines to give happiness to sad people, food to hungry people, and children to sterile women? Can machines stop crimes and wars? Can they stop earthquakes? And we may also ask if they can cause earthquakes.

Could humanity become peaceful? Could humanity grow without limits? Could the task of producing food be left to machines? Could the world problems of hunger be solved by a chemical industry producing synthetic food with vitamins, proteins and calories, granting good taste, pleasant smell, crispy feeling, and appetizing look? Could deserts become fertile, turning into Gardens of Eden? Predictions offer an immense variety of possibilities. What would life be without predictions?

Artificial intelligence could replace human work by robots, allowing humanity either more involvement in the arts, imaginative creativity and scientific research, or to laziness, bore and decadence. Different predictions are possible. Predicting is not enough to grant their fulfillment. Prophets, magicians and witchdoctors may have better chances.

Predictions are part of daily thoughts, and daily thoughts vary, as they depend on state of mind, mood, events and conditions. We are not yet equipped to predict the unpredictable. But also, the predictable is not always granted. Therefore, predictions remain what they are, just predictions. Only the future tells whether they were right.

One thing we can predict: that every action has some consequences and human evolution is conditioned by actions which are part of the chain linking the past to the present and the present to the future.

This discussion leads us to a question: what could have been the predictions of the early hominids that migrated out of Africa two million years ago? Just looking for hunting game? Just curiosity to discover the next valley? Could they have figured out the output: the humanity of today, with its knowledge, technology, resources and problems, spread over five continents and planning to colonize other planets? We do not know if since, in the last two million years, any long-term prediction predicted what then really happened.

And in the relatively short terms, what can we predict? How the US, Russia, China, Europe, but also Korea, Ethiopia or Antarctica, will look like in 20 years' time?

Whatever the intents behind could have been, the question was a good one. Readers are cordially invited to further develop conceptual predicting.

## THE DEBATE ON THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION

A new book and new trends

*Emmanuel Anati (Italy)*

## THE DIMENSIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON

How and when did religions originate? Each religion started for different reasons and at different times, and has its own confessional versions of its origins. A prophet or a revelation, a miracle or an extraordinary event may cause the birth of belief, but the genesis of a religion cannot explain the universal phenomenon of religion. The question has awakened a broad debate. Archeology and anthropology constantly provide new data and knowledge is updated, as exposed by the new edition of *The Origins of Religion* (Anati, 2023).

The study of prehistoric art has produced groundbreaking knowledge of early expressions of religion. For millennia the sites of rock art in caves and the open air functioned as

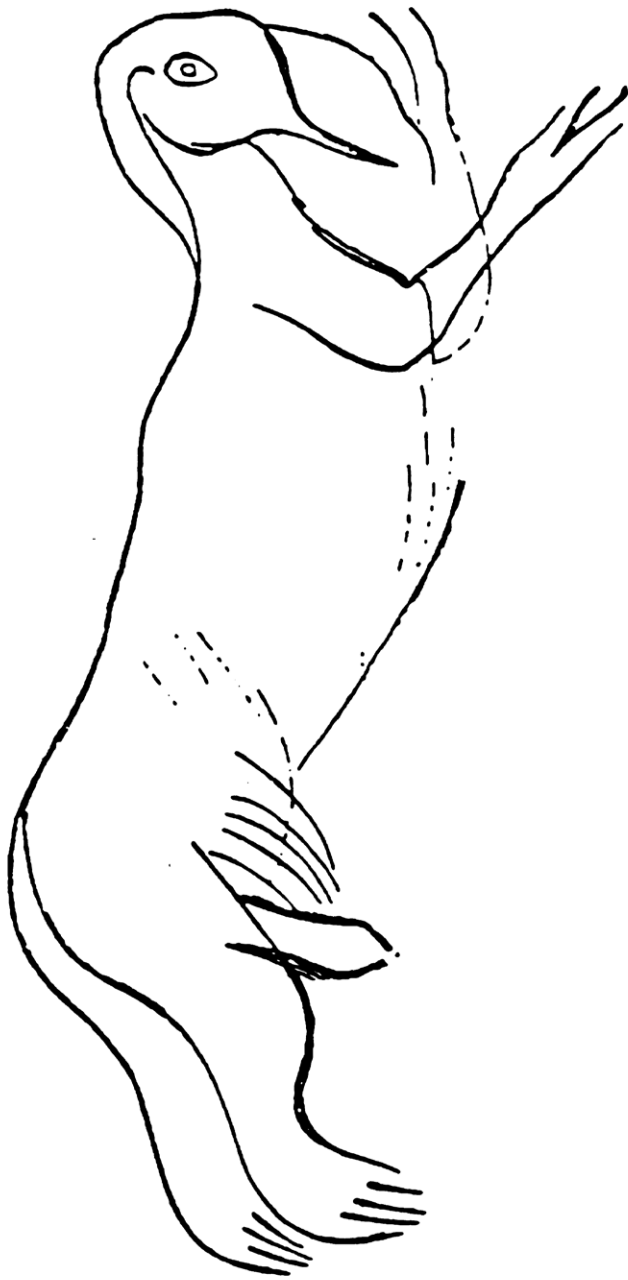


Fig. 1. Altamira Cave, Santander, Spain. Image of an anthropo-zoomorphic being of the Early Hunters (Paleolithic). This engraved figure has an erect posture with human arms and sex, but the head is that of a bird and the feet are those of a bear (tracing by H. Breuil, in Anati, 1989).

places of worship and tribal identity, acting as archives of myths, beliefs and events to be transmitted for generations as the conceptual ethnic heritage. Figures of imaginary beings, descriptions of their deeds and their encounters, depictions of beliefs and rituals, visions and ceremonies have revealed the experiences and the speculative nature of the human mind for millennia. Man never stopped inventing his own reality.<sup>1</sup>

Much of what is meant by prehistoric iconography has yet to be deciphered, but the first steps in reading the messages open a gate to the associative mental processes of the executors, the makers of the visual art. Their concern to describe beliefs and spiritual experiences indicates how relevant the role of religion was in the thought and daily life of hunter-gatherers.

### A STORY INSIDE A STORY

For the present writer, the topic of the origins of religion was faced almost daily in the 1950s in the years in Paris, as a student first and then as a CNRS researcher. In 1972, the theme was the focus of the second International Symposium of Valcamonica entitled “Les Religions de la Préhistoire” (Anati, ed, 1975). The third Valcamonica Symposium on “Prehistoric Art and Religion” (Anati, ed, 1979) rekindled the debates and highlighted the key role of prehistoric art in the reconstruction of Pleistocene beliefs and religious behavior. Each of these meetings was attended by over a hundred scholars and researchers. While dealing with the topic in university courses, there followed various writings synthesized in a book whose first Italian edition of 1995 was revised in the French edition of 1999.<sup>2</sup>

A new update came in *Ripensamenti sulle origini delle religioni* (2009). These books were in the reading assignments of history of religion courses, in universities with confessional orientations, in Italy, France, and Belgium. Having a secular conception, this fact contributed to the feeling of facing the problem of religion in a way acceptable also to religious devotees.

In these works, we maintained a critical evaluation of the then widespread postulate that religion was born with the first agricultural societies in the Neolithic period and that there was no religion among pre-Neolithic hunters. These works aroused debates that persisted in the Copenhagen Congress, “Religion and Material Cultures” of May 2011.<sup>3</sup>

1 The term man includes the entire humankind, with all its beings and all possible genders.

2 Editions Bayard, Paris, a publishing house of the Catholic church (Anati, 1999).

3 (Bredholt Christensen *et al.*, 2013, Department of History of Religions, Copenhagen University).



Fig. 2. Cave of Altamira, Santander. Engravings of anthropo-zoomorphic figures of Early Hunters (Paleolithic), dating back about 20,000–18,000 years. The praying being is the dominant subject, is larger in size than the worshipped being in front of him. The object of worship is of lesser dimension (importance) than the actor of the cult. The zoomorphic images reflect totemic concepts (tracing by Breuil, in Graziosi, 1960).

The findings of these works were adopted by some authors, and we assume that they contributed to the history of religions. In particular the work by Cardinal Julien Ries, summarized in a volume, repeatedly stated his agreement with Anati's secular vision (Ries, 1983, 2012).

Besides the university courses, the efforts to have an open debate on the origins of religion led to meetings with groups of different faiths, in Jerusalem with an orthodox Jewish community, in Paris with an existentialist group of atheists, in Beijing with students of the Minzu University having both Buddhist and atheistic backgrounds, in Parma with Italian Catholic prelates, and elsewhere. A lecture at the University of Fez in Morocco in June 2009, in front of a public of imams and other religious authorities, speaking

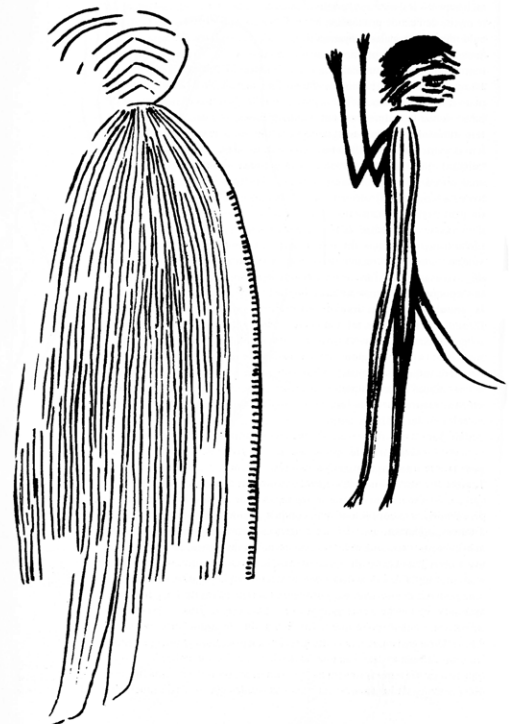


Fig. 3. Pahi, Konda, Tanzania. Cave painting of evolved hunters (Neolithic period). A mythical entity with an elusive face has in front of him a small praying human, notably smaller in size than him; the mythical being is the dominant image, larger thus more important than the praying person. Compared with the Early Hunters of fig. 2, the concepts of the Evolved Hunters (users of bow and arrow) were reversed: first the worshipper was dominant and the worshipped appeared as secondary; later the object of worship became dominant, the worshipper secondary (from Leakey, 1983).

in laic terms about the ideological and social functions of religion, was surprisingly warmly applauded and followed by questions and discussion.

Every religion has its own ideology, and the history of religions can have confessional or non-confessional orientations. We have sought the method of open dialogue accessible both to different confessions and to those who do not profess a confession.

### LOOKING FOR THE MEANING OF DATA

Academic doctrines of half a century ago condemned comparisons between archeology and anthropology and between archeological finds and recent tribal realities, ad-

vocating the separation of the skills and methods of different disciplines. This attitude had the effect of limiting the range of research and analytical visions, favoring the formation of technicians rather than scholars. It led us in the opposite direction. To understand human behavior there is no need to fix limits to the exploration of the mind and the possibility of associations and comparisons. Doctrinal boundaries, in the theological as in the academic settings, limited the freedom of expression, and conditioned the diffusion of innovative concepts.

Research should have access to all available information, without ideological, confessional, typological, political or geographic limitations; then researchers can make their choices. The schools that guide students and researchers toward rigorous specialization and to be strictly confined in their specific sector limits both objectivity and analytical range. Thus, they can be repressive as to the advancement and the freedom of research. What counts are the innovative results. Of course, it may happen that conclusions or deductions are wrong and, in such a case, they benefit from the privilege of criticism and have a short life. The innovations and breakthroughs in research often result from infringing rules, escaping the practice of orthodox submission to conventions. Conformity is lethal for research though it can be rewarding for the career, and not only in the field of the history of religion.

The same happened in art history, which is a fundamental source for the history of religions. In Europe, art history often was European art history and began with classical Greece; other continents hardly existed. Some barriers are being overcome but for some art historians it is still an effort to see beyond the Caryatids of the Parthenon. Chinese art was not included; it was a sector of oriental studies. Pharaonic Egypt was a short preamble to the beginning of art, and prehistoric art was seen as a phenomenon to be verified. Tribal art was not included in textbooks and prehistoric art was not part of art history.

All these separate sectors are a great source for the history of religions, and also for the conceptual history of man, if seen as a whole. The sense of the whole is different from that of each of the individual sectors separately. For an elder of the Aranta tribe in Central Australia the understandable visual production is that of his ancestors. The Caryatids of the Parthenon are for him what the art of his ancestors are for some traditional European art historians. If both religion and art are expressions of the entire humankind, the understanding of their phenomenological meaning may be advantaged by a humanistic broad overview.

Art history and the history of religions have much in common and like in art history, analogous tendencies were fashionable in the history of religions. Until recently, texts

mainly led from polytheism (named pagan idolatry) to monotheism. Animistic beliefs were allowed the inappropriate term of spirituality, not religion. Even the term religion was often criticized when used for prehistory.

Some routine habits nevertheless contradicted this trend. The corpulent female figurines of the Eurasian Paleolithic, the so-called Venuses, were attributed the role of mother goddess, thus a religious entity. The decorated caves of the European Paleolithic were seen as unspecified sanctuaries, thus religious sites. For the tribal world, the immense content of spirituality, myths, and habits was often reduced to a misleading fresco of magic, cannibalism, and human sacrifices. In some traditionalist schools, talking about Paleolithic religions was considered a heresy. Hopefully, these dogmatic attitudes have had their time.

After having insisted for years on the much-criticized presence of religion since the appearance of *Homo sapiens* (*Homo sapiens-sapiens* in the traditional terminology), evidence has grown for the presence of religion even before the emergence of our direct ancestor. The debate is further elaborated in the recently published new edition of *The Origins of Religion* (2023).

Despite differing opinions, we trust that the tendency of considering religion as the privilege of food-producing societies is defeated for ever. The archeological remains confirm that religion has been present ever since hominids became capable of an articulated and complex language, practically since their becoming human. Religion is a mindset phenomenon that was introduced in the course of conceptual evolution, to be understood in the complexity of its variants and functions as a global phenomenon.

## THE SEARCH FOR THE ORIGINS

The debate on the origins of religion faced various theories which we briefly summarize here. The ritual function of everyday tools is based on highly speculative hypotheses. The miraculous and sacred fire or the driven spear scored by supernatural forces are late acquisitions implying complex esotericism. Prophets may give birth to a specific religion, not to the origins of religion. Prophets may exist only if people believe in prophecies, which again is a relatively late acquisition. In this vast debate, other theories turned out to be devoid of contextual evidence for the origins of religion: miracles, revelations, visions, apparitions, hallucinations, and trance states are contingent events that presuppose the presence of previous religious concepts. They may give birth to a religion or to a sect, not to the global phenomenon of religion.

The supernatural power of certain man-made tools, wands, swords or axes becoming miraculous is a late phenomenon.



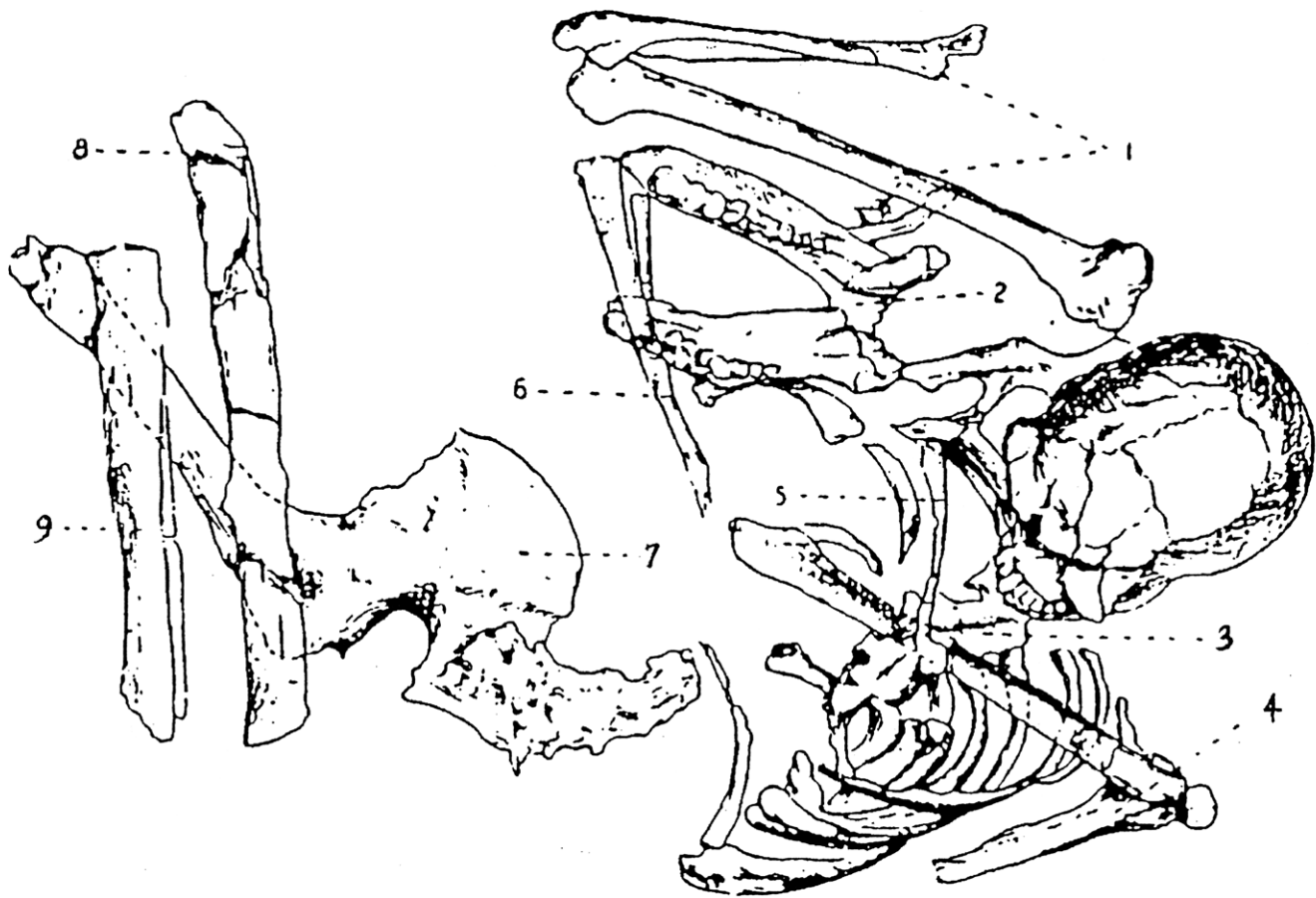


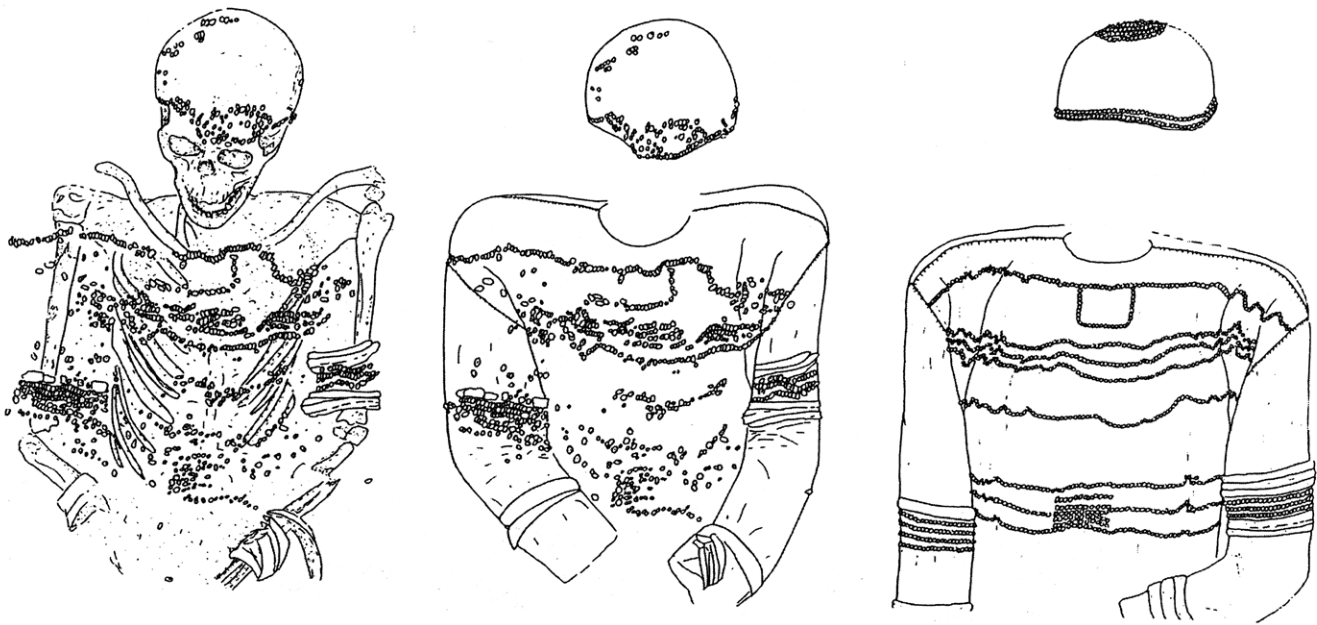
Fig. 4. Skhul Cave, Mount Carmel, Israel. Mousterian burial (Middle Paleolithic), from c. 75,000 years ago. The deceased is accompanied by a kit that includes food. The wild-pig jaw bone is a remnant of the meat that was wrapping it. 1. Right arm; 2. Pig mandible; 3. Dorsal vertebrae; 4. Scapula and humerus; 5. Left clavicle; 6. Left radius; 7. Right ilium; 8. Left femur; 9. Left tibia and fibula. According to the discoverers, the pig jaw was held between the right arm's radius which overlaps it and the left arm next to it on the other side. It was a generous portion of meat, of which only the bones remained (from Garrod and Bate, 1937).

Compared with primary manifestations of religiosity, the divine revelation is a late event. The divinity entry into the scene for or against the actions of man, or just as a supreme king of the universe, is equally a late phenomenon. The concept of divinity is a late phenomenon. To conceive a king of the sky, there must be examples of human kings on earth, which is a social expression of agricultural and urban societies, not of nomadic clans of hunters.

The hypothesis recently proposed on the role of hypothetical extraterrestrials as gods or religious missionaries ignores what is now available about prehistoric religions, advancing dubious testimony and daring interpretations that lack credibility. They produced ingenious science fiction but no trace of reliable evidence. The earliest known elements of religious thought make these ideas obsolete.

Psychologists developed the theory of dependence from

the need for addiction. The adult has nostalgia for the child's situation, dependent on parents, constantly evaluating what he/she is doing, whether good or bad, punished and praised according to actions and behavior. Freed from parental addiction, longing for this guide, the individual needed to conceive a "Big Father", in heaven or below the ground, that takes his place, to be entrusted with judging his actions and guiding him/her. This view may perhaps justify certain aspects of the beliefs of theistic religions where there is a need for addiction, but it can hardly explain the primary cult of the dead, the spirituality of certain non-theistic religions, or the globality of the religious phenomenon. The search for origins, the visions of the after-world, the accumulation and preservation of the mythological heritage, the dogmas, the social aspects of association and communion, the rituals and the need for ritual, social



Figs. 5a, 5b, 5c. Sungir, Russia. Reconstruction of decoration with small beads of bone on a skeleton of *Homo sapiens*, about 35,000 years ago. The beads found on the skeleton were sewn on something made of organic material that was not preserved. Presumably it was made of leather or tapa, or bark tree cloth, soaked and beaten (non-woven fabric like felt). Tools used for the manufacture of tapa cloth in the Upper Paleolithic were found in Kostenky, Ukraine, of about the same age as Sungir. The body had been buried in a dress decorated with hundreds of beads, bracelets, and other ornaments, not suitable for hunting, and presumably not for everyday use. Why was the departing deceased so dressed up? (Tracing by Bader, 1978, in Anati, 2005).

customs and traditions do not seem to depend on the need for paternalism.

Recent studies illustrate the function of holy scripture that the rock art sites cover for a time-span of 40,000 years (Anati, 2015). Are they evidence of the presence of a true religion or just of a primary spirituality, as advocated by some conservative scholars? This depends not only on the definition that is given to the term religion, but also on the contents, beliefs, and rituals that emerge from what we can decipher of the records defined as art (Frolov, 1983; Mountford, 1956; Leroi-Gourhan, 1965, 1975).

From the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic, over 40,000 years ago, there are also signs of the cult of ancestors. Their invisible souls are represented as imaginary embodiments by rock art and by standing stones, the so-called menhirs (Anati, 2020, 2023b). But even earlier, the persistence of rites and habits for generations imply the transmission of rituals and beliefs, thus of initiation practices or some sort of catechism.

### THE OLDEST TRACES OF RELIGION

Archeological remains over 100,000 years old, in the Middle Paleolithic, testify to the care of the deceased. Broadly

diffused methods of burying the dead could hardly have just practical reasons, but grave goods, objects and even food given to the deceased implies mean something more. Why should a dead body need food?

What was preserved consists mainly of stone implements and bones. Other parts of the same kits, such as the meat around the bones or the wooden handles related to the stone points or scrapers, left no traces. If there were other organic items, vegetal food, wooden tools, leather wear or garments, they were not preserved. But we know that both tools and food accompanied the dead body in the grave. And what is the meaning of the diffused habit of painting the dead body with red ochre? What kind of reality was conceived by the human mind?

The new edition of “*The Origins of Religion*” (2023), further develops the evidence provided by burials, other ritual or prehistoric ceremonial sites and traditions among recent hunter-gatherer peoples. Conceiving the passage from life to death caused a conceptual dilemma that had to be clarified. The lifeless body is abandoned by his energy; something leaves the body. What happens to the missing faculties and powers? The spirit is gone, but where?

The problem of the after imposed answers and raised ques-



Fig. 6. Zisab Gorge, Brandberg, Namibia. Rock painting. A mortuary scene of Late Hunters. The difference in size of the carriers and the followers is noteworthy. It may indicate the different importance of the two types of participants in the ceremony (tracing by H. Pager, in Anati, 1989).

tions about life: what is life, and what happens when life leaves the body? “Yesterday you talked to your father, and now he does not hear you anymore and does not respond. What happened?” How did life cease? But... “Did indeed life cease?”

Another question followed: how to appease the anxieties of uncertainty about what comes next. Already over 100 years ago, Baldwin Spencer studied and described the conceptual world of hunter-gatherers (1914). Other authors followed (Anati, 2023).

Even for today’s minds, the idea that millions of cells that form the material of which we are made can suddenly alter their function gives us a sense of awe. Millions of molecules cease their usual functions all of a sudden. The energy that governs them stops all at once? The body is still there, decaying; the energy, the voice, and the eyes are turned off. What happened? To most people on earth, death is a final act of life for the victim and a traumatic fact for the observer. Is indeed death the end? Can life have an end?

The concept of death being the end, the final act of life, is defied. The objects and food left near the dead body witness a material act performed by the living that implies concern

about the after: what may be needed by the deceased? What can he do after death? What can the living do to satisfy the needs of the dead? Life is energy. Energy left the body. We see the body, we do not see the energy: where has it gone? It left the body... *he* left the body: where has *he* gone? And what happens to this *he*, when he leaves the body? What happens next, to this energy, to this he (or she, or neutral, or both he-she), who abandons the body? What happens next? What is the future of life after abandoning the dead body?

### BETWEEN BEING AND BECOMING

From the archeological and anthropological evidence we may assume that the first steps of recorded religious behavior lies in the burial customs. The effect of faith beyond knowledge reveals the conceptual process. The transition between being and becoming imposed a faith in the unknown. The refusal of the idea of death as the end of life imposed the question of what had happened to the energy that abandoned the body. Knowledge could not supply an answer, beliefs could.

Anxiety about the future preceded the exegesis of the past. Many of the memories, apologies, testimonies, prophecies and predictions that justify beliefs, which occupy so much of the doctrines of recent religions, are not a primary expression of religion, they developed later. Their roots are to be found in the myths of ancestral spirits, as documented by the hunter-gatherers (Paleolithic) art of five continents. The myths have accumulated as indispensable evidence in support of the truth of the growing doctrine. The intellectual and spiritual traditions concerning the ghosts of the past grew and expanded.

From the very first traces of religious expressions, the existential questions about death and the concept of the after, the soul that survives the body, had a dominant role. Later on, there emerged the need to collect, store, and transmit the mythical heritage of the past, genealogies, apology for the genesis, myths of origin and whatever else that constitutes factors of belief.

What are the roots of religion? How can we trace back the roots from present reality? Even before, we have to ask what drives, consciously or unconsciously, the production of the global phenomenon of religion. Human minds’ inquisitiveness leads to a search of the unknown. Knowledge grows from generation to generation but it is always insufficient for understanding. Imagination is the highest gift of the human mind: it enriches knowledge by adding belief to it. We assume that the earliest expressions of religion that we can trace are in the grave goods, tools, and food accompanying the dead in the tomb. They are the testimony of





Fig. 7. Rock painting of Ruchera Cave, Mtoko, Zimbabwe. An anthropo-zoomorphic being is emerging on the rock surface. His posture seems to indicate that he is jumping out of the rock. He has a human body but the head and the tail of an eland (source: Goodall, 1959).

beliefs, attempts to allay anxieties about the dilemma of death. The concept that death might be the annihilation of life was rejected, a trend which continues to be actual. But if death is not the end of life, what happens after death?

### BETWEEN CAUSE AND EFFECT

Every religion professes truths that other religions do not share. "I believe therefore I belong, I am part of the community." The specific beliefs of various religious denominations are key indicators of identity and social belonging. The backbone of religion is the belief in hypotheses that are supposed to be proved by evidence that cannot be proved or provable above doubt, thus awaking the question of reliability. In particular, the affirmation of faith supports the belief concerning the after-life: "I believe therefore I belong, I am part of the community." Belief binds believers; it identifies with traditions and erudition, but it does not necessarily identify with knowledge. "He believes A, you believe B, I believe C, somebody else believes D." Each one of these four believers has a different truth regarding the realm of the dead. Despite all the efforts, believing is not knowing. The difference between knowing and believing

makes believing vulnerable, thus needing to be defended by the believers. Defending the faith has led to the outcomes of wars, persecutions, inquisitions, jihad, and other harassments and again, their outcomes, martyrs and saints. The consecration of beliefs may well be a binding element from the earliest forms of religion. Science and religion can be at odds, but the origins were one and the same. They had the same primary goal: understanding. And understanding the shocking fact of death, as far as we can deduce, is the basis of the evidence from archeological finds, going back more than 100,000 years.

What else was fermenting in the minds of these ancestors, that may be assumed from the archeological finds? There are hypotheses and a few certainties, but a key factor emerges: the lack of knowledge has produced belief. Each belief is an act of culture, and is an asset of identity to be defended. One does not have to defend knowledge: knowledge is strong enough to defend itself. But people have to defend beliefs.

The new edition of *The Origins of Religion* is a modest updating of a colossal problem involving the entire humanity: why religion? Like the previous editions, it is research in progress, a step to stimulate thinking, and an invitation to participate in the debate.

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## COMPARING THE VIEWS FROM THE TOP OF SAINT CATHERINE AND HAR KARKOM ACCORDING TO EGERIA'S ACCOUNT

*Flavio Barbiero*  
CISPE (Italy)

In the last issue of *EXPRESSION* Prof. Crosilla offered an interesting contribution to the debate about the mountain visited by the Roman pilgrim Egeria, St Katherine or Har Karkom (Crosilla 2022).

Some background: the account of Egeria contains a wealth of information about travel times, distances, archeological remains, dwellings of monks, agriculture sites, and so on, that seem not compatible with the reality of St Catherine. The only evidence in favour of this mountain, apparently incontestable, is the itinerary followed by the pilgrim on her way back to Jerusalem, according to the account, along the coast of the Red Sea up to Suez (Maraval 1997, 151). Through a thorough examination of the manuscript, that

was produced in the 12th century in the monastery of Montecassino (Italy), Barbiero realized that this document is a collage of four different trips of the pilgrim that the copyist put in sequence according to an order that was not the same as supposedly reported in the original Egeria's diary (Barbiero 2017). In fact a letter written by Valerius from Bierzo testifies that the first trip made by Egeria was in Egypt and along the Gulf of Suez, in the steps of Exodus's itinerary, and only the following year did she go to the Holy Mountain (Maraval 1997, 339, 340). The copyist inverted the sequence of these two trips and made small adjustments (quite evident in the manuscript) apparently with the aim of making the account compatible with the knowledge of the time.

Therefore, the supposed evidence in favour of St Catherine is not reliable and the identity of the mountain visited by Egeria may only be established through the characteristics reported in her account.

During the archeological expeditions of Prof. Anati to Har Karkom, a survey was done to verify if there was a match between this territory and the account and it was found excellent (Barbiero 2022).

Now Prof. Crosilla proposes a further way to decide between the two mountains by comparing which view admired by the pilgrim from the top matches better. To this purpose he uses an open-source software by Geo Guru, available in QGIS3, establishing the limits of visibility from the top of Har Karkom, St Catherine, and Gebel Musa.

A method that reminds those viewpoints where there is a board with arrows indicating the main features of the landscape and a powerful binocular lens allowing visitors to reach the limits of visibility. Egeria was naked-eyed and therefore her view was somewhat limited, but at least the role of the board with arrows was taken by the local monks at her side.

This is, from her own words, what she saw from the top of the mountain:

"Egyptum autem et Palestinam et mare Rubrum et mare illum Parthenicum, quod mittit Alexandriam, nec non et fines Saracenorum infinitos ita subter nos inde uidebamus ut credit huic possit; quae tamen singula nobis illi sancti demonstrabant" (Maraval 1997, 137).

It seems reasonable to suppose that the monks (*sancti*) indicated to Egeria the direction of territories known to her for personal experience, otherwise she would not have bothered to ask them. Therefore, Egypt and the Red Sea were the places that, according to Valerius, she had visited the year before, the Gulf of Suez and northern Egypt. The territories of the Saracens, that extended infinitely from the foot of the mountain, could be identified on the basis of the account of a pilgrim of the sixth century, Antoninus

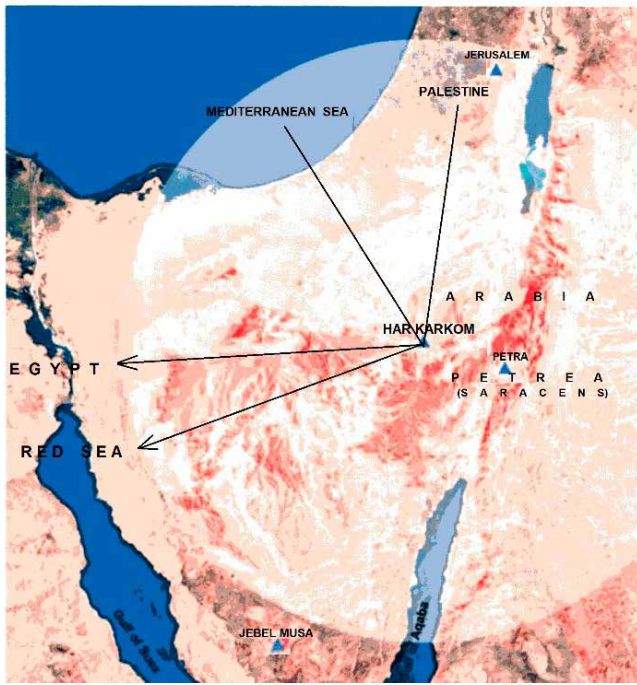


Fig. .1 The limits of visibility from the top of Har Karkom according to the analysis of Prof. Crosilla (Crosilla 2022).

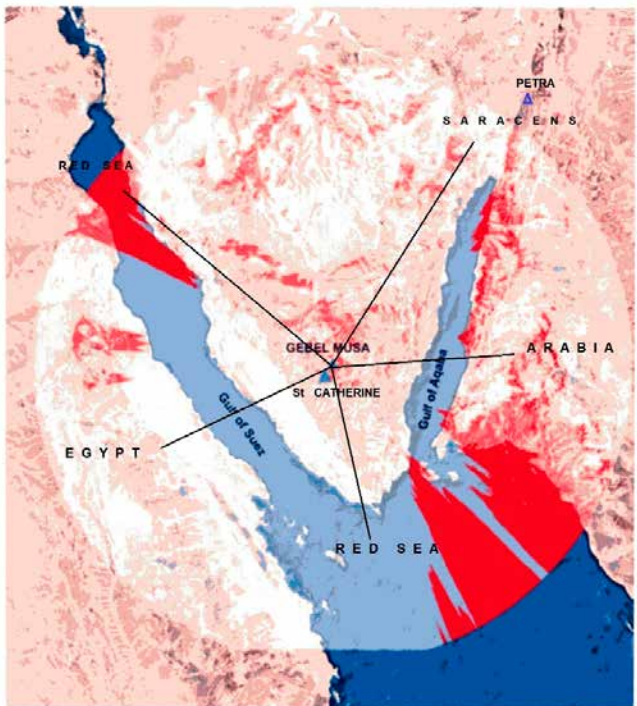


Fig. 2. The limits of visibility from the top of Gebel Musa, according to the analysis of Prof. Crosilla (2022).

Placentinus, who from Elousa (Negev), “where the desert that extends to the Sinai starts” (Milani 1977; Sodini 1997), travelled south for several days during which he was supplied with food and water by people on camels, whom he calls Saracens. The evidence is that they were Nabateans, known to the Romans as Arabs, whose territories to the west of Petra spanned from the Negev to Eilat and beyond, including the area of Har Karkom. Maraval too states that the land of the Saracens at the time of Egeria was Arabia Petrea (Maraval 1997, 137).

