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Prehistoric art: signs, symbols, myth, ideology
Art préhistorique: Signes, symboles, mythes, ideologie
Arte prehistórico: signos, símbolos, mitos, ideología

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PAPERS

Arqueología para los Paî Tavyterâ (Amambay, Paraguay). Sabiduría indígena y conocimiento científico del arte rupestre de estilo Pisadas

Pilar Fatás & José Antonio Lasheras - Espanha

La asociación de comunidades indígenas Paî Tavyterâ, Paî Retâ Joaju (PRJ) es propietaria legal del cerro Jasuka Venda, en la región de Amambay, Paraguay. Este cerro es su lugar sagrado; allí fue donde surgió el Dios Creador y Gran Abuelo Ñande Ru, donde se inició la creación del mundo y de la humanidad. El lugar posee un rico patrimonio arqueológico y arte rupestre, inéditos hasta ahora. El Museo de Altamira ha desarrollado en este sitio el proyecto "Patrimonio cultural del pueblo Paî Tavyterâ en Jasuka Venda". Realizado a iniciativa del PRJ, que había manifestado su interés por disponer del conocimiento científico para sumarlo a su sabiduría tradicional, y bajo su supervisión, ellos han sido los depositarios primeros de los resultados, contribuyendo de este modo a reforzar la institución indígena ante la propia comunidad y ante la sociedad paraguaya, reforzando su identidad y lógicamente su visibilidad.

Preistoric Rock Art, the Most Ancient And Widespread Material Sign of the Human Spirituality

Dario Seglie & Luiz Oosterbeek - Itália, Portugal

In a particular moment of Man's history on our planet, the phenomenon of Rock Art appeared, more or less 40,000 years ago, formed by signs projected on rocky surfaces, in caves, in shelters or in the open air. The typology is vast and varied: from signs of the figurative naturalistic and descriptive to abstract geometric and symbolic notations. This huge coacervation of signs that men have impressed on the surrounding world is not the result of an immediate transformation of Homo Sapiens's intellectual activity, but is the effect of the maturation of a long cognitive process based on the psychic dimension and comporting stages leading to a more enlarged Self knowledge, grounded in reflexive deepening thought associated with the knowledge of another world perceived as separated from or discontinuous with human personality.

Las cuatro tradiciones del arte rupestre colonial del Cusco

Gori Tumi Echevarría López - Peru

La ciudad del Cusco es uno de los sitios más impresionantes del Perú con una historia cultural compleja, parte de cuyo testimonio ha sido graficado en muchos de los muros de su arquitectura colonial temprana. Durante el año 2006, el autor y estudiantes Cusqueños, examinamos parte de estas imágenes llegando a documentar cuatro corrientes simultáneas de arte rupestre en el núcleo de la ciudad colonial, antiguamente la capital del imperio Tahuantinsuyu y cede del poder imperial peruano de los siglos XV y XVI. La documentación de cuatro corrientes simbólico representativas, verdaderas tradiciones figurativas con independiente valor ideológico, superviviendo simultáneamente en un espacio contiguo, la ciudad del Cusco, expone claramente la contrastable y compleja realidad colonial temprana del Perú, donde las imágenes y símbolos europeos se mezclan con las imágenes nativas, en una convivencia cuyas implicancias ideológicas y culturales para el Cusco y el Perú recién empiezan a ser entendidas.

Gravadas e Esculpidas na Pedra: A Arte Móvel do IV Milénio A.C. Em Sesimbra (Portugal)

Manuel Calado, Luís Gonçalves & Leonor Rocha - Portugal

As placas de xisto gravadas constituem um elemento maior no contexto das manifestações artísticas do neolítico final alentejano.

