

THE PETROGLYPHS OF ARMENIA AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT AS A SACRED AREA*

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Key words: Armenia, rock carving, cult, worship, mythology, world creation, magic, ritual, imaginary creature, cosmological ideas, patriarch Hayk, dragon-vishap, symbol.

Abstract

In ancient Armenia there were various types of sanctuaries and sacred places. They served the purpose of worship and its various manifestations, in which the ritual, its traditions and customs were significant and important. In archaic times the petroglyph environment was also a unique sacred area. The votive elements, in various forms of expressions, are present in many scenes and compositions.

The rock paintings with ritual and worship scenes are classified in this article according to their content: a/ world creation and fertility, b/ magic and ritual, c/ imaginary creatures, d/ cosmological ideas, e/ symbols. A comprehensive analysis of these cult types and components presents the petroglyph and its environment as a unique space, where prehistoric man performed rituals vital for his everyday activities, worshipping the forces of nature, luminaries and celestial bodies, and various mythical creatures.

Each type of worship is also presented in the context of its later manifestations in other spheres of culture and ethnographic realities. Over the centuries, the petroglyph environment as a sacred area gave way to constructive environments such as temples, altars and others, which were dedicated to gods and goddesses who inherited mythological images from the distant past.

Introduction

Rock art as the deepest layer of the pictorial heritage, is at the origins of the eternal process of human faith and aspirations, cognitive and creative activity. Initially, in most ancient petroglyphs almost all creatures, objects and phenomena are the result of observation of natural realities, simple or artistic reflection, but often there is also ritualization of reality, supernaturalization,

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flight of imagination, and they reflect the inner world and mythological perceptions of archaic man.

The petroglyphs of Armenia with their multifaceted semantics and imagery, appeal to almost all essential spheres of culture, including worship, the elements of which are present in various scenes and compositions. Archaeologists have studied certain images of cult scenes and compositions, however, the petroglyphs with their environment as a sacred area have not yet been specifically studied. Meanwhile, the material collected recently gives us the opportunity to examine the subject in a new way, from the appropriate perspective.

We examine the rock paintings of Armenia with ritual scenes, classifying them according to the content of the composition and elucidating the types of worship expressed in them. They are analyzed due to each thematic group, with the aim to reveal what role the scenes engraved on the stones played in archaic community's life, and whether the petroglyph environment can be characterized as a sacred space. The images are compared with later manifestations in other spheres of culture, in certain artifacts, and sometimes in ethnographic realities¹.

Theories on rock art interpretation

At the beginning of the 20th century, two main directions explaining the origin and purpose of rock art were formed: the magical and the cultic. The French archaeologist and religious scholar S. Reinach proposed the magical theory, due to which the depiction and the resulting image are a means of remote influence on a living being, the main part and form of magic that contributes to successful hunting or warfare². The French archaeologist and anthropologist A. Leroi-Gourhan elucidated primitive art in the frames of cult, as a result of reliance on supernatural forces, rejecting the absolute exclusivity of the magic factor, as it could not explain the frequent presence of certain pictorial elements, such as dangerous beasts or imaginary, fantastic creatures, monsters³.

We believe that as part of the general ritual sphere and a manifestation of mythical thinking, magic and cult are very close. While, the means of implementation are different: in the case of magic, a person relies on the influence of his internal power; in the case of worship, he conditions the expected result with the possible participation of another, supernatural, intermediary third force. So, we can say, that rock art is an emotional sphere of human cognition, in which enchantment and worship are important components. These reflections of the archaic wisdom are a unique combination of science and art, knowledge and emotion, and even a pictorial language.

¹ Petroglyph-worship connections are partially reflected in our previous publications: Վարդումյան և Թեմիշյան. 2002, 386–407, Tokhatyan. 2015, 187–193; Վարդումյան և Ջյան. 2016, 156–165, Թեմիշյան. 2016, 189–190, Vardumyan. 2020, 167–183; Vardumyan. 2024, 126–145.

² Reinach. 1903, 257–266.

³ Leroi-Gourhan. 1964.

Modern aesthetic thought makes greater emphasis on the cognitive aspect of rock art, seeing in this sphere a tendency to realistically reflect the surrounding world. In addition to these approaches, including both sacred and profane features of rock art, we emphasize its cult aspect, which was one of the significant sides of prehistoric man's life, since through it he ensured his contact with the supernatural good forces. In the sacred petroglyph environment, he felt himself under the protection of higher powers and considered the ritual actions as a guarantee of his aspirations' fulfillment. In contrast to profane space, the sacred places were a kind of man's private universe, as if it were in such spots that he had received the revelation of a reality other than that in which he participated through his ordinary daily life⁴.

Mythological ideas, cult and ritual in rock art

The petroglyphs of Armenia were characterized as sacred monuments back in 1971, by archaeologists H. Martirosyan and H. Israelyan who wrote: "They are the cherished sanctuaries of prehistoric people, the 'temples' of ancient art"⁵. And they were right, because in the compositions of archaic 'canvases' it is possible to notice the manifestations of the ancestors' thoughts, their beliefs and mythological ideas.