At this point we can proceed to compare the views from the two tops and, of course, for a fair evaluation we must use the same views produced by Prof. Crosilla.

Let us start from Har Karkom. The presence of monks there is well testified by the Roman-Byzantine settlements that Cottinelli has identified as monastic “laure” (Cottinelli 1994).

Palestine and the Mediterranean Sea are all well within the limits of visibility, as well as the lands of the Saracens, that surround the mountain, while northern Egypt and the Red Sea are just at the edge. In my evaluation this does not disagree with Egeria’s declaration, because she certainly asked the monks where the places she had travelled the year before were situated, and they of course indicated the right direction, regardless if they were visible or not.

Prof. Crosilla, instead, affirms that the “situation is completely different from that described by Egeria in her book”, I guess because Egypt and the Gulf of Suez are not within the limits of visibility, and maybe because he places the lands of the Saracens somewhere else.

Let us see then the situation from St Catherine, or better from the Gebel Musa (Prof. Crosilla shows the views from both peaks, which are very near to each other, but in the end he chooses the latter).

Here too the directions are indicated by the local monks, but which monks? To my knowledge they arrived there more than one century later when Emperor Justinian banned the Monophysite heretics, allowing them to seek refuge in Egypt. For the sake of the discussion, however, we must agree that there were monks.

Let us see, then, what was visible from there: on the east the coast of the Arabian peninsula, supposed to be the land of the Saracens; on the south a wonderful view of the Red Sea with its two northern arms, cherished destinations of modern tourists, but unknown to Egeria, apart from the western one; on the west a clear view of the Egyptian eastern desert, also unknown to Egeria; on the northeast Arabia Petrea. Northern Egypt, the Mediterranean Sea and Palestine are out of the picture. In my judgement this puts St Catherine and Gebel Musa out of the contest.

Yet again Prof. Crosilla proffers a different opinion: “These



agree with that reported by Egeria in her book, apart from the Parthenion Sea (Mediterranean)", concluding that "according to the results, it clearly emerges that the mountain climbed by Egeria is Gebel Musa and not Har Karkom, an assumption that can be scientifically shown considering the landscape visibility from the top described by Egeria." I must have missed something in his line of reasoning.

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## AN ENGRAVING FROM ALTAMIRA CAVE, SPAIN






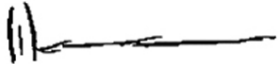


In EXPRESSION 29 an engraving on the walls of Altamira cave was discussed and a tentative decoding was proposed. Other readers are adding additional comments The images are here repeated.

### Decoding a 20,000 old message.

Altamira cave, Spain. The engraving shows two horses, some ideograms and one psychogram. The dart or spear usually has a male value, like the 'arbolet' ideogram. Vulva and lips ideograms have a female value. A vertical horse is accompanied by a male ideogram, a horizontal horse by a female ideogram. On top of them ideograms memorize the event or wish: the depiction of the dart ideogram (male) is penetrating the lips, female ideogram. Below the horizontal horse a psychogram appears, a sort of exclamation. How to read this document? (Tracing by Breuil, 1912).





GRAMMAR ANALYSIS	SYNTAX ANALYSIS
 <p data-bbox="256 1098 667 1150">Pictograms: two animals figures (horses), one vertical, the other horizontal</p>	 <p data-bbox="954 1098 1292 1129">Vertical animal with male ideogram</p>
 <p data-bbox="248 1356 505 1409">Ideograms: two male signs (branch and arrow)</p>	 <p data-bbox="932 1371 1317 1402">Horizontal animal with female ideogram</p>
 <p data-bbox="248 1535 643 1566">Ideograms: two female signs (lip and ear)</p>	 <p data-bbox="932 1539 1328 1591">Union of female ideogram (lips) and male ideogram (arrow)</p>
 <p data-bbox="297 1864 621 1896">Psychogram: sinuous lines bundle</p>	 <p data-bbox="987 1860 1317 1892">Psychogram. exclamation or omen</p>

## THE CONCEPT OF TIME

*Federico Mailland (Switzerland)*

This composition represents with pictograms and ideograms a sexual intercourse and the female orgasm. In my opinion the composition is independent of any temporal meaning: it does not necessarily represent either something that happened, or the expectation of what will happen. It simply is the representation of something that gives pleasure. In this sense the scene is part - or rather the beginning - of erotic literature which, as we can see, is timeless. As Emmanuel Anati teaches us, all Paleolithic art can be interpreted as the beginning of writing. And such it is, if we consider that the parietal and rock art is nothing more than messages that humans have left on the walls of caves and rocks since prehistoric times. Very clear messages for their contemporaries, more difficult to interpret for modern men, due to the cultural stratification that prevents us from quickly reaching the meaning of these messages. Decoding Paleolithic art requires to get rid of our cultural superstructures. We must think as prehistoric man reasoned, considering his essential needs and what it could be a reason for satisfaction, fear and in any case positive or negative. This is the process that Anati is doing in his interpretation of Paleolithic art as the beginning of writing by the so-called illiterate peoples. And the results are amazing.

## WHO DID IT?

*Ariela Fradkin (Israel)*

Who produced this parietal composition 20,000 years ago: a man or a woman?

## UNVEILING THE STRUCTURE OF MIND

*Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimaraes (Brazil)*

The example of the Altamira wall engraving awakens a very important issue concerning not only prehistory but also the development of the human mind, and specifically the unconscious side. The presence of similar compositions in other regions support the idea that such images are a universal way of expression of the human mind not a specific language of a specific group. These figures are an exceptional source of understanding the structure of our mind, since these figures are free from the Neolithic and later cultural conditioning. Regarding the analytical method used by you in this cur-

rent study,<sup>4</sup> I am very attracted to the “Syntax Analysis”, as it suggests real advances towards the understanding of prehistoric art. However, this analytical path should be carefully used, avoiding misconceived conclusions. An extensive analytical study, should extend beyond the Eurasian boundaries to verify its global holding.

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<sup>4</sup> “Anati, E. “Decoding Prehistoric Art and the Origins of Writing” (2015).

## WHY DID PREHISTORIC PEOPLE PRODUCE ART

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

## FORTHCOMING NEW DEBATES

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

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

## PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEBATES

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



# THE CONCEPTUAL FUNCTION OF SIMPLE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN PALEOLITHIC ART

*Emmanuel Anati*

Atelier Research Center for Conceptual Anthropology (Italy)

What was the function of visual art in Paleolithic caves? One of the hypotheses of early researchers was that they were produced to decorate the rocky surfaces: art for art's sake. Other hypotheses were that they were an expression of hunting magic, initiation rites, calendars, and other suppositions. Its function as a record of myths, beliefs, and concepts has been pondered by various authors. Twelve main hypotheses are reviewed in "*Aux Origines de l'art*" (Anati, 2003, pp. 44-56). However prehistoric art, just like historic literature, had not one but several functions, both sacred and profane. This variety of functions is confirmed by the decryption of Paleolithic iconographic ensembles that constitute narratives of myths, events, travels, transactions, and other themes (Anati, 2021). In the present text we consider the recurrence of simple associations between two animal figures and between these and ideograms. As a working hypothesis we assume that repetitive patterns of similar associative models presuppose recurrent meaning.

In fact, in the art of caves, open-air rock art and the art of movable objects, some types of recurrent association between graphemes, even in far apart locations, are likely to be the expression of elementary associative logic with a constant significance.

We consider cases such as the association of an entire animal figure with that of just the head of another animal, or the association of an animal depicted in large format, with another animal in a much smaller format. Pondering their widespread presence, these kinds of associations with recurring figurative formulae, may have their specific sense. The selected examples are recurrent since the older phases of Paleolithic figurative art, taking us back some 40,000 years. The subject is relevant as expression of associative trends of the human mind unveiling elementary aspects of logical reasoning.

In this text we consider two types of associations:

- graphic associations of two animals of different

sizes: one larger, dominant, the other smaller, submissive or subordinate.

- association between the figure of an animal depicted in its entirety, head and body, and that of the head of the other.

The main images or pictograms, are usually accompanied by ideograms and psychograms, whose meanings and functions have already been widely discussed (Anati, 1997; 2015a).

Some of these signs have male or female ideographic attributions which often accompany the pictograms in the visual art of hunter-gatherers, as in European Paleolithic art; some imply different values, like positive or negative, danger, pleasure, wish, and other indicators or adjectives. (Anati, 2020).<sup>1</sup>

It should be mentioned that in the art of hunting-gathering peoples, even those still living today, the pictograms like animal figure can have different meanings, the animal itself, the name of a clan or a site, a totemic emblem, an adjective, or indication of an action, or something else (Anati, 2021).<sup>2</sup>

## **Graphic associations of two animals of different sizes: one larger, dominant, the smaller, submissive**

The associations between two animal figures, one large, with a dominant aspect, the other small, presumably submissive or inferior, were often not even considered or considered as accidental, or as cases of additions of later figures without relationships between them. However, it appears as an intentional and repetitive factor. In some cases, as those presented in this paper, the two images appear to have been executed by the same hand or the same tool. Furthermore, this type of association is present not only in the Franco-Can-

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1 To avoid repeating what said already, we apologize for making frequent references to our previous publications.

2 See also EXPRESSION 6, pp.3-24; 15, pp.7-13; 16, pp.9-23; 23, pp.7-23; 29, pp.12-15.



Fig. 1. Gabillou cave, Dordogne, France. Parietal engraving of a large bison figure associated with horses of smaller proportions, one depicted in its entirety, with head and body, the other in front of the bison's snout has only a muzzle and mane. On the body of the bison, above the horse, an association of ideograms appears: the ideogram "arrow" (of male significance) has penetrated the ideogram "lips" (of female significance) and is oriented toward the horse. Next to it are three parallel vertical lines which could be a numeric ideogram (Tracing by H. Breuil in Breuil, 1952).

tabrian area, but in various European locations, from Foz Coa in Portugal to Gobustan in Azerbaijan and beyond. And it is even present in Early Hunters (Paleolithic) art in Africa. Considering the diffusion, its primary meaning may be hypothesized in associative logic: that of the relative size as an expression of the kind of relationships between the subjects.

In Europe, there are several cases of the relationship between the bovid, as the dominant figure, and the equid, which often appears as a minor figure. But there are also associations between other animal species having different sizes. These couplings between two animals depicted in different proportions extend in temporal terms from the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic to various phases of the Paleolithic, up to the final expressions of the Early Hunters; and it is also present in the Epi-Paleolithic phase of Valcamon-

ica: it is recurring over the course of over 30,000 years. It is an association between a dominant subject and a submitted subject. The described cases do not represent extemporaneous acts. Some of the deeply engraved figures of Azerbaijan, by their large size, over 3 m. long, may have demanded hours or even days of work. They are acts intentionally planned and executed. They were done to remain as acts and documents. What do the pictograms represent? What does their association mean? And why were they immortalized? What is their meaning? So far as we can postulate, this repetitious pattern is a case of transfer from a kind of logical reasoning to its visual materialization. The association of the major to the minor, by the different size, is meant to make clear, to whom may have been concerned, the kind of relationship between a dominant to a subordinate element, represented by

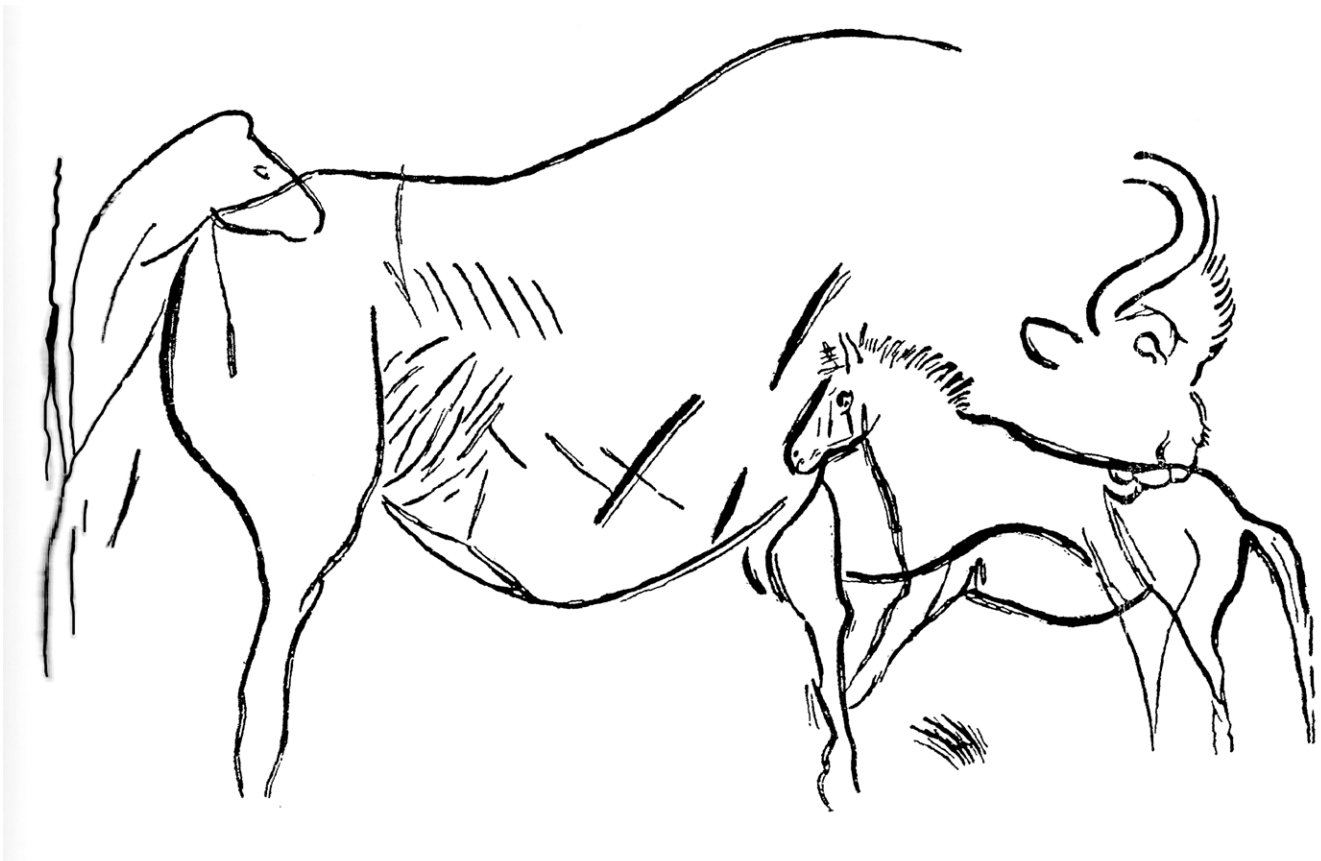


Fig. 2. Combarelles cave, Dordogne, France. Parietal engraving of a large bison figure associated with horses of smaller proportions, one depicted in its entirety, with head and body, the other, at the back of the bison, has only a muzzle and neck (Tracing by H. Breuil 1912, in Anati 2007a).

the animals, whatever they may signify. The graphic execution is an act intended to fix the content, which may be an event, an agreement, a conceptual affirmation or something else. This repetitious occurrence of major-minor association is opening up a window on a way of thinking, going back over thirty thousand years. It may also provide some ideas on human relations, between individuals or clans.

### **Association between animal depicted in full and head or partial figure**

As seen already in previous figures, in the European Paleolithic figurative art a specific kind of association between two figures is frequent, that of the profile of an animal body in its entirety, and that of another animal depicted only partially. This second animal is often represented by its head, and in other cases the head is accompanied by a part of the body. It has been suggested that the image of the animal head indicates

the name or the totemic sign of an individual, a clan or a locality (Anati, 2015). In a few instances, the same animal head or the same ideogram is repeated twice in the same composition. This peculiarity is likely to indicate both the identity of the human group and the name of a locality. Some examples were decoded as: "...the people of the horse-head come from, or go to, the country of the horse-head."; or "...the people of fires come from the land of fires and go to the land of the bison" (Anati, 2020b).

A case already highlighted concerns three bone objects with figurative engravings, from three different locations in France and Spain (Anati, 2020b; 2021). In all three, the head of a carnivorous predatory animal is depicted, next to an antelope or fawn fully represented in semi-profile. The composition associates two animals, one depicted in full, of the other just the muzzle. The carnivore, likely a wolf, is marked by the *bâtonnet* or the fishbone sign, ideograms of male significance,

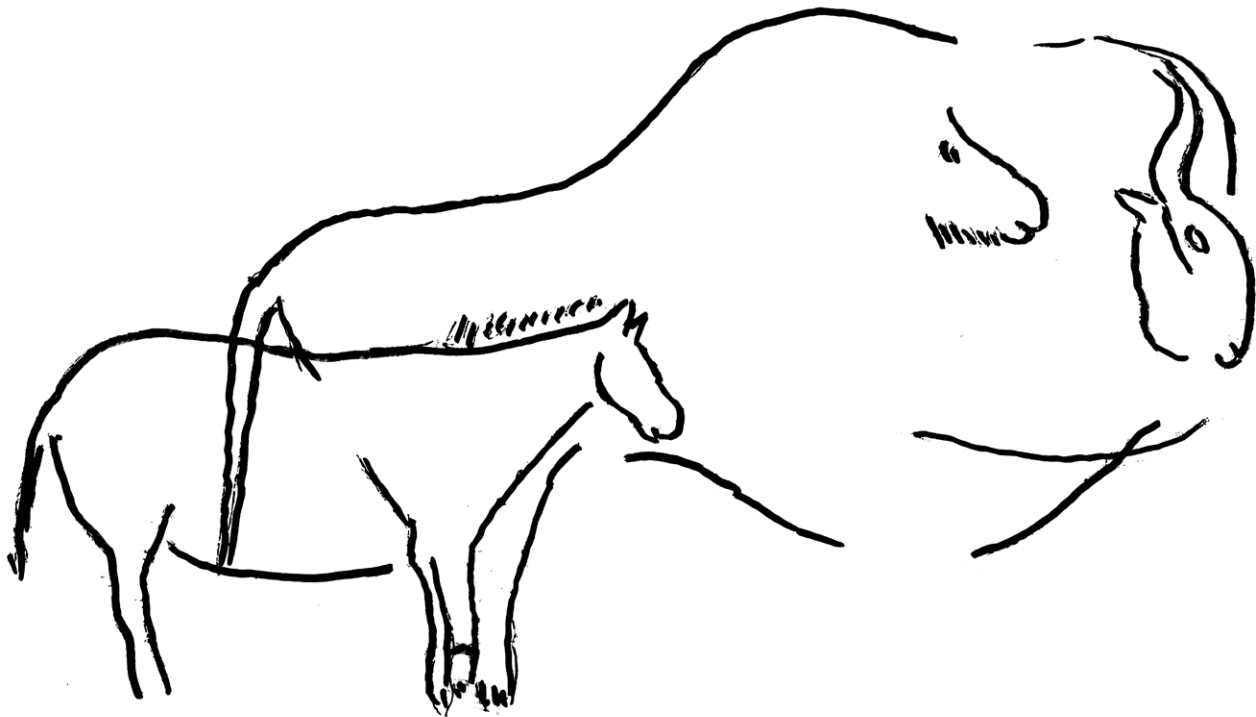
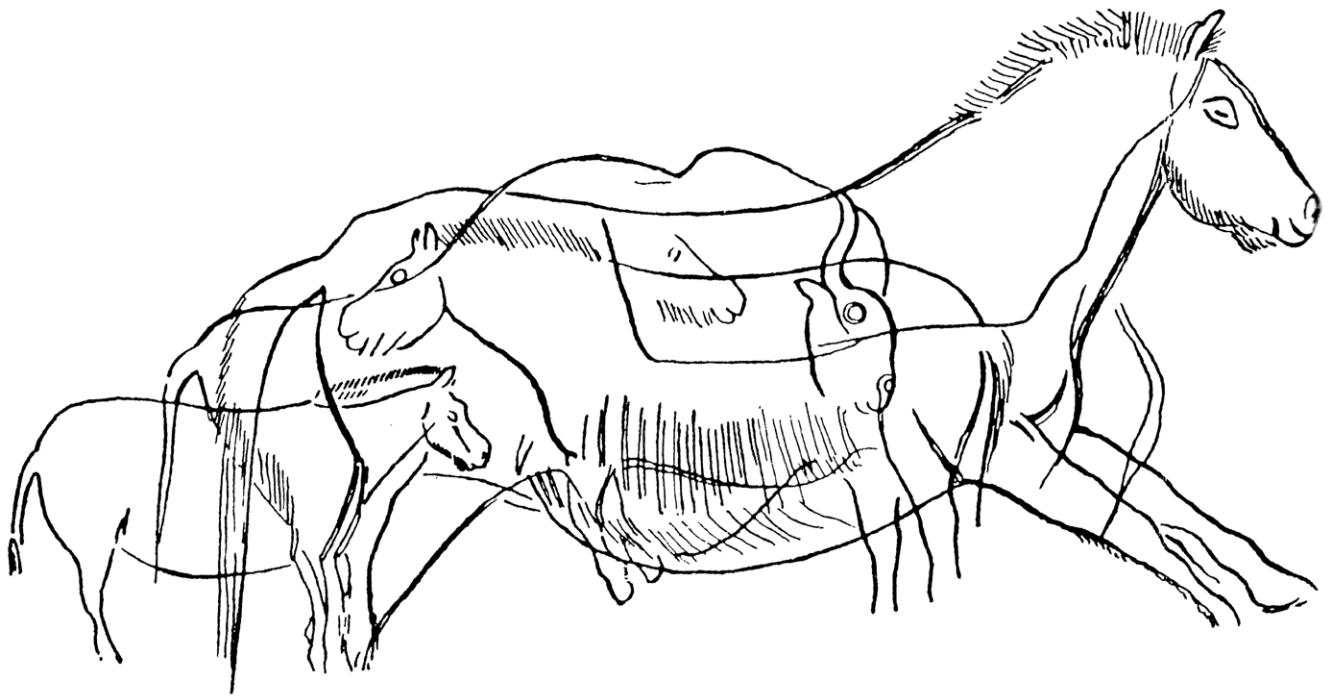


Fig. 3 a; b. Another group of engravings from Combarelle cave, Dordogne, France. It represents a puzzling superposition of three phases. Two of them represent horses, one has a dominant bison with a horse and a horse head. Their relative sequence seems to have the central middle-size horse come first. The composition of bison and horses comes next, finally the large horse is superimposed. It looks like a sort of competition between the horse and the bison. The b. figure is a sketch of the phase with the bison, according to the tracing by H. Breuil. (Tracing by H. Breuil 1912, in Anati, 2007a).



Fig. 4. Lascaux cave, Dordogne France. Painting. Association of bovid and equid with ideograms in front of the muzzle of the bovid. The dominant figure is the bovid whose proportions are larger than those of the horse. The figure of the horse is inserted in the space of the bovid body. It is hypothesized that the relative proportions of the graphemes may indicate functions of subjects and objects or relations of prevalence (after Leroi-Gourhan, 1965).



Fig. 5. Siega Verde, Salamanca, Spain. Engraving. Large figure of bovid associated with minor figures, one of them, represented entirely, in the space of its body (species not identified), other partial ones above (equids) (Anati Archive).

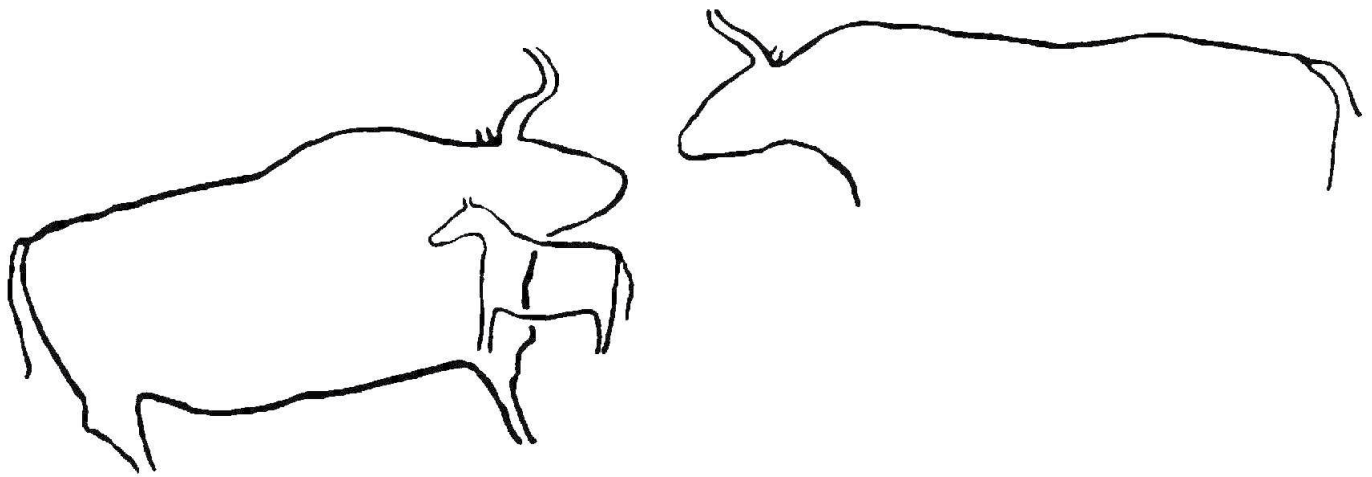


Fig. 6. Gobustan, Azerbaijan. Panel of deeply carved rock engraving of Early Hunters (likely corresponding to a middle phase of the upper Paleolithic). Two large bovids (aurochs) face each other. One body is depicted in full, the other figure has only the upper part of the body. They have horns of different shapes, an indicator that is repeated in compositions in which there are animals of the same species. Their identity is presumably defined by the shape of the horns. An equid of smaller proportions is associated with the bovid on the left, the one which is represented with the full body. It seems that the story concerns two entities, the two cattle being presumably two ethnic groups belonging to the same totemic sign. (This panel is over 5 m long. The bovid on the right is about 3 m long. Tracing by Djafarsade, in Anati, 2015d).



Fig. 7. Gobustan, Azerbaijan. Group of rock engravings of Early Hunters, belonging to the same phase as the previous figure. The composition represents two aurochs (large wild cattle), whose identity is indicated by the peculiar shape of their horns. The larger one is associated with a small image of an antelope or other wild goat. The other is associated with a bovid muzzle that has its own shape of horns, presumably the repetition of the same animal's head. It is hypothesized that the panel represents a fact or a story of two totemic entities or groups represented by the two cattle, regarding whatever the figure of the antelope may mean. All the group is engraved with deep and sure lines. The panel is over 3 m. long. (From Anati, 2015d).



Fig. 8. Camonica Valley, Italy. Final phase of the Early Hunters, Epi-Paleolithic period. The association of two animals of different proportions is repeated, even if the fauna is no longer that of the Paleolithic. (From Anati, 2015).

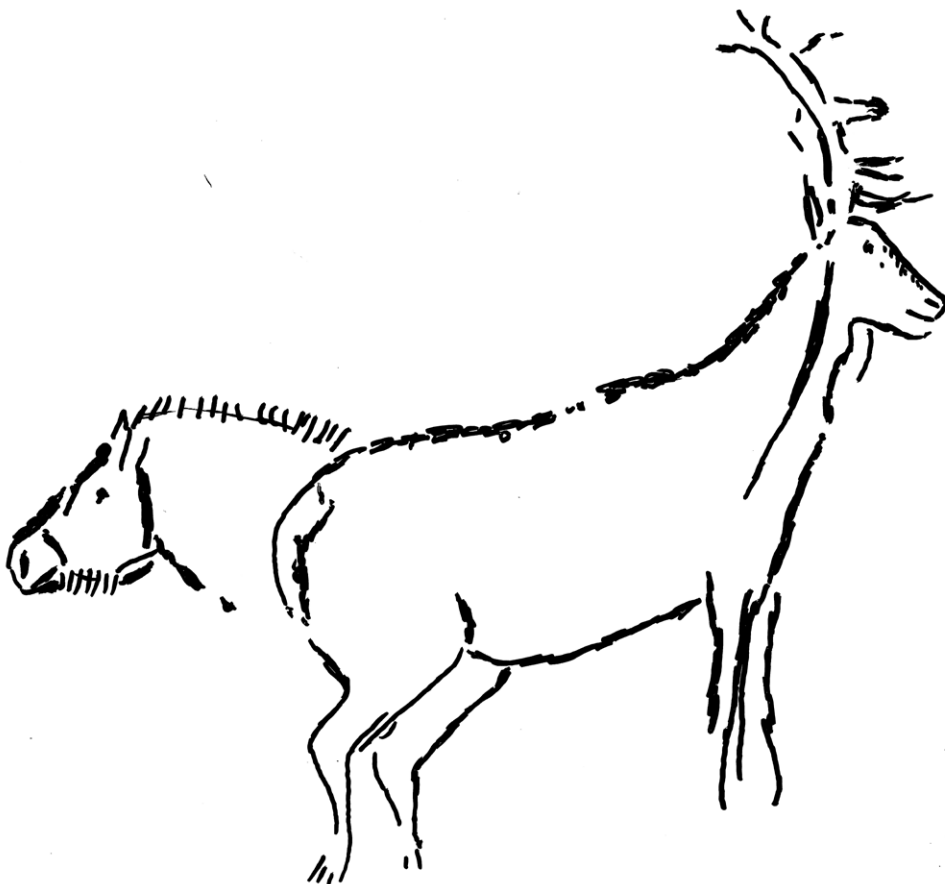


Fig. 9. Niaux Cave, Ariège, France. Painting of a stag accompanied by a horse-head, an association between an animal depicted in full and the head of another animal (Anati Archives).



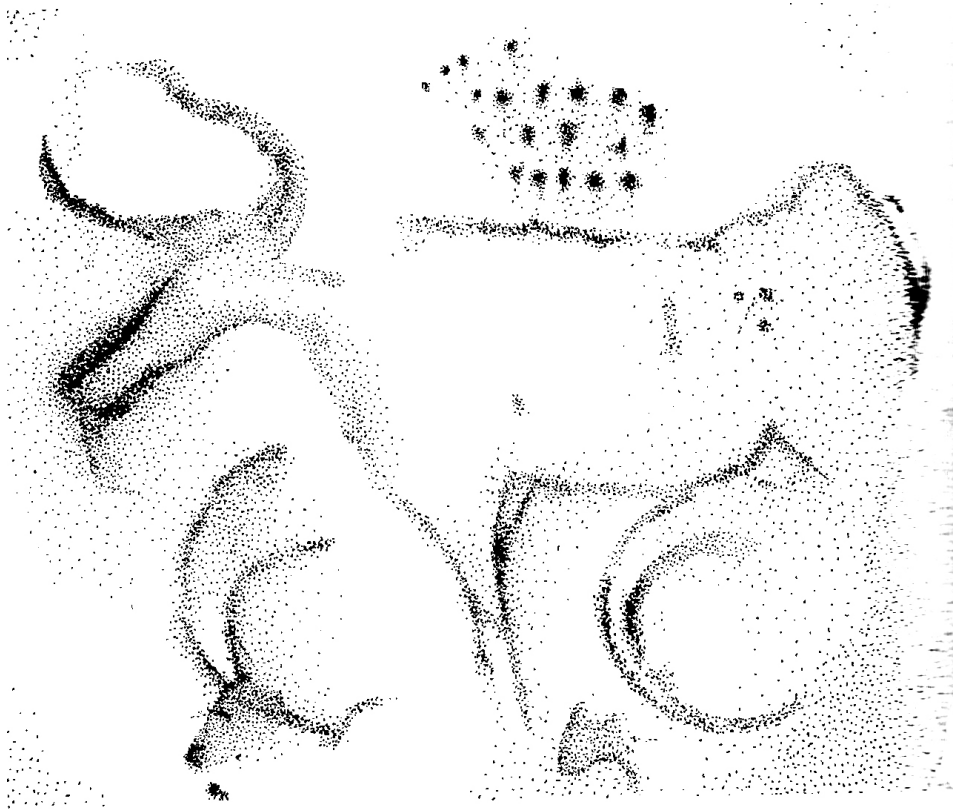


Fig. 10. A group of painted figures in red-brown from the cave 'Tete de Lion', Ardèche, France, representing a fully depicted ox and the heads of two caprines. The figures are accompanied by series of dots, three on the body of the ox, and 15 or 16 above it, they likely have numeric values (from Anati, 2007a)

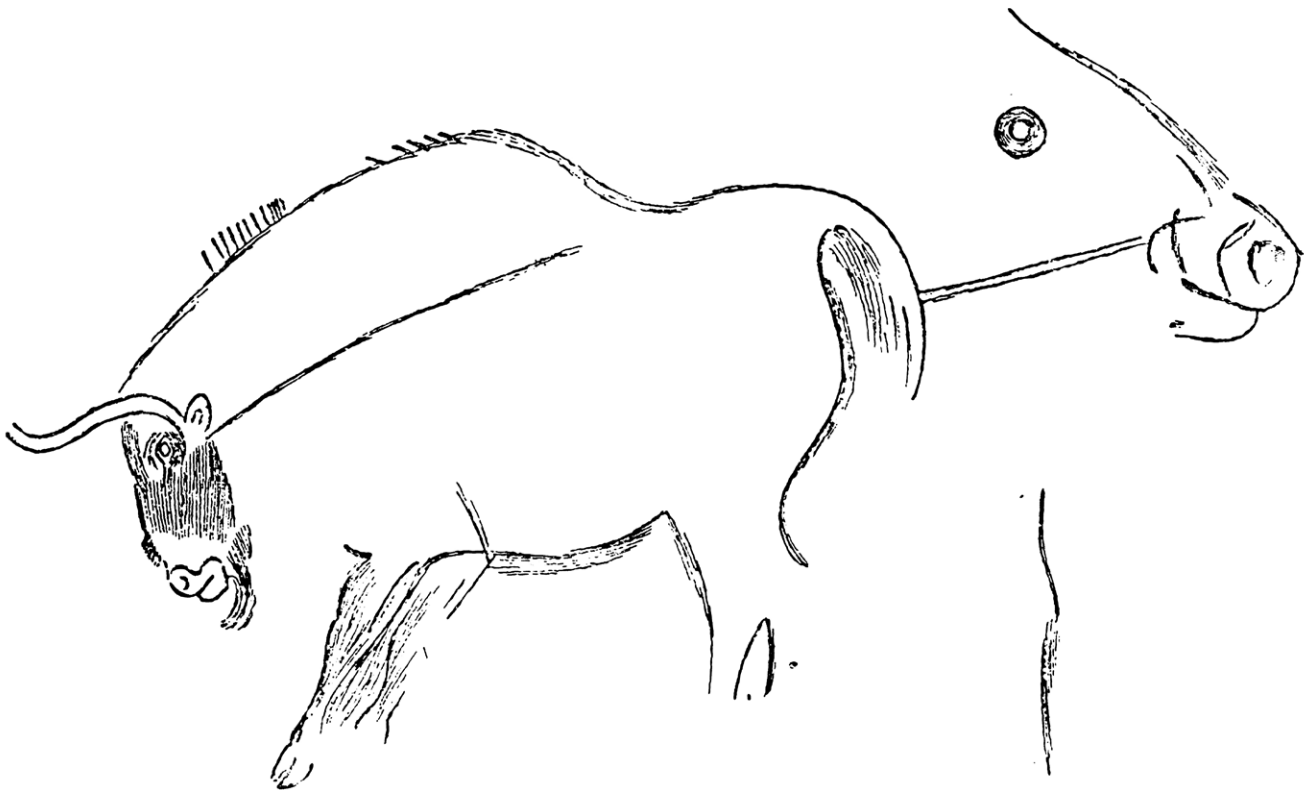


Fig. 11. Altamira cave, Spain. Engravings found below paintings. A fully represented bison is accompanied by an animal head, likely a horse-head (After Graziosi, 1987).