Com base na presença maciça destes artefactos simbólicos no território de Sesimbra, onde a arte rupestre está, por ora, totalmente ausente, e o megalitismo é praticamente desconhecido, pretendem-se avaliar, numa perspectiva regional alargada, as relações de complementaridade ou de exclusão destes diferentes tipos de manifestações rituais. Nessa equação, entram elementos estruturantes, como são as diferenças paisagísticas e os nexos históricos diferenciados. Em Sesimbra, a vida ritual parece organizar-se em torno das riquíssimas paisagens cársicas, em cujas grutas foram depositadas as placas de xisto. Estas, por outro lado, parecem ter sido “fabricadas” num contexto em que a arte rupestre é um tema muito relevante, nas proximidades do grande complexo do Alqueva. No Alentejo, em contrapartida, arte rupestre e megalitismo ocupam territórios muito distintos: os xistos e os granitos, respectivamente; aí, as placas de xisto parecem estabelecer a ponte entre ambos.

Plains Indian Cosmologies: Tentative Sources for Interpreting European Palaeolithic Cave Art

Enrico Comba - Itália

Traditional Plains Indian cosmologies describe a multi-layered world-view in which humans live in middle place. The world above is the abode of the heavenly bodies and other powers related with the sky, while the world below is conceived as the body of Mother or Grandmother Earth. Both humans and the other animals were believed to come from the interior of the earth, from the underground world. The spirits of the animals still are conceived of as living under the earth, in caves which open in the mountainside: from there they come out to be reborn and there they return after being killed by the human hunters. There is reason to suppose that the main elements of this world-view had their origin during the Palaeo-Indian period and have been transmitted to the bison-hunting cultures survived until the end of the XIXth century. The suggestion proposed here is to try to read the painted caves of Palaeolithic Europe in the light of this ancient cosmological system, which, possibly, was brought in the Americas by the first hunter-gatherers who peopled the continent.

Experience of Palaeoart Popularization

Arsen Faradzheva - Rússia

I'll share in my report experiences on Palaeoart popularization, which include several approaches:

Lectures for students, which took place at Moscow State University; Presentation for kids, which took place in State Darwin Museum in Moscow;

A radio interview, that was broadcast all over the Russian Federation, (12 time zones!);

Publication of "Palaeoart chronicles", in the most fashionable Moscow magazine "Art Chronicles".

El triunfo de la culebra. La imagen de la serpiente en el arte rupestre del Choapa.

Diego Artigas - Chile

Las distintas culturas han dado a la serpiente distintos valores, desde sabia consejera, hasta venenosa traidora, permaneciendo en las narraciones desde el principio de los tiempos.

En el norte semiárido y la zona central de Chile, la imagen maligna de la culebra es central en el universo simbólico campesino, y a primera vista parece ser una herencia cristiana. No obstante ellos, es necesario detenerse y profundizar en el verdadero origen de esta relación, que resulta ser mucho más propia del imaginario indígena antes que europeo. Bajo la hipótesis de que en las narraciones actuales se mantienen algunos elementos del relato mítico indígena original que dio forma a la manifestación rupestre, el análisis de algunos mitos y leyendas que tienen al personaje ofidio como eje central, permite observar la importancia simbólica de estos elementos en el arte de las comunidades prehispánicas. El arte rupestre de la zona del Choapa, con una enorme presencia de figuras serpentiformes, parece convertirse, entonces, en un medio esencial para adentrarnos en esta problemática, en donde los mitos indígenas y campesinos parecen tener un correlato en las imágenes prehispánicas grabadas en las rocas. Así los relatos tradicionales de culebras, culebrones e híbridos de serpientes que abundan en las tradiciones campesinas chilenas, se conjugan con el arte rupestre prehispánico para encontrar el origen de la valoración negativa del personaje ofidio en esta zona... a la vez que nos alumbramos acerca del por qué, si las tememos tanto, necesitamos tenerlas cerca, y representarlas en las rocas.

The Sky on the Rocks: Cometary Depictions in Rock Art

Fernando Coimbra - Portugal

Since there are many examples of astronomical representations in rock art it can be argued that one of the early cognitive abilities of Humankind was to observe the sky, producing, this way, several thoughts regarding myths and rituals.