In earliest times the choice of the appropriate place, the creation of the images, the ritual ceremony – all this was a unified ritual process and thinking. The engraver used a rich arsenal of artistic means and techniques to visually reproduce his concepts and mythological ideas. Understanding the past and present as simultaneous states, every ritual with cosmogonic meaning was modeling the primordial time of creation, phenomena, and real events.

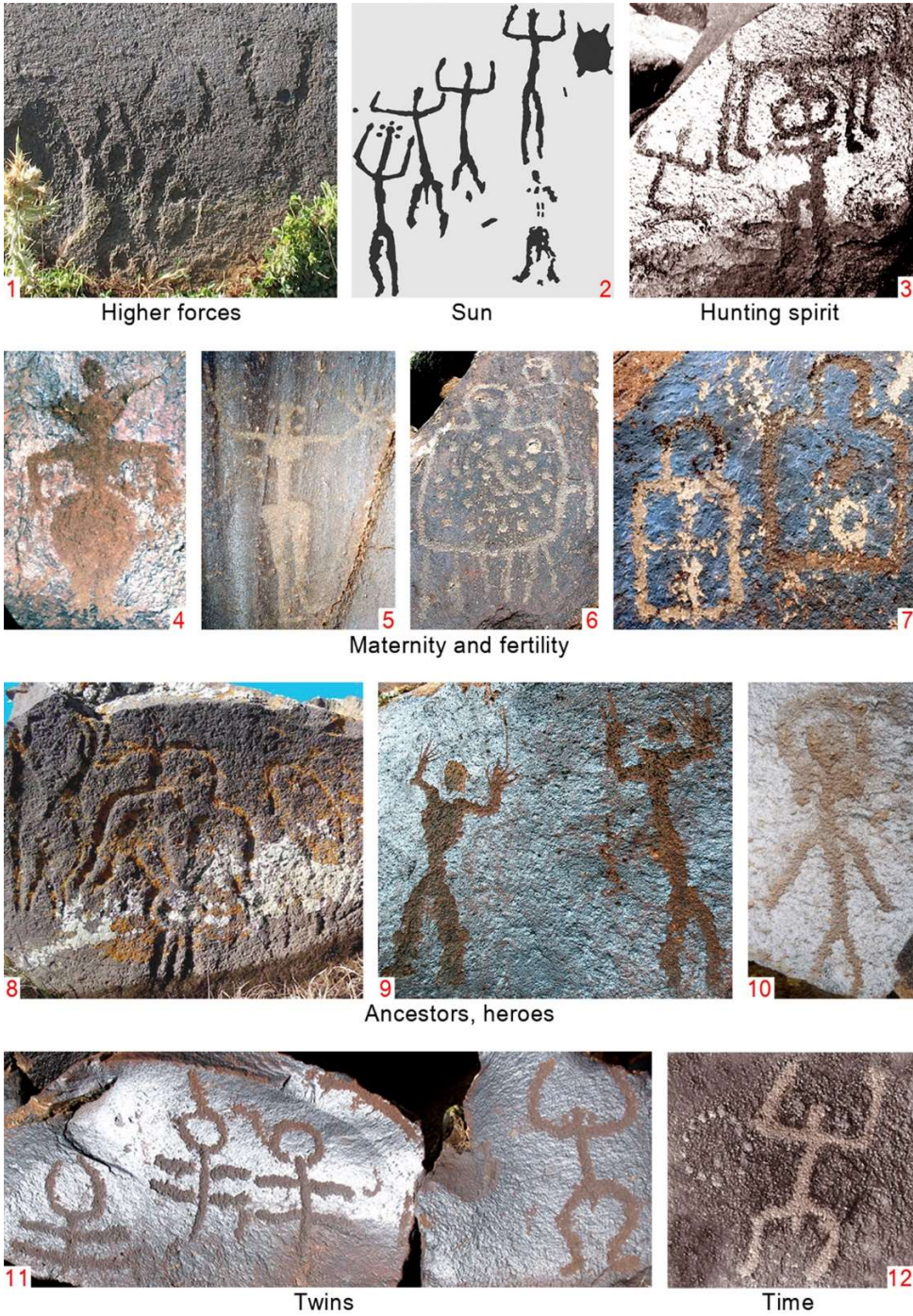
Rock art was intertwined to almost all essential spheres of Armenian culture by constant theme and invariants, such as living beings, gods, luminaries, ancestors and motherhood, mythical creatures, dragons and symbols, etc. The rock paintings reflect archaic beliefs and rituals, the worship of plants, animals, spirits, higher powers, ancestors, heroes, deities, twins, time [tab. 1₁₋₃, 8-12], Earth and Sky, heavenly luminaries [tab. 4], atmospheric phenomena [tab. 5₁₋₉], etc. There are direct depictions of votive rituals, dances, the images of goddesses, maternity and fertility [tab. 14-6, 211-13], as well as pregnancy and childbirth⁶ [tab. 16-7, 217].

⁴ Eliade. 1959, 24.