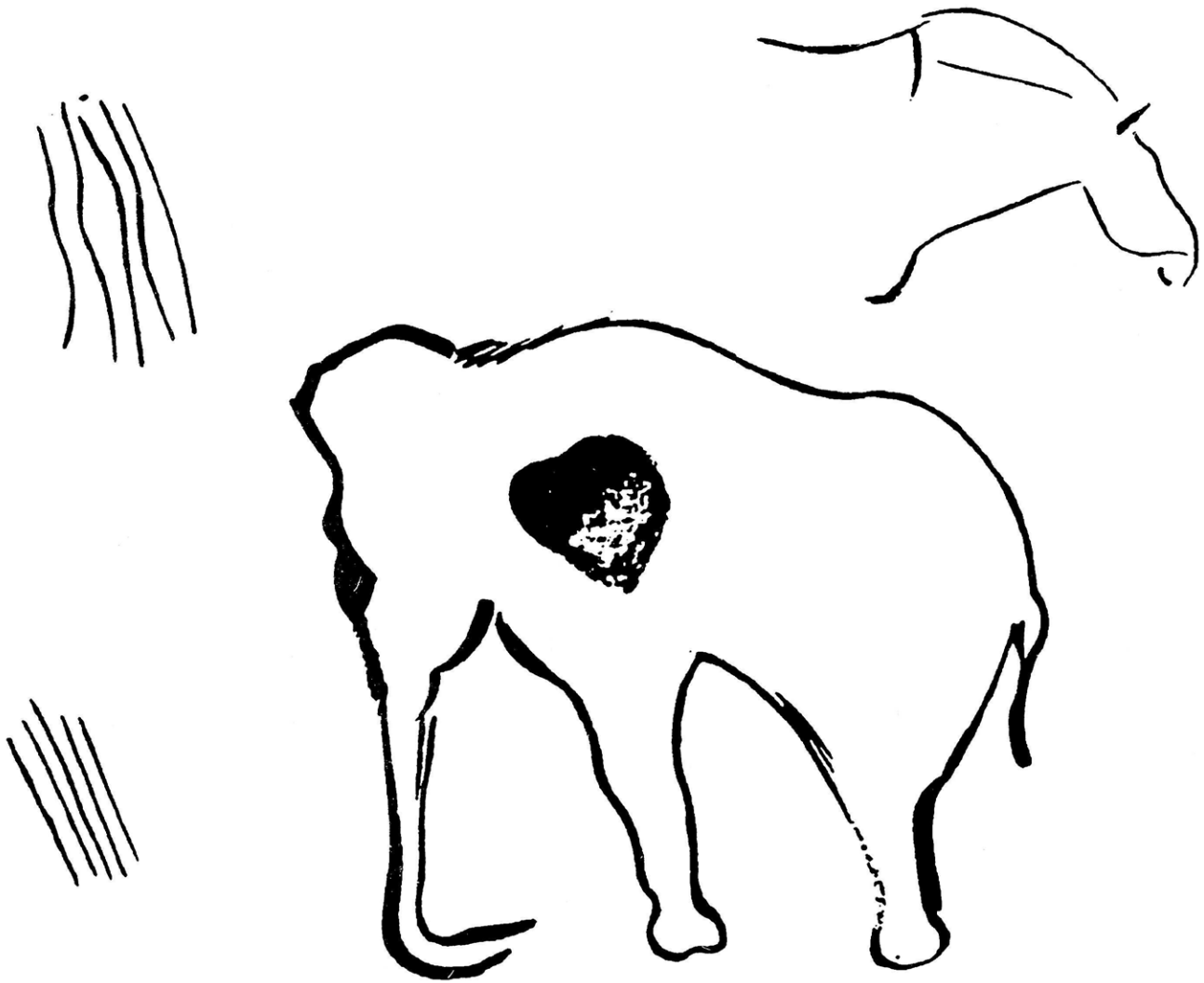


Fig. 12. El Pindal cave, Spain. Painting in red. Full figure of an elephant associated with a horse's head. The elephant has a large red mark on the body. On the left side there are two groups of five vertical lines, each of which seems to refer to one of the animals depicted. One group is straight, the other is wavy. This composition has to have a meaning, probably an act or agreement of the main entity that appears as the protagonist, the figure of an elephant with its red mark (Tracing by H. Breuil, 1912, in Anati, 2002).

while the antelope is marked by a two-line ideogram, called "lips", of female significance. Ideograms of numerical value are associated (Anati, 1989). Several other similar compositions have been identified, both on portable objects and on walls of cave art, in France and Spain (Anati, 2020b). The persistent association of a fully figured animal with just the head of another animal is a repetitive factor.

What does this association between the two animals imply, one depicted whole and the other only with the snout, and what purpose do these figures have? The two subjects are accompanied by other ideograms. The various images of this composition which associ-

ates the body of an animal with the head of another animal, between 25,000 and 20,000 years ago, are repeated in several cases, within an area of over 250 km. The two animals, fawn or antelope and wolf or other carnivore, in these Paleolithic images, like the wolf and the sheep in recent narratives, are often associated with tales of an allegoric or metaphorical nature, such as those of Aesop. In prehistoric images, the two animals that traditionally are prey and predator are placed side by side, one, usually the prey with a full body, the other, the predator, just the head. The wolf sometimes has its jaws open. Are they the narration of a myth or a reality, or what?

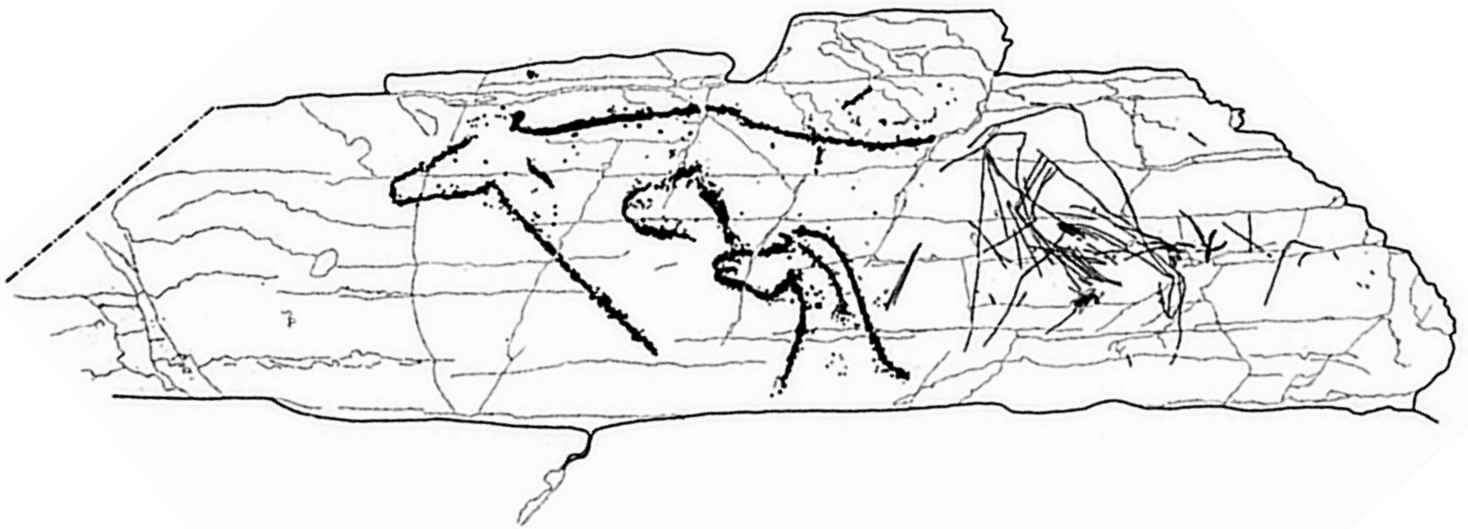


Fig. 13. Canada do Inferno, Côa River Valley, Portugal. Composition of animal figures. A large bovine is associated with two figures of horse heads. (From Zilhão, 1996).

What is the conceptual function of the animal head? There are different hypotheses. One is that the head figure defines the totemic belonging or ownership of the fully represented animal: in this case, the ownership of the predator on the prey. Another is that the two different identities, aggressor and prey, are representing a story in which the two can live side by side. A main point concerns the different function of a fully represented animal and that of the head only.

The repeated associated ideograms of a male value for the carnivore head and a female value for the antelope hint at conceptual significance. It was suggested that underlying allegories show the kind of basic concept of social structure in the society that produced such works: the wolf and the sheep as a metaphor for the rapport between man and woman, as prey and predator, would reveal an aspect of the then relationship between genders (Anati, 2021). The various hypotheses do not provide so far a conclusive answer.

This repetitive association could be the synthesis of a popular tale, which would enrich our knowledge of the society of the time. There are minor variants, but the story is the same and a tentative reading could be: “Female antelope and male wolf-head are next to each other.” Or “Male predator owns female prey”. The synthesis of a story in just one image is a common feature of Paleolithic art as it is in the picture-writ-

ing of American natives or of Australian Aborigines (Anati, 2020b). Perhaps this is a legend or myth of an educational and moralizing nature that is presumed to treat the relations between the two genders with a grace that was not seen in traditional concepts of Paleolithic society.

The fundamental problem that we have posed, however, is still open to debate: what is the conceptual difference between the animal depicted in its entirety and the one depicted partially? Tentative hypotheses have given the head depiction various meanings, as totemic attribution, tribal or personal name, coat of arms, or sign of ownership (Anati, 2020). In the case of the objects just described, the meaning of ownership might make sense. The question however remains open to discussion.

The association between complete animal figure and partial figure, often smaller in size, is present both in mobile art and in rock art throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. The decrypting of the meaning of these different graphic features has multiple goals, contributing to the decoding of Paleolithic art, to the understanding of the logic of the primary way of thinking and symbolizing, and to the psychological processes in the minds of our ancestors. Understanding our forefathers is a way to discovering something about ourselves.

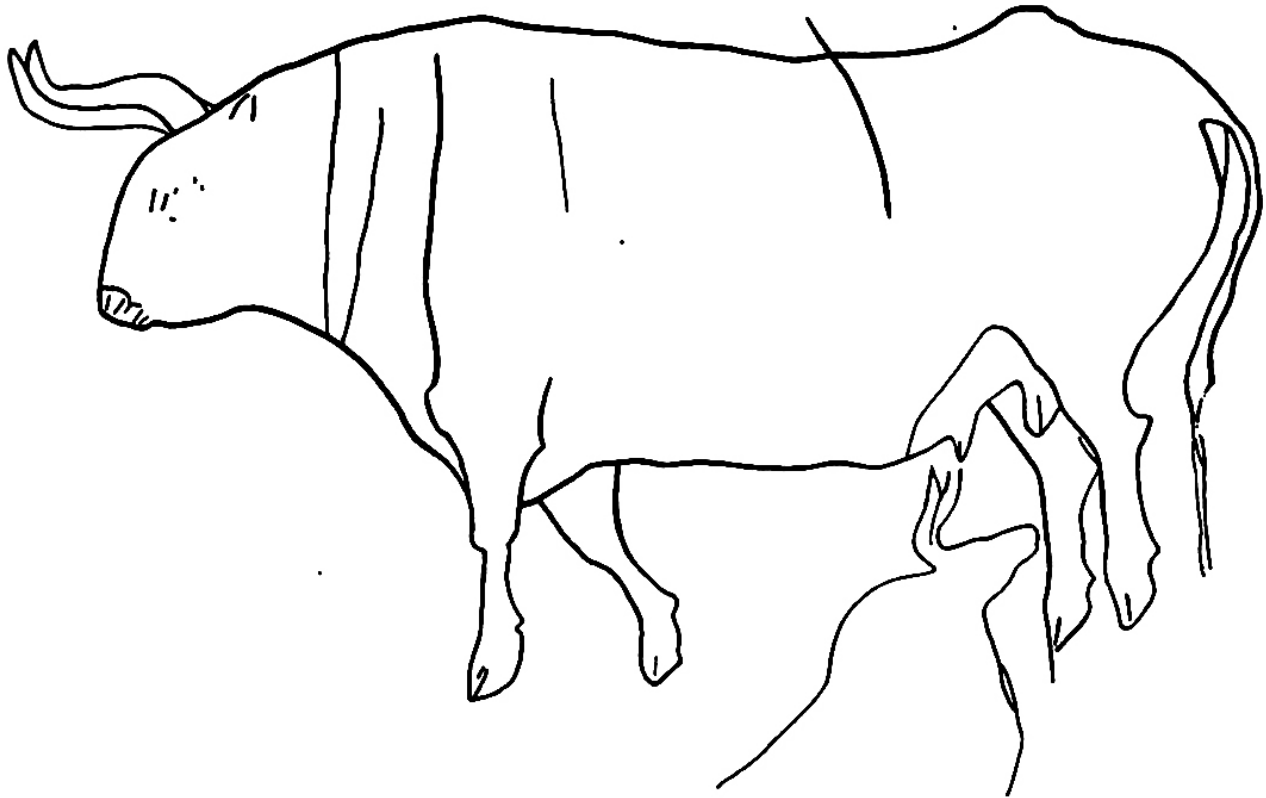


Fig. 14. Romito shelter, Cosenza, Italy. Paleolithic association of two figures of bovines, one of dominant size, depicted in full, the other in partial figuration. The two are differentiated by the size and have different shapes of the horns. The same type of composition of a complete animal with a partial animal is repeated in various areas of Europe and beyond, with probable similar meanings (Tracing by P. Graziosi in Graziosi, 1987).

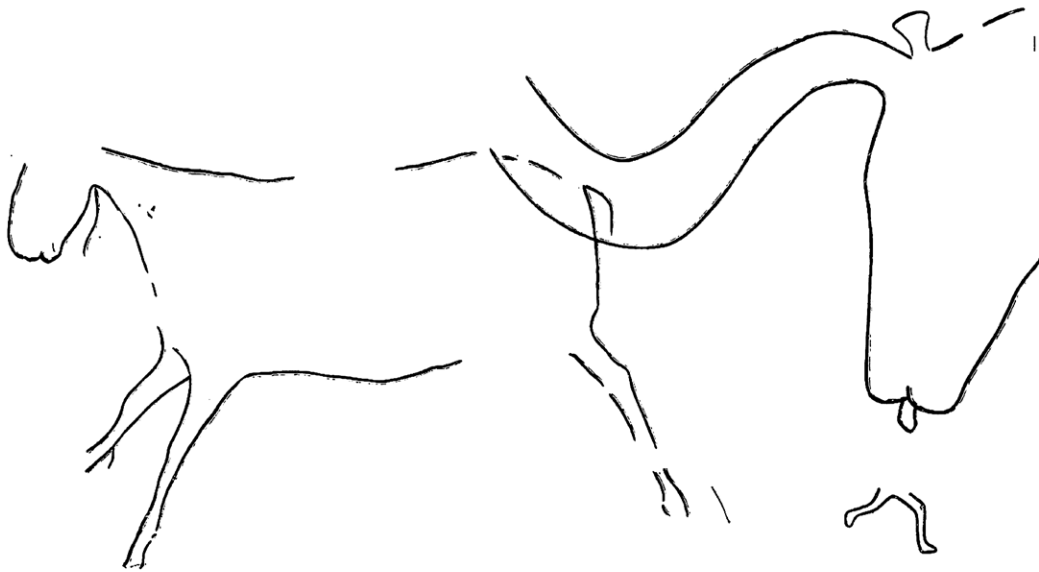


Fig. 15. Levanzo Cave, Italy. Paleolithic composition of entirely represented animal, likely an equine, with large head of bovine showing the tongue. A small ideogram, below the mouth of the bovine head, seems to represent anthropomorphic legs: an intentional assemblage of two pictograms and one ideogram: meaning? (Base of tracing, cm. 65: From Graziosi, 1987).

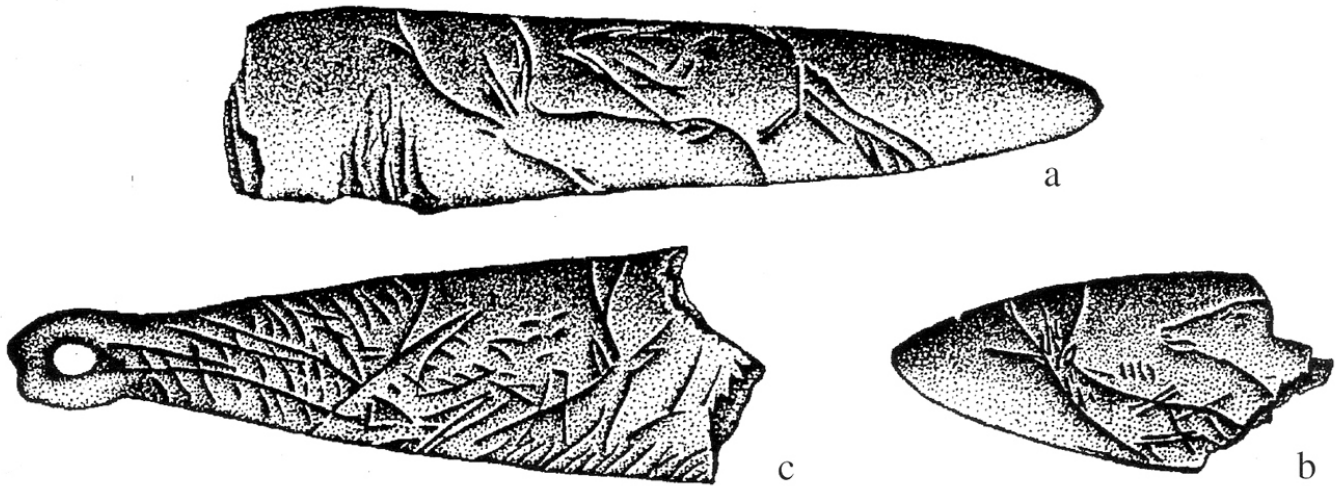


Fig. 16. Repetitive coupling of pictograms on three bone fragments from three different provinces of the Franco-Cantabrian area: a) Mas d'Azil, Ariège, France; b) Lorthet, Hautes Pyrénées, France; c) El Pendo, Santander, Spain. In all three, a carnivorous animal face is depicted next to an antelope body seen in half profile. In all three cases, the antelope's snout does not appear. The carnivore is marked by a *bâtonnet* or a fishbone sign, ideograms of male significance, while the antelope is marked by a two-line ideogram, called "lips", of female significance. There are also ideograms of numerical value. (From Anati, 1989b).



Fig. 17. Gourdan, Haute-Garonne, France. Engraving on bone representing an antelope and the head of a carnivore. On the body of the antelope there are three ideograms of two parallel lines, called "lips", of female significance. (From Anati, 2015).



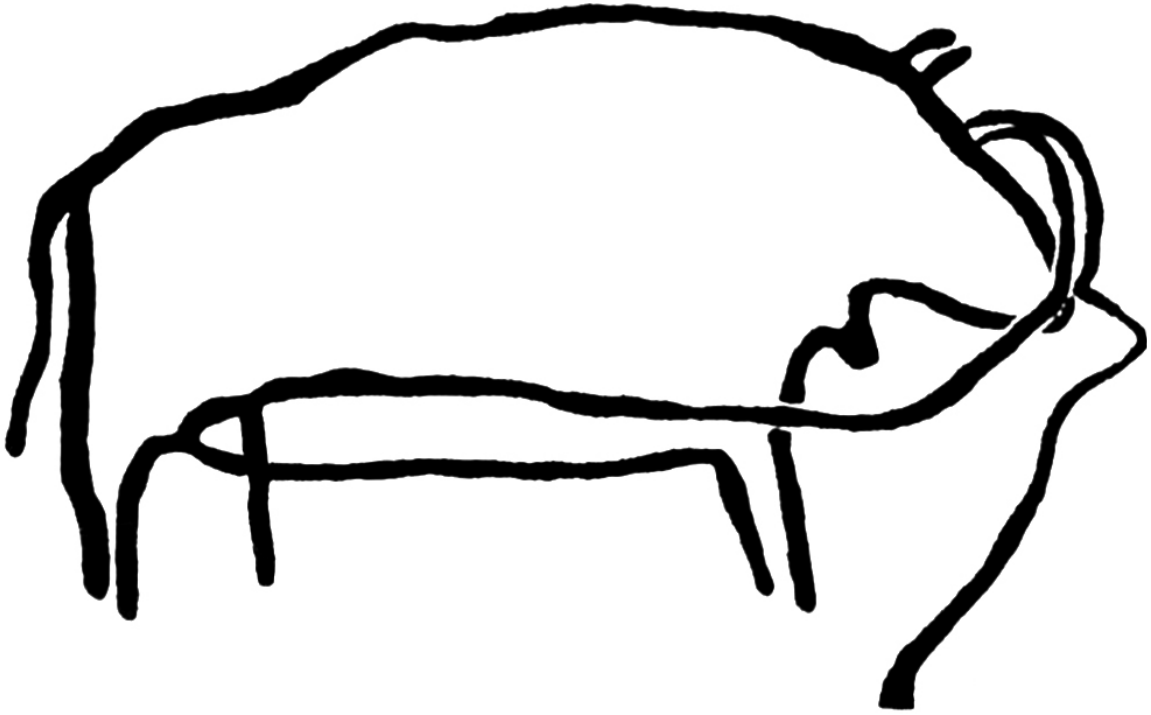


Fig. 18. Gobustan, Azerbaijan. Rock engraving of an association between bovid and antelope. The bovid is depicted in full, the antelope is partial. The two figures appear to be intentionally overlapping each other. (From Anati, 2015d).

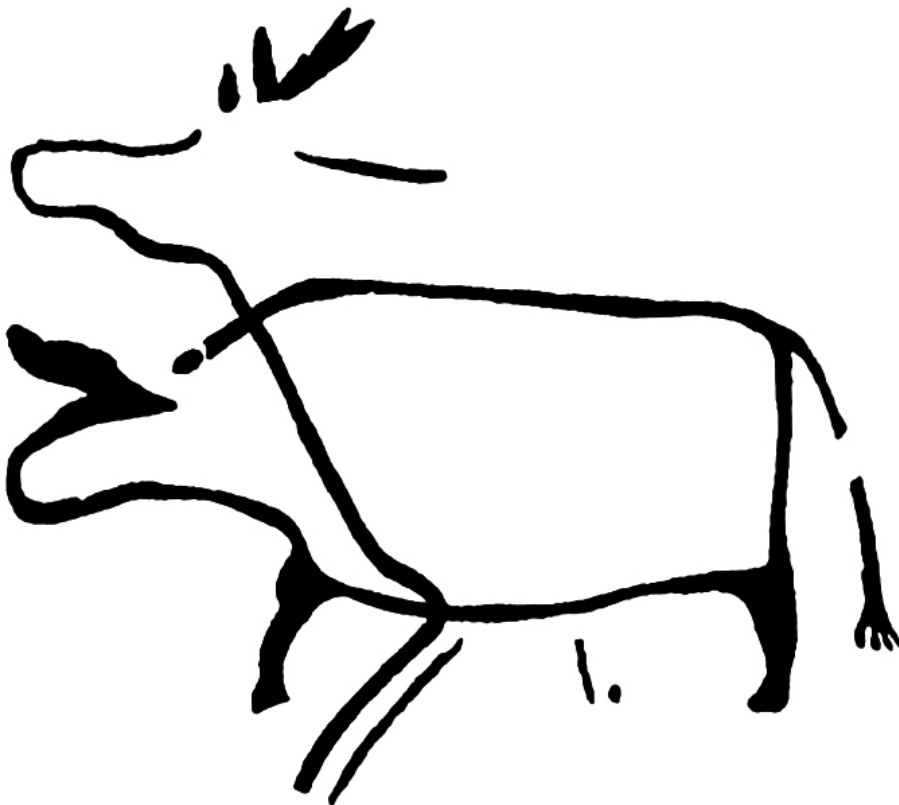


Fig. 19. Lena River Valley, Central Asia, Russian Federation. Rock engraving of association between bovid and antelope. The bovid is depicted in full, the antelope is partial. The two figures appear to be intentionally superimposed. (From Okladnikov, 1966).

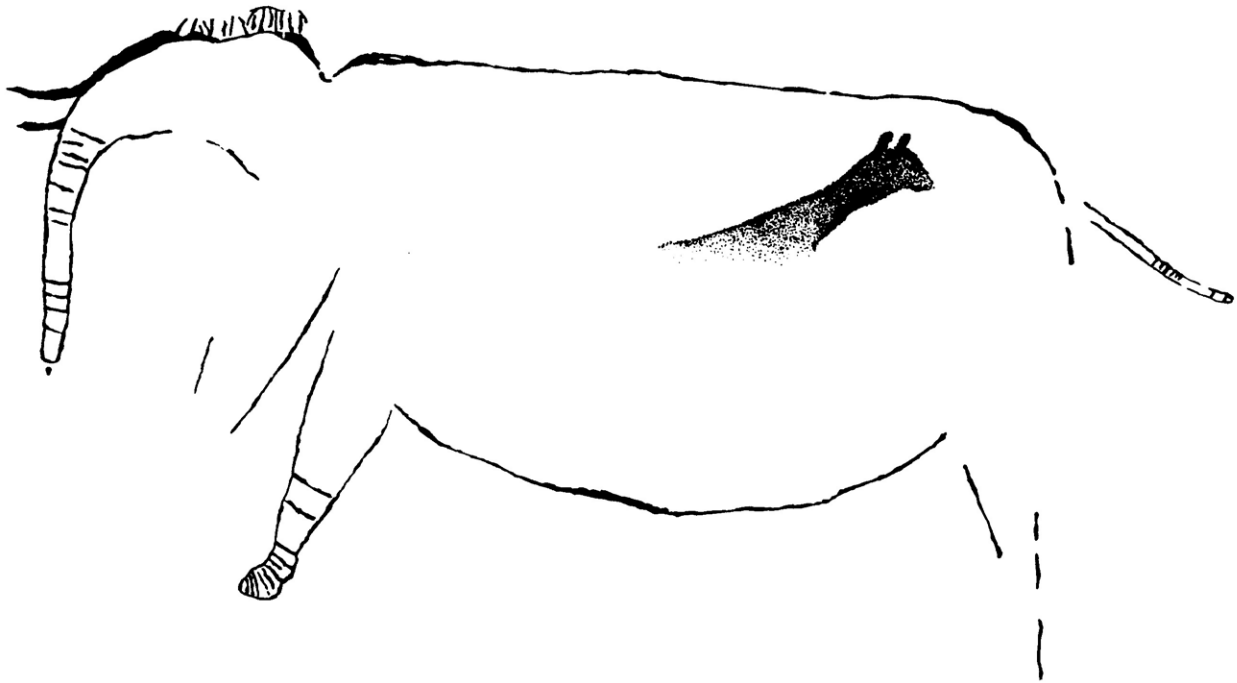


Fig. 20. Kondo, Tanzania. Elephant and giraffe association in a rock painting of Early Hunters, a phase corresponding to the European Paleolithic. The complete body of the elephant is drawn in black. The head and neck of the giraffe are in red-brown. The elephant appears to be the dominant subject. The head or a single part of the body is an abstraction that can transform the pictogram into an ideogram. What does this painting intend to convey? (The figure of the elephant is about 1.50 m long. From Anati, 2018).

The present paper is a call for new ideas, addressed to researchers from various disciplines, in a joint commitment to decoding prehistoric art and reading its messages.

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# VULTURE AND BIRD-HEAD ANTHROPOMORPHS IN SAIMALUU-TASH, KYRGYZSTAN

Luc Hermann

Independent researcher (Belgium)

## Introduction

Saimaluu-Tash is located in the center of Kyrgyzstan, c. 40 km south of Kazarman, on the eastern slope of the Fergana range (fig. 1). The main site (called Saimaluu-Tash 1) is situated at 3,100 m a. s. l. and, though there is no significant monograph, has been well-documented in the last 30 years (Martynov *et al.* 1992; Tashbaeva *et al.* 2001). A second site (Saimaluu-Tash 2) is located northeast of the main site at an altitude of 3,300 m (fig. 2). This site has almost never been documented or published, even if some pictures of it have been reproduced in a photo-album about Saimaluu-Tash (Sulaimanova *et al.* 2016).

In our investigations between 2013 and 2017, 2,320 engraved rocks were documented in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 1,360 in Saimaluu-Tash 2. The majority of petro-

glyphs is datable to the Bronze Age, with some also from the Iron Age and from the Old Turkic period (700-1300 AD).

Due to the large number of drawings, and due to the large diversity in iconography, both sites are important for the study of rock art in Central Asia. Significantly, drawings rarely found at other sites, such as the so-called sunhead deities, are frequently present in Saimaluu-Tash.

During our research, we found some depictions of anthropomorphs with a bird-head. Sometimes, this head could be attributed to a vulture. Two other bird-head-depictions were also found at Tchatchikei, another site in Kyrgyzstan (fig. 1). Until now this kind of petroglyph was never mentioned in Saimaluu-Tash nor at other Central Asian sites.

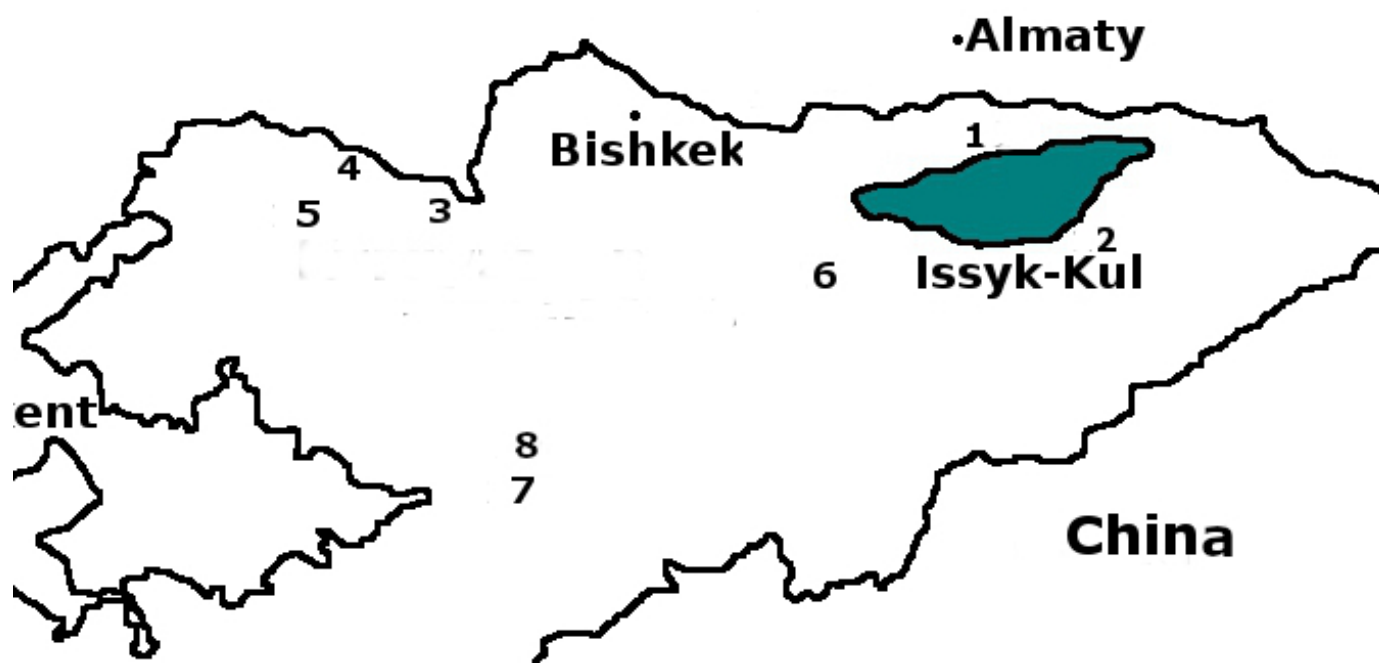


Fig. 1: Location map of the main sites in Kyrgyzstan: 1. North Issyk-Kul (Baet, Ornok...); 2 Barskoon; 3. Karakol region (Talas); 4. Tchatchikei; 5. Ur-Maral region; 6. Kara-Too; 7. Suuk-Döbö; 8. Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2.



Fig. 2: View of Saimaluu-Tash 2.

### **The vulture: a bird and a symbol**

The Himalayan vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) is a bird of prey distributed not only in the Himalayan Plateau, but also in the Pamirs (Tajikistan) and the Tien-Shan (Kyrgyzstan). Saimaluu-Tash 2 is still used for horse pastoralism and, as a raptor, vultures find their food for example on the carrion of dead horses. Nowadays at least two couples of vultures were observed in Saimaluu-Tash 2 (fig. 3).

The vulture is recognizable by its beak, long neck, and collar. Due to the fact that vultures feed on decaying flesh, they are associated with death. For example, there is a tradition of sky burials by the Buddhists in Tibet and by the Farsi in India: the human corpse is exposed to the natural elements and is devoured by vultures (Peters and Schmidt 2004: 213).

In Asia, depictions of vultures are known on stelae from Göbekli Tepe in Turkey (Pillar 56 enclosure H and pillar 43 enclosure D) (Dietrich and Notroff 2016: 26), as well as in Mesopotamia on the so-called Stele of the Vultures at the Louvre, dated around 2,450 BC and depicting vultures feeding on human heads after a battle (Internet site from Le Louvre 2021).



Fig. 3: Himalayan Vulture (*gyps himalayensis*) in Saimaluu-Tash 2.





Fig. 4: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 2192.

### **The chronology of petroglyphs in Kyrgyzstan**

The chronological attribution is based on a chronology established by many Russian and Kazakh archeologists (Baipakov *et al.* 2005; Beisenov and Maryashev 2014; Kasanov *et al.* 2017; Rogozhinskii *et al.* 2004; Rogozhinskii 2011a; Samashev 2012; Sher 1980; Shvets 2012).

The patina is not always helpful for determining chronology. Patina can be useful for engravings on a same panel, but it is impossible to differentiate different epochs on different panels with the patina at a site like Saimaluu-Tash: at this site, some rocks are under snow 11 months per year, whereas others are visible for three or four months. Furthermore, the orientation of the rocks causes differences of erosion (and also different patinas) due to weathering conditions. Some Bronze Age petroglyphs have a quite fresh patina, whereas other petroglyphs from more recent periods are hardly visible.

Another problem with the chronology is that it is so far not possible to define the chronology of Bronze Age petroglyphs, even if they have different styles. If it is possible to determine that some engravings are from the Bronze Age, only a few of them can be attributed to the Early, the Middle or the Late Bronze Age. The differences of styles in Saimaluu-Tash could indicate different periods, but also different cultural influences contemporary with nomadic populations coming from Siberia through Kazakhstan or from Iran through Uzbekistan. There are still a lot of sites to document in Central Asia and a lot of petroglyphs to analyze before a more elaborate chronology can be finalized.

### **Anthropomorphs with a bird-head in Kyrgyzstan**

Four rocks in Saimaluu-Tash 1, six in Saimaluu-Tash 2 and two in Tchatchikei show 15 human beings with





Fig. 5: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 2192 (detail) (10 x 17 cm).

a bird-head, most probably with a vulture-head in five cases in Saimaluu-Tash. There are five bird-heads in Saimaluu-Tash 1, whereas eight others were found in Saimaluu-Tash 2. Furthermore, two anthropomorphs have bird's wings on two other rocks in Saimaluu-Tash 1. By their style all these drawings are attributed to the Bronze Age. The orientation of the rocks does not have significance: for the vulture-heads, one is oriented to the southeast, another one to the east, a third one to the south and the fourth one faces the west. Two of the bird-heads are oriented to the east, three to the north, and one to the west.

### Saimaluu-Tash 1

One anthropomorph has a long neck and a beak similar to a vulture's (Figs. 4, 5, 19E). This human depiction also has a tail and leans on a stick and seems to have two wings. A goat is engraved on this panel. In Arpa-Uzen, an anthropomorph carries a similar stick, but has no bird-head (fig. 6A). This drawing is attributed to the Seima-Turbino tradition (Rogozhinskii 2011b: 92). Furthermore, the stick looks like a crosier-shaped staff used by Central Asian dervishes

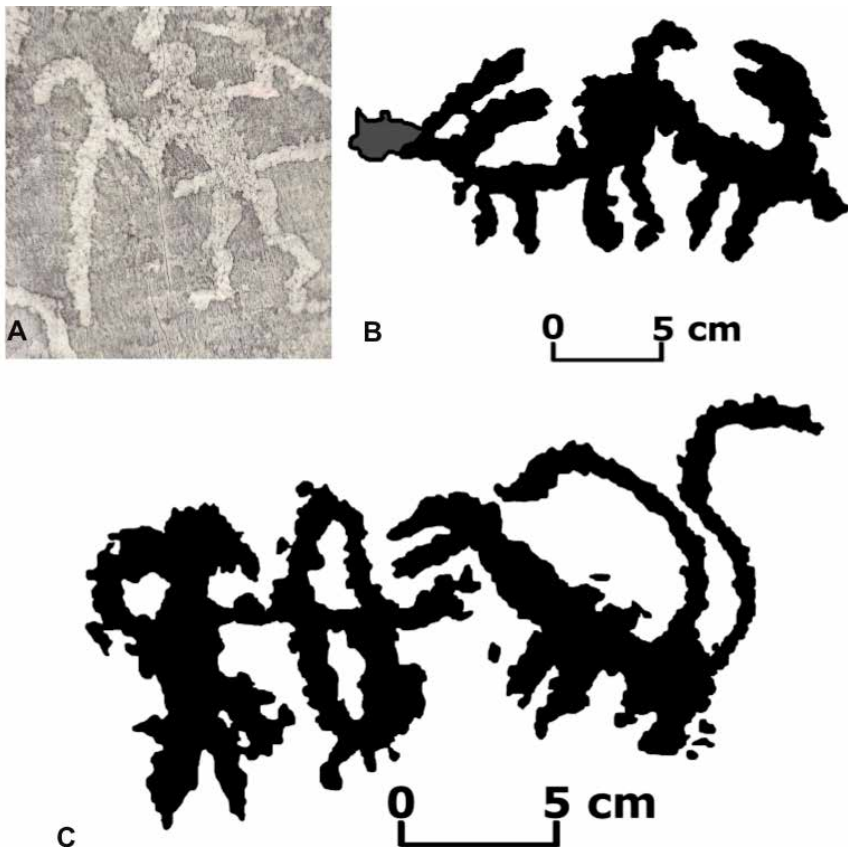


Fig. 6: A. Arpa-Uzen in Kazakhstan (Rogozhinskii 2011: 90); B. Saimaluu-Tash 2, rock 311; C. Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 1561.

