

Le incisioni di Galato Gongolo e l'arte rupestre dell'Etiopia sud-occidentale

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Riassunto

Si descrivono alcune incisioni conservate a Galato Gongolo che, in base ai propri caratteri stilistici, possono essere, almeno in parte, ricondotte all'interno della corrente stilistica Etiopico-Araba, compresa cronologicamente tra la fine del III e il II millennio a. C. Nell'occasione si fa il punto sulle conoscenze dell'arte rupestre preistorica presente nell'area sud-occidentale dell'Etiopia.

Summary

Engravings from Galato Gongolo and the rock art of south-western Ethiopia.

The author deals with some engravings conserved in Galato Gongolo (Ethiopia) by taking into consideration only stylistic comparisons. The figures, at least in part, may be dated back to a period ranging between the end of the third millennium and the course of second millennium BC (first stage of the Ethiopian-Arabic style). A discussion is also offered on what we currently know about rock art in South-Western Ethiopia.



The significance of the distribution of rock art in Britain

Stan BECKENSALL

My most recent work is on the prehistoric rock art of Kilmartin, Argyll (Beckensall, 2004), so I shall use this as a springboard to examine the general picture in Britain.

The Kilmartin area is in many ways a microcosm of rock art studies in Britain. The geographical area is well defined and varied. Marked rocks in the open air are numerous and are distributed in such a way that it is possible to infer some sort of logic from their distribution. The making of the motifs shows well the techniques that were employed. The arrangement of symbols has produced an interesting series of variations on the theme.

Although the dating of open-air rock art is impossible as yet, there is a strong link between motifs and monuments that gives us some idea of chronology, but nothing absolute. The unique presence of cup marks and outlines of metal axes in cists at least gives us a 'final' date for their use. The concentration of burials, monuments, standing stones and stone circles shows the importance of this area to prehistoric people and includes some 'diagnostic' artefacts (tools that are distinctive and identified with a certain period and people), pottery and jewellery. The area has some special characteristics too: the use of jointed cist side slabs, unique in the British Isles, and the inclusion in cists of two stones decorated with lines instead of circles and curves.

The history of the exploration of British rock art has a special place, too, for it was here that the antiquarians identified this special contribution to our knowledge of prehistory. It added a language of signs to a non-literary culture. The story of their discoveries and speculations has been added to since then, yet despite the increase in information, we still ask questions that they asked, and still await answers.

We must always keep a sense of proportion: as with so much in the past, we have probably lost a great amount, and tend to make generalisations from what is left. If rock art is used over at least a thousand years, we have indeed a tiny representation to scatter over that period, like a little sand on a field. The final sum of what we know has to be examined carefully and added to our knowledge of rock art in the rest of Britain and indeed in the rest of the world.

Before attempting some sort of synthesis, I must start by asking some general questions and recall fundamental concepts in prehistorical archaeology.

Will the collection of more data enable archaeologists to draw conclusions about what the motifs of rock art mean, or do we already have sufficient information to put forward suggestions? Are we further along the road to understanding than the antiquarians of the 19th century who became fascinated by the phenomenon?

Does my knowledge of so many areas and detailed familiarity with the panels and single marked stones put me in a better position than anyone else to offer a hypothesis? Am I aware of the significance of what I already know? Do the insights that I have gained from a variety of sources to deal with the relationships between the types of motifs made, the landscapes where they occur and the contexts of burials and monuments where some of them are found? How much of my cultural background will help or get in the way of understanding something of the minds of people who lived over 4,000 years ago?

Is there any danger in transferring knowledge of other Palaeolithic cultures to those of northern Britain? How far is analogy useful and how far misleading? How far can developments in disciplines related to archaeology such as science, aesthetics, psychology and philosophy help us to understand rock art? Changes in emphasis in all these disciplines, the process of refuting old ideas and introducing new ones should warn us that our own conclusions will certainly be questioned, but that we must nevertheless make the effort to hypothesise and open ourselves up to challenge now or in the future.

In studying rock art we are drawn deeply into motives for human behaviour thousands of years ago. The spread, context and frequency of motifs alerts us to their importance in the prehistoric world. The fact that 'geometric' shapes rather than pictures of people and animals are exclusive subjects tells us that something is being taken out of the 'natural' world and represented in a powerful kind of shorthand. The process



of abstracting such important symbols comes from the mind either through observation of something in nature or from some deeply rooted, built-in imagery. Consciousness or awareness of the world does not come merely by observing it and living in it or by using intelligence to solve problems. Strong feelings play an important part in the way we think and how we perceive the world. The mind can be heightened by excitement, and we learn and create not just in a state of cold reason but by being excited. In our dreams a world partly 'real' and a world created by us with its imaginary come to the surface; their revelations can be very disturbing and bring up many of our anxieties.

There are thousands of images that we live with daily that are more general and perhaps more widely shared. A road sign, National Trust oak leaves, National Parks curlew, Boy Scout fleur de lis are common enough in England and the thistle in Scotland, but not all people recognise a curlew or know why a lily flower and clover have become the symbols of Guides and Scouts. Yet we can all know what they stand for generally without knowledge of how they originated. A crescent, cross, star of David, red cross, green cross mean different things to people in different countries.

In prehistoric art 'pictures' of animals, places and human activities may carry far more meaning to the people who made them and to those who saw them than to us. When cave paintings were first discovered in Europe they were so vivid that people at first refused to believe that they could possibly be so old; they had preconceived ideas that 'savages' were incapable of such art. This idea has changed; those who painted such images in caves are now thought by some to have done so when they had trance visions through which they acquired the images that they depicted, so that animals took on a much greater significance than something to be hunted and eaten.

If we view cup and ring art with this in mind, and give prehistoric people credit for coming to terms not only with survival in a hunting and farming world, they are also to be credited with being 'spiritual beings'. Many of their greatest buildings are non-functional, non-domestic in that they were not built to store things in or to live in. Stone circles and *henges* were community centres, a focus for scattered farmers who felt the need to keep together periodically to establish a tribal identity through chat, trade, and by sharing a life that involved rituals. Some of the standing stones of these structures were decorated with cups, cups and rings, and spirals.

Having established that people who lived thousands of years ago were capable of expressing their perceptions of the real and spirit world so vividly in their art, this capability is certainly possible amongst any group of humans in the world, and certainly in Neolithic Britain.

The way ancient Britons disposed of the dead suggests a ritual and a sense of continuity in a spirit world after death. The Irish passage graves point in no uncertain terms to the use of symbols and motifs in something like a man-made cave, full of darkness and mystery. Although the kerbstones surrounding the great mounds carry simple and complex decoration, it is the interior, reached through passages, where a special and awesome place is constructed. Newgrange may have had some of the original feeling taken out of it by being made presentable for an enquiring and eager public, but its visit is still a powerful experience. More so for me was a visit to the Loughcrew sites where there is no electric light and only 'darkness visible' in a passage grave where I found myself surrounded by a remarkable array of symbols woven into designs. It was, quite frankly, frightening. Many have the same reaction to the restored mound of Maes Howe on Orkney. Having to crawl along a narrow, low tunnel to reach the main chamber is a preparation for this underworld experience.

The Irish passage graves have decoration that seems so profuse that, compared with what we meet in the open air, it seems over the top! It's like taking the Christian cross and covering it with jewels and multiple decorations compared with the simple wayside crosses on a pilgrim route. The passage graves of the Boyne valley are the strongest statement in Britain of the power of place and symbol in prehistoric times. There is also a great sense of continuity there.

Seamus Heaney, for example, in his poem 'Funeral Rites', takes the site at Newgrange as a place where all human feelings and thoughts about the dead can be focused in a ritual now as in the past (Heaney, 1990). Monuments and burials link rock art with 'religion' in a ritual involving the dead. That ritual is not all-inclusive as it is possible that the 'specialised' use of certain physical areas in the mounds was only accessible by a limited number of people.

Buried motifs pose all sorts of questions. Are such motifs specially developed from simpler ones because their function becomes more important? The sense of place that we have when we visit these graves and ritual centres is dependent not only on the constructions themselves but also on their settings. Castlerigg



in Cumbria is a stone circle at the centre of a circle of mountains; a place that already lifts the spirit before the stones and their markings begin to affect us. Long Meg towers over the other stones in the circle at the entrance to the circle, detached from them, possibly older, decorated on the whole of one face that looks to the centre of the circle.

Of course the next question about graves and monuments is why they are not all decorated with cup and ring motifs and spirals. A few cups and rings have appeared in the south of England, but they are almost negligible. Were these motifs common on materials such as wood and cloth? Were they painted or tattooed on human skin? We don't know. Why were so few burials chosen to incorporate rock art? Is this because the archaeological record is so patchy, rather than its being a true picture of distribution? Why do Stonehenge and Kilmartin be the only ones to have axe motifs?

When art is found in burial and monumental contexts there is a period of use to be deduced. We can attribute it to a broad time scale from about 3000-2000BC, with an overlap at either end. We can surmise that it had something to do with how monuments were used and how the dead were buried, but most British rock art is in the landscape, so what purpose did the motifs serve there?

Although there seems to be a stronger link establishing the period of use and possible reasons for use in burials and monuments, the logic for its distribution in the landscape is clearer than many one may have supposed. We now have thousands of marked rocks recorded and an analysis of where they are found should help us to understand why they were put there and nowhere else. Hundreds have been destroyed, but there should be sufficient data to make some informed suggestions.

One of the first archaeologists to put the distribution of marked rocks in the landscape into some sort of coherent order was Richard Bradley, working with a team of students that could provide fieldwork on a large scale. At the beginning of his book (Bradley 1997) on the results of his investigations he stresses the importance of theory.

He gives an example of how the critical understanding of data worked in his awakened interest in rock art, when a visit to Ilkley Moor 'set one wondering just how such places had been used'. He began with the idea that the rocks are 'signs', places in the landscape that gave information, and would have had meanings for the people there. That applies to any rock art area in Britain, for just by walking the routes from one panel to another one gets a sense of markers being offered, without our being able to understand what those particular symbols mean. While archaeology relies on static elements such as settlements and artefacts for an understanding of people, the dynamic element of mobility had also to be taken into account here. People carrying out activities in the area cannot afford to clash with other groups, and need to define their space of special interest. Perhaps marking the rocks with their own signs would do this. The more dependent people were on farming in one place, with defined fields for crops, pasture and dwellings, the less mobile their lives, although they would still need to pasture animals outside the settlement and to hunt. These hunting and pasture areas, outside the most fertile arable lands, would have been in what we call 'marginal' land, not the best for arable farming, but still rich in food. In Northumberland, around the fertile Milfield plain, where the ritual monuments lie and where the best arable land is, are sandstone scarps cut into areas by streams and by the River Till that Clive Waddington sees as 'inscribed' grazing areas defined by cup and ring marks (Waddington 1998). The same marginal areas also include most burial cairns, mostly of the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age type. If rock art defines areas of grazing for one group, then such areas may be crossed or be linked by trails, as beasts do not pasture in one spot. Some archaeologists believe that the decline in use of rock motifs was the result of a decline in the mobility of prehistoric peoples, and this has been used for suggesting a very early date for rock art: more settled farming/less need to mark the rocks as mobility decreased. I see no reason why mobile grazing should decline because of settled farming; hunting and pasture continued to be essential to life, especially as population increased and more food was always needed.

Richard Bradley states that mainstream archaeology has missed out something significant by not seeing mobility as important, and instead of seeing rock art as 'a medium for wider study of prehistoric society and its occupation of the landscape' they have treated rock art in the same way as portable artefacts.

He asks what rock art was actually advertising? What information was it giving? As it was used over such a considerable period of time, it is even unlikely the people who made the motifs were aware of how the whole process began. That does not mean that people went through some meaningless and outdated ritual when they made the marks. They must have known that what they were doing was important and of great significance. We use ourselves words without thinking about how they came into being or of what they are composed. We use symbols in everyday life without thinking about why they were chosen to mean what



they mean. The fact that the motifs are abstract does not help us to understand them; such motifs may hold many meanings for the people who made and understood them, like 'layers of meaning' in poetry. Not only that, but also the meaning of the images may have changed over time.

If we accept that whatever we do we may not be able to 'crack the code' that leaves us with the more profitable task of trying to find a logic to their distribution in the landscape. There are plenty of data that enable us to make distribution maps. We can place sites and single marked rocks precisely on a map, draw diagrams to show their height above sea level, find out what kind of rock they are pecked on and whether they are related in their distribution to various types of soil. Richard Bradley and his group recorded for the first time how far away one has to be before a rock becomes visible; conclusion: close by. He worked out what can be seen from a rock, and demonstrated that very many of them command wide views in different directions, that he measured, allowing for whatever vegetation might have been in the way at the time, such as trees. He noted that many of them overlook valleys and the entrances to plains. He noted clusters of marked rocks in a limited area, and wondered whether this meant that people congregated there at special times. He decided that if we don't know what they mean, at least we might attempt to show 'that they were organised according to certain conventions'.

One of the things that has resulted from my own extensive fieldwork and that of my friends is an intuition about where to look for new rock art, for through this we have discovered many new sites. This 'hunch' can hardly be blind instinct, for we have learnt about places, about rock types, about topography. It is as if somewhere in our brains we are using the same logic as prehistoric people in deciding where rock art might or ought to be.

One starting point in the search for new marked rocks is in areas where they already have been found. It is rather like finding one flint flake in a ploughed field; it directs attention to the possibility or probability of finding more. Very high places are out, and intensively ploughed areas are not usually forthcoming, but the marginal intermediate higher ground is where we find them. Within an established rock art area, the surprises and delights of discovery are our reward. In Northumberland one of the most spectacular recent finds was on the floor of a rock shelter at Ketley Craggs. The shelter was in a minor Fell Sandstone cliff that fell away to a stream valley. The most that it could have afforded was a temporary small shelter for two or three people, huddled together, yet the floor has some of the most skilful use of the natural floor as a base for intricate rock art as any we have ever encountered. The significance of the place could not have been just as a shelter, for other rock overhangs would have proved more effective. Can we really say why it was singled out? There is other rock art on the higher ground above it, some of very high quality. The view from the overhang is so widespread and spectacular – over the valley to the distant Cheviot Hills – that its location as a commanding spot must have been one reason for its choice. Could other rocks along the same outcrop have been used? Probably yes, so we may have to acknowledge that other factors were at work in making a choice, and the level of artistry made it even more special. As a meeting place for special occasions it might not have been very suitable as it is on a rather awkward slope. There is a much more suitable dome of rock above it, with rock art that is good, but not so impressive as this.

We can expect patterns to emerge now, but must be prepared for something to challenge our expectations. However, we can make some generalisations about where people placed their motifs.

In Kilmartin, Tayside and a part of Northumberland the bulk of rock art occupies high places that overlook lower ground, bordering and overlooking a loch, surrounding and overlooking a long flat valley, and forming an area of low hills around a flat plain. The pattern is also one that follows rivers and stream courses. Rivers and streams give access to the land, and provide essential water for animals. Rock art also marks the actual sources of streams. On Gales Moor in Richmondshire (Beckensall 1998, 35) one set of cups and linked grooves is uncharacteristically without a view, but draws attention to the spring that they mark. In Howgill, County Durham, (Beckensall 1998, 82), a flat field has a flat marked rock that lies at the beginning of several springs. At Eels Hill on Barningham Moor (Beckensall 1998,55) rock art surrounds a major spring source. These are just a few of many examples.

These examples alone show how rock art 'socialises' landscapes, imprinting human signs at specific places. There were already many places that would allow travellers, distant or local, to know where they were in their journey; cliffs, large boulders, certain trees would be familiar because they are outstanding. Rock art is lower key; it takes an existing rock surface, studies its form, and begins to use natural indentations, cracks and the shape of the rock itself to produce a design based on simple symbols. In a way this then enhances the landscape, it humanises it in what could have appeared as a dangerous wilderness; it would have been reassuring. I find that this is my reaction when I find a new decorated panel. It is familiar, yet different, for every rock is different. Beyond the excitement of making a new discovery, it generates a warmth of



familiarity for me. It increases my sense of wonder, links me with a past that I only sense in part.

There are statistical methods that can be applied to the analysis of rock art. Here are some questions:

1. Where are all the known panels of rock art? Map their locations. Use a GPS to plot them accurately.
2. What can be seen from them, and from how far can they be seen?
3. What is the nature of the rocks with markings? Sedimentary, metamorphic, igneous? Given a choice, which rocks are favoured?
4. Are there other surfaces suitable for rock art that have not been used? Why therefore were some rocks chosen and not others?
5. Were the 'best' surfaces chosen (i.e. to our thinking, the smoothest and most accessible)? If not, why was an 'unsuitable' rock chosen? Was its surface shape such that it suggested a design, and were its irregularities incorporated? Did the irregularities determine the design? Was the rock at a special place, perhaps where something important had happened?
6. Are there signs that markings were made at different times on the same rock surface? Are there superimpositions? Are there signs that designs could have been re-cut?
7. What kind of symbols/motifs appear on the rocks?
8. How are these markings arranged, related to each other, and spread?
9. With a range from simple to complex (which may be our aesthetic judgement), is there a pattern in which more complex motifs appear in different areas or at different heights? Do some combinations of symbols appear in special contexts? If we discover repeated designs, is there any logic to their distribution?

These are useful leading questions, but what is missing up to now is the relationship between where the rock art appears and other archaeological features. This relationship should take into account all known information such as:

1. Settlements, including fields and domestic sites
2. Scatters of flint, chert and agate left by temporary settlers.
3. Defensive enclosures
4. Artefact finds
5. Monuments
6. Burials
7. Route ways

We must take into account how much of a rock surface has actually been marked. This may depend on what was covered by vegetation in prehistoric times; in some cases the decoration was framed by leaving a space around it at the edge of the rock. A good example of this is at Ballygowan. In other cases, such as Achnabreck east, only the upper part of the surface is marked, so the lower might have been covered with growth.

We must distinguish between what appears to be a random scatter of symbols from a deliberate design. The problem here is that a single cup mark could have been as significant in its context as a deliberate design. The modern viewer may be more impressed by size and variety. Some archaeologists have distinguished cups and cups with single rings as 'simple' motifs, and others with multiple rings as 'complex', yet a pattern of cup marks arranged in lines, rosettes or dominoes can be equally 'complex'. However, as a general rule the addition of many rings does seem to us to produce a more arresting display than a single ring, without our knowing what the addition of extra rings actually meant. Some have considered the possibility of rings being added over a period of time, but there is no evidence for this.

There is a similarity throughout Britain in design elements. Thus rings without a central cup are rarer than rings and a groove centred on a cup. The sameness is broken when some individual seems to break away from the norm and produces something novel like a rosette, or enjoys joining together cups of different sizes with a groove, as at Kilmichael Glassary. The spiral breaks away from the usual. Squares and other angular enclosures are rare.

The most striking differences appear when we consider relationships between the design elements on a rock. These always take into account the natural form of the rock in its slope, surface smoothness or otherwise, the presence of natural cracks or glacial grooves. Natural and artificial are brought together. Direction of slope determines how much sun the rock surface receives at different times of the year, and shadows play an



important part in revealing what has been pecked onto the rock. We look at the pattern from the lower slope upwards, but can stand above the design and look around to see what areas of landscape are encompassed from there. What appear to us to be the most sophisticated designs (and therefore the most satisfying aesthetically) are interrelated motifs. Some run into each other or touch. Ducts running from cups may run parallel. Motifs are enclosed singly or in groups by cracks. It is this grouping of symbols and motifs that produces 'complex' art.

There is not really a specific characteristic of rock art in Argyll really, for all that we see here is paralleled in the rest of Britain. For example, although there are spectacular rosettes at Ormaig, there are more in Northumberland, West Yorkshire and High Auchenlarie (Beckensall, 1999, p 21). There is nothing like the large cupless multiple concentric circles at Chapel Stile (Beckensall, 2002, p.35). There are few arcs, except at Glasvaar. Nowhere are there the ladder motifs of West Yorkshire (Beckensall 1999, p. 30) or the grid patterns of Galloway, Northumberland and North Yorkshire. Even the rich rock surfaces of Achabreck do not have every representative motif found in Britain. Nowhere do we find the exotic, 'baroque' style of art of the Irish passage graves and chambered tombs. Neither is it helpful to claim some Kilmartin motifs as being of 'passage grave' type. There are no decorated vertical faces of cliffs like those at Ballochmyle (Beckensall 1999,p67) Hawthornden (NT280 632) or Morwick (Beckensall 1999.p16) that carry a profusion of unusual motifs.

The most significant contexts for rock art are standing stones and burials. As with Northumberland, standing stones in this area have cups, with an occasional ring. There is nothing like Cumbrian Long Meg (Beckensall, 2002, p.59) for lavish ornament. In burial cairns it is only cups that are used, until the metal-type axes are added or the rare linear motifs at Badden and Carn Ban. Motifs in cists vary between those already on outcrop before being removed for cist construction to the purpose-made slabs at Fulforth Farm (page...) and Pool Farm, West Hampree (Coles et al, 2000). The latter, recently re-assessed, has a ground-down surface on which there have been pecked twelve cups, six footprints and a possible seventh. The date of the cremations in the cist is from 1890BC to 1735 BC, the early Bronze Age. Almost all decorated cists in Britain have cups or cup and ring marks, so the presence of footprints, axes, lozenge shapes and lines is rare, so Kilmartin has a fair proportion of the unusual. The introduction of the rare pictorial motifs of axe and footprint appear as late in the archaeological record. Temple Wood with its elaborate spiral is a one-off. Galloway, Northumberland, Cumbria and Ireland have a few in burials, on monuments, and in the landscape. West and North Yorkshire, Tayside and Derbyshire have none.

How does the Kilmartin area have such an appeal? The uncommon motif may manage to capture attention because it is different, but the overall impression is the use to which the most common motifs are put. Their degree of preservation has been ensured by the natural hardness of metamorphic rock. The markings on this would have been a different colour when they were first made, and then blended in with the landscape.

The distribution of rock art panels

The problem with arranging rock art panels according to their position in the landscape is that, no matter what categories of place are decided, some panels are going to be in more than one category. However, the distribution of rock art in the Kilmartin region is largely centred on intermediate high places overlooking valleys. It does not appear on the highest ground, and rarely occupies valley floors.

The following areas of placement are a guide:

1. There are sites overlooking or close to the sea. Some rocks are at high places dominating or marking route ways from and to the sea, including the classic site at Achabreck.
2. Other route way sites at high places
3. There are decorated rocks at stream sources
4. Most sites overlook valleys from slopes, others being on the valley floor.
5. Sites related to burials.
6. Other sites include portables

An interesting comparison and contrast of the Kilmartin motifs with a new survey of the Loch Tay area helps to throw the distribution of rock art outside monuments and burials into relief.

The Scottish Royal Commission surveyed rock art of the Strath Tay area in 2000 and identified 121 marked rocks where previously only 14 had been recorded. I am grateful to Alex Hale (Hale 2003) for his published account of these decorated rocks, as I was able to record only a small number of them. The loch is long, with steep slopes on either side that are mainly tree-covered. The north slope (south-facing) has



a foreshore up to 200m OD, and a one-kilometre long terrace, between 200 and 400 meter high, made up of well-drained soils and glacial drift, littered with boulders and with some bedrock outcrops. This terrace is relatively flat to the south and gets steeper to the north. Above 400 meters the land is bare of trees, with open moorland and three big peat basins. Today it is used for grazing, and in the recent past was used for 'shielings' – temporary herds' huts and gardens when beasts were being pastured in the summer. Today one mostly uses the lower and middle slopes.

The 14 sites previously recorded included 21 cup and ring marked rocks, two of which could not be relocated. The newly discovered sites are in four concentrations, with a dispersed group to the west, a tight group of eight rocks further east, 70 dispersed boulders or decorated bedrocks, and 12 rocks at the eastern end. The gaps between the clusters of marked rocks pose a question: were there any there originally? Have they been removed by farming? Does the dense vegetation of the loch shore cover some? How many have found their way into walls?

Alex Hale reported that at least 10% of known marked rocks have been removed: four appear in buildings, three in enclosure banks of dykes (walls), five in clearance heaps and one in a rockery. His analysis shows that of the 121 marked rocks 16 are on bedrock outcrop (3 have cups and rings, the rest plain cups), with four on the lowest and 12 on the middle bands. 105 are on boulders, all in the upper band, with only one cup and single ring rock in the lowest band.

