

THE ANIMAL AS
A SACRED SYMBOL

I N

P R E H I S T O R I C A R T

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN FINE ARTS

of

R H O D E S U N I V E R S I T Y

by

JOHANNES LODEWICUS VAN HEERDEN
NOVEMBER, 1973.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

- (1) MAPS:
 - (A) Main areas where prehistoric sites are found.
 - (b) The Cantabrian - Pyrenées region.
 - (c) Les Eyzies region (Dordogne).

 - (2) "The Sorcerer" from Les Trois Frères.

 - (3) Part of the ceiling of Les Trois Frères, depicting a dancing hybrid figure.

 - (4) An illustration from Claud Lèvi-Strauss' "The Primitive Mind", showing human beings with deliberately cultivated animal attributes.

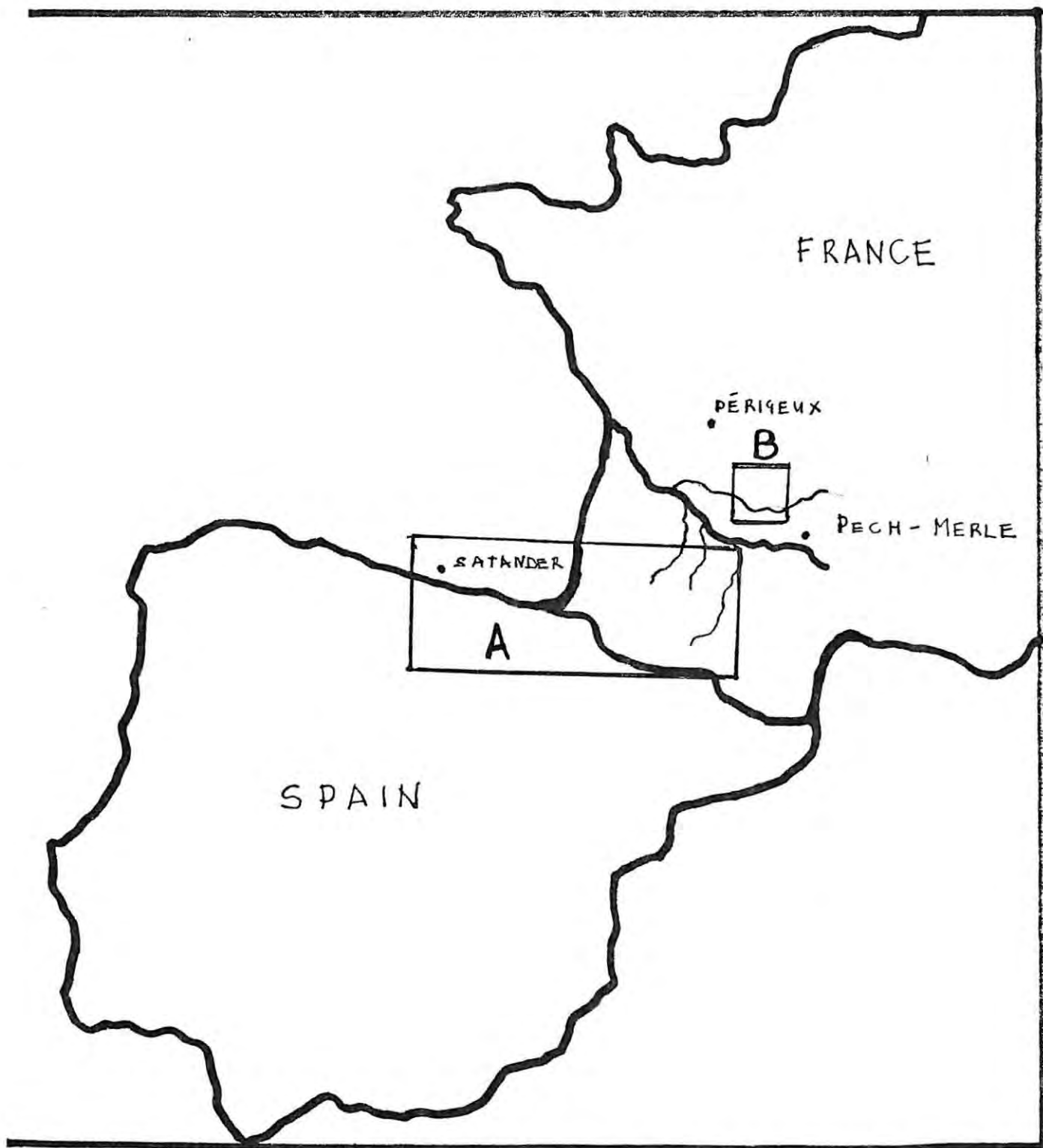
 - (5) Two different depictions of "The Well Scene" from Lascaux.

 - (6) Three charts from Leroi Gourhan's "The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe";
 - (a) The development of the female sign.
 - (b) The development of the male sign.
 - (c) Paired signs.

 - (7) The metamorphoses from animal to human, as seen at Pech Merle.

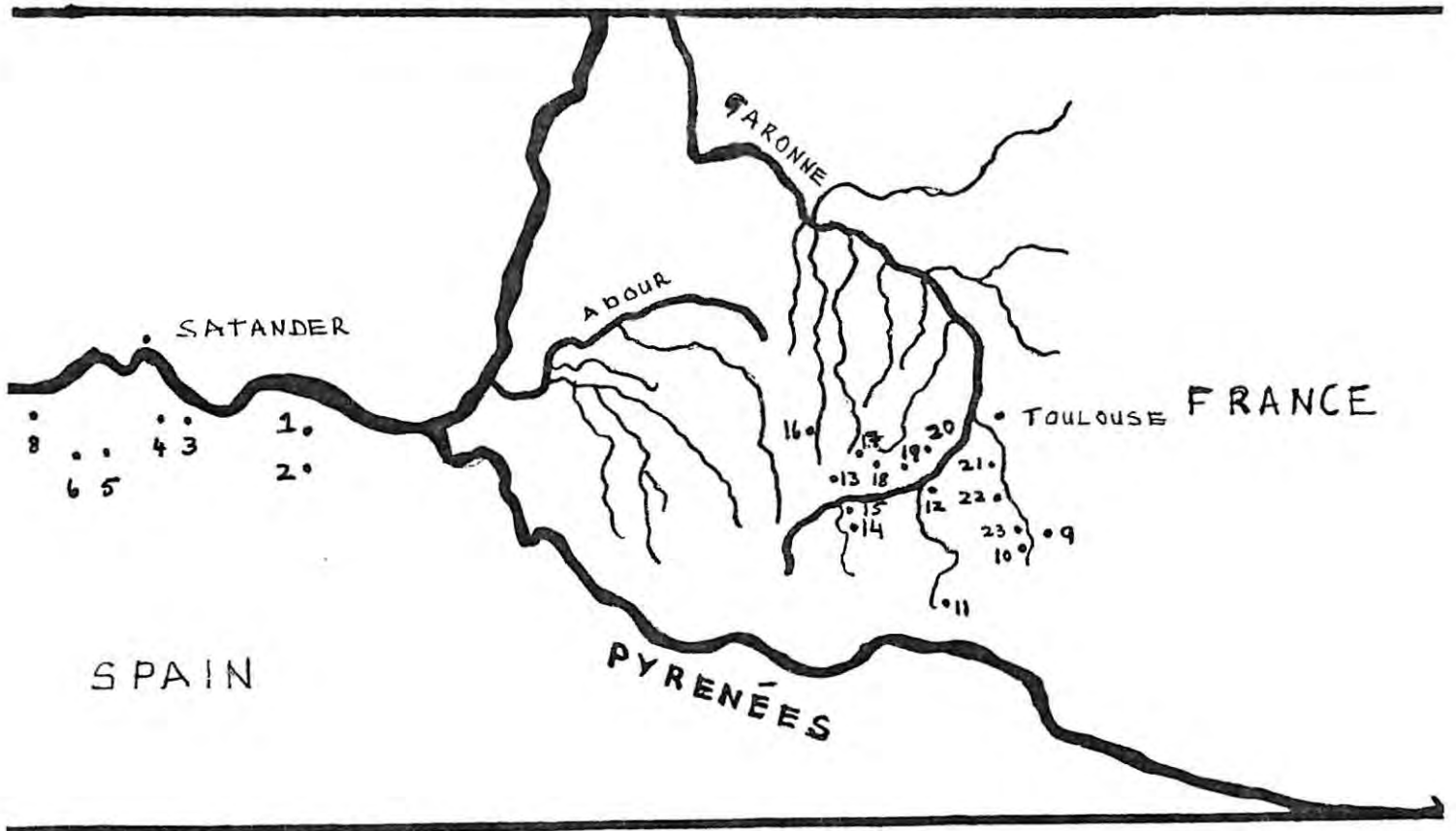
 - (8) Two examples of Eskimo carving.
-

1a.



MAP SHOWING THE MOST IMPORTANT CENTRES WHERE PREHISTORIC ART IS TO BE FOUND.

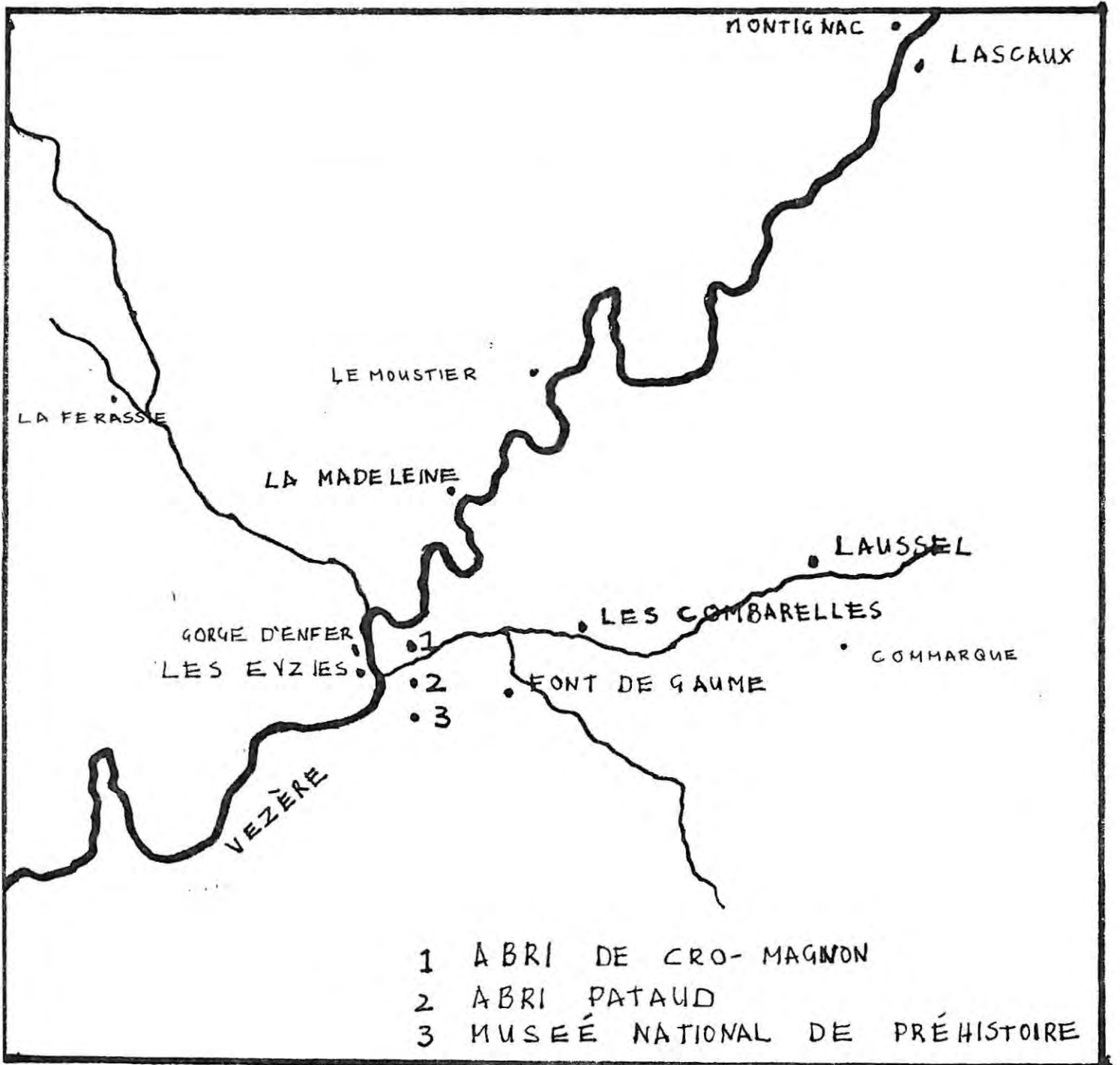
- A. THE CANTABRIAN & PYRENÉES.
- B. LES EYZIES