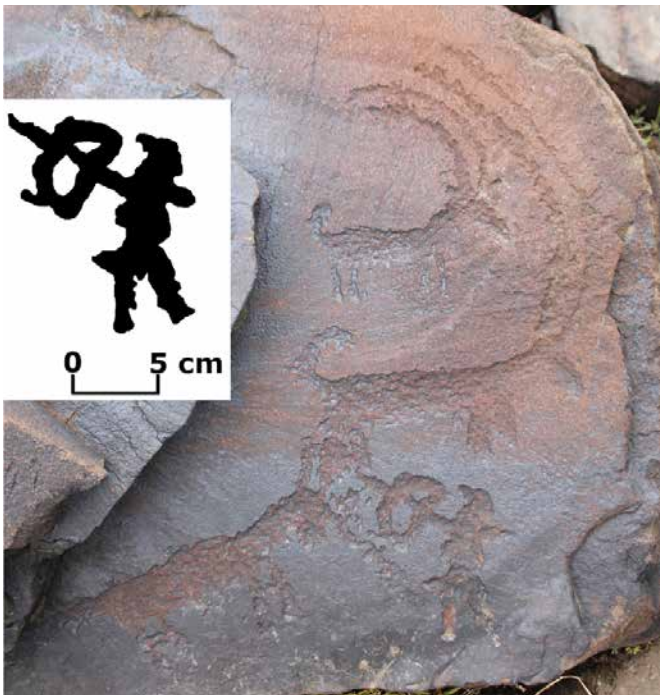


Fig. 7: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 456 (30 x 37 cm).



Fig. 9: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 1505 (detail).

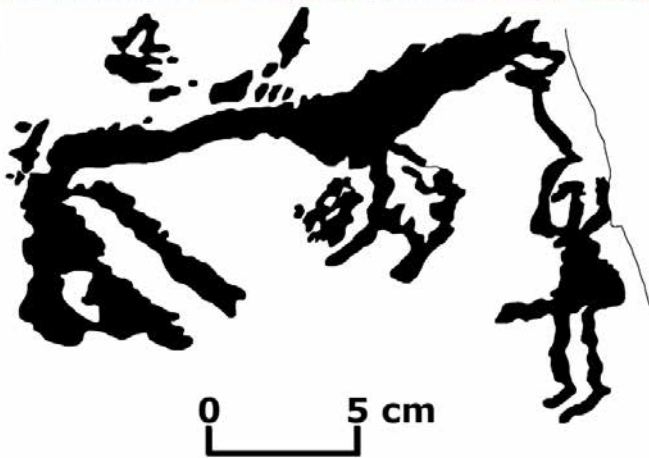


Fig. 8: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 1505 (detail).

(Rozwadowski 2004: 72). The tail could be part of a shaman's dress.

Two other human beings with a bird-head are hunters with a bow, each hunting a goat (figs. 6C, 7). On another rock, two ithyphallic bird-head anthropomorphs hold a horse on a leash (figs. 8, 9). One of the men has raised arms, the other has also a raised arm, holding a stick or an axe.

Furthermore, there are two depictions of anthropomorphs with bird's wings but without a bird-head. One is associated with a goat (fig. 10), whereas the second one is outside an oval feature (usually interpreted as an enclosure) with three "normal" anthropomorphs inside (fig. 11).

It should also be noted that there is a depiction of a bird at this site, most probably a bird of prey (fig. 12). Unfortunately, its head is damaged, preventing an exact description.





Fig. 10: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 1535 (20 x 19 cm.)

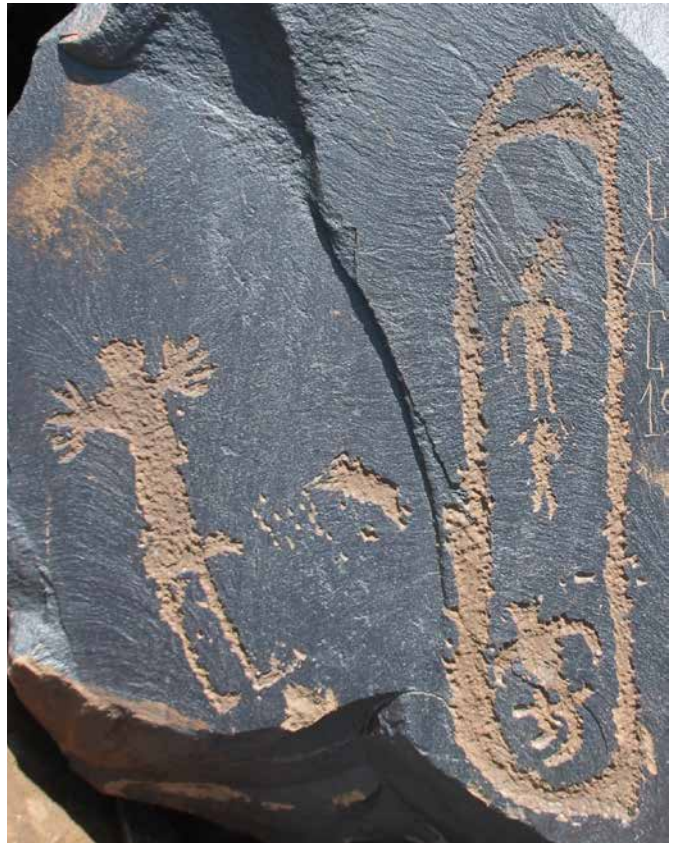


Fig. 11: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 2027 (bird-head anthropomorph: 13 x 27 cm).



Fig. 12: Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 1381 (13 x 8 cm).



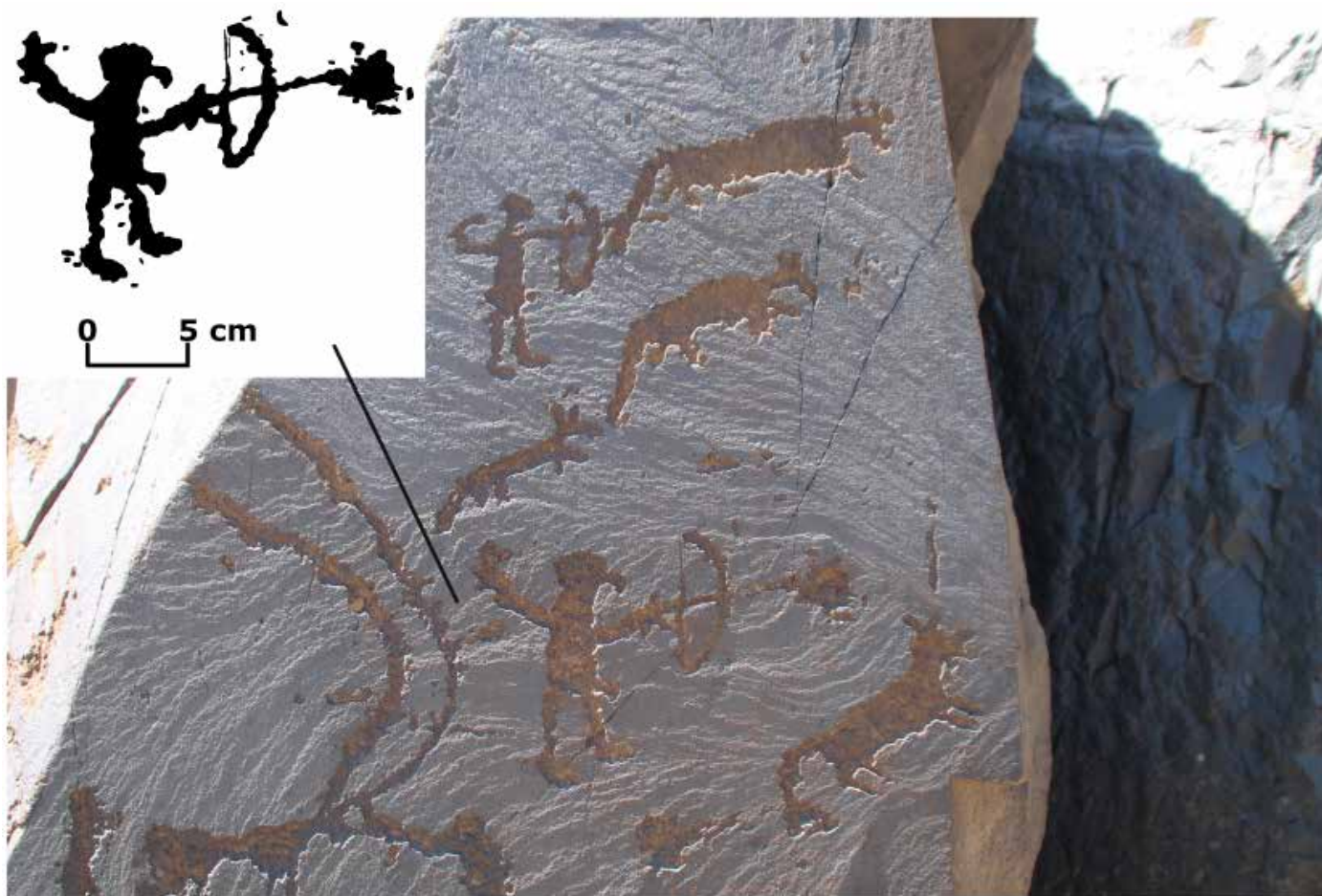


Fig. 13: Saimaluu-Tash 2, rock 413 (detail).

### Saimaluu-Tash 2

At this site, four anthropomorphs have a vulture-head and four have a bird-head.

One human depiction with a bird-head is associated with two goats, as if he held them by the tail (fig. 6B). Another bird-head is a hunter shooting with a bow at a wolf, protecting a goat (fig. 13). Two other bird-heads are worshipers (fig. 14B). Their hands are joined but it also seems that they are bound by a rope. On this rock, there are three other pairs of worshipers but without bird-heads, as well as two goats and three canids.

Three vulture-heads are on the same rock. One of them is behind a bull, holding a stick (fig. 14D). A pair of worshipers are on the other side of this rock (figs. 14C, 15). They are easily recognizable by the beak and the long neck, and one of them also has a

collar around the neck. The movement of their arms and of their legs gives the impression that they are dancing.

The last human being with a probable vulture-head has two wings instead of arms and is associated with a solar symbol (fig. 14A).

### Tchatchikei

Two other depictions of bird-head anthropomorphs were found in Tchatchikei in the Talas region, c. 200 km northwest of Saimaluu-Tash (fig. 1).

One rock shows an isolated anthropomorph (fig. 16A). It is difficult to attribute it to a specific period due to the lack of relevant stylistic elements, but this human depiction was surrounded by other rocks with Bronze Age engravings.

The second panel depicts two anthropomorphs with

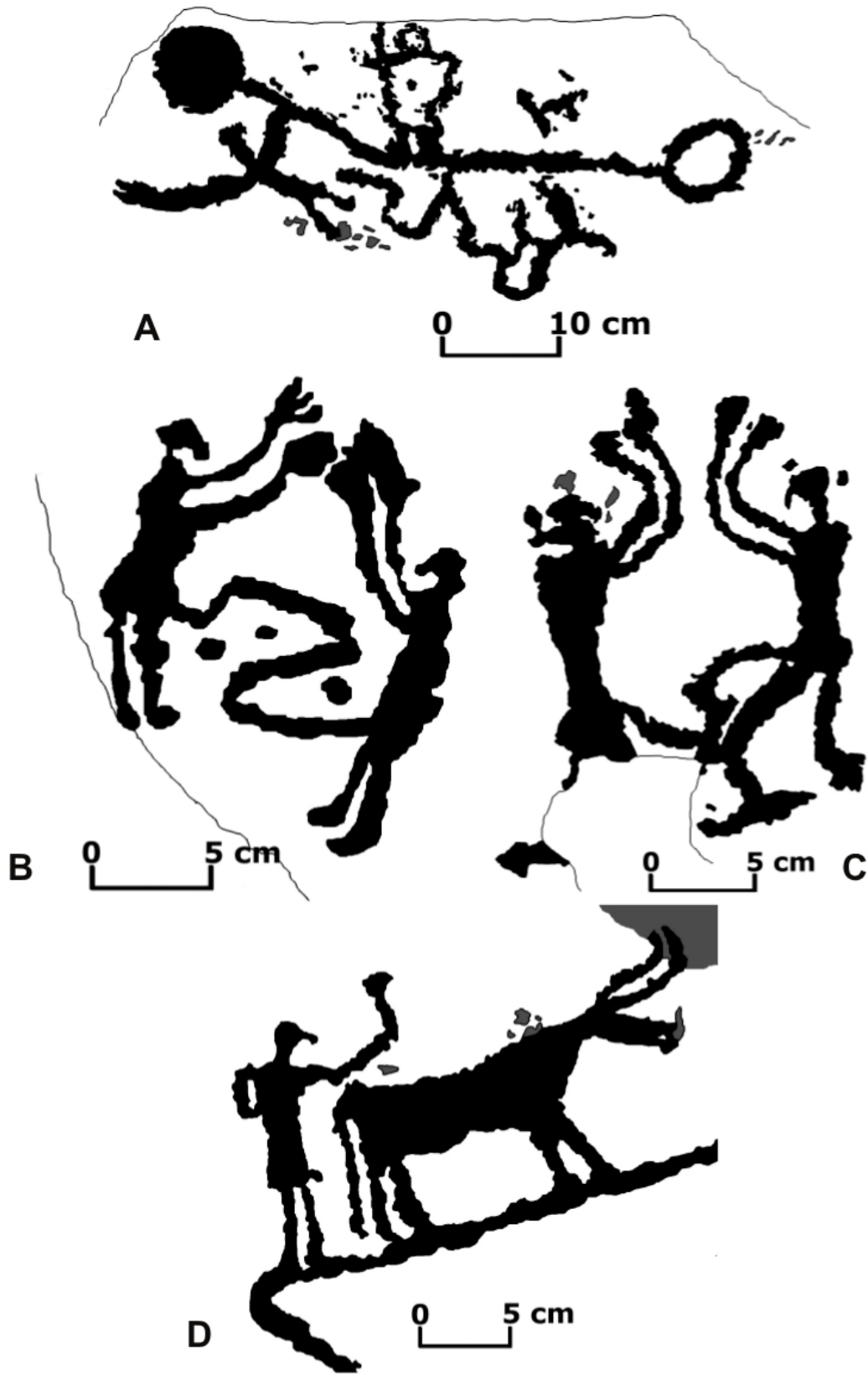


Fig. 14: Saimaluu-Tash 2. A. rock 676; B. rock 495; C. rock 1234; D. rock 1233.





a camel (fig. 16B). This zoomorph can clearly be attributed to the Bronze Age. One anthropomorph is shooting the animal with a bow and the arrow is piercing through the neck of the camel. The second human depiction has a bird-head and is also probably a hunter: his right arm is longer than his left one as if he carries a weapon. Due to the shape of it, we exclude the possibility of an axe and suggest that it could be a boomerang.

**Shamans with bird-masks: masked hunters or bird-spirits?**

Though the scarcity of such petroglyphs makes it difficult to draw conclusions, the examples above raise interesting questions: do these anthropomorphs depict shamans? Do they carry a mask in a cultic ritual or for a ritual hunting? Do they represent a mythological being or are they depictions of bird-spirits?

Anthropomorphs with animal-heads are already known in Central Asian rock art, but they are usually depicted with wolf features, as for example hunters with bows in Kulzhabasy in Kazakhstan (figs. 17,

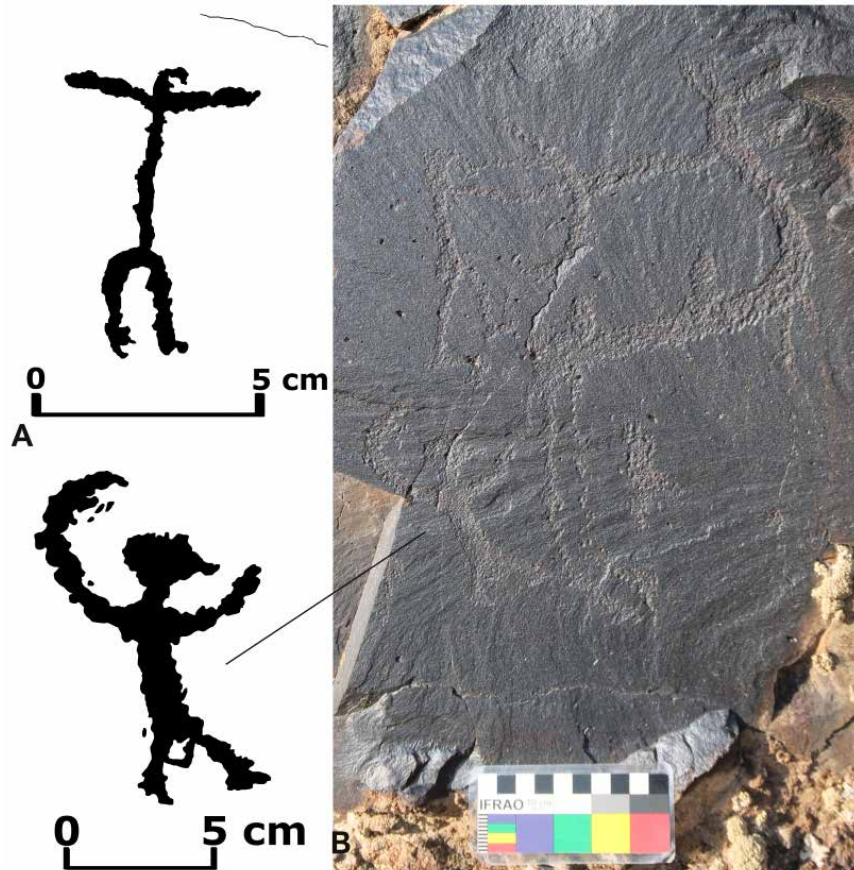


Fig. 15: Saimaluu-Tash 2, rock 1234 (detail, 16 x 22 cm).

Fig. 16: Tchatchikei: A. rock 113; B. rock 249.





Fig. 17: Kulzhabasy, Kazakhstan (30 x 16 cm).



Fig. 18: Akkainar, Kazakhstan (24 x 40 cm).

19A-C). These examples allow us to interpret these anthropomorphs as hunters with a wolf-mask. Two bird-head anthropomorphs in Saimaluu-Tash 1, one in Saimaluu-Tash 2 and one in Tchatchikei, were also hunters. However, the question is still open if these bird-head hunters are symbolizing a mythological event, a ritual or are the transposition of real hunting scenes.

Another petroglyph from Akkainar in Kazakhstan also shows an anthropomorph with a wolf-head (figs. 18, 19D). In this last case, this picture is not associated with a hunting scene. For this reason, it is probably a depiction of a mythological being or of a shamanic cult where the animal's spirit becomes incarnate in the shaman's body. It is also perhaps the case with the vulture-heads in Saimaluu-Tash 2, who are dancing

or associated with a solar symbol. In the case of vulture-head anthropomorphs, we should also not forget that these birds of prey are associated with death in many cultures.

Examples of bird- or vulture-heads have been unknown until now. Due to the scarcity of such depictions, it would be presumptuous to try to interpret these petroglyphs. Furthermore, a difference should be made between bird-head- and vulture-head depictions. But even if there is only a small number of them, they had a meaning, because of their frequency in Saimaluu-Tash. The fact that two other engravings with bird-heads were found at another site in Kyrgyzstan shows that this theme spread into other regions or that it belonged to a common cultural universe in some Central Asian regions during the Bronze Age.



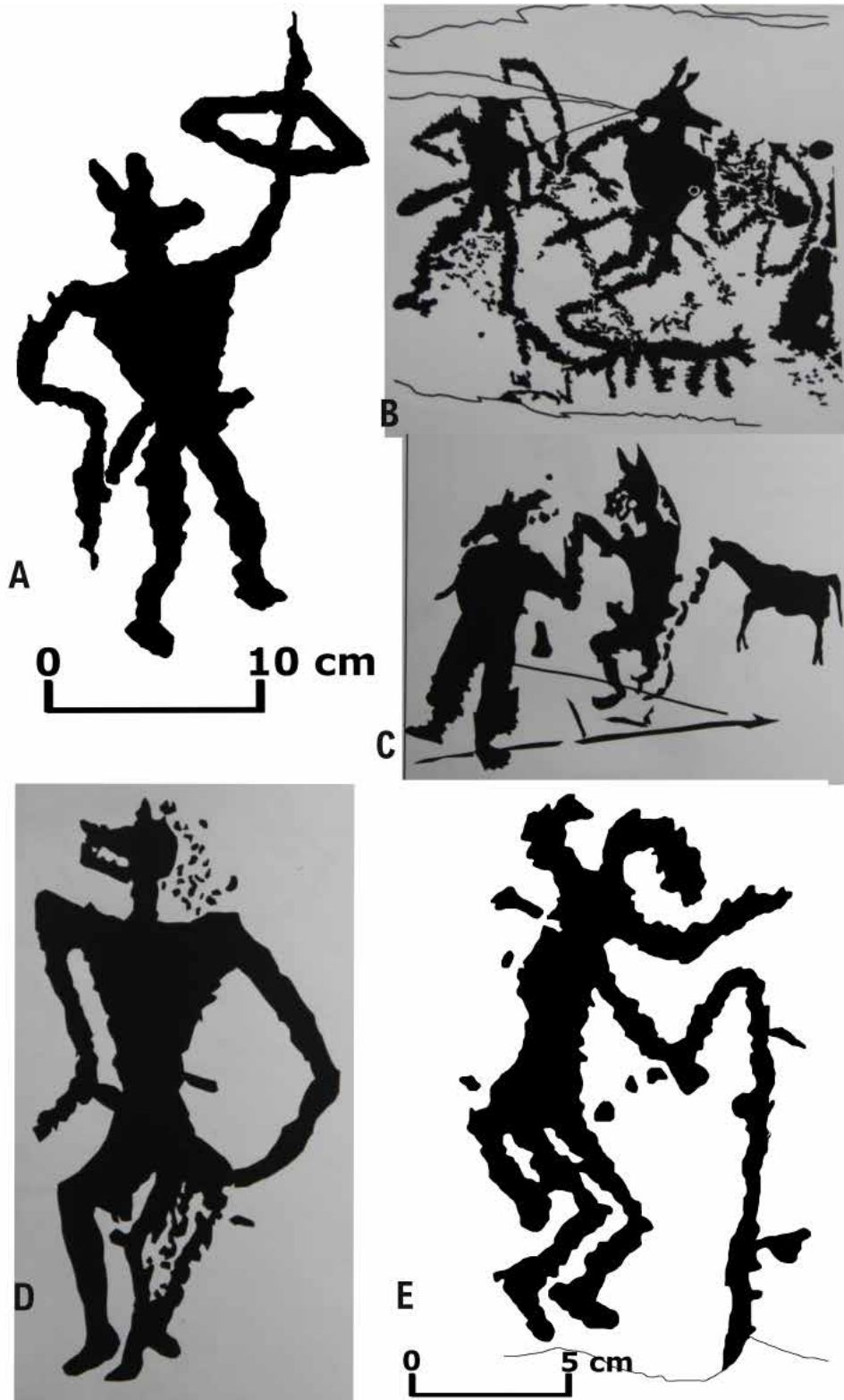


Fig. 19: Wolf-Masks in Kazakhstan: A-C. Kulzhabasy; D. Akkainar; E. Rock 2192 in Saimaluu-Tash 1. (Figs. B-D: Maryashev & Zheleznyakov 2013: 148)

It is necessary to search for this rock art motif in other Asiatic regions in order to understand if it appeared in Saimaluu-Tash from nowhere or was influenced by other cultures, coming e.g. from India or from Mesopotamia and Persia.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Christoph Baumer for the organization of the expedition to Saimaluu-Tash in 2017. I also express my gratitude to Alexei Rogozhinskii for the picture of Arpa-Uzen, as well as to James Plumtree for the revision of the text.

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# CONCENTRIC CIRCLES, WHORLS, AND SPIRALS, INDICATORS OF MOVEMENT IN TIME AND SPACE IN PETROGLYPHS OF THE COLORADO PLATEAU

Carol Patterson

PhD, Research Affiliate with Dominguez Archaeological Research Group (USA)

## Introduction

Concentric circles, whorls, and spirals have always been an enigma to investigators of petroglyphs of the American southwest and throughout the world. I have found a way to better understand the meaning through Native informants who interpret them as verbs to show action and nouns as symbols for migrations or journeys over time. Over the years, I have come to understand the following principles that I use as tools for interpreting them. The examples of panels and the interpretations are from my research. A few illustrations I have drawn from Martineau's unpublished dictionary (2022)<sup>1</sup> are cited. Martineau suggests that concentric circles represent the motion of water in some context. A stone dropped into still water causes ripples that radiate outward across the water. A small stone creates thinly spaced ripples that disperse rapidly. A heavy stone creates broadly spaced ripples that disperse slowly across the water. Concentric circles with an open ring in the center read as *empty out*, *spread around*, or *dispersed*. Concentric circles with a solid center read as *holding*, *entering*, or *going into* the center. Mallery compares a pictogram of a circle with a dot in the center with a hand gesture for holding that mimics a hole with one hand and a finger pointing into the center with the other hand (Mallery 1881) (see Chart 1).

Martineau (1973) interprets whorls as indicating continuous movement upward, downward, or horizontal-

ly. He cites the example of large raptors that revolve in the sky using updrafts and downdrafts to access their desired altitude. The whorl symbol mimics the motion of air and water as it moves in the northern hemisphere. Low-pressure air currents revolve counterclockwise, while high-pressure updrafts revolve clockwise. Meteorologists use the directional whorl symbols on their maps to indicate high- and low-pressure systems.

Whorls are often used as verbs and are depicted as subordinate symbols placed next to primary symbols, such as humans or animals, to convey the ideas of *arriving*, *departing*, *going up*, and *coming down*. Spirals are more complex than whorls because they represent a narrative's temporal and spatial attributes.

The geocentric orientation of a culture solves the problem of where to begin and end with a spiral. The geocentric orientation for Pueblo and Plains cultures is to the north, contrasting with the Ute and Paiute, who are oriented to the south. The Apache and Navaho orient to the East. These cardinal directions mark the beginning of their directional preference. All groups follow a sunwise rotation relative to their geocentric orientation. The Pueblo and Plains cultures prefer a right-to-left, counterclockwise rotation (N, W, S, E). In contrast, the Uto/Aztecans prefer left to right, clockwise rotation (S, W, N, E), while the Apachean groups prefer right-to-left clockwise rotation (E, S, W, N).

The cultural preferences dictate whether a spiral turns from inside-outward or outside-inward. I have marked each spiral's center and tail with green for the beginning and red for the ending. To illustrate the spatial and temporal indicators, I have added a red graphic cross-hair target overlay with a vertical line that defines the upper and lower dimensions in space and a horizontal line that defines the before and after dimensions in time (see Chart 2).

Fortunately, in some panels, the directionality is indicated by animals or human figures that clarify how to

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1 Martineau's unpublished dictionary of symbols is the accumulation of data from photographs taken in the field, redrawing thousands of petroglyph panels, isolating symbols, symbol combinations, and symbol incorporations for 50+ years. Martineau applied cryptanalysis to identify symbol association and symbol consistency with frequency counts. His interpretations are largely based on Mallery's 1881, 1893, Schoolcraft 1853, and Tompkins 1948 publications. His whole life was submerged in Native American cultures, learning seven different languages and having hands-on experience reproducing and restoring prehistoric artifacts for museums.

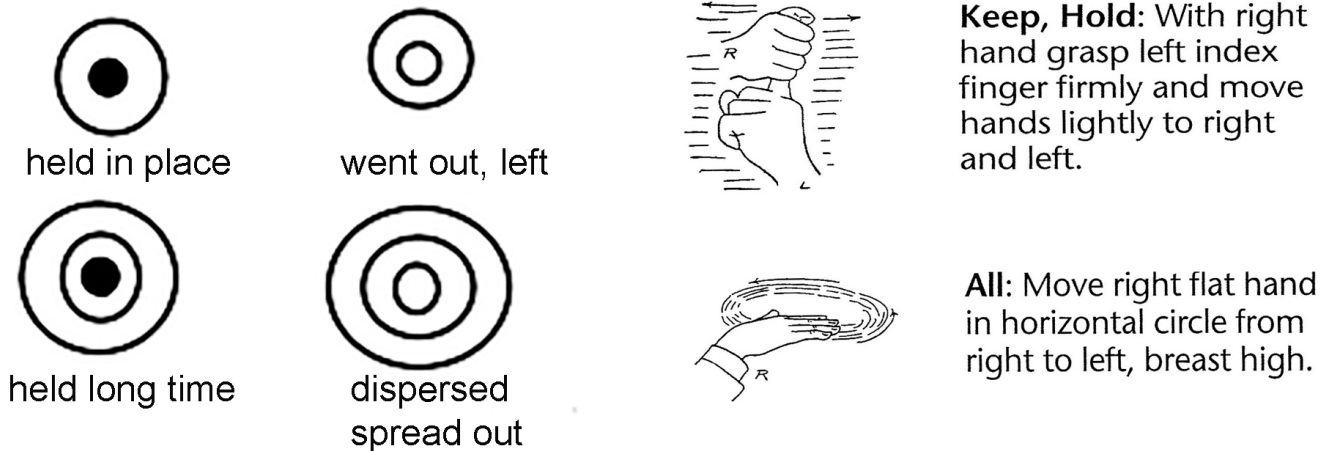


Fig. 1. A simple chart with concentric circles with a solid center and concentric circles with an open center (Martineau 1984, 1973, 2022). The illustrations of sign language gestures are from Tomkins (1935).



Fig. 2. The example on the left is a quadruped moving left to right, from a solid center to an open center. It is a Ute petroglyph from Shavano Valley, interpreted as the movement of their band from one camp where they were staying to a new (empty) camp indicated by the concentric circle with an empty center. Next is a figure with a concentric circle head and hair with little particles presumed to be cactus (Martineau 2022).

read the spiral. Often, they are walking on, attached to, or in line with a spiral.

From my database of sites in the Colorado Plateau, I have chosen examples of concentric circles and spirals that include animals or people for contextual consistency. Isolated spirals are often in context with land features or associated with springs or solar alignments. They require more documentation with geological and cultural information and are beyond the scope of this study.

### Concentric circles

Concentric circles are used as verbs to describe a motion like that of water. Thinly spaced rings convey the idea of something happening quickly. Largely spaced rings convey the idea of slow movement spread out all

around. Concentric circles with an open ring in the center read as *emptied out*, or *dispersed*. In contrast, concentric circles with a solid center read as *holding*, *entering*, or *going into* the center, as the solid stone does when dropped in shallow water.

Concentric circles with a solid center refer to something that is being held within, in an area or structure like a house or a camp. Additional rings may be used to emphasize the action in strength, distance, or intensity. A similar example with both types of concentric circles is an Ancestral Pueblo panel in Montezuma Creek, (c. AD 800–1100). Their cultural preference is right-to-left (fig. 3).

Figure 3 has both an open and a solid center concentric circle. The open concentric circle incorporates the head of an anthropomorph that combines three ideas: head-

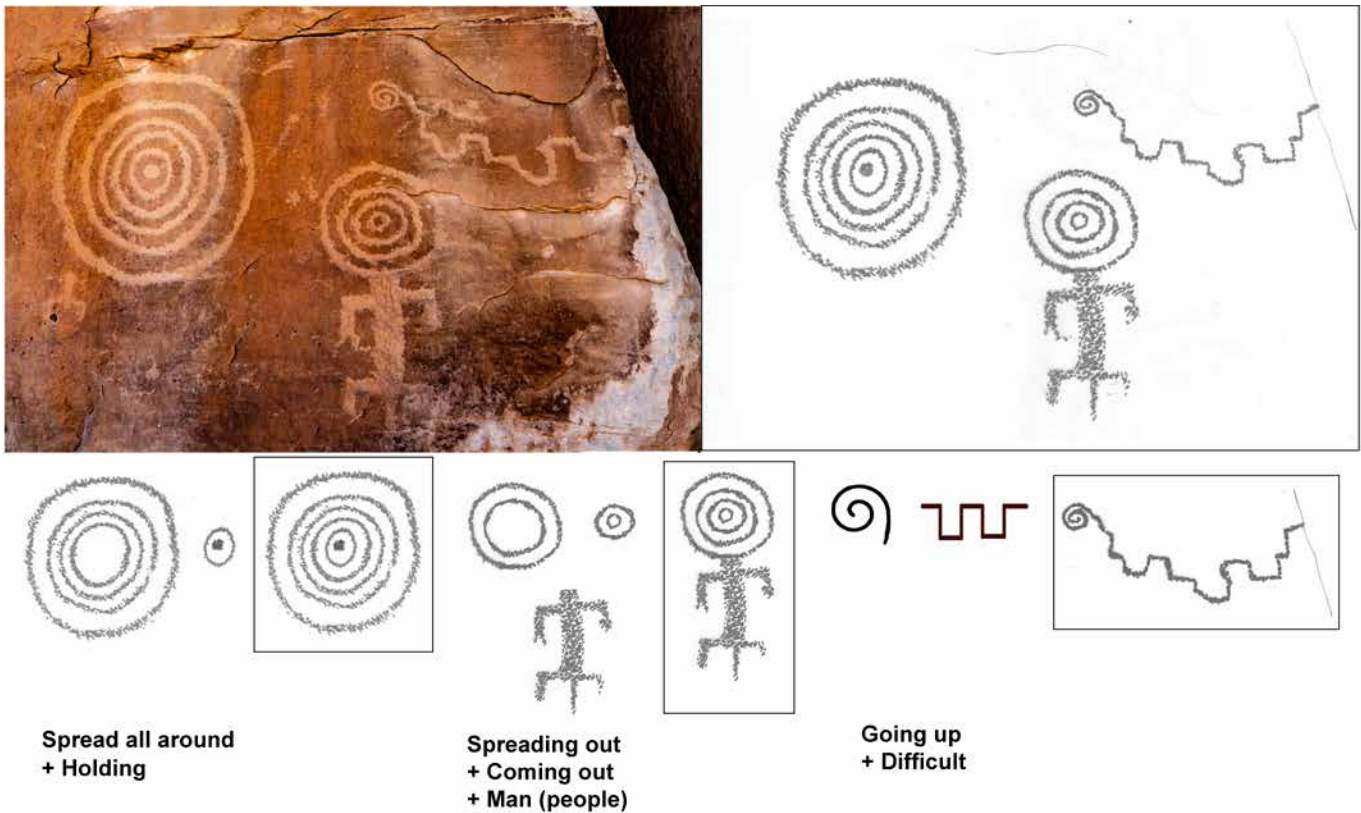


Fig. 3. This panel reads from right to left, beginning with the long journey these people took to arrive as they came out of the canyons or lowland and up to this area. The trail from rock edge goes down and across, up, down, around, up, across, up, across, down, then up, going up. The people head up and are spreading out. The people live here now and have spread out all around this land.

ing upwards, coming out, and spreading all around. The concentric circle with a solid center indicates a stationary position with the encircling presence of (people or protection) all around. Additional symbol combinations of the whorl and the symbol for a difficult journey convey the idea of a journey through canyons, over mesas, and into valleys that are difficult to traverse and in context with the geology of the surrounding landscape. The rock incorporation of the boulder edge adds the third dimension of coming around the cliff in this canyon country where it is located.

This panel reads from right to left, beginning with the long journey these people took to arrive. The whorl indicates they came out of the canyons or lowlands and up to this area. The open-centered concentric circle incorporated with the head of an anthropomorph convey the idea of people emerging out into this area. The large concentric circle with a solid center establishes that the people live here now and have spread

out around this land.

There are many springs throughout Montezuma Canyon, where this panel is located, and it is known to have supported a remarkably high population of inhabitants during the Pueblo II–III era (AD 600–1300). But the area was abandoned during the time of a great drought, AD 1175–1250.

Examples of concentric circles that convey the actions of the human actors are shown in fig. 4. These Fremont panels use two concentric circles, one with an open center and the other with a solid center. Figure 4a employs the use of spatial positioning and repetition in size to denote time and distance; thus, they read right to left, from smaller to larger.

### Whorls

The whorl used as a noun is a symbol associated with the wind, speech, ripples, waves, clouds, or feathers. As a verb, like gestures, it indicates movement up, down,



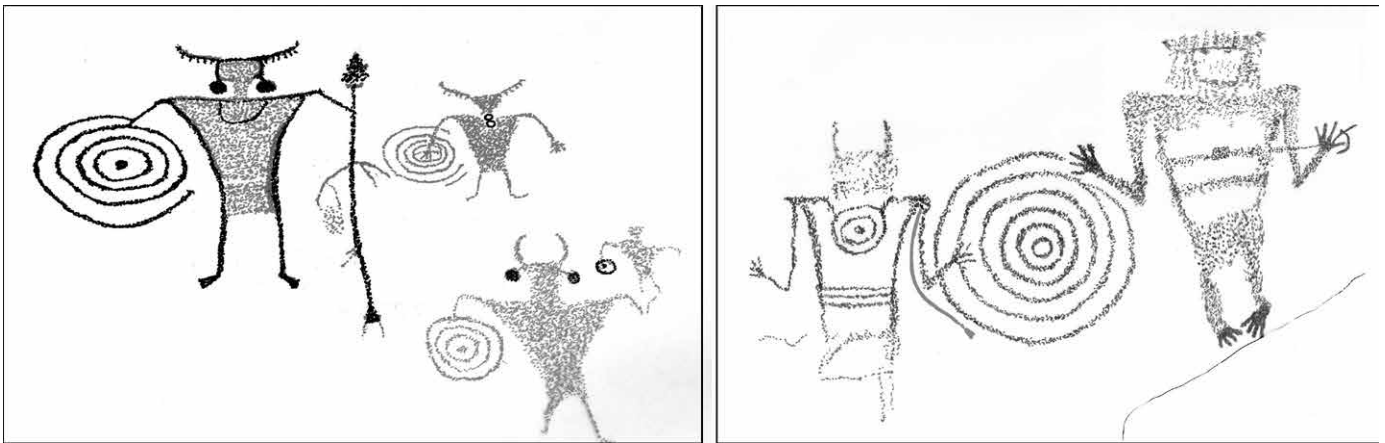


Fig. 4a and 4b. Two examples of concentric circles with a dot in the center in tandem with a concentric circle with an open center. They are from Mill Creek near Moab Utah and the Green River in the Uinta Basin. Figure 4a has a small anthropomorph holding the open center as if pointing to where he is coming out' He is shown again as the second larger anthropomorph touching the outside ring halfway around the concentric circles with a dot in the center circle. In fig. 4 b, the figure on the right is wearing a feather headdress of a twin war god and touching the outer ring of a concentric circles with an open center. The figure on the left is wearing a neck ornament of a concentric circle with a dot in the center, an emblem of the other twin war god. He is wearing horns that indicate he is strong and powerful. He is gesturing toward the inside rings of the concentric circle indicating *spreading around* and protecting the land. They both may represent the culture heroes, Killer-of-Enemies, who wears a Flicker-feather headdress, and Child-of-Water, who wears an amulet of concentric circles associated with water (Patterson 2022b).