Although not being easy to find unambiguous images of comets engraved on rock surfaces such examples do occur, having some of them been studied not only by archaeologists but also by astronomers. In this paper the author presents some examples of possible comets and meteors depicted in rock art, with different chronologies, and analyses some interpretations given to these astronomical phenomena since early civilizations. Regarding cometary phenomena, the discussion of this article is also based on astronomical data, classical literature, mythology, geological and archaeological data. As a conclusion, it can be noticed that the relation between astronomical events and religious thought in Prehistory is very close and therefore comets and meteors must have left a deep impression in the mind of the observers, due to the visual impact that they produced, being probably considered as manifestations of the gods.

Ritual Scenes In Rock Art Of Early Pastorals At Chaturbhujnath Nala In Chambal Valley, India

Giriraj Kumar - India

We made micro documentation and study of rock art at Chaturbhujnath nala in Chambal valley in 2006 to 2008. We observed some ritual scenes and ritual objects in rock art of early pastorals. As a whole they represent very less percentage of the scenes depicted, but when compared with the rock art of the preceding hunting gathering stage of life they show an increase in their numbers. At this stage nothing definite can be said about their meaning and significance, however we tried to understand them by studying the art of modern pastorals and tribes of Chaturbhujnath nala. I am presenting the study and observation on the above subject in the present paper.

Rebirth: A Late Neolithic Mythene

Léo Dubal, & Dario Seglie - Suíça/França & Itália

Il y a 6 à 4 millénaires, les proto-langages ne permettaient pas encore à *homo sapiens* d'exprimer verbalement sa perception du *temps cyclique*. On peut cependant tenter de déchiffrer des représentations du *mythème de la re-naissance* dans ses artefacts, tels que - les momies paléoaméricaines de la Quebrada de Chulin disposées en position fœtale à proximité de matrices pointillistes,

- les cercles concentriques de Betanzos,
- le paysage solsticial artificiel de Gizeh,
- les gravures au soleil levant solsticial: labyrinthes galiciens, anthropomorphes cévenols, symbole solaire à Peira Eicrita, roses camuniennes à dos Sulif, etc .

Astronomical Views and Symbolism in Rock Art of Japan, with Reference to Effective Managements of Rock Art by Museums (Especially Of Chambered Tombs).

Nobuhiro Yoshida - Japão

The most understandable and intelligible concrete imagery of astronomy, symbolism and aesthetics of ancient people in the 500's to 550's A.D. in the Far East can be seen in the designs, figures, colourings, paintings and engravings on the rock walls of chambered tombs which concentrate in south-western parts of Japan, although several similarities are to be seen in Nara, central part of Japan. Most of them are simplified images of arcs, shields, the Sun, stars, brackens, swords, boats, birds, triangles, lines and human beings, with strong yellow, red, green, black and blue colourings. These imageries enable us to trace backhuman heritages of art as well as to analyse astronomical idea in those days and origins of art symbols in order to estimate astronomy or faiths of the ancient people. It is to be noted that most of such ideas of astronomy and symbolism of ancient people was influenced so much by older Chinese cultures, to which this presentation refers. The most important thing is that to preserve such rock art paintings and rock art, local museums have made plastic replicas of similar sizes and colours and displayed for public showcases. Such labours by museums are necessary to gather people's interest for history sciences.

Aspects Of Life And Death In Megalithic Ritual Landscape

Alja Žorž Matjašič - Eslovénia

The outcome of the research of idols found in megalithic structures on the Iberian Peninsula has shown that megalithic structures and artifacts found in them belong to a wider context which can be identified as ritual landscape. Idols represent works of art, carriers of significant information about the life of their creators, owners and relations between people. Moreover they may also be seen as tools of shamans, or within macro level be recognized as the agents or tools of individual and society. On the basis of material and semiotic characteristics of each artifact, comparison to other cultures and context in which they appear, idols can often be equated to different symbols. Through study of ornaments carried out on idols and walls of megalithic structures we can observe strong tendencies towards the illustrating of anthropomorphic figures and abstract symbols. These symbols can be read as story of ancestors or signs of death, re-birth, fertility and immortality. In the context of megalithic structures, such as menhirs or chamber tombs they may have played a role as mediators between this reality and after-life. The transitoriness from Paleolithic worshiping of animals to development of respect of Man can clearly be apprehended. Moreover chamber tombs or menhirs are highly impressive and can in this way be seen as territory markers. On the other hand yet their shape suggests they represent a sort of symbolic monument or place where link between living and dead has been established. Within the macro