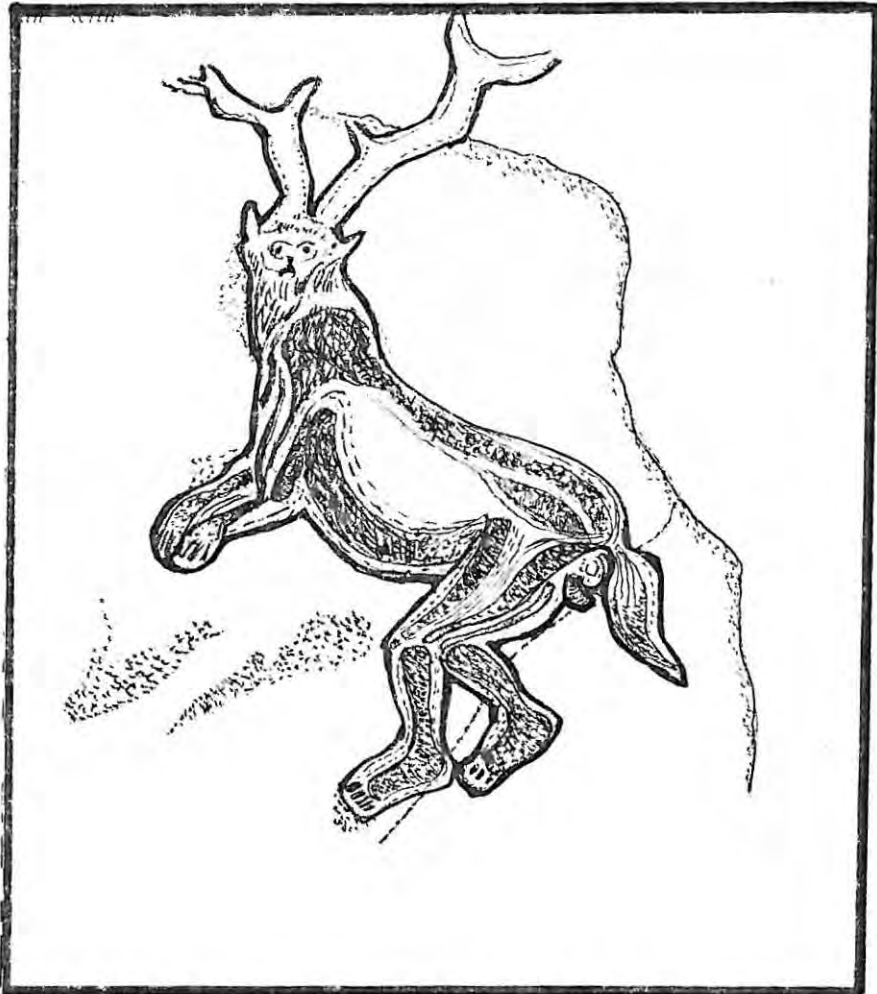
THE CANTABRIAN & PYRENÉES AREA

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. EL VALLE | 13. MONTESPAN |
| 2. CONVALANAS | 14. GARGAS |
| 3. EL PENDO | 15. GOURDAN |
| 4. SANTIAN | 16. LORTHET |
| 5. (LA PASIEGA
(EL CASTILLO) | 17. RIDEAUX |
| 6. HORNAS DE LA PENA | 18. LESPUGNE |
| 7. LA CLOTHILDE | 19. MARSOULAS |
| 8. ALTAMIRA | 20. LE TUC D'AUDOUBERT |
| 9. TARASCON-SUR-ARIÈGE | 21. MAS D'AZIL |
| 10. NIAUY | 22. LE PORTEL |
| 11. MASSAT | 23. BÉ DEIL HAC |
| 12. LES TROIS FRÈRES | |

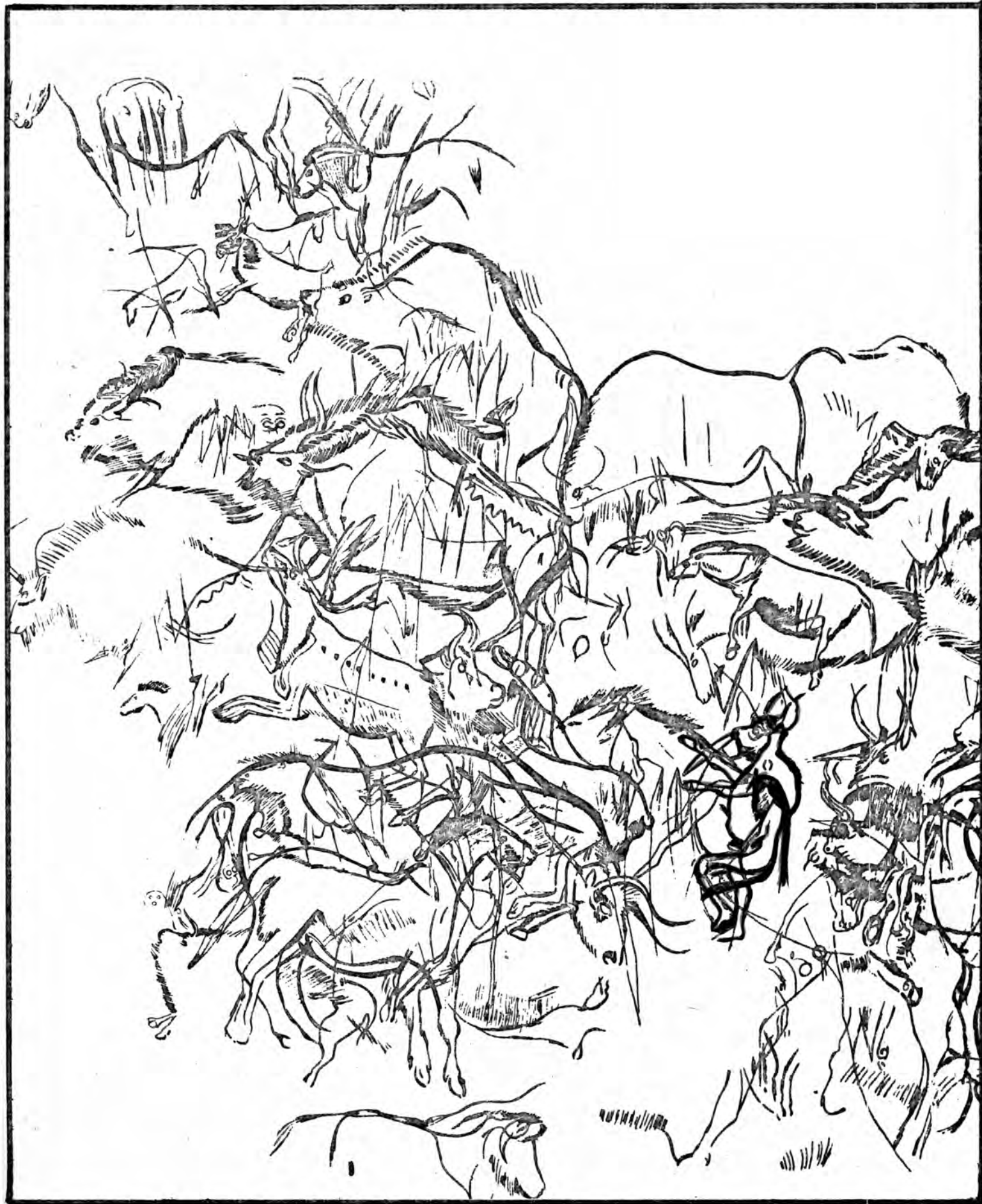
1c



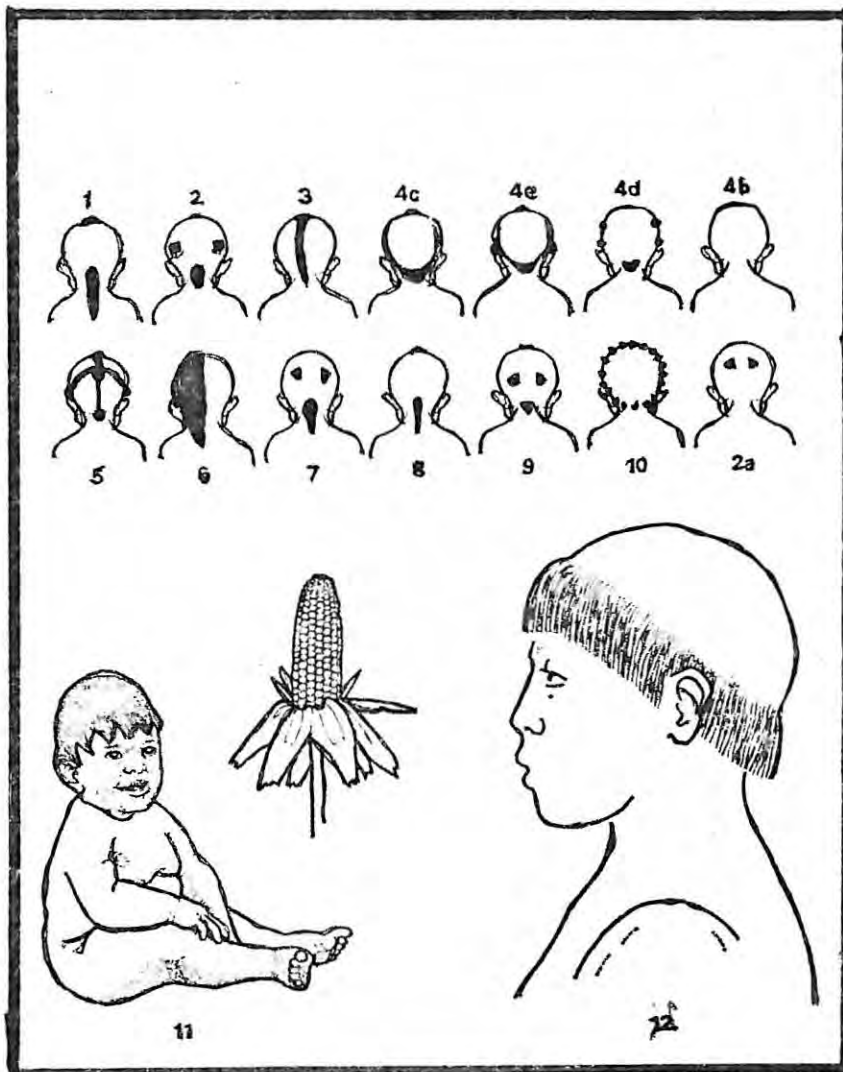
LES EYZIES (DORDOGNE)



THE SORCERER FROM LES TROIS FRÈRES (AFTER ABBÉ BREUIL)



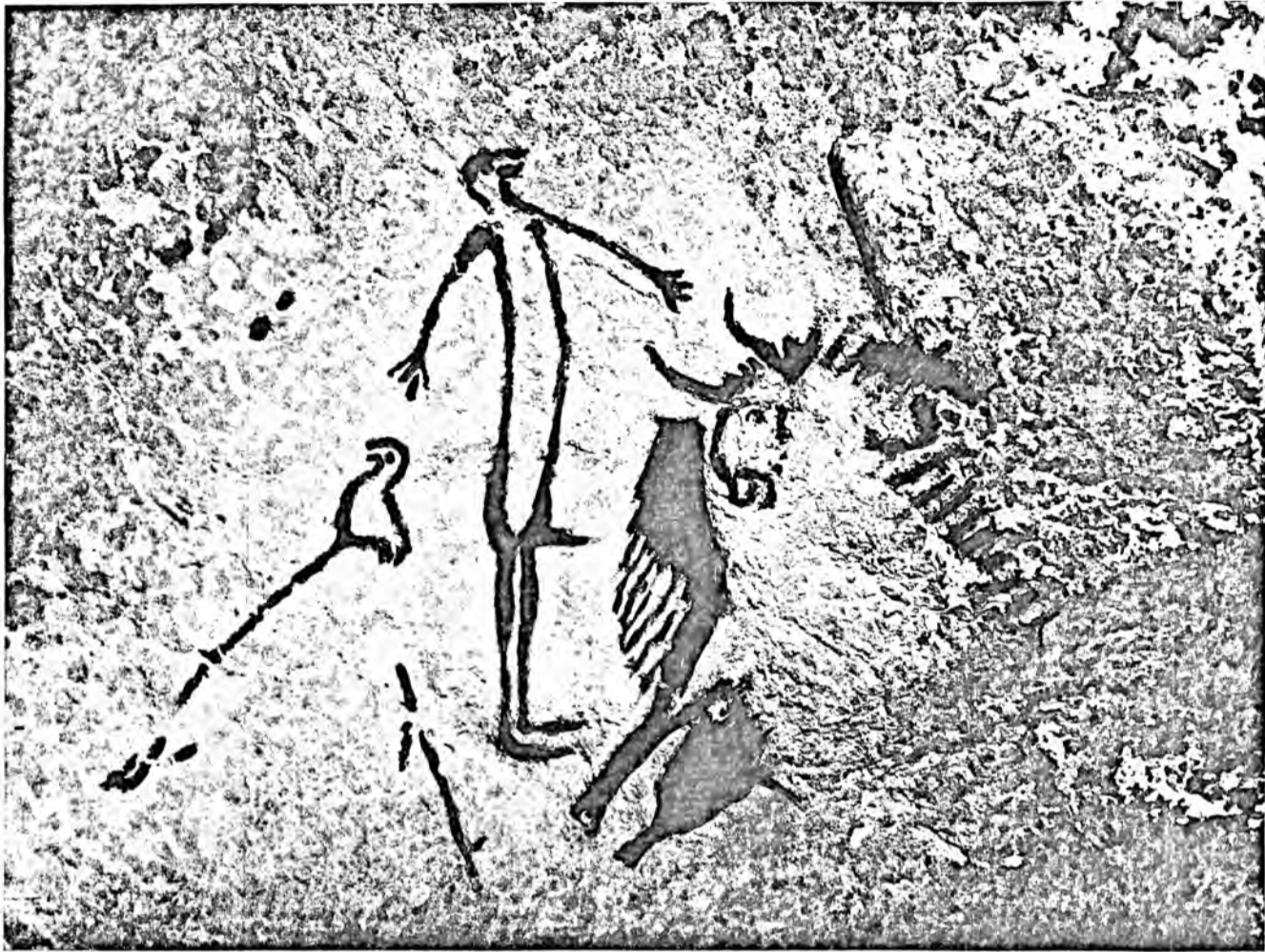
FROM LES TROIS FRÈRES (AFTER ABBÉ BREUIL)
A HUNTER DISGUISED AS ANIMAL CAN BE CLEARLY SEEN.