Fig. 5. Porter Swentzell of Santa Clara Pueblo demonstrating how to read whorls, from the Pueblo tradition of right-to-left directionality. Using his fists, he begins with the right fist, which he says represents “coming out of the kiva,” and moving to the left fist, he says it represents “going into the kiva.” (Swentzell 2020). Porter Swentzell, PhD, is from Santa Clara Pueblo, where he grew up participating in traditional life in his community and currently serves as a tribal official. He is an Associate Professor of Indigenous Liberal Studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts, a Regent for Northern New Mexico College and serves on several non-profit boards.

based on <b>left to right</b> direction going from the outside to inside					
blow, wind, roll over	coming up from below	coming out	to ascend up (hill or mt) germinate, rise up, whirlwind	descend going into	Rolling something up
→					
based on <b>right to left</b> orientation					
coming up from below	coming down from high place	going up a hill or mt.	roll over, going down, blow, wind	(fist and thumbs) "into the kiva"	"coming out of the Kiva" (Porter Swenzell) Tewa
←					

Fig. 6. Chart 1. Whorls from two different cultural preferences or geocentric orientations. The first row is interpreted from left to right based on the Ute and Paiute cultural preferences. The second row is interpreted from a Pueblo, Apache, and Plains cultural preference of right-to-left directionality. The ground level is assumed to be the end of the tail.

or horizontally. Whorls are found in association with primary subjects to indicate *arrival*, *departure*, *going up*, and *coming down*. The whorl is a motion that modifies whatever is moving, running, walking, flying, growing, etc. Whorls are interpreted based on the orientation of the stem and the inner curl. Porter Swenzell of Santa Clara Pueblo gave me a demonstration of the Tewa Pueblo's geocentric orientation and right-to-left cultural preference for directionality (see fig. 5). The following chart shows the several types of whorls and their proposed meanings: fig. 6, Chart 1.

### Reading whorls from right to left

In the following examples whorls appear in a panel associated with Apache mythic text discussed in detail in Patterson (2022a). The Apache cultural direction is also right to left. The protagonist is on the right, gesturing toward the animal and birds on the left. Ac-

cording to their creation story, the animals were asked to come forward and supply their special powers to help the Emergence Mountain grow taller. The whorl is a verb indicating the request for the sheep and other animals to come forward (see fig. 7).

Similarly, the whorl is a verb to describe the action of a figure from the Kings panel at McConkie Ranch, near Vernal, Utah (see fig. 8). He is wearing a war cap with knobs called horns that signify strength. He may be a deity that is called upon for help during stressful situations (Patterson 2022c).

Whorls are used to represent germination, wind, waves, and clouds. Figure 9 shows the little whorls associated with a corn plant. The whorls represent the germination of a corn seedling.

### Reading whorls from left to right

The Hopi are linguistically related to the Uto/Aztecans,

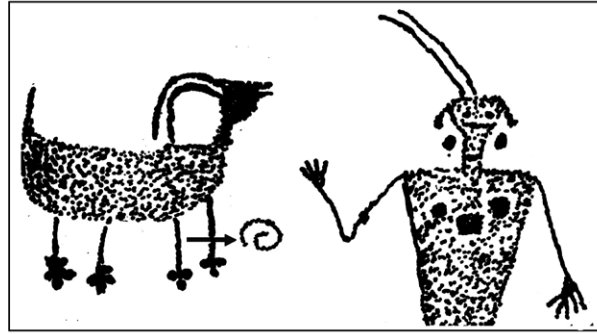
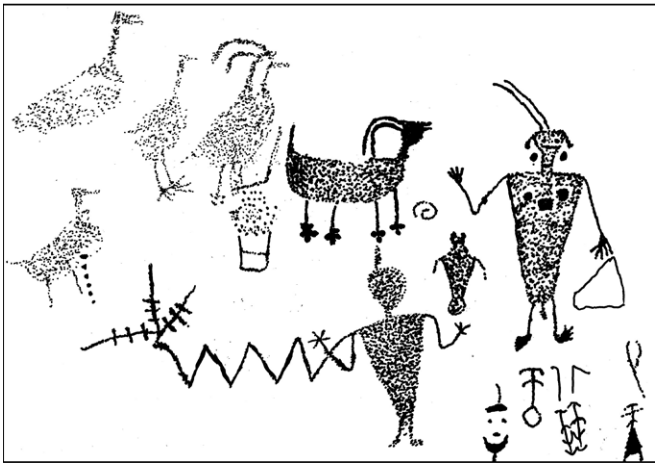


Fig. 7. The mythic text of the Jicarilla Apache describes a scene with a special Hactcin (god) calling the animals to come and help make the Emergence Mountain grow tall enough for the people to reach the sky hole and emerge into the next world. Animals and birds each have special powers to do this. The figure on the right is gesturing toward the sheep on the left. Near the sheep's feet is a small whorl that begins at the tail and turns into the center. It represents the movement of coming forward.

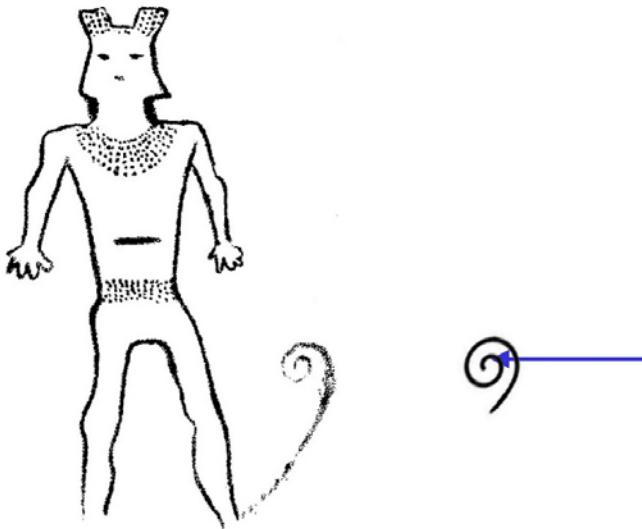


Fig. 8. The whorl attached to the foot of this figure is uncurling from the center down to the end of the tail. It represents coming out, and the long tail indicates from a long distance to where he is standing now.

and their cultural direction is left to right. The panel is from Clear Creek Canyon, a site claimed by the Hopi as their ancestral homeland for several clans. (Martineau Clear Creek Report 1985) (fig. 10a). The animals incorporated with whorls help convey the direction of motion (fig. 10b).

### Reading spirals

The spiral represents two dimensions, time and space. A spiral's temporal and spatial attributes are essential in understanding three dimensions represented on a two-dimensional surface. In order to illustrate this, I have placed a red graphic cross-hair target overlay over the center of each one. The vertical line defines the upper and lower dimensions in space, and a horizontal line defines the before and after dimensions in time. The green areas mark the beginning, and the red area marks the ending. Imagine that you approach the spiral along the red horizontal line of time. If you encounter the tail first, you begin at the tail (green) of the spiral and revolve around toward the center and end (red). If you pass through to the center without hitting the tail end, then you begin from the center (green), revolve around to the tail end (red), and exit up or down depending upon the tail's position in space.

### Reading spirals from left to right

An example of this rule can be seen in panels that read from left to right, based upon the addition of animals that supply the context of directional movement. Figure 14, Chart 1 shows how to determine if a spiral reads from left to right.

Examples of spirals that read from left to right are shown in figs. 12 and 13.

Figure 13 is another example of animals used to show the direction of movement.



Fig. 9. This panel is Navaho, c. AD 1700, from Largo Canyon, New Mexico, and reads from right to left, using the whorl in the position of coming out. The panel depicts, among other things, the germination of corn. The little whorls are the germinating corn kernels and the corn plant supplies the context of growing corn. The moccasins showing toes and foot soles inside are references to *worn-out* moccasins, symbolizing hardships. The bird tracks convey the idea of stress and the destruction of corn plants and seedlings.



Fig. 10a. The cultural direction for this whorl is based on the animal moving from left to right. The animal has come up from the center and exits out the tail (illustration from Martineau 1985). Fig. 10b. is a pictograph (Basketmaker – Pueblo II) illustrating the use of an animal showing the direction of movement from one spiral as *coming out* and crossing over to the other spiral and *going in* (Grand Gulch, Utah).

### Reading spirals from right to left

The following chart, fig. 14 Chart 3, shows how the spirals is read within the cultural context of people of the Pueblos, Plains, and Apacheans who read from right to left.

Consistency with this rule can be seen this next panel from Wupatki National Monument in Arizona. It is believed to have been carved after the volcano eruption around AD 1066. The people abandoned the area by AD 1225. They may have lived there for about 150 years (fig. 15).

The Wupatki petroglyph is very precise in detail and placement in time (before and after) and space (above or below the ground). The lower left spiral has various individuals exiting the spiral. Their feet are placed below the ground line as if they were continuing their journey in the underworld. Bunzel describes the cycles of life and death concerning the afterlife of the dead for the Zuni. They continue as spirits in the underworld and are very much a part of the living, in the present (Bunzel 1932a). It appears that all three of the spirals have people who begin or end their journey below the ground line, the underworld, the home of the



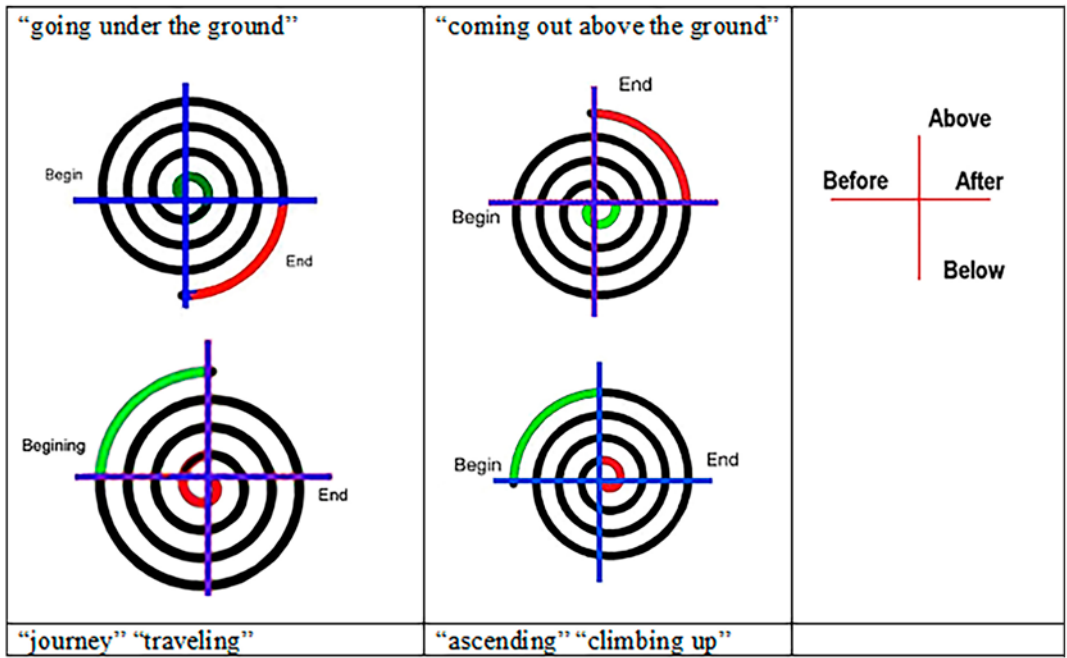


Fig. 11 Chart 2. Spirals that read from left to right. Beginning on the left, the trajectory, like an imaginary arrow, hits the green center of the spiral first. If the imaginary arrow hits the tail first, that is the beginning, and the red is in the center of the spiral.

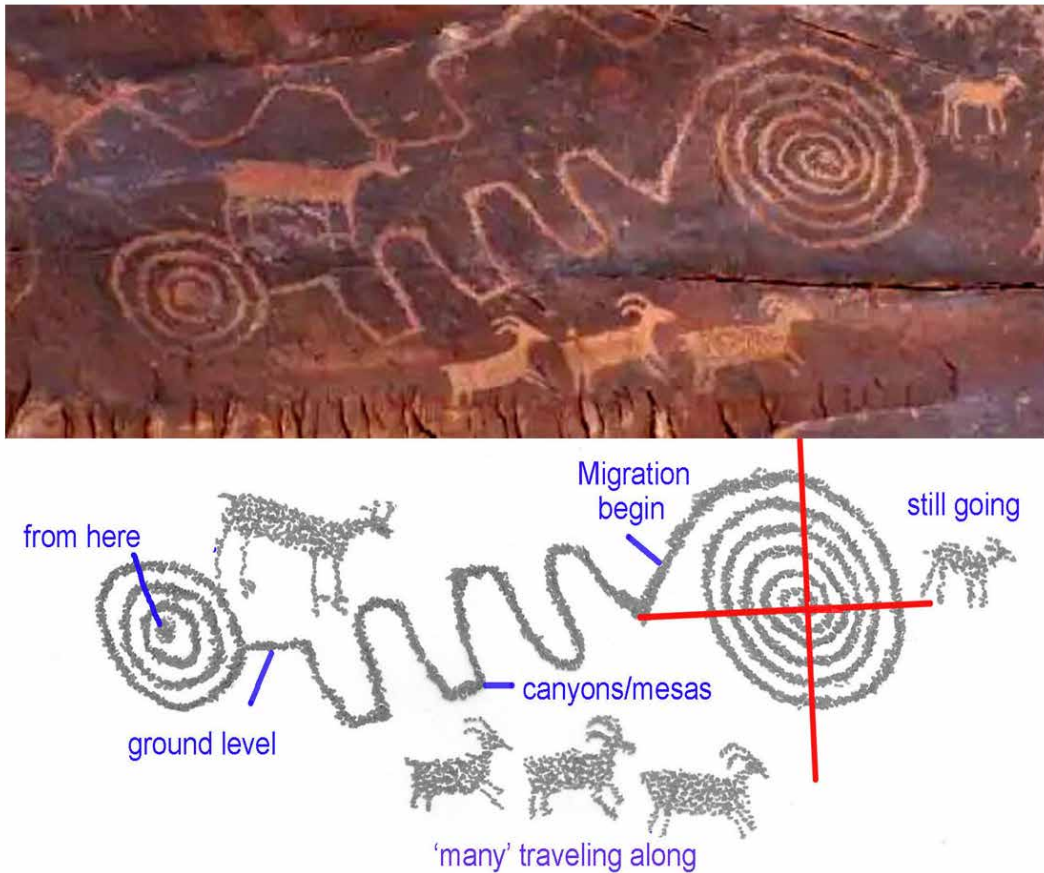


Fig. 12. Mill Creek, Moab, Utah. The animals show the reader the direction of motion. The concentric circle with a solid center indicates where the animals (people) were living. They travel up and down through canyons, mesas, and valleys, indicated by the symbol for canyons or rough terrain. Finally, they encounter the tail of the spiral and begin their long migration. The Hopis and Zunis often refer to large spirals as migration symbols.



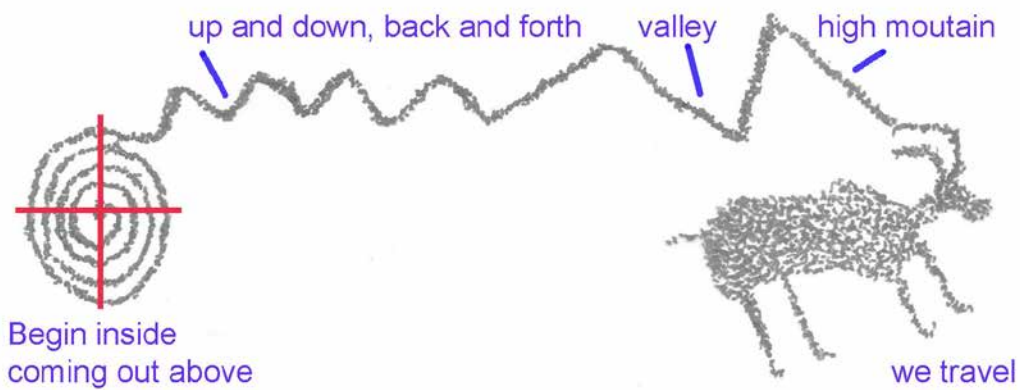


Fig. 13. Photo and drawing of a panel in Mill Creek. This spiral begins inside and revolves from the center to the top, following the rule that the horizontal arrow goes through the center first. The tail ends at the top and continues with a wavy line that means moving *back and forth* and then it dips low and rises sharply like a valley and high mountain. It is attached to the horns and head of an animal and used to illustrate the journey of *people* coming out and traveling back and forth as they head up into the mountains. Hunter-gatherer foragers practiced seasonal migrations to optimize the resources in changing seasons. The Utes made seasonal migrations to the high mountain every spring, where they stayed all summer (Mill Creek, Photo by Rory Tyler).

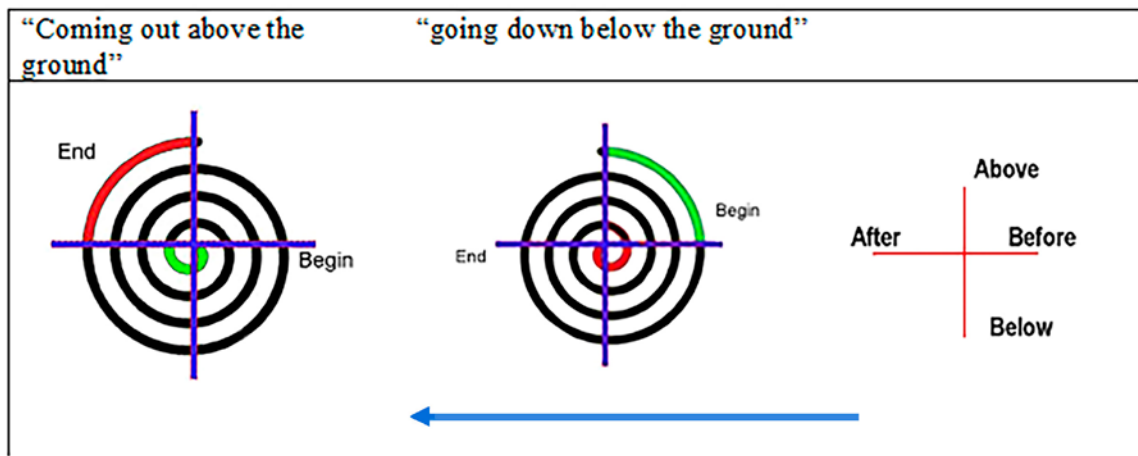


Fig. 14 Chart 3. Spirals that read from right to left. In the first spiral, the imaginary arrow begins on the green tail and ends in the red center. In the second spiral, the imaginary arrow begins in the green center and ends on the red tail.

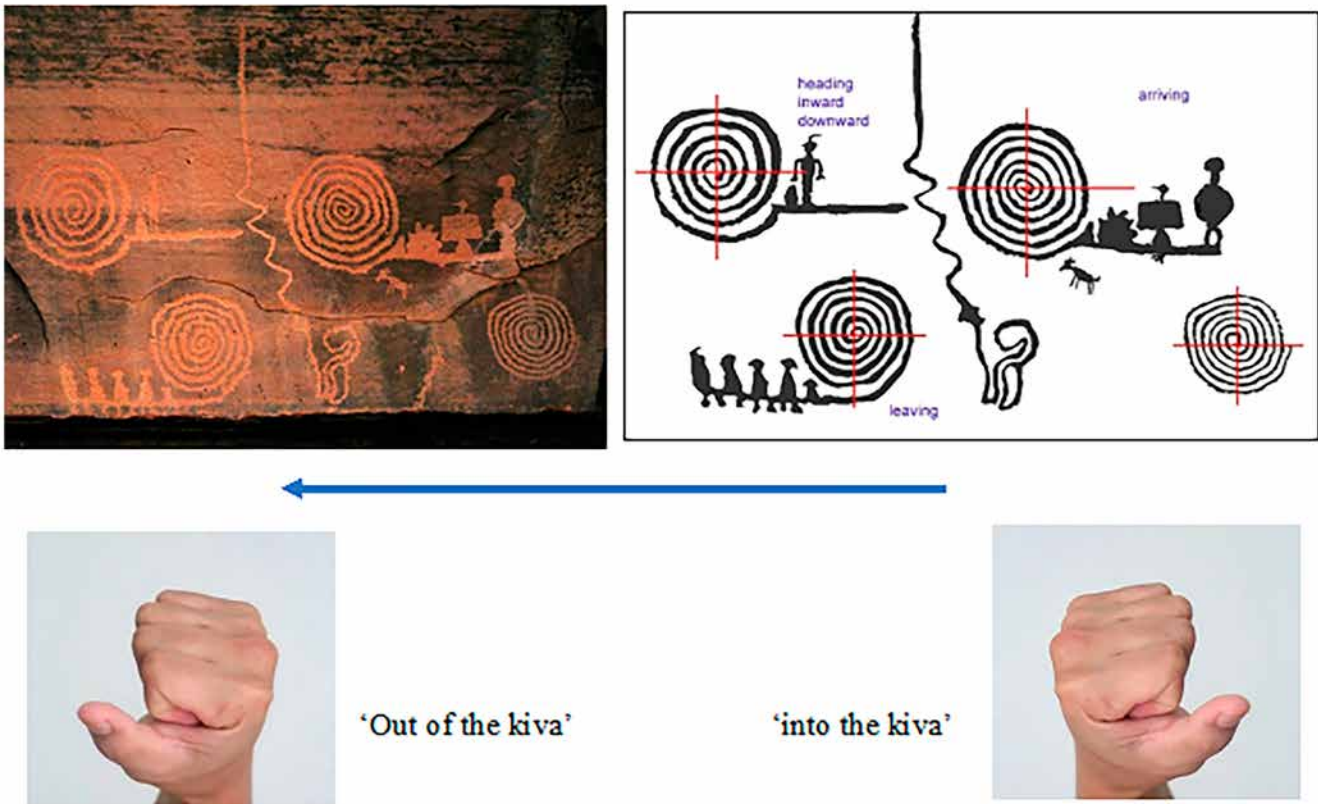


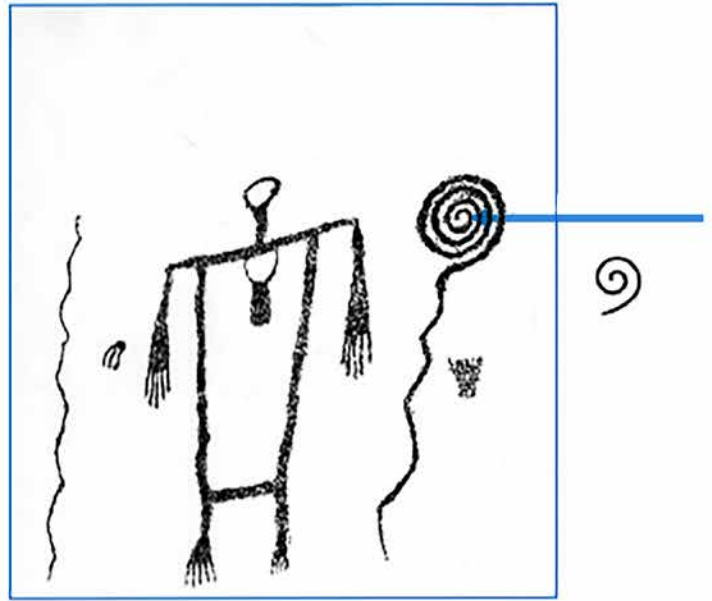
Fig. 15. Photograph and drawing of a panel from Wupatki, Arizona. The posture of the figures indicates a right-to-left orientation. The upper spiral has a figure wearing a single feather bent back slightly and his hands are pointed down toward the earth. The figures on the right are approaching the spiral from below ground level. The upper spiral has three figures. The center figure is like a bird with its beak pointed toward the spiral. Below is a small animal also approaching the spiral. I assume the figures are entering the spiral from the line that forms the tail and is positioned below an imaginary ground line. The lower spiral on the left begins in the center and revolves outward. The tail of the spiral becomes a line through the legs of the people. Their feet are shown underneath the line.

spirits of the dead. It is hard not to speculate that the vertical zigzag line represents a disruption (perhaps the volcanic eruption) that separates the events on the right from the left. The line may be a demarcation between the journey of the living figures on the right and the spirit figures below on the left.

The location of this panel is very high on the sandstone cliff face above a long rampway along the wall reaching to the ground. It commands a view of the San Juan River from the northeast to the southwest. The spatial positioning of this figure places it within the context of the sky and clouds. The lightning symbols on either side remind me of the power of thunderstorms that bring terrifying lightning strikes all around the mesa tops in full view for dozens of miles.

### Conclusion

Concentric circles, whorls, and spirals in petroglyph panels can convey a wide range of meanings, depending on the cultural context of the creators. These symbols are like verbs showing movement of the actors through a narrative sequence in a panel. Concentric circles, like ripples on water, convey the idea of people moving out across the area and by varying the spaced rings can show slow or rapid rates of dispersal. Whorls as verbs, indicate movement, such as arrival, departure, going up, or coming down. Spirals as verbs convey the temporal and spatial attributes of a narrative. The cultural context determines the geocentric reference and cultural preferences for directionality. Animals and human figures can also provide additional context for interpreting the symbols. The petroglyph



Figs. 16a and 16b. Photograph and drawing of a large Cloud Being or Rain Bringer, with a lightning/spiral that comes out of the sky and down to the ground. The spiral turns from inside out because the imaginary arrow hits the center first rather than the end of the tail. This spiral is *coming out* (Chart 2). The tail becomes a lightning symbol reaching clear to the ground. Clouds are sentient and given personal names. Their hanging hands and feet represent a spirit entity, not a living being, but to the Zuni they are called the Rain Bringers after death (Benedict 1935; Bunzel 1929–1930, Patterson 2020).

panels shown here are from various cultural groups, and they demonstrate the complexity and diversity of the meanings that can be conveyed through concentric circles, whorls, and spirals.

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# THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN SAN ROCK ART AND BEYOND

David M. Witelson

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Rock Art Research Institute, School of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South Africa)

Meaning and function are two concepts that have occupied the minds of rock art researchers worldwide. When researchers move beyond discovery and description, they encounter issues of the possible but elusive meaning and function of the imagery in the societies that made them. This debate has characterized southern African rock art research for 50 years. Unlike many other parts of the world, there is much in southern African ethnography that is directly relevant to San rock art. I briefly review this discussion in South Africa, highlighting points that may be relevant elsewhere in the world where ethnographies are thinner or non-existent.

The rock paintings in and surrounding the Maloti-

Drakensberg massif, the southeastern mountains in South Africa and the landlocked country of Lesotho (figs 1 and 2), span some 3,000 years. Much older painted plaquettes are known from Apollo 11 Cave in Namibia (Wendt 1976; Vogelsang *et al.* 2010). Nevertheless, it is from the southeastern mountains that some of the most well-known hunter-gatherer rock paintings come (figs 3 and 4). In this region, rock art evidences changes resulting from the arrival of allochthonous herders and agropastoralists from around 2,000 years ago, and, much later, European colonists (figs 5 and 6). Among other stylistic elements, changes are evidenced by depictions of domestic animals and the abandonment of the shaded



Fig. 1. Map of the region and places mentioned in the text. Image by the author.



Fig. 2. A view of the Drakensberg mountains from Glengarry Holiday Farm, Kamberg, KwaZulu-Natal Province. Photograph by the author.

polychrome technique.

There are also other kinds of rock art in southern Africa, which are typically associated with allochthonous groups (figs 7–9). Fine-line brush paintings (figs 3–6) belong to what is broadly called San rock art, on which I focus in this article, because of the demonstrable ties between details in the paintings and details in 19th- and 20th-century San ethnography (Lewis-Williams 1981). Rock paintings were made up to around AD 1930–32. At that time, two BaPhuthi (agropastoralists) men, Mapote and Masitise, who had grown up with San (Bushman) people, were asked by Europeans to make rock paintings for them (How 1962; Jolly 2014, 307–309; King *et al.* 2022). Masitise painted on the walls of the British Residency building at Quthing near Qacha's Nek in today's Lesotho. The stone that Mapote painted is today in the collection

of the Rock Art Research Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa and is on permanent display at the Origins Centre Museum (fig. 10).

### Meaning

Much research has focused on the meaning of San rock paintings. Older interpretations of the art, including the arguments that these images were *art pour l'art* or a form of sympathetic hunting magic or depictions of daily life, did not adequately explain why the images were produced at all (Vinnicombe 1972a, 1972b; Lewis-Williams 1972, 1974, 1981). The unique detail of San rock paintings, characterized by a diversity of motifs, many complex painted relationships between those motifs, and details painted on a millimetre scale, is one of two key factors that allow researchers to com-





Fig. 3. San hunter-gatherer rock art from Game Pass Shelter in Kamberg, KwaZulu-Natal. Photograph by the author.



Fig. 4. An exceptional shaded polychrome eland. RSA BAE2 near Nqanqarhu, Eastern Cape Province. Photograph by the author.





Fig. 5. Rock paintings of domestic animals, such as cattle, date to within the last 2,000 years. From a site near Rossouw village, Eastern Cape Province. Photograph by the author.



Fig. 6. Colonial-period rock painting of a cattle raider in European dress. Note the dog. RSA FEL2, Eastern Cape Province. Photograph by the author.



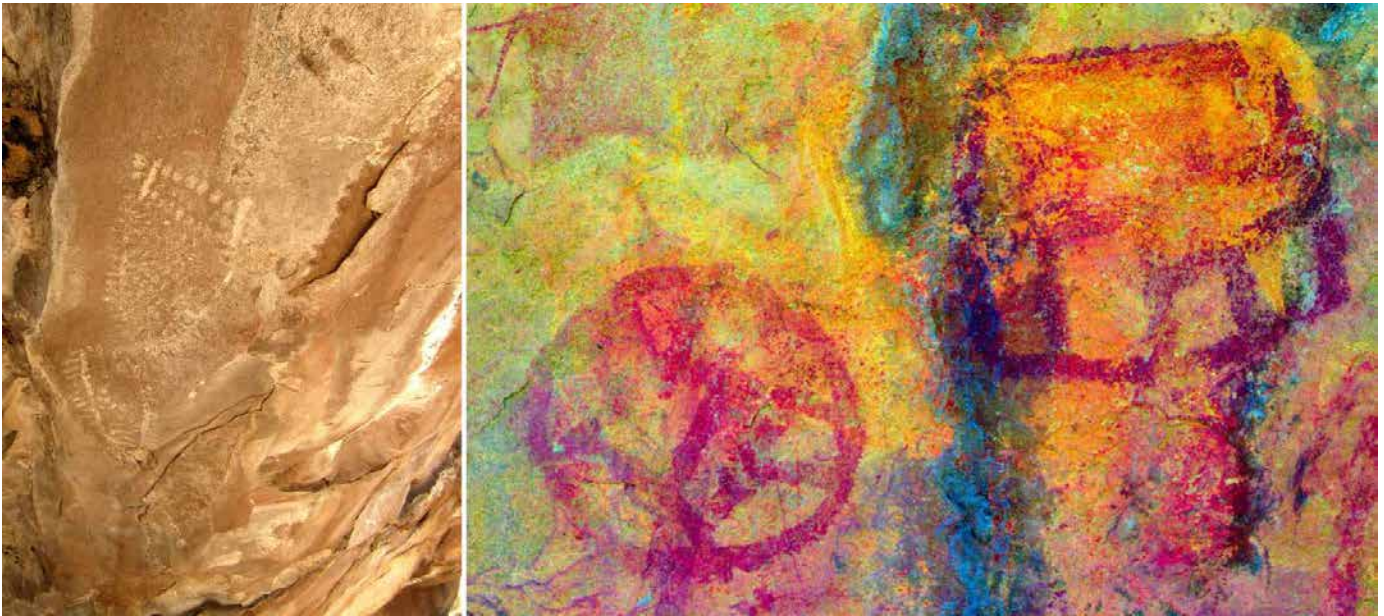


Fig. 7. Examples of finger-painted geometric rock art putatively associated with herders. Left: RSA MAC1, Limpopo Province. Image courtesy of Iris Guillemard. Right: RSA BUF2, near Dordrecht, Eastern Cape Province. DStretch (LDS) enhancement of the author's photograph.



Fig. 8. Handprints are also associated with the herder tradition of rock paintings. These examples, which were made by painting the hand and then removing some of the paint to create nested U shapes, comes from Elands Bay Cave, Western Cape Province. Photograph by the author.

ment on the meaning of the art. The other important factor, which I have noted already, is the richness of the ethnographic sources (Orpen 1874; Bleek and Lloyd 1911; Marshall 1999). The unique corpus of San ethnography facilitates investigations of the meaning and

function of San images in their society. Indeed, the details of the art and ethnography are mutually illuminating: questions raised by the ethnography can be clarified by the paintings, and questions raised by the paintings can be clarified by the ethnography (Lewis-Williams 1981, fig. 10). The direct historical continuity (not ethnographic analogy) between the paintings and the ethnography is empirically demonstrable (McGranaghan 2017).

The central religious ritual of San people is a communal healing dance (figs 12 and 13). In it, healers, known in the !Xam San language as *!gi:ten* or as *n|omkxausi* by Jul'hoansi and for which I use the general translation "owners of potency",<sup>1</sup> heat and activate a supernatural potency that the Jul'hoansi call *n|om* (Lewis-Williams 1981; Marshall 1999; Lee 2013). Once that potency is heated sufficiently, it explodes out of the top of the healer's head. His or her spirit leaves the body to travel

<sup>1</sup> San rock art and San society as a whole are shamanistic. However, the art and ethnography of San peoples is so uniquely detailed that, apart from the ever-present need to make this material comprehensible to an international audience who cannot read or pronounce the words of San languages, there is no need whatsoever to mention or appeal to notional shamanism. I therefore do not use shaman in this paper and appeal to readers to focus on the San themselves and their rock art.





Fig. 9. Examples of engraved rock art in southern Africa. Top: Nooitgedacht glacial pavement near Kimberley, Northern Cape Province. Bottom: Pecked engravings along the river bed near Apollo 11 Cave, Namibia. Image by the author.



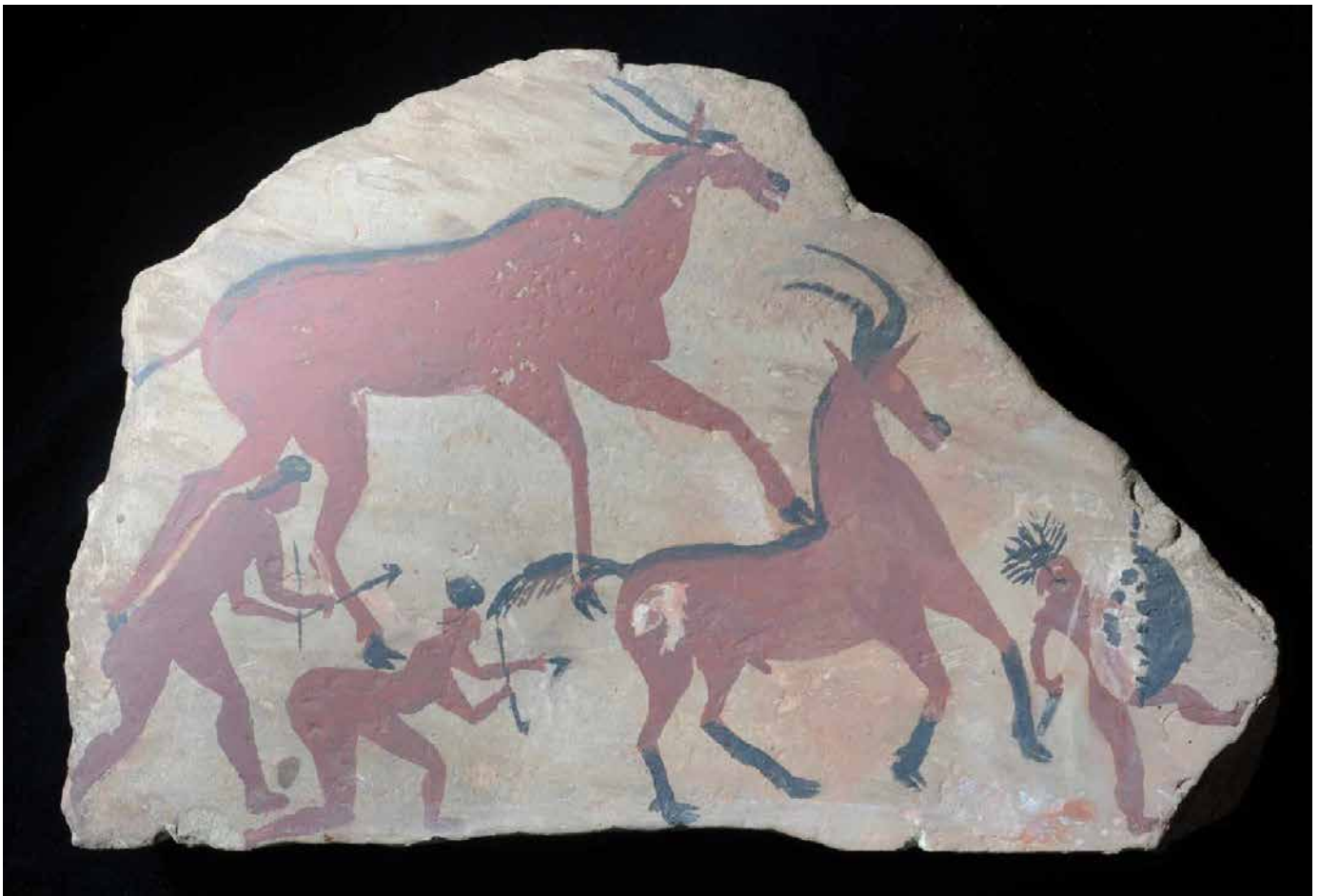


Fig. 10. The stone painted by Mapote in 1930. Origins Centre Museum, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Image courtesy of David Pearce.

to the spirit world and confront the spirits of the dead. These spirits are responsible for bringing sickness to the living: the dead long for the living to join them and shoot “arrows of sickness” into them. These arrows are removed and cast away by the healers, who take it into themselves and send it back from the napes of their necks whence it came. Healers may also transform into the powerful animals from which they have drawn their power. While the healers dance and enter the state of altered consciousness that the Jul’hoansi call *!aia*, some women clap and sing powerful *n!om* songs to support the healers in their life-and-death battles on behalf of the community. We therefore know (it is not an assumption) that San healers enter altered states of consciousness at healing dances (Marshall 1999; Lee 2013). The healers see and hear things that ordinary people do not. When they return to the

world of the living, and perhaps after a short rest, they share their experiences verbally (Biesele 1993).