All the views from the rocks are naturally to the south and SE, but in the past the views may have been obscured by vegetation; a possibility that has to be determined by palynology. On the highest ground there is a concentration of marked rocks at springs and stream sources; lower down the ground has been cleared for pasture. The marked rocks do not dominate the landscape, and can only be seen from close by. More prominent rocks have no markings on them, so the emphasis is on marking rocks that already blend in with the landscape – a blending in rather than dominance.

In dividing types of motifs from one another, Alex Hale has classified them as follows: single cups, multiple plain cups, multiple cups, some with single rings multiple cups, some with multiple rings, multiple cups, some with single or multiple rings and radial ducts.

The more elaborate designs show evidence of sequence, additions and alterations that could have been made at any time. Those numbered are illustrated here.

The distribution shows most below the head dykes on cultivated land, but the most dramatic designs are on the higher ground. What does this mean? Bearing in mind that finds are at the whim often of individuals, a regulated search like this that has revealed so many new marked rocks makes an assessment more confident. It has been noted, for example that the marked rocks are related to the boundaries of different soil types – a point that is seldom noted. In the past, as now, vegetation would follow that distribution. In Alex Hales' words: 'they are related to the character of the ground, probably as indicated by the particular type of vegetation'.

Increase in data allows us to reassess previous research, such as that of Margaret Stewart (1959) and Richard Bradley (1993). One conclusion is that the more elaborate rock art in this survey does appear at a higher level than simple cups, but that the latter continue to take their place alongside the former and that the lower ground is not devoid of cups and rings. Another observation is that when we talk about 'complex' motifs, we must remember that one of the panels illustrated here shows how elaborate a pattern can be by using only cups.

One particular observation that my friends and I made in Strath Tay that tied in with what we had discovered particularly in County Durham was the coincidence of some marked rocks with stream sources, where 'viewpoints' in Durham were limited. The other major point is that rock art here does blend in with the landscape and tends to avoid the more prominent rocks.

There is intense interest today in the state of mind of people who carved rocks in prehistoric times. There is a particularly intriguing question about why on the Continent there are so many picture images whereas in Britain we have non-figurative images. The figurative images, whether they be in caves or later depictions hammered onto rock surfaces have always attracted more attention, because people feel more comfortable with their interpretation, as they are recognisably 'something'.

Almost all rock art in monuments, in burials and in the landscape of Britain is non-figurative. In cup and ring art, there are many variations such as arcs, rectangles, grids and squares that give variety that can be attributed to an individual seeing it in a different way. The end result is non-representational art. All these variations cannot be demonstrated to have come from nature. We might see ripple marks in pools, zigzag



skylines of hills and trees, the annual rings of a fallen tree, vulvas, breasts or whatever as sources for these images, but where is the evidence that this is what they are?

There is, however, a marked difference between the motifs found in passage graves and those in the open air. Whereas the latter sit on outcrop and earthfast stones, the latter are cut from rock, shaped and ordered in order to fit tomb-design. This creates a different impression from art in the landscape, enhanced by the exuberance of the decoration. Art used in later mounds in different areas from these giants has only limited cups and cups and rings incorporated.

What is the difference, then? Clive Waddington (Waddington, 2004) in a recent investigation has made a convincing case for two separate traditions. Passage grave art occurs close to the sea and river estuaries in Atlantic Europe, such as Anglesey and Portugal. In Ireland 84% are in County Meath with access to the sea, mostly close to the River Boyne, and, like those in the Orkneys, have been dated to the late 4th and early 3rd millennium BC. Does this mean that groups of people who perhaps originated in the same lands and who thought alike were responsible? Cup and ring marks occur in different areas from these; as we have seen, there is no passage grave art in Kilmartin or Tayside, but plenty of those in the open air.

These tombs have a different function in cave-like ritual from landscape art, which is much more widespread and, presumably, accessible. There is a distinct difference in the form of the motifs. Patterns of lozenge-shapes, spirals, zigzags and wavy lines are also present on pottery. There is an early pottery style called Grooved Ware spread all over Britain that shares some of these motifs, and this is associated with open-air 'ritual' sites around passage graves and henges.

Style, however, is only one strand in the reasons for the difference between passage grave and open-air art. If we were to choose to go by design alone, we may find linear designs and lozenge shapes on Food Vessels, Beakers and Urns, but as these vessels are from c. 2000 BC and passage graves are hundreds of years earlier, this shows the dangers of making comparisons. And, of course, this pottery exists widely where there is no rock art. Because the passage grave tradition is so different in use and space, Clive Waddington concludes that 'the shared similarities between passage tomb regions, the artwork, the chronologies, and their distribution along the Atlantic seaboard of Europe suggests that the idea of passage grave art in Ireland and western Britain is, perhaps, in origin, intrusive'.

Coping with theories – A warning

The absurdity of playing a game of origins and meanings is abundant in some TV programmes that have afflicted us. We've had the Crop Circles circus, and we were treated to a particularly awful programme when the main contention (lasting about an hour, padded out by weird music and image jumbling) was that the Heel Stone at Stonehenge was the penis of the Sky God and when it cast its shadow inside the horseshoe at Stonehenge it was the god fertilising the Earth Mother. As if to authenticate this, we were taken to a Native American sacred site in America where a sacred cave (surprise, surprise) just looked like a woman's internal sexual organs. So what? It is nonsense like this, and the involvement of some quite respectable archaeologists who may not be aware at first of how they are being used, that is distressing. We all have our gut-reaction theories, but some of us grow out of them in the cold light of truth.

To come back to terminology; 'abstract art' comes from inside the mind, but 'representational art' comes from natural forms that we see around us. I have in the past loosely called rock art images 'abstract', but now have to think again about the term I use. 'Non-representational images' seems better.

I have been taken to task over the way I have seen the origins of basic forms such as spirals and concentric circles. I have noted in children a strong tendency to draw them as though they are deeply embedded in their minds (consciousness) – a natural process – in the same way that they draw adults around them at an early age as creatures with small heads and enormous legs and arms – an understandable view of a world in which they are so small.

Some archaeologists are saying that rock art images are produced in a state of altered consciousness, in a heightened state of excitement and awareness. It goes like this: people had trance visions and acquired the images that they depicted – circles, zig-zags, wavy lines, for example – that occur in rock art all over the world because these images are in their consciousness waiting to be released. Such images are common to all humans and are rooted in the brain or nervous system. Some of these are seen by migraine sufferers. (With my own rare attacks of migraine I see the edges of my vision become wavy lines).

So how do these images come to the surface? One way in which our minds are relaxed and made receptive is through trance. This can be brought about by the action of the group on an individual or individuals through



dance or by other rhythmic stimuli such as clapping. Party goers who don't drink alcohol can get high on the mood created by a party and their behaviour becomes more relaxed. Mobs can stir up normally placid people to act in a way that they would not normally endorse. This does not have to be spelt out further, but action, as hypnotists are aware, cannot be aroused in someone who is deeply opposed to it.

Society has people to whom the group can turn when it is difficult to cope. People who cannot face the death of a loved one may turn to Spiritualists to re-connect them. A family doctor or priest becomes a lifeline. People turn to horoscopes or go through rituals like throwing salt over the shoulder to ward off bad luck. All this happens in so-called civilised society, where fear and superstition still lurk not far below the surface. In primitive societies a person with unusual perceptions, sometimes known as a 'shaman' is identified as the helper in times of acute stress. These people are not charlatans; much illness is psychosomatic, affecting bodily function, and helping the mind to cope and hope and think positively is a vital service. In some societies the shaman may go into a state of trance in order to enter a spirit world where help is available and return with an answer. This trance state may be induced by all the group acting upon him, or it may be assisted or induced by taking drugs. Drugs alter the state of consciousness, and some believe that during this state of surrender the taker sees the kinds of images that occur in rock art.

No doubt my oversimplification of the process may not do justice to it. Some who strongly believe this have used drugs themselves to test the hypothesis, but as I am unwilling to follow the same path beyond moderate alcohol, my perceptions are limited.

I can believe that locked up inside our brain are basic images common to all people, and that what we see on the rocks may have stemmed from some release, for how else can we account for the universal use of symbols such as cups, concentric rings, spirals, zigzags, lozenge shapes? To see that a panel of rock art in California could be equally at home in Kilmartin points to some common inspiration not shared by transporting it over the sea at a given time. People do not have to meet in Britain to decide to put spirals on cliffs in Northumberland or on Temple Wood, or to put rosettes on rock overlooking the sea at Ormaig or on outcrop in Northumberland.

The distribution of rock art over Britain is hardly surprising when seen against the similarity in styles of pottery, artefacts, house construction, and farming methods. Neither is it surprising that rock art in Galicia is so much like that in Britain, for the sea was obviously not an insuperable barrier. What is difficult to account for is the virtual absence of rock art in the south of England from where so many other ideas could have spread. It may have taken a more perishable form, and may have been inhibited by a lack of suitable rock surfaces, but it is still odd. Against that we must take into account that it was by no means widespread in northern Britain. It is scattered thinly in parts, and there are more concentrated patches in others. It does occur in burials, but why should Ireland house the greatest passage grave tombs with their art? For those who want to see the art in those tombs as being inspired by shamans under the influence of drugs, it would be wise for them to listen to George Eogan, the man who has excavated them for years and who knows them all intimately. When he was interviewed for *Current Archaeology* (CA October 2203) by Andrew Selkirk with the question 'Do you believe in these current ideas about it being inspired by shamans under the influence of drugs? A slight pause. "No" he said abruptly, and seemed to want to change the subject.' The issue remains open, and is likely to do so no matter how far the theory applies to other cultures at others times. We do not have any direct evidence of the presence of shamans or of their influence on rock art in Britain.

We may look for such evidence, but what can we possibly expect to find?

The future of rock art studies

Never before has rock art received such attention from so many people in so many parts of the world. The range of people interested is great – from those with a casual interest to academics who have chosen to study it in depth.

Kilmartin is already on the map for having an important rock art resource in its landscape and monuments. Work on it has included excavation and recording, display and publication. Across the border, the English Heritage Rock Art Pilot Project (2000) was designed to investigate archaeological issues. Scottish, Welsh and Irish rock art specialists were invited onto the Advisory Committee, for the research and its implications should apply to the whole of Britain.



Recording

Naturally, one priority of the survey was to find out exactly how much was known already. There are many sources, including books and papers, and many regions have a Sites and Monuments Record of what is on their patch. However, it soon became clear that the standard of recording was variable, and there was a need to produce an agreed common standard of recording. Below is a summary of some of the issues raised.

The places where rock art is found can be accurately plotted with the aid of a GPS. This is far removed from the days when people entered the field with chains and compasses in a time-consuming process to plot sites on a map.

Rock art has to be drawn and photographed. That sounds straight-forward, but isn't. A glance at many reports will show that some drawings are free-hand and approximate. There is little attempt to show the natural structure of a rock surface, with its cracks and indentations; drawings in thick or thin black lines take no account of the relationships between one motif and another. For example, some motifs are fainter than others. There are some traces of superimposition of symbols and motifs. No attempt even today has been made to find a way of recording the varied depths of cups and grooves. Professor John Coles, who has done extensive work developing recording systems in Scandinavia, writes: 'I suggest that the days of simple black and white illustration, devoid of structure and variation, should now be drawn to a conclusion'. He also suggests that any system should include 'the depth of the carvings'. (Coles, 2003).

Modern technology can help here, for the laser scanner shows each motif clearly and presents a contour picture of the rock, including the varying depth of the grooves. This can certainly be done now with panels that are not inaccessible, and the others may follow later.

As laser scanning is expensive and not applied universally, other methods of recording are still used and can be very accurate.

Wax-rubbing, in which black wax is rubbed on the surface of thin, strong newsprint, is a method that I have used to great effect, but this is an acquired skill; without plenty of practice and patience this can be subjective. Many systems of recording suffer from the operator making assumptions about the way the pattern is developing, and may be wrong. Even with the most careful rubbing on paper over a clean surface, the results must be checked against photographs taken in strong, oblique light, preferably not at one time or season only.

If the rubbings, which are a primary source of information, are to be stored, there may be a problem with the type of paper used. Many advocate acid-free paper, but this is expensive. The whole purpose is not to produce decorative wall-coverings but to provide a basis for an accurate drawing. In most cases this is perfectly possible, but as the surface of a rock undulates and dips, there is bound to be a distortion of area when it is reduced to a flat surface.

The rubbing may be covered with a grid of 10cm squares so that the information can be transferred to graph paper, giving a scale of 1/10. Then the drawing is made, with further reference to photographs and to further visits to the site to check all details. Symbols have to be devised so that natural markings are distinguished from artificial. Wherever motifs are clearly spaced there is no problem; where and how motifs merge must be shown. This method of recording has been questioned, and what one has to remember is that if the site is classified as Ancient Monument it can only be used with permission.

Another method is to cover the rock with a sheet of polythene and use a felt pen to draw the design. This sounds satisfactory, but is less objective than a rubbing. Motifs cannot be easily seen under plastic unless they have been filled in with some substance beforehand; this reads the pattern decided by the eye onto the tracing. Corrections can be made, however, to the final drawing in the light of good photographs and through selective rubbings of difficult areas.

A glance at any reports from all over the world shows that there are many methods of drawing. Some use dark grooves against a white background; others have white grooves against a stippled or shaded background. Some put in a sharp edge to cups and rings; others a fuzzy edge. There is as yet no agreed single method. The key question is: What detailed information is a drawing expected to give?

Even when drawings are good, they still need to be complemented by good photographs. Black and white is an excellent medium, and those taken years ago outlive colour prints. Today's technology allows colour prints to be turned into black and white, and colour itself can be enhanced and adjusted. Digital images are particularly useful in close-ups and do not require a great deal of light, although oblique sunlight shows details better. There is a standard scale now accepted, produced by IFRAO, that shows not only centimetres but colours. In the past we have all been in the field when, for various reasons, an acceptable scale has not been available, and coins, walking sticks, pencils, spectacles, buckets, combs and anything handy have been used as scale. In time these will come to date the photographs!



Information that accompanies the drawings and photography must include details of the area and its recorded archaeology. The type of rock must be noted too, and the presence of growths on the rock such as lichen. The 'history' of the rock must be given.

A 360 degree photographic image around a rock is desirable, and there are special lenses for this.

The most thorough and effective system of recording in England has been developed at Newcastle University. This is not the place to examine it in detail, but it meets all the criteria of the precision that we need (Mazel, 2003, ongoing). It is able to accommodate all regions of Britain and abroad in a coherent, universal system, although its scope is at the time of writing confined to Northumberland. As the Newcastle Museum of Antiquities has a large hidden cache of prehistoric marked rocks, one aim is to extend museum and other facilities to encourage everyone to use the information.

Having said this, it must be pointed out that the English Heritage Report (2000) says that. 'It would be better to achieve complete coverage at a standard level (that later could be enhanced if resources became available) rather than attain partial cover at a de luxe level in some areas and nothing at all in others'. That would be all very well, but as little has happened to achieve this since the Report was written, it is better to go for the real work being done and build on that.

Threats to rock art – Conservation and management

A major element is to assess the dangers that exist to rock art. In Britain human intervention, particularly in the form of quarrying and farming has led to the destruction of many panels or to their defacement. A priority is to ensure that those we know about should be legally and scientifically protected

Another threat to decorated rocks is a natural one: that exposure opens up some rocks to the action of water, frost, acid rain and the growth of lichens. In the latter case we are still not sure what effect lichens have. It seems logical that, if they grow on a rock surface, they are drawing out minerals to feed on. On the other hand, the cover that lichens and mosses provided may protect the rock from other kinds of erosion. There is need here for an objective study.

As rock art has become so popular throughout the world to visitors, this popularity is both a blessing and a danger. That people wish to share a heritage is laudable, but some wish to add their names and scrawls as a cheap sort of immortality. We see names, initials and dates chiselled into the rocks at such places as Ormaig. That this is not general in the Kilmartin area is partly due to making people aware of the importance and fragility of the motifs, and by satisfying their needs by establishing controlled access. This is a management problem shared by all historical sites. In Scotland there is considerable work being done to assess and remedy any threats to decorated surfaces, not only on prehistoric sites but at all places where stonework, marked or not, is in danger. An important document on this, *Carved Stones - Historic Scotland's approach*, has set out the store in 2003.

Conservation and management go hand in hand. Monument status theoretically gives a rock legal protection, but that does not protect it. I know of many rocks that have been removed, and have reported this. Protection involves making intelligent decisions on which panels are best displayed and which should be covered over.

How often are marked rocks visited by inspectors? At the moment, not very often and some not at all. This is where a local involvement is important: people who care enough to visit and report anything worrying. It is better to have regional groups made responsible rather than having bureaucrats staged miles away, and for these to be linked to a larger network for purposes of standardisation. Rock art must get its fair share of the budget for such work.

Such an important part of our history, and such an intriguing mystery draws thousands to visit Kilmartin and similar sites, but too much may be left to chance. We need to publicise it more, to make it more generally available, especially to children and schools. When people are directed to sites, the sites must be displayed to the highest standards of good taste.

In the field it is important that rock art should not be seen as something detached from the landscape as a whole. In this, Kilmartin is an ideal situation, as one views it alongside other prehistoric remains. A tour of the well-displayed panels takes in so much of the landscape around it and gives the visitor a strong sense of place. The trail can be extended. At the same time other demands on the landscape are evident: forestry, quarrying, arable and other farming. It is essential to get a balance between the needs of tourism and industry. It is hard for a farmer whose sheep are lambing to have to face a problem of uncontrolled visitors' dogs crossing the field.



The lessons that we have learnt in Britain and continue to learn through selective excavation and site management may be shared with the rest of the world, and we can learn much from the experience of other countries. We must be uncompromising in reaching for the highest standards. The past deserves it and the future expects it of us.

What is left for us to see is what we can delight in. The places where rock art occurs, often remote and needing effort to find, can be extraordinary in their beauty. There is a strong sense of place, of the past, of a mystery. The markings themselves, such an integral part of the landscape, can be profuse and varied or of incredible simplicity, where a single cup mark must have had meaning. It is as important to our heritage as monuments that may well dwarf it and shout for our attention.

Rock art intrigues not only by its presence but also by its provocation. 'You don't and you can't know everything, for all your searching' it seems to say, but it gently prods us to go on with the quest for knowledge.

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Les *Protolibyens* aux marges de la Préhistoire (l'hypothèse Libyo-Berbère)

Ali Farid BELKADI

Resumé

Des régions et des moments différents à travers le monde, englobent des traits culturels analogues. Cela laisse supposer que des connexions et des contacts culturels intercontinentaux, hégémoniques ou autres, se sont opérés entre des populations données durant la Préhistoire. Des monuments inscrits de caractères graphiques surprenants sont disséminés par milliers sur des sites clos depuis des décennies à toute tentative d'éclaircissement. Le hasard semble n'être pour rien dans ces affinités culturelles, imprégnées du même contenu formel.

A l'exemple des chars rupestres, peints ou gravés du Maghreb, ainsi que ceux de l'Aïr du Sahara méridional, qui sont modelés à l'aide des lettres de l'écriture Libyque. L'écriture Libyque est probablement le prototype graphique originel qui aurait servi à noter les premières hiéroglyphes de l'Égypte. Les tatouages berbères contemporains, dont certains forment le signe de la divinité Neith, on dit aussi « collier de Neith », sont de même issus de cette écriture, dont on retrouve des éléments dans des pays européens, riverains de l'océan Atlantique.

Dans un autre ordre d'idée, un symbole graphique contenu plusieurs fois dans le diverticule axial de la grotte de Lascaux, figure aux fins fonds du Sahara, à Tin Itinen, dans le Tassili. Le signe de Lascaux est daté entre 15.000 et 20.000 ans par les spécialistes, alors celui du Sahara, qui lui est absolument identique –et passé inaperçu jusqu'à ce jour– est estimé quant à lui, à 4000 ans avant le présent par Henri Lhote.

« Quel abîme profond que le passé des hommes »
HERODOTE.

PROLOGUE

Les Libyens à BRESCIA (Tite-Live (V, 35).

Les auteurs anciens, grecs et latins, ont signalé à différentes reprises la présence de populations Libyo-berbères en Europe occidentale.

Parmi ces auteurs : DIODORE de Sicile (III, 53, 56, 60) et APOLLODORE (II, 5, 11) qui nous apprennent que ATLAS, fils d'OURANOS et frère de CRONOS régna sur la Libye, la Sicile, l'Italie, l'Hespérie et le pays des Hyperboréens. Ces Hyperboréens dont Platon disait qu'ils étaient Libyens. Le mot Libye comprenait l'ensemble des pays du Maghreb, selon les anciens grecs qui adoptèrent la terminologie Rebu des égyptiens.

Les GORGONES du mythe grec sont Libyennes selon PAUSANIAS (II, 21, 5-6), et DIODORE (III, 52). L'empire d'Ouranos s'étendait à l'Occident et au Nord du continent Afro-Européen.

AVIENUS «*Descriptio orbis terrae*» (329, 738, cf. pseudo SCYMNOS 152-158), dit que l'Hespéride était habitée par des éthiopiens, et que le sud de l'Espagne faisait partie de la Libye. PHILEAS, limite la Libye au fleuve Rhône français, dont deux branches s'appelaient Libyca (PHILEAS c/o AVIENUS).

POLYBE va dans le même sens. PLINE l'Ancien dit la même chose.

On retrouve l'éponyme Libya dans des villes en Europe Occidentale, en Lusitanie, en Cantabrie, et en Tarraconaise.

SARDUS fils d'HERAKLES (MELQART libyen), fut l'éponyme des sardes et de la Sardaigne, selon SOLIN 4, 1. PAUSANIAS X, 17, 2 ; SILIUS ITALICUS (XII 359360) et ISIDORE «*origines*» (XIV, 6, 39).

PAUSANIAS (X, 17, 8), dit encore que la Corse fut occupée par les Libyens.

TITE-LIVE (V, 35) écrit que les territoires de Vérone et de Brescia, proches de Valcamonica, furent habités par les anciens berbères, Libuens. Ce dernier nom évoque la vaste et puissante confédération des Lebu, qui menaient une guerre assidue à l'Égypte.



DIODORE de Sicile parle des Atlantes berbères comme d'un peuple hautement civilisé qui vivait aux confins Algéro-Tunisiens, auxquels les amazones de Libye, c'est-à-dire les tribus matriarcales voisines enlevèrent leur ville principale, Cirmé.

Plus près de nous, Robert GRAVES écrit : « Au cours du troisième millénaire des cultivateurs libyens hautement civilisés envahirent l'Europe Occidentale en passant par l'Espagne et le Portugal avant de parvenir dans les îles britanniques, (vers la fin du III^e millénaire avant J.-C.) où ils sont désignés sous le qualificatif de « constructeurs de tombes » (...) Des poteries retrouvées en Crète indiquent une immigration berbère durant le IV^e millénaire. L'apparition des berbères en Crète précède l'avènement de la civilisation de l'île ».

L'écriture Libyque, les youyou, IO et le culte d'ISIS

C'est le cri Taghrit (targui), Tzaghrit (arabe dialectal) et Tighratin (berbère kabyle), Twalwil (arabe dialectal maghrébin) -plus connu de nos jours sous le terme trivial de « youyou »- qui dans les temps antiques était poussé rituellement par les prêtresses berbères d'Isis en l'honneur de la divinité IO-ISIS sous la forme : OLOLYGE ELELEU IOU IOU.

Sachant que par définition, les mythes -d'Isis et de IO- sont indatables, en suivant les indications données par Hérodote (484/485 avant J-C à Halicarnasse), qui attribue le cri Tagherit aux prêtresses libyennes, il est permis d'envisager l'utilisation de l'écriture Libyque à des dates extrêmement lointaines, à la limite de l'entendement historique. Par définition l'Histoire débute avec l'apparition de l'écriture, là se termine conventionnellement la Préhistoire. En considérant de plus près l'écriture libyque –dont sont issus les tfinagh touaregs-, on constate que la lettre A berbère appelée Tagherit, qui s'écrit à l'aide d'un point • évoque précisément le cri Taghrit (targui), Tzaghrit (arabe dialectal) et Tighratin (berbère kabyle). Or le point • est la base de toutes les écritures. A la manière du pixel du domaine informatique. C'est aussi le début des sciences mathématiques, il faut deux points pour mener une droite, trois pour tracer un cercle etc.. De toutes les écritures encore en usage ou appartenant au passé, l'écriture Libyque est la seule qui utilise le point en guise de lettre A.