CUT OF OSAGE AND OMAHA BOYS' HAIR ACCORDING TO CLAN
(AFTER LÉVI-STRAUSS)

1. HEAD AND TAIL OF ELK
2. HEAD, TAIL AND HORNS OF BUFFALO 2(a) HORNS OF BUFFALO
3. LINE OF BUFFALO'S BACK
- 4.(b) HEAD OF BEAR 4(c) HEAD, TAIL & BODY OF SMALL BIRD
- 4.(d) SHELL OF TURTLE, WITH HEAD, FEET AND TAIL
- 4.(e) HEAD, WINGS & TAIL OF EAGLE
5. FOUR POINTS OF COMPASS 6. SHAGGY SIDE OF WOLF
7. HORNS AND TAIL OF THE BUFFALO 8. HEAD & TAIL OF DEER
9. HEAD, TAIL AND GROWING KNOBS OF THE GROWING HORN OF THE BUFFALO CALF.
10. REPTILE TEETH 11. PETALS OF THE CONE FLOWER
12. ROCK WITH ALGAE FLOATING AROUND

LASCAUX: THE WELL SCENE



A

GIEDION'S
VERSION



B

AS
USUALLY
DEPICTED

ABSTRACTION OF FEMALE SIGN				
	TYPE	NORMAL	SIMPLIFIED	DERIVED
A	1			
	2			
	3			
B	1			
	2			
	3			
C				
D	1			
	2			
E				

A and B. TRIANGULAR SIGNS

In A 3 and B 3 we see "wound" or "arrow" signs. The forms derived from B correspond to the variants of tectiforms in the Les Eyzies region. Other forms are found among the derivations in E.

This chart shows typological characteristics only. Obviously, in the case of the derived forms (especially for E), there must have occurred borrowings and cross-cultural influences both between epochs and regions.

C. OVAL SIGNS

D. QUADRANGULAR SIGNS

1. PÉRIGORD-PYRENEES GROUP


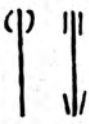

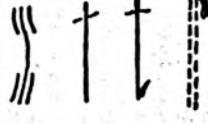







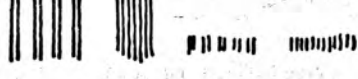



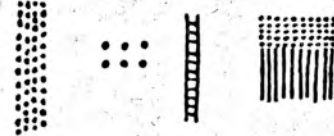
2. CANTABRIAN GROUP

E. CLAVIFORM SIGNS

(AFTER LEROI-GOURHAN)

66

MALE SIGNS

	TYPE	NORMAL	SIMPLIFIED	DERIVED
A				
B				
C				
D				

A. HOOKED OR "SPEAR-THROWER" SIGNS.

B. BARBED SIGNS.

C. SINGLE AND DOUBLE STROKES.

D. DOTS AND ROW OF DOTS, SINGLE AND DOUBLE.

PAIRED SIGNS

A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						
G						
H						

A. From left to right: LA FILETA, FONT-DE-GAUME, EBBOU, LA FER-RASSIE, PECH MERLE, LA MEAZA.

B. NIAUX, LE GABILLOU, LASCAUX (Chamber of Felines), LASCAUX (Nave), LAS MONEDAS, LA CROZE.

C. FONT-DE-GAUME, EL CASTILLO, LA MOUTHE, BERNIFAL, OULEN.

D. USSAT, ARCY-SUR-CURE, SALLELES-CABARDÈS, SAINT-MARCEL, LABASTIDE, LE PORTEL.

E. LES COMBARELLES (group 69), LES COMBARELLES (group 105), USSAT, BERNIFAL, OULEN, OULEN.

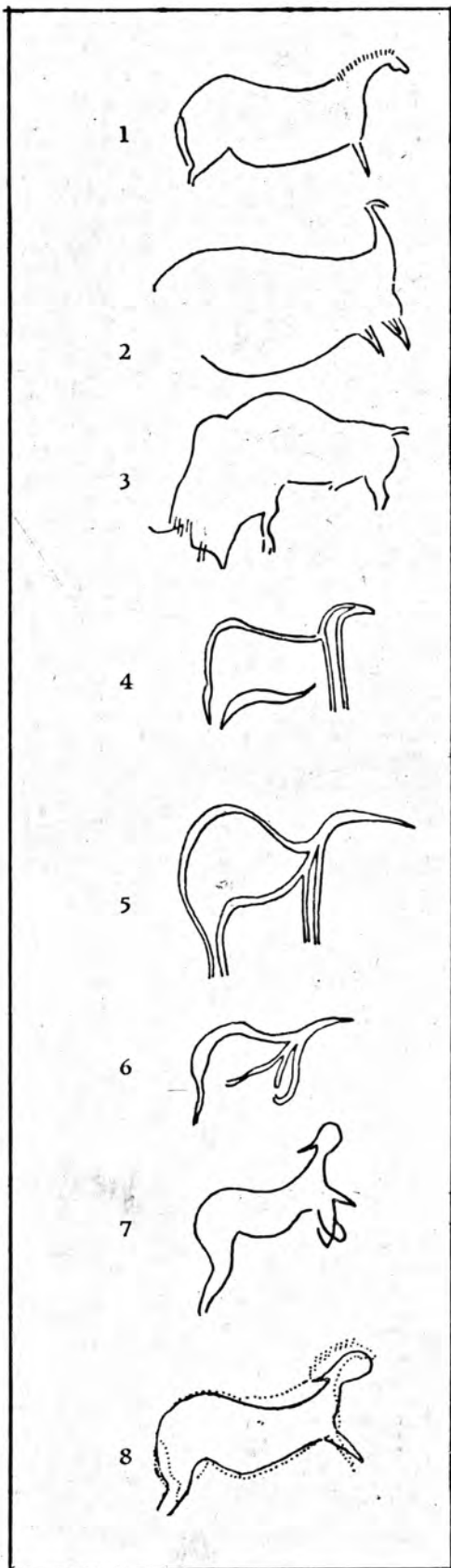
F. LASCAUX (Chamber of Felines), LASCAUX (same), LASCAUX (Axial Gallery), LASCAUX (same), LE GABILLOU, LE GABILLOU.

G. LE PORTEL (Gallery 2), ALTAMIRA (terminal gallery), EL CASTILLO, LAS CHIMENEAS, ALTAMIRA, MARSOULAS (half-rounded rods).

H. ALTAMIRA (Painted Ceiling), LAS MONEDAS, NIAUX, LA CULLULVERA, NIAUX, NIAUX.

PECH MERLE

THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT
FROM ANIMAL TO FEMALE
(AFTER LEROI-GOURHAN)



1. Horse in "lioness" panel at Le Combel.

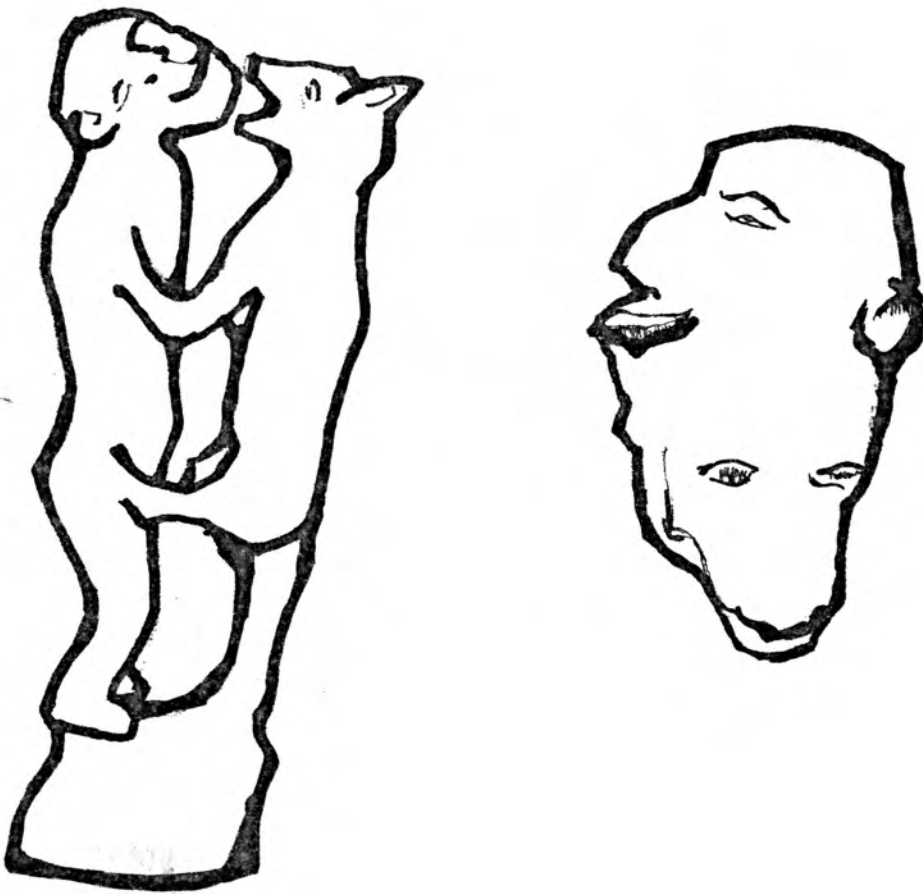
2. One of the "monsters" at Le Combel. The construction of figures 1 and 2 reflects considerable reduction in the proportions of the head.

3. Bison in the Large Chamber; the principal masses are transferred to the fore-quarters, producing a reversal of outline.

4, 5, 6. Stylized figures in the "women/bison" recess. It is hard to tell whether this subject was inspired by woman or bison. Figure 4 is close to a bison; figure 5 seems closer to representations of women. The outline of a human female is clearly suggested in figure 6, where a pendulous breast is formed by the line that turns back on itself.

7. Female figure on "the ceiling with scrawls."

8. Drawing obtained by superimposing woman 7 and horse 1.



TWO CARVINGS FROM THE AVALIK (ESKIMO) SHOWING CLEARLY HOW THE WOLF
IS CONSIDERED AS MAN'S EQUAL.

"Records do not tell us clearly at what precise moment of man's history the representation of the human face first appeared. We know, we think we know, from the traces left on stone and slate that the earliest artists of the human race first set down the forms of the animals they hunted, and that later the hunter himself appeared. But how he came to stand apart, as primitive societies developed, how the quarry vanished so that the body of the hunter, and then his face became the subject of essential interest to art, is something that, upto the present day, specialists have not been able, or willing to tell us precisely"

Aragon.

"There was a time when animals resembled men and acted like them and men changed into animals. They changed into other things too, like trees or even stones: this is the dream time when everything was possible"

Kupka.

THE ANIMAL AS A SACRED SYMBOL IN PREHISTORIC
ART.

Why the animal as our point of departure in this discussion of prehistoric art, and why as a sacred symbol? Prehistoric art stretched over an immensely long period, from the first evidence of the activities of Neanderthal tribes during the Mousterian period, \pm 35,000 B.C., to the end of the Magdalenian, \pm 8,000 B.C. We are dealing with a time-span of nearly 30,000 years, during which a strictly Zoomorphic attitude existed. The animal was the dominant feature. It was constantly used in the decoration of cave walls, on engraved stone slabs, and on all kinds of utilitarian objects.

Whenever human beings appeared in conjunction with the animal they seemed to be selfconscious about their presence and were usually totally dominated. This is clearly depicted on a decorated reindeer antler from Langerie - Basse. On it appears the hindlegs and phallus of a bison, with a pregnant woman lying at its feet, her hands uplifted in a praying or adoring attitude. Apart from the dominance of the animal, it also seems to be an object of veneration. There is also a symbolical significance involved. The bison constantly appears in prehistory as a female symbol, just as the horse represents the male.

This becomes apparent as we compare the signs which continually appear in caves, always in conjunction with animals. Whereas all kinds of meanings had been attributed to these signs, e.g. the tectiforms being hunting snares, depictions of prehistoric dwellings, etc., Leroi-Gourhan came to the conclusion "that signs were one of the keys to chronology in the decorated caves" (Leroi-Gourhan, "the Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe", page 15). Illustrations 6a, b and c show the comparative charts compiled by him. These are the result of intensive study in 66 different caves, and the use of a punch card system to sort out information and arrive at a chronology. In following these charts, we see the vulva developing from a realistic representation on early Aurignacian slabs, through ovals, quadrangulars, tectiforms, to arrive at the highly complex clawiforms on the ceiling of Altamira. Here the large bison is standing with its hindquarters on a red clawiform, and another large one is in front of him. This pairing of bison and female signs hardly seem incidental, as it is frequently repeated. The female signs are usually paired with male signs, which appear in the beginning as realistic phalusses, and as the chart indicates, also becomes abstract symbols. An interesting example is the two engraved staffs from the Magdalenian period. These engraved staffs show great similarities with cave art, and as they are usually found in datable strata, they serve as an important link in the dating of caves. On the first staff, from La Madeleine, is depicted a bear's head. Its tongue is outstretched towards a composite phallus/vulva,

depicted realistically. Behind the bear's head is a barbed sign. The second staff, from Massat, is vulva-shaped, with a split at the front. It is also decorated with a bear's head, its tongue again outstretched, but this time the phallus is a barbed shape, and the vulva an oval.