It is a remarkable fact that healing dances are depicted in San rock paintings (fig. 14). The details of painted dances match the ethnographic sources. For example, most of the painted dancers are male: the large central dancer in fig. 8 is clearly male. We know from anthropologists working with Jul’hoansi San that half the men and about a third of the women became healers, boys being encouraged to do so more than girls (Lee 2013). Another important detail is that some of the figures associated with dances carry flyswitches, wildebeest or giraffe tails mounted on the end of a short stick (Marshall 1999, figs 13 and 15). Such artifacts are carried only at the dance and are used by owners of potency in dealing with the arrows of sickness (Marshall 1999). The dance postures of the



Fig. 11. The famous Rosetta Stone panel at Game Pass Shelter. David Lewis-Williams showed that this painting depicts metaphors related to the San healing dance: a dying eland (note the lowered head and crossed legs) next to an owner of potency in the half-death of *!aia* (it also has crossed legs and a partially antelope body). Image by the author.

healers are also diagnostic, typically depicted with a bent waist and bent knees (figs 12–14 and 16), and sometimes have their arms out or backwards, a posture Jul’hoan healers adopt when asking “god” for more potency (Lewis-Williams 1981, fig. 17). Sometimes, the healers are painted bleeding from the nose (Lewis-Williams 1981). Although whole dance scenes are less numerous than isolated dancing or clapping figures, so-called fragments of the dance, these painted fragments refer to the whole dance by the principle of synecdoche (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2004b). The ethnography is indispensable when it comes to addressing the meaning of the art. The meaning of San rock paintings is typically interpreted relative to the network of associated concepts in San thought and belief, which we know from the ethnography. This does

not mean, however, that the meaning of the art was static or unchanging. Quite the contrary: the introduction of new motifs in the so-called contact period meant that new entities took on new meanings in new social contexts. Similarly, pre-existing paintings took on new meanings as the audience viewing and using those paintings changed (Witelson 2022). The old paintings were viewed through new eyes in a changing world.

To speak of the meaning of San rock art is, however, strictly incorrect. San rock paintings have many meanings. The largest southern African antelope, the eland, is a case in point (fig. 18). The San concept of eland is polysemic: it has many meanings, which are played up or down according to context (Lewis-Williams 1981). For example, the eland plays a central





Fig. 12. A San healing dance performed at night. Note the group of clapping women standing at right and the bent posture of the lone dancer. Image by Kgara Kevin Rack. Used here under the CC BY-SA 4.0 licence, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=103241740>.



Fig. 13. A trance dance during the day. Note the dancers' bent knees, dance rattles and sticks. The rightmost man holds an animal-tail fly-switch. Image by Kgara Kevin Rack. Used here under the CC BY-SA 4.0 licence, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=103241738>.





Fig. 14. A dance scene showing a large central dancer supported by seated clapping figures. The bottom image is a DStretch (YRD) enhancement. RSA MEL6 near Nqanqarhu, Eastern Cape Province. Image by the author.





Fig. 15. The two flyswitches held by this trance dancer (extracted from a larger dance scene) mark him as a San healer. RSA KIV1 near Dordrecht, Eastern Cape Province. Image by the author.



Fig. 16. This dancer with a bent waist also belongs to the dance scene in fig. 9. RSA KIV1 near Dordrecht, Eastern Cape Province. Image by the author.

symbolic role in San rites of passage, including boys' first kill ceremonies, girls' puberty rites, and marriage (Lewis-Williams 1981). The eland also plays a role in the performance of healing dances: hunters will dance next to a fresh eland kill to make the most of the abundant potency (Lewis-Williams 1981). Eland kills also provide a lot of meat and fat (Lewis-Williams 2015a). For the San, fat is associated with health and beauty. Women like meat: men are said to hunt women as if they were meat and women are said to like the meat that the men provide (Biesele 1993). The San

also say that a skinned eland smells sweet, like honey. This well-known connection is expressed in San myth: the creator of the eland, |Kaggen (the first owner of potency and to whom all antelope belong), nursed the first eland on honey (Lewis-Williams 2015a). The pervasive, polysemic eland symbol is but one example of how San rock paintings have many meanings that vary in emphasis across social contexts.

Although the meanings of San rock art are polyvalent, the question of meaning is more useful if it is rephrased: why did the San make rock paintings? This





Fig. 17. Arms-back dancing figures at RSA CHI1, Kamberg, in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg. Note the three male figures at the top with their arms back. The bottom figure also has his arms back: it is painted on the ceiling and the direction is relative to the viewer, not the bottom of the image. Photograph by the author.



Fig. 18. The common eland, *Taurotragus oryx*. Image Bernard Dupont from France - Common Eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) male Used here under the CC BY-SA 2.0 licence, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=75247362>.

second question is relevant because meanings operate in the context of people doing things, whether hunting, dancing, initiating, marrying or telling stories. The repetition of the same symbols, the condensed sets of associations that focus on a particular concept, across multiple social contexts gives rise to their permanence. Crucially, however, performances are the nodes in a network of meanings at which the meanings themselves are developed, emphasized or changed (Witelson 2022).

### Function

Function concerns the purpose of the art. It also returns us to the question of why the art was made in the first place. This is not a straightforward question to answer, not least because rock paintings must have been used for various (not unlimited) purposes. The best available explanation that we have for San rock



Fig. 19. Three superimposed eland images. The lowermost brown eland was superimposed by a red eland, which in turn was superimposed by a yellow eland. RSA KIV1 near Dordrecht, Eastern Cape Province. Photograph by the author.

paintings is that they were implicated in the tasks of the owners of potency (Lewis-Williams 1981, 2001). In other words, San rock art was not the everyday art of the average person, but the ritual art of a distinct category of person. Indeed, many paintings concern matters and experiences of which the owners of potency, rather than other members of San society, had direct, first-hand knowledge. We must distinguish between, on the one hand, the owners of potency who dealt in matters of the spirit world and, on the other hand, those who knew about it but did not purposefully engage with the spirit world themselves.

It is helpful to think through this distinction in terms of performance theory (Schechner 1988; Carlson 2018; Witelson 2022). Here, performance means that a group of performers (for example healers, dancers or storytellers) displays skills and experience in one or another context, and always in a culturally coded way, for an observing audience. The audience assesses the performers and what they do, and judges whether the performance is a success or failure.

There are many kinds of San performances. Healing dances, for example, are highly participatory activities in which the performers of healing are actively supported by women who clap and sing (Marshall 1999;

Lee 2013). There is much interaction between these two groups, and healing would be impossible without it. Nevertheless, it is the healers, not the participating women, who risk their lives to travel to the spirit world, confront the spirits of the dead and remove sickness from the living. Through their bodies, the healers visibly display to those at the dance what is happening at each stage; they display their mastery of heating and manipulating *n!om*, draw the sickness into their bodies, shout at the evil spirits and fall into comatose states, which the San consider to be the death of *!aia*, from which only the healers are powerful enough to return to the world of the living (fig. 11).

San storytelling is also performed (Bieseles 1993). Everyone grows up learning the stories, so that a mere passing reference to an event or character is enough to call the whole story to mind. This is not unique to San peoples: English speakers know, for example, what the term Goldilocks planet means without needing to hear the full tale to understand how it applies to earth. Among the San, it is the old, experienced people who are the best storytellers. In telling stories, they display their narrative skills and knowledge of all the existing stories to their listeners.

I argue that the making of San rock paintings was





Fig. 20. An area of a painted panel showing signs of rubbing. RSA MEL7 near Nqanqaru, Eastern Cape Province. Image by the author.





Fig. 21. A non-real, part-human, part-animal figure known as a therianthrope. This therianthrope appears to have a jackal's head and is marked as an owner of potency (a healer) by the two fly-switches at its right shoulder. From a site near Rossouw, Eastern Cape Province. DStretch (LDS) enhancement of the author's photograph.

also a kind of performance. The images were, from a performance perspective, visual displays for viewers (other members of San society or other communities) to see and interact with. We know that later painters added to and developed the paintings of earlier image-makers (Lewis-Williams 1974, fig. 19), and that viewers used the images by drawing on the images' power, sometimes touching and rubbing them to gain potency (Witelson 2019, fig. 20). There is no evidence that access to or knowledge of the paintings themselves was restricted to any one category of person in San society, which is characteristically open and, to a point, egalitarian. In any event, the making of images involved the display of both technical, painterly skills and, as evidenced by the subject matter of the art, a mastery of supernatural potency and engagement with the spirit world itself.

The performative nature of the art returns us to the question of the art's function. The purpose of the art (what it did) must have been tied to for whom the images were made. Performances of image-making must have operated in a culturally determined frame of needs and expectations. We know from what the painters depicted that much of the art is related to the tasks performed by San owners of potency (Lewis-Williams 1981; Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2004b). In addition to healing, these included out-of-body travel to see how friends and family were faring; the influencing of the behavior of game animals to in-



Fig. 22. Two antelope-headed therianthropes from Main Caves, Giant's Castle, Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province. Photograph by the author.

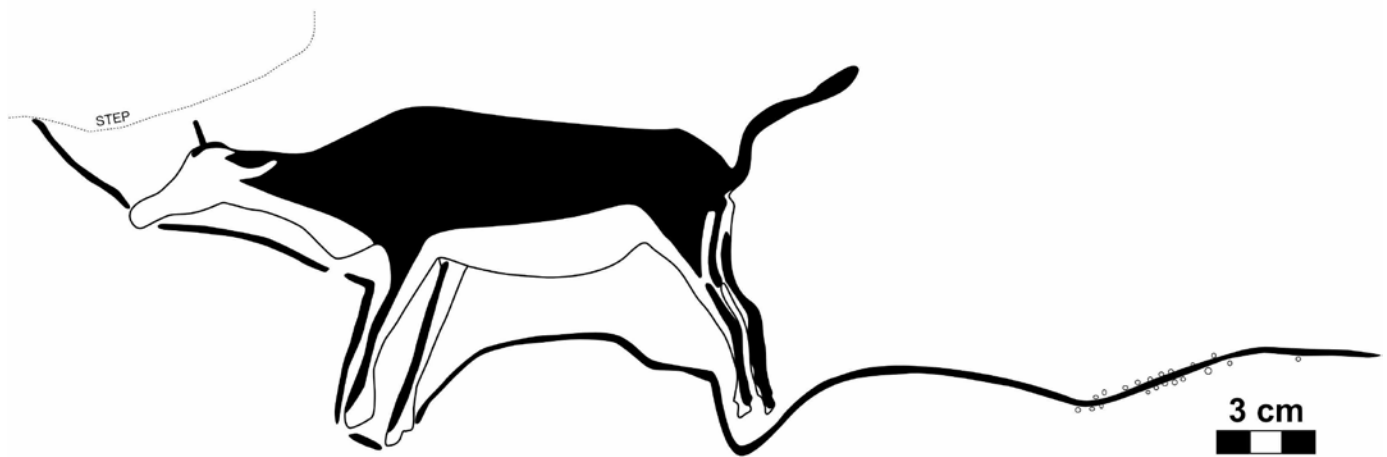


Fig. 23. A female eland walks along a painted thread of light with white dots (right) which disappears into a step in the rock face (left). From a site near Rossouw, Eastern Cape Province. Image by the author.

crease the chance of a successful hunt; and calling rain to fall when it was late or there was a spell of hot, dry weather. All these activities are found in the rock paintings.

This range of topics suggests that not all images had the same function. For instance, paintings related to healing dances and travels in the spirit world may have been at least partly didactic: masters used images to familiarize novices with the danger and fear of travelling to the spirit world, a world inhabited by dangerous, powerful, and often grotesque entities that do not inhabit the world of the living (Lewis-Williams 1982). In principle, this function of the art is thoroughly supported by San ethnography concerning learning by immersion and participation in other forms of San expressive culture (see discussion in Witelson 2022). The function of the art, however, cannot have been purely didactic: in the same way that all San listeners would have recognized a story by a mere word or phrase from a lifetime of exposure to the tales, San viewers of rock paintings are likely to have drawn on pre-existing knowledge about the spirit world to recognize what had been painted, even if they did not have first-hand experience or make images themselves. Interestingly, healers probably painted dances after experiencing *!aia*, the fine motor control needed to achieve the minute details of the art would have been impossible during *!aia*. Nevertheless, these experiences are depicted in the art. San rock paintings of dance

scenes and entoptic geometric forms, of the kind that all humans have the physical potential to experience in states of altered consciousness through culturally specific lenses (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1989), may have functioned to show others what an individual painter had seen during the dance, perhaps as a visual accompaniment to verbal accounts. In this way, the owners of potency shared their *!aia* experiences visually as well as verbally, and simultaneously displayed their power and abilities through images. Yet this is also too limited a function to apply to the whole corpus of art. Blends of real and non-real entities are pervasive in San rock art (figs 21 and 22), and there is no clear evidence that some *!aia* visions (whether geometric or realistic) or experiences were valued over others. Instead, it seems that it was the experience itself – engagement with the spirit world – which was of utmost importance, and that this was shared, probably to achieve some end, with the community by those with privileged access to it.

In the case of healing imagery, dancing and painting dance scenes appear to have been distinct. Paintings that concern out-of-body travel, game animal control and rainmaking, however, raise the possibility that the making of some images were indistinct from the act they depicted. While this superficially resembles the old sympathetic magic argument, it is nevertheless true that, from a San perspective, things that share attributes or properties are considered similar in other





Fig. 24. Seemingly isolated images with no obvious references to the spirit world, such as this exceptionally well-preserved herd of eland, are nevertheless painted on the same permeable boundary between worlds as the other paintings. The paintings are probably only a few hundred years old. RSA EDD1 near Rossouw, Eastern Cape Province. Photograph by the author.

ways (Lewis-Williams 1981; see discussion in Witelson 2022). The key point is that the distinction between the act itself and a rock painting of it is unlikely to have been as clear-cut for the San themselves as it is for us from a Western perspective. The images were agentive, powerful things-in-themselves (Lewis-Williams 2001).

One of the motifs that suggest out-of-body travel has become known as the thin red line (Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000). They depict ethnographically attested threads of light along which healers move in the spirit world. The paintings are often remarkably detailed: thin, red lines fringed with tiny rows of white dots (fig. 23). The lines themselves often link up seemingly separate paintings. They travel across meters of rock face, sometimes disappearing into cracks or steps in

the surface, only to emerge again further on. In such cases, the lines evidence interactions between the image-makers and the spirit world at the rock face. For this reason, the rock face itself has been referred to as the painted veil between worlds (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1990).

Despite the variety of tasks performed by owners of potency that are depicted in the art, it seems that all the images are painted on that permeable interface. Paintings of antelope and human figures, for example, are painted on the same boundary between realms as the dance scenes and thin red lines (fig. 24). In such cases, “we have to see the few isolated images that we find in some sites ... in light of what we know about the San and their images in general” (Lewis-Williams 2015a: 11). This goes some way to addressing the





Fig. 25. An example of a non-real, spotted and one-horned rain-animal being tamed by a rainmaker. RSA LEE1 near Dordrecht, Eastern Cape Province. Photograph by the author.

function of all San rock art: its function, at least in part, was engagement with the spirit world. In this way, the variety in the meanings of the art evidences different kinds of engagement with the spirit world (Lewis-Williams 2015b).

Paintings of game animal control and rainmaking also involved interactions with supernatural potency and the spirit world. The control of game animals required the performance (in the sense defined above) of certain nice respect behaviors by humans toward wild animals so that the animals might, in return, behave in a nice and tame way so that the hunters could kill them. This understanding of painted human-animal interactions has been termed taming magic (McGranaghan and Challis 2016) and may have been one way of performing the taming itself (Witelson 2019). Again, the distinction between the real animal and an image of it may not have been as clear-cut as it otherwise seems to

us. A San trance dancer once hunted and killed a spirit eland during his performance of the healing dance; the next day, he found and ate the actual kill (Lewis-Williams 1987). Although the worlds of the living and spirits are distinct, they nevertheless flow into one another. Bodies of water and holes in the ground, and probably rock shelters, were portals between them (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2004b).

The function of images concerning rainmaking is likely to have been similar to taming magic images. Indeed, the researchers who proposed taming magic as a refinement of hunting magic suggest that the placation of game animals parallels the placation of rain-animals by rainmakers (fig. 25). In that way, it is merely a contextual variety of taming magic in which the intended outcome is not a successful hunt but the calling of gentle, nurturing rain. More important, however, is that rainmaking involved travel to the spirit world

where the rain-animal was ambushed and then led via a rope to where rain needed to fall (Lewis-Williams 1981; Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2004a, 2004b). Those owners of potency who caught the rain would cut or butcher it, and throw the blood (water) and body parts (also water) in the directions where they wanted rain to fall. The making of the rain-animal image on the veil between worlds may have performed the function of calling and capturing the rain. When people looked up and saw the rainclouds coming, they knew that the rainmakers had been successful (Witelson 2022).

Importantly, performances of rainmaking could fail. In one well-known account, the rope used by an experienced !Xam San rainmaker broke and the rain-animal got away (Witelson 2019, 2022). Upon his return home, his people ridiculed him for being so careless: “did he not see that it was a strong rain?” Although it is not precisely clear in what ways other San performances could fail, it must nevertheless have been the case that they did sometimes fail. After all, a performance achieves something in the world: it is a way of accomplishing some definite outcome (Witelson 2022). Recognizing that image-making performances may have failed to accomplish whatever they were supposed to achieve goes some of the way to broadening our understanding of the function of the images. One of the clearest functions of the art was socio-political (Lewis-Williams 1982; Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2004b). I have already noted that San society is not totally egalitarian. Indeed, decisions are typically reached through communal discussion and consensus without any hierarchical leadership. It is also true that the accumulation of material wealth is negated through sharing and exchange practices (Marshall 1999; Lee 2013). Nevertheless, the differentiation between owners of potency and other members of San society is a division between those with direct knowledge and experience of the spirit world, and those who have no direct access save through dreams. In this way, the making of rock paintings by owners of potency was a means to exercise some degree of control over the other people in their communities. The paintings reaffirmed and proclaimed the power of the owners of potency to do the things that the community relied on them for and which they were often approached by the community to perform.

## Conclusion

The study of San rock art is not the study of the traces left behind by average members of society but of the spiritual art of the owners of potency. The meaning of San rock paintings is tied to their social function. On the one hand, the paintings resonate with sets of socially significant associations. On the other hand, image-makers displayed their skills and experience as owners of potency through the images they painted. The making of paintings was an active form of mediation between the living and spirit worlds. Although other members of society could view and interact with the images, they could not access the spirit world to which the owners of potency regularly travelled. A take-home lesson from this consideration of meaning and function is that these two concepts are culturally specific and contingent. Without San ethnography, we would not understand as much about the art as we do.

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# NOTES AND NEWS

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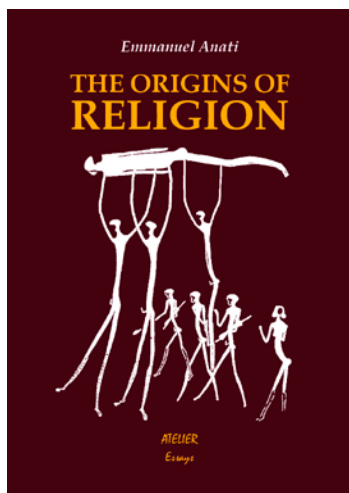
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### The Origins of Religion

Anati, E.

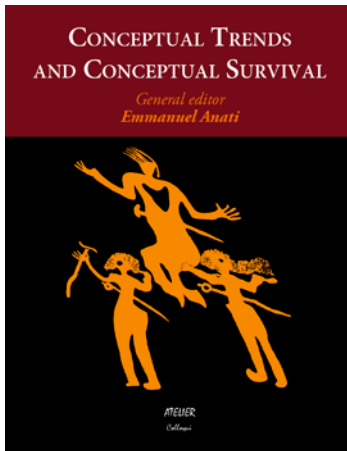
2023, *The Origins of Religion*, Second English Edition

Essays VI

Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 238 pp., 54 figg. € 20

How and when did religions originate? The study of prehistoric art is revolutionizing our knowledge of prehistoric religions. The rock art sites have been places of worship and tribal identity for millennia, serving as archives of myths, beliefs and rites, all of which evolved, diversified and acquired regional and ethnic features. Visual art, however, is not the earliest evidence of the presence of religion. Archeological discoveries of burial customs and burial goods accompanying the dead in their journey to the other world, and newly discovered prehistoric shrines, reveal concepts and beliefs going back even before the origins of art. When and how were the first religious concepts and rituals conceived? And how did religions acquire their present shape?

1. The Debate on the Origins
2. Spirituality and Religion
3. Religion and Other Intellectual Expressions
4. The Oldest Evidence
5. What Is Animism?
6. Shamanism
7. The Rock Art Archives
8. Religion, Art and Language
9. Memories of the Image
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11. The Oldest Sanctuary
12. Testimonies, Attestations and Contents
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15. Conclusions
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## Conceptual Trends and Conceptual Survival

Anati, E. (ed.)

2023, *Conceptual Trends and Conceptual Survival*

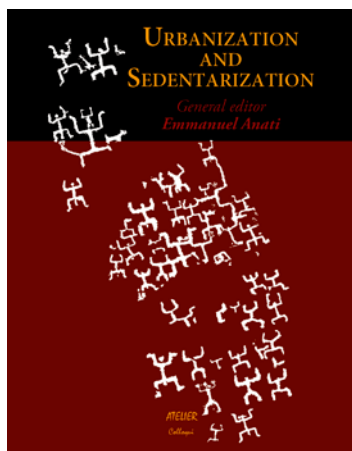
Colloqui XXVII

Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 180 pp., 182 figg. € 40

Cultural and conceptual survival is subject to evolution, like the life of each being, from birth, to growth, aging, and death. And like the life of each being, the conceptions of the human intellect, are subject to evolution: aging is an inevitable process. The human mind is oriented toward survival in its various forms, physical, social, ethnic, economic, ideological, political and emotional. What makes the difference, thus evidencing the cultural identity of each human group, is the conceptual orientation which defines the distinctiveness of the unit involved. The book faces various views of this common denominator, including forms of habits, cooperation, faith, and artistic expressions.

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## Urbanization and Sedentarization

Anati, E. (ed.)

2023, *Urbanization and Sedentarization*

Colloqui XXVIII

Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 280 pp., 296 figg. € 40

From the earliest traces of sedentarization to the present drifts of urbanization, patterns of settlement are the expression of human social and economic adventures. This book mainly focusses on the origins and conceptual evolution of settlement. The causes and effects of living patterns reflect the requirements of society and its means of survival. As a cultural trend, urbanization developed very late: the first town is just 10,000 years old while the first deliberately modeled stone implements were produced over 3 million years ago. The human mind evolved starting with the first pebble-tool, like the material vestiges.

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## HOW TO SPECIALIZE IN CONCEPTUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Conceptual anthropology is a new discipline not yet included in university and college teaching. The main means for learning it is by reading the available publications and by apprenticeship. Other options may provide additional support.

Specialized publications are the main educational and training means, accessible to everyone in all countries, free from the dependence on the four walls of the class-room. The classroom is the planet Earth. And such is also its geographical area of concern. *EXPRESSION* is a quarterly journal, carrying on a continuous discourse, an accumulation of data and concepts, in a global overview. It is the main educational tool for conceptual anthropology. Back issues may be easily consulted. A general index of authors, including the titles of their texts, is included in each issue and helps to find topics. About 250 authors from different world regions make it a natural encyclopedia that is enriched with each issue: it promotes culture, relations, collaboration, and intellectual progress, connecting scholars, students and other readers in over 85 countries. This journal also reaches native communities, in various continents. Other *ATELIER* publications, monographs, analytical books, and research reports are expressions of this new discipline. They are conceived to be scientifically reliable, didactically efficient, pleasant and interesting to read, suitable for researchers and fans without limits of age, culture or ethnic identity. *EXPRESSION* journal is in English. Books are published in English, French and Italian. The publications are designed for the level of university students, and are easy for everyone to read.

Education and training are carried out through an open formula, available at a world level, that is, reading and consulting. Education through publications, both printed and online, reach multitudes without displacing them and is accessible everywhere in the world. Internet and Zoom cannot fully replace direct personal contacts, but allow human and scientific relations all over the planet and favor the participation of both groups and isolated researchers. Aimed at the conceptual aspects of human creativity, imagination, socialization, artistic expression, and spirituality, the *Atelier* publications propose new horizons of teaching and stimulates innovative, creative ways of anthropological and archeological studies. The diffusion of the publications is at an initial stage and requires further development. While in other fields the decrease of the use of books is recorded, in conceptual anthropology books and reading are considered to be the main tool to promote knowledge, understanding, and participation.

Apprentice-ship is based on the individual training of each student, to learn not just the practical application of research but also to discover her/his potential, personality and identity.

Today's students are the teachers and scholars of tomorrow. Since there are no university courses in conceptual anthropology, the training is based on the individual practical work of each candidate. For more details see *EXPRESSION* 38, pp. 68-72.

## ABOUT REFERENCES TO PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

A question was raised by a reader about the source of an image in a previous issue of *EXPRESSION*. The images had previously appeared in two different publications. The reader asked why the reference mentioned the second and not the first one of these previous publications. If an image is repeated in various publications, should the reference be its first or last issue? The editors retain that, to avoid the risk of variation in the different publications, the citation should refer to the publication from which the illustration is taken.

## DEFINITION OF RELATED INSTITUTIONS

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

### WHAT IS CISENP?

*CISENP* is the International Scientific Commission on Research into the Intellectual and Spiritual Expression of Non-literate Peoples. Born as a commission of *UISPP*, the International Union of Prehistoric Sciences, its goals expanded its research fields included other sectors of the humanities, concerning archeologists, anthropologists, art historians and historians of religion. It is a free association. Anyone who is

interested and motivated, may join by requesting <atelier. etno@gmail.com> to be registered as associate and participate according to his/her abilities and interests. Associates receive the EXPRESSION quarterly journal for free. They are contributing activities, including papers and/ or editorial work to the EXPRESSION journal and to other editorial activities by Atelier, and are active in research and social relations. Their membership ceases if they are inactive for a over year. Membership is free: no formal charges or fees are imposed. Donations are welcome.

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EXPRESSION is a quarterly journal addressed to readers in the human and social sciences. Published articles reach academic institutions and cultured people in over 85 countries of five continents. Both text and illustration should be appealing to readers involved in various disciplines of the humanities. Texts should be innovative, awakening curiosity and queries, provoking thinking and, obviously, be reliable and clear. The journal does not publish dry technical or purely descriptive reports and tries to avoid theoretical general disquisitions. Irrelevant references and other unnecessary displays of erudition should be avoided. The publishing language is English (American spelling). Articles are submitted to reviewers. The recommended length of a paper is 2,000 to 5,000 words. Articles counting less than 2,000 words or having no consistent illustration, may be considered for the 'Notes and News' or for the 'Discussion Forum'. Illustrations should

have the resolution of 300 dpi, with a base of 14 cm. They should have an explanatory caption, including its source when relevant. Illustrations should be presented separately from the text. Both text and illustration should be free from copyright and any other obligation, and preferably not yet published elsewhere. Authors are fully responsible for the submitted text and illustrations.

## SHORT COMMENTS BY THE READERS

### COMMENT ON EXPRESSION

*Thanks to all the team of Atelier: EXPRESSION is realizing an essential and necessary work in our time. Strong hugs.*

Dr. Ramon Viñas,  
IPHES (Institut de Paleocologia Humana i Evolució social)  
Montblanc, Tarragona, España

### COMMENTS ON THE MALTA BOOK

*This was for me a mental trip back in timeless time!*

Dr. Carl Masthay, St. Louis, Missouri, USA

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*You are right to rock the boat by asking all those questions. The very task of trying to answer them is in itself a positive intellectual process. There are questions, however, that can never be answered with the limited resources that we can ever have.*

*One particular point I should perhaps make. You limit your references to French 2020, rather than to the rest of the two FRAG-SUS volumes, in which some effort has been made (through the contribution of scientists) to answer some of these questions.*

Prof. Anthony Bonanno, Malta University.

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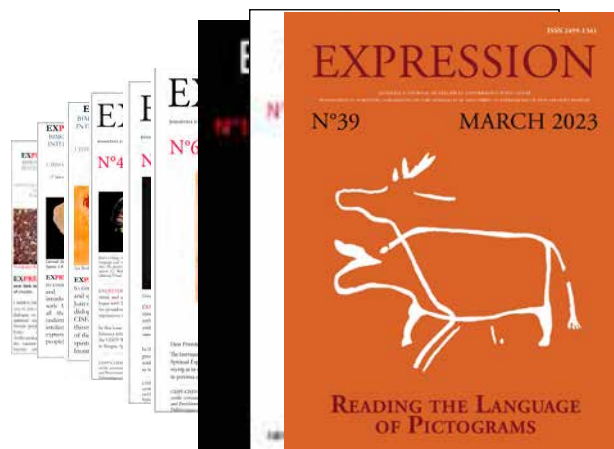
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N°39 March 2023



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*Atelier Research Center  
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ISSN 2499-1341

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

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



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### An Introduction to Conceptual Anthropology

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

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



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

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

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

## Expression 2

November 2013

### What Caused the Creation of Art?

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

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

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



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

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

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

## Expression 3


January 2014

### Discussion about the Targets of Expression Research Group

**EXPRESSION**

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

**N°4** April 2014



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

In this issue of **EXPRESSION**, we present a preliminary selection of the abstracts of participants to the UISPP World Congress “*Neanderthal*” to be held in Burgos, Spain from 1-7 September 2014.

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

As always, we are interested in your comments and look forward to an exchange of questions, comments and suggestions on the CISENP Discussion Forum blog, which will help prepare fruitful discussions for the congress. To be sure, some time before we meet, we will publish contributions acts in the future or blog conversations.

A publication overview: CISENP will be presenting on all geographical regions and from a number of disciplines and interdisciplinary perspectives. The spiritual and intellectual expressions of non-literate peoples constitute a particular focus in the research of such as and extending the archaeological, anthropological, cognitive neuroscience, psychology, and genetics – we would see perhaps the enrichment of the emerging field of the interdisciplinary field of “*Conceptual Anthropology*”.

We seek to investigate cultural and spiritual expressions as they are a fundamental which to discover the human mind. Decoding the significance and purposes of visual images, signs and symbols, means decoding our collective memory both our thousands of years to the present. CISENP will discuss past questions and signs regarding our own research contributions. Let us know what path you are on, for your way to Atapuerca.

