

human figures encountered in those compositions, as well as the very compositional structures of the scenery have exact parallels in the 14th-13th century bronze figurines (Tables 54, 55, 58—2) of Lechashen, the fortress of Lori, Artik, in the motifs and linear ornaments of quite reliably dated pottery of the Late Bronze Age, and the bronze belts of the early, middle and late Bronze Age, (Lechashen Noyemberian, Ghedabek, etc.). Another group of parallels is also available; it involves the types of armour represented on rock carvings (Tables 40—2; 47). They duplicate the armour and defensive weapons of definite dating, dis-

covered in the necropolises and habitations of the same area.

#### GROUP OF FIGURES OF THE EARLY IRON AGE (9th-6th centuries B. C.) (Table VIII).

They are of lesser consequence as to artistic composition, since rock carving was on the decline in that area of Armenia during the period in question. The dating of this group of figures was established by comparing the unique styles of human and animal figures, and the reliefs of Shamiram as well as bronze belts, etc.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE NARRATIVE CONTEXT OF HUNTING SCENES (Tables 16—60)

It was established in the preceding chapter that the prehistoric rock carving in Armenia continuously evolved over four thousand years. Through the ages at the hands of the succeeding generations rock-carvings constantly changed and became more complex; the groups of figures were based on the productive, religious and ideological norms of early farming-hunting-herding tribes. Most of the rock carvings portrayed various hunting scenes, since as husbandry and herding flourished, hunting witnessed a new rise, practiced mostly in the summer months in the Alpine and sub-Alpine regions (just where the carvings were situated), areas abounding with birds and other wildlife. The hunting scenes had a magical significance and were intended to bring greater success in hunting. The present chapter briefly describes these types of scenes in chronological and topical order, and gives possible interpretations. In this way the subtlest and most refined forms and methods of hunting are recognized, along with the general rich depiction of the scenes and their aims. A scrupulous examination of hunting scenes results in the discovery of basic problems which lie at the very root of economy i. e. the development of the material life of late pre-historic period. Some of these essential problems are listed below. Hunting was not a goal in itself to our ances-

tors; it was subordinate to the general economy of animal husbandry and farming, and had quite a differentiated character. This circumstance accounts for the diverse forms and ways of hunting. Bare hands, the rope, clubs, traps, hollows, nets, etc., were most often used for catching wild animals. Such scenes predominate over the rest. Thus, the intention was to add these animals to or improve the communal herd. Hunting done by means of the bow and arrow, spears and hatchets was aimed at preserving the communal herd from beasts of prey and procuring meat. The rock pictures of the early period enable us to assert that the bezoar goat was the first animal to be domesticated in Armenia. The hunting scenes of those animals form a majority and their bone fossils predominate in the animal remnants of ancient settlements. Equally old is the domestication of wild aurochs and the Armenian mountain sheep. This domestication is likely to date back to the 7th and 6th millennia B. C., though the reflection in the rock carvings comes not earlier than from the 5th millennium B. C. Transcaucasian archaeology provides evidence to the effect that sheep predominated in the communal flocks of the 3rd millennium B. C., but this development was not altogether reflected in the art of the rock carvings. This fact may be accounted for by lingering artis-

tic convention, the location of rock images and a number of other circumstances.

The rock carvings of the 3rd—1st millennia B. C. indicate that both the second period of rise in hunting and the high standard of animal husbandry were possible only due to a high level of farming-surplus grain to supply winter feed for the animals. But animal husbandry developed even more rapidly than farming and the consistently growing flocks of animals were likely to be in need of summer and winter fodder.

As archaeological data point out, it was in this period that the use of winter pastures

was initiated, the practice sustaining itself in the following thousands of years in the plain of Moughan-Gharabagh, the middle course of the river Araxes, the farming oasis of Van, etc. This explains the occurrence of groups of images in at least two of those areas. Following the herds our ancestors acquired new pasturelands which at the same time held good for farming. This rise in economy may explain the migrations en masse, in the 3rd millennium B. C., of the Armenian Highland tribes to Asia Minor and the Near East which had been several centuries before occupied by local people with their own particular cultures.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ROCK CARVING AS A RELIABLE SOURCE IN PALEOBIOLOGY

Rock-carvings can be used as rich sources of paleobiological information provided one is certain of their reliability. Actually, in attempts to reproduce the animal as precisely as possible, at the same time preserving the generally stylized lines, the pre-historic artist often achieved such perfection that enabled him not only to convey the external features of the animal but also, to some degree, its frightened alertness, quiet state, characteristic movements and other details. These factors make it possible to discern not only the bird and animal as such, but also to distinguish their species (swan, goose, crane, goat, bull, deer, elk, etc.).

Listed in Table IX are all the species of animals encountered with their bone remnants along the shore of Lake Sevan and the cultural layers of neighbouring neolithic-Bronze Age settlements.

Dominant among rock-carved animals was the bezoar goat, widespread in the high Alpine zones of pre-historic Armenia. It was also adapted to the lower Alpine lands. By the horns one can distinguish the old and young males and females and their young and observe the peculiar features of their life and environment. The he-goats are often pictured alone or stooped in the moment of struggle, while the she-goats appear only in compositions accompanied

by their male counterparts and their kids. The scenes where man handles the animals by "peaceful" means driving them to the hollows and the dens are very expressive. Armenia offered favourable conditions for early goat and sheep domestication and improvement through crossbreeding with wild stock. All of this information available from rock carvings, the vast amounts of well preserved goat remnants collected around the Lake Sevan basin and the bone remains of other archaeological monuments, make it possible to recognize the ancient area of distribution of bezoar goats. In the past they had roamed all the mountainous regions of Transcaucasia and spread throughout the Caucasus. This was followed by a reduction of the confines of their locus. The last bezoar goat was shot in the Gegham mountains in 1947.

High in artistic quality (if not in number) among all the images in the Gegham mountain range are the multiform carvings of deer, which impress with their realistic form. Interestingly, in series of compositions the deer are pictured grazing, in peaceful surroundings in the company of men. They testify to deer-breeding in the remote past. The deer are likely to belong to the synanthropic species. To this testify the bone remnants of deer re-