Protohiéroglyphes?

TAJERART, JERARA, LE CHAR

Les chars rupestres, peints ou gravés, du Maghreb, ainsi que ceux de l'Aïr au Niger sont symbolisés à l'aide des lettres de l'écriture Libyque (Planche X, alphabet Libyque).

Sur le plan graphique, DJERARA et TADJERART s'écrivent respectivement (en caractères Libyque):

⌊j Or Or et Xt ⌊j Or Or Xt

Ces consonnes une fois assemblées ou superposées prennent la forme d'un char. Deux possibilités d'écriture se présentent :

- 1) Un Char simplifié : O ⌊ O
- 2) Un Char avec ses essieux : V ⌊ V

On obtient ces deux formes indifféremment, à l'aide du Libyque de Dougga/Algérie, du Libyque de Lixus (Maroc) ou des Tfinagh' touaregs.

LE SOC DE LA CHARRUE (VALCAMONICA):



On retrouve dans cet autre exemple, les deux consonnes berbères J et G, qui s'assemblent pour former le mot JOUG, ainsi que le soc de la charrue proprement dit. Deux bêtes liées en duo, bœufs ou autres, confirment la finesse de cette représentation. (Planche VIII, fig.24).

De même que JRR ou TJRRT sont condensés à leurs éléments graphiques de base, formés par les lettres berbères.



La divinité RA

Dans le même ordre d'idée, les consonnes berbères R et A, qui sont :

 lettre *r* et  lettre *a* permettent de transcrire d'emblée le nom hiéroglyphique du dieu solaire Egyptien Ra ou Ré.

 RA

Sachant l'ancienneté de cette divinité égyptienne, il est permis de se poser des questions sur la antériorité de l'écriture Libyque sur les hiéroglyphes de L'Égypte. On sait que RA, la divinité qui accapara le panthéon égyptien, était revendiquée en tant que filiation royale, dès les premières dynasties qui gouvernèrent l'Égypte. Voilà plus de 5000 ans.

SIGNES DE L'EPOQUE MAGDALENIENNE

L'origine et l'évolution primitive de l'écriture vieux-berbère sont à rechercher dans les inscriptions que certains spécialistes ont appelé signes mnémotechniques de l'époque dite Magdalénienne. C'est à dire à l'ensemble des faciès culturels de l'Europe occidentale, jusqu'à la fin de la glaciation de Würm qui eut lieu de 15.000 à 10.000 avant le présent. Le magdalénien -qui tient son nom de l'abri de la Madeleine à Tursac en Dordogne dont on a fait une civilisation comme le Mas d'Azil est devenu Azilien- est caractérisé en particulier par l'art pictural des grottes d'Altamira près de Santander en Espagne. De Beaumes-de-Venise près d'Avignon (France) ou celui de Coizard-Joches près de Montmirail (France). Le musée des Eyzies en Dordogne contient des inscriptions gravées sur des vestiges osseux de même que l'abri de Font-de-Gaume qui se trouve non loin de là. De plus en plus d'historiens, pensent, sans le formuler distinctement, que ces inscriptions peintes dans les grottes préhistoriques sont les traces d'une écriture primitive ou d'une pré-écriture, composée de symboles impossibles à décrypter. Plus personne ne s'y est plus jamais intéressé depuis les siècles derniers.

En conclusion, on peut dire que deux écoles s'opposent avec acharnement depuis la fin du XIX^e siècle à propos de l'apparition de l'écriture, c'est à dire la représentation de la pensée à l'aide de signes graphiques conventionnels. Les Adeptes de la naissance de l'écriture en ORIENT, contestant l'apparition de l'écriture en OCCIDENT.

SCULPTURE SUR CRAIE PORTANT DES INSCRIPTIONS (Planche I, fig.1).

Cette gravure baptisée: «La déesse de COIZARD» de COIZARD-JOCHES, une petite commune de Montmirail, au sud du département de la MARNE, près de la ville de REIMS, porte des inscriptions de la même nature que celles de GLOZEL. La distance qui sépare Coizard, de Glozel, s'élève à près de quatre cents kilomètres. Une importante nécropole attribuée au faciès culturel Seine-Oise-Marne, datant du néolithique final (milieu du III^e millénaire avant J-C), a été découverte au cours de l'année 1842 dans cette localité. Trente cinq nouveaux hypogées -monuments souterrains servant de chambres funéraires- ont été par la suite prospectés par le marquis J. De BAYE, après qu'il eut fait d'importantes trouvailles de surface dans son domaine, entre 1870 et 1971. J. De BAYE l'inventeur du site, a laissé plusieurs volumes consacrés à ses trouvailles. Parmi lesquels cette gravure sur craie nommée «Déesse gravée» par J. De Baye lui-même. On remarque d'emblée que l'écriture est identique à celle de Glozel (Département de l'Allier). Glozel a donc été jugé faux par un grand nombre de spécialistes du XX^e siècle. Il n'y a pas lieu d'y revenir. Jamais, à notre connaissance, aucun spécialiste n'a accusé le marquis De Baye d'être un faussaire, comme cela fut le cas d'Émile FRADIN, le découvreur du site de Glozel, qui défraya la chronique en France durant les années mille neuf cent vingt. De Faye était marquis, FRADIN simple paysan. La gravure représente une femme, les yeux exorbités par la douleur, se tenant la tête, le menton appuyé sur ses mains dans une attitude exprimant la souffrance. Après déchiffrement des inscriptions de la tablette à l'aide de l'écriture Libyo-berbère, nous apprenons qu'il s'agit d'une pauvre dame souffrante, languissante et prostrée, dont le front est brûlant de fièvre.



TROIS GRAVURES DE GLOZEL (Planche I, fig.2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

1) TAGMARIN , LA JUMENT

TAGMARIN , la jument. Le mot qui désigne «la jument» dans la langue berbère, est TAGMART ou TAGMARIN, il est clairement exposé dans deux gravures. Dr MORLET qui a dressé le corpus des inscriptions découvertes à GLOZEL, s'est trompé en écrivant à propos de cette gravure : «Inscription au-dessus d'une louve gravide sur poignard emmanché (...) il s'agit peut-être d'un loup». Il ne s'agit pas d'une louve, car il manque à l'animal représenté sur cette gravure de GLOZEL, des mamelles. Pas plus qu'elle n'est gravide car dans ce cas elle aurait eu le ventre tombant. Ce n'est pas un loup non plus, car le museau est disproportionné par rapport au reste du corps, qui est allongé sur la gravure. Il s'agit bel et bien d'une jument, TAGMARIN en berbère. < r j I (de gauche à droite) G M R N selon l'écriture libyo-berbère).

2) LE LION

Cette autre figuration sur galet de GLOZEL, qui représente une lionne ou un lionceau, du fait de l'absence de crinière, exprime par deux lettres le nom du lion en berbère, IZEM. Il s'agit de – (z) et Δ(m) inscrits sur la gravure près de la patte dressée de l'animal.

3) INSCRIPTION SUR GALET PERFORE

Cette autre inscription de Glozel contient également le mot GMRN « la jument ». Elle confirme la gravure précédente.

LES PETROGLYPHES DU VAL CAMONICA

(Planche II, fig.9).

Le Val Camonica, par ses milliers de relevés de gravures incisées linéairement à la pointe fine, délinées par percussion directe ou piquetées par percussion détournée, est pareillement un sujet de travail exaltant. D'autres sites à gravures rupestres similaires existent à Totes Gerbirge en Autriche, dans le Val Carschenna et dans le Haut-Adige en Suisse. Le Mont BEGO, en France ainsi que la Vallée de l'Arc en France, sont représentatifs de ce style de gravures.

A CONSTANTINE (Algérie) AUSSI

De l'autre côté de la Méditerranée les paysages agrestes du Constantinois, dans l'est de l'Algérie, renferment des gravures analogues. Ces pétroglyphes qui présentent un grand nombre de caractéristiques anthropomorphes, évoquent les gravures sur roches de plusieurs continents. Il existe une vingtaine d'emplacements archéologiques similaires, dans un rayon de 200 km autour de la ville de Constantine, connus dès 1867. Ch. De VIGNERAL révélait le site de KHANGUET EL HADJAR dès cette époque. Le Dr REBOUD et R. BERNELLE, respectivement en 1882 et en 1892 s'y intéressèrent à leur tour, parallèlement à leurs innombrables relevés d'inscriptions Libyques, reprises par l'Abbé CHABOT dans son R.I.L (Recueil des Inscriptions Libyques). R. VAUFREY dans son « Préhistoire de l'Algérie » classe les sites pétrographiques du Constantinois en plusieurs catégories. Qui sont (Planche II, fig.7,8):

Les stations à bas-relief : A KHANGUET EL-HADJAR, KEF SIDI SALAH, KEF TASSENGA.

Les stations à gravures piquetées ou martelées : HADJAR-EL-GHORAB, KEF MARBAH, KEF TARFANA, Abri du serpent, CHABET EL-HEULSA et KSAR EL -KHANGA .

Les stations à gravures au trait : CHABET EL-GUETTAR, LAMBLÉCHE, KEF EL-MSAOURA et KEF EL DAMOUS.

Les stations à peintures : GUECHGUECH, KEF KANTARIA, KEF AÏN NHAS et AÏN REGADA.

et enfin ce qu'il dénomme, *les stations aux traits en fuseaux* : dont font partie les sites du DJEBEL MAZELA.

Dans les sites du Djebel MAZELA, des représentations de BUBALUS ANTIQUS, animal disparu depuis plusieurs millénaires ont été relevées par SOLIGNAC en 1929. Il s'agit là d'un précieux repère temporel, qui permet une datation radicale des gravures rupestres de la zone de Constantine. A quelle date a véritablement disparu cet animal?

Des scènes identiques à celles représentées dans le VALCAMONICA et au Mont BEGO, existent par dizaines dans les sites algériens énumérés ci-dessus. G. et L. LEFEBVRE en signalent certaines, anthropomorphes, qui leur suggèrent par leur apparence, le geste classique de la prière. Il ne fait aucun



doute que la chronologie est d'époque préhistorique.

L'ALLÉGORIE BERBERE

On peut résumer ces représentations de personnages gravés sur roches, de la région de Constantine, et d'ailleurs, par le symbole qui est également la valeur de la consonne Z de l'alphabet berbère. Le plus important est de décomposer ce symbole z, selon la norme berbère définie par nous-mêmes comme étant une écriture à lettres superposées cumulées, annonciatrice des hiéroglyphes de l'égypte. Dans ce symbole anodin en apparence, le nom de TANIT est clairement énoncé.

TANIT/NEITH/TA'ANAYT

Ce symbole est produit par la superposition de trois lettres berbères: qui sont le T, puis par la lettre N intermédiaire, et enfin une nouvelle fois par la lettre T, cette fois-ci, les fourches vers le bas. Les deux Th étant disposés tête-bêche. Les voyelles ne s'écrivant pas dans le corps des mots nous obtenons TNT ou TANIT qui est également NEITH, ATHENA ou TA'ANAYT (berbère).

LASCAUX et le SAHARA (Planche III, fig.13,14,15) et (Planche IV)

Un exemple de datation archéologique contestable nous est fourni par le symbole peint sur le diverticule axial de la grotte de LASCAUX. Ce site est considéré comme le sommet de l'art pariétal paléolithique. Le symbole en question est identique en tout point à celui qui figure sur une fresque rupestre de In-Itinen dans le Tassili. Cette concordance iconographique est passée inaperçue jusqu'à présent.

LA PEYRA ESCRITA DE FORMIGUERES (PYRENEES-ORIENTALES) (Planche VIII, fig.24)

En berbère, le mot "bâton", "une massue" se dit TAQAZULT, QAZUL. Les figures suivantes extraites d'un personnage de FORMIGUERES, qui est représenté tenant dans chaque main un bâton. GZWL ou TGZWL en berbère.

LUSSAC-LES-CHATEAUX (Planche III, fig.12)

L'Art paléolithique est largement représenté à LUSSAC-les-CHATEAUX, canton de la Vienne, en particulier par la découverte de plus de 1500 dalles ou plaquettes gravées dans diverses couches datant du MAGDALENIEN. La grotte de la "MARCHE" (classée Monument Historique le 7.4.1970) a été fouillée à partir de 1937 par Léon PERICARD et Stéphane WOLF. Les tablettes de Lussac-Les-Châteaux furent tout d'abord contestées par les spécialistes. Il a fallu toute la notoriété de l'Abbé Breuil pour qu'elles figurent intégralement dans le patrimoine archéologique de la France.

LES TATOUAGES BERBERES

(Planche VI, fig.20,21)

L'homme et la femme se sont tatoué le corps depuis la nuit des temps, en usant de dessins spécifiques et indélébiles par piqûres de matières colorantes sous l'épiderme. L'utilisation de pigment noir, qui vire à la couleur bleuâtre après son insertion dans la peau, est quasi générale sur les tous les continents. A l'exception près de certaines tribus du Pacifique, dont les Haydah, des îles Queen Charlotte, qui utilisent la teinte rouge. Une diversité considérable de tatouages se révèle lorsqu'on observe les dessins et les symboles à travers le monde.

Pourquoi l'homme se tatoue-t-il ? Qui en furent les précurseurs ? Comment des peuples des cinq continents, aussi éloignés et aussi différents les uns des autres, tels que ceux de Palau et Yap ou ceux du Laos ou encore les tribus indiennes de l'Amérique du Nord ont-ils pu découvrir distinctement, la technique du tatouage et l'envie soudaine d'orne certaines parties de leur corps de motifs insolites.

La plus ancienne trace de tatouages, figure dans les archives écrites de l'égypte. Elle a été relevée et répertoriée historiquement, dans la Tombe de Sethi I^o, XIX^o Dynastie égyptienne, 1306/1290. On y voit un groupe de seigneurs Libyo-berbères, drapés de leurs vêtements d'apparats, les bras et les jambes tatoués du signe de Neith.

Les tatouages berbères évoquent des éléments de diagrammes à caractères religieux, genre mandalas sommaires. C'est le constat auquel nous sommes parvenu. D'autres fois ils semblent clairement issus de signes de l'écriture Libyque.

ITRI , l'astre, ASTARTE

ITRI, un motif en forme de losange berbère est largement utilisé dans l'art décoratif et l'artisanat, depuis



la haute antiquité comme l'attestent des poteries préhistoriques mises au jour à Tiddis (Algérie). ITRI signifie « étoile », « astre ». En rapport à la planète Vénus, « le joyau du ciel », qui était connue des anciens astronomes sous les noms « d'étoile du matin » et « d'étoile du soir ». C'est l'astre le plus brillant du ciel après le Soleil et la Lune, visible tantôt à l'aube (étoile du matin), tantôt au crépuscule (étoile du Berger). Les assyriens l'appelaient ISHTAR, la grande déesse de la Vie et de la Fertilité. Elle fut identifiée à la déesse phénicienne Astarte ou Ashtar et plus tard à Aphrodite grecque « Déesse de l'amour ».

La radicale bilitère TR (Itri) renvoie à la trilitère ShTR dont dérive le substantif ISHTAR ou ASTARTE, qui portait divers noms, selon les pays où parvint ce culte. Ainsi elle devient Neith, Athéna, Isis, 'Uset, Astarté, Nout Déméter ou Vénus... Al-Uzza, dans le Coran.

LE SIGNE DE NOUT-NEITH-TA'ANAYT-ISIS (Planche V, fig.16,17,18,19)

Les Seigneurs libyens Temehou, Tombe de Sethi I^o, XIX^e Dynastie 1306/1290, Égypte, portent le signe de Neith, tatoué sur les membres. La plus ancienne représentation, connue, de ce signe de Neith, figure sur la tablette d'ébène de Ménès, Première dynastie, Abydos, 3400 av. J.-C, selon l'égyptologue James Henry Breasted. Ce signe qui apparaît dès la formation de la royauté en Égypte, laisse supposer que le culte voué à cette divinité remonte à la nuit des temps. Il évoque, par entrecroisement des hachures, le motif berbère Itri. On retrouve jusqu'à nos jours, dans l'artisanat et la poterie berbère, ce signe de la haute antiquité, pourvu du même symbole d'écriture, et coudé à ses extrémités.

Un tatouage identique, formé d'une multitude de losanges-Itri non circonscrits dans un format quadratique, figure autour du cou de femmes berbères contemporaines. Ces losanges sont reproduits sommairement, sous la forme de hachures hybridées. Cinq mille ans séparent les tatouages de notre époque, de cette lointaine métaphore graphique désignant Neith, dont le confession religieuse se confondait parfois avec le culte d'Isis.

LE SIGNE D'ADORATION A L'EFFIGIE DU CAMELEON (Planche IX, fig.25)

T A T A (arabe vulgaire et Berbère), « le caméléon », est à rapprocher du lézard des régions chaudes, le GECKO grimpeur, «Tarentola mauritanica», doté de doigts qui lui permettent d'adhérer à n'importe quelle surface verticale.

Ce petit reptile, de la famille des lacertiliens, long d'une trentaine de centimètres, est à la fois arboricole et insectivore. Sa peau est ordinairement capable d'adopter la couleur du milieu où il est posté. Sa langue qui est aussi longue que son corps, lui sert à attraper ses proies. Le caméléon porte un casque surélevé à l'arrière, il a le talon garni d'un éperon. Sa couleur est le vert émeraude.

Le caméléon, fait l'objet d'une vénération crédule, à caractère fétichiste au MAGHREB. Empaillé et suspendu à l'intérieur des maisons ou au-dessus de la porte cochère de préférence, il est sensé protéger les lieux de multiples manières. Peut-être cela est-il dû à ses yeux, qui sont très animés et indépendants l'un de l'autre, et qui peuvent sous l'action de muscles extérieurs, se mouvoir en tous sens, en s'orientant dans n'importe quelle direction autour de leur point de fixation. On lui attribue le pouvoir de lutter contre le mauvais œil. Sans que l'on sache l'origine exacte de cette considération que certaines populations au Maghreb, vouent à ce lézard. Son nom scientifique est "Chamaleo chamaleo".

Dans les campagnes, jusqu'à ces dernières décennies on utilisait le caméléon comme remède, sous forme de fumigations pour la gorge ou autres. Les populations touarègues appliquent de la peau de caméléon séché au soleil et pilée, pour lutter contre les morsures de scorpions et de serpents. Il existe une autre espèce de GECKO terrestre celui-là, le "Cyrtodactylus Kotschy", différent du précédent par ses doigts pourvus d'ongles, alors que le Gecko grimpeur dispose de crochets qui lui permettent de coller aux murs. Les deux espèces se sont par ailleurs adaptées au désert Saharien où vivaient leurs ancêtres les gigantesques sauriens lorsque le Sahara était recouvert de forêts.

On peut former la silhouette de TATA à l'aide de deux lettres de l'alphabet berbère T, tête-bêche. On rajoutant le trait vertical, qui est la lettre N libyque, nous obtenons TNT.

La ressemblance formelle entre la physionomie du caméléon, toujours révéral au Maghreb, et l'énigmatique symbole d'adoration inscrit un peu partout dans l'art rupestre sur les cinq continents, trouve un début d'éclaircissement dans l'énoncé graphique du nom de Tanit : TNT (libyo-berbère).

Il n'est pas exclu que ce symbole de TATA, ait été adopté pour préfigurer TANIT (Neith-Ta'anayt-Isis, Ta'anayt), suite à des persécutions d'ordre religieux, à la manière du poisson Ichthus choisi par les premiers chrétiens qui subissaient les brimades romaines. La forme et la structure du corps du caméléon et



sa capacité à s'adapter à l'environnement ainsi que sa vigilance en perpétuel éveil, en ont fait une allégorie composite idéale pour les orants de la haute antiquité, pour ne pas dire de la proche préhistoire. L'Ourane ou lézard des sables est appelé de manière sibylline par les touaregs du nord : « Notre grand oncle maternel ». Peut-être en rapport à la divinité TANIT, NEITH qui a été assimilée à tort à un personnage temporel. Tin Hinan, l'Antinéa de romanciers en mal d'exotisme, appartient au culte ancien voué à travers le monde méditerranéen à cette divinité féminine d'origine Libyenne que différentes traditions religieuses, ont nommé Neith, Athéna, Isis, Al-Uzza, 'Uset, Astarté, Nout Déméter ou Vénus.

Les tatouages berbères, inscrits fois sur des jambes masculines, évoquent en même temps le signe rupestre z et la silhouette du caméléon, TATA.

La présence de caractère d'écriture Libyque est perceptible d'emblée dans ces tatouages. Le signe de TANIT qui se perpétue au Maghreb depuis des millénaires, est exprimé sous la forme d'une figurine qui tend les bras de chaque côté du corps. Une fois de plus ce qui semble être un archétype, ou un prototype métaphorique de Neith, nous ramène à la symbolique des signes pétrographiques universels.

Ainsi la déesse Astarté, Ishtar, devint Aphrodite en Grèce et Vénus à Rome dont les deux fonctions essentielles, étaient liées à de l'amour et la fécondité. Dans ce cas il est tout à fait normal de la retrouver dans les tatouages féminins berbères. Tout cela semble confirmer les assertions de Hérodote : « Les femmes de Cyrène se refusent aussi à manger de la vache, à cause de l'Isis des égyptiens, qu'elles honorent de plus par des jeûnes et des fêtes», (Hérodote, Livre IV).

Fonds commun universel?

Parmi les peuples anciens de l'occident méditerranéen, qui étaient pourvus d'écriture les Ibères, les Etrusques et les Ligures ne sont plus là. Les Celtes qui ont perdu le sens de leurs runes, de facture récente, continuent contre vents et marées à vouloir préserver leur culture héréditaire. Restent les Berbères, parmi eux le peuple des Touaregs, ce peuple vestige d'un énigmatique passé humain, et leur système d'écriture que l'on s'évertue à exclure du champ de l'histoire, à l'instar du signe de Lascaux que l'on retrouve inscrit dans le Tassili. Admettre l'existence d'une écriture ou d'une pré-écriture vieille de plusieurs millénaires, cela équivaut à repousser les limites de l'histoire dans le temps, hors des contraintes enracinées dans le monde de la paléographie. Reculer les limites de l'histoire, cela revient à ruiner d'irréductibles théories anciennes. L'Histoire est apparue bien plus tôt qu'on ne le pense, semble nous dire l'ECRITURE géométrique des protolibyens. Mais hélas pour nous, elle ne s'écrivait pas à la façon de Tite-Live, de Homère ou de Ibn Khaldoun.

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Planche I



Fig. 1. Dame de Coizard. France (J. de Baye).



Fig. 2. Tablette de Glozel. France (Dr Morlet).



Fig. 3. Inscription sur un poignard. Glozel. France (Dr Morlet).

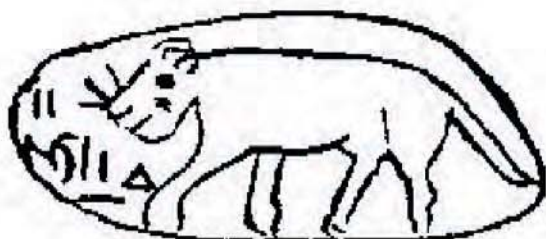


Fig. 4. Un galet de Glozel. France (Dr Morlet).



Planche II



Fig. 5. Galet perforé de Glozel. France (Dr Morlet).



Fig. 6. Hameçon de Glozel. France (Dr Morlet).



Fig. 7. Art rupestre de la région de Constantine (Algérie) (R. Vaufrey).



Fig. 8. Art rupestre de l'Aïr (Sahara méridional), divers sites.

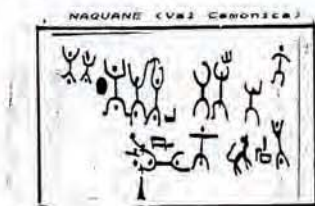


Fig. 9. Art rupestre de Naquane, Valcamonica (E. Anati).



Fig. 10. Inscriptions rupestres de l'Amérique du nord, pays Shoshoni (Idaho).



Fig. 11. Gravures rupestres de Pacaraima, Guyane anglaise. (C. Barrington).



Planche III

Fig. 12. Gravure exhumée à LUSSAC-LES-CHATEAUX par Stephan Wolf vers 1940, contestée par un grand nombre de préhistoriens, elle sera authentifiée par l'Abbé Breuil, auquel on doit le dessin.