Candida Galvão

## Expression 4

April 2014

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

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



**Expression 5**

*June 2014*

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

*With articles by Li An and Junsheng Wu (China), Aoyungerile and Ying An (China), Beatriz Menéndez/Quijada César/Vinas Ramon/Albert Rubio and Santos Neemias (Mexico, Spain), Margalit Berriet (France), Ana M.S. Bettencourt (Portugal), Bo Cao (China), Chakravarty Somnath (India), Manuel Edo/Ferran Antolin/Pablo Martínez/M<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 Shabam and Anna Belfer-Cohen (Israel), Zeming Shi/Xiaoxia Zhang and Yanqin Jing (China), Xiaoyong Sun and Jiaying Zhang (China), Viktor Vetrov (Ukraine), Liangfan Wang and Xiaoming Luo (China), Jiakai Wu (China), Qiuping Zhu (China), Liefeng Zhu and Xu Wang (China).*

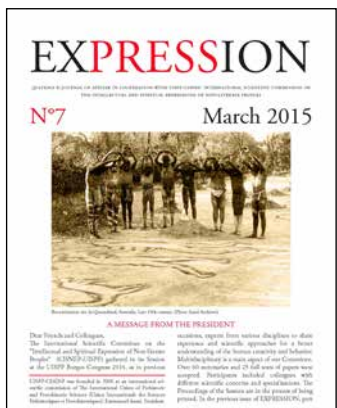


**Expression 6**

*August 2014*

**Summaries of the Session at the UISPP Burgos Congress**

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



**Expression 7**

*March 2015*

**Spiritual Dimensions of Rock Art**

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

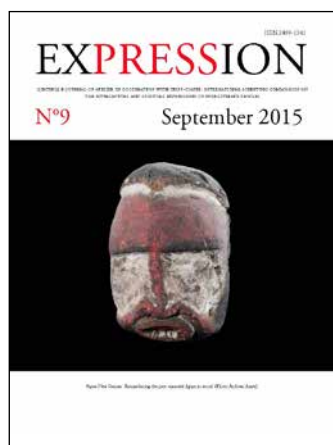


**Expression 8**

*June 2015*

**Rock Art: When, Why and to Whom?**

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

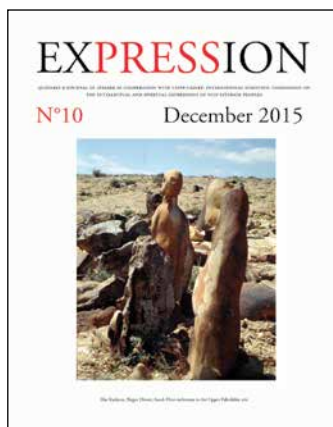


**Expression 9**  
September 2015

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

*Presenting the WWW Project.*

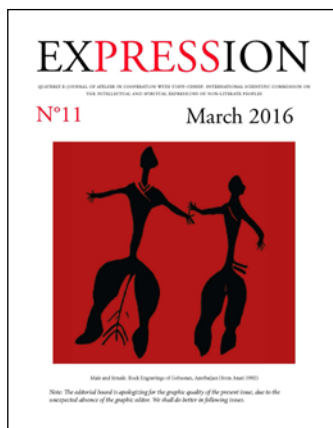
*With articles by Monia Chies (Italy), David Delnoy and Marcel Otte (Belgium), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Chris Hegg (USA), Emmanuelle Honoré (UK), Bulu Imam (India), Shemsi Krasniqi (Kosovo), Trond Lødøen (Norway), Cristina Lopes (Portugal), Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Federico Mailland (Switzerland),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



**Expression 10**  
December 2015

**The Role of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft in Prehistoric and Tribal Art**

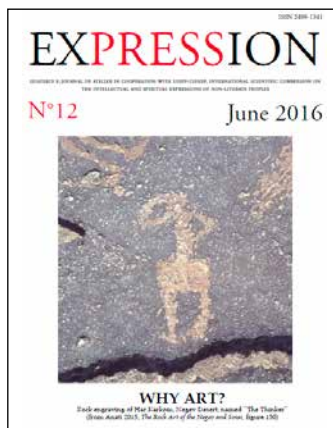
*With articles by Jaâfar Ben Nasr (Tunisia), Ingmar M. Braun (Switzerland), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Arnaud F. Lambert (USA), Maria Laura Leone (Italy), J. D. Lewis-Williams (South Africa), Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Federico Mailland (Switzerland), Nataliia Mykhailova (Ukraine), Susan Searight-Martinet (Morocco), Hans-Joachim Ulbrich (Austria), Vahanyan Gregori (Armenia) and Steven J. Waller (USA).*



**Expression 11**  
March 2016

**Male and Female in Prehistoric and Tribal Art**

*With articles by Margalit Berriet (France), Carl Bjork (Usa), Pascale Binant (France), Brian Britten (Canada), Jessica Joyce Christie (Usa), Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimaraes (Brazil), Deb Holt and Jane Ross (Australia), Arnaud F. Lambert (Usa), Federico Mailland and Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Katharina Rebay-Salisbury (Austria), Susan Searight - Martinet (Morocco), Jitka Soukopova (Italy), Sachin Kr Tiwary (India), Maarten Van Hoek (Holland), Aixa Vidal/Lorena Ferraro and Maria Teresa Pagni (Argentina).*

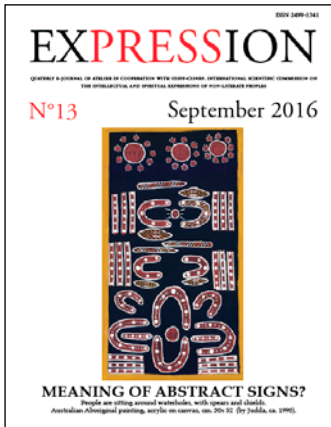


**Expression 12**  
June 2016

**Why Art?**

*With articles by Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty (India), Liudmila Lbova (Russia), Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay (Mexico) and Derek Hodgson (UK), Ancila Nhamo (Zimbabwe), Marcel Otte (Belgium), Kalle Sognnes (Norway), Jitka Soukopova (UK), George F. Steiner (Switzerland) and Tsoni Tsonev (Bulgaria).*



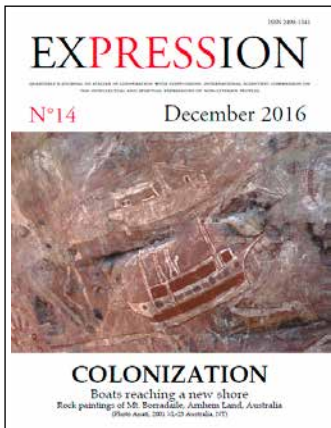


**Expression 13**

*September 2016*

**Abstract Signs in Prehistoric and Tribal Art: Meaning and Problems of Interpretation**

*With articles by Margalit Berriet (France), Jean Clottes (France), Jagannath Dash (India), Maurer Dieter (Switzerland), Edmund Furter (South Africa), Thirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay and Alan P. Garfinkel (Usa), Tsoni Tsonov (Bulgaria) and Leslie Van Gelder (Usa).*

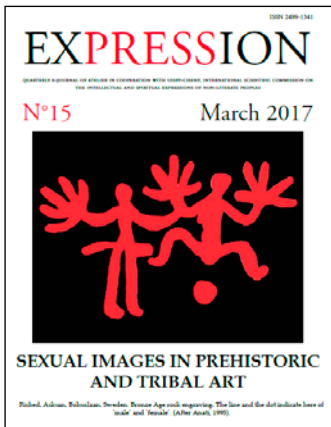


**Expression 14**

*December 2016*

**Colonization: How Did Humans Reach All the Lands of the Planet?**

*With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Marta Arzarello (Italy), Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Anthony Bonanno (Malta), José Farruja de la Rosa (Spain), Edmund Furter (South Africa), Marcel Otte (Belgium), Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimaraes and Leidiana Alves de Mota (Brazil).*



**Expression 15**

*March 2017*

**Sexual Images in Prehistoric and Tribal Art**

*With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Leo Dubal (France), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Michel Justamand and Pedro Paulo A. Funari (Brazil), Shensi Krasniqi (Kosovo), Angelina Magnotta (Italy), Marc Martinez/Michel Lenoir and Anne-Catherine Welté (France), Terence Meaden (UK), Nataliia Mykhailova (Ukraine) and Jitka Soukopova (UK).*

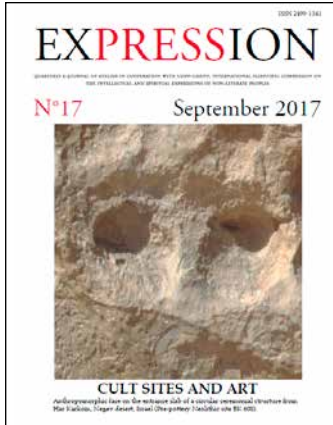


**Expression 16**

*June 2017*

**The Message Behind the Images in Prehistoric and Tribal Art**

*With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Emilio G. Berrocal (Italy), Ekaterina Devlet (Russia), A. José Farruja de la Rosa (Spain), Edmond Furter (South Africa), Alexandre Guida Navarro (Brazil), Cristina Lopes (Portugal), Terence Meaden (Uk), Cynthia Ontiretse Mooketsi (Botswana), Jacinto Palma Dias (Portugal), Radoslaw Palonka (Poland), Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay (Mexico), Alan Garfinkel (Usa), Luis Ramon Merchan Villalba (Colombia), Vahan Vahanyan and Gregori Vahanyan (Armenia).*

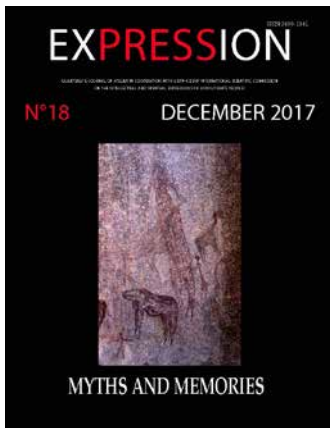


**Expression 17**

*September 2017*

**Cult Sites and Art**

*With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Margalit Berriet (France), Jerzy Gassowski (Poland), Kempe Stephan F.J. and Al-Malabeh Ahmad (Germany, Jordan), Terence Meaden (UK), Kalle Sognnes (Norway), Sachin Tiwary (India), Gregori Vahanyan (Armenia), Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães Santiago (Brazil).*

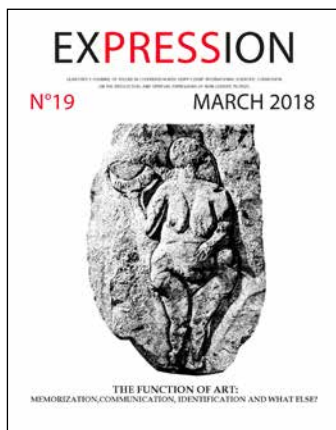


**Expression 18**

*December 2017*

**Myths and Memories: Stories Told by Pictures**

*With articles by Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Margalit Berriet (France), Gassowski Jerzy (Poland), Kempe Stephan F.J. and Al-Malabeh Ahmad (Germany, Jordan), Terence Meaden (UK), Tiwary Sachin (India), Kalle Sognnes (Norway), Gregor Vahanyan (Armenia) and Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães Santiago (Brazil).*



**Expression 19**

*March 2018*

**The Function of Art: Memorization, Communication and What Else?**

*With articles by Bulu Imam (India), Devlet Ekaterina (Russia), Kraniqi Shemsi (Kosovo), Lopes Cristina (Portugal), Maurer Dieter (Switzerland), Moulton Susan (USA), Vahanyan Vahan (Armenia), Villa Marta and Nisi Domenico (Italy).*



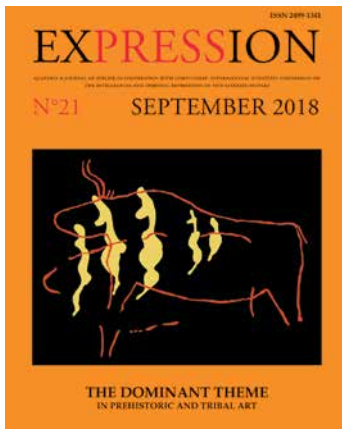
**Expression 20**

*June 2018*

**The Function of Art: Memorization, Communication and What Else?**

*Part II*

*With articles by: Mailland Federico (Switzerland), Marler Joan (USA), Mykhailova Nataliia (Ukraine), Prasad Awadh Kishore (India), Warland Jacinta (Australia).*



**Expression 21**

*September 2018*

**The Dominant Theme in Prehistoric and Tribal Art**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Shanandoah Anderson (USA), Sara Garcês, Luiz Oosterbeek (Portugal), Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Suely Amâncio Martinelli (Brazil), Gregori Vahanyan, Vahanyan Vahan, Baghdasaryan Vard (Armenia), Jessie Van Cauter, Marc De Bie (Belgium).*

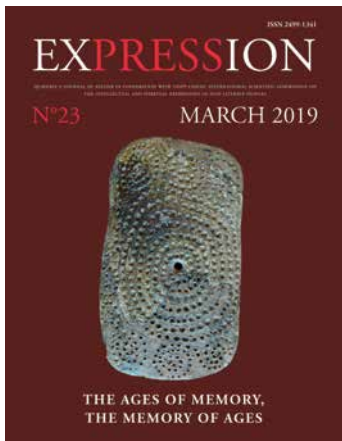


**Expression 22**

*December 2018*

**The Dominant Theme in Prehistoric and Tribal Art - Part II**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Margalit Berriet (France), Amélie Bonnet-Balazut (France), Bulu Imam (India), Carol Patterson (USA).*

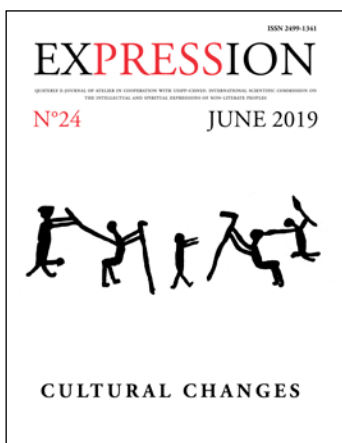


**Expression 23**

*March 2019*

**The Age of Memory, the Memory of Ages**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Fernando A. Coimbra (Portugal), Leo Dubal (France), Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães (Brazil), Liudmila Lbova, Tatyana Rostyazhenko (Siberian Federal District, Russia), Aixa Vidal (Argentina)*



**Expression 24**

*June 2019*

**Cultural Changes**

*With articles by: Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), Brian Hayden (Canada), Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Pedro Paulo Funari (Brazil), Majeed Khan (Saudi Arabia), Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay, Armando Pérez Crespo (Mexico), Simon Radchenko, Dmytro Nykonenko (Ukraine)*



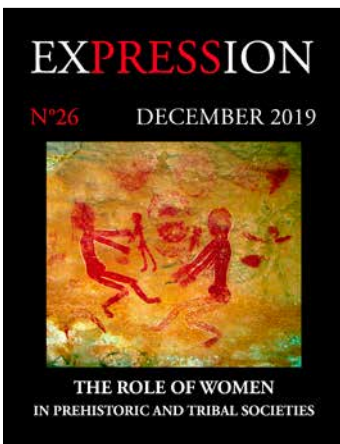


**Expression 25**

*September 2019*

**Cultural Changes - Part II**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Jean Clottes (France), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Carol Patterson (USA), Raj Somadeva, Anusha Wanninayake, Dinesh Devage, Resta Fernando(Sri Lanka)*

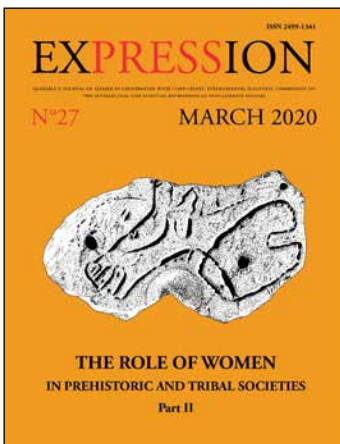


**Expression 26**

*December 2019*

**The Role of Women in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), JSantiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimarães (Brazil), Michel Justamand, Gabriel Frechiani de Oliveira, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Vanessa Belarmino da Silva, Pedro Paulo Funar (Brazil), Majeed Khan (Saudi Arabia), Ruman Banerjee (India), Somnath Chakraverty (India), David W. Robinson (UK), Jitka Soukopova (UK)*



**Expression 27**

*March 2020*

**The Role of Women in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies - Part II**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Meenakshi Dubey-Pathak (India), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Maria Laura Leone (Italy), Carol Patterson (USA)*

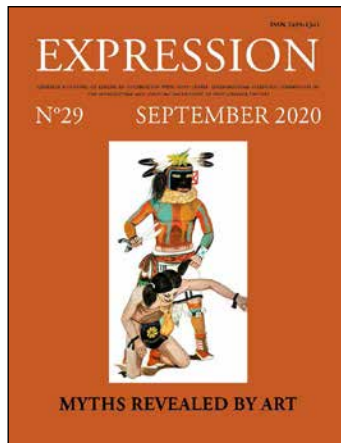


**Expression 28**

*June 2020*

**On the Diffusion of Culture**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Herman Bender (USA), Anthony Bonanno (Malta), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Annik Schnitzler (France), Jitka Soukopova (UK)*



**Expression 29**  
*September 2020*

**Myths Revealed by Art**

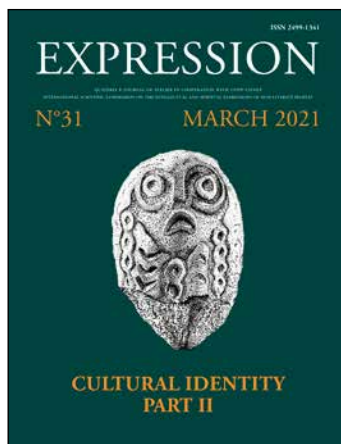
*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Meenakshi Dubey-Pathak (India), Terence Meaden (UK), Alessandro Menardi Noguera (Italy), Carol Patterson (USA)*



**Expression 30**  
*December 2020*

**Cultural Identity**

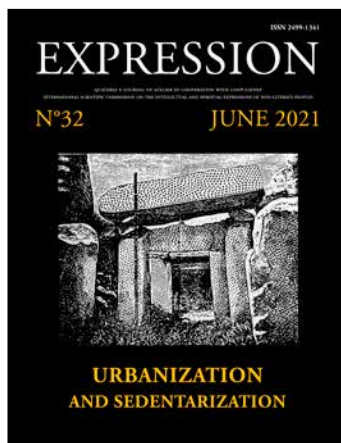
*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Amélie Bonnet Balazut (France), Stavros D. Kiotsekoglou (Greece), Giuseppe Orefici (Perù), Jitka Soukopova (Czech Republic)*



**Expression 31**  
*March 2021*

**Cultural Identity - Part II**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Léo Dubal (France), Michel Justamand, Cristiane de Andrade Buco, Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida, Antoniel dos Santos Gomes Filho, Albérico Queiroz, Gabriel F. de Oliveira, Mateus Freitas de Oliveira, Leandro Paiva (Brasil), Terence Meaden (UK), Alessandro Menardi Noguera (Italy)*



**Expression 32**  
*June 2021*

**Urbanization Origins**

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

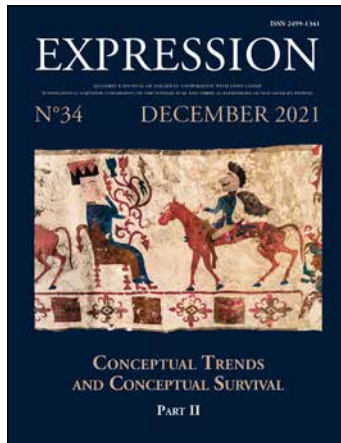


**Expression 33**

*September 2021*

**Cultural Trends and Conceptual Survival**

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

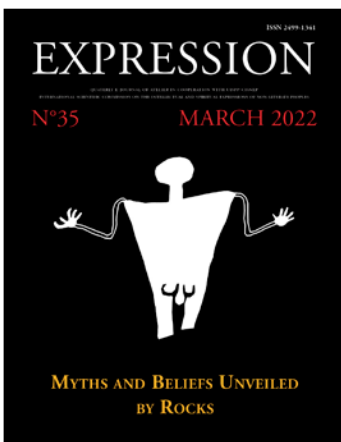


**Expression 34**

*December 2021*

**Cultural Trends and Conceptual Survival - Part II**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Michel Justamand (Brasil), Ana Cristina Alves Balbino (Brasil), Vanessa da Silva Belarmino (Brasil), Vitor José Rampaneli de Almeida (Brasil), Gabriel F de Oliveira (Brasil), Matteus Freitas de Oliveira (Brasil), Cristina Lopes (Portugal), Ioannis Papadimitriou (Greece)*



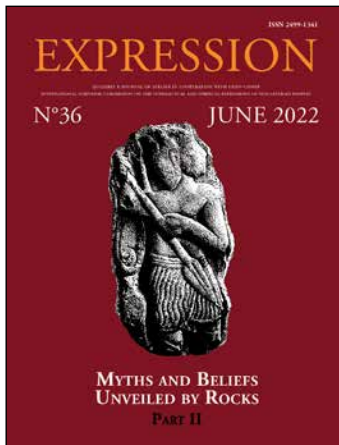
**Expression 35**

*March 2022*

**Myths and Beliefs Unveiled by Rocks**

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



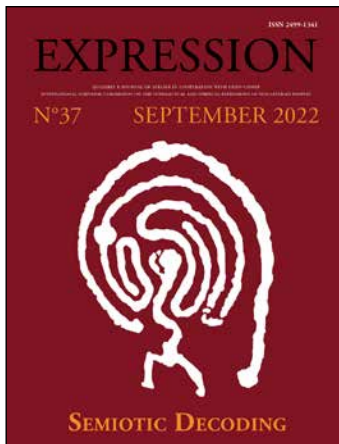


**Expression 36**

*June 2022*

**Myths and Beliefs Unveiled by Rocks, Part II**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Francesco Bandarin (Italy), Stavros D. Kiotsekoglou (Greece), Spyros P. Pagkalis (Greece), Apostolos Th. Tsakridis (Greece), Carol Patterson (USA)*

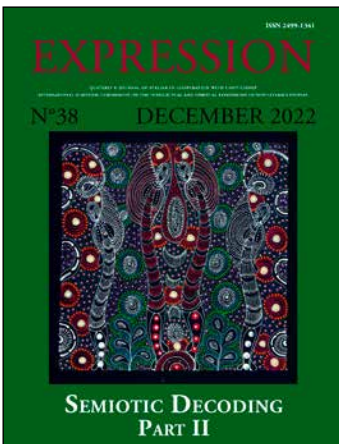


**Expression 37**

*September 2022*

**Semiotic Decoding**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Carol Patterson (USA), S. Rama Krishna Pisipaty (India), Li Man (China), Shi Lanying (China), Tang Huisheng (China)*

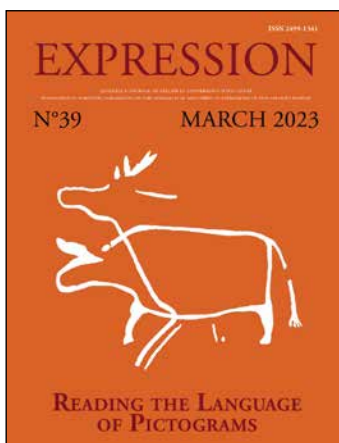


**Expression 38**

*December 2022*

**Semiotic Decoding, Part II**

*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Flavio Barbiero (Italy), Fabio Crosilla (Italy), Xu Feng (China), Deborah Hurn (Australia), Terence Meaden (UK), Umberto Sansoni (Italy)*



**Expression 39**

*March 2023*

**Reading the Language of Pictograms**

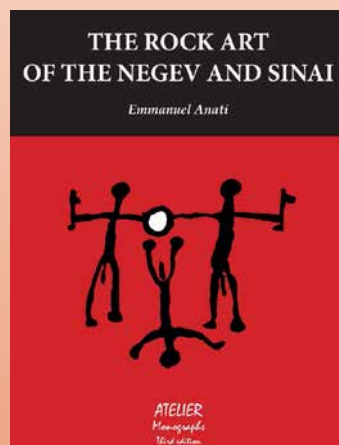
*With articles by: Emmanuel Anati (Italy), Flavio Barbiero (Italy), Ariela Fradkin (Italy), Santiago Wolnei Ferreira Guimaraes (Brazil), Luc Hermann (Belgium), Federico Mailland (Italy), Carol Patterson (USA), David M. Witelson (South Africa)*

# ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Atelier is pleased to present

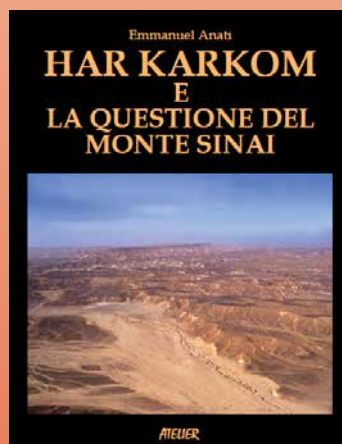
## ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE DESERT EXODUS: NEW DISCOVERIES RELATED TO BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY

From excavations and explorations in the deserts that separate the land of Canaan from Egypt, Emmanuel Anati, the scholar who for half a century is exploring these deserts, sums up new discoveries in the following volumes. Richly illustrated books bring new light on the events that inspired the Biblical narrative.



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

The book deals with a new theme of Neareastern archeology: the rock art of the Negev and Sinai. It presents new discoveries and reconsiders contents and assumptions of previous articles and of a book by the same author that dates back to 1979. The richly illustrated book is offering a new vision of this immense archive engraved and painted on rocks that reveals events and beliefs of the desert. The rock art of the Negev and Sinai illustrates stories and customs of the Sinai Peninsula over the past 10,000 years. Some depictions of the Bronze Age may refer to people mentioned in the Pentateuch. Others, of Roman-Byzantine times, illustrate life and customs from the age of early spread of Christianity.



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

Capo di Ponte (Atelier), pp 220; 138 ill., €30,00

The findings of shrines and encampments of the Bronze Age at Har Karkom, a mountain located in one of the driest places and inhospitable parts of the Negev desert, in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, arouses a global debate on the hypothesis that this mountain can identify with the biblical Mount Sinai. The book presents a summary of the discoveries; it calls into question previous assumptions about the reliability of the Exodus Biblical narrative, both on the location of the mythical Mount Sinai, and on the chronological discrepancies proposed by various researchers. The book is richly documented by photographs, maps and other illustrations, it updates on recent discoveries, analyzing their possible historical significance, suggesting a new vision of the events narrated in the Bible.



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

Monografie XVI (in Italian)

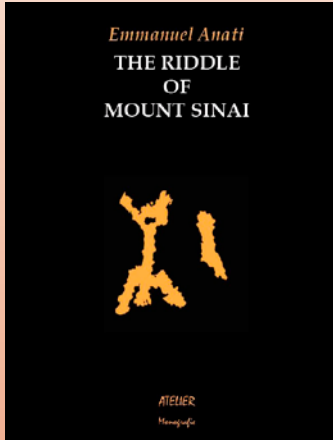
Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 104 pp. 54 figg. € 20

The discovery of a Paleolithic sanctuary, the oldest known, in the middle of the desert, and right in the desert of the biblical Exodus and the perennial exodus, along the great migratory route between Africa and Asia, awakens questions about the spiritual and conceptual world of the origins of religion. The surprise of this volume is that it reveals how and why. Concepts and beliefs emerge that gave rise to one of the oldest religious expressions in the world: it adds a new chapter in the history of religions.

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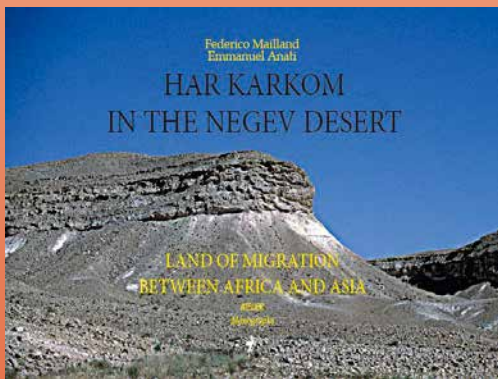
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Anati, E. 2017, *The Riddle of Mount Sinai*, Second English Edition

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

What is the true story behind the biblical narration of Exodus? The discoveries of the Italian archaeological expedition at Har Karkom, in the Negev Desert, tell the hitherto unknown story of the sacred mountain in the heart of the desert of Exodus, reflecting surprising similarities to the events and conditions described to us, albeit in mythicised form, in the Old Testament. The mountain was a paramount cult site and the archaeological discoveries go far beyond the expectations. This well documented volume also helps to clarify a major question: to what extent may we consider the biblical narration as a source of historical documentation.



Anati, E.; Maillard F., 2018, *Har Karkom in the Negev Desert. Raw Material for a Museum on Two Million Years of Human Presence*

Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 130 pp., 534 pls., € 110, English Edition

A mountain located in the land-bridge between Africa and the rest of the world yielded traces of ages of human presence ever since the first steps of the human ancestors out of Africa. The archeological discoveries tell us of two million years, from the earliest stations of archaic Pebble Culture, to recent Bedouin camping sites. The site became a holy mountain with shrines and other cult structures already in the Paleolithic; it developed into an immense cult site in the Bronze Age, likely to be the biblical Mount Sinai. The present book is displaying the results of over 30 years of fieldwork, the raw material of the sequence of ages, for a museum on Har Karkom in the Negev Desert, presenting the story of humankind as concentrated in a mountain of a few square miles in the middle of one of the most arid and nowadays most inhospitable spots in the Near East.

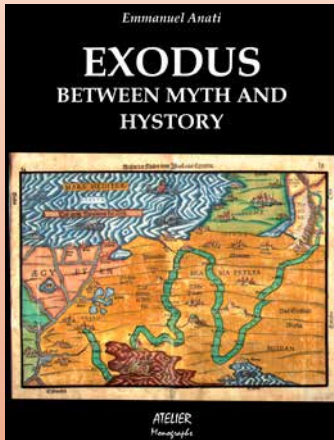
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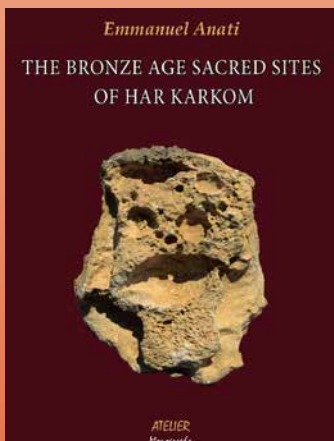
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## ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE



Anati, E., 2018: *Exodus Between Myth and History*, English edition Capodiponte (Atelier) pp. 388; 138 pls., Analytical Appendix., € 40,00  
Different opinions divided the academic world about the historic reliability of the biblical narrative of Exodus. The events in Egypt, the wanderings in the desert under the leadership of Moses and the events at the foot of Mount Sinai are they based on facts or are they just legend? Broad and systematic explorations on the ground and new archaeological discoveries open up the possibility of tracing back the geographical and environmental context, by providing elements that bring new insight on the historical roots of this magnificent epic passed down from the Bible.



Anati, E., 2022, *The Bronze Age Sacred Sites of Har Karkom*  
Monograph XVIII, Capo di Ponte (Atelier), 124 pp., 118 figg. € 20

The Har Karkom Bronze Age cult sites, found on the mountain and in the surrounding valleys, the types of altars, ritual platforms, private sanctuaries, shrines, temples, anthropomorphic cult-stones, menhirs and standing pillars, tumuli, geoglyphs and rock art, disclose the vast dimensions of rituals, traditions and beliefs of the tribal world in the desert, related to the narrations of the biblical book of Exodus.

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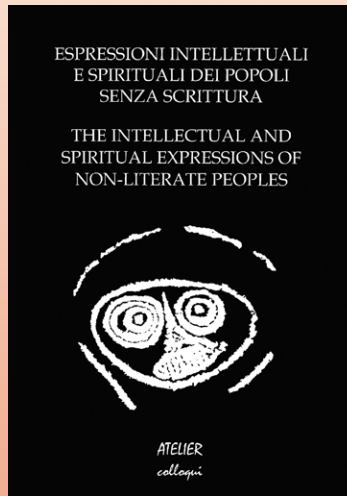
# ATELIER' PUBLICATIONS

## colloqui



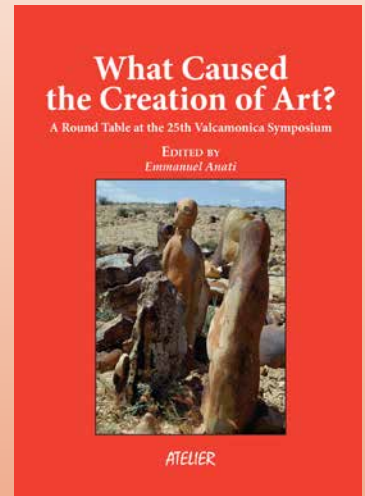
### Il segni originari dell'arte (In Italian)

Proceedings of the Colloquium held at the University of Urbino in 2010. Essays by nine authors who deal with the theme seen from various disciplines: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art History, Semiotics, Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Sociology.



### Espressioni intellettuali dei popoli senza scrittura (In Italian, English, French)

Proceedings of the Colloquium organized in Valcamonica by the International Union of Prehistoric Sciences in 2012. Essays by 30 authors from 11 countries on the intellectual expressions of the primary societies.



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

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



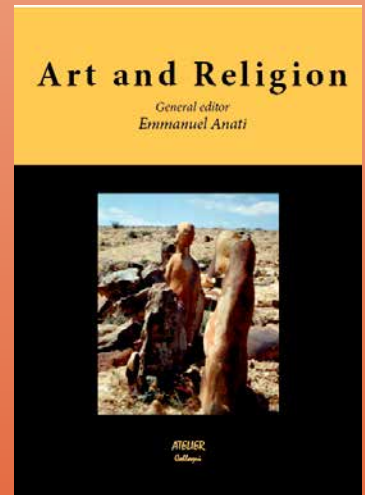
### Sogno e memoria: Per una psicoanalisi della Preistoria (In Italian)

A series of papers presented at Congresses of Sociology, Psychology and Psychoanalysis concern. The analysis of human behavior and of graphic art externalizations is opening new perspectives to the social sciences and multidisciplinary cooperation.



### Semiotica dell'arte preistorica (In Italian)

The conceptual meaning of the forms, the metamorphosis of shapes into sounds, sounds in forms, ideas into images, thoughts in words, it is the very basis of identity of the intellectual being, of 'Homo intellectualis'. This mechanism stimulated, over the years, some of the author's papers and lectures in congresses and conferences of semiotics, sociology and psychology.



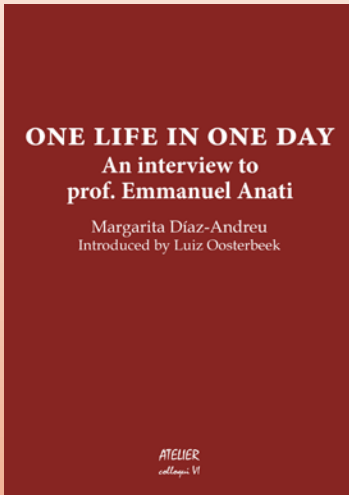
### Art and Religion

What is the role of religion, magic and witchcraft in prehistoric and tribal art? The intellectual and spiritual motivations of art produced various theories since the first attempts to explain prehistoric art over a century ago. Recent research is revealing more complex conceptual connections. In this book, authors of different backgrounds and countries, from four continents, present examples of specific aspects, providing first-hand data.

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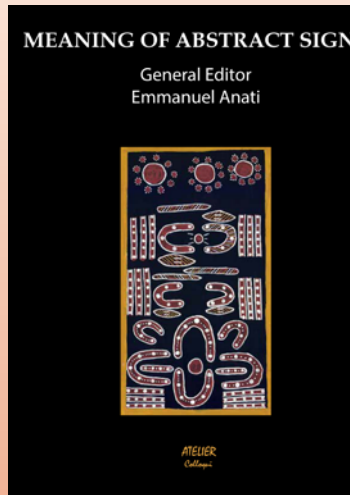
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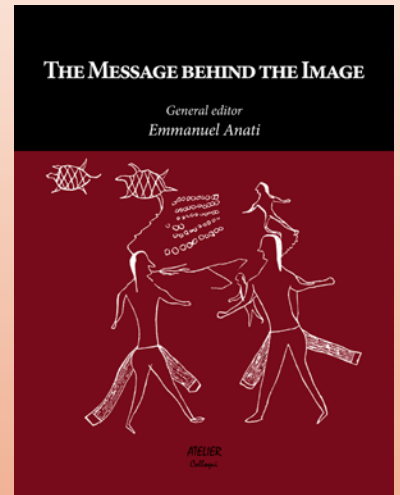
### One Life in One Day. An interview to prof. Emmanuel Anati

In the gardens of the campus of Burgos University, while delegates were moving from sessions and lectures to coffee breaks and back, Margarita Díaz-Andreu recorded, for hours, the words of Professor Emmanuel Anati. It was the 5th of September 2014 and when the electric lights of the evening replaced the sunlight, a life-long story was drafted. It concerned just one aspect of Anati's life, that of his experiences as a scholar in the human sciences.



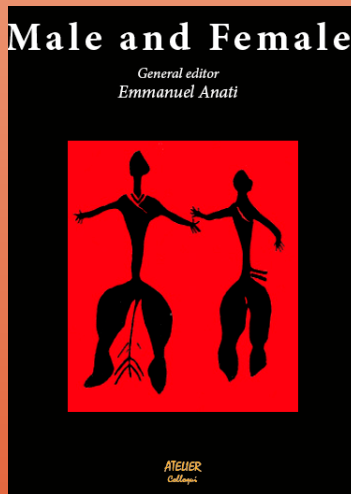
### Meaning of Abstract Signs

The clan was planning a fight against another clan that had abused hospitality hunting kangaroos in a reserved ground. The painter recorded the gathering of the elders to decide the expelling of the guest clan. He represented the elders and the warriors by standard signs. The art-dealer sold the painting as an "Aboriginal abstract composition". The meaning came from the people of the clan who saw the painting explaining the recorded event. Other examples and studies attempt at defining the meaning of abstract signs.



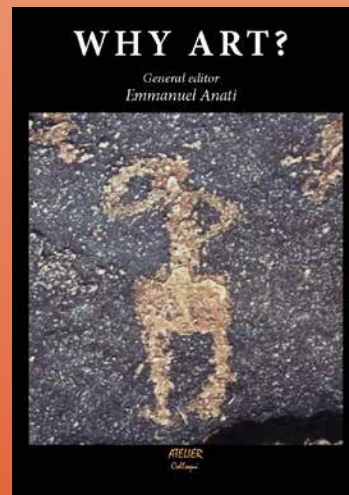
### The message behind the image

Prehistoric and tribal people have left behind millions of images, in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Was their purpose just that of embellishing rock surfaces? What pushed people from all over the world to record their memories throughout the ages? This immense heritage, whether intentional or not, is full of messages to be read and understood.



### Male and Female

The book includes papers of 20 authors from five continents. It considers human representations in prehistoric and tribal art presenting a broad landscape of different views and cases. In each age and culture a specific choice is emerging in the visual arts, between preferring male or female images, and between having or not the human figure as the main concern. The book presents different cases and views from experts of five continents.



### Why Art

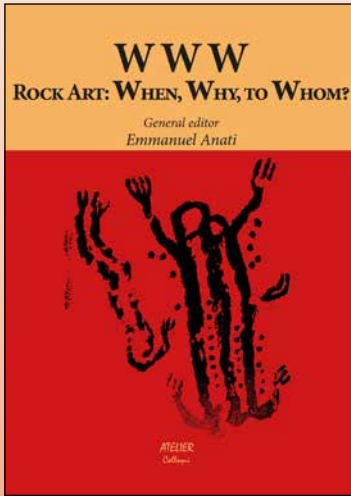
The volume presents a search of contents by scholars from different continents with different experiences. Prehistoric art is like the literature of more recent times, some depictions may concern science, others religion, some may be school textbooks and others fiction. The decoding of prehistoric art helps to approach the understanding of contents and motivations

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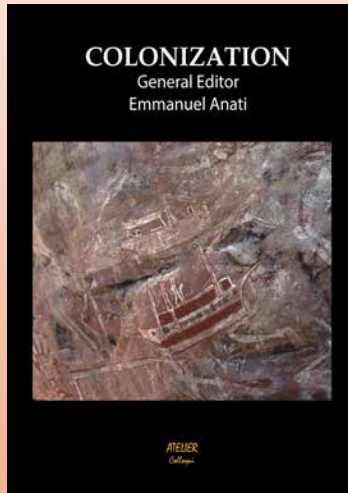
## Colloqui



### WWW - Rock Art:

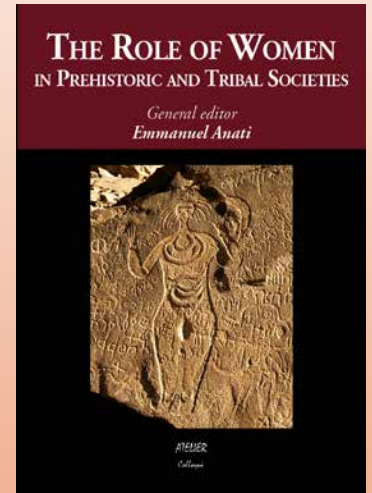
#### When, Why and to Whom

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



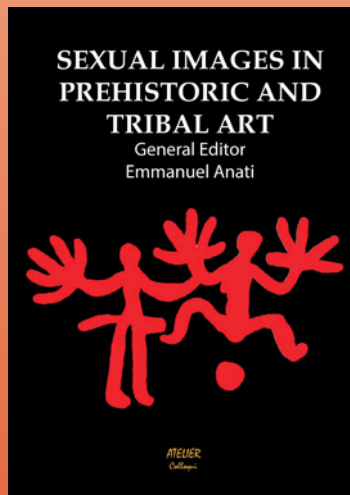
### Colonization

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



### The Role of Women

in Prehistoric and Tribal Societies  
The social roles of women, as those of men, are subject to biological, social, economic and cultural factors. Such roles are not the same among clans of hunters, tribes of rice growers, or complex urban societies. They are not the same in urban Kabul and in urban Las Vegas. Some societies allow more variability than others.



### Sexual Images in Prehistoric and Tribal Art

Since the earliest figurative art, sex appears to be a theme of primary concern in every corner of the world. Why were such depictions made? In some cases oral traditions allow us to identify the cause or the inspiration. Can we trace back the stories behind the images? Sharing knowledge is favoring an overview on images, myths, rituals and customs related to sex, in prehistoric and tribal art.

