

ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF LOWER AND MIDDLE PALEOLITHIC PRESULPTURE IN PARALLEL LINES WITH PRODUCTION AND EVOLUTION OF LITHIC TOOLS.

The research on art origin

The research on lower and middle paleolithic sculpture began about the middle of the past century, still before the discovery of cave drawing of upperpaleolithic, whose first discoveries remount to the end of the same century. The very fine drawings of stags, oxen, mammoths and a lot of different animals of glacial age have put in second plain the researches on lower and middle paleolithic sculpture.

Today also the youngest scholars know that these zoomorphous drawings found in caves are prehistoric. Very rare, instead, are people who place themselves chronological problems, and particularly are interested in origin of art. The same scientists of upper paleolithic art are always uninterested to research on origin in past paleolithic periods.

The only one who is known to us is the late regretted German scientist Professor Herbert Kuhn, who researched as many on upper paleolithic as lower and middle paleolithic. The upper paleolithic art of Europe became by mistake a guide for the art of all the world; it, furthermore not in evolutionist key.

There are in effect, those who studies only zoomorphous drawings of Magdalehiens (from about 16.000 = sixteen thousand to 9.500 nine thousand and five a hundred years A.D.). And those who studies the sculpture that is prevalently anthropomorphous of aurignacians, perigordians and gravettians (from about 35.000 thirty five thousand to 16.000 sixteen thousand years A.D.)

It is known that man ^{has} manufactured tools from 3,500,000 three million five hundred thousand years, then with slow, laborious evolution.

How can we continue to think, even if people don't want to know discoveries till now made of middle and lower paleolithic sculptures, that the sculpture tondo fashioned is born so perfect and ~~we~~ without an origin 37.000 thirty seven thousand years ago ?

The scientists who posed themselves the problem of art origin previously the upper paleolithic are a lot, and their line of reason in the

following "How it is possible that the tools have an origin, followed by an evolution on that has always been more perfect from lower paleolithic to the upper paleolithic, while the art shows himself in upper paleolithic at once fully developed without an origin?"

It's evident that the art of upper paleolithic must have an origin in preceding phases, but they have never researched it.

Other researchers, who have posed themselves the same problem, have solved it explaining it with a "jump of quality" that man should make during the cultural transition from middle to upper paleolithic, who should make possible the "birth of the art", just 37.000 thirty seven thousand years ago.

Other researchers, on the contrary, have made and are going to make some researches on origin of upper paleolithic art, researching it in lower and middle paleolithic.

These researchers are located in West Europe and it was not easy to detect them, inasmuch as some work out of academic research, and, so, their publications remain without the channels of international diffusion of the science.

Few have participated in international congresses and those who did it, rouses insufficient attention.

The art of lower and middle paleolithic is exclusively constituted by antropomorphous and zoomorphous images sculpted on the stone, which are named "presculptures" for the working technique with removal of flakes like that employed for lithic tools fabrication.

The first researcher known by us is the French Boucher de Perthes, who in his publication "Antiquités celtiques et antédiluviennes" of 1846 (eighteen forty-six), signalizes antediluvians "pierres figures", that today we know, these to be presculptures of lower and middle paleolithic, inasmuch as found in layers in association with tools of such ~~xx~~ cultural phases. Boucher de Perthes has published true and un~~t~~-true tools that is, casual or false, and he also made the same mistake with some "pierres figures", but his publication succeeded ~~x~~ equally at the beginning of the prehistoric research.

There was immediately an intense research on the tools by other

researchers, but only twenty# years after, with acquired experience, began the inevitable process of revision which has hollowed to detect the forgeries. It was not, instead, this process with the presculptures, inasmuch they have no credit near the academic world of the time, and the research has been continued by a minority of researchers, who we can define progressists. Still today very numerous are the scientists who don't believe in the art of lower and middle paleolithic, or don't even want to hear to speak of, or never heard speak of.

The accusation that frequently is moved to the presculptures is based on superficial analysis and more often on prejudices, stating that these are casual, and not international.

Then it is dutiful to say that "amateur researchers" (but also Boucher de Perthes was an "amateur"), often taken by enthusiasm, have signaled, with zoomorphous and anthropomorphous sculptures also simple stones with zoomorphous and anthropomorphous characteristics, that is the latter false presculptures.

A revisional process of false ones has already begun by more scientists of history of art of lower and middle paleolithic, and will be further when these researches will be performed by every palaeontologist who make excavations, and then codified in types, as it was made for tools. Those who don't think in the presculpture that up to now was found and published, must not have the hope that future finds can resolve the problem of art origin.