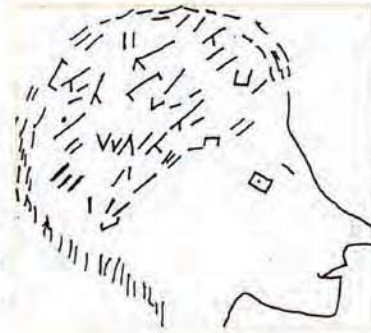
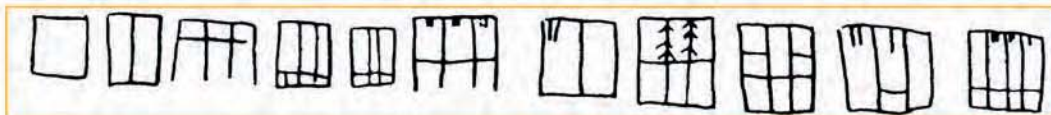


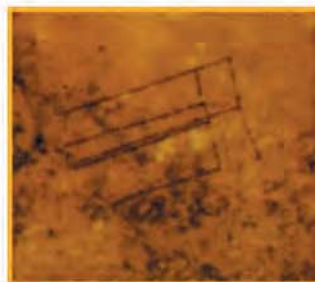
Fig. 13. Signe de Lascaux (France) et signe de In Itinen (Tassili, Algérie).



Quelques signes à cellules figurant dans la grotte de Lascaux.



Fig. 14. Deux fresques renfermant ce signe, à gauche Lascaux (France) et à droite In Itinen (Tassili, Algérie)



Signe de In Itinen (Tassili), détail.



Planche IV



Fig. 14. Signe de la grotte d'El Castillo (Espagne).



Un signe identique à celui de la grotte d'El Castillo (Espagne) figure dans la grande fresque de l'Abri Idheren (Tassili, Algérie).



Fig. 15. Signe de lascaux (à droite) comparé à celui de la grande fresque de l'Abri Idheren, (Tassili, Algérie). (à gauche). Mêmes cellules, mêmes fragments. Qui suggèrent une hutte ou un échafaudage.



Planche V



Fig. 16. Seigneurs protoberbères, de la confédération des Temehou (Tombe de Sethi I°, XIX DYNASTIE ? 1306/1290, Egypte). Détails montrant le signe de Neith tatoué sur leurs membres.



Signe de Neith qui figure sur les bras et les jambes des seigneurs libyens .

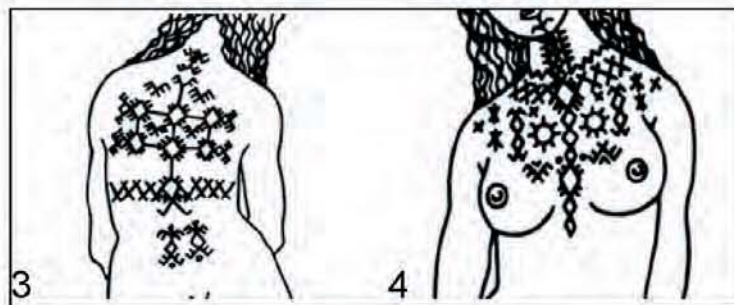


Fig. 17. Ce signe de Neith, également appelé « Collier de Neith » figure en haut des reins et autour du cou d'une jeune femme berbère de l'époque moderne (Croquis de Maarten Heselt Van Dinter).



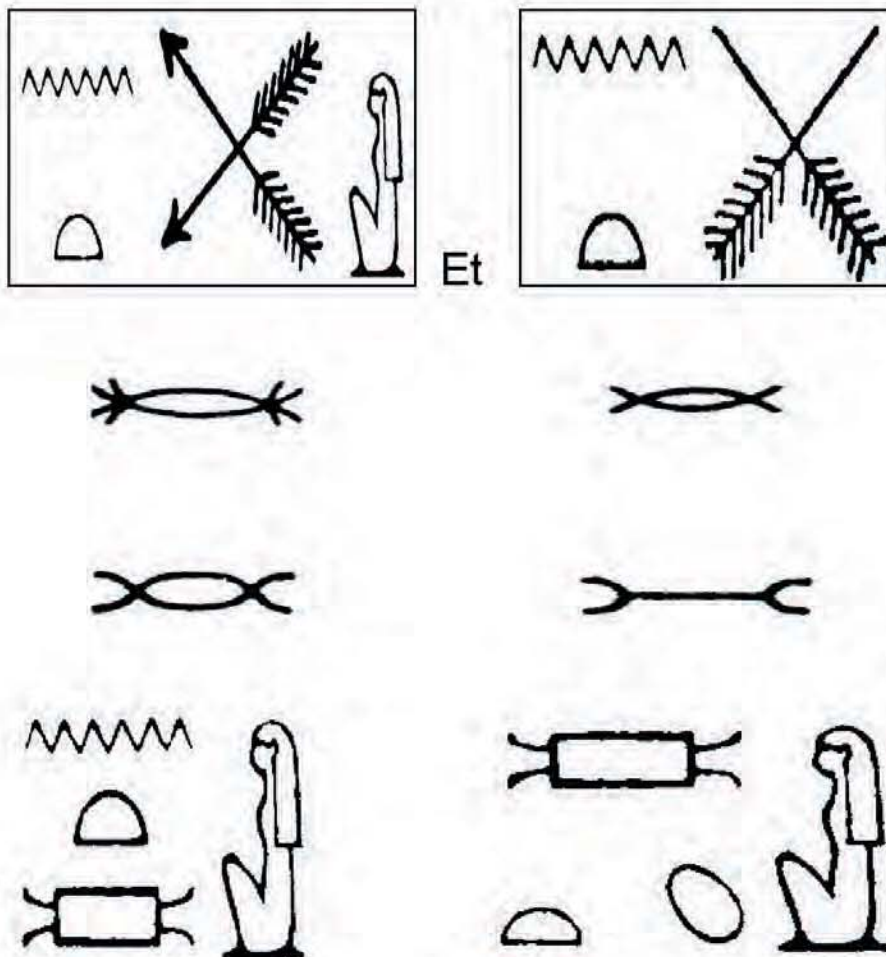


Fig. 18. Evolution du signe de Neith, à partir de deux flèches entrecroisées. Jusqu'à aboutir au symbole figurant dans ces deux cartouches de Neith.



Fig. 19. Le signe de Neith est esquissé sur l'embase de ce groupe de gigantesques amphores à provisions à trois corps (Akoufi en berbère). (Taguemount Ou Kerrouch, Kabylie, Algérie, époque contemporaine).



Planche VI



Fig. 20. Tatouages berbères contemporains, où figure le losange ITRI de l'art berbère, qui est aussi le nom de l'étoile en berbère. Itri en rapport à la planète Vénus, Astaté ou Ishtar. (Croquis de Maarten Heselt Van Dinter).

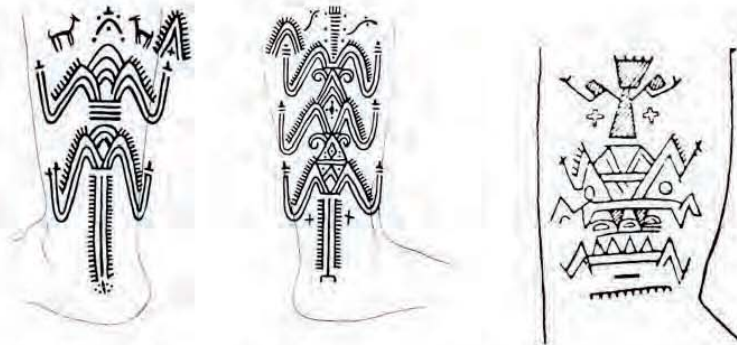


Fig. 21. Tatouages masculins berbères aux jambes (à gauche) et au bras (à droite), allusions païennes à l'ancien culte de Tanit-Neith-Athéna. L'aspect orant évoque les figures humanoïdes de l'art rupestre universel. Dans le tatouage de droite, culminant, l'effigie liturgique de Tanit est clairement représentée.

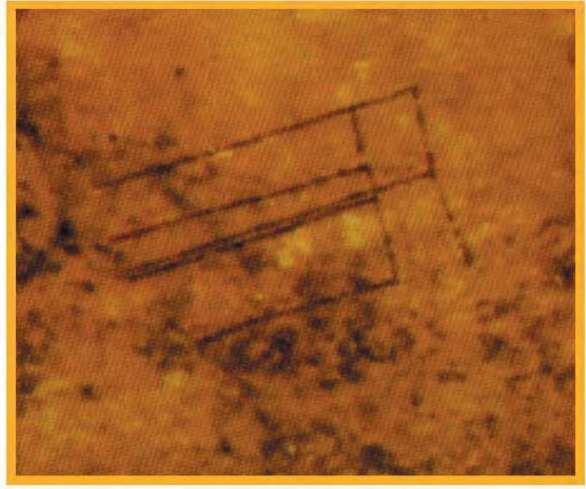
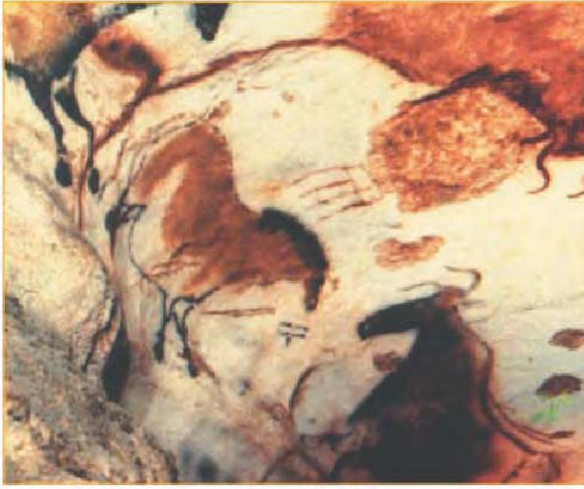


Taourirt Abdallah (Quadhia)

Fig. 22. Le losange ITRI est omniprésent dans l'art traditionnel et campagnard berbère. Ici peint sur une jarre à provisions.



Planche VII



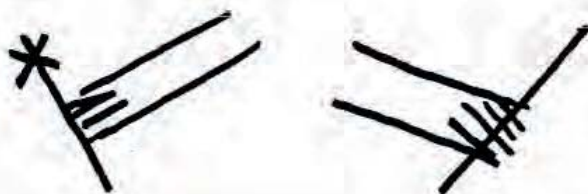
Ci-dessus : Signe de la grotte de Lascaux (à gauche) et à In Itinen (Tassili)



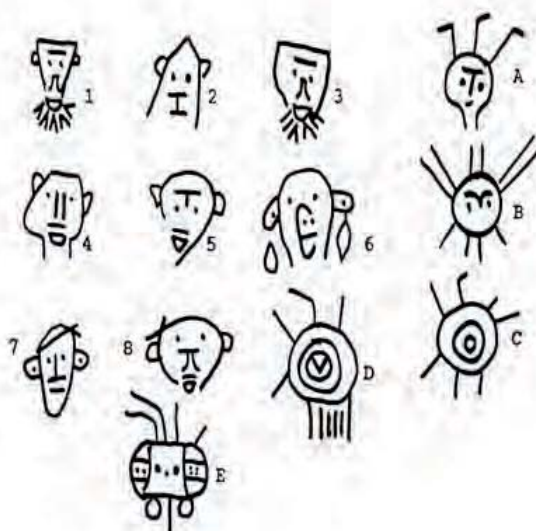
Signes de Lascaux. Diverticule axial et autres emplacements.



Planche VIII



Ces bras de La Peyra Escrita de Formiguères sont terminés par des mains qui semblent porter un bâton, sont conçus à l'aide de signes d'écriture : TGZL. En berbère la radicale QZL (GZL en berbère saharien) contient le mot qui désigne « un bâton » Qazul ou encore Gazul.



DES VISAGES DE LA PEYRA ESCRITA DE FORMIGUERES (n° 1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8) confrontés à des visages dessinés sahariens (A.B.C.D.E).

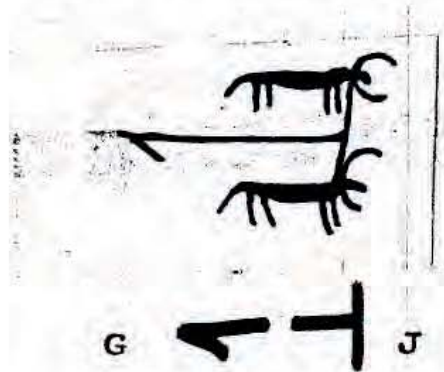
Les visages des personnages sont différents les uns des autres. Cette schématisation à l'extrême du visage humain, rend plausible une énumération de mots et autres déterminants relatifs à la physionomie de la face humaine.





Visages appartenant à divers sites sahariens, exprimés avec des lettres superposées. Des protohiéroglyphes qui semblent dire chacune des mots différents .

Une charrue (Valcamonica):



D'après E. ANATI

Fig. 24. On retrouve ici les deux consonnes berbères J et G assemblées pour former le mot JouG ainsi que le soc de la charrue proprement dit. Deux bêtes liées en duo, bœufs ou autres, confirment la perspicacité de cette représentation.



Planche IX

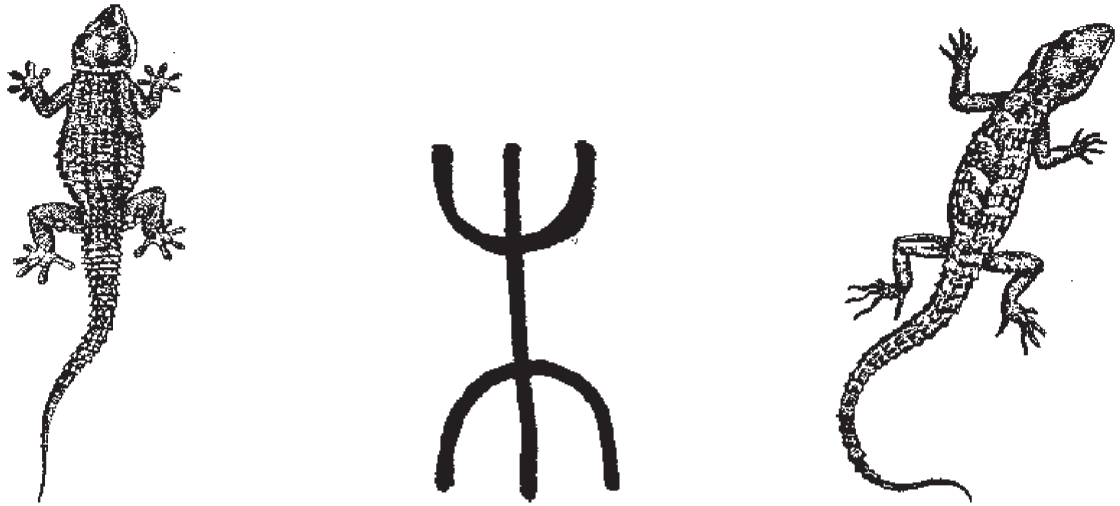


Fig. 25. Caméléon, lézard et signe d'adoration de l'art rupestre universel (au centre).

L'Ourane, le lézard des sables sahariens est appelé par les touaregs du nord : « *Notre grand oncle maternel* ». Allusion à Neith qui aurait eu pour nom local Tin Hinan. Ce Tin Hinan à tort a été octroyé à une princesse médiévale, dont la sépulture est visible de nos jours au Musée du Bardo à Alger.



Autre tatouage berbère, Algérie. Qui suggère en filigrane une forme humaine, les bras levés, en adoration face à Tanit-Neith qu'il évoque par la présence de deux croix qui sont la consonne T berbère, sans rapport avec le signe chrétien.



Des Troglodytes aux Toubous: les hypothèses sur le «Grand Sud» du pays des Garamantes

Vanni BELTRAMI

Resumé

Le grand sud de la Libye est ce que l'on appelle «Sahara oriental» et son cœur plus profond on le reconnaît dans le Tibesti, complexe de montagnes volcaniques avec une surface qui dépasse le 100.000 km² et des altitudes entre 2000 et 3500 mètres. L'eau souterraine y est profonde, le climat est désertique et en même temps influencé par l'altitude et permet quelques palmeraies et des maigres cultures. C'est le territoire traditionnel des Toubous, aux ressources très modestes et à la vie difficile.

Si l'on cherche quelques témoignage sur le passé de l'aire toubou, on constate qu'une économie pastorale et agricole y se dévoile entre 7.500 et 6.000 before present, mais ni les pierres taillées ni l'art rupestre donnent quelques renseignements à l'égard des habitants de cet age. Plus intéressante est la documentation de quelques fouilles de tombes préislamiques – seulement parfois semblables à celles d'autres régions sahariennes – avec des sujets qui montraient parfois des caractères méditerranéens, parfois des évidences kamites et des datations de 3.500- 3.200 before present.

Pour quelque suggestion ultérieure, il faut attendre le témoignage d'Hérodote, qui décrit les Ethiopiens Troglodytes, qui vivent au sud du Fezzan et «dont les Garamantes font la chasse sur leur chars à quatre roues». Ces Ethiopiens sont noir, sont «les plus rapides dans la course à pied, mangent aussi les serpents et les lézards ... et parlent une langue qui ...ressemble aux cris des chauve-souris».

On trouve dans cette description quelques similitudes avec les Toubous, qui utilisent parfois les cavernes comme abri, spécialement pendant l'hiver; qui sont noir (bien qu'avec des caractères physiologique méditerranéens); qui pratiquaient encore il y a un demi siècle le pillage des villages sédentaires, avec réaction possible des victimes; qui mangent ce qu'ils trouvent pendant les mauvaises saisons ; qui parlent une langue étrange, d'origine nilotique-soudanaise, proche à celle des Kanouri du bassin tchadien. De cette langue Charles Le Cœur dit que «la voix reste parfois suspendue sur une note très haute... ce qui a été toujours remarqué par les visiteurs».

Comme conséquence, l'hypothèse que les Ethiopiens Troglodytes soient les ancêtres directes des Toubous est acceptée par plusieurs ethnologues. Un mélange bien éloigné entre les deux souches, libyco-berbère et soudanaise, se serait produit et fixé avant le troisième millénaire before present et – à cause de la situation d'isolement des lieux – serait resté inchangé pour les siècles suivants jusque à nos jours.



Rock Art of the Northern Hemisphere: Scandinavia, Finland and Russia Major sites, cultural context and chronology

Ulf BERTILSSON

The earliest tradition

Rock art in the Northern Hemisphere is abundant. Some sites in Scandinavia like Leiknes and Bardal in Norway (Fig 1, Hagen 1990:53) and Gärde and Lake Ånn in Sweden seems to belong to the same Late Palaeolithic tradition of big, contoured animals executed in a naturalistic style similar to that of Foz Coa in Portugal. Regardless of the obvious similarities the dating seems not to correspond very well. While the Portuguese engravings seem to be 20.000 years old (Zilhao 1997:434, Varela Gomes 2000:25), the Scandinavian ones do not reach even half that age. The oldest possible dates for Leiknes would be approx. 10.000 years due to the changing level of the sea. However, the dates suggested are much later, "...at least 6.000 years old." (Hagen 1990:54, my translation). Östmo & Moe (1994:16) suggest the dates for this early engraving tradition to be 8.000 – 6.500 B.C and thus actually 10.000 years old. According to Hagen, this early rock art tradition of the Northern Hunters was the heritage from the Late Ice Age cave art of Southern France and Spain.

This statement was made before the discovery of the open air engravings at Foz Coa in 1993. Although a considerable time gap most certainly existed between those engravings there is a striking resemblance between the composition of the panels and the engraving technique at Leiknes (Hagen 1990:53) and e.g. Penascosa, Rocha 4 (Baptista & Varela Gomes 1997:382) (Fig. 2). It should be mentioned that attempts to date the Foz Coa engravings by radiocarbon analyses have resulted in dates ranging from 8.000 to 2.000 years B.P. These dates have however been strongly questioned since they obviously contradict those based on archaeological evidence and stylistic arguments but also natural scientific ones (Dorn 1997:449). If the radiocarbon dates would be adequate then the rock art at Foz Coa and that of the Scandinavian sites would be equally old, i.e. dating to the Mesolithic. Abiding for this matter to be finally settled, we can conclude that it is most likely that there is a time difference of many thousand years between those engravings of the Northern and Southern Hunters. There are also some parallels elsewhere to the big animals' style like at the Luine site in Valcamonica Italy. This site holds a vast number of panels from the Bronze and Iron Age but also some naturalistic animal engravings of elks and red deer where the latter even turns the head backwards in a characteristic fashion that indicates movement (Anati 2000:108-109). According to Anati (1982) these engravings are of "protocamunian" origin and are at most 10.000 years old. This means that they also could be contemporary with the Scandinavian ones.

Although Scandinavia has tenth of thousands of engravings only a few seems to belong to this early tradition with big naturalistic animals. In total less than ten can be attributed to it. Except for Gärde and Landverk in Jämtland (Sweden) they are all situated in the northern parts of Norway with sites like Sagselva, Hamarøy in Nordland, and Hell in Trøndelag (Hagen 1990: 30 and 36). A common feature of these sites is the often spectacular landscape setting. At Leiknes in Tysfjord the fjord and mountains form a kind of natural amphitheatre around the engravings. At Landverk in Jämtland the engravings are situated immediately on the shore of the Lake Ånn. This creates the impression that the naturalistic elks engraved on a projecting rocky jetty are literally standing on the water surface. Forests and wetlands surround the lake with a distinct, barren mountain ridge facing the engravings. In the area are numerous traces from hunting cultures, such as trapping pits and settlement sites. A settlement located just above the engraving was excavated and dated to approx. 5.000 B.P. (Jensen 1989: 211p). This means that a considerable time gap of 3-5.000 years would exist in comparison with the earliest engravings of this tradition at Leiknes. Even though this seems like a terrible long time, it might be explained by the span of time it took to spread this tradition all the way



from the coast of Nordland in the north to the interior of Jämtland in the south. One reason for this could be some remaining negative climatic effects of the retreating inland ice in the latter area situated more than 600 kilometres away. Before this “riddle” of chronology can be solved more thorough analysis of the sites attributed to this early tradition is needed.

A more common and widespread tradition in Northern Scandinavia and Finland is that of rock paintings of which there is a series dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic (c. 6000-2000 BC and for Finland 5100 – 1000 B.C., calibrated C14-datings). These paintings have been found on rock surfaces that are often sheltered by projecting rocks. The paint consists of red ochre – iron oxide mixed with animal fat. The images depict humans and wild animals including elk, reindeer and stag. Boats, geometric designs and flat painted areas also occur. The number of paintings registered is approximately 140. They are widely distributed: 30 in Sweden, 30 in Norway and 80 in Finland. New discoveries occur frequently. In Sweden 15 of the now registered paintings were discovered in the 1990s and in Finland only two were known before the 1970s, while new findings are still frequent. The actual number of paintings that were made was certainly many times greater than those remaining today. In Denmark there are no paintings due to the lack of suitable settings and rock surfaces.

The paintings occur in a belt that stretches from south-eastern Finland through northern-central Sweden to middle and south-eastern Norway. In the north, scattered paintings are also found in Finnmark, in Norway, and in Lappland (Finland). The majority of these were made by the Stone Age culture of the northern hunters, but recent discoveries in western Sweden indicate that the relationship of this art to the engravings of the Bronze Age cultures in the South might be more complex than has been hitherto assumed.

In Sweden the largest number of paintings may be found in middle Norrland and the provinces of Jämtland, Ångermanland and Lappland. As in Finland, elk dominates the repertoire of images. The setting is similar too, paintings occurring on steep, inclining panels on rocks that meet with the water of lakes. Some paintings are, as in Norway, also found in mountainous areas. Yet some are located into caves like Kollhelleren at Moskenes in Lofoten (Norway).

Sweden: northern rock art in the landscape

In Sweden the most important locality is Flatruet, in Härjedalen. More than 20 painted images, including elks, reindeer and humans, have been found on a light, ice-polished mica-schist panel that is sheltered by a projecting rock. The painted area is restricted to a small, smooth panel on a rock terrace from which there is an exceptional view of the vast lower woodland areas (Fig.3).

The context of the rock paintings and the northernmost rock carvings are totally dominated by hunting and fishing cultures as far as subsistence economy is concerned. In Jämtland, Härjedalen, Ångermanland, southern Lappland and Västerbotten rock art sites occur close to shore dwelling sites, trapping pits along rivers and streams or close to lakes. There are notable prehistoric remains of this type at Hästskotjärn i Kall and Landverk on Lake Änn, for example. The latter engraving is situated in one of the richest prehistoric hunting areas in Sweden. The continuous close contact with water at the sites in Norrland and Värmland provide a good picture of the prehistoric hunting environment.