⁵ Մարտիրոսյան, Իսրայելյան. 1971, 7:

⁶ The iconography of rock images is characterized by the syncretism typical for primitive culture. The mixed, undifferentiated state of perception of things and phenomena, a combined representation of the real and the imaginary, the themes are often intertwined, mutually complementary, even within the composition of one rock image (Վարդումյան, Թոխատյան. 2023, 207-212).

Table 1. Figs. 1, 3–4, 9–12 (Geghama Mountains). Figs. 2, 5–6 (Syunik).
Fig. 7 (Aragats). Fig. 8 (Sevsar).



The vivid ritual, game, dance and performance of the prehistoric era were symbolic, a means of marking and decorating any memorable event. During human history, phenomena and situations occurring in nature and in everyday life have been initially differentiated and valued, and due to their meaning, beliefs and worship related to them, have been formed. As a result of all this, the old customs traditions passed from generation to generation, and were carved on rocks. Moreover, it can be assumed that near those engraved stones ancient man performed rituals that were significant to his life and activities, thus turning the petroglyph environment into a sacred area.

Below, we examine the versatile worship content of certain rock carvings, classifying them by cult types and their representations.

World creation and fertility

In creation myths, the disordered state of the Universe – Chaos, was often embodied in a feminine image, from which, through struggle and travail, the ordered Cosmos was born. The earthly (chthonic) nature of woman in ancient religions (Mesopotamian, Indian, Hittite, Greek, Roman, etc.) was symbolized by her generative role⁷. Even in the early Paleolithic, the worship of Great Mother – the goddess of fertility, arose from the woman's role in childbirth.

In the Neolithic, with the development of agriculture and cattle breeding, the concepts of fertility and abundance, the image of the mother-goddess became more significant. She was worshiped as the guardian of the clan and tribe, the protector of household prosperity, and the guarantee of the community's well-being. Numerous rock images and stone female figurines with emphasized breasts, hips, abdomen, and other signs of fertility, serve as vivid testimony to the archaic "Venuses".

The woman in rock art is mainly depicted alone, which perhaps symbolizes the importance of her specific status in community [tab. 2 1-5, 11, 1 4-6]. She is mostly portrayed naked, which should not be interpreted as a reflection of lifestyle, but merely as a symbolic iconographic manifestation of fertility [tab. 14-5, 8]. In some rock pictures, which also depict familial or everyday scenes, there is a ritual group-dance near or around domestic or wild animals [tab. 26-10, 18]. In some canvases, a family is pictured, sometimes with a child [tab. 28-10]. The rock paintings of maternity goddesses are very expressive. Occasionally, they are accompanied by fertile animals, such as mountain goat and deer [tab. 2 12-13]. Near them often appear images of a lightning spirit or zigzag sign emphasizing the divine and supernatural forces associated with fertility [tab. 51-9]. H. Martirosyan related the rock carvings depicting lightning and a goat together, to the riddle "it's the goat, and his back is lightning"⁸,

⁷ Lincoln. 1975, 121-145; Lincoln. 2024, 65-85; Վարդումյան, Թոխատյան. 2023, 206-207, В ардумян, Тохатян. 2024, 347, рис. 110.

⁸ Նալբանդյան. 1883, 17, Abeghian. 1899, 78; Աբեղյան. 1975, 66, 530, Հարությունյան. 1965, 11, 20, Վարդումյան, Թոխատյան. 2023, 209:

Table 2. Figs. 1–4, 6, 8, 14–15, 17 (Geghama Mountains). Figs. 5, 7, 9–10 (Syunig). Fig. 11 (But, Vaspurakan). Fig. 12–13 (Aragats). Fig. 16 (Lori).



noting that the bitriangle image of the goat is also present in Urartian and medieval ideograms, with the meaning “the nunny, the lightning” (Arm. «դայակն, փայլակն»)⁹.

An important place of woman worship is the Virgins’ cave on the slope of the sacred Paghato Mountain, in Vaspurakan Province, near the But village. There are five small colour paintings of dancing goddesses, dating back to the 8th–5th millennia BC. [tab. 2₁₁]. Near the summit, once there were also the temples of Anahit, Aramazd and Astghik¹⁰, and not far from this place, in Darbnatskhar (mentioned in Sasna Epic), was a significant worship center of the Mother Goddesses Arubaini and Anahit. Later, in the 4th century, the Hogeats Monastery, dedicated to the Holy Begotten, was built on the place of the old temple¹¹. The historical-cultural connection between Mother Goddesses and Saint Mary the Virgin is more than obvious, and it has survived in the reliefs of religious buildings, and in miniatures¹².

The architect-theorist S. Mnatsakanyan, analyzing the relief portraits at the Cathedral of Holy Cross Akhtamar church, notices that the ancient image, “preserving its existence for dozens of centuries, reached the 10th century and found its place on the walls of the temple. That the most beloved deities of Ancient Armenia were not forgotten even in the 11th century is evidenced by the appearance of Anahit's image in miniature compositions of several gospels”¹³. In this regard, he refers to T. Izmaylova, a specialist in Armenian miniatures, who writes: “In the image of the goddess, revived in Armenian manuscripts of the 11th century, one should see Anahit”¹⁴.