We scientists of prehistorical art history have made research in all the most important layers of lower and middle paleolithic, both in strata and in surface, or in caves or on rocks, and we can assert that art's origin and evolution are in the worked stone that we have found.

New finds of presculptures will let us perfect our knowledge about local aspects and evolution of art, completing some cultural views, but with difficulty new finds will be so different from these that they are unthinkable in this moment. This consideration is valid also for the tools, inasmuch as some new founds, so important they are, can only resolve local questions, but are not so different from those known that they replace in discussion all the lower and middle paleolithic.

There are also some paleontologists whose opposition to the presculpture is quite flexible, inas^{MUCH}~~much~~, however, they have not the prejudice with respect to discussion. Generally they don't deny flint presculptures are manufactured, but emphasize these "are alike", but "are not" intentional sculptures. They admit the total or partial flaking on the stone by human work, but thinking the manufactured as a tool, a refuse or a working residue. Therefore they think these manufactured, either anthropomorphic or zoomorphic, not casual objects of nature, but casual object worked by man. These interpretations can be right -sometimes- with regard to little anthropomorphic and zoomorphic manufactured on thin flint lamina, but certainly not when the presculptures are of remarkable think-ness, worked on every side, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic, have not cutting sides as so a tool, and are not nucleus, nor an other rest of working.

Premises for a correct analysis.

We must also remark that for correct analysis it is necessary to be able to distinguish the true from the false and partially worked. In North-Europe presculptures often are obtained from flint nodules which often have some little international retouches by man for modeling an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic shape preexisting in nature. In such a case, ~~as~~ often, it is not ~~easy~~ to decide if the few exportations are all worked by man or also by natural events. The distinction between true and false, that is an ulterior verification is obtainable also by study of typologie, that is by constatation of same types repetition, exactly as we make for tools study. The scientists of prehistoric art origin in North-Europe are convinced that also a few of retouches can contribute to definitive formation of figure. In reality, in our territories predominate the clactonian technique that is a use of working that privilege the flaking on only one side, on the contrary of South-Europe presculptures where predominate the acheulean technique with the working use generally on both sides. It follows that North-Europe presculptures partially flaked, both on nodule and on flake, must be inserted in a cultural context different

from these of South-Europe; besides, we must take care that in South-Europe there are no flint nodules with odd shape, but almost exclusively round flint stones, which have required most work. The typology of North-Europe presculptures, therefore, can not be constituted by a rigid schema of representations of similar types as for South-Europe, where the anthropomorphous subject repeats him-self, equal, but, with more elasticity practically, in North-Europe, representations on flint of animals, complete of body, with or without partial articulations, have a notable variety of shapes and expressions, that however are to consider as a type who collect various shapes and expressions, just as an elastic typologie.

While for anthropomorphous presculpture of South-Europe we can hypotize, through historic and ethnografic parallelisms, the historic god or the divinity, for North-European zoomorphous plastques we hypotize only a little, also if it could make parallelisms of the religious order with zoomorphous art of magdaleniens of upper paleolithic.

The zoomorphous presculptures on flint of North-Europe clactonian often, are made with a few of retouches, but this, when it is clarified that the retouches are intentional, must not be considered as a fault with respect to other presculptures much worked in South-Europe. I remember on this subject that in Australia people make, during periodic ceremonies, some sand "sculptures" that don't resist for longer than the feast.

Zoomorphous representations in North-Europe presculptures are about 40% (Forty per cent), while in South-Europe are about 5% (Five per cent), the others anthropomorphous prevalently, with a part of zoo-anthropomorphous combinations. These are very approximate percentages, that have not a statistic value inasmuch as they group all cultural phases that are succeeded by abbevillien through musterien, but that they permit us to establish which differences have been, and that we must, for any cultural phase, make statistics of typologie for the study of cults and rituals, that is, of motivations for which man makes presculptures.

Doubts, accusations and inquisitor question that people often address to us, are today compensated by strong crescendo of agreement and interests towards presculpture, just because it fills up the vacuum on known art origins.

There exists, however, also a continuous critique revision between the single views of us scientists of history of prehistoric art origin. To such a degree, however, it is perhaps opportune to specify which are to consider the scientist of art's origins history, and which are not.

-First) There are not those who use not a scientific research's method, who detect the object on key of actual artistic speculation, who practically make fiction, also if, during their researches, they can collect sporadic finds that are authentic presculptures.