Similarly to the north, paintings found in southern Sweden were also often located in areas rich in dwelling sites. For example, in Tumledalen near Göteborg the paintings lie within a very compact set of dwelling sites that date from the end of the Mesolithic period. The paintings in Bohuslän have now lost contact with the shore on account of land elevation: several of them now lie in uncultivated country at high elevations which, in Mesolithic times were central coastal sites for hunting, fishing and settlement. However, this typical setting is still evident at Lake Blomsjön in Värmland where new discoveries of paintings have been made. While a few paintings in Norrland, including those at Flatruet in Härjedalen, mentioned above, lie high up in the hunting area without any original contact with the shore. A similar landscape context applies to the painting at Honnhammer at Tingvoll in Møre and Romsdal. This variation in settings may reflect the adaptation of Stone Age cultures to different areas of subsistence. The position of the paintings on flat rock surfaces either close to water or high up in mountains might reflect the outer limits of the world, or rather the cosmos, of those hunters.

The concepts of the northern rock pictures

The rock pictures of hunting and fishing cultures were created, like the rock carvings, to communicate with both the surrounding physical and the spiritual worlds, with a certain emphasis on the latter. The subjects



are repeatedly stereotyped but in many cases produced with great artistic skill. All known paintings have a more or less strong ochre-red tone that comes from an iron oxide based pigment. In many cases this mineral can be found close to the paintings, often oozing from fissures in the rock. The lines are often as thick as a finger, which suggests that they were painted without brushes. Some special devices must however have been used when covering bigger areas with paint.

Both paintings and carvings are said to closely reflect their surroundings, the animal figures being those of the local fauna. Elks are the dominant animals in the north; there are also depictions of reindeer and bears. Elks also dominate at Värmland but, as in Bohuslän, stags also occur. A red stag together with a salmon and some geometric designs constitute the painted images at Tumblehed, close to Göteborg. These animals were important game, so the depictions might indicate that the rock figures had a primary function in widespread magic hunting rites. The theory of hunting-magic dominated Scandinavian rock art research from its start with Hallström in the early 20th century until recent years with Gjessing, Helskog and others. As with the paintings, some of the engravings reflect the local fauna, the most obvious example being Nämforsen where numerous elk images are accompanied by salmons. Also, some of the Bronze Age engravings of the south display hunting scenes, such as that of a giant wild boar at Himmelstalund in Norrköping and that of the red stag at Massleberg in Bohuslän.

Another interpretation of the northern art, suggested by Ramqvist is that the images might also have served as totem symbols, that is, tribe emblems. However, this interpretation seems to lack credence since the elk is the most frequently depicted animal not only in Sweden but also in Norway, Finland and the whole of northern Russia. It seems hardly likely that one and the same elk tribe or clan populated the whole area ranging from the Atlantic to the Bering Strait. While it is evident that the elk held a significant position in hunting culture cosmology in this entire area. An alternative explanation would be that the paintings and engravings of the hunting cultures reflect a different kind of communication between man and nature: a communication that took place in dangerous and/or hidden, sacred places literally located at the outer limits of the Stone Age hunter's world.

The numerous elk images might then even reflect the existence of an Elk God or Spirit. However, recent discoveries at Forsaån in Jämtland with images of anthropomorphs interacting with elk may, like the engraving with a similar motif at Alta in Norway, indicate that the elk was a helping spirit of man, that is, the shaman (Fig.4). The latter is especially illustrative of this since it depicts an anthropomorph holding an elevated elk-headed device in his hands (Bertilsson 2000:44, fig. 12). This elk-headed tool is actually in direct contact with the adjacent elk: their noses are actually touching. This could be an interesting representation of the Elk deity with whom the human is trying to get in contact by partly morphing into the animal's shape. Elk-headed staffs were actually found at the Stone Age cemetery on Olenij Ostrov in Lake Onega, Russia, in the 1950s. A connection with shamanism may in fact reflect an inherent quality of Scandinavian rock art (Bertilsson 2000). At the above-mentioned engraving at Gärde in Jämtland it seems that two different traditions occur. The first and oldest is represented by three – or four, as an engraving of what might be a gigantic hind leg of a fourth elk was discovered in recent years – over-sized and contoured elks that have been cut into the rock. The cut lines have later been polished. These engravings find parallels with the contemporary Norwegian traditions that can be best studied at Leiknes in Tysfjord and at Bardal in Steinkjer (Hagen 1990:103p). One difference is that the Norwegian sites display a wider range of animals including whale and goose. The big elks at Gärde seem to belong to the oldest Scandinavian rock art tradition, the naturalistic one. Then it becomes interesting that this site also includes images of the same animal but in a different style: contoured elk but with wider lines in the manner of those engraved in southern Scandinavia during the Bronze Age. Another difference is the size of the engraved images, which is now much smaller (Fig. 4).

However, the most striking feature at Gärde is the series of human footprints and animal tracks. The elk tracks are paired in groups of two and the human footprints form a long line leading up to one of the engraved elks, giving the impression of someone walking in the direction of the elk. So far this has been interpreted as a man sneaking up on the elk from behind in hunting magic terms. An alternative explanation would be that both man and elk are present and in close contact at this site. Further, the footprints may indicate that the presence was of spiritual nature. This explanation would be analogous to that of the footprints representing "the invisible god" on the Bronze Age engravings. Moreover, at Gärde, like in Alta, the presence of human and animal spirits is suggestive of the practice of shamanism. This was probably the very place where man, by changing his appearance, could get in contact with other worlds and creatures. In that respect Gärde is



one of the key rock art sites of early hunters in northern Scandinavia. At first it seems that animals were the most important mythological creatures like in the Palaeolithic art of the Mediterranean countries. But as time went by man also entered the mythology and became spiritualised. Further, it seems man and animal were equal and that the latter became less important as is indicated by the decreasing size of the animal depictions. Exactly when this change took place is not clear. It was probably a gradual process that became more marked during the Bronze Age in the south. This would also indicate contacts and relations between the northern and southern traditions.

Finland

In order to fully understand all of the aspects of the northern rock images it is of vital importance not to limit their study to one single country. It is impossible to make a correct interpretation of the phenomenon of rock art unless the whole of Scandinavia and Finland is considered. In recent years there has literally been an explosion of new discoveries of rock painting sites, especially in Finland. More than 80 sites are now registered (published in Finnish by Kivikäs in 1995). The two most important sites are Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969) and Värrikallio. Except for traditional motifs like elk and humans, the images of these two sites, such as boat images, may help to shed new light on the paintings and engravings in the whole of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Both sites are extraordinarily rich, with between 60 and 100 painted images. They display several exceptional traits: at Värrikallio (Fig. 5) there are superimposed figures and humans with triangular heads and bodies in positions similar to some engraved figures at Alta and Vingen in Norway (Hagen 1990; Helskog 1988; Kivikäs 1995:55). At Astuvansalmi (Fig. 6) there are boats, and at least one painted hand stencil. The richness and complexity of motifs also includes humans and animals such as the elk. In contrast to the way it was normally depicted in Sweden and Norway, here horns are also depicted. As at Värrikallio, there are human images one of which show some extraordinarily features. This image seems to depict a human carrying a raised axe or hammer. In addition to that, it has a two-horned head paralleling some of the engravings in Bohuslän. Moreover, if one considers its prominent position at the centre of the painted area, it may represent the depiction of a deity or spiritual creature. An image with some definite resemblance to this one is painted in the Norwegian cave Helvete (Hell! my translation) on the Island of Röst dramatically situated at the southernmost point of Lofoten in Norway. The painted images were discovered only in 1992. They are dominated by a 90 cm-high antropomorph with spread legs and stretched out arms and hands with five toes and four fingers. The head seems to have two horns like the antropomorph at Astuvansalmi in Ristiina, Finland (Norsted 2000: 119, pl. 3). Since these images are situated more than 1000 kilometres apart the obvious parallelism between the prehistoric rock paintings in Norway and Finland needs to be interpreted within the cultural dynamics of the Scandinavian Peninsula.

The outstanding character of the site at Astuvansalmi is further emphasised by the finds of four amber pendants, three shaped like human heads and a fourth like a bear, and two stone arrowheads in the water in front of the painting. The stone arrowheads are of a type that can be dated to the Bronze Age. The finds were lying on a rock shelf situated 4 meters under the lake's surface, which would indicate that ritual offerings were made in front of the panel (Taskinen 2000:30, fig:s 10 and 11). Excavations in front of the Flatruet painting in Sweden in 2003 also revealed two arrowheads, one of which was damaged from having been shot at the painting as is indicated by a dent in the rock surface (Anders Hansson and Carl Johan Olofsson: personal communication). Another interesting trait is that the projecting rock at Astuvansalmi has the shape of a human head, especially when approached from the lake. Although the shorelines of the lake were probably higher when some of the images were painted this may be the reason why this panel originally was chosen.

The rich variety of motifs of the Finnish paintings is further illustrated by the two sites situated not far apart in Kirkkonummi (swe. Kyrkslätt) in the southern part of the country. The first one at Vitträsk, recorded in 1917, consists of an organised triangular zigzag pattern inside a frame. The second one at Juusjärvi consists of approx. 20 images of antropomorphs, hands, elks, bear and salmon forming a lively display of interactions (Taskinen 2000: 25, fig:s 6 and 7).

One immediate effect of the many new discoveries of rock paintings in Finland is that the Finnish Lake District now constitutes the centre of distribution of Stone Age rock paintings in Nordic countries. As a consequence, this astonishingly rich and varied cluster of rock art indicates a pressing need to rethink the traditional interpretations of Scandinavian rock art, both geographically and intellectually. One of the most obvious elements is the special location of the painted sites in direct contact with the huge lake system that penetrates interior the land mass of Finland, where a very rich number of prehistoric settlements occurred. A related and puzzling fact is that rock engravings, with one minor exception at Rovaniemi (Taskinen 2000:



21, fig. 3) are still not represented in Finland. However, the sudden outburst of rock painting discoveries in the last 30 years might indicate that the present situation this reflects a research gap rather than an actual lack of rock art.

Norway

In Norway the situation of the Stone Age hunters' art can be defined as rich and varied. A complex and small variety of engravings and paintings constitutes the early art. The images of the paintings in Norway are relatively modest, whereas the location is definitely much the opposite. The paintings in the cave at Helvete (Hell) on the Röst Island in Lofoten is outstanding due to its setting in a cave on a small island far out at sea. Only to get there in a small Stone Age canoe must have been a most dangerous enterprise, due to hard winds or strong underwater currents or both. Hell is indeed situated at the End of the World. The location and landscape context of the caves is often most spectacular, like at Kollhelleren near Moskenes, also in Lofoten. The entrance of the cave is less than ten meters wide but almost 50 metres high! Not very much fantasy is needed to suggest it looks like a natural vagina. Another striking feature is the painted images designed there like "lizard-shaped" anthropomorphs with rounded-pointed heads and downwards/backwards spread arms and legs (Norsted 2000: 121, pl. 4). Some of these images seem to represent phallic symbols. Painted images having similar distinct features can be found elsewhere e.g. in Sweden at Holmedal in Värmland (Bertilsson 2000: 42, fig. 8).

However, when the early engravings are considered, the relationship between art and location becomes reversed. Some of the sites with early rock carvings in Norway are among the most outstanding in Scandinavia. The most important one is by far the Leiknes site, at Tysfjord in Nordland, mentioned above, with its beautiful, naturalistic, oversized animals that were manufactured using a technique of polishing the engraved lines in order to enhance the visibility. The magnificent natural setting with the high barren mountain ridges surrounding the huge fjord gives a monumental setting like a natural cathedral.

There are two close parallels to the Leiknes site, one at Gärde in Jämtland in Sweden, and another at Bardal in Trøndelag, Norway. The Gärde situation was presented above. The complexity and image contents at these three sites really challenges the mind of the interpreter considering the alternative approaches discussed above.

From a different viewpoint the other parallel to Leiknes is Bardal in Trøndelag, which in some respects also parallels Gärde. The Bardal panel holds more than 400 figures, of which more than 50 are expressions of the naturalistic animal tradition. The animal species represent once more the big game like whale elk, reindeer and water birds. Although, the animal images are interesting, the most exceptional trait at Bardal is the presence of more than 350 images typical of the farming Bronze Age cultures: boats, horses, humans with swords, paired human footprints and abstract geometric symbols with a combination of concentric circles and typical spirals (Hagen 1990:104). These latter designs can also be found at Ekenberg in Östergötland (Sweden) and are probably depictions of the sun. This unique panel reflects the two major rock art traditions of this part of Scandinavia representing, in this way, a possible time span of at least 3500 years, possibly more. Whether the figures represent evidence of continuous or intermittent use, or of contacts between the two prehistoric cultural traditions or not are matters for future analysis.

Yet another, hitherto specifically Norwegian, element of early rock art is that of a tradition of contoured animals – generally elk and fish – with interior body decorations of geometric patterns. As far as the art of the hunting cultures of the Early Stone Age is concerned, this tradition is most frequent in the south in the counties of Telemark, Aust-Agder and Hedmark.

In Norway one also finds two of the most intriguing sites in all of Scandinavia: Ausevik in Sogn and Vingen in Fjordane. Both point to the period of contact between the northern hunting culture and the southern farming culture. The sites are characterised by numerous depictions of animals, dominated by red deer, humans and geometric and abstract symbols. At Ausevik the number of images exceeds 300 and at Vingen 1500. The dominating figures on both sites are deer, which display geometrical decorations inside the body. The locations of the two sites are overwhelming, but for different reasons: Ausevik is close to a farm with pastoral fields overlooking a fjord and facing snow covered mountain peaks. These contrasting features give to the site with a strange tension that must have been even more obvious in the Stone Age. At Vingen, situated on beautiful but barren rocks at the shore of the Bremanger fjord, the basic elements of nature, the rock, the sky and the water is so obvious that the site can be said to be indeed situated at the End of the World. In this respect, these two sites have few counterparts in Scandinavia or elsewhere. The Vingen engravings are probably the oldest, dated by stylistic elements etc. to about .3000 BC. Hagen (1990) dates



the Ausevik rock carvings to 1800 BC and argues that Ausevik reflects elements that were significant in the transition from hunting to agriculture. Recent excavations in front of the rock art panels at Vingen indicated that the dating should be set even earlier, to about 4000 BC and thus to the Mesolithic period (Lodoen 2003).

A part from the sites presented above, the most important rock carvings in Norway are probably those of Alta. According to Helskog (1988) the panels in the area bridges the time-span from 4200-500 BC. This dating is based on the direct connection with the withdrawal of the sea shoreline in combination with typological and stylistic elements. Although normally considered to be the oldest element in Scandinavian rock art, the oversized, naturalistic game executed with the technique of engraved and polished contour lines, is not represented. Still, the proposed dating is probably correct. However, as is the case with many of the northern sites, the Alta engravings need to be re-evaluated and perhaps partly re-interpreted, when their richness is compared to the complete Scandinavian tradition. Its complexity is immediately obvious, displaying traits that otherwise characterise both the Finnish rock paintings mentioned above and the Bronze Age engravings of southern Scandinavia. Alta may in fact prove to be one of the key sites when we try to describe and understand that complexity.

In a recent work Helskog has in a fruitful way applied and demonstrated the explanatory power of general theories of shamanism alongside the obvious connection with ancient mythology (Helskog 2000).

Rock art in Russia – the White Sea region and Karelia

Russia is an enormously big country with an equally big number of rock art sites. It is literally impossible to cover this topic in this restricted space. Another problem is that, although much research was done and reported, the language barrier makes it almost impossible to keep abreast on the subject since very few publications are written in languages other than Russian. However, since much of the rock art in Russia has relevance for the study of that in Scandinavia and Finland we will offer a brief overview of some of the most important sites in the White Sea region and Russian Karelia. In those regions two very rich assemblages are located in Zalavruga at Belomorsk on the White Sea, and Besov Nos at Lake Onega in Karelia. There are several other sites, such as Konozero (fi. Kannjärvi), but they will not be discussed here.

The Zalavruga engravings were originally located on the rocks on the shore of the river Vyg. In fact, some of the panels, such as at Staraja (Old) Zalavruga and others, must have been flooded when the river was high. Today, the river is almost dry due to the construction of an electric power plant built in the 1960s. At that time a museum was built over some of the engravings closely situated to the power station. The museum erected in concrete elements is now closed since it is about to collapse. The engravings at Staraja Zalavruga was recorded and published already in the 1930s. The panel is now badly worn out, as it was originally polished by ice and water and in modern time by being part of a road for heavy motor vehicles. Some of the images are hardly visible except by artificial light. The panel is dominated by a row of big naturalistic reindeer. Although arranged in a slightly different fashion than at Leiknes and Foz Côa, there is some obvious resemblance to these sites. The panel is obviously the earliest on the site and the most ancient in the region. It is suggested to be approx. 6,000 years old, thus dating to the Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic period (Devlet & Devlet 2004).

The neighbouring Novaja Zalavruga panels display a different set of smaller images, depicting anthropomorphs, elks, birds, fishes, trees and boats in vivid action. The images are manufactured with high artistic skills and almost every single peck-mark is still visible. The reason for that is that the panels were buried under river deposits already in prehistoric times. On those deposits then settled other prehistoric populations. At the time of the electric power plant construction these settlement sites were excavated and the panels once again became visible (Savatejev 1970). There are several extraordinarily images and scenes however, the most fantastic one is that of skiers hunting an elk (Fig. 7 and 8). This scene depicts not only the skiing archers and the elk, but also the ski tracks and other details that makes it look almost like a modern comic strip. Although the panels are still in excellent condition, this may soon change due to destructive forces of the climate and other factors.

Lake Onega situated in the heart of Russian Karelia is extraordinarily rich in prehistoric settlements, burials and in rock art. Almost everywhere when a granite rock is found along its otherwise sandy shores there is some prehistoric rock engravings like at Shala and many other places. However, the most outstanding engravings are to be found on a small cape with the strange name of Besov Nos (The Devil's Nose). It might be that this name actually refers to the rock art images. The biggest of them all is an anthropomorph placed on both sides of a long natural crack in the rock surface. The image, which is full size, has a completely pecked out body with legs and arms. It looks rather hideous and is supposed to be a female, probably due



to the crack in its body which, might have been considered as a natural vagina. A long-term tradition still in use for visitors to offer something into this crack, a coin or even a sip of vodka. It might be that this image is the reason for the naming of the panel. In this connection it is a highly interesting fact that a Christian cross of Gregorian type has been added later to the left hand of the engraving. One reason for doing so may have been an attempt to counteract the evil forces connected with that specific image. In addition, there are several more images some of big sizes like sturgeons, swans and elks. One of the most interesting is certainly one that is found almost at the bottom of the panel close to the water surface. It is a funnel-shaped design almost looking like a depiction of a seamount, a buoy with a point down. According to Professor Abraham Solyar, this design is actually a kind of mark that is pointing in the direction of the famous Stone Age cemetery at the island Oleny Ostrov. This island is situated more than 10 kilometres away from Besov Nos. This specific design is also to be found on some other panels along the shores of Lake Onega. Sometimes it is accompanied by highly artistic and skilfully engravings of anthropomorphs, elks and daggers. The daggers seem to be of the same type as the most advanced Neolithic flint daggers found in Southern Scandinavia. Another interesting parallel to Scandinavian rock art is the images of what have been referred to as “sun-stands”. Similar engravings are found in Bohuslän (Sweden), e.g. at Backa in Brastad, where one finds the famous panel with the warrior with the axe-hammer “The Shoemaker”. Since the “sun-stands” are most probably depictions of mirrors, there is a definite link to the sun. Despite of these similarities, there are also other images looking like boats. It is therefore not easy to see a direct link between Karelia and Scandinavia regarding the rock art at Lake Onega. Still, this area is one of the most interesting in Northern Europe. It is normally supposed to cover a time span from Late Mesolithic through the Neolithic.

The rock carvings of southern Scandinavia – Sweden

Sweden has a considerable number of rock carvings. For a long time the dating and the cultural background of rock carvings in the south remained unclear. As late as the mid-19th century it was suggested, because of the numerous boat images, that the carvings depicted Viking adventures. But it was finally established that they belonged to the Nordic Bronze Age culture in 1869, when the Director General of the Swedish National Board of Antiquities, Bror Emil Hildebrand, identified engraved swords in the Ekenberg panel near Norrköping as being typical of the Early Bronze Age (Fig.9). Dating Bronze Age carvings has hopefully become more accurate since then.

However, the earliest engravings of the southern tradition, represented in at least two areas/sites, are somewhat older than the Bronze Age. The oldest is probably the Släbro site in Södermanland, situated at an old estuary now some kilometres inland due to land upheaval, with strange geometric and stylised anthropomorphic designs that can be dated to the Late Stone Age and/or to the Calcolithic period. Parallels can be found in the earlier stages of the rock engravings of Valcamonica (Italy), in Galicia (Spain) and in neighbouring areas in Portugal (references to Anati, Züchner, Baptista). In the locality of Simris, in the coastal zone of southeast Skåne, is a different but likewise early (Late Neolithic) complex of engravings of weapons. The dominating image is that of large, shafted, ceremonial bronze axes with wide, convex edges. The closest parallel in Europe is found in Valtellina, although in a setting much different from Simris. In Valtellina the weapons are engraved on a steep rock overlooking an alpine valley, whereas at Simris they are engraved in a flat panel very close to the seashore (Sansoni et al. 2000). The Simris carvings are executed in hard, extremely dense sandstone that has resisted degradation through time (Fig. 10).

From the Early Bronze Age, from about 1800 BC onwards, boat images dominate the rock carvings in southern Sweden and Norway. The boats are accompanied by humans and animals, chariots and wagons, weapons and ornaments, circle-crosses, footprints and cup-marks. The rock engravings have most likely been inspired by a cult oriented towards fertility. Common traits may have been in the worshipping of the sun and rain-making, as shown by the numerous symbolic depictions of the sun in the form of circles, spirals, discs and cup-marks. Many researchers have discussed the existence of a cult of death that is evidenced by the numerous boat images, by scenes on certain panels, and especially by the decorated slabs found in the megasized Kivik burial cairn close to Simris. Elements of shamanism may also be attributed to representations of anthropomorphs wearing bird-masks and sometimes also wings, at Kallsängen in Bottna, Bohuslän for example. The so-called “dancers” at Järrestad in Skåne and elsewhere may also indicate this (Fig. 11). On the Järrestad panel there are also numerous depictions of human footprints, always in bare condition. The footprints are considered to be early and possibly part of the megalithic tradition connected to many other sites and areas in the north, including the sites of Gärde and Nämforsen mentioned above. Rock carvings are unevenly distributed in Sweden. Northern Bohuslän, where Tanum is central, constitutes the richest area by far. Its connection with the neighbouring areas in Östfold (Norway) is obvious. This area



is in fact one of the richest of its kind in Europe and elsewhere. In Northern Bohuslän only, the number of registered engraved panels exceeds 4,000 with more than 60,000 figures (Bertilsson 1994). Those engravings are extremely rich in variety of images and scenes, depicting not only single valuable objects but also central themes and scenes in Nordic mythology. They are executed in a skilful, highly artistic manner. The height of the tradition seems to have been reached during the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age from 1000 to 500 BC when the Hallstatt culture dominated Europe. This dating is verified by recent analysis of images by David Vogt (personal communication). In Bohuslän, this period is represented by easily identifiable and datable objects, such as weapons and ornaments. The most famous is perhaps the warrior from Hede in Kville carrying a decoratively embossed shield of Hallstatt style and a sword-sheath ending in a winged chape that is dated to Montelius period V by actual finds (Fig. 12). The numerous detailed representations of huge warriors carrying swords, spears and axes and helmets with twin horns reflect the focus on warriors and fighting. Although the fights may have been rituals, analysis of the wear of actual bronze weapons from contemporary burials indicates that the weapons were used in actual fighting (Kristiansen 1973). In that way the engravings might reflect much of the same worship and cult of fighting and war that is described in the literature of the Nordic Saga tradition from the Viking era almost 1500 years later. Many such warriors are depicted in opposing positions, the closest parallels being found in Valcamonica (Italy), where they are named “duellanti” (Anati, 1982, pp. 308-309).