On the chart we can see this barbed sign under "B", being derived from a spear or harpoon-like sign. There is a profusion of these spear-like signs in the axial gallery of Lascaux. A red cow seems to be pierced by these signs in her neck, back, and on her thigh. Next to her is a pony, who is surrounded by a row of dots. "D" on our chart indicates these dots as the final phase of abstraction which the signs representing the phallus, achieve. Thus, if we base our interpretation upon Leroi-Gourhan's findings, a symbolical pattern emerges, providing a certain "meaning" to prehistoric art. The red cow at Lascaux would be a symbol of the female, balanced by the horse and other derived male signs.

Anette Laming Emperaire also studied the appearance of signs intensively, and found that the female sign was sometimes replaced by a wound. At Pech Merle there is for example a wounded lioness which is surrounded by horses and a profusion of other male signs. As the general pattern right throughout cave art seems to follow a system of pairing male and female signs, it is hardly likely in this case that the artist would have forgotten to include a female sign. In the "Well Scene" at Lascaux there is once again a wound surrounded by male signs. A wounded bison's entrails are drawn in concentric circles, representing a vulva. It is surrounded by an ithyphallic man, as well as several dots, spear-like signs, and lower down a horse's head.

The bear, which appears on the two previously mentioned Magdalenian staffs, might also fulfil a special function. At Drähenloch in the Swiss Alps a Mousterian burial site containing the remains of bears was discovered. Specially made chambers ran along the wall, leaving in between them a 15 inch wide space. These spaces were filled with the remains of cave bears, mainly skulls and leg bones. At the entrance of one of the chambers bone heaps were accumulated in stone chests with lids, and at the back of the chamber were 3 bears' skulls, with thighbones pushed through their cheeks. Can we assume that the bear cult which was popular in Northern countries derived from these prehistoric examples?

The epic myth of Finland, the Kevala, is of ancient origin. It deals with the creation of the world in which the bear features as "the golden friend of fen and forest"..... and after the bear had been hunted, "its bones were put in a tomb with skis, a knife and other objects. The slain animal was treated as a friend and asked to tell other bears about all the honours men had paid to it". (Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology page 317). The slaughtered

bear serves here as a mediator between the living and the dead, and is elevated to the level of sacred.

A prehistoric example of the existence of a bear cult comes from the cave of Montespan. Deep within the cave, was found the clay image of a bear. It is significant that the more dangerous animals, like bears, lions, rhinoceros, etc., were usually placed deep within the cave. Among many primitive tribes dangerous animals are regarded as possessing supernatural powers. The Gé Indians of South America ascribe the origin of fire to a tiger. This particular tiger was not only married to a human being, but also knew the secret of fire. One particular day the tiger captured a man who was stranded on a high cliff, took him home, and taught him how to make a fire and roast meat. (Ref. "Totemism" by Lévi-Strauss)

The bear statue at Montespan was punched with deliberately fabricated holes. In between its paws was found a bear's skull which might have been attached to its body by means of a stick. It seems safe to presume that this statue was completed with a real bear's head, and perhaps covered with the skin of a freshly slaughtered bear.

Sympathetic magic might have been practised on it by beating it with sticks, thus explaining the holes punched all over it. The bear could hardly have been a popular part of prehistoric man's diet, as reindeer were in abundance and their remains are the ones most frequently found at cave entrances and habitations.

The assumption that this bear was covered with a skin, has parallels in later times. Among the Egyptians, Assyrians and Greeks, the skin of a victim was worn during special ceremonies, and it stood as a symbol of the reincarnation of a divinity.

The Esquimaux wear a sealskin, and a seal mask in their ritual dances evoking the seal.

A further prehistoric example of the deliberate punching of images with holes can be seen on the ceiling of Les Trois Frères. A bear is covered with these holes, and seems to be vomiting blood. Sympathetic magic usually relies on the principle that an operation performed on an image of a being, might produce the same effect on the being itself. It is frequently found among primitive tribes. Parallels between symbology used by prehistoric man, and that of primitive races, does not necessarily imply a similarity, but amongst primitive races there was a great respect for traditions which continued unhindered for thousands of years, and some of them could have been linked with prehistory. The Aztecs used to make a sacrificial slaughter of their war god Huitzilopochtli in the form

of/.....

of a paste image which was shot through with arrows and then eaten. This occurred with the start of the winter solstice thus expressing the wish for rebirth. (Ref. "Indian Art of the U.S." by F. Douglas and R.D'Harcourt.) The Pygmies performed a special rite to assure the resurrection of slaughtered animals. At dawn they would draw an image of the desired animal on the ground, and cover it with blood and hair - When the sun (Creator) rose, the continuation of the species was assured. (Ref. "The many faces of Primitive Art" by D. Frasen.) Nail fetishes appear frequently amongst African tribes. Although it could have been used as destructive magic by nails being driven into an image on whom revenge was desired, it also served as a machine for controlling life forces. Nails and bits of metal were driven into the image of an animal until only the head was visible. This was accompanied by ritual dances and songs, which expressed the wish to conquer the animal.

These practises are also closely linked with the wish for reincarnation. The animal is not only hunted, but there is simultaneously a desire for his resurrection. Only through the continuation of the species will enough food be available. The Huron Indians of New France believe that a herd of animals must present themselves before they can be hunted, and consequently they impose lengthy fasts to enable them to meet these animal spirits. The Esquimaux make their weapons as beautiful as possible, so as not to insult the hunted animal. (Ref. "Indian Art of the U.S." by F. D Douglas and R.D'Harcourt.) Life, death, and reincarnation was closely linked and formed a cycle. Apart from the fact that our examples of sympathetic magic might express the wish to kill the animal, they are not only destructive in meaning. Hunting was the means of living amongst prehistoric and primitive people. It was consequently natural that man should practise fertility magic to ensure that game would be plentiful. The effigies of animals were thus used to evoke fertility.

Meuserian burial sites are our earliest evidence of a cult of the dead. A symbolic link between man and animal seem to have existed even at this time. At Dolmú Vestonice a woman was found, buried in an east-west position. She was surrounded by red ochre (red being the symbol of life, the colour of blood) and was accompanied by tools. The incised shoulderblade of an animal was placed on her breast. In her right hand she had the paw and tail of a fox, and in her left hand its teeth. There seems to be a purpose for man and animal being placed within the same grave. The presence of the fox might be symbolical and with the tools serve to comfort the dead. Some of the burial sites contain skeletons from which the marrow and brain had been removed. The Egyptians also followed this practise, and placed these sacred objects in a special jar. Since all these practises were performed for people whose earthly
life/.....

life was finished, they imply a certain form of religious belief, a cult of the dead. The dead were left with implements, fragments of bone and shell, probably all personal belongings, the brains and marrow might have served as offerings to a God. In New Guinea the dead are placed on a barge, accompanied by a plate of food, a spoon to eat with, and various other personal belongings. (Ref. "Man and his Symbols" by C.G. Jung)

Prehistoric man used red ochre in profusion at burial sites. Because it is the colour of blood, certain primitive peoples like the Australian Aborigines consider it as a symbol of life and strength.

At some Mousterian burial sites, such as Chancellade, Dordogne, skeletons were found with the legs in a folded-up position. This seems to imply that the dead were tied up in fear that they might return and torment the living, and that a belief in after-death existed. The Peruvians to this purpose, drove stakes through their dead and buried them far away from the villages. (Ref. "The Art of Ancient Peru" by F. Anton)

The superiority of the animal was profoundly assented by the numerous examples from prehistory of human forms derived from animals. Some of these possess animal attributes, like the hybrids, which were a fusion of man and animal. At Pech Merle a bison gradually becomes transformed into a creeping female. (Illustration 7) During 4 stages of metamorphoses a female profile with hanging breasts emerges. The surrounding animal figures are superbly executed, and man seems here, in the case of the creeping woman, to play a subordinate role. On an engraved pebble from La Madeleine a man with an animal-like head is depicted. The whole position of his body, with its pawlike hands, is suggestive of an animal. On the reverse side is a female in similar position, and she also has an animal's head. Prehistoric man seems to feel himself inferior to the animal, as he hardly ever appears on cave walls and decorated objects. On the occasions that he does appear, he either possesses animal attributes, is disguised as an animal or is overpowered by the far superior size and depiction of animals.

The hybrid figures from Les Trois Frères and Lascaux are both endowed with supernatural powers to enable them to probe the mysteries of the unknown. At Lascaux the hybrid is in the form of a bird-faced man. He is ithyphallic and in a state of ecstasy, his arms and fingers outstretched. According to Giedion he is not falling

over/.....

over, as usually shown in most photographs which make concessions to the onlooker; but is standing upright when seen in situ. (Illustration no. 5) He is however, not "dead" as claimed at times, the ecstatic state of his body hardly allowing for this. To the left of the man is a rhinoceros and some male dot signs. On the right is a raging bison, his belly torn open and the intestines hanging out in concentric circles. An object resembling a spear seems to be piercing the bison, and another is lying at its belly. Next to the man is a bird on a stick, which might be his spearthrower (spearthrowers were beautifully decorated with animal carvings during the Magdalenian period). Furtherdown, hardly visible, is a horse's head. There are many interpretations of this scene, some claiming that the rhinoceros had wounded the bison, and is running away, leaving the man at the mercy of the raging bison. However, this is a back cave scene, the "Well" forming the end of this section. The rhinoceros is one of the typical dangerous animals which we usually find in these back areas. This might eliminate its participation in the main composition, and leaves us with the bison and man, accompanied by the bird on a stick, spear-like objects, and a hardly visible horse's head. Giedion's version, as he claims it appears in situ, shows the bull in a nearly vertical position, and the man as standing upright. It is hardly possible for the bull to be attacking him, and the relationship might rather be a magical one, such as a Shaman in a state of ecstasy, communicating with the animal deity.

With the Shamans ecstasy was an essential state of transcending the human world and communicating with supernatural forces, and this process involved the fusion with animal spirits. (Ref. "Tracing Shamans in Siberia" by V. Diösegi) The bird on a stick might represent the abode of the Shamans spirit, or a staff with a carved head which was part of a Shaman's attire.

According to Leroi-Gourhan "wound marks are often ambiguous, hard to distinguish from highly simplified female signs no spear with barbed marks is known from this period and if we consider the variants of the "arrow" and "wound" marks, we become aware that these graphic markings can be assimilated to variant forms of the male and female signs". (Leroi-Gourhan "The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe page 173) (see illustrations 6a, b. and c.) These spear signs also appear in connection with many other animals at Lascaux. In the Axial Gallery, several of the cows seem to be pierced by these signs. At Bernifal an engraved bison has 2 signs; an oval and a spear, drawn on its thigh. In the Lascaux "Well Scene" we probably have the re-enactment of a highly symbolical rite, the participants being a bird-masked man, and a bison. They are surrounded by signs, which stand both as wounds and symbols of

fertility/.....

fertility. The Shaman is acting as a mediator, asking forgiveness of the slaughtered animal, but also imploring its continuation as a desired specie. It is unusual to find birds represented in prehistory, and thus the bird symbology in this scene might be difficult to declare. Feathers could have been used by prehistoric man to decorate his costume, but we have no evidence of this or any other perishable materials left. The bird appears frequently in the mythology of primitive peoples. Amongst the Mexicans the War God, Huitzilpochtli wore a humming bird's feathers at his heels. One myth recalls that he was originally a hummingbird who was associated with fire. (Ref. "Indian Art of the U.S." by F. Douglas and R. D'Harcourt) There is the firebird of the North American Indians, who was the creator of the earth and surmounts every totem pole. Amongst the Bororos of South America the Macaw's feathers are treasured, and the Indians believe that their souls become embodied for a while in the Macaws. (Ref. "The Raw and the Cooked" by Lévi-Strauss) The Siberian Shaman is summoned by his ancestral spirits appearing in eagle form. The Shaman then dons his costume, beats upon his drum, and flies into space to communicate with the spirits.

Another well-known prehistoric hybrid is the "Sorcerer" from the cave of Les Trois Frères (illustration no. 2). This is a figure "endowed with the highest power of magic" (Giedion, "The Eternal Present" page 500). Because he possesses these characteristics, the sorcerer dominates a vast scene of intermingled animals. He is powerful, only his feet, legs and body being human. He has the tail of a horse, a wolf's ears; an owl's eyes; a reindeer's horns, and the front paws of a bear. This seems to be a fusion of all the animal characteristics which man desires most. The hybrid figures, or magicians or Shamen, whatever one prefers to call them, seems to be man's link with the animal and the supernatural. They perform a sacred act by entering the dark cave, the womb of Mother Earth, where mysterious rites are formed in a state of high ecstasy which transcends the everyday. This state of ecstasy has its parallel in religion. Only by transcending his human limitations can man enter the sphere of the supernatural, and form a fusion which would normally not be possible. St. Francis of Assisi is known to have lived with and spoken to animals.

Prehistoric man also had a close affinity with the animal. He "gained magic possession over coveted animals by drawing their outlines. Art came into being as a direct response to man's inner sight. A creature closely linked with the forces of nature was at work here". (Giedion, "the Eternal Present", Vol. 1, page 54). But this was not a conscious endeavour on the part of prehistoric

man/.....

man, it was part of his living pattern, a rhythmic continuation of all the surrounding cosmic forces.

With the end of the Magdalenian era the animal seems to become dethroned from the superior position it had maintained for a period of nearly 30,000 years. Important social changes commence in Europe. With the advent of the economics of the new empires like Assyria and Egypt, the contact with nature becomes limited to small areas. In Egypt the seasons revolve around the Nile, and a whole life pattern evolves accordingly. Prehistoric man, in contrast, were hunters and gatherers. This made them entirely dependant upon nature and far distances were travelled in the pursuit of their needs. The large cities of the New Empires simulate a static existence. Man grows crops and stores his grain. He cultivates animals, keeps them in pastures, and has his meat available at any time.