-Second) There are those, instead, who use methods of scientific research, hence with a knowledge of geology, stonygraphy, palaeontology, extended to notions of history of the art and religions, and who therefore can develop an interdisciplinary research.

-Third) There are, at last, some amateur researchers who, collecting in surface layers or old alluvial both presculptures and tools, yet have not the necessary preparation and frequently they collect true objects and false objects between the false most showy there are those smaller than a cherry; those who clearly are little tools, whose retouches of edge or splitting from rolling make little profiles appear, those on flint, with patination of various colours, due to different splitting in the course of the centuries, where, in the form-colour combination, people want to see some figures.

The coordination work explained in Europe by R.C.C. (Researchers Co-Ordination Center Upper Pre-Paleolithic Art) has put in evidence the existent difficulties for signaling these mistakes and hence continue for a codification work as already done for the tools.

Indeed, a lot of these people collected from long ago & separately, not only physical, but also ideologically, inasmuch as they have no debate with others. For example, the little false ones, smaller than a cherry, presculptures were justified as "miniatures", and was not valuable to our logical explication to change the opinion of whom had collected it. While examining collection of these persons we have found a lot of interesting presculptures truly authentic inasmuch as worked on all sides, but also here, at least for a portion of these, our interpretations were different, inasmuch as, for us, they are palaeanthropous heads, while, for

them, zoomorphous subjects their idealization, not inserted in a correct scientific research, addressed them to research determined types to the detriment of others.

For example, the presculptures of Homo sapiens sapiens heads with the chin and forehead were privileged, compared with those of Homo sapiens neanderthalensis without chin or forehead inasmuch as they did not think at all; and when they found good presculptures representing Homo sapiens neanderthalensis, they interpreted those differently, just like animals' heads.

An other example of correct and new interpretation : an English researcher who already had on his account a conspicuous collection of presculptures, began to find in Surrey's layers also two-headed anthropomorphous presculptures, after-wards we will send to you publications with photos of these ~~types~~ types.

The R.C.C.'s coordination work in the ambit of presculpture scientists and researchers has already made notable results, inasmuch as there is a tendency to adopt conventional signs in common, an extension of research about some types found by others, and, in spite of some resistance, a revision of these uncertain types.

As we can see, the history of art's origin research has been bristling with difficulties. These remain, but they can be overcome by correct methods of lecture that permit the right interpretation of them. This is necessary, inasmuch as the "not employed on the work", in front of a presculpture, can see in it only a simple stone, exactly as it happens for many types of tools.

The difference between the presculpture of lower and middle paleolithic and the sculpture of upper paleolithic have given prominence, together with the affinities.

The sculpture of the first millennia of upper paleolithic (aurignacien, perigordien and gravettien) include subjects that are nearly all anthropomorphous and of little size. Their work is already similar to the sculpture of historic times, inasmuch as the figure opposite side is equal to the other, but these good levels of working are rejoined with invention of new techniques and adoption of new materials : engraving on bone and modelling on clay, inasmuch as the stone, also soft, is rare.

The anthropomorphous sculpture of the first phases of the upper paleolithic had in common with the preceding phases the absence of ears representation, the absence of a base for standing in vertical position, the representation of some types of hairstyles and hats, the representation of ~~the~~ human head without neck.

In upper paleolithic flint is abandoned as matter for sculpting. In lower and middle paleolithic, for sculpting, flint and other stone types were employed. In Liguria, for example where there is no flint, presculptures are all in other stone types.

We take up better the work technique on flint presculptures, insamuch as every removal of flakes is visible, even if the manufactured has undergone an easy alluvial rolling.

The anthropomorphous representation, in lower paleolithic is generally semifrontal, in middle paleolithic (from 80.000 to 35.000 years ago) is semifrontal and rarely frontal, with a tendence to all round, but where the other side of the face is a little different from these these opposite. There are present also some profile types that represent a half-face, that practically are high relief sculptures on stone. The flint presculpture "lecture" must take care of the flakes, that, being on hard matter, have flakes that, sometimes are smaller, and sometimes bigger than the necessary. For a correct "lecture" it is necessary also a certain rotation of the object in the hand, for a full comprehension of representation; this rule, however, is applied also to the examination of some tool types. It's necessary also to keep in consideration the sculpture types of figures that we can consider as "figure-type". Pratically, when we "read" a tool, we must interpret the function that it had or can have (cutting, boring, etc); we must make it also with presculptures under logic considerations and without fantasies. In effect, when the presculpture is true, we can detect and demonstrate every part that composes it. A nose, a jaw, a mouth, when they are worked in a proportioned whole that forms a face or a head, can be explained exactly, as we can explain the cutting or scraping sides of a tool. There are some cases, in that issues the doubt, insamuchas, in a diligent "lecture", not all necessary characteristics emerge. That happens also for tools. There are, in effect, typical tools for every cultural phase,

and other atypic, that can be or cannot be. As for the presculptures, therefore, it is possible to say that some are more cared in working than others we can identify false ones with a diligent lecture based on reasoning.

