

Rock carving in the Saharan Atlas, Laghouat, Algeria

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Abstract – The art of drawings and engravings is one of the most important elements for studying the prehistoric era - its dawn. Where it gives us a lively picture of the ways of life, habits, and social and economic conditions of the population. The topics of these inscriptions and rock drawings deal with the intellectual aspects and the collective and ducal methods of the religious peoples who implemented them. Regardless of the motives for producing the art of rock paintings, it provides us with a revolution of information and involves great historical importance.

Keywords – Engravings– Rock Art – Prehistoric – Rock Engraving Techniques – Saharan Atlas.

I. INTRODUCTION

The primitive man who lived in caves knew art before the era of history, so the effort of the cave dwellers in the Stone Age was not limited to making tools, weapons, and knife heads from stone and bones; they were also engraving animal shapes such as mammoths, unicorns, and camels. Different civilizations appeared in the Near East and North Africa. This, and in the ages of the dawn of ancient history, natural factors settled in North Africa that made it submerged in snow, and after a while these factors moved to Europe and made it covered with snow, while North Africa was a region of heavy rains, and this is the reason for which human civilization appeared in North Africa until the end of the Stone Age. We see art (rock art).



Fig. 1 Image representing elephants protecting their young from tiger attack

II. HISTORY OF RESEARCH IN THE AREA

The first discoveries of rock inscriptions were in the year 1847 by Dr. Jacquot and Commander Kush at the site of Tiout and Magrar Tahtani in Naama ALGERIA [1].

It was in 1847 that a room written in written stones was discovered in the Saharan Atlas. When travelers and Qasdarites ask about it, they say that they know it at all times and call it that.

Appointed Sifsefa (Gisha Laghouat) by Captain Maumenée 1899. [2]

Researchers in the Algerian country have found traces of the people of the Stone Age, which are either homes for their neighborhoods, or graves for their dead, or machines for their life from their artifacts, or things from their possessions.

They found some of these drawings in Jabal Bani Rashid [3].

III. : DEFINITION OF ROCK ART

Rock art is considered among the material evidence of the intellectual and cultural development of prehistoric man, through which he was able to express his daily lifestyle.

Various regions of the world have witnessed an important artistic development during the end of the prehistoric period, so that this development continues in the Neolithic period, according to

researchers, to find several types of inscriptions, drawings, and finally rock writings [4].

Rock art is now known as stone inscriptions, and we find it near mountainous areas.

Drawings and rock art were initially intended to establish a specific communication system.

Perhaps we can consider rock art as writing in the form of primitive carvings that were describing the things that prehistoric man deliberately attached to his memory.

Rock art is considered as a real library from which significant data can be extracted regarding the art and pattern of development of the population.

It is worth noting that the prehistoric artist had a keen sense of drawing despite the limited means.

The written room (rock inscriptions) represents a symbol of communication by our distant ancestors, as if it were a testament, and this is before writing.

They are engraving on the rocks an eternal testimony about their civilization, and this is 8,000 years ago [6].

IV. ROCK ENGRAVING TECHNIQUES

The engravings made in the oceanic way, or the so-called natural style, are considered among the most ancient inscriptions, and they often include the animal species that used to live in these areas, such as the buffalo, elephant, giraffe, and rhinoceros.

During our field visit, we found that there are several techniques, summarized as follows:

The U-shaped polishing technique and the V-shaped polishing technique, as well as the tapping technique, and we also noticed a mixture of the two techniques.

The shapes with a polished band, which are characterized by a wide and deep line, and with a sector predominantly in the shape of the letter U, were accomplished by the method of pre-punching, as many of them contain imprints of that perforation under the layer of polishing, but at a later stage of the stages the polished line with a sector in the form of the letter U and a deep polished line with a V-shaped sector appeared, often associated with perforations and a specific style.



Fig. 2 The U-shaped polishing technique the V-shaped polishing technique



Fig. 3 The U-shaped polishing technique



Fig. 4 The V-shaped polishing technique



Fig. 5 Dual Technique (Click and Smooth)



Fig. 6 Dual Technique (Click and Smooth)



Fig. 7 The U-shaped polishing technique

V. RESULTS

polishing technique:

The German traveler Barth, who was the first to notice the phenomenon of polishing, mentions that it is the preparation of a figure for coloring only

Click technique:

And it was represented in the method of wedging, or hammering, which is a phrase of successive blows by a chisel or a beak that is held by the hand, then hammers another stone until it leaves a small hole, and those small holes are successive, so that in the end they form the shape to be drawn.

Dual Technique (Click and Smooth):

Considering that there are two techniques, the artist often combined them by performing a process of a certain depth with a tool with a convex and smooth edge

-We get a U shape if the polishing is done parallel to the rock

-We get a V shape of the letter V if the polishing is done with inclinations to the right and left sides

-We get a slanted shape to one side if the polishing is done on one side

The shapes with a polished band, which are characterized by a wide and deep line, and with a sector predominantly in the shape of the letter U, were accomplished by the method of pre-punching, as many of them contain imprints of that perforation under the layer of polishing, but at a later stage of the stages the polished line with a sector in the form of the letter U and a deep polished line with a V-shaped sector appeared, often associated with perforations and a specific style

There is another method of executing rock paintings, which is also known as the dotting method, and is often found attached to ostrich eggs and soft objects that cannot be cut or hammered.

The implementation of these drawings was also subject to the quality of the stone machine, which was often made of horseshoes (horse shoes) or in the form of the letter V. Among the most prominent methods that were followed in the implementation of ironic drawings in the ancient Maghreb and the Sahara in particular, we refer to the method of recessed notches that were widely used. in the implementation of the region's photographs

When a researcher wants to date rock paintings and engravings, he must take into account three important things: style, technique, and subject

Through the method, we can know whether the drawing is natural or symbolic, and the natural method is represented in the drawings of huge animals, while symbolism means those drawings in which the artist tends towards abstraction, so that he controls his artwork, and thus we see him drawing deer and some other animals for us. In high beauty and accuracy, then he also painted the hands and feet, symbolizing them as ritual objects [7].

VI. DISCUSSION

And in the cultural field, the fixed and spatially defined mural provided us with unexpected information about the world of human hands, and thanks to it, humanity dared to conquer the whole world.

We can get acquainted with the actions of it because it behaves differently from other animals and those other animals, and with regard to those that concern us, and of which they do not represent written documents, the only way that exists in communicating the activity in it is to interrogate the remains according to effective methods of activity, economic or civilized.

This should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. The results should be drawn together, compared with prior work and/or theory and interpreted to present a clear step forward in scientific understanding. Combined Results and Discussion sections comprising a list of results and individual interpretations in isolation are particularly discouraged.

VII. CONCLUSION

The main conclusions of the study should be summarized in a short Conclusions section.

Accordingly, the regions of Laghouat, Algeria, are still virgin lands

Perhaps the reason is the few studies on the Saharan Atlas region

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