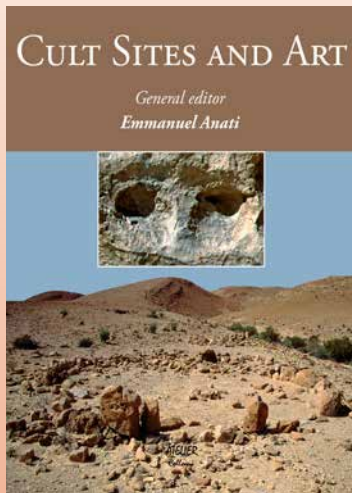


### Etnogastronomia La cucina dei popoli (In Italian)

Tra le 10.000 popolazioni che vivono negli oltre 200 Paesi del pianeta Terra, abbiamo scelto le cucine di undici punti del globo, descrivendole nelle loro caratteristiche essenziali, fornendo ricette accettabili dal gusto occidentale, e realizzabili con prodotti facilmente reperibili. Capire il sapore del diverso, è saper apprezzare non solo i cibi, ma anche i sorrisi dei popoli.

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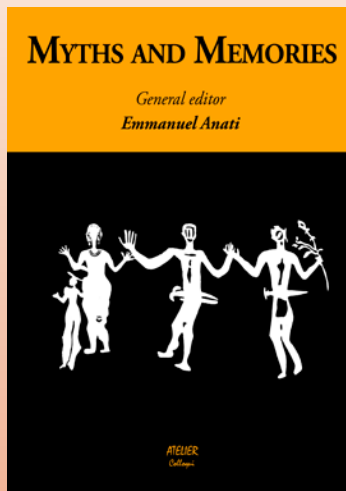
## Colloqui



### Cult Sites and Art

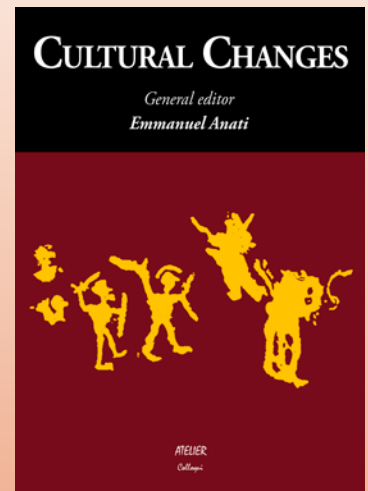
The volume is the printed version of number 17 (2017) of EXPRESSION, the quarterly online journal on conceptual anthropology. Sites of worship have had religious images and symbols since prehistoric times.

The relationship between religion and art emerges in its variants and in its purposes. Significant examples are presented by the authors, in Israel and the Middle East, in Armenia, Tunisia, Europe, Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, showing a conceptual archetype that has persisted since distant prehistoric times.



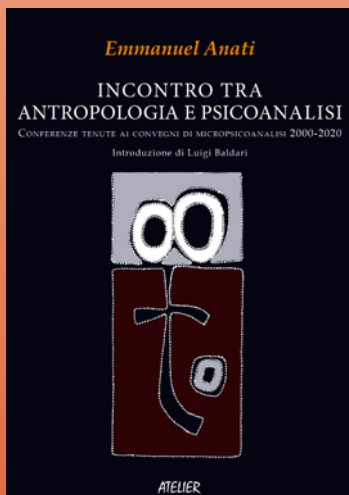
### Myths and Memories

Was the mind of early man much different from ours? Decorated caves, megalithic monuments, early shrines, sites of rock art, are the containers of myths and memories, the testimony of the immense variety of beliefs and habits, the source for an as yet unwritten history of mankind: the existential expressions of people's real and imaginary, myths and memories. Different facets of the theme are considered by nine authors of nine different countries of three continents.



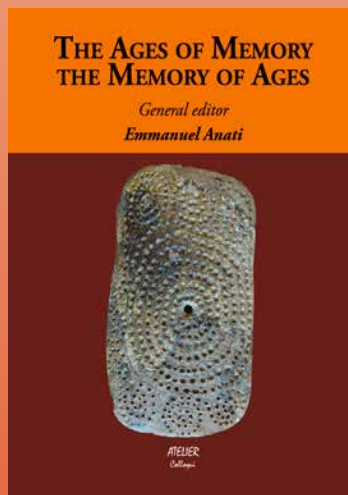
### Cultural Changes

By its own nature culture moves and changes. The reasons that led to these changes are not always evident. When available, the causes help us to conceive what the past can teach us about understanding the present and attempting figuring out the future. Eighteen authors from ten countries in five continents present different aspects of cultural changes. Each article contributes a small but meaningful tessera of the fascinating mosaic of cultural changes in a world perspective.



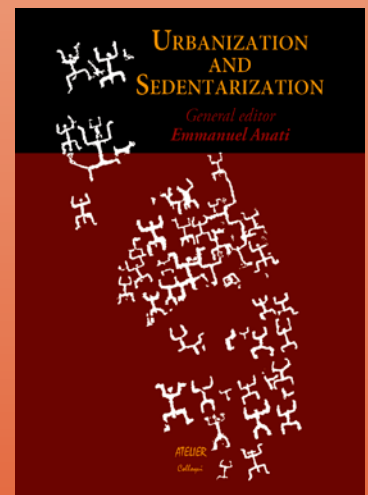
### Incontro tra antropologia e psicoanalisi (in Italian)

The volume collects 16 lectures by Anati at conventions of psychoanalysts on his conceptual system to overcome the frontiers that separate different disciplines, for a new vision of research in the human and social sciences.



### The Ages of Memory The Memory of Ages

When prehistoric art is decoded it becomes an invaluable cultural source in itself. An additional step is attempting to use it as a document to reconstruct the cause of its creation. What did actually happen, what were the reasons that brought about the graphic production that has reached us, and what story does it tell? "This is not the task of archeology!" Right! It is the task of conceptual anthropology.



### Urbanization and Sedentarization

From the earliest traces of sedentarization to the present drifts of urbanization, patterns of settlement are the expression of human social and economic adventures. This book mainly focusses on the origins and conceptual evolution of settlement. The causes and effects of living patterns reflect the requirements of society and its means of survival.

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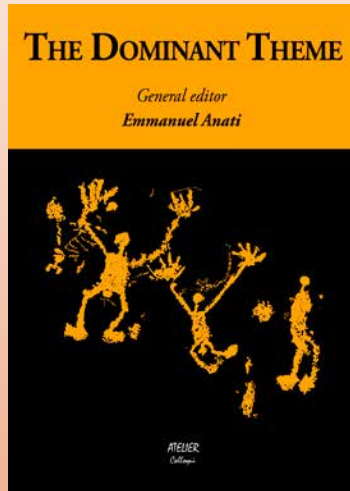
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## Colloqui



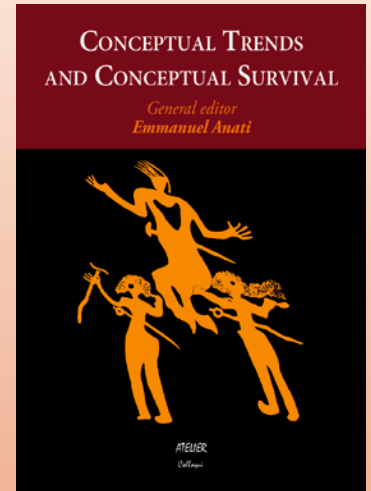
### The Function of Art

Recent studies are stressing that prehistoric art had as many different purposes as those of more recent written literature, religious and not, historical or imaginary, aimed at memorization, communication, magic, commemoration, recording, affirmation of cultural or ethnic identity and much else. Such functions may vary from site to site and from one culture to another.



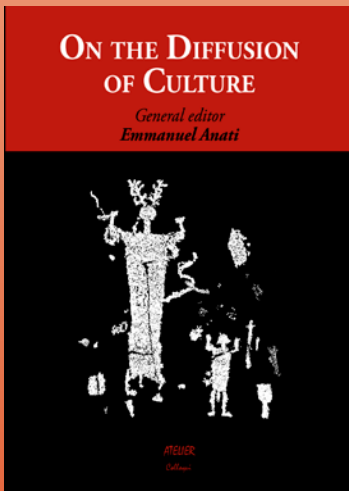
### The Dominant Theme

Like any other style or period of visual art, each assemblage of prehistoric and tribal art has a dominant theme. Some focus on anthropomorphic figures, others on animals, others on signs, symbols or ideograms. Well-known sites of prehistoric art display millenary sequences of different phases showing changes in the dominant theme from one period to another. What is the meaning and function of the dominant theme? Visual expressions are a mirror of the mind and soul of their makers.



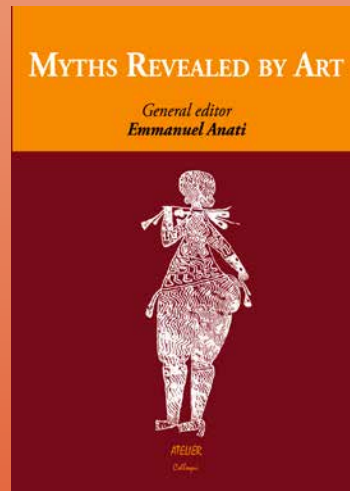
### Conceptual Trends and Conceptual Survival

Cultural and conceptual survival is subject to evolution, like the life of each being, from birth, to growth, aging, and death. And like the life of each being, the conceptions of the human intellect, are subject to evolution: aging is an inevitable process. The human mind is oriented toward survival in its various forms, physical, social, ethnic, economic, ideological, political and emotional.



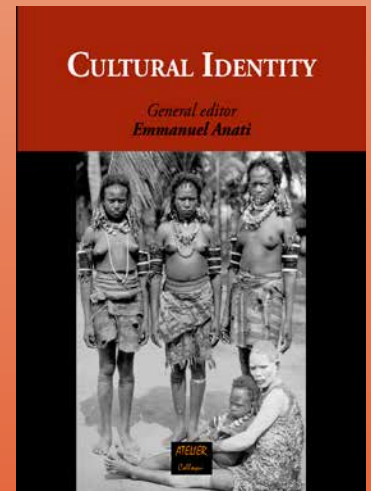
### On the Diffusion of Culture

The multi-millenary history of man is made of many stories, they are your heritage, whoever you are, they reveal the identity of your ancestors: explorers, pushed by the biggest fault and the biggest gift of our species: curiosity. Clamorous events like the diffusion of European culture in Australia changed its ethnic identity; the diffusion of Christianity in Latin America or of Islam in Asia and Africa introduced new values and changed beliefs and social traditions.



### Myths Revealed by Art

Prehistoric art illustrates the real and the imaginary realms of their makers. It is an immense visual archive representing a global phenomenon that records, memorizes and reveals human concepts, facts, beliefs, and emotions for ages, all over the globe. It is by far the largest documentation of the intellectual history of our species. The images survived, but their meaning has to be recovered.



### Cultural Identity

Cultural identity has two faces: how you define your cultural identity and how other people define it. The patterns and trends of these definitions vary according to conceptual orientations. Both definitions of past and of contemporary societies are subjective, as we look at them with the eyes of our own culture, and with the conditioning of our own indoctrination. Can there be an objective way of defining cultural identity?

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# ATELIER' PUBLICATIONS

## Essays



### Origini della Musica (in Italian)

How and why did music originate? What function did it hold for the individual and for society? The book presents the oldest documentation of prehistoric art and archeology on the presence of music, dance and musical instruments. The text is accompanied by figures of the oldest musical instruments known to date and images depicting music and dance.



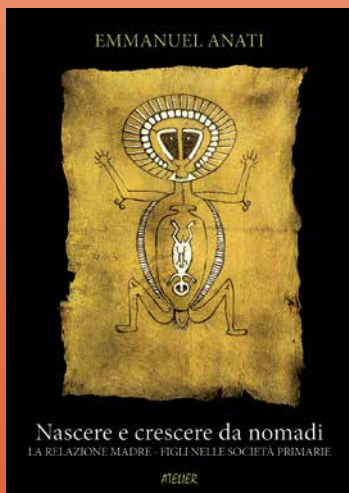
### Iniziazione e riti di passaggio (in Italian)

What are the origins of baptism, circumcision, marriage and burial? The practices of initiation and rites of passage of certain Aboriginal clans of Arnhem Land, Australia, reveal the archetypes of accepted practices which are still common to many peoples of the world. The ritual has the dual role of educating and socializing. It has maintained stable their life of clans for millennia, serving as the glue between individual and group.



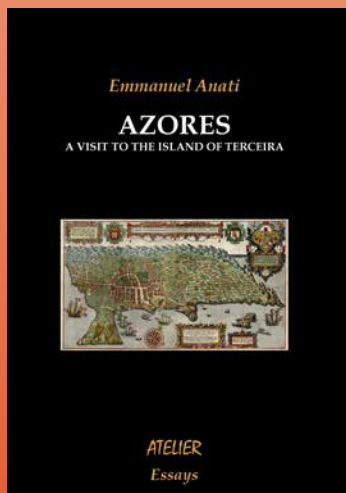
### Chi sei? Chi sono? Alla ricerca dell'identità (in Italian)

The problems arising from the search for identity begin in the infant and accompany the human being to the last breath. Defining the identity of the person, of the nation or "race", concerns all people from the Early Hunters to the most advanced urban, literate cultures. The present study is proposing a historical dimension to an archetype of the cognitive system. When does the need to define the identity start, and why?



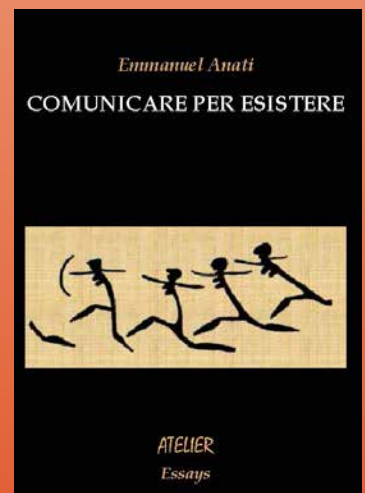
### Nascere e crescere da nomadi. La relazione madre-figli nelle società primarie (in Italian)

A study of constants and variants between human societies of hunters-gatherers and urban societies in the mother-child relationship reveals archetypes and variants. The mother-child relationship is the backbone of all species of mammals and acquires special rules in primates.



### Azores: a Visit to the Island of Terceira

When did man first arrive to the Azores islands? The Portuguese colonization in the 15th century marked the beginning of the official history. Is there a history before this history? The controversy, between the traditional history and the advocates of a previous human presence, finds partial solutions in the dating and decoding of traces indicating ancient human presence.



### Comunicare per esistere (in Italian)

This text, inspired by travel notes of about 40 years ago, seems now to refer to prehistory. Aboriginal people have made a jump of millennia in two generations. Today they speak English, live in houses, drive cars and use the shotgun. Their lives changed since the 70s of the last century.

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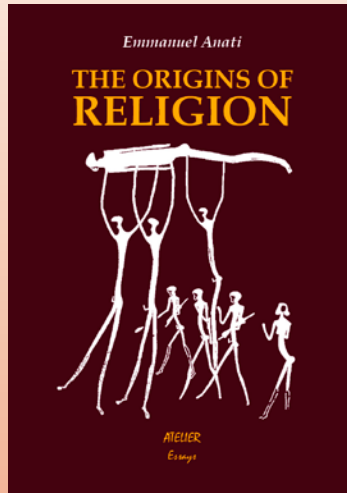
# ATELIER' PUBLICATIONS

## Essays



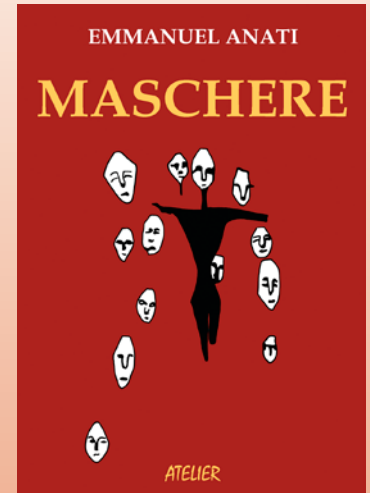
### Mito tra utopia e verità (in Italian)

How do myths originate? The production of myths proves to be a constant of the cognitive process of all human societies. Parameters of this process are examined: the roots of a distant memory, the itineraries of idealization, sublimation and structuring. Similar myths from different cultures reveal recurring conceptual criteria. From the beginning man feeds the myth and the myth feeds the man. Myths feed myths.



### The Origins of Religion

How and when did religions originate? The study of prehistoric art is bringing a revolution to our knowledge of the origins of religious thought. Rock art sites have held for millennia the function of places of worship and tribal identity, serving as archives of myths, beliefs and rituals. Visual art, however, is not the oldest evidence of the presence of religion. Burial customs and other material traces are bringing us further back to the origins of religious behaviour.



### Maschere (in Italian)

What is behind the mask? The mask can hide the identity, but can also reveal an identity submerged, both as an object-mask or a conceptual-mask. Going back to the roots, an aspect of the cognitive process of the mask awakens questions on the comparison of human tendencies, between globalization and individualism. Tracing the history of the mask reveals recurring phenomena of man's relationship with his own identity.



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

Some scholars in the history of religions affirm that religion was born in the Neolithic age. People coming directly from the Paleolithic bluntly contradicts this preconception.

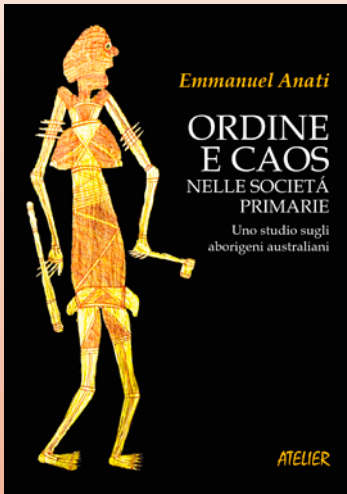


### Amore e sessualità (In Italian)

Love and sexuality, a theme of all lives and many books, is considered under the aspect of conceptual anthropology. Biological impulses, cultural rules and individual feelings meet in different cultures, in different formulas and lead to a vision of how they work and interact socially, psychologically and emotionally on the human being and on the social context.

# ATELIER'S PUBLICATIONS

## Essays



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

Order and chaos are compared as a principle of the binary concept that characterizes the search for an elementary logic of what man is able to hypothesize about the behavior of the world around him. To what extent does the order of nature determine social order in primary societies?



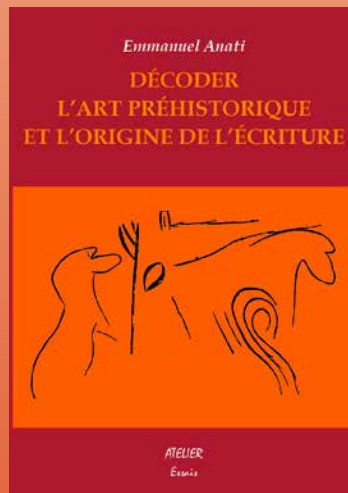
### **La morte (In Italian)**

Knowledge and beliefs about death and the afterlife generate the formation of similar conceptions in different cultures and populations. Similar anxieties and fears cause similar speculative effects in combining the real with the imaginary. The idea of the soul's survival after the death of the body turns out to be at the origins of both religions and philosophy. Conceptual analysis defines elementary processes of cognitive logic, in the constant confrontation between knowing and believing.



### **La typologie de l'art rupestre (In French)**

Rock art is a human expression, produced over the millennia, on five continents. In the frame of the UNESCO "World Report on Rock Art: the state of the art" (2008), the author presented a typological structure of rock art, which has since been updated and revised.



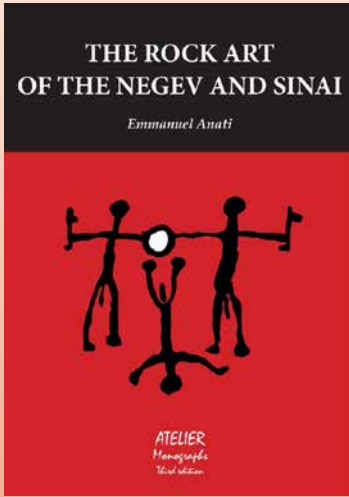
### **Décoder l'art préhistorique et l'origine de l'écriture (In French)**

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



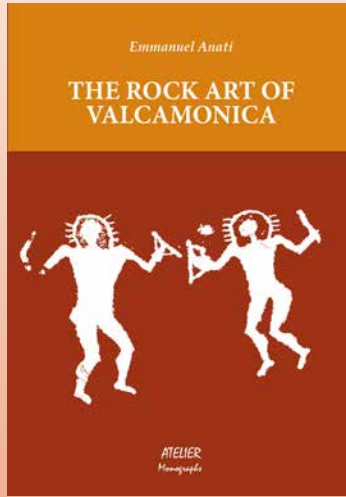
# ATELIER' PUBLICATIONS

## Monographs



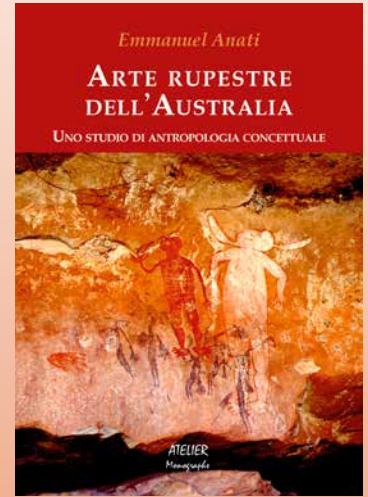
### The Rock Art of the Negev and Sinai

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



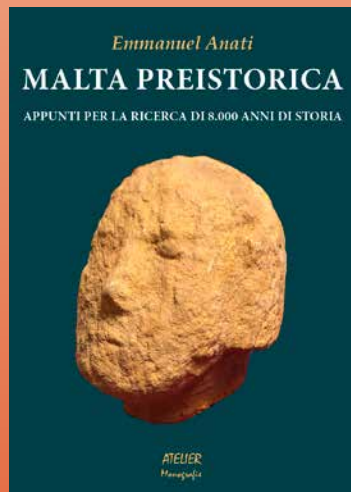
### The Rock Art of Valcamonica

Valcamonica, in the Italian Alps, with over 300,000 images engraved on rocks, is the major rock art site in Europe. It is the first 'World Heritage Site' listed by UNESCO in Italy and the first rock art site listed in the world. Its study reveals the largest archive left behind by the ancient inhabitants of Europe.



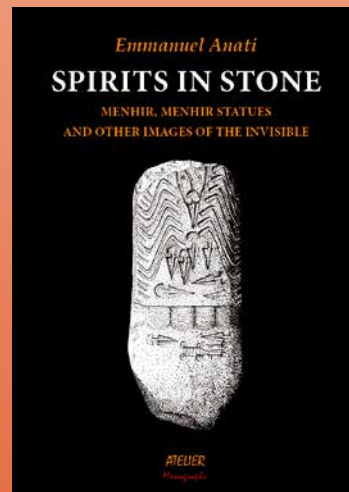
### Arte rupestre dell'Australia (in Italian)

The Australian aborigines until yesterday were hunter-gatherers, creators of visual art according to ancient traditions and beliefs. The rock art tells their story and the history of art of 50,000 years.



### Malta preistorica (in Italian)

The story of Malta has several unsolved questions, starting with the dilemma of the first presence of man on these islands in the Paleolithic period. Other riddles emerge for each period. The most relevant problems remain those related to the magnificent and still mysterious development of the Neolithic megalithic temples.

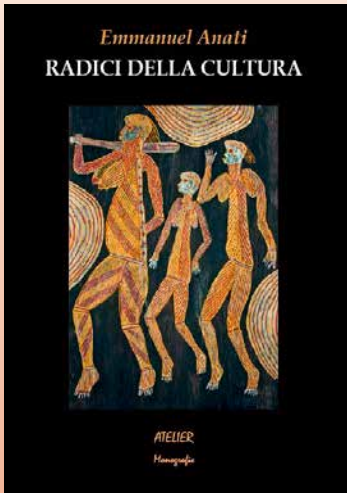


### Spirits in Stone

The menhirs, or standing stones, decorated or not, appear to be the expression of a conceptual movement aimed at the cult of ancestral spirits, that dominated religious thoughts for millennia. These prehistoric monuments, spread over most of Eurasia, are witnesses of the first great universal religion of which we have traces. In this context, ethnic and regional trends are revealed by the local evolutions of iconography.

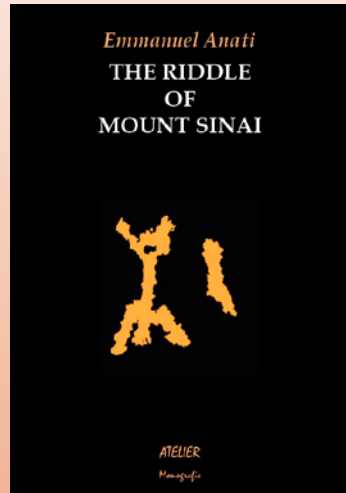
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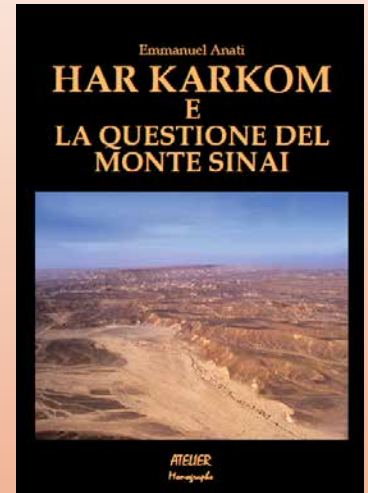
### Radici della cultura (in italian)

The history of culture is the history which unify the whole humankind. As Yves Coppens wrote in the preface, from the very first flint tool four million years ago to the conquest of space, the human adventure shows an hyperbole, which from the beginning of history, through the ages, builds the reality of present and project us to the future.



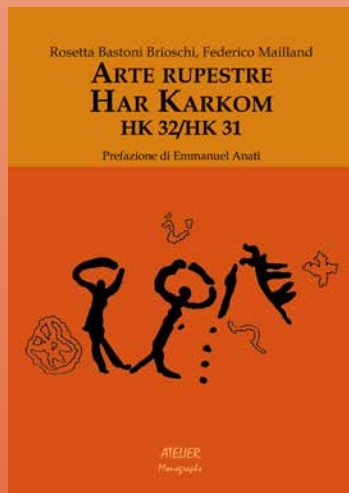
### The Riddle of Mount Sinai

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



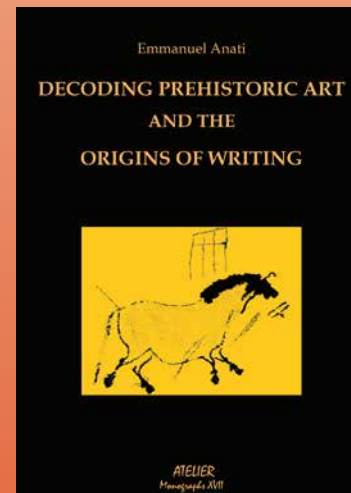
### Har Karkom e la questione del Monte Sinai (in Italian)

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



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

Within the frame of the Archaeological Italian Expedition in Israel, the present book is a record of rock art in two adjacent sites on the plateau of Har Karkom. The rock art is in the same area with tumuli, altar stones, stone circles and other megalithic structures. Some of the rock engravings are on these monuments. The rock engravings are described and illustrated by numerous photos and tracings.

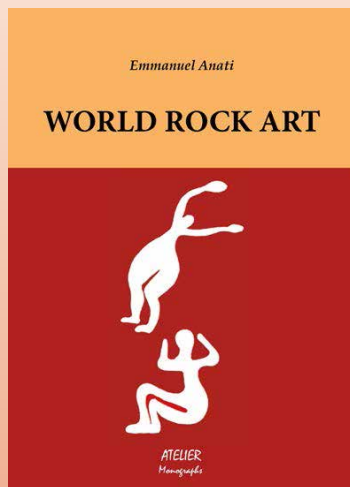


### Decoding Prehistoric Art and the Origins of Writing

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

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### World Rock Art

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



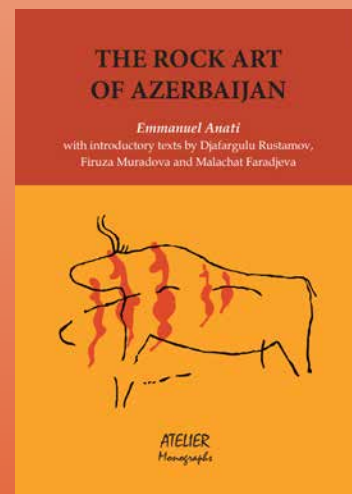
### The rock art of Spain and Portugal

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



### L'arte delle tapa. Sacre stoffe dell'Oceania (in Italian)

The tapa is a non-woven fabric, a kind of felt produced from the bark of some species of trees. Their origins are much earlier than the invention of weaving. Their roots go back to the Old Stone Age. Indirect testimony of their antiquity are provided by the discovery of tools used for the manufacture of tapa in archaeological layers and by figures of tapa cloths in the rock art.



### The Rock art of Azerbaijan

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

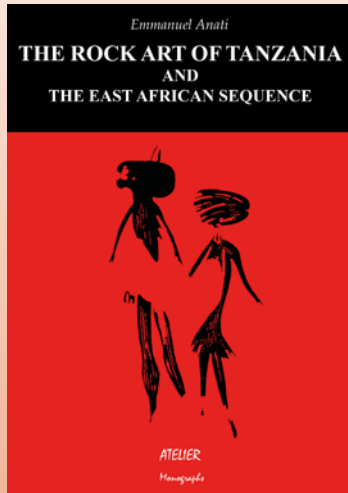
This gateway of Europe, between the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea, was a major way of migrations from Asia to Europe.

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



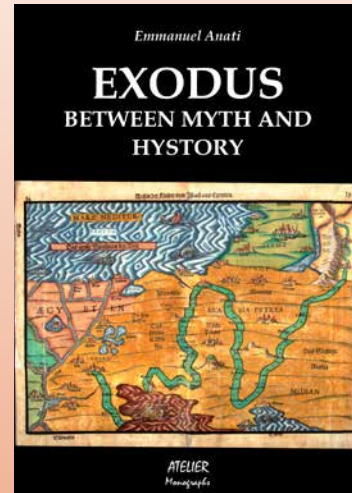
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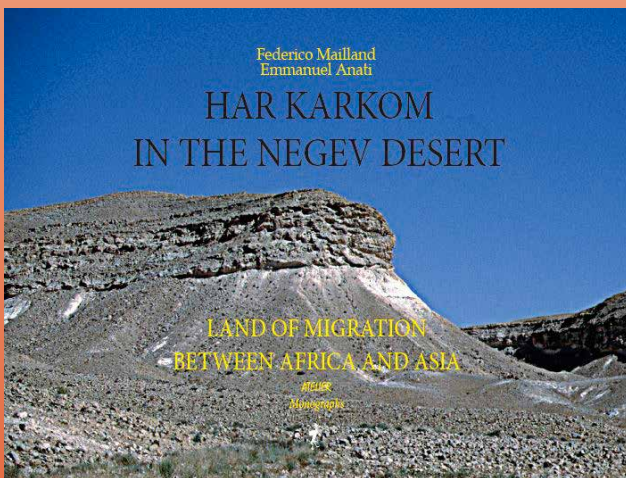
### The Rock Art of Tanzania and the East African Sequence

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



### Exodus Between Myth and History

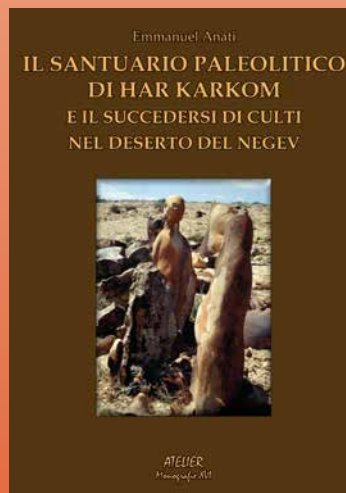
The epic of Moses: is it myth or history? The Biblical narrative of the exodus and the revelation of Mount Sinai are a monumental literary work that has been passed down for well over two millennia, after being transmitted orally for centuries. What would have really happened during the Exodus? How did monotheism emerge? Who were the mentioned people of the desert met by the children of Israel? The central episode of the epic is the revelation at Mount Sinai.



### Har Karkom in the Negev Desert

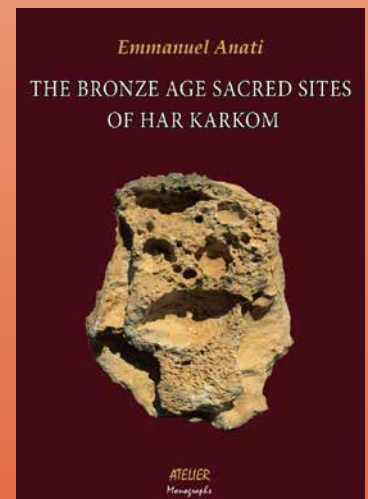
A mountain located in the land-bridge between Africa and the rest of the world yielded traces of ages of human presence ever since the first steps of the human ancestors out of Africa.

The archeological discoveries tell us of two million years, from the earliest stations of archaic Pebble Culture, to recent Bedouin camping sites.



### Il santuario paleolitico di Har Karkom (in italian)

The discovery of a Paleolithic sanctuary, the oldest known, in the middle of the desert, and right in the desert of the biblical Exodus and the perennial exodus, along the great migratory route between Africa and Asia, awakens questions about the spiritual and conceptual world of the origins of religion. The surprise of this volume is that it reveals how and why. Concepts and beliefs emerge that gave rise to one of the oldest religious expressions in the world: it adds a new chapter in the history of religions.



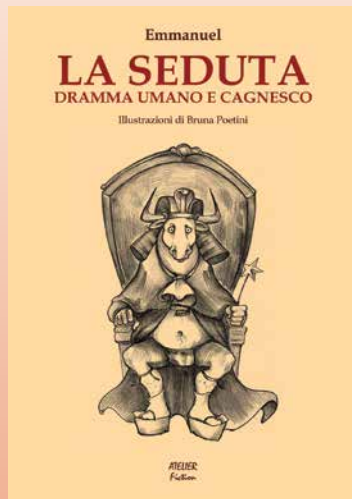
### The Bronze Age Sacred Sites of Har Karkom

The Har Karkom Bronze Age cult sites, found on the mountain and in the surrounding valleys, the types of altars, ritual platforms, private sanctuaries, shrines, temples, anthropomorphic cult-stones, menhirs and standing pillars, tumuli, geoglyphs and rock art, disclose the vast dimensions of rituals, traditions and beliefs of the tribal world in the desert, related to the narrations of the biblical book of Exodus.

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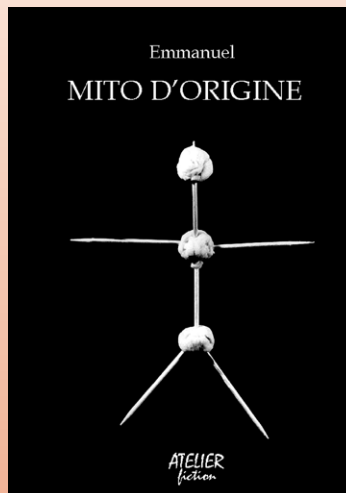
## Fiction



### La Seduta (in Italian)

This work of the author's youth reflects a biting social commentary that after half a century seems to have not lost its charge.

It was written in the 60s of the last century, in the climate of postwar youth revolt. It was published for the first time in 1979 in a bi-monthly magazine. It now comes out in a revised edition.

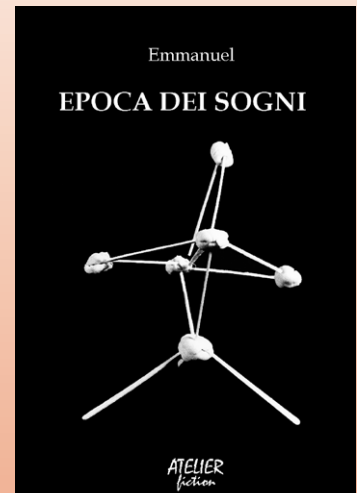


### Mito d'origine Epoca dei Sogni (in Italian)

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

Between reality and dream, realism and myth, symbols and metaphors, they accompany us in the space of flooded memories. Balls and sticks wander, meet and multiply in black space, always accompany the shadows and the lights of thought.

They are works created by the author at a young age now published for the first time, a few decades after since they were first conceived.

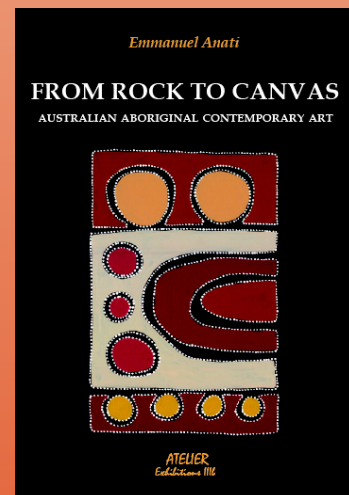


## Exhibitions



### The Art of the Australian Aborigines Bark Paintings

Australian Aborigines have produced paintings on tree bark that, in addition to being remarkable artworks, store myths and memories, emotions and human relations. What remains today of authentic bark paintings, made by Aborigines for themselves, is an extremely small group.



### From Rock to Canvas Australian Aboriginal Contemporary Art

Turning from the Stone Age to the age of air-conditioning in a generation is an experience which leaves its mark on artistic expression. The canvas paintings made by contemporary Aboriginal artists, whose fathers painted on rocks or tree bark, display a momentous revolution in the spirit of a generation that has leapfrogged millennia.

Information or orders: <[atelier.etno@gmail.com](mailto:atelier.etno@gmail.com)>

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