The Assyrian winged bull that guards the entrance to King Sargon's Palace at Khorsabad, still contains hybrid features. But now the eagle's wings and the bull's eyes, horns and bodies are employed to express human strength, the power of the newly found Assyrian Empire. There is no longer any need for man to wear a mask. The animal now suffers under man's newly acquired strength, as the dying lioness on a frieze from the Palace of Assurbanipal clearly shows. The body of the lioness is penetrated by several arrows, and her taut legs are stretched out behind her. There is a great triumph in the depiction of the suffering animal, man has finally conquered it with his weapons. Let us compare this with an example from prehistory. In one of the galleries of de Combet there is a wounded lioness, surrounded by some horses and several red dots. Above the scene are some breastshaped stalactites which seem to form a natural part of the scene, breast and wound being female symbols paired by the male symbols of horse and dots. Here man functions as the opposite complementary to the female, rather than asserting his powerful dominance.

The Egyptians still had a great reverence for the animal, and this is their strongest link with prehistory. Animate and inanimate, the living and the dead, are all fused. There is a great cult of the dead in which animals play an important role. Not only were many of the Egyptian Gods identified with animals, e.g. RA (Sun God) with a beetle; Atum (God of Creation) with a lizard, etc., but the Egyptian necropolis also contained special burial sites for animals. Many of these animals, such as the cat, were embalmed and contained within bronze casts. In the forefront of Egyptian animal cults stood that of the bull. Apis, the white bull of Memphis, was ritually driven into the sown lands to make them yield. The

Persian/.....

Persian God Mithras, was often represented as a bull and this existed through to Roman times, when the Mithric cult was extremely powerful.

The Etruscans linked the origins of Rome closely to a she-wolf, who suckled the 2 sons of Mars, Romulus and Remus and saved their lives, so that they could go forth and found the city of Rome. So even in these civilizations we find the concept of associating human beings with animals. But the concept has become anthropomorphic, whereas in contrast, Prehistoric man took on animal attributes. "The animal was first regarded as being higher than man himself: The Sacred Animal; the object of greatest veneration. During the Palaeolithic era which was, above all Zoomorphic - the animal was the indisputable idol. This explains the great love and intensity of feeling emanating from animal representation" (Giedion "the Eternal Present" Vol. 1 page 5). One could add that this relationship was also maintained by those who kept their "eggshells" close to them, and whose lives were dependant upon a good relationship between man and animal. The Esquimaux had not even reached the Neolithic stage in seeing the animal as domesticated.

Carpenter refers to an Esquimaux called Ohnainewk, "and although he was sophisticated in the ways of the white man, he found the domestication of animals incomprehensible. One day, in a borrowed magazine of mine, he came upon a picture of a farmer ploughing a field with 2 horses. Such a man he said, must be exceedingly brave, particularly since the whip he held was very small" (Carpenter, Varley, Faherty, "Eskimo" page 23)

The production of decorated objects was an everyday phenomenon in prehistoric and primitive societies, being closely linked with man's immediate environment and needs. Weapons had to be made, and in order to please the soul of the victim they had to be beautiful. Magic entered the scene because man realized that procreation was necessary for the continuation of desired species. The skin and horns of the dead animal was utilized for these magic rituals, in the making of drums, masks and beautifully carved objects. The Shaman performed an act of mediation with the ancestral Gods, thus facilitating the re-entry of the dead animal into life.

The Bushman believed that all men were once animals, and that only by casting away their skins and masks could they become men, similarly animals could appear amongst them in human guise. Thus they had to make a special effort to please the ever present animal spirits. (Ref. "Bushman Folklore" by Bleek & Lyodd)

In the Avalik carvings (illustration No. 8) the Esquimaux dances with a wolf, or is represented tête a tête with it. Good relations must be kept with animals, or else evil spirits might haunt the humans, or animals could even refuse to present themselves to be hunted.

Prehistoric and primitive carvings and decorated objects embrace the ambivalent concepts of life and death, and depict a fusion of the animate and inanimate. The many examples of hybrids show that there is a strong symbolical meaning attached to these works, and that they should not be considered outside their context. In certain parts of central Africa man and woman eat separately, and if the wife wants to convey a message to her husband, she has a special lid carved. On this lid is depicted a message in symbolical form. Thus a carving which contains a definite symbolical meaning, originates (Ref. "The many faces of primitive Art" by D. Fraser). This lid, when placed in a museum, is naturally out of context and its meaning will evade us. Creativity amongst primitive peoples was and still is a normal requirement, a means of expression, of coming to terms with unknown forces, but it also serves a definite utilitarian purpose. All created objects are beautiful and there is no better available proof than the weapons of prehistoric man. These were carved from animal remains, decorated with animals, and were also used to kill. Some of these objects were made to last, such as the spearthrower, which would be intricately decorated. The spear itself would perhaps only contain schematic hatchings, as it did not last very long. This might be one explanation to the co-existence of realistic and schematic themes right throughout the Upper Palaeolithic. But never was even the most insignificant object left in an undecorated state. The creation of beautiful objects was a habit and a necessity.

Some/.....

Some broken spearheads were altered to be used as pendants. These may have served a sacred purpose, such as veneration for the dead animal.

There are many prehistoric spearthrowers carved into animal shapes, e.g. the jumping horse of Bruniquel. It shows a bundle of energy ready to fly into space at any given moment. An example from Les Trois Frères depicts 2 headless fighting ibexes. By using the part of the antler where the two lines meet, the carver was able to fit in his composition admirably. There was not sufficient space for carving heads, but separate heads might have been glued on, and at the necks the spongy tissue which had been hollowed out suggests this. The animals are beautifully decorated with fine hatchings and show Magdalenian art at its prime. Some objects, like stags' canine teeth, were extremely popular as pendants, and often copied in bone. Imitation led to creation, and at some early Mousterian burial sites we find collections of eoliths, selected for their peculiar formation, and arranged in special order. Man noticed the hatchings that his knife made upon the bones when meat was eaten, and started imitating these random marks. On an early pebble from Leugerie - Haute we clearly see this random kind of marking, the hatchings occasionally meeting to form groups, criss-cross patterns, or even vulvas. The body of a woman in a Mousterian grave from Dolni Vestonice was found covered with the incised shoulderblade of an animal. These incisions might have had a symbolical meaning, just as we today write signs on our gravestones.

In his book, "Tracing Shamans in Siberia" Dioszegi quotes the story of a Shaman who provoked the Gods because of his superior knowledge. He was summoned to heaven and his books torn up and scattered upon the earth. A sheep ate the fragments of the book and by slaughtering the sheep, the Shaman could retrieve his books which had become written on the sheep's shoulderblade. The Chinese I Ching Oracle originated when the ancient sages threw a shoulderblade onto the fire. This resulted in the formation of cracks on the bone. These cracks were interpreted and gradually organized into systematic patterns or hexagrams, which served as important guides in answering questions put to the oracle. At La Ferrassie a Mousterian grave was unearthed, in which the body was covered with a decorated slab. These decorations consisted of hollows or cupules arranged in a definite sequence. The block was deliberately placed in an inverted position, and the cupules on the inside must have had some relation to the dead. During the Neolithic Age there are many examples of hollowed-out rock surfaces, like the hole at Menetol in Britain. It was believed that a sick child, if it passed through the hole, would be healed. Frequently these hollowed-out rocks are

accompanied/.....

accompanied by monoliths, which might be a continuation of the prehistoric male/female pairing. These monoliths penetrate deep into the earth and they are usually decorated at their base, clearly pointing to a deep symbolical meaning, of a fusion between the monolith and the surrounding universe.

The first signs of definite representative decoration appears with the early Aurignacian rocks on which were carved vulvae. At Abri Cellier the head of an animal is combined with a vulva and some male signs in the form of dots. Here is an obvious example of the fusion of the abstract and the realistic, a feature which runs parallel right throughout prehistory. Whereas animals became more and more realistic, the paired signs accompanying them became advancedly abstract, so that, as we have already pointed out in the Lascaux "Well Scene", the wound represents the female, and the spear the male. But it is not only in the depiction of signs that abstraction runs hand in hand with realism. At the decorated shelter of Cap Blanc the right-hand part of the frieze is depicted in a naturalistic way, and despite severe damage we can still clearly recognize three horses. However, the left-hand side of the composition seems completely fused. This is not because of prehistoric man's inability to carve naturalistically, as the right-hand side clearly proves. The carved frieze and the rock fuse into a perfect harmony. It seems that the natural rock surface was appreciated and left in its natural state. On close inspection we gradually recognize the carved mass of a horse's body facing right, the neck and front legs being formed by the natural rock surface. The horse's hindquarters grow into a bison's body, facing in the opposite direction. This horse/bison pairing is the most general throughout cave art, and as we know by now, symbolizes the male/female complement. This ingenious fusion of elements can also be seen at Le Combet. Towards the back of the cave is a ceiling decorated with quadrangular female signs, accompanied by a double row of dots. It ends in a small chamber where breast-shaped stalactites are painted black, and surmounted by red dots. On the opposite side to the stalactites red dots are placed either side of a triangular opening in the rock. These dots frequently appear at the openings towards side galleries in caves, and we may assume that they indicate the male sign, accompanying the vulva (hollows in rocks, the cave itself being the womb of mother earth). At Niaux a similar triangular opening in the rock has a pair of ibex horns above it. The horns probably also represent the male element. At the fertility site of Laussel the female nude holds a horn in her hand. There is another example of the fusion of realistic and abstract elements at Le Combet. In one of the chambers the hindquarters of a rhinoceros are combined with the bodies of 3 antelopes, and between the necks of the two front antelopes a lion's face appears. This composition/....

composition is surrounded by paired signs, and decorated stalactites representing breasts. Here is a fusion of the most varied species in a composite organism. Perhaps man wanted to blend all the varied characteristics into a highly desirable specie. Prehistoric man made no distinction between the world he lived in, and that of the supernatural. Life had constant possibilities of magic, and through the creative art man endeavoured to come to terms with the unknown. He did not possess the self confidence which set him apart as an individual, and his life was closely intermingled with nature and all natural phenomena. The animal was the part of man's environment closest to him, as he was continually observed and imitated, in order to be hunted with greater skill.

After a long winter of near starvation, man's desire for food must have been intense. Yet the animal could not be hunted indiscriminately. Spring was the season of new birth, and the thousands of pregnant deer migrating across the plains, must have made man intensely aware of the necessity of procreation to ensure the continuation of the species. Thus the co-operation of the animal was essential. He had to be pleased or else some disaster might befall the hunt. The hunter had a very special knowledge of animal characteristics, as he not only lived closely with the animal, but also had to cultivate some of its habits and even take on part of its guise, so as to capture it easier. The Bushmen can imitate a gazelle so well, that they are able to get very close to it before being recognized. They can also sense on the side of their bodies the approach of a herd of springbuck, because they believe that the animals' dark stripes become transmitted to their own person. They may also foretell the killing of game as they experience a distant sensation of the animal's blood. (Ref. "Art of the Stone Age" by Bandi, Breuil, Holm, L'Hote and Lommel) The Esquimaux hunter wears a sealskin and a special seal mask, and takes on the quality of sealness which enables him to get close to the seal he is hunting. Special rites and dances imitating the animal are performed before hunting starts.

Among the Kwakwiltl Indians of N.W. America transformation masks are used during ritual ceremonies. The masks consist of the head of a raven, and when this is lifted by means of a string, a hill appears, and only underneath this is a human face, which still covers the real human face. These ritual dances are performed at the onset of the winter solstice and expresses the wish for renewal with the oncoming of Spring. The community is firmly rooted in the belief that each individual has his own protective animal spirit, which is received by him in a state of trance. Initiates have to go into the forest to seek out their spirits, and these are in turn exorcised by the Shaman in a series of rituals. (Ref. "The Primitive Mentality" by Lévy-Bruhl)

The seasonal factors play an important part in primitive art and we find some examples from prehistory which also show an intense awareness of seasonal relationships.

A Magdalenian staff from Montgaudier, shows an engraving of two seals superimposed upon each other. In front of them is a fish, probably a salmon, which is upside-down, and with an open mouth. In front of the fish three barbed (male) signs appear, and above them two intertwined figures that seem to represent eels. The relationship between seals and salmon is significant as the salmon moved upstream into rivers with the first searises of spring and was followed by the seals who fed upon them. The eels are depicted all along the length of the staff as slenderly intertwined, probably a mating position and they are accompanied by criss-cross hatches. This staff seems to represent a celebration of spring, the rebirth of nature. (Ref. "The Roots of Civilization" by A. Marshank)

"The totem is an object, a being, a force of nature, which is generally looked on as the ancestor of a group or clan or an individual, who takes its name and identifies themselves with it and in exchange for the totem's help and protection all its representatives owe a certain amount of deference and worship, rather as if it were an ancestor". (Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, page 441)

We can see totemism manifesting itself in the carving of the totem pole by the American Indians. All the ancestral spirits of the tribe are represented on the pole, and above them is the thunderbird, the guardian of the sky. Among the motas of the Bank Islands, a child is considered as the incarnation of an animal or a plant found eaten by the mother during pregnancy. (Ref. "The Savage Mind" by Lévi-Strauss)

The Algonquin believe that a special relationship is established between a newborn child and any animal seen approaching the family cabin. During pregnancy women are not allowed to eat fish, which represent the male symbol, and fishing nets and tackle must be purified after use, before being brought into the village. (Ref. "The Savage Mind" by Lévi-Strauss)

The symbol of the fish occasionally appears in prehistory. We have already mentioned the staff from Montgaudier. An engraving from Gorge d'Enfer, shows a salmon superimposed upon a bison. This is probably a male/female combination and is related to fertility. On a carved reindeer antler from Lorthet we also see this fertility connection. Three salmon are swimming upwards towards a couple of reindeer which are in turn surmounted by some triangular vulvae.