Some petroglyphs contain direct or symbolic depictions of fertilizing deity and sacred coitus¹⁵ [tab. 2_{14–15}], pregnancy and childbirth [tab. 1₄, 6–7, 2₁₇],

⁹ Մարտիրոսյան, Իսրայելյան. 1971, 15, Մարտիրոսյան, Իսրայելյան. 1973, 21–24, աղ. V, Մարտիրոսյան, Իսրայելյան. 1978, 41–42, 94, 97, աղ. I_{10–13}, XIVa; Մարտիրոսյան, Իսրայելյան. 1981, 10–11, 21. About this ideogram see: Աբրահամյան. 1959, 173:

¹⁰ Մովսիսի Խորենացու Մատենադարան. 1843, 295, 301, also: Ալիշան. 1895, 38, 48:

¹¹ Սրբազան ձեռագիր. 1884, 67–68, երեմյան. 1963, 36, Մելիք-Փաշայան. 1963, 58, 108–109:

¹² Թոխյան. 2003, 87. About the local origin of the goddesses, their relationship to the Begotten see: Капанцян. 1956, 311–313; Մելիք-Փաշայան. 1963, 65, 80–88, 111, 128–135, Вардумян. 1991, 79, 105–111, 127; Վարդևանյան, Թոխյան. 2023, 205–206, 210, Вардумян, Тохатян. 2024, 351–354.

¹³ Մնացականյան. 1970, 198–199:

¹⁴ Измайлова. 1967, 217.

¹⁵ There is a petroglyph in Syunik, near Sepasar Mountain (Knoll, Meller. 2015, 44, fig. 3), where the celestial fertilizing father god holds a scepter in his hand – the symbol of power, and the woman with halo is the fertile Mother Goddess. Halo is also present in other rock paintings and can be considered the earliest prototype of

childcare [tab. 28–10]. Within the scope of prehistoric beliefs and rituals, particularly striking is the scene with women worshiping higher powers [tab. 11–2]. In veneration scenes, the images of women are remarkable by their dynamic expression and impressive graceful forms, representing mermaids, nymphs or other water spirits [tab. 14–5, 8]. Most likely, in those distant times, women came to such petroglyphs to appeal to heavenly powers and sought help for their various desires.

Magic and ritual

In the context of archaic beliefs and mythological thinking, the rock images reflecting magical actions are of great importance. In some compositions animals or mythical creatures are depicted, bound or captured (net-like signs), killed (straight line along the body, or as skeleton), rarely shot by arrow or spear. Engraving such scenes before the upcoming hunt, man hoped to get the help of spirits and higher forces.

Elements of magic rituals could also be expressed in rock carvings, depicting the surrounding and distant nature, phenomena, aspects of human activity and results of creation, and especially scenes related to the inner world (such as imaginary creatures, inner visions, faces, uncertain images, symbols, etc.).

The magic and enchantment factors are key in rock art. Hunting scenes were made with main purpose to fix the wanted action, and the expected result. The sculptor in this way expressed his gratitude to the higher forces, the spirit protecting the hunt, the totem, and also sought the animal's "forgiveness". Musical instruments were used to enchant the prey with dance movements and to distract attention by imitating sounds. Especially in hunting and group ritual scenes, there are images reminding the prototypes of musical instruments: a lyre, cymbals, tambourine, bowl, horn, and drum¹⁶.

We suppose, there is a certain understanding of balance between survival and environmental issues. Prehistoric man perceived himself as a part of nature and, as a result, endowed the world around him with human features. He probably had the same attitude towards himself and animals. He did not see the beast as a creature different from himself; he perceived it as "another being", different only in appearance, and, by depicting it on stone, hoped to charm and hunt it.

Imaginary creatures

Fantastic creatures are also a part of mythological images in rock carvings. There are depictions connected with legends and myths: supernatural, fantastic amphibian or triphibian creatures, two-headed snakes, hydras, dragons, goat-bodied snake-headed beings, vulture-goats or griffins, and many others¹⁷. They

the symbol of holiness [tab. 110]. It was widespread in the Middle Ages, very often depicted on khachkars (cross-stones), tombstones, and bas-reliefs.

¹⁶ Վարդուհանյան, Թորոսյան. 2023, 208–209, Тохатян, Вардунян. 2025. 127–130, рис. 3.

¹⁷ Մարտիրոսյան, Խրատյան. 1971, 18:

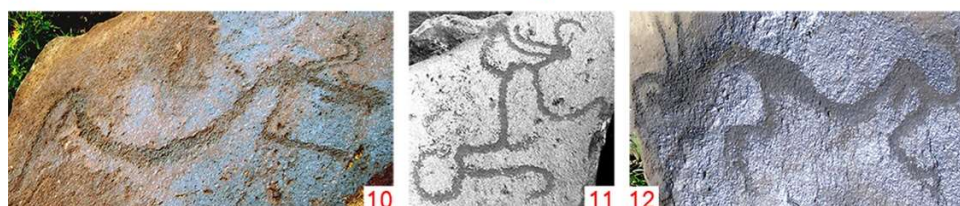
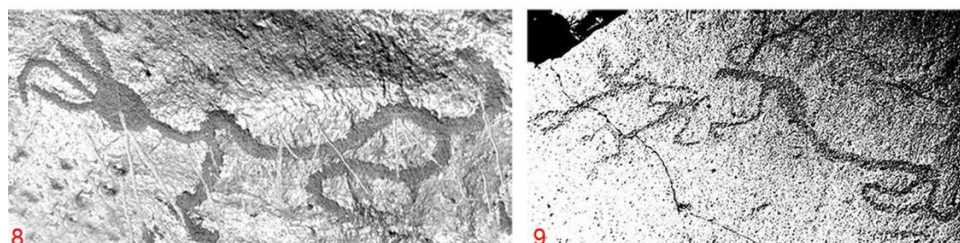
Table 3. Figs. 1–5, 8–14 (Geghama Mountains). Figs. 6–7 (Syuniq).
Fig. 15 (Huso sar, Vayq).



Spirits, Geghama mountains



Spirits and demons, Geghama and Syuniq mountains



Dragons, Geghama and Vayq mountains

By mythologically interpreting the world, our far ancestors spiritualized and anthropomorphized celestial luminaries and phenomena, forming the worship of their deities. Compositions have often been repeated in the form and function of archaeological finds and structures, in the peculiarities of ornament and style, in mythology, art and science, music and poetry. There are numerous vivid manifestations of celestial and solar perceptions in calendar, written and ethnographic heritage²².

Remarkable images are carved on two neighboring stones in the Geghama Mountains: on one – an archer and a bull, on the other – a swastika and a bull [tab. 4₅₋₆]. The connection to the constellations Hayk (Orion) and Taurus is quite obvious. The archer's image may be an echo of the epic founder of Armenia, the ancestor of the Armenian nation, Patriarch Hayk, who killed the tyrant Bel with his huge bow and arrow²³. The image is consistent with the mythological figure of the Great Forefather, who was worshipped as god-creator, personifying time, and as cosmic archer, who embodied the Orion constellation named Hayk in the first Armenian translation of the Bible. The connection to the worship of ancestors is also evident, to whom ancient man appealed with the hope of help in difficult or decisive moments of life, and it is more than possible that especially near this petroglyph he performed his ritual contact with the heroic Patriarch who defeated the enemy.

Symbols and vague images

Some images do not resemble any known reality, and are still uncertain. They are found near the clearly perceptible images of well-known objects, phenomena, and living beings. It is possible that the vague appearance is a result of chance, error, imperfection or incompleteness. But, very likely, the image is meaningful, since it is often placed separately and has independent role, its own function [tab. 5₁₀₋₂₄]. Such a petroglyph could also reflect preconceived ideas, dreams, or deliberate disguise, distortion, and imitation of appearance in the subconscious of archaic man. As in the case of visible creatures, these images also demonstrate the transition from the simple to the imaginary and abstract.

²² Referring to the worship of celestial luminaries, ethnographer V. Bdoyan notices that the remnants of astral religion in Armenian mythology are reflected in the so called Akhtark literature, and among them are the notions according to which certain star groups are directly connected with agricultural tools, animals, and the farmer (*Քդռյաւն. 1950, 34–35, Քդռյաւն. 1972, 460, 462*).

²³ Khorenatsi. 1991, 32–37. Armenian history and its chronology take their sources from Hayk's glorious victory against Bel, that took place on Navasard 1 (corresponding to August 11) 2492 BC. This date has become the beginning of the Armenian national calendar, and the months in Haykid calendar are called by the names of his sons and daughters (*Անանիա Շիրակացի. 1940, 76–77, Ալիշաւն. 1869, 96*). About the cosmic content of Hayk's image see: Vardumyan. 2024, 126–145.

Table 4. Figs. 1–6, 8, 10–11 (Geghama Mountains). Fig. 7 (Sevsar).
Fig. 9 (Vardenyats Pass).