level, both idols and megalithic structures, represent small pieces of a whole, ritual landscape, carefully organized and marked in order to operate uniformly. Through observation and perception of Neolithic art in the context of landscape we become aware of the remains of different cults and religious or daily rituals, which can often be seen as a part of process starting with life or materialization, continuing with transformation to inanimate and re-birth.

Rock Art in the Context Of Contemporary Tribal Art in Eastern India.

Ranjana Ray - India

The present discussion focusses on the plateau area of Eastern India. The area is also dotted with hills. Rockshelters are plenty in them. This is also the homeland of people who are living in the area for a very long time. The area is rich in prehistoric cultural remains. There are rock arts, both painted and engraved, found in the area. The people of this area are also fond of decorating walls of their mud houses with paintings of various colours and of various motifs. Apparently it appears that there is a continuity of lifestyle from past to the present among some tribes who are living until recently in comparative geographical isolation. The motifs of art, colour used, source of the colour, ritualistic aspects of the art and related factors point to a very interesting aspect of the art, specially in the context of dating and inferring the objectives of prehistoric rock art of the area.

Originarios, inkas y españoles. Signos y símbolos en el arte rupestre de La Puna de Jujuy. Argentina

Domingo Chorolque, María Ester Albeck, Martín Basso, María Tejerina - Argentina

El presente trabajo está enfocado en la importancia de dos áreas o zonas altiplánicas centrales de la Provincia de Jujuy (Argentina): Casabindo y Cochinoca. La Puna o altiplano jujeño se encuentra a 3.800 m snm; hay manifestaciones rupestres desde la etapa de cazadores recolectores hasta lo hispano indígena. Nuestra investigación de varios años está centrada en los Periodos de Desarrollos Regionales (1000-1380), Período Inka (1380-1535) y el Período Hispano Indígena (1535-1600). Estudios más detallados de las pictografías del área de Casabindo y Cochinoca han evidenciado una gran riqueza iconográfica. Si bien la gran recurrencia de motivos podría dar lugar a una impresión de cierta homogeneidad en las representaciones (como es la abundancia de camélidos o las figuras humanas), es frecuente que aparezcan también otros motivos asociados, generando escenas complejas. Por su parte, las representaciones antropomorfas se plasman de una manera sumamente variada, por ejemplo, con "unkus" de diferente forma y color, portando complicados tocados cefálicos o en diversas actitudes o posturas. La llegada de los españoles planteó una nueva forma de forjar figuras las que poseen un valor simbólico y etnológico. Al analizar las pinturas rupestres se observa que muchas de ellas se refieren a la realidad del espacio territorial que las contiene, en tanto muchas de las representaciones pueden vincularse con el entorno biofísico, económico, social o ritual, conocido desde la etnografía y la etnohistoria. Por eso, el arte rupestre adquiere el valor de un testimonio de significación, valioso porque las culturas del área no contaban con escritura. Las implicancias, como conjunto de significaciones y sentidos que subyacen a los eventos pictográficos, nos permiten la reconstrucción de la historia de estos sitios prehispánicos porque conforman un corpus importante, como muestra representativa. Las pinturas se convierten así en relatos de algo que pasó y necesitó ser registrado. Los sitios con arte rupestre se integran, dentro de un paisaje ritualizado y resignificado a lo largo de generaciones. En este lugar de la puna de Jujuy, el arte rupestre, como parte de los sistemas de expresión plástica, constituye entonces un documento en piedra que re-actualiza la memoria de la realidad vivida por las poblaciones del pasado y es necesario tenerlo en cuenta dentro del contexto general de las investigaciones arqueológicas.