The Hawaiians claim that they "know what the animals do, and what their needs are, because long ago men married them and acquired this knowledge from their animal wives". (Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Savage Mind" page 37)

Many tribes are known by their totemic names. Among the Bechuanas we find the Bakuenas (crocodile men); Batlapis (fish men); Banater (buffalo men) etc. Furthermore they mark their cattle with an incision resembling the open jaws of their totem. The chief of the Bakuenas becomes the great man of the crocodile, and if the totem is killed because of danger, special rites of purification have to follow. It is also strictly tabu to eat a totem, and this is considered a sort of cannibalism. (Ref. Discovering Art, Primitive Art No. 2) Among the Osage, Indian haircuts are identified with the different totemic groups to which they belong. (See illustration no. 4)

The origin of totemism probably dates back to prehistory and in the fusion of man and animal we have considered the hybrid creatures' souls as the sorcerer of Les Trois Frères and the Esquimaux carving of man and wolf. From the cave of Les Trois Frères in the engraving of the great herd of animals, is a dancing creature playing a musical instrument. (See illustration no. 3) He seems to be wearing a bison's mask, with a skin slung over his shoulder and he might be "a sort of Palaeolithic Orpheus charming the animals by means of his music and dancing". (Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, page 1) It seems evident from this example that prehistoric man did use masks, musical instruments, costumes, etc., which are of course all objects that deteriorate fairly quickly and thus we find no traces of them.

The relationship between hunter and animal is celebrated amongst all primitive tribes. The success of the hunt is a vital factor, and to ensure this special rituals involving prayers, dances, songs and costumes are regularly performed. Deep within the cave of Le Tuc D'Audoubert there seem to have existed a sanctuary for the performance of rituals. A male and female bison are depicted at the onset of mating. It is expressed with intense power. The bodies of the animals are taut and concentrated, their nostrils quivering and their manes standing upright in excitement. The bison are sculpted in clay, and they are leaning against a rock table, which is deeply embedded in the ground, so that it forms an "altar". Surrounding the "altar" are some adolescent footsteps which had been preserved by a layer of calcite crystal having formed over it. The footsteps seem to have been made by backwards walking, pressing the heel first into the clay. Have we here the evidence of a ritual taking place in the holy sanctuary? Of initiates being introduced to the mysterious rites of fertility, being epitomized by the altar with pairing bison?

The Shaman was the magician of the tribe, and in this capacity he performed the role of a mediator between man and the unknown forces. When the Shaman entered the cave in prehistoric times, he was symbolically penetrating the womb of mother earth, creating within the sanctuary/.....

sanctuary fertility rites necessary both for the well-being of his people and the animals upon whom they were dependent. Thus the decorations upon cave walls not only represented animals, but at the same time linked them with symbolical rites. The magical and actual were one. As the Esquimaux carver created his images, he accompanied it by magical songs.

It is doubtful whether the inner sanctuaries of caves were frequented, apart from being used for initiation rites. At many cave mouths plaques depicting representations from the inside of the cave were found, and we might presume that certain practises were also performed at the cave mouth. Furthermore the entering into a dark ill-lit cave must have been a terrifying experience to a people steeped in the belief of spirits and the constant possibility of magic. On their entry into the deeper recesses of the cave, initiates were probably confronted by unexpected noises and masked figures, and this, as well as the terrifying images of sacred animals appearing and disappearing in the flickering light of all lamps, must have served to induce a sense of reverence and even fear, before the holy sanctuary was reached where the rituals were to be performed.

The penetration by prehistoric man into the deeper parts of the cave took place only during the middle Magdalenian era. Earlier decorations were executed on overhanging rock shelters, such as Laussel and Le Roc de Sers, and in those areas of the cave lit by daylight, e.g. at Gargas where negative hands and "macaroni" scribbles appear in the front section. The negative hands were formed by placing the hand upon a rock surface and spraying paint over it. It might have been an identification mark of man, announcing his "humble presence in the cave!" "Macaronis" present a kind of graffiti, drawn in the wet clay and they were probably at first imitations of scrapings left by bears sharpening their claws. These tentative marks soon became highly organized patterns such as we see at Altamira. On a low ceiling in one of the front galleries two S-like forms in triple line flow together to part again and form a criss-cross basket shape at the bottom; at Hornos de la Pena the lines take on the head of a hind. It must have called for great courage to enter into the darkest recesses of the cave, but the desire to communicate with the unknown superceded the dread. The Shaman accompanied by some assistants, probably decorated these interiors as part of a sacred ritual.

Towards the end of the Magdalenian era, cave art again moved to the outside regions, as at Teyjat, and the evidence is that it then disappeared entirely. Future discoveries might throw new light upon this phenomenon.

It is significant to note that Shamanism existed until recent times, in such isolated regions as Siberia. Diószegi defines Shamanism as follows:- "Under Shamanism we understand a form of

religion: a certain definite grade of the cult of the spirit. Primitive peoples believe that everything is possessed by a spirit, men, animals, plants, etc., in addition to these there exists other spirits too, such as the ghosts of the deceased. The Shamans are able to establish contact with these unearthly beings and share their knowledge" ("Tracing Shamans in Siberia" page 8) To make this contact calls for special ceremonies, as well as costumes and disguises, dances, singing, and the activities are closely linked to personal needs. When the Australian Aborigines introduce initiates into the tribe, the holy chirunga is produced. This consists of a decorated stone, which is hidden in great secrecy. The Shaman traces the patterns on the stone with his finger, and relates in song the ancient legends of the tribe. (The "The Dawn of Art" by K. Kupka)

Within all primitive tribes decorated objects have this close link with ritual, and despite the fact that they are frequently decorated in an abstract fashion, they are understood by all who participate in the traditions of the tribe. This fact explains why these objects should not be seen out of their environments, although they do possess great artistic merit. Similarly the prehistoric carving or painting should be seen in situ, by the light of a small oil lamp which allows it multiple possibilities as objects appear and recede in the flickering light. The Shaman costumes, drums and ritual possessions grace many museums, but they are not mere decorated objects, and we must be aware of their other dimensions as well. Upon receiving his drum the Shaman had to search out the spirit of the animal whose skin was used to make the drum. He followed the path that the animal had wandered, right back to its birthplace. Only there could the spirit be captured and the drum "come to life". By beating on his drum the Shaman could mount it and ride to faraway places. (Ref. "Tracing Shamans in Siberia" by V. Diéguez)

Among the Eschaggas of South America where honey is an important part of the diet, the Shaman has to bless the iron which is turned into an axe for felling the trees used as beehives. The person who sets out to fell trees, has to do so before dawn, so as not to encounter any evil spirits which might have a malignant influence upon the axe. The beehives are placed in position accompanied by special rituals. When honey is removed, rituals have to be performed as well. (Ref. "The Soul of the Primitive" by Lévy-Bruhl)

In primitive societies art forms an inseparable part of life. It is an extension, a part of the magic which is practised in order to explain the unknown. Although all members of the community create,

artists/.....

artists with special capacities for creation are honoured, and they frequently are of high social ranking. Artists are honoured as the shapers and preservers of tradition, and all man-made objects are inseparably linked with ritual. Their environment frequently imposes severe limitations upon primitive artists, such as the extreme climatic conditions and snowstorms which the Esquimaux are subjected to. There is also a limited range of materials available. The Aborigines paint on tree bark. Not only does it present a limited surface, but it also has a short lifespan, as deterioration occurs rapidly. Space is used as effectively as possible, and with great economy, dividing it precisely and developing abbreviated signs of expression. The range of colour is also limited, as in Palaeolithic times only earth colours are employed. A piece of ochre is highly valued, and men are known to have travelled great distances to obtain it. The handling of the brush is deft and swift, as there is no available space for mistakes. There is the same assuredness of execution which we find in prehistoric cave painting. (Ref. "The Dawn of Civilization" by K. Kupka)

Prehistoric man was able to express by means of simple outline, only varied by cross hatchings to indicate hair, manes and textures. This ability culminated in the Magdalenian era. At Niaux there are bison, horses and ibexes executed as if in one movement of the brush. Their colour is that of the cave surface. By adding black outline to the rock, man created animals which were expressive and powerful, they were representations of THE ANIMAL rather than animals.

The spread of known decorated caves is confined to the Franco-Cantabrian area, mainly Spain, and France, on either side of the Pyrenees. (See maps - illustrations nos. la b & c).

Spanish caves are concentrated around Santander, with some rock shelters at the so-called Levant, on the east coast. This area was probably linked with Africa via Gibraltar, where an isthmus existed, and some sources claim that rock painting spread from here via the Sahara to the Bushmen. (Ref. "Art of the World", "The Stone Age, by Bandi, Breuil, Holm, L' Hote & Lommel)

In France the majority of caves stretch from the foot of the Pyrenees along the Garonne - Dordogne - and Verzère Valleys. Although many Magdalenian decorated objects have been found in Scandinavia, Belgium, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia, there seems to be no evidence of decorated caves. The only area outside the Franco-Cantabrian region containing a decorated cave, is Siberia, where the decoration of the Kapova cave show great affinities with Magdalenian work. Thus it can be assumed that the Franco - Cantabrian area served as a centre for cave painting. It might even have been a place of pilgrimage. This would explain the presence of highly sophisticated decorated objects from centres where caves have not yet been discovered. These objects, like spear throwers, and the

many beautiful baked clay figures of animals from Dolní Vestonice, are the result of a long artistic tradition. They could not have originated in a short space of time. Cross-cultural contact must have existed between these various areas, the Franco Cantabrian forming the nucleus perhaps because of more favourable climatic and social conditions.

Prehistoric man had the cave surface as his canvas, and he used this to every possible advantage. The artist seems to have allowed his imagination free run, singling out some areas that appealed to him, sometimes using the whole cave, and at other times only part of it. At Altamira many of the bulls incorporate the natural bulges on the rock surface, thus adding a sculptural dimension to their already powerful presence. Cave art is the most prolific expression of prehistoric men. With the small decorated "objects mobiliers" and the carved stone slabs, it provides the bulk of evidence that such a people actually existed. Their subject matter was nature. Lévi-Strauss states that "nature is so much richer than culture; one very quickly exhausts the range of manufacture objects as compared with the fantastic diversity of the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds in short, the novel character of the ready-made presents a kind of last resort before the return to the main source" ("The Savage Mind" page 2). They used the earth as their pigment, ochre and haemite for red, yellow and browns, for black oxide of manganese and charcoal. The pigment was probably mixed with water, vegetable juices, or fat. The paint was applied either by hand; sprayed onto the surface, or applied by means of brushes. Within these limited means we find a great range of expressiveness. Colour and line are used with extreme economy and express a great artistic maturity. At Lascaux the large bulls in the Rotunda are drawn in black outline, their faces being heightened with dots and their legs and mouths coloured with heavy black. The little horses surrounding them are painted in a blurred black outline, which merges with the dark brown of their bodies, and their manes and bellies are accentuated by broad areas of black. The natural rock surface seems, either by accident, or perhaps because of deliberate selection of surface, to accentuate the form and movement of these ponies.

Simple line and colour achieves great expressive power. Forms and images probably merged with their background as the flickering light of the small lamps that prehistoric man used, fell upon the cave wall.

The sculpted horse from Commarque is only visible from a certain angle, and one can pass it quite easily without noticing it.

Moritz Holmes, in the 19th century, stated that "prehistoric art gives the impression of an orderless and directionless multiplicity, an undisciplined freedom which could not achieve results because it lacked the firm tradition and assuredness afforded by the strict observance of principles of style" (Giedion, "The Eternal Present" Vol.1, page 516) Since that time our attitude has changed tremendously, being helped by the discovery of many important caves and other decorated objects. Now we can declare with Giedion that prehistoric art does in fact not represent chaos or inability. "It approaches rather to the order of the stars, which move about in endless space, unconfined, and universal in their relations". (Giedion, "The Eternal Present", Vol. 1, page 538)

Because prehistoric art represents an entirely different time, aim and context from that to which we are accustomed, our attitude when viewing this ancient art must be adapted accordingly. It is of no avail to judge it by the rules we have laid down to differentiate our works of art. Perspective as we understand it, plays no part in the work of the Palaeolithic artist. According to P. & L. Murray (A dictionary of Art and Artists" page 153) "perspective is a quasi-mathematical system for the representation of 3 dimensional objects in spatial recession on a 2 dimensional surface, i.e. for the creation of an independent pictorial space as a microcosm of nature the basic assumption is that parallel lines never meet but that they appear to do so and that further, all parallel lines going in any one direction meet at a single point on the horizon known as the vanishing point. In order to obtain greater naturalism, a system was evolved which uses two vanishing points on the horizon, and more if necessary to obtain up-hill or down-dale effects. A further refinement is the use of the measuring points, which allow for the exact representation of objects on scale". We have to discard our norms of perspective in a Palaeolithic sanctuary. The animals depicted upon the walls do not recede in spatial recession. They continually jump across the lines we are trying to impose upon them, and none of them seem to follow a definite ground plane. Palaeolithic man's spatial conception differed greatly from ours. The animals were painted upon any surface that seemed suitable, and they frequently appear in "irrational" positions. At El Castillo a bison seems to be climbing vertically up a stalagmite. Upon closer inspection we notice that the tail, flanks, the outline and part of the back and belly were formed by the natural rock formations, and all that man did was to add a few black outlines to strengthen the image. At Niaux we find 2 bison drawn in vertical positions, and they are surrounded by other animals in "normal" horizontal positions. The upside-down horse at the end of the Axial Gallery of Lascaux is usually referred to as "the falling horse". But upon turning the painting around, we notice that the horse is in a normal standing position. The animals surrounding it supply sufficient evidence that

the prehistoric artist could draw "naturalistically" enough to show how a horse moved its legs when it fell. "The eyes of prehistoric man were free. He did not find it necessary to translate every composition into vertical lines". (Giedion "The Eternal Present", Vol. 1, page 521) He proceeds by illustrating this with an engraved slab from Laugerie-Basse. On the slab is a grazing. When the stone is turned over and held at a slightly different angle, a gazelle appears.