The ceremonial aspect is further mirrored by depictions of grouped lure-blowers, acrobats, adorers and human processions. The focus on fertility is also obvious from the so-called bridal-couples performing sexual intercourse, but also from the scenes with ploughmen. All these rites and ceremonies also survived in part in the historic farming community as late as the 19th century.

The reason such large number of rock carvings occur in certain Bronze Age settlement areas, especially in Bohuslän, but not in others is probably related to two factors: the geographic position favouring sea communications, and the existence of a large portion of arable land suitable for cattle grazing. The landscape in Bohuslän is characterised by small, open settlement areas on moraine slopes overlooking clayey plains and fracture valleys surrounded by steep, but rather low, mountain ridges. Rock carvings are found on granite rocks that have been polished by the inland ice and often washed by the sea, at the foot of the mountains along the clayey soils. Contemporary Bronze Age graves, large cairns and small flat cairns lie on hilltops and ledges facing the open country. The known dwelling-sites are not so numerous, but they often lie close to carvings.

In some of the other important rock carving areas in Sweden in Norrköping in Östergötland and in Enköping in Uppland there are graves and dwelling-sites with numerous heaps of fire-cracked stones. In the latter area there are a total of 1200 engravings and in the former approximately 800. The most outstanding engraving in the Enköping area is the 4.2 metre-long, beautifully designed, Brandsskog ship, close to a burial cairn (Fig.15). Other important sites are found at Rickeby with the engraving known as the “Bride’s Chair” and documented already in the 1660s.

Peder Alfsson, a vicar, made the earliest copy of a Scandinavian rock carving at Backa in Brastad, Bohuslän in 1623. Strangely enough, the depiction by Alfsson represents a woman with typical gender attributes, while the actual figure, known as “The Shoemaker”, is an obviously phallic male warrior carrying a battleaxe (Fig 16).

The two most important sites of the Norrköping area are those of Himmelstalund and Ekenberg. The Himmelstalund panels hold more than 1,500 images: boats, human, hunting scenes etc. The site, close to Motala Stream, probably functioned as a ceremonial centre during the Bronze Age. At Ekenberg, there are more than 400 figures, including the Bronze Age swords discussed above, a human procession and boats decorated with Bronze Age symbols like spirals that were executed in a highly skilful artistic manner.

Another important and most impressive Swedish site is that of Nämforsen in Ångermanland, where some 2,000 images are carved in the rocky banks along the rapids of the river. Although the panels are dominated by Stone Age depictions of game, elks and salmons, there are also figures that are typical symbols of the Bronze Age culture, such as paired human footprints and circle-crosses (Fig.17). The placing and grouping of the figures and the carving/pecking techniques display traits that are typical of the south. In that way, the Nämforsen engraving may illustrate close contact between the two traditions and geographical areas of Scandinavia: the northern hunters and the southern farmers. These contacts resulted in a much varied and complex, rich and beautiful rock art complex. It is important to stress that the tradition at Nämforsen could have been started rather early in the Stone Age but persisted for a very long time. The biggest elk on one of the central rocks of this much-dispersed site is obviously closely connected, spatially, with a pair of contoured feet. This points to an interesting parallel with the Leiknes engravings that were discussed



above.

Denmark

Finally, in order to complete this short outline of Scandinavian rock art, we say a few words about Denmark. So far Denmark has no known rock art originating from the hunting Stone Age culture that is otherwise frequently witnessed by dwelling-sites and burials. The art representing this period decorates bone artefacts and similar objects. There are several objects decorated with geometric patterns and symbols. In some instances depictions of humans and animals also occur. The objects seem to belong to the Mesolithic phase known as Maglemose. In that way it seems to be earlier than the earliest actual "rock" art from the Scandinavian Peninsula. A possible connection might be found in the engravings of geometrically decorated animals of the Norwegian Stone Age that were mentioned above. An interesting question then arises regarding the chronological implications for sites like Vingen and Ausevik.

The first rock art occurs in Denmark in the following period, the Late Stone Age. This art is connected with the megalithic tombs: dolmens, passage graves and stone cists, the roof slabs of which have been decorated with grooves and cup-marks. Although it has been argued that this art was made later, during the Bronze Age, it is obvious that some of it is connected with the period when the tombs were constructed.

In the following period, the Bronze Age, some additions of boat engravings were made on the roof slabs. A parallel situation occur in the megalith areas in Sweden and elsewhere. In this period some open-air rock surfaces were engraved on the island of Bornholm, the only district where such conditions actually exist in Denmark. The boats are sometimes accompanied by circle-crosses and similar designs.

The most important expression of Danish rock art is the engravings that were found on small slabs: the so-called "Hand Sign Stones". Those are stones that have been carefully chosen and shaped as gravestones, deeply engraved with a stylised arm and hand together with four vertical lines placed above the hand. More than 20 such stones have been found. The majority come from an excavation on the island of Själland and belongs in general to cremation burials that can be dated rather precisely, in these cases, to the Montelius period IV, a date that corresponds to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. Some of the Själland stones belonged to a structure that has been interpreted as a house built for mortuary practices (Kaul 1995). Three similar stones have been registered in Bohuslän, Sweden and two in Östfold (Norway). Engravings of the same type were found on the reverse side of actual bronze fibulas that are also dated to the fourth period of the Nordic Bronze Age. A complex connection with the "normal" Scandinavian rock art might be indicated by the appearance of images of hands on some engraved panels in Bohuslän and the hand stencil on the Finnish painting at Astuvansalmi. This may have many intriguing and analogous implications for future rock art research and clearly indicates that the inherent information about the prehistoric cultures of the Nordic countries has not been fully understood and explored yet.

List of sites:

Naturalistic big animals tradition:

Norway

1. Leiknes, Tysfjord, Nordland – A total of 40 images of killer-whales, elks, reindeer, bears, salmon (s) and geese.
2. Bardal, Steinkjer, Trøndelag – A total of 60 images of killer-whales, elks, reindeer, bears, birds, anthropomorph and geometric designs.

Sweden

3. Gärde, Offerdal, Jämtland – A total of 4 images of elks.
4. Landverk, Lake Ånn, Åre, Jämtland – A total of 4 images of elks.

Rock paintings

Sweden

5. Flatruet, Tännäs in Härjedalen – A total of 20 images of elks, reindeer, bears and anthropomorphs.
6. Hästskotjärn, Kall in Jämtland – A total of 20 images of elkss, snake and anthropomorphs.
7. Forsaån, Bodsjö in Jämtland – A total of 4 images of elks, snakes and anthropomorphs.
8. Brudberget, Nedre Blomsjön in Värmland – A total of 10 images of elks and red deer.
9. Tumlehed, Torslanda in Bohuslän – A total of 10 images of red deer, salmon, boats, nets and zig-



zags.

Norway

10. Honhammeren, Tingvoll in Møre and Romsdal – A total of images of elks, reindeer, etc.
11. Hell, Röst in – A total of 10 images of anthropomorphs, hands and geometric designs.
12. Kollhelleren, Moskenes in Lofoten, Nordland – A total of 20 images of anthropomorphs.

Finland

13. Vitträsk in Kyrkslätt – One image of geometric design.
14. Kirkonummi in Juusjärvi – A total of 20 images of elks, bears, salmon, anthropomorphs and hands.
15. Saraakallio in Laukas – A total of 50 images of elks, anthropomorphs, hands and boats.
16. Astuvansalmi in Ristiina – A total of 100 images of elks, anthropomorphs, hands and boats.
17. Väräkallio in Suomussalmi – A total of 100 images of elks and anthropomorphs.

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Lo stato della ricerca sull'arte schematica nelle Alpi

Antonio BIGANZOLI

Riassunto

Una serie abbastanza estesa di osservazioni effettuate su massi incisi dell'arco alpino ci porta a ipotizzare che una importante funzione dei massi a coppelle e canaletti (definibili genericamente "massi-altare") fosse di tipo culturale (forse riti di iniziazione, purificazione o sacrifici, anche cruenti, a ad una divinità). Una possibile conferma di tale ipotesi viene suggerita dalla posizione topografica di numerosi massi, che sono posti su crinali, cime di piccoli rilievi, orli di pianori che rompono la continuità di un versante, punti visibili da altri siti ricchi di rocce incise.

Molte coppelle, singole o a piccoli gruppi o file, erano probabilmente utilizzate come lumini e indicavano forse la via per il raggiungimento dei luoghi sacri, dove appunto troviamo i massi-altare. Diverse di queste coppelle si trovano a lato di sentieri, ancora attuali, che ricalcano antichissime percorrenze. Altre coppelle, incise su massi-altare, potevano essere sede di altri lumini o piccoli fuochi, ed avere una funzione legata alla celebrazione di culti. Che sui massi-altare ardessero fuochi o comunque sorgenti di luce, verrebbe confermato da alcune frasi di condanna al culto delle pietre (*saxorum veneratio*) da parte della Chiesa nel corso del primo millennio ("Nullus Christianus ad fana, vel ad petras, vel ad fontes....luminaria faciat" (da M.Rossi, 1981).

Un'altra funzione delle incisioni rupestri semplici, nettamente diversificata dalla precedente, è quella delle coppelle che troviamo su superfici rocciose a forte pendenza o addirittura verticali: è evidente che esse non potevano contenere liquidi e quindi dovevano avere funzioni del tutto diverse. Esse sono molto meno frequenti delle coppelle incise su superfici suborizzontali, ma sembrano comunque largamente diffuse.

Mi permetto quindi di sottoporre questo problema agli Amici e Colleghi che si interessano di arte schematica: ritengo che questo potrebbe essere un interessante tema da discutere nel corso del prossimo incontro specifico.

Tra il 1898 ed il 1901 la "Rivista archeologica della Provincia di Como" pubblicò una serie di articoli sulle "pietre a scodelle", così si definivano allora i massi cuppellati. Tra questi articoli spicca, per chiarezza di esposizione e dovizia di documentazione, quello del Dott. Antonio Magni, ricercatore comasco che ha scoperto, e documentato nell'articolo in questione, molti massi cuppellati nel territorio di Como e dei suoi dintorni.

Nella bibliografia relativa a questo articolo il Magni cita circa 150 lavori di ricercatori europei relativi alle "pietre con scodelle" rinvenute un po' ovunque in Europa tra la metà e la fine dell'Ottocento, mentre, nel testo, riguardo all'ubicazione, fa presente che questi massi, se sono abbondanti in Europa, hanno però diffusione in tutto il mondo, essendone stati notati in India, in America del Nord e del Sud, in Africa ed in Oceania. Riporta inoltre tutta una serie di ipotesi interpretative, dalle costellazioni alle mappe topografiche, all'uso funerario, a quello culturale e così via, senza tuttavia privilegiarne nessuna.

Dal 1901 ad oggi la situazione non è mutata nella sostanza, salvo l'incremento delle segnalazioni dovuto all'attività dei ricercatori, moltissimi dilettanti, che si sono appassionati a questa materia.

Questa attività di ricerca ha però reso ulteriormente chiaro che le incisioni "schematiche", costituite in gran parte da superfici o massi incisi a coppelle, sono sparse un po' ovunque nel mondo, dove vi siano rocce.

Nelle Alpi il fenomeno è vastissimo, dalle Alpi Liguri fino alla Carnia si può dire che non vi sia valle, anche secondaria, nella quale non siano state segnalate incisioni schematiche, massimamente a coppelle.

La diffusione è tale che, rispetto alla totalità delle evidenze incisorie nelle Alpi, quelle schematiche a coppelle possono, immaginificamente, rappresentare "il mare" dal quale emergono poche "isole" (anche se estremamente importanti e significative come la Valcamonica) di incisioni figurative.

Come per tutte le istoriazioni su roccia la datazione del momento dell'incisione non è possibile, o è comunque troppo complicata e non applicabile pertanto all'enorme massa dei reperti; inoltre, se per le



incisioni figurative si possono utilizzare riferimenti di carattere simbolico e stilistico, già accertati come caratteristici di un periodo, preistorico o storico che sia, ciò non vale per gli insiemi di cospicue che nella loro schematizzazione ed astrattezza, oltre che per l'estrema semplicità dell'elemento base (la coppella, appunto), non offrirebbero analogie da potersi riferire ad un lasso temporale.

Tuttavia noi sappiamo che- a partire dalla lastra di La Ferrassie, incisa a cospicue, apposta, come si suppone, a copertura di una sepoltura del paleolitico medio, neandertaliano, e procedendo sino ad incontrare cospicue incise su monumenti megalitici del neolitico europeo ed altre incisioni coppelliformi e piediformi sulla lastra di copertura di una tomba a pozzetto della civiltà di Golasecca (prima età del ferro), fino a giungere alle cospicue incise a sfregiare le ornamentazioni del portale medioevale di San Zeno a Verona- questa cultura incisoria, oltre ad avere la massima espansione geografica, ha avuto anche la maggior durata temporale. Essa si configura quindi, evidentemente, come l'espressione rupestre "di base", la più "popolare", quella che era comunque deputata, presso la gran parte delle popolazioni non dotate di scrittura e non avvezze alla figurazione (o che destinavano la figurazione ad altre funzioni), a trasmettere messaggi, od a rappresentare realtà o pensieri, od a celebrare riti. E tutto ciò indipendentemente dalla presenza o meno, anche nella stessa area, delle culture figurative.

Più avanti parleremo dei vari filoni in cui si articola oggi, in Italia, la ricerca, ma non ci vogliamo addentrare nel campo delle ipotesi sul significato "letterale" delle incisioni schematiche, ci interessa soltanto rammentare, e documentare con qualche esempio, che gli insiemi di cospicue e canaletti, anche se in molti casi sono, almeno apparentemente, disordinati e, per noi, senza senso, in molti altri mostrano chiaramente un'intenzione, un pensiero compiuto, oltre che, e questo ci sembra molto importante, dei segni ricorrenti almeno in ambito regionale.

Sulla base di queste osservazioni, negli ultimi decenni, la ricerca sulle incisioni schematiche ha conosciuto un nuovo impulso aggiungendo ai centri di ricerca che da tempo operano sul territorio alpino una schiera di ricercatori.

Espressione e compendio di questa attività sono stati i convegni dedicati in modo specifico, o, come a Pinerolo, avendone una sezione dedicata, all'arte rupestre schematica. Essi si sono svolti nel 2001 a Verbania, organizzato dal Museo del Paesaggio, nel 2002 a Como (Cavallasca), organizzato dalla Società Archeologica Comense e nel 2003 a Pinerolo, organizzato dal Centro Studi e Museo d'Arte Preistorica. Per il 2005 è previsto il prossimo che sarà organizzato dal Dipartimento Valcamonica e Lombardia del Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici.

Questi convegni hanno visto la partecipazione di Enti e singoli ricercatori che hanno rappresentato, dalla Liguria all'Alto Adige, l'intero arco alpino. Non sono mancati interessanti apporti dalla Spagna, Portogallo e dall'Italia meridionale (Puglie).

I preatti del convegno del 2001 a Verbania sono disponibili in forma cartacea presso il Museo del Paesaggio di Verbania e gli atti sono pubblicati sul sito www.artepreistorica.it, i preatti del convegno di Como del 2002 sono disponibili in forma cartacea presso la Società Archeologica Comense di Como, così come quelli del 2003 a Pinerolo che sono disponibili presso il CeSMAP. I temi e le problematiche che sono emersi da questi momenti di confronto ci sembra possano essere così riassunti (le citazioni degli interventi hanno mero valore di esempio):

- Pur nella consapevolezza della maggior estensione dell'arco temporale interessato, la più consistente concentrazione delle incisioni coppelliformi sembra essere tipica del periodo compreso tra il bronzo finale, l'età del ferro ed i primi secoli dell'era cristiana (Andrea Arcà – Verbania 2001). Su questo aspetto vi è, in genere, accordo.

- E' sempre forte la tendenza ad attribuire la funzione di questi petroglifi a scopi culturali ed a identificare massi e superfici incise come "massi altare", "pietre sacrificali" ecc.. Tutti sono disposti a riconoscere, specie nei casi che sembrerebbero più evidenti come i sistemi di cospicue e canaletti che convogliano liquidi, la funzione legata al rito e quindi alla religiosità, anche perché, nelle società dove la scienza è empirismo, la scrittura non esiste e l'atteggiamento religioso è panteistico, il sacro e la culturalità permeano ogni pensiero ed ogni atto della vita quotidiana e quindi, probabilmente, anche una pietra segnava, una mappa, un riferimento astronomico/calendario, l'indicazione di un percorso, un attrezzo, divengono oggetti "sacri". Ma, accanto a questa ampia valenza culturale, si vanno sempre più articolando e differenziando quei filoni di ricerca cui si accennava precedentemente. Riteniamo che questi possano essere, in linea di massima, così riassunti:

- Emerge la forte valenza territoriale delle incisioni schematiche, dimostrata dalla loro collocazione in luoghi panoramici, nei punti nodali dei percorsi o lungo gli stessi, in paesi, alpeggi, zone di pascolo ecc.. (Andrea Arcà- Verbania 2001, Antonio Biganzoli- Verbania 2001, Hans Luis Platzgummer- Como 2002).



Platzgummer e Biganzoli fanno anche rilevare l'esistenza delle relazioni visive, anche a lunga distanza, tra sito e sito.

- Nel territorio i rilievi in modo particolare sembrano fungere da punti di riferimento attorno ai quali o in vista dei quali si trovano maggiori concentrazioni di incisioni coppelliformi (Alberto Pozzi- Verbania 2001)

- Mentre insiste, ma sembra perdere terreno, la tendenza a riconoscere costellazioni in gruppi di coppelle (abusata l'Orsa Maggiore), prendono invece sempre maggior corpo le ipotesi arqueoastroonomiche, sostenute da studi specifici sul campo, legate in modo particolare agli impieghi calendariali (Adriano Gaspani- Como 2002)

- Sempre legati alla funzione calendariale sono gli studi di Léo Dubal ("Marques solsticiales" – Pinerolo 2003) e di Luigi Felolo ("Siti montani con incisioni rupestri in rapporto all'orizzonte visibile" – Pinerolo 2003). Con la stessa funzione si segnalano allineamenti di pietre fitte (Pietro Barale- Pinerolo 2003)

- Tentativi di trovare una connessione logica ed una struttura geometrica in assiami disordinati di coppelle sono esperiti da Giorgio Dimitriadis (Verbania 2001, Como 2002 con Adriano Gaspani, Pinerolo 2003)

- Infine si deve porre l'accento su una metodologia di ricerca che, a nostro avviso, oltre ad essere corretta sul piano scientifico, è redditizia sul piano dell'informazione ricavabile.

Si tratta innanzitutto di isolare una zona omogenea (nelle Alpi generalmente una valle) e condurre dentro questa zona una ricerca che sia il più possibile esaustiva sul terreno riguardo ai reperti ma che indaghi anche sul piano storico ed etnografico le caratteristiche della zona stessa. Lo scopo è evidente: rintracciare nelle sopravvivenze di tradizione i possibili nessi con i reperti. Con questo metodo di ricerca, relativamente all'arte schematica, lavora con convinzione, il Dipartimento Valcamonica e Lombardia del C.C.S.P.¹ oltre a ricercatori di altre zone.

E' un vero peccato che il corpus della tradizione orale, con le sue leggende, i suoi riti, i suoi dialetti e la sua microtoponomastica si sia perso inevitabilmente con la morte della Civiltà Rurale Montana lasciando scarse sopravvivenze. Si è così definitivamente interrotta quella continuità culturale che, pur mutando forme e modalità espressive, aveva sempre contraddistinto, dalla preistoria fino a tempi recenti, la vita e l'immaginario dei popoli delle Alpi. Questa perdita è una jattura, e si è verificata proprio nel periodo storico (da metà Ottocento sino alla metà del Novecento) in cui, nelle Alpi, l'industrializzazione delle pianure viciniori e dei fondovalle ha definitivamente cancellato la cultura rurale alpina; lo stesso periodo in cui questa ricerca "minore", ed enfatizziamo le virgolette sul termine "minore", poteva prendere vigore ma è stata invece trascurata a favore delle più allettanti prospettive (in senso artistico, culturale e monumentale) della, allora nascente, archeologia moderna.

Concludendo, anche se le ipotesi interpretative sono, nella sostanza, ferme a quelle elencate dal Magni nel 1901, non vi è alcun dubbio che la ricerca prosegua e, pur in quei solchi già intuiti dai ricercatori ottocenteschi, registri significativi e qualificati approfondimenti.

L'auspicio, già formulato in una relazione del convegno di Como-Cavallasca 2002², è che si crei, sulla scala geografica più ampia possibile, un archivio dedicato alle sole manifestazioni rupestri schematiche e, soprattutto, che abbiano continuità i convegni specifici.

Così facendo non solo si getterà più luce su quelle espressioni che, a tutt'oggi, restano un "mistero", ma si contribuirà ad aumentare le conoscenze su un fenomeno di vastissima portata, rappresentativo di una diffusa cultura rurale e popolare, durata un lunghissimo arco di tempo e dalla quale, ancor oggi, potremmo trarre degli ammaestramenti, così come accade per i reperti archeologici o per la più "nobile" arte rupestre figurativa.

Note

¹ Si veda, a titolo di esempio: SANSONI U.- MARRETTA A.-LENTINI S. "Il segno minore- Arte rupestre e tradizione nella Bassa Valcamonica", Edizioni del C.C.S.P. 2001

² Antonio Biganzoli "Coppelle, lingua e lessico" relazione al convegno "Coppelle e dintorni nell'arco alpino meridionale" Cavallasca 28-29 settembre 2002.



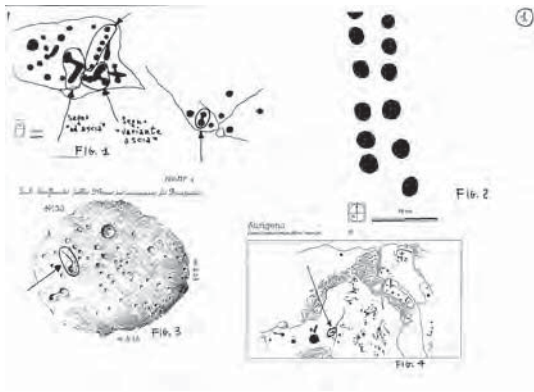


Fig. 1

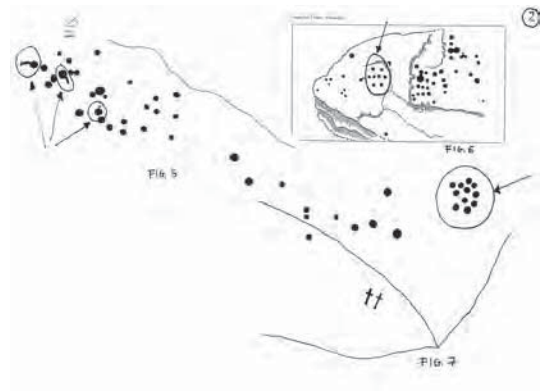


Fig. 2

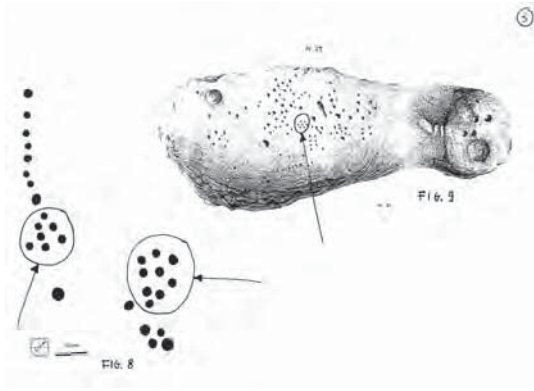


Fig. 3

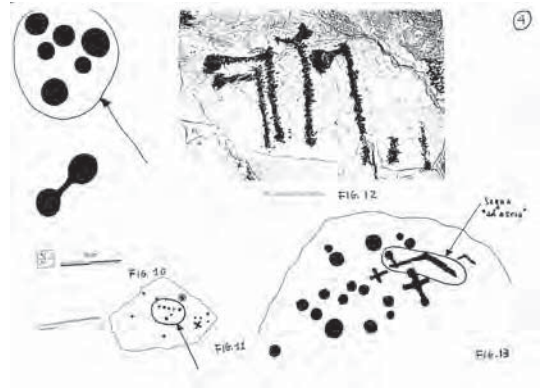


Fig. 4

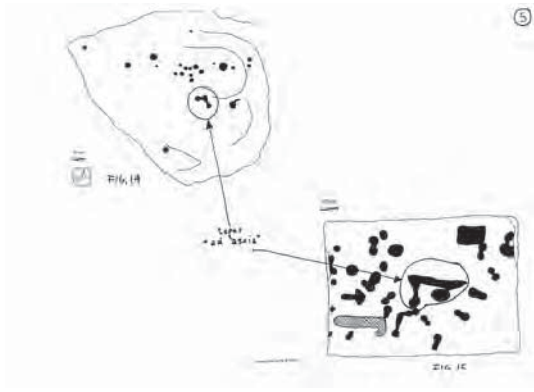


Fig. 5

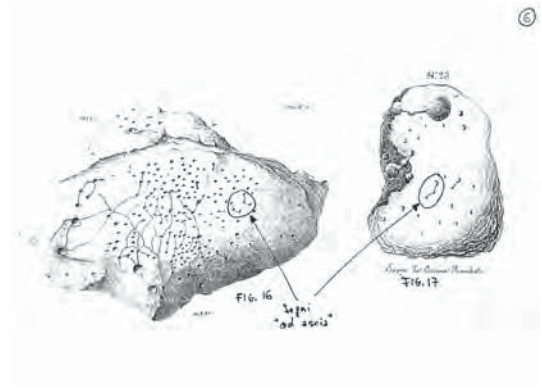


Fig. 6



The conservation of archaeological sites in the recently listed UKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site: a lesson in living heritage of the Qwahlamba San

Andy BLACKMORE

Abstract

Wildlife conservation agencies in Africa, and in particular South Africa, have concentrated on establishing protected areas for the conservation and preservation of Biodiversity. While being extremely successful at this mandate, e.g. the rescuing of the white and black rhino (*Ceratotherium simum* and *Diceros bicornis* minor, respectively), little or no effort was afforded to the recognition and management of cultural heritage within the protected areas. This has resulted in many ethical and legal dilemmas in terms of the conservation agencies' role in the protection of historical, archaeological and living cultures.