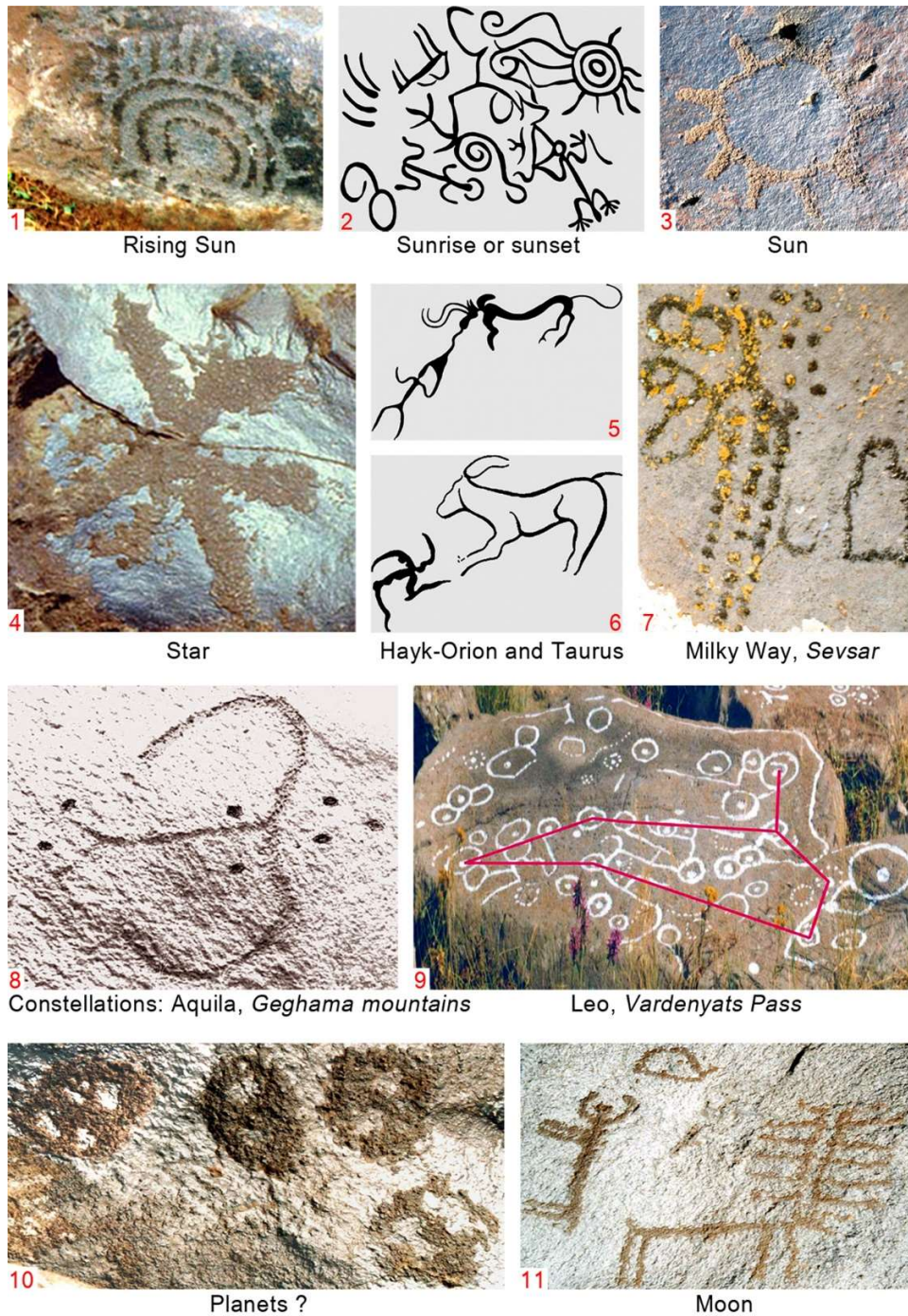
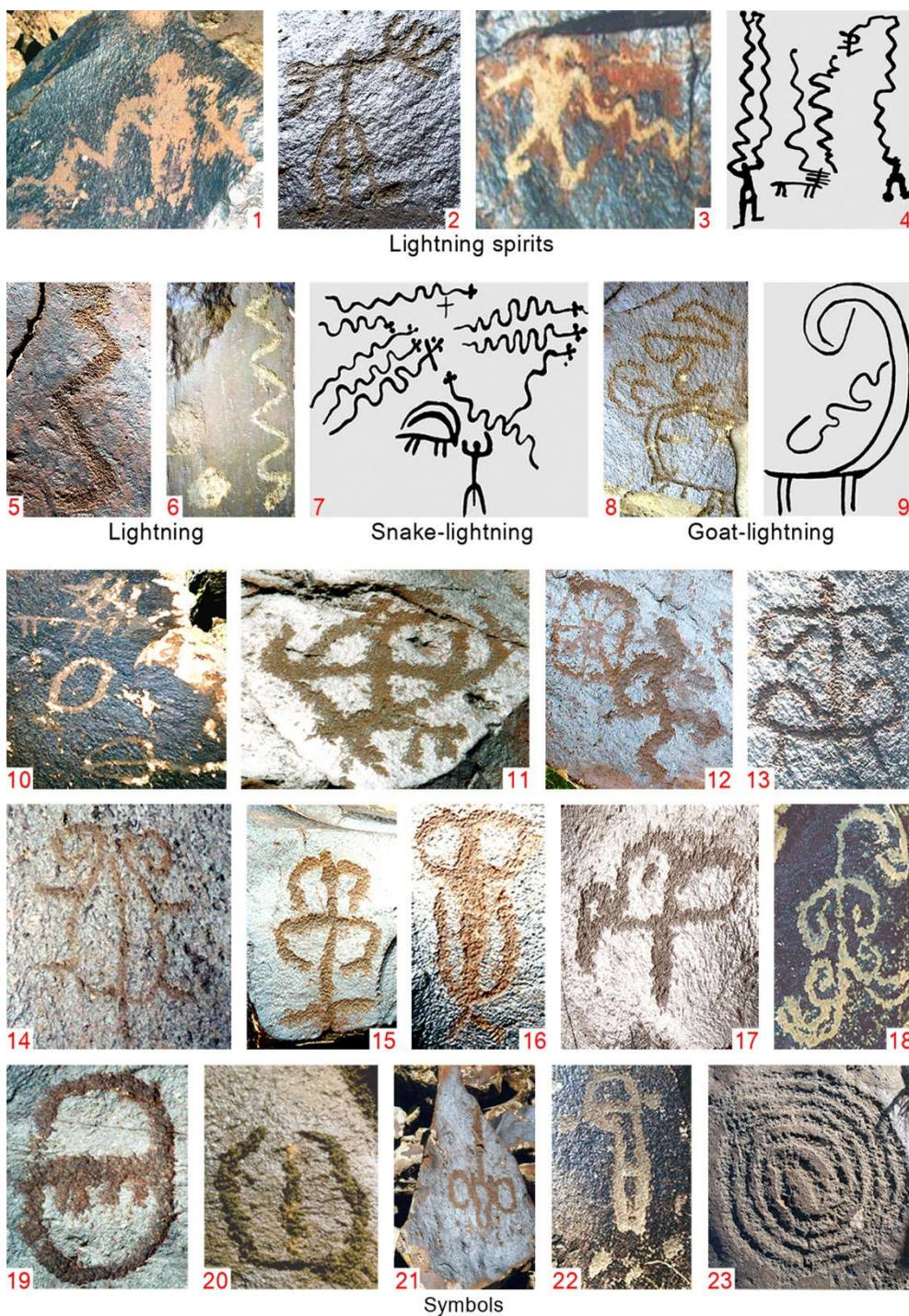