This theory of unbounded space is exemplified in the frequent use of superimposition. At Lascaux a polychrome horse from a later period is placed in between the horns of the two bulls. This little horse does not superimpose; he blends with his surroundings, and only part of his body was drawn so as not to spoil the already existent drawing of bulls. The Esquimaux also show this subtle concept of boundless space in their carvings. On the handle of an engraved reindeer antler, we see a grazing reindeer if the antler is held in a horizontal position, but when the handle is turned to a vertical position, the grazing reindeer becomes an animal standing on guard. Space is completely free in prehistoric art. All surfaces and linear directions having equal right, according to the way that they stimulate the artist's imagination, and so we might expect a chaotic presentation upon the cave walls. As has been shown, this is not at all the case. We have already referred to Leroi-Gourhan's chronological classification. He states that after having visited several caves, he could guess what would follow what in the decorations, and that when he missed a sign which should have been there, this was frequently found concealed in a side gallery or around a corner.

On this information, he established an "Ideal Palaeolithic Sanctuary" based on the following pattern:-

"More than 80% of the 'female' subjects (bison, ox, female signs), occur in central location. The "male" subjects are more or less evenly distributed in the peripheral locations (for example the stag 22% + 29% + 37% = 88%). The only exception is the hand, which is both central and peripheral. Signs from the male category are approximately distributed the same in all locations. Like the horse they appear on the periphery as elements in the main category and at the centre as elements complementary to female signs: entrance 10.9%; periphery 20.6%; centre 25.9%; side gallery 9%; passageway 19.9%; back cave area 13.5%." (Leroi-Gourhan, "the Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe", page 501).

The totality of Prehistoric art, i.e. from the first datable decorated objects, to the end of the Magdalenian era, \pm 8000 years B.C., is termed the Palaeolithic. To divide the Palaeolithic into different periods, is an extremely hard task, as our only available evidence is the works of art and the tools that exist. These objects were frequently subject to removal from their original setting, without the proper precautions of comparing them with surrounding data, being taken. There has also been, and still is, a great amount of theft taking place at caves, and thus important links in dating are frequently lacking.

The Abbé Breuil devised a four-cycle division:- The Aurignacian-Perigordian; and the Solutrean-Magdalenian cycles, which was in long use as a guide to Palaeolithic art. However, new discoveries of sites as well as scientific advancement has added some refinements to this four-cycle system. Breuil was mainly guided by stylistic and technical differences in his dating of Palaeolithic Art. He relied heavily upon the superimposition of animals on cave walls as an indication of their age, but since Laming-Emperaire and Leroi-Gourhan's discovery of a definite pattern being followed in cave layout, new light has been cast upon superimposition. It does not necessarily indicate a difference in time-span. For example, at Pech Merle we find the composite figure consisting of a rhinoceros, 3 antelopes and a lion. This superimposition seems to indicate a fusion of different characteristics, rather than depicting animals painted at different times. Breuil's system is also at fault when it claims that the two facing ibexes from the Axial Gallery at Lascaux are from different periods because the one is black, and the other red. They are in fact exactly identical in execution.

What guidelines are we then to follow in arriving at a chronology of Palaeolithic Art? (And even if we do arrive at such a chronology, it would always be tentative as our knowledge of this vast timespan of 30,000 years is, and will remain for long still extremely limited). The most accurate clues are supplied at sights where the geographical strata had been discovered in an undisturbed state. By examining the different layers of soil and their composition, archaeologists could arrive at a certain time sequence. If decorated objects were also present in these layers, they would naturally relate to the time sequence. These objects could then be dated with a fair amount of accuracy, and in turn be compared with doubtful articles. The friezes from Laussel and Le Cap Blanc were found emerged in geological strata, and thus their dating was greatly facilitated. Decoration upon spearthrowers, staffs, etc., mainly started during the middle Magdalenian, correspond with cave painting, and there is a great stylistic resemblance between the animals of the decorated "objets mobilier", and those on the cave walls.

20

At many caves, e.g. Lascaux, tools and various other remains were found, and the C-14 test gives us a good idea of when they were in use. Inside the cave itself we must take the figures on the walls as our source of chronological critique. If we follow Leroi-Gourhan's topographical outlay of the cave, figures that do not correspond to the coherent scheme would soon become visible, and might date from a different period. Prehistoric man moved into the deeper parts of the cave only during the middle Magdalenian, and this might also serve as a tentative guideline. The earliest cave art was executed on open rock shelters, or at the cave mouths and there was probably a gradual move into the cave as wall space became limited. (Towards the end of the Magdalenian there was again a move towards the cave mouth, but the decorations executed then can easily be differentiated from the first ones, on the basis of their stylistic maturity.) But the pattern of movement into the caves is not always clearcut, because some caves consist out of many side galleries which could also be used, and different cave entrances might also have been in use at different times.

The evolution of the male/female signs conform to a certain development pattern, as Leroi-Gourhan's charts (see illustrations 6a, b and c) clearly indicate. The vulvas on early inscribed slabs, like those from Abri-Cellier, are realistic. They go through a metamorphosis of ovals, bell-shapes (e.g. at El Castillo, where they are paired with barbed-shaped male signs) quadrangular signs and end up as the highly complex tectiforms on the ceiling of Altamira. The male signs develop from realistic phalluses (e.g. on the decorated staff from La Madeleine) and during the mature Magdalenian they have become rows of dots. These signs thus serve as a fairly good guide to chronology.

During the early period of cave art the reindeer is quite a general feature, but it seems to disappear towards the middle, to reappear again in the mature Magdalenian era on decorated staffs and cave walls. From the abundant reindeer remains found at cave mouths and other places of habitation, we know that the reindeer was prehistoric man's staple diet, and thus its disappearance from art objects is rather baffling. Nevertheless, it serves as a guide to the distinction of different periods.

There are of course also clear stylistic differences. For example during the early and middle Magdalenian, animals have squat legs like the "Chinese ponies" at Lascaux, consequently they appear fat and are frequently referred to as pregnant. Bulls and other horned animals often appear in "perspective tordue" (twisted perspective) as at Lascaux where the horns seem to be in $\frac{3}{4}$ view. In late caves, like Teyjat, this is completely mastered and profiles appear as normal. But we have already shown on the fact that cave art did

not/.....

not conform to rules of perspective, and that the animals seem to revolve in free space. The Egyptians also used a form of "perspective tordue" e.g. figures seen in profile have eyes placed in a frontal position. This was deliberately done so as to represent the most essential characteristics.

New discoveries may still fill up the many gaps in our evidence concerning prehistory, and established systems of dating will be overthrown more than once.

Perishable materials which prehistoric man probably used, e.g. feathers and masks might also have supplied important chronological links. To quote a modern equivalent: the Australian Aborigine frequently draws in the sand, this being closely linked with rituals. Naturally this form of artistic expression contains no lasting value. A comparison which might carry more weight, is that of body painting which is a popular practise among the Aborigines. From Cucuteni (Rumania) there is a group of Neolithic figurines of which the entire bodies had been decorated with marks resembling either body paint or tattooing. Neolithic man was still closely linked with prehistory, not only in time, but also in spirit. Here we might have evidence of a perishable branch of art which dates back to prehistory.

Some of the decorated caves have been known for centuries. In the 15th century Pope Calixtus II forbade the religious ceremonies that took place at a certain cave decorated with horses. In the 18th century Lope de Vega referred to La Batuecas cave in Spain, which was held in high superstition by local inhabitants.

Rouffignac has also been known for many centuries, as we can see from the many inscriptions of names which visitors left on the walls.

In 1834 Brouillet discovered a decorated Magdalenian staff at La Chaffaud, but this was laughed off as being Celtic. 1859 saw the publication of Darwin's "Origin of the Species", and also the crossing of the channel by two English geologists, Evans and Prestwich, in order to observe some stone implements at Abbeville. In the same year Evans read a paper on "the occurrence of flint implements in association with the remains of animals of extinct species in beds of late geological Period" to the Royal Society. Altamira was discovered in 1879 by Marcelino de Sautuola, but not even mentioned at the Lisbon Congress of Archaeology in 1880. But by 1902 Cartailiac and Breuil had started excavating Altamira, and with the discovery of Lascaux in 1940, the study of prehistory had become a serious matter. The earliest known biological evidence of man dates back to more than 20 million years. During the MIOCENE was found the Proconsul Ape, the ancestor of man. He was neither upright nor capable of brachiation. The ape population developed and spread towards the PLIOCENE, and finally with the onset of the PLEISTOCENE, Homo erectus, (upright man) commenced, and probably the possibility of tools. The Pleistocene was marked by several glaciations,

during/.....

during which the ice advanced several times, and interglaciations, when the ice melted again and a warm climate existed. (We are at the moment experiencing the 4th interglacial period which started \pm 8,000 B.C.) Great herds of reindeer, woolly mammoths, bison and horses were in abundant supply, but the climate changed drastically several times, and both man and animal was forced by advancing ice to vacate Northern Europe. The reindeer finally moved to the cooler Northern countries with the onset of the warm fourth interglacial period. The sea level rose and fell continually, and as water became locked up in ice sheets, isthmuses developed between Britain and France; Spain and Africa; Italy and Sicily; Siberia and Alaska, etc. The glaciations are usually dated by means of fossil pollen, which contains evidence of the existent flora of different periods. Africa has delivered up to date the earliest actual evidence of human habitations the so-called Pithecanthropines.

At the Olduvai Gorge, which was formed during the Pleistocene by river erosion cutting through different beds and exposing layers of strata, Leakey found the remains of the *Australopithecus Africanus*, which he dated back to 2,5 million years. In bed I was found the remains of crocodiles and fish, as well as 2 human-type skulls and some tools. Beds II and III provided various Chellean - Acheulean artifacts, and in bed IV several large hand axes were present. These findings have recently been expanded by Leakey Jr., by the discovery of a human-type skull at Lake Rudolf which he dates back to 3 million years. (National Geographical Magazine, June 1973)

Another important discovery was at Choukoutien, where Teilhard de Chardin found the remains of the *Sinanthropus*, as well as evidence of the use of fire. This is dated at 500,000 years. All these early discoveries fall under the LOWER PALAEOLITHIC. With the advent of the MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC we are at the Mousterian era, when homo ^{sapiens} (man who discerns) made his appearance in the form of various Neanderthal tribes. This period dates between 75,000 - 35,000 B.C., and provides us with many burial sights, e.g. at La Ferassie where the body of a child was surrounded by red ochre and covered with an incised stone.

Professor Bordes of the "Laboratoire de Geologie du Quaternaire et Préhistoire" of Bordeaux University, found that the Mousterian culture of Neanderthal man contained a kit composed of 63 different tool types which illustrates a wide range of skills and activities.

The UPPER PALAEOLITHIC is subdivided into several sections. First comes the Chatelperronian-Gravettian period, with the Aurignacian hinging in between. The Aurignacian is subdivided into lower, middle and upper, and the Gravettian into Perigordian I, II and III. The Châtelperronian-, Aurignacian-, Gravettian period dates from \pm 35,000 to 20,000 B.C., and engraving on stones take place, e.g. the engraved vulvas from Abri-Cellier. From \pm 20,000 -

15,000 B.C., we find the Solutrean period which is wellknown for its beautiful "laurel leaf" implements. The transition between the Gravettian- and the Solutrean period is signified by the Venus figurines, e.g. Laussel and decorated rock shelters e.g. Le Cap Blanc. The Magdalenian period dates from + 1,500 - 8,000 B.C., and it is subdivided into 6 periods. During Magdalenian III caves like Lascaux were decorated, and at Magdalenian VI we find the maturity of the Paleolithic, e.g. at Teyjat. At the end of the Magdalenian era there seems to be a relapse in cave art. This period is known as the Mesolithic, during which stones with abstract decorations appear in abundance, especially around Le Maz d'Azil, and thus they are referred to as Azilian. The Mesolithic is followed by the Neolithic.