Following the democratisation of South Africa in 1994, the outcomes and recommendations of the World Parks Congress and the new protected area legislation, a greater emphasis has been placed on the wellbeing of previously disadvantaged and indigenous communities and their participative decision making role in protected area management. This rapidly changing political and legal climate has led the agency Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to redefine its mandate, re-skill, form partnerships with communities and realise the importance of the cultural heritage it has been mandated to conserve.

On entering this arena of cultural conservation, archaeological and other cultural disciplines were found to be interwoven with the dynamic living heritage of those communities abutting on to the protected areas. In the case of the UKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park (a mixed World Heritage Site, listed in December 2000), these communities were that of the San (Bushmen) which were believed to be extinct. The recognition of this living heritage and the assistance afforded to the San to regain their identity has resulted in new insights in the understanding and management of the rock art for which the Park is internationally recognised.

The conservation successes are dependant on sound archaeological knowledge, anthropogenic investigation and partnerships with those indigenous communities who are either descendant of that heritage or abut directly onto the Park. This has added substantial value to this Park in the eyes of the Zulu and San communities, which has in turn assisted the conservation agency, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, in promoting the conservation of biodiversity and the Park as a whole.



Alle origini della sacralità

Pier Luigi BOLMIDA

Riassunto

La sacralità, ovvero ciò che Anati definisce come il senso del mistico, del sovra umano, dell'ultra terreno, intimamente legato al mondo dei sogni da cui proviene, e che appare nelle sculture rupestri fin agli albori dell'Umanità, rappresenta in definitiva il nucleo centrale della costituzione di un SuperIo universale, totalmente condiviso da ogni abitante del pianeta, che si trasmetterà ereditariamente in seguito, assumendo la forma di Super-io filogenetico, retto in prima istanza dall'interiorizzazione dei vari traumatismi, ambientali esterni (mutazioni climatiche, variazioni di cibo, ecc.) e evolutivi interni (modifiche ed adattamenti corporei e comportamentali, malattie). Tale istanza intrapsichica agisce come meccanismo di inibizione, quindi di regolazione, della spinta all'allucinazione primaria: il bisogno di produrre allucinazioni (che poi è quello che sottintende ogni patologia mentale) costituisce l'estrema difesa dell'organizzazione psicosomatica per tentare di abbassare la tensione intrapsichica. Il principio di realtà invia messaggi rispetto alla spiacevolezza della vita e si erge in qualità di spinta auto-conservativa, le cui esigenze vanno a scontrarsi con le tendenze allucinatorie che si muovono verso la fusionalità. Si costituisce pertanto un meccanismo inibitorio che in un moto caotico sospinge individui e gruppi a sfuggire all'inerzia dell'allucinazione e attivare condotte quanto più adattate alla situazione. In tal modo, diventa così vietato fondersi (ricercare la completezza) con l'Animale, con l'altro Sesso, con la Natura. Tale divieto, che sottolinea in modo ridondante l'essenza dualistica dell'Universo, crea dapprima la separazione e in seguito la differenza tra soggetto e l'oggetto ma contemporaneamente stabilisce l'impossibilità di unione tra essi. Lo rende cioè intoccabile. Il messaggio inciso nella roccia diventa per tutti intelligibile: il sacro, il mistico, il sovrumano non può essere toccato impunemente dai sensi, sotto pena di punizione, ma raggiunto con le debite riutilizzazioni che ne impediscono la fusione diretta.

Premessa

Muovendomi all'interno dello spirito di multi disciplinarietà che anima questo convegno, desidero proporre l'incontro del pensiero di due grandi Maestri, appartenenti a scienze così apparentemente diverse come la Psicologia Clinica e la Paleontologia. Il primo di questi innovatori, celeberrimo e conosciuto in tutto il mondo, è Henri Ey, psichiatra francese, autore di innumerevoli opere adottate come testi di base dalle Facoltà di Medicina in ogni continente; il secondo, altrettanto famoso, è Emmanuel Anati, le cui ricerche hanno rivoluzionato la conoscenza dell'Arte preistorica, proponendo una visione globale mai conseguita in precedenza e stimolando la cooperazione di studiosi e specialisti di oltre 80 paesi. L'elemento culturale che fungerà da collagene tra questi due mondi di ricerca, cioè la Psicologia Clinica e gli Studi Preistorici, sarà costituito dalle elaborazioni scientifiche di N.Peluffo e S.Fanti, ossia i Maestri fondatori e scopritori della Micropsicoanalisi. In quest'ottica, quello che desidero fare è proporre agli studiosi di archeologia e paleontologia delle informazioni di natura specialistica che possano fungere da supporto teorico e operativo al fine di elaborare nuove strategie di ricerca e nuove concettualizzazioni che conducano a spiegazioni più complete di quei fenomeni psichici che hanno indotto i nostri antenati preistorici a incidere messaggi sempiterni nella roccia.

È indispensabile introdurre a questo punto della mia premessa un elemento di semeiotica clinica quasi assiomatico, che tuttavia deriva dalle verifiche sperimentali compiute in seduta dalla Psicoanalisi dapprima e successivamente dalla Micropsicoanalisi; si tratta di un dato fondamentale che riguarda la natura e la struttura del nucleo più profondo, arcaico ed innato dello psichismo umano: tale nucleo, che in gergo specialistico viene definito con il termine di Es (che è il pronome neutro in tedesco, corrispondente al latino Id), costituisce praticamente il serbatoio dell'energia pulsionale e rinchioda in sé gli schemi di risposta elementari acquisiti filogeneticamente nel corso del processo di ominizzazione, quindi appunto a partire dalla preistoria in avanti. Tale substrato intrapsichico risulta, all'osservazione clinica, essere una formazione



residua originale, impermeabile alla realtà esterna e imm modificabile dalla variazione dell'esperienza individuale. In definitiva, si tratta di un sistema elementare di auto-regolazione primaria dei processi di carica/scarica, sprovvisto di ogni ramificazione e relazione con l'organizzazione complessa dell'Io Cosciente, e che agisce in modo parallelo, talvolta in opposizione, con le raffinate esigenze dell'Io acculturato e civilizzato. In breve, quella che andremo a considerare è una funzione primitiva, stratificatasi geneticamente, che funge sia da propellente che da motore all'interno di ogni vicenda psichica umana, attuale o passata.

1ª parte: L'appetenza all'allucinazione

Nel suo celeberrimo Trattato delle allucinazioni (1), H. Ey stabilisce i criteri diagnostici di suddivisione tra i fenomeni di:

I) illusione percettiva, ossia false allucinazioni legate a fenomeni di suggestibilità individuale o collettiva che sono fondamentalmente illusioni normali;

II) le esperienze deliranti e allucinatorie, che sono manifestazioni dirette della destrutturazione del campo della coscienza derivanti dall'esperienza onirica, cioè dall'attività del sonno/sogno;

III) le allucinazioni noético-affettive, che sono invece l'espressione diretta del lavoro di elaborazione delle psicosi deliranti croniche, quali la paranoia, la schizofrenia o le parafrenie.

In termini più semplici, l'Autore definisce i disturbi della percezione e della coscienza, cioè le allucinazioni e i deliri, come fenomeni universali che si sviluppano all'interno dello psichismo, distinguendo i disordini percettivi "compatibili con la ragione", quindi le "pseudo o false allucinazioni", separandole dalle esperienze di alienazione e destrutturazione dell'Io, ossia dalle "vere allucinazioni", che costituiscono fenomeno patognomonico di malattie mentali gravissime. Comunque, quello che mi interessa sottolineare in questo contesto è che il semplice fatto che occorra distinguere e definire in patologia le allucinazioni vere da quelle false, cioè dalle esperienze normali, testimonia di per sé l'esistenza all'interno dell'essere umano di una tendenza innata a produrre e sviluppare esperienze percettive e sensoriali in assenza totale o parziale dell'oggetto percepito; tendenza, appunto, che ho definito nei termini di "appetenza all'allucinazione". Occorre anche specificare il fatto che gli Etologi abbiano più volte verificato come il fenomeno possa apparire nell'Animale, nel singolo o nel branco, tuttavia si tratta di processi specifici ben localizzati dovuti a particolari situazioni di stress che alterano il funzionamento normale delle strutture nervose, disgregando l'organizzazione istintuale della condotta; alterazioni analoghe vengono riscontrate dai Botanici in alcune specie di piante, come per esempio le "gemmazioni euforiche" che avvengono in situazioni climatiche esattamente opposte a quelle necessarie alla normalità, et similia. In definitiva, se è possibile affermare in termini generali molto larghi che una certa soglia di allucinazione sia insita all'interno della materia organica stessa, ovvero che esistano tropismi allucinatori nelle piante e condotte istintuali allucinatorie negli animali, resta pur sempre fuori di dubbio che il bisogno di crearsi illusioni sensoriali costituisca attività precipua dell'essere umano. In breve, si può dire che il sistema primario, innato e geneticamente organizzato che ho citato in precedenza, tende di per sé a diseccitarsi in modo autonomo, senza tener conto della realtà ambiente che lo circonda. Come scrive N. Peluffo, (7) è il sistema somatico, tramite l'invio di segnali di dispiacere, a obbligare la psiche a fuoriuscire dall'allucinazione primaria e ad adattarsi alla situazione, attivando condotte, azioni e comportamenti sempre più adeguati al Principio di Realtà e alla spinta auto-conservativa.

Scusandomi per la lungaggine descrittiva, cercherò ora di esaminare più sistematicamente tali "percezioni senza oggetto", seguendo la classificazione della nosografia ufficiale. Classicamente, l'allucinazione si definisce come una turbe psicosensoriale che conduce a una falsa percezione, che si produce nella totale assenza di quegli stimoli che in condizioni normali attivano il funzionamento fisiologico dei recettori periferici. Insomma, si tratta di un funzionamento basato sul "come se", in cui la psiche reagisce "come se" fosse confrontata con l'esistenza di un oggetto reale esterno mentre esso è in effetti collocato totalmente all'interno della psiche stessa. Fondamentalmente, si osservano:

Allucinazioni visive, che sono sostanzialmente delle visioni; possono essere di tipo elementare, quali fosfemi (puntini o lineette luminose) o fotopsie (luci, fiamme) oppure di tipo complesso (figure, scene, disegni decorativi) Talora le immagini sono immobili, a volte in movimento fino a giungere a scene caleidoscopiche. Le immagini allucinatorie possono essere a grandezza naturale, o minuscole, o gigantesche. Un particolare valore diagnostico rivestono le zoopsie (visioni di animali, normalmente terrificanti o disgustosi); di norma le immagini sono proiettate su superfici piane, pareti, soffitti o pavimenti, frequentemente sono molto vivide e colorate e posseggono una tonalità affettiva molto



intensa, euforica o esaltante, come succede durante le visioni mistiche o gli stati di estasi. In altri casi assumono valenze passionali come nelle visioni erotiche. La forma più caratteristica delle allucinazioni visive è di assumere uno svolgimento analogo se non identico a quello delle scene oniriche, anzi negli stati confusionali da assunzione di sostanze psicotrope vi è una vera e propria ricerca attiva degli scenari tipici del sogno: in questi casi si può parlare di un preciso e mirato tentativo di rientrare nel mondo dei sogni in stato di veglia.

Allucinazioni uditive, nelle quali compaiono suoni più o meno acuti e intensi (fischi, ronzii o scampanii) o melodie musicali. Più frequentemente si tratta di allucinazioni acustico-verbali in cui vengono udite voci, nettamente localizzate nello spazio e distinguibili per tonalità, intensità e timbro. A volte le voci parlano in seconda persona rivolgendosi direttamente all'ascoltatore, in altri casi le voci parlano tra loro designando il soggetto con la terza persona. Classicamente le voci proferiscono accuse o ingiurie, oppure comunicano informazioni sconosciute o semplicemente ripetono incessantemente uno stesso comando. Tali conversazioni costituiscono il fulcro di un segreto che il soggetto tende gelosamente a custodire o a rivelare solo a pochi eletti e sono pertanto oggetto di una reticenza sistematica, al contrario delle allucinazioni visive che tendono a essere divulgate e condivise con tutto l'entourage.

Allucinazioni cinestesiche e dello schema corporeo che sono costituite da impressioni allucinatorie di trasformazioni e variazioni della sensibilità dell'interno del proprio corpo (percezioni propriocettive e enterocettive disturbate). Tali disturbi si manifestano tramite sensazioni di modificazioni somatiche dovute a invasioni diaboliche o animalesche che si impossessano di singoli organi o dell'intero schema corporeo, producendo allucinazioni di tipo viscerale, muscolare e scheletrico che comportano illusioni di spostamenti o distorsione delle membra, metamorfosi cutanee, esistenza di membra fantasma, ecc. Accade anche che sotto l'influsso allucinatorio la muscolatura liscia si metta a vibrare in modo incontrollato, animata da impulsi estranei alla volontà del soggetto. Tali disturbi si osservano, con qualche differenza semiologica, sia in alcune affezioni cerebrali (lesioni parietali e del tronco) sia negli stati di intossicazione (mescalina, acido lisergico); le allucinazioni da depersonalizzazione sono poi massicciamente presenti negli stati schizofrenici, in quelli depressivi oltre che in alcune nevrosi come l'isteria di conversione e la nevrosi d'angoscia.

Naturalmente quello che ho appena presentato è un piccolo schema riassuntivo di un fenomeno talmente vasto che richiederebbe una trattazione ben più ampia e particolareggiata, tuttavia credo di aver ben evidenziato l'informazione fondamentale che desidero trasmettere in questa sede, ovverosia che nelle disfunzioni più profonde dell'esperienza percettiva, - sia che si tratti di esperienze confuso-oniriche da assunzione di sostanze psicotrope, sia che si tratti di esperienze crepuscolari-oniroidi di origine depressiva, sia che si tratti di stati di depersonalizzazione a sfondo schizofrenico, sia che si tratti di esperienze di angoscia ed esaltazione di natura infettivo-traumatica o da deprivazione - si assiste a una predisposizione costituzionale della psiche umana a oscillare in una sorta di diastole/sistole tra due mondi: il primo, quello esterno costituito da realtà fisiche (oggetti materiali mobili e immobili, animali e piante, altri esseri umani, condizioni ambientali e climatiche, ecc.) che costringe l'individuo a un continuo sforzo psicosomatico di adattamento vincolato alla situazione; il secondo, totalmente soggettivo, immateriale ed interno, fondamentalmente costituito da esperienze oniriche, retto dall'inerzia, ove nulla si oppone al godimento, il dispendio energetico è ridotto al minimo e gli accadimenti si svolgono seguendo il principio del Piacere. Anzi: a questo proposito si può tranquillamente affermare che la vera oscillazione consista nel fatto che o è l'allucinazione onirica che, sotto il peso di vari fattori quali traumi, malattie, deprivazioni o lutti, sfonda le barriere erette dall'Io e si riversa nella realtà esterna, oppure è l'Io che, intossicandosi, ricerca attivamente di distruggere la barriera di separazione e rientrare all'interno dell'esperienza onirica, sfuggendo momentaneamente alle frustrazioni che il mondo della realtà gli propone incessantemente.

Da quanto descrive E. Anati: "...I Raccoglitori Arcaici sono popolazioni solitamente coeve dei Cacciatori Arcaici, la cui arte indica raccolta di frutti spontanei come attività economica principale...La presenza di immagini fantastiche, sovente surrealiste, indica una ricca immaginazione oltre che la pratica di produrre arte in stati di allucinazione dovuta a stupefacenti. In vari gruppi vengono anche raffigurate le sostanze utilizzate, quali piante, frutti, foglie, funghi allucinogeni..." (2), si evince come questa diastole/sistole tra Sogno e Realtà si effettui da decine di migliaia di anni sempre eguale a se stessa, in una dimensione al di fuori dello Spazio/Tempo.

Possiamo a questo punto tranquillamente ritornare al progetto iniziale di un incontro interdisciplinare tra due Scienze così diverse e affermare con sicurezza scientifica che ambedue le discipline considerate,



ognuna partendo dallo studio dei propri osservabili e utilizzando le specifiche metodologie di ricerca, convergono incastrandosi perfettamente all'interno di una stessa dimostrazione sperimentale, a tal punto che gli stessi concetti vengono espressi in modo pressoché identico: "...Per un periodo di 40.000 anni si è conservata un' ideologia che si basava sull'esaltazione epica del dualismo, che trovava espressione nel confronto quotidiano tra uomo e animale, tra uomo e donna, tra giorno e notte, tra realtà della veglia e realtà del sogno...Per queste popolazioni ciò che conta permane e risale all' epoca dei sogni, cioè alla mitostoria, nella quale gli antenati e gli spiriti crearono il cielo e la terra, le forme della natura che da allora hanno acquisito volontà e poteri propri..."

Tutto ciò che conta risale e permane all'epoca del sogno: è impossibile a questo punto stabilire chi pronuncia tale affermazione, se il micropsicoanalista che osserva lo svolgersi delle catene associative in seduta o il paleontologo che classifica gli archivi di pietra sparsi per tutti i continenti, dato che entrambi stanno considerando lo stesso, identico fenomeno: la struttura della psiche umana, che ha caratterizzato l'intera specie fin dalla sua comparsa sul pianeta.

2ª parte: Semeiotica delle incisioni rupestri

Stabilita questa prima verifica interdisciplinare, cercherò ora di prendere in considerazione alcuni degli elementi che, caratterizzando le incisioni dell'Arte rupestre, possono sostenere l'ipotesi che tento di dimostrare; mi riferisco in particolar modo agli ideogrammi, strutture lessicali non figurative che non rappresentano né oggetti, né simboli, sono bensì espressioni visuali di concetti o espressioni: "...Gli ideogrammi si dividono in tre tipi, che in mancanza di una migliore terminologia vengono definiti come: 1. anatomici; 2. numerici; 3. concettuali. Essi riflettono tre settori di indagine di altro tipo: la funzione reale o simbolica di organi del corpo umano; la quantificazione del reale, dell'ipotetico e dell'immaginario; la materializzazione delle idee..." (3).

Se ho ben capito quanto afferma Anati nei suoi scritti, all'interno dell'arte rupestre mondiale è dunque possibile individuare un gruppo, una sottospecie, una classe di raffigurazioni specifiche, che vengono connotate sistematicamente con grafemi tipici (pittogrammi, psicogrammi o ideogrammi) che ne indicano il carattere del "sovraumano", del "soprannaturale", del "mistico", e tali grafismi si ripeterebbero sempre eguali tra di loro in ogni parte del mondo: "...La presenza di animali o esseri immaginari è frequente nell'arte preistorica e tribale, ed anche nelle civiltà urbane e letterate. Figure di esseri che nessuno ha mai visto, diavoli, draghi, angeli e divinità, sono pittogrammi che rappresentano 'realtà immaginarie', con riferimenti mitologici e metaforici..." (4).

Così, rappresentazioni di creature alate, entità antropozoomorfe, figure immaginarie e fantastiche, ecc. verrebbero sistematicamente designate con gli indicatori dell' ultraterreno e del non umano, distinguendole da tutte le altre. Come scrive Anati: "Tra i pittogrammi s'incontrano associazioni ricorrenti, quali due animali abbinati o affrontati ed il confronto zoomorfo-antropomorfo. In tutte le aree di arte dei cacciatori arcaici si trovano tali associazioni anche in sintesi, nelle figure antropo-zoomorfe che mostrano caratteristiche umane ed animali in uno stesso corpo e nelle immagini zoomorfe che uniscono caratteri somatici di due specie animali. I siti stessi, scelti dall'uomo, dove furono eseguite le opere d'arte, grotte ripari o anfratti rocciosi, mostrano sovente una topografia concettuale nella quale il luogo dove sono le opere d'arte è separato dalle aree circostanti ma, allo stesso tempo, congiunto ad esse. Nelle grotte oscure come nei siti d' arte rupestre all'aperto, l' accesso all'area istoriata ha una funzione di transizione e passaggio tra due diversi "mondi"...Si ha spesso l'impressione che nella concettualità tribale vi sia ben poco di profano, invece vi è una chiara distinzione tra spazio cerimoniale e spazio "laico", due mondi nella cui coesistenza si esprime la relazione tra territorio dei viventi e territorio degli spiriti. Talvolta questa è anche la relazione esistenziale tra presente e passato..." (5).

Mi sembra a questo punto che non sussistano dubbi nell'affermare come l'archeologia rupestre verifichi l'esigenza, ben presente già presso le popolazioni più arcaiche, di mantenere nettamente separati i due ordini di rappresentazioni: quelle che vertono sugli eventi "naturali" e "terreni" e quelli che si riferiscono ai fenomeni "soprannaturali" e "ultraterreni"; non solo, mentre per il Neandertaliano sacro e profano risultano essere ancora fortemente commisti nella quotidianità, per l'Homo sapiens, mano a mano che egli progredisce, il bisogno di organizzare lo spazio tra il mondo laico e quello spirituale si fa sempre più impellente e la stessa transizione tra le due realtà viene segnalata fisicamente da passaggi oscuri, angusti, difficilmente raggiungibili. Fino a giungere al santuario di Har Karkom, dove la pietra dalla duplice parvenze, con la faccia da un lato antropomorfa e e dall'altra zoomorfa, viene deposta in una sala a sé stante: la simbiosi tra uomo e bestia, sacralizzata, viene così collocata in un sito specifico, separato dalla quotidianità ma ben presente in essa, quattordicimila anni or sono.



In definitiva, schematizzando in modo grossolano ma non fantasioso il lunghissimo processo evolutivo, si può dire che assistiamo a uno sforzo attivo, che implica l'impiego di tempo, energie, tecnologie e materiali, compiuto dall'Antenato preistorico al fine di operare un'incessante distinzione tra una serie di raffigurazioni, quelle che riguardano la vita quotidiana e quelle che riguardano il mondo soprannaturale; successivamente tali rappresentazioni vengono "sacralizzate" e deposte in siti a sé stanti, difficilmente raggiungibili, quali buche o santuari. Parallelamente viene a crearsi la figura e il ruolo del "mediatore", ossia il "sacerdote", lo sciamano o stregone che designar si voglia. Così scrive Anati: "...Viene così esclusa la possibilità reale di contatto diretto tra mandante ed adepto, dando all'operatore tutti i poteri. La negazione della comunicazione diretta tra divinità e ordinario mortale, salvo straordinarie eccezioni, l'esigenza di frapparvi l'intercessione di un ministro, trova forme varie, ma simili tra di loro ed ognuna con le sue 'ragioni teologiche'. Lo sciamano del mondo tribale è l'unico in grado di dialogare con le forze occulte e di trasmettere il loro verbo agli uomini. Gli spiriti parlano suo tramite.." (6).