Table 5. Figs. 1–2, 5, 7–8, 10–23 (Geghama Mountains). Fig. 3 (Navasar).
Figs. 4, 6, 9 (Syuniq). Fig. 24 (Huso sar, Vayq).



Perhaps, it was through such vague images and symbols that man communicated with his worshipped powers, and just such a petroglyph was his sacred environment.

It is well known that the origins of many medieval religious symbols trace back to prehistoric times, to the ideas and beliefs of hunter-herders of the Eneolithic and even earlier periods, and within this frames many pre-ideas were developed, later evolving into deeply rooted symbolic forms. The majority of Christian symbols are the same ancient pagan motifs that were given entirely new interpretations by Christianity. Animals and fantastic, imaginary creatures appear on the walls of temples and palaces, the meaning of which is not always clear. However, they find expression in folk beliefs and traditions, and were well known to medieval people²⁴.

Thus, rock art was intertwined to almost all essential spheres of Armenian culture by constant theme and invariants, such as living beings, gods, luminaries, ancestors and motherhood, mythical creatures, dragons and symbols, etc. In the further stages of development, the ritualistic and symbolic concept of creation became more emphasized. The majority of these cult motifs continued their natural evolution in the design of Bronze Age pottery [tab. 2₁₆], seals, bronze votive plates and belts, weaponry, as well as in the forms and ornaments of dragon-stelae, statuettes, in the depiction of ancient and medieval temples²⁵, wall-paintings, mosaics, bas-reliefs, miniatures, tombstones, amulets, in the weaving of carpets and carving of khachkars.

During many centuries, the sacred environment formed by petroglyphs, contributed to the formation of constructive sacred environment – temples and other sanctuaries dedicated to gods who inherited many mythological ideas from the deep past.

Conclusions

Examining rock images with votive content and showing the types of worship depicted and expressed in them, we come to the conclusion that petroglyphs were a kind of sacred places for the people of archaic times. They reflected man's ideas and perceptions about the world and life, his desire to communicate with higher forces through his paintings. Our far ancestors carved images on rocks expressing their conceptions of world creation, cosmological ideas, scenes of magic and ritual, pictures of mythical creatures, and performed their rituals in that sacred environment.

They portrayed women as a symbol of fertility and fecundity, depicted their ancestors in the form of stars and constellations, engraved spirits and dragons symbolizing the forces of nature, people worshiping the higher powers with their arms outstretched to the sky, and many other scenes

²⁴ Մեջակայան. 1970, 185–187, 193, Վարդուհան. 2010–2011, 279–307, Վարդուհան. 2020, 163–186:

²⁵ All symbols and rituals having to do with temples, cities, and houses are finally derived from the primary experience of sacred space (Eliade. 1959, 58).

testifying to the fact that the petroglyph environment was a sacred place.

Due to those numerous cult images and compositions, the rock art area can be considered ancient place of worship, mountain sanctuary, prehistoric man's ritual life space. From times immemorial, the petroglyph with its sacred environment, has reflected the eternal process of human faith and aspirations, cognitive and creative activities. These images of archaic wisdom are a unique source of people's beliefs and mythological ideas, rituals and customs, pictorial speech. From those traditions over the centuries have been formed state pantheons with their religious ideology, temples and altars, art works and scientific thought in pre-Christian Armenia.