Presculpture datation happens by association of finding with tools, the typology of which is by now inserted in a certain chronologie. Therefore, the datations of which we dispose, are based on cultural attribution: abbevilliens, clactoniens, acheuleens, mousteriens.

There are some types that repeat themselves in time, ^{Why?} these can have a certain datation only if found in a datable archaeological layer.

For tools, there are cultural divisions much more exact, insamuch as the great quantity found can permit it. Let's think that the regretted Professor Bordes catalogued 12 (twelve) different cultural traditions of the mousterian.

Mousterian sculpture found through systematic excavations, in the cave of Byze (Narbonne, France) by Hélène Philippe in 1939 (nineteen thirty-nine), we cannot know which mousterian cultural tradition belongs to, insamuch as insamuch as in that time there are not again these subdivisions.

Sculpture and presculpture insamuch as instruments of cults and rites, must not necessarily be researched in residence places, so must not surprise if in a lot of excavations they are not found. We remember on this subject that magdalenian cave zoomorphous drawings were not in residence places, and that the rocky engravings not in caves of Mount Bego and of Valley Camonica belonging more or less to the bronze age also they, were not in residential place, and moreover in all the surrounding areas, where traces of habitation have been found, there was no traces of engraving, not even on small stones. This shows that "sacred places" didn't co-incide with residential places.

A consideration of a cave as a typical place for sacred rites is right only during some cultural phases and in the places where the caves existed, but I remember that most of the territories that have given placements traces of lower and middle paleolithic are without caves. Alluvial layers downstream hilly or mountain places assemble in confusion tools and presculptures carried from surrounding and overlooking places

waters, but in flat places it is possible to find the residence place with tools, bones, fireplaces, etc, without presculptures, and instead to find presculptures assembled at remarkable distance, in a place that can be of cult.

One of accusations that often are moved by presculpture opposers is that it is found with too much frequency. On this subject I remember that we can find hundred and thousands of pieces against only one presculpture. I remember also that the art was never too frequent. For example, in Val Camonica (North Italy) there were counted 170.000 (a hundred and seventy thousand) rocky engravings on open rocks. They have been dated from 8.000 (eight thousand) a.d. to Roman epoch. It is a striking number, but with the very modest average of twenty one engravings every year. Now, in consideration that lower and middle paleolithic people belong to cultural phases from five to thirty times chronologically longer, we should find more presculptures than we have found, even if the paleolithic population was numerically lower than that protohistorical of Val Camonica.

About cults and rites connected with prehistorical and protohistorical art there are more hypothesis than logical deductions. As for looking at again the lower and middle paleolithic presculpture, it is opportune to make two preliminary observations. First : in lower paleolithic, man, as people know, conserved only the skull of defunct relative, and his art dimension is in the head representation. When Homo sapiens neanderthalensis began to bury the dead in sleeping position, then the first representation of head with body began. Second observation : presculptures more clearly interpretable as associated with religion are those that represent two heads joined by the back of the head looking in opposite directions. These, in effect, are an invention absent in tangible reality, and they have a verification with double-faced anthropomorphous and zoomorphous sculptures of proto-history, history and ethnography of all the world.

Art and humanity evolution.

It's a mistake to think that the art evolution and the best part of humanity pass through magdalenian civilization of upper paleolithic,

also if this has distinguished himself by an excellent cave zoomorphous drawing. Magdalenians were surestimated also because the caves where they left drawings are placed in the home land of prehistory scientists, that ~~that~~ is France just for this, magdalenian art eclipsed our knowlege about other cultural provinces of the same epoch. What we are going to assert, we can see by live primitives which are still surviving or who culturally died out during these last centuries owing to contact with our industrial civilization.

The primitives who have had a scarce evolution from prehistory to our time had all an artistic activity founded on drawing or sculpture. Who had only sculpture was a hunter or a breeder; who had only stone and wood sculpture generally was cultivator, insamuch as who had bone sculpture was a breeder or a hunter. Drawing and sculpture together are really of higher societies. Magdalenian cultural tradition we do not meet in town makers that is in these who have started the modern world, insamuch as they have a production of sculpture often gross, but anthropomorphous sculpture, who represented perhaps god.