Mi è necessario soffermarmi su questi due concetti, che costituiscono il fulcro di tutta la mia ipotesi: il concetto di "sacro" e quello di "tramite o mediatore". In realtà, la parola "sacer" è latina e verrà coniata svariati millenni dopo, ma il concetto di "sacro" è paleolitico e viene inciso sulla roccia dai Cacciatori Arcaici, dato che il suo significato primievò è quello di "intoccabile": tutto ciò che è sacro non può essere sfiorato, né dai cinque sensi e neppure dal pensiero. Se estendiamo questo concetto, possiamo ragionevolmente ipotizzare che i grafemi che accompagnano qualsiasi raffigurazione appartenente alla sottoclasse del mistico, del soprannaturale e dell'ultraterreno rinchiudano in sé la stessa avvertenza, che, in modo immaginifico, potremmo così esprimere con parole contemporanee: "ciò che è qui rappresentato non appartiene a questo mondo, per cui è vietato avvicinarvisi in modo diretto, ma solo previa intercessione del ministro". I riti di passaggio necessari all'iniziazione provvederebbero quindi ad insegnare all'adepto quali informazioni siano direttamente accessibili alla sua coscienza e quali invece necessitino dell'azione medianica dello sciamano. Se questa ipotesi risultasse accettabile e quindi coerente con gli attuali modelli di riferimento della Paleontologia, si evidenzerebbe all'interno delle incisioni rupestri una vera e propria semeiotica preistorica, atta implicitamente a distinguere tra percezioni dirette verso la realtà esterna e quelle più intimamente rivolte al mondo interno, cioè il mondo dei sogni: si tratterebbe pertanto del primo nucleo originario di tentativi intrapsichici tesi al processo di identificazione dell'io, tribale innanzitutto e individuale in seguito, che viene così a contrapporsi alla relazione fusionale e simbiotica con la Natura e l'Universo, con l'Animale e con l'altro sesso, creando un sistema binario, o dualistico come dice Anati, complementare ma distinto. Progressivamente la Specie impara che l'essere umano non è il Tutto, non è l'Animale, l'Uomo non è la Donna: esistono delle differenze che vengono organizzate e incise nella roccia. Si creano pertanto catene associative che possono permanere nell'universo materiale ed altre che devono essere estroflesse dal tempo presente e dallo spazio naturale per essere relegate in un tempo mitico e in uno spazio mistico, di non facile accesso. Alcuni prodotti dell'Arte rupestre vengono così rimossi dal Villaggio e depositi nei santuari naturali, diventando in tal modo sacri (intoccabili). In gergo specialistico, si può dire come l'Arte Rupestre indichi lo svolgersi di un lungo e stratificato processo di Rimozione, che condurrà la Specie a distinguere in modo sempre più complesso la soggettività della fantasia dall'oggettività del mondo fisico, introducendo tra i due mondi, quello dei sogni e quello della quotidianità, uno "spazio", dapprima reale e collocato fisicamente all'esterno, abitato da un'entità precisa (l'Operatore) che funge da mediatore, da tramite tra l'impulso del desiderio e la sua diretta esecuzione: la capacità e l'esigenza di cercare un ordine nelle forme e nei fenomeni della Natura, la ricerca di comunicazione con entità ed energie immateriali o invisibili si strutturano intorno a un elemento stabilizzatore, lo sciamano, che in ultima analisi organizza e modula la risposta, interponendosi tra l'occulto e l'ordinario, trasferendo i messaggi tra i due universi, frapponendo divieti, rallentando il processo, in definitiva, educando il sistema a un funzionamento più stabile e ordinato.

Per utilizzare la terminologia di Anati, tra il "Mandante invisibile" e "l'Adepto" viene esclusa ogni possibilità di contatto reale e si instaura la negazione della comunicazione diretta tra il soprannaturale e il mortale. In altri termini, si inserisce un sistema di divieti che impedisce la realizzazione immediata del desiderio e si costituisce pertanto un meccanismo inibitorio che in un moto caotico ma progressivo spinge individui e gruppi a sfuggire all'inerzia e attivare condotte sempre più adattate alla conservazione della Specie e dell'individuo. In tal modo viene ad erigersi uno "scudo difensivo" tra il mandante immateriale e l'adepto, la cui rottura è sempre apportatrice di scompiglio nei meccanismi di identificazione etnica e nel funzionamento del sistema, sia individuale che collettivo. Col progredire evolutivo, questo scudo viene a varie tappe sempre più interiorizzato, sia a livello mentale che a livello somatico, per trasformarsi in un complesso sistema intrapsichico articolato in quelle tre istanze che Freud ha descritto nei termini di



“Es, Io e SuperIo” e che si sovrappongono esattamente e puntualmente alla formulazione elaborata da Anati di “Mandante, Adepto, Operatore” a tal punto che si può tranquillamente affermare che, quando nell’Uomo moderno si scatena l’allucinazione, significa semplicemente che l’adepto non ha rispettato l’azione mediatrice dell’Operatore, si è messo in comunicazione diretta con il Mandante, disorganizzando i parametri del suo funzionamento intellettuale e scompigliando la propria identità tribale.

Conclusione

Con il termine di struttura si indica l’insieme organico di elementi, materiali o immateriali, in rapporto di coordinazione e/o interdipendenza reciproca, ossia il modo in cui i singoli elementi sono organizzati all’interno di un sistema. In altri termini, il funzionamento di un sistema è fortemente, se non interamente, determinato dalla propria struttura. Questo dato elementare è molto semplice da accettare e verificare se si osservano alcuni macro elementi anatomici, quali le variazioni della scatola cranica o della colonna vertebrale, dalla cui struttura appunto si evince immediatamente l’ampiamiento delle funzioni cerebrali o l’acquisizione della deambulazione a statura eretta. Si riconoscono così facilmente gli elementi originari costitutivi, in questo esempio si tratterebbe di frammenti ossei, attorno ai quali è venuto progressivamente a innestarsi il processo di trasformazione. Analogamente all’anatomia, è possibile individuare e ricostruire quegli elementi psichici essenziali che si sono fin dall’inizio organizzati nella costruzione della struttura psichica e, al pari della forma di un occipite o di una vertebra, si sono tramandati ereditariamente nel corso delle centinaia di migliaia di generazioni umane. La verifica sperimentale incrociata effettuata dalla Paleontologia e dalla Micropsicoanalisi mette ben in rilievo come il complesso fenomeno della sacralità costituisca una delle principali architravi che reggono l’intera struttura psichica. Se Freud (8) aveva formulato l’illazione che gli stessi meccanismi che conducono alla religiosità fossero contemporaneamente responsabili della formazione dei sintomi nevrotici, oltre che del processo di civilizzazione umana, possiamo tranquillamente affermare che l’Arte Rupestre non solo conferma tale ipotesi: la illustra. Letteralmente.

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Paletnologia e psicoanalisi: quale possibile raccordo?

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Riassunto

Può la psicoanalisi, una scienza nata tra fine Ottocento e inizi Novecento, così legata alla comprensione delle patologie della modernità, sostenere la ricerca paletnologica nella comprensione dei processi cognitivi che hanno portato alle origini dell'arte?

Questo contributo prende in esame tre temi centrali dell'arte rupestre preistorica e tribale: sesso, cibo e territorio. In tutti e tre i momenti, la complessa indagine di Freud individua spinte pulsionali dense di conseguenze sul piano dell'agire umano, un agire fortemente condizionato da motivi inconsci. In particolare, la pulsione di morte e il senso di colpa si mescolano all'ansia della vita, una mescolanza che forse giustifica, in parte, il carattere ambivalente delle prime forme d'arte che, se da una parte provocano un effetto fortemente illusionistico ed empatico, dall'altra trovano la loro espressione nel freddo cristallino delle rocce, in una permanenza d'astrazione al di là della disgregazione del tempo.

Mai l'umanità ha mancato di immagini potenti,
apportatrici di magica protezione contro la perturbante
realtà delle profondità psichiche; le figure dell'inconscio
furono sempre espresse mediante immagini protettrici e risanatrici
e in tal modo respinte nello spazio cosmico, ultrapsichico.

Carl Gustav Jung

1. Thomas Mann, nella sua *Autobiografia*, indubbiamente suggestionato da Kerényi e da Freud, scrisse che scendere negli abissi dell'anima e inoltrarsi negli abissi del tempo si equivalgono: “nel procedere della conoscenza nelle tenebre del passato e nella notte dell'inconscio, le indagini a un certo punto si incrociano e coincidono”. L'espressione non è priva di forti suggestioni. Ma qual è effettivamente questo punto stregato in cui paletnologia e psicoanalisi vengono a incrociarsi e a coincidere?

Scopo di questa relazione è di individuare se vi siano nel complesso orizzonte psicoanalitico elementi utili alla comprensione di quei processi cognitivi che hanno portato all'emergenza delle prime forme d'arte e alla ricostruzione di quel vissuto delle origini che ha prodotto le straordinarie immagini rupestri preistoriche. Nella sua ricognizione mondiale dell'arte rupestre preistorica e tribale, Emmanuel Anati ha individuato tre momenti “sesso, cibo e territorio” sui quali si concentrano, per la massima parte, gli interessi figurativi dei primordi. “Talvolta sono rappresentazioni crude e dirette, come le figure vulvari, le prede colpite da dardi e gli emblemi di clan che marcano il territorio. In altri casi questi tre fattori si manifestano attraverso narrazioni grafiche che evocano allegorie: sono allusioni a storie che ognuno doveva conoscere, si presume che per lo più siano miti d'origine, della genesi dei popoli con associazioni e composizioni di sintesi enigmatiche. I tre fattori si ripetono in uno spirito carico di concetti e sovente anche di senso estetico, dove l'immaginazione ha seguito canoni convenzionali di un linguaggio non ancora interamente decifrato” (Anati 2002). Ora, può la psicoanalisi concorrere a decifrare questo linguaggio? Può sciogliere l'enigma? La mia convinzione è che lo possa, in parte.

Certamente va fatta una considerazione preliminare: sia la psicoanalisi che la paletnologia nascono nel medesimo contesto, respirano la stessa aria culturale di fine Ottocento-inizi Novecento. In entrambe vi è il superamento di una idea ingenua “delle origini”: l'infanzia dell'individuo non è quel paradiso di innocenza che fino ad allora si pensava, così come l'infanzia dell'umanità non è quel balbettio animalesco che si



credeva prima della scoperta delle grandi grotte istoriate. Da un certo punto di vista, *I tre saggi sulla sessualità* di Freud del 1905 e il quasi contemporaneo *Mea culpa d'uno scettico* di Cartailhac del 1902 fanno piazza pulita di queste semplificazioni. Ma, al di là di questa convergenza storica, che cosa può effettivamente dare la psicoanalisi alla paleontologia e la paleontologia alla psicoanalisi?

Freud, come è noto, usa spesso paragonare il lavoro dell'analisi allo scavo dell'archeologo. Ma si tratta di una metafora poco produttiva sul piano pratico delle ricerche. Più organico e mirato al tema delle origini è il saggio di Freud *Totem e Tabù* (1912-1913). Qui, nel mito dell'uccisione da parte dei fratelli di un padre-padrone onnipotente, Freud intendeva fornire alla cultura laica del tempo un sostituto credibile del mito biblico del peccato originale. Eppure, a cent'anni di distanza, questo testo, pur straordinario, non sembra superare il suo orizzonte epocale: gli studi sui riti di Frazer da una parte, le ricerche sugli indoeuropei dall'altra, ma soprattutto le dinamiche patologiche della famiglia borghese moderna in disfacimento ne rendono problematico un utilizzo al passo col nostro sapere attuale circa le origini. Già Malinowski lo aveva rilevato: "L'unico complesso nucleare che la scuola di Freud conosce e considera universalmente valido, ossia il complesso edipico corrisponde essenzialmente alla nostra famiglia indoeuropea, la quale è patrilineare, con un accentuato sviluppo della *patria potestas*, sostenuta dal diritto romano e dalla morale cristiana e rafforzata dal moderno industrialismo europeo della borghesia benpensante" (1924).

Un discorso analogo può valere, a mio avviso, anche per Jung.

Apparentemente Jung con la sua teoria degli archetipi collettivi sembra pescare più di Freud negli strati profondi, universali e originari della psiche strettamente correlati a un passato ancestrale inabissato nell'inconscio.

Eppure se facciamo scorrere le immagini inconscie di Jung, dall'archetipo della Madre all'archetipo di Core e del Fanciullino, le troviamo fortemente debitorie di un orizzonte mitologico relativamente recente, classico potremmo dire, se non greco (e indiano), incapaci di trovare conferma nelle straordinarie evidenze archeologiche che la cultura paleontologica oggi possiede.

Mi rendo conto che questo punto esigerebbe ben maggiori argomentazioni e che uno junghiano potrebbe a ragione contestare questa considerazione troppo sbrigativa per essere convincente. Non è mia intenzione sottovalutare gli apporti straordinari di Jung al tema del simbolismo. Ma manca, in questa sede, lo spazio per approfondire il discorso, così come manca lo spazio per argomentare adeguatamente un'altra considerazione essenziale: che la psicoanalisi, -sia freudiana che junghiana (e lacaniana)-, sia una straordinaria macchina, non solo terapeutica, ma esplicativa per la comprensione dei fenomeni della modernità e dei suoi disagi, in buona parte inservibile all'indagine del passato ancestrale.

Vi è però una parte non marginale, soprattutto del pensiero di Freud che, a mio avviso, oltrepassa questo orizzonte moderno e può fornire, allo studioso che tenti di ricostruire il vissuto emozionale delle origini, degli strumenti formidabili.

Di cosa si tratta? Partiamo dai tre elementi che giustamente Emmanuel Anati pone alla base della strutturazione sociale del mondo delle origini: il sesso, il cibo e il territorio.

Ora, se "sesso, cibo e territorio" sono i grandi motori delle dinamiche evolutive sul piano sociale, di per sé, senza ulteriori specificazioni, essi sembrano pescare troppo in basso nel cammino filogenetico della nostra specie. Da un certo punto di vista, caratterizzavano il vivente superiore in quanto tale.

Il problema è quindi di vedere come "sesso, cibo e territorio" caratterizzino la nostra specificità di *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Il problema è di capire se esiste una modalità specifica per cogliere l'essenza mentale specifica di queste modalità, contribuendo, in tal modo, alla comprensione delle basi della nostra unicità.

2. Iniziamo dal "sesso". È noto che Freud, non parla mai di sesso, ma di pulsione sessuale, così come nella *libido* e nell'"oggetto del desiderio" non parla mai di corpo *tout court*, ma di corpo pulsionale.

Questo già di per sé rende il quadro della sessualità complesso. Ora, se fino agli anni Venti, Freud coniuga la pulsione sessuale con il *principio di piacere*, a partire dal famoso saggio del 1920 *Al di là del principio di piacere* individua, mescolata alla pulsione sessuale una pulsione che opera silenziosa e inavvertita: "la pulsione di morte". Vi è nella *libido* una sostanziale ambivalenza che spinge alla conservazione della vita, ma che opera anche verso una meta opposta, verso il destino ultimo della vita, cioè verso la morte. È una considerazione generale, questa di Freud, potremmo quasi dire biologica, ma che nella nostra specie, una specie che esprime nei confronti della morte un atteggiamento del tutto particolare rispetto a ogni altro vivente (pensiamo solo ai riti funerari e alla loro probabile illusione di rinascita) deve aver assunto un dualismo pulsionale radicale. Lo stanno a dimostrare ancora oggi i riti primitivi di iniziazione alla sessualità che spesso comportano delle mutilazioni alle zone genitali e il passaggio attraverso "la piccola morte". Vi sono elementi per rintracciare questo impasto di *Eros* e *Thanatos* anche nel mondo preistorico? Io



penso di sì. Anche qui però è necessaria una premessa che non può venire in questa sede sufficientemente argomentata: le figure frontali sono assai rare nel mondo preistorico, ma anche nel mondo protostorico e nelle età arcaiche. “Gli ultimi segreti dell’esistenza e del non essere -scrive Walter Otto- guardano l’uomo con occhi spaventosi”. Pensiamo al mondo Greco dove solo la Gorgone, Dioniso e i Satiri (e poco più) vengono rappresentati con lo sguardo frontale. Lo sguardo frontale è di per sé perturbante e implica una sorta di immersione mimetica che, a mio avviso, ha fortemente a che vedere con il mistero della morte e le sue angosce: lo sguardo fisso e ipnotico del volto umano abbandonato dalla vita. Ora, spesso, queste figure frontali si caratterizzano per una forte esuberanza sessuale: evidenza itifallica, priapismo ecc. Manifestano in questa loro potenza sessuale il legame inconscio che stringe fin dalle origini la vita alla morte? *Eros a Thanatos?*

3. Veniamo al tema del “cibo”. Probabilmente già molto in fondo nella nostra linea filogenetica, il cibo ha costituito per la nostra specie nascente una sostanziale dimensione di innaturalità. Da quando e in che senso? Probabilmente dal momento in cui, nei siti africani del Pliocene, una scimmia bipede, onnivora (ma per lo più frugivora) ha compiuto un “salto alimentare” denso di conseguenze, iniziando a cibarsi prevalentemente di carne. Se questa abitudine alimentare è del tutto naturale nei carnivori che non provano ovviamente alcun senso di colpa per la loro vittima, in un individuo che andava, con lo sviluppo della complessità cerebrale, sempre più affinando la sua sensibilità, questa abitudine deve avere, a un certo punto della sua evoluzione iniziato a costituire un problema. E qui non parlo di un problema relativo alla scarsità di cibo, - problema pur presente in certe fasi preistoriche, ma nel Paleolitico superiore relativamente marginale -. Parlo, di nuovo, di un problema connesso con l’angoscia della morte. Il cacciatore arcaico, per sopravvivere, per rigenerare la propria energia, doveva spegnere un’altra vita. Vivente tra il vivente, doveva ricorrere all’astuzia delle trappole e alla forza delle zagaglie per portare quella morte che gli avrebbe consentito di procurarsi la provvida sorgente di un’energia salvatrice.

Molti riti arcaici ci parlano di complesse “cerimonie di riparazione” per far tornare in vita l’animale ucciso e per convincerlo a donarsi al sacrificio. Commedie dell’innocenza o piuttosto inconsci sensi di colpa? E sensi di colpa nei confronti di chi? Nei confronti dell’animale ucciso o nei confronti di una naturalità ormai irreparabilmente perduta? E’ interessante, fra l’altro, rilevare qui che questi ricorrenti riti di espiazione passeranno quasi intatti - nelle economie complesse - al mondo vegetale.

Nelle prime culture di caccia, alla lotta con i grandi animali nei territori aperti sotto la volta celeste, doveva corrispondere, dentro le grotte istoriate, un complesso cerimoniale iniziatico, espressione di un contrasto interiore, di una lotta, potremmo dire, per la vita e per la morte fra una natura non ancora totalmente oltrepassata e una cultura non ancora totalmente dispiegata. Parafrasando Lévi-Strauss, potremmo dire che certi animali “erano più buoni da pensare che da mangiare”. Forse qui, nel fondo di questo pozzo del tempo e dell’anima, sopra le spoglie di una naturalità in cui il vivere e il morire si andavano raccordando, si è venuta progressivamente a stendere, come un’ombra oscura, l’apprensione per una vita destinata a estinguersi e l’illusione di una morte votata alla rigenerazione. Per procurarsi i mezzi per la vita, il cacciatore arcaico era costretto a immergersi nella morte: uccideva l’animale che gli stava dinanzi ma, con questo stesso atto, uccideva, nello stesso tempo, dentro di sé quella naturalità di cui l’animale era simbolo tangibile e concreto. Da qui la necessità di sollevare l’animo turbato con rituali magico-riparativi.

4. E veniamo, da ultimo, al “territorio”. Mentre per l’animale il territorio è un “ambiente” circoscritto, ben delimitato dalle pressioni selettive dei suoi istinti, per l’*Homo sapiens*, che andava progressivamente lasciandosi alle spalle la specializzazione dell’istinto, il territorio doveva, ben presto, presentarsi come un “mondo” panoramico, come un campo di sorpresa permanente, di una ricchezza e di una varietà infinite che lo lasciavano in balia di una straordinaria esuberanza ricettiva. Il suo vedere non era una passiva e meccanica registrazione ottica dei dati osservativi. Era piuttosto un atto creativo che non coinvolgeva solo l’apparato sensoriale, ma anche tutta la sfera emotiva e pulsionale. Se l’istinto è unidirezionato, le pulsioni, come afferma Freud, si danno un’infinità di mete sostitutive (*Pulsioni e loro destino*, 1915). E’ probabilmente proprio il progressivo affievolirsi degli istinti e la loro riorganizzazione psichica in pulsioni complesse ad aver prodotto nei nostri progenitori l’emergenza di nuovi bisogni eccedenti rispetto al limitato corredo materiale degli altri primati e affidati, nella loro possibilità di soddisfazione, non alla naturalità dei ritmi biologici e del ricambio naturale dell’ambiente, ma al libero gioco della creatività del mondo. Alla complessità interiore faceva dunque riscontro nell’*Homo sapiens* una complessità esteriore che spingeva la nostra specie a elaborare delle innaturali strategie di riduzione della complessità sia della natura interna che della natura esterna. Una complessità dominata, in ogni caso dall’angoscia della morte e dal senso di



colpa.

5. Conclusioni. Io credo che le prime forme d'arte, insieme al linguaggio -elementi che caratterizzano entrambi l'eccezionalità del vivere umano-, possano essere intese come strategie di riduzione di questa complessità. Senso di colpa e pulsione di morte non sono estranei al processo che ha condotto a questa emergenza espressiva. L'arte, dalle prime straordinarie forme pittoriche che ci giungono dal Paleolitico superiore, è un elemento distintivo dell'*Homo sapiens sapiens*, e segna una radicale diversità rispetto alle modalità comportamentali del resto del vivente. I nostri antenati non andavano nella profondità della terra a dipingere i grandi esseri zoomorfi, ma a incontrarli, stagliati sulle pareti cristalline e sui pendenti rocciosi. Un incontro soprannaturale, attivato da una robusta propensione visionaria. Ne seguiva il gesto creativo reso possibile da una mano intelligente, ma soprattutto attivato da una progettualità della mente. E' incredibile l'effetto naturalistico di questi primi dipinti: una immersione nella vita animale capace di suscitare un profondo senso di empatia, di comunanza, potremmo dire. Eppure queste apparizioni per lo più zoomorfe suscitano nello stesso tempo anche un senso opposto.

Il primo dato visivo delle immagini del Paleolitico superiore è quello di una fondamentale ambivalenza costitutiva. Da una parte è indubbio l'effetto illusionistico potente: alla luce delle fiamme i grandi dipinti sulle pareti delle grotte sembrano prendere vita, dando l'impressione di un incontro mimetico con un branco. Ma il loro vivere, è un vivere ambivalente: un pulsare impigliato nel freddo cristallino della grotta. Il loro dinamismo è statico. Questi animali paradossalmente segnano la corsa. Sono esseri organici e inorganici allo stesso tempo, caldi e freddi. Qui, in questi luoghi dove i grandi orologi del fluire del tempo, il sole e la luna sono assenti, la vita sembra sottratta al suo disgregarsi. Si coniuga con l'eterno. In queste immagini, cariche di tensioni pulsionali, sembra che la vita si inserisca nel ciclo della morte e la morte nel ciclo della vita. Il cibo "rinasce" e "l'angoscia di morte si placa". Noi, per decine di migliaia di anni siamo scesi nelle grotte a reiterare un rito denso di elementi emotivi. Forse qui, insieme con la nostra spiritualità nascente, si sono costituite le matrici del nostro comportamento inconscio più profondo. Un comportamento che ancor oggi condiziona potentemente le nostre azioni consapevoli. "Sembra dapprima che le esperienze dell'Io vadano perdute per gli eredi: quando però si ripetono con sufficiente frequenza e intensità per molti individui delle successive generazioni, esse si trasformano, per così dire, in esperienze dell'Es le cui espressioni vengono consolidate attraverso la trasmissione ereditaria. In tal modo l'Es, divenuto depositario di questa eredità, custodisce in sé i residui di innumerevoli esistenze dell'Io, e può darsi che quando l'Io crea dall'Es il proprio Super-io, non faccia altro che trarre nuovamente alla superficie, facendole resuscitare configurazioni dell'Io di più antica data" (Freud, *L'Io e l'Es*, 1922).

Un'ipotesi.

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