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ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԺԱՅՌԱՊԱՏԿԵՐՆԵՐԸ ԵՎ ԴՐԱՆՑ ՄԻՋԱՎԱՅՐԸ ՈՐՊԵՍ ՍՐԲԱԶԱՆ ՏԱՐԱԾՔ

ԳՈՀԱՐ ՎԱՐԴՈՒՄՅԱՆ, ԿԱՐԵՆ ԹՈԽԱԹՅԱՆ

Ա մ փ ո փ ո մ

Բանալի բառեր՝ Հայաստան, ժայռապատկեր, պաշտամունք, դիցաբանություն, աշխարհարարում, հմայանք, ծես, երևակայական էակ, տիեզերաբանական պատկերացումներ, Հայկ նահապետ, վիշապ, խորհրդանշան:

Հին Հայաստանում սրբավայրերը բազմազան են եղել՝ տաճարներ, բազիլիկներ, մեհյաններ: Դրանք ծառայել են պաշտամունքին ու դրա տարաբնույթ դրսևորումներին, որոնցում կարևորվում էին արարողակարգը, ծիսական ավանդույթը և այլն: Վաղնջական ժամանակներում պաշտամունքային ուրույն միջավայր է

եղել նաև ժայռապատկերը: Պաշտամունքային տարրերը զանազան դրսևորումներով առկա են շատ տեսարաններում ու հորինվածքներում:

Ծիսապաշտամունքային տեսարաններով ժայռապատկերները դասակարգվում են ըստ բովանդակության ու թեմային հորինվածքների՝ ա. աշխարհարարում և արգասավորություն, բ. հմայանք և ծես, գ. երևակայական էակներ, դ. տիեզերաբանական պատկերացումներ, ե. խորհրդանշաններ: Պաշտամունքային այս տեսակների և բաղադրիչների համակողմանի վերլուծությամբ ներկայացվում է, որ վաղնջական ժամանակներում ժայռապատկերը և դրա տարածքը յուրահատուկ սրբավայր էր, որտեղ հնադարի մարդը կատարել է իր ամենօրյա կյանքի և գործունեության համար կարևոր ծեսեր՝ երկրպագելով իրեն շրջապատող բնության ուժերին, երկնային մարմիններին ու լուսատուներին և զանազան առասպելական էակներին:

Պաշտամունքի յուրաքանչյուր տեսակի համատեքստում ներկայացված են նաև դրա հետագա դրսևորումները մշակույթի այլ բնագավառներում, արտեֆակտներում և ազգագրական իրականություն մեջ: Դարերի ընթացքում ժայռապատկերը՝ որպես սրբազան միջավայր, իր տեղը գիշել է կառուցային միջավայրերին՝ տաճարներին, բազիլիկներին, մեհյաններին, որոնք նվիրված էին հեռավոր անցյալից դիցաբանական պատկերացումներ ժառանգած աստվածներին ու աստվածուհիներին:

Գոհար Վարդումյան – պ. գ. թ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտի Հին դարերի պատմության բաժնի առաջատար գիտաշխատող, Վ. Բրյուսովի անվան պետական համալսարանի հայագիտության ամբիոնի դոցենտ: Գիտական հետաքրքրությունները՝ Հին Հայաստանի պատմություն և մշակույթ, դիցաբանություն, ավանդույթներ: Հեղինակ է 1 մենագրության և շուրջ 135 հոդվածի:

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Կարեն Թոխատյան – պ. գ. թ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտի Հին դարերի պատմության բաժնի ավագ գիտաշխատող, Վ. Բրյուսովի անվան պետական համալսարանի հայագիտության ամբիոնի ավագ դասախոս: Գիտական հետաքրքրությունները՝ ժայռապատկերաբանություն, նախնադարյան արվեստ, հնաստղագիտություն: Հեղինակ է 1 մենագրության և շուրջ 85 հոդվածի:

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ПЕТРОГЛИФЫ АРМЕНИИ И ИХ СРЕДА КАК СВЯЩЕННЫЙ АРЕАЛ

ГОАР ВАРДУМЯН, КАРЕН ТОХАТЯН

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Армения, петроглиф, культ, мифология, сотворение мира, магия, ритуал, воображаемое существо, космологические представления, патриарх Айк, вишан-дракон, символ.

В Древней Армении существовало множество типов святилищ: храмы, баины, алтари, и они служили одной цели – культу и его различным проявлениям, в которых подчеркивалась важность церемонии, ритуальной традиции и т. д. В древности петроглифы также представляли собой уникальную среду для поклонения. Во многих сценах и композициях элементы культа присутствуют в различных проявлениях.

Наскальные рисунки с ритуально-культовыми сценами классифицированы по тематическому составу и содержанию: а) сотворение мира и плодородие, б) магия и ритуал, в) воображаемые существа, г) космологические представления, д) символы. На основе комплексного анализа этих типов и компонентов культа представлено, что в древности петроглиф и его среда были своеобразным святилищем, где древний человек совершал важные для своей повседневной жизни и деятельности обряды, поклоняясь силам природы, небесным телам и светилам, различным мифическим существам.

В контексте каждого вида поклонения также рассматриваются его дальнейшие проявления в других областях культуры, артефактах и этнографических реалиях. На протяжении столетий наскальное искусство как сакральная среда уступило место конструкционным средам: храмам, пагодам и монастырям, которые были посвящены богам и богиням, унаследовавшим мифологические образы из далекого прошлого.

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