

MYTHS OF CENTRAL ASIA'S PETROGLYPHS

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Summary

The earliest petroglyphs in Mongolia were found in the western part of the country, in a cave known as Hoit-Tsenherin-agui. The pictures found in niches are remains of Upper Palaeolithic art: antlers, arrows, boomerangs, snakes. The idea of the World Tree, the quest for a clue to the life and the death's mystery, the mysteries of the fertility cult are all manifested in the symbols of the Palaeolithic myth. In deciphering this cave, I followed A. Leroi-Gourhan who revealed that the order in which cave paintings appear on the walls corresponds to the progressing of the myths.

The idea of the universe, the main idea of art in Central Asia, has been found many times and in many places such as Eastern Mongolia, Manchuria, and Eastern Transbaicalia. The most typical example of painting rock pictures are squares shown with many points inside them. Many think (for example, Okladnikov), that these squares represented cattle corrals. Contrary to that, I believe it's a symbol of the middle world. The upper world shows a moon and a sun. The biggest human person inside the middle part of the universe has three fingered hands which possibly symbolize mother-ancestor. It is interesting to note that these rock pictures were coordinated with culture "slab-lined tombs" and Mongoloid tribes.

In the Western part of Central Asia, I found other pictures of the universe, and a "portrait" of a great Mother. At the Choulout shrine, I was rather impressed by a figure of a woman giving birth to a child with her three-fingered hands raised up.

Another cult in Central Asia's petroglyphs was the cult of the chariot. We found legends about the chariot with deer and snakes. The Cult of the deer was a very ancient one in this region. For Bronze Age new themes were typical: a charioteer and a deer with the sun in its antlers. With the chariots there are big "mythical" hoofed animals with their bodies being dismembered into many geometrical shapes. "Animal style" was born in Central Asia. The creators of the chariot, deer stones and animal style were europoids.