Without doubt, in post-magdalenian tradition (South Italy, Spain, North Africa) we found engravings or drawings with complex scenes: dances, hunt, plucking, war, daily life scenes which are important, but they would be lost, if town makers in Middle-East and Egypt would not have adopted technically for the decoration of walls of their buidings and temples.

From Lower Paleolithic to historical epochs the stone working has had a large developmental scale. It didn't have it for Magdalenians, who drew, engraved bone and modelled clay: there are not stone sculptures that we can to attribute with certainty to Magdalenians.

Menhirs, dolmens and squared stone to make houses and towns, there's no doubt that they originate from those peoples who produced presculptures, in Lower Paleolithic and sculptures in Middle Paleolithic.

This is an important aspect for a verification of the cultural evolution of the presculpture.

At El-Juyo (Santander, Spain), there was found the sculpture of a double-faced God from 14.000 years ago (a half human head joint with a half feline head), and this is in parallel with the Magdalenian civilization. Some cultural groups with sculpture can be found in all the world in Mesolithic,

Epipaleolithic, Neolithic and Metal Age, and this when other groups, in other provinces, continued the painting or engraving of Magdalenian tradition. As an evolution of tools exists, and production means with different cultural traditions from Prehistory to our days, so it exists an art evolution which has different traditions, that involve different means of thinking and hence of living.

The Magdalenian merit has been that to have invented drawing, inasmuch as the colour, at least the principal colours, have already been produced by Mousterians. Magdalenians arrived in West Europe, coming from the East, perhaps from Siberia. Their religious world performs itself completely with animal representations, of exquisite workmanship, while human representation are very rare and of very bad manufacture. Magdalenian art and religion origin is unknown to us, but perhaps we can find an origin in evolving Clactonian. This is the only hypothesis that we can make in this moment.

Some zoomorphous presculptures full with body and partial articulations attributable to the evolved Clactonian have been found by Professor W. Matthes in North Germany.

Clactonian is a cultural phase that we can find frequently in North Europe and in almost all Asia. This is typical of the flake working, that generally is monofacial, and, as we have already said, on nodules, with few retouchings.

Professor Matthes, who was Director of Prehistory Institute of the University of Hamburg, West Germany, published presculptures found by himself and by other researchers of the zone, that was in association with tools of the Clactonian culture, like the presculptures, in moraine layers.

In North Europe, however, there was also a diffusion of Acheuléen, also if through shortest periods also the Clactonian, particularly in Denmark. Acheuléens presculptures of exquisite workmanship, obtained from block, not from flake, with double-faced anthropomorphous subjects, have been found in Denmark and are very similar to others founded in Italy.

The photos, that we enclose, concern presculptures of Abbevillian, Acheuléen, Clactonian and Mousterian.

At the origin of the origins.

We want to specify, however, that for us the presculpture origin is not at the Abbevillian, but in the Pebble Culture, that is in parallel lines with fabrication of the first tools. We did not want to present the presculptures of the Pebble Culture, inasmuch as those in our possession come from layers of South Europe, where we can find presculptures and tools strongly smoothed by alluvial rolling.

African Pebble Culture has been dated until 3,500,000 years, while for South Europe there must exist a more recent chronology, but not inferior to a million years.

Researches on presculpture of the Pebble Culture must be made in Africa, inasmuch as lithic manufactureds are in good conditions, and not damaged by rolling.

On contemporary origin of presculptures and tools there is a theory (P. Gaietto, 1968, 1974, 1982) that relates, following the evolutionist model, presculpture in parallel lines with tools. In effect, also the most ancient tools have been identified, inasmuch as they were of the origin of those more perfected than successive periods. Evolution process is the same for the tools as for the presculptures and, we point out that by every component that constitutes the manufactured, between which one is just working technique.

Authoritative Palaeontologists have hypothesized that man, before tools fabrication, employed rock cutting fragments, that he found in nature; these hypothesis can be extended, in the field of art, to casual figures to which after-wards followed the fabrication, as for the tools. In effect, we can not concede fantasy and intelligence with regard to the tools, Right! and to deny it from the art origin.

It's augurable that interdisciplinary researches would be to state between the various branches of prehistorical sciences, in order to put full light on this important aspect of human mind activity, and today this seems possible, inasmuch as the presculpture, if we believe in it, must definitively erase the image of simian man, that people still attribute to the most ancestral humanity.

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