THE PLEISTOCENE ICE AGE (LOWER PALAEO-LITHIC)

DATING:	CULTURAL TYPE	CHAR. TOOLS	LOCALITY OF FINDS	BIOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATIONS
Between Donau & Gunz Glaciations ± 3 - 2.5 million years to 950,000 years.	OLDWAN	Mainly chopping tools.	Olduvai: Beds I and II Lake Rudolph	Australopithecus Africanus
Between the Cromerian Interglaciation to the Mindel Glaciation ± 500,000 years.	EARLY AUCHEULIAN	Hand Axes chopping tools	Olduvai Upper Bed II Peking and Java man	Homo erectus
Holstein Interglacial ± 250,000 years.	MATURE AUCHEULIAN	Hand axes flake tools	Swanscombe, Steinheim Olduvai bed IV	Start of homo sapiens
Riss glaciation and Eemian interglaciation ± 200,000- 105,000 years	CHARENTIAN	chopping tools	Ehringsdorf	HOMO Sapiens
Würm Glaciation ± 75,000 - 35,000 years	MOUSTERIAN (Middle Palaeolithic)	Flaked tools	La Ferassie, Dolni Vestonice	Neanderthal tribes

THE UPPER PALAEO-LITHIC

DATING	LEROI - Gourhan's Division	CHARACTERISTICS	SITES
± 35,000 - 27,000 Châtelperronian Aurignacian :- Lower, Middle and Upper. Gravettian: Perigordian I	Period I	Crudely decorated bone fragments and stone slabs	La Ferassie, Belcayre, Laugerie Haute; Abri-Cellier, etc.
25,000 - 18,000 Perigordian II and Perigordian III Solutrean	Period II	Venus figurines, laurel leaf tools, beginning of cave decoration	Laussel; Gargas; Solutré etc.
± 17,000 - 8,000 - MAGDALENIAN	Period III	The triumph of Cave Painting	Lascaux, Pech Merle, Altamira etc.
I II III IV V VI	Period IV	Harpoons, spear throwers, movement to Cave mouth	Teyjat, Ebbou, etc.
± 8,000 MESOLITHIC			
± 5,000 NEOLITHIC			

THE CHÂTELPERRONIAN - AURIGNACIAN - GRAVETTIAN PERIOD: LEROI-GOURHAN'S PERIOD 1 (\pm 30,000 - 27,000 B.C.)

This period spans nearly twenty milleniums and there are no decorated caves or objects apart from a few engraved slabs which were found in datable strata. These slabs certainly refute the theory that art began with naturalism. On a slab from Abri-Cellier a composite scene which involves the head of an animal, a vulva and male st_oke signs are depicted. Another slab from La Ferassie again features the pairing of signs. On it is engraved rows of dots and an oval-shaped vulva in association with the hindquarters of an animal. The relationship between animal and signs seem to have existed from the start.

The depiction of animals acquire a much greater ease during period 11. This stretched from the Upper Perigordian of the Gravettian to the Proto-Solutrean. (\pm 25,000 - 18,000 B.C.)

Examples of works are now more numerous and spread over a much wider area, although not sufficient to allow for an arrangement into a well-organized chronological sequence. We are dealing here with a time stretch of nearly 10,000 years, works being represented in Spain, France, Central Europe and even Russia. From Dolni Vestonice date many superb animal sculptures. They were created by means of a sophisticated technique, clay being mixed with bone ash and fired. In one hearth more than 200 of the figures were found. The conception of the statuettes is so simple that they might appear at first glance as lumps of clay, but within these abstract shapes one starts discerning eyes, a mouth, the delicate wavings of hair on a neck - all these features indicated by gently curving lines. The head of a rhinoceros has a tremendous silent presence about it. Its horn is jutting upwards at a 95° angle and strongly contrasts with the abstractly conceived bulk of the head. The features can be sensed even before one discerns them.

The first spears make their appearance during this period. Some are completely undecorated, and others, like an example from Isturitz contain animal depictions. This spear was found amongst datable strata, and serves as a valuable guide to the identification of animal figures ascribed to this period. On the spear a horse appears. It is composed of a strong sinuous S-shape, which defines neck, antlers and back,, and the face consists of 3 straight lines, varied by vertical hatchings which indicate the ears. The legs are merely suggested and not rendered at all. These characteristics also emerge from decorated caves, like Pair-non-Pair, La Mouthe, and Gargas. Decorations are limited to the daylight zones, as the movement inwards takes place during the early Magdalenian period.

Pair-non-Pair was completely buried in datable debris. This, as well as the stylistic similarities with decorated objects, places it well within this period. It contains many finely engraved animal figures/.....

figures, showing the typical strong structural line of the back varied by specific details, like horns, legs and tails, which fade away. The bison/horse pairing dominates. The cave is divided into 6 panels which start with 2 facing ibexes and a mammoth. On the opposite side is another mammoth, accompanied by a cervid. Next follows some bison which are complemented by horses, as well as male and female signs. A definite pattern which continually recurs seems to emerge from the onset of cave decoration.

The figures at La Mouthe show a strong similarity with those of Pair-non-Pair. A bull near the entrance exhibits the typical strong dorsal line and lack of peripheral details. La Mouthe shows clearly how cave decoration progressively moved farther inside: towards the back of the cave there is a gallery which enlarges into a broad concave panel. On this panel is depicted twenty-one engraved figures which includes bison, ibexes, horses and stags. These animals still contain the sinuous dorsal line typical of period II, but peripheral details like legs are now completely rendered, although they appear short and stocky. Line has acquired more freedom, and there is a general tendency towards decoration which culminates in the depiction of hair on the mane and belly. Bison's horns show the "perspective tordue" which also appears at Lascaux. This, and the presence of a quadrangular sign, is usual style III characteristics. "They attest to a transition between two systems of perspective, attributable to the terminable Perigordian or the beginnings of the Magdalenian". (Leroi-Gourhan, "The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe" page 319). At the back is a sanctuary which shows great affinities with style IV caves like Rouffignac. Mammoths with great spiralling tusks are drawn in a nearly photographically realistic way. The reindeer, which after a long absence reappear during this period, is also present.

Gargas is also a cave where decoration was started at an early stage. Daylight penetrates fairly deeply and period II figures are well represented. Valuable stratigraphic layers which date from the Châtelperronian to the Perigordian eras were found at the entrance. The upper sections contained some engraved plaques which were decorated with animal compositions relating to those on the walls. The earliest signs at Gargas are negative hands, many of them showing mutilated fingers. These were made by placing the hand upon the cave surface, and spraying over it with paint. In some cases they are surrounded with dots (male signs) and might be linked with fertility. (At Kap Abba, New Guinea, there is a cave which is covered with these mutilated hands. The natives chop off their fingers in a ritual designed to ward off evil. (Ref. "The ETERNAL Present" Vol. 1 by S. Giedion). Later on positive handmarks also appear, the hand being dipped in paint and then pressed onto the cave surface.

Near the hands in Gargas there are also some clay meanderings, the so-called "macaroni". "Here man attempted to give direct visible expression to his deepest desires by means of symbols and figurations. The yielding material proffered no technical impediment: only imagination was necessary" (Giedion "The Eternal Present", Vol. 1 page 295) An interesting feature in Gargas is the presence of a semidome which is completely coated in red. We have seen that at the Mousterian burial sites red ochre was frequently spread around bodies; and that it symbolized the life-force. This chamber at Gargas might have been used in the performance of fertility rites.

On the outer part of most caves there is plenty of evidence of human habitation, as is proven by the presence of implements and remains. But towards the deeper recesses this evidence becomes less. These areas were probably only visited by the Shaman and his assistants, although initiation- and other rites could have been held there.

Another typical feature of Style 11 is the female nudes. They were either found amongst stratigraphic data like those from Lespugue and Wittendorf, or as in the case of Laussel, on a rock shelter completely buried by several layers of soil. These factors naturally facilitated their dating. These figurines possess a powerful earthiness which elevates them above the title of "Aurignacian pinup girls" or "Venuses". This is Mother Earth, the fertility goddess. At Laussel she is headless (as in most cases) and only essential features such as breasts, hips and vulva are indicated. She holds a horn in her hand. (Probably a male symbol)

The different styles gradually merge so that it is difficult to separate them at the transitional stages or to arrive at any definite chronology. Period 111 marks the Solutrean and early Magdalenian 11 - 111) (\pm 17,000 - 13,000 B.C.) The curved dorsal line from style 11 becomes completely mastered and the necks of animals are powerfully arched. Limbs are detailed down to the hoofs, but they are disproportionally short. This gives the animals a fat appearance and they are frequently referred to as "pregnant", such as the "Chinese ponies" from Lascaux, although they are obviously male. The positioning of horns and ears are still not mastered. Ears are usually placed on the neck, and horns appear in the "half-twisted" or so-called "perspective Tordue". The Solutrean "laurel leaf" implements are also a well-known characteristic and frequently facilitates the dating of strata. The chronological boundaries of Style 111 are not precise, as is the case with most other periods. Rock shelters like Le Roc de Sers and Le Fourneau du Diable were found in close association with upper Solutrean layers, surrounded by "laurel leaf" implements. This renders them as invaluable guides in dating other areas. The oxen at Le Fourneau du Diable show the typical "perspective tordue" (i.e. the curve of the front horn is single as

opposed/.....

opposed to the sinuous line of the back horn, making it appear in $\frac{3}{4}$ view) of which we also find abundant examples at Lascaux. What furthermore facilitates the dating of Style III figures at Lascaux is the presence of quadrangular signs. (see illustration 6a chart D) These later on become claviforms, of which there are abundant examples at Altamira. (See illustration 6a chart E). The claviforms probably indicate the transition from middle to late Magdalenian.

Le Roc de Sers consists of a series of long stone slabs which had fallen from the rock surface at some stage. Sculpted on these is a complex scene which might depict a fertility rite. To the left appears an insignificant human figure with a bison behind it. The bison's head seems reworked to form that of a sow, and it is followed by a horse. In this frieze there is a total disregard of ground line, and the figures seem to be conceived of in free space, creating an exciting sense of movement. On the right a massive bison is pursuing a fleeing man, and nearby is a bird. The bison/bird/man theme reappears in the "well scene" of Lascaux (illustration no. 5) and might represent one of the features of period III.

Many of the decorated caves start at this period, e.g. Pech Merle, Le Gabillou, Cougnac, El Castillo, Lascaux and Altamira. Most of them also show characteristics of the mature Magdalenian as there was a gradual inwards progression. The cave which represents style III par excellence is Lascaux. It is usually divided into the Rotunda, the Axial gallery, The Passageway, the Ape, The Shaft and the Chamber of Felines.

The Rotunda offers a breathtaking view. Its ceiling appears like an inverted boat with bulbous outcroppings. Surrounding it is a white lime ridge which contains the decorations. In the centre of the frieze an opening leads to the Axial gallery. The paintings in the Rotunda seem to form two complementary groups: on the right bulls and red bovines accompanied by male signs; on the left, cows and horses accompanied by female signs. A composite animal, the "unicorn" introduces the frieze. "In its heaviness of body and feet, it resembles some member of the cattle family or a rhinoceros; the stubby tail would rather indicate the latter; the flanks are marked with large O-shaped spots, for such a weighty body the neck and head are ridiculously undersized; the square muzzle recalls a feline's; from its forehead thrust forward two rectangular rods, each ending in a bulb or tuft, and resembling the horns of no animal, unless it would be as Miss Bates has suggested, "the panta-lops of Tibet" (H. Breuil "Four hundred Centuries of Cave Art" page 52) The oval-shaped dots decorating the unicorn's body might represent vulvas. A frieze of little horses lead to a cow which has paired signs consisting of strokes and dots on her muzzle. To the left are 3 large bulls facing right, the largest one measuring 17 feet in length. They are accompanied by spear signs/.....

signs. At the base of the second and fourth bulls two red bovines appear, and at the breast of the third bull the paw of a bear appears. The bovines and the bear probably date from an earlier period. In between the horns of the cow and first bull, is a polychrome horse which shows affinities with similar ones in the Axial gallery. This horse had not been completed and its incomplete state seems to indicate respect for the already existent drawing of the stags underneath it.

The stags lead to the tunnel-like axial gallery, where one is immediately struck by 2 dominant features: the formula used in the Rotunda is repeated, but a much lighter and freer atmosphere reigns. The animals are mainly drawn in polychrome, as in contrast with the black outlines used in the Rotunda. The first "Chinese pony" shows characteristics of Style IV, e.g. the double shoulder line and M-shaped ventral modelling. Above it is the typical Period III female quadrangle (illustration no. 6a, D), but in front of its muzzle a brace-shaped sign typifying the next period appears. (Illustration no. 6a, E) Thus we may resume that there is in the Axial gallery gradual transition to the mature Magdalenian period. On the right-hand side of the entrance is a stag accompanied by a row of dots, and a quadrangular sign. The stag's antlers are superbly drawn, and here are typical features of the middle Magdalenian, like the ears of the stag which are placed upon its neck. Next we find one of the 3 "Chinese Ponies", which is galloping towards the stag. The pony is outlined in black and coloured with ochre. Underneath its belly is a row of dots, reflecting the upwards curl from belly to neck. This row of dots form an oval which is surrounded by spear-like signs. Above the pony is a long, drawnout red cow, merrily moving towards the back. It is accompanied by 3 spear-like signs, one on her hindleg, the others seeming to penetrate her back and neck. Underneath the red cow is a small pony's head. The other "Chinese ponies" follow on this. Here we see colour handled with great virtuosity. The second Chinese pony is drawn in ochre, with half of the body left open to be formed by the natural rock. A strong black outline pulls the whole composition together. The third "Chinese pony" is entirely drawn in dark brown, heavier patches accentuating the mane, belly, mouth and legs. Now follows a frieze of 12 small ponies, which show a great variety. Towards the back of the gallery they are red-brown and freely executed, becoming much darker and very tightly drawn at the centre, their legs ending in straight stumps as in contrast with the well defined legs of the Chinese ponies. This probably indicates that they were executed at different times. Mid-way above the ponies there is a large leaping cow, and in front of her a quadrangular sign accompanied by strokes and dots. The flowing lines of the cow's body is

balanced by the delicately executed horns and tail. The cow is drawn in black, with red shining through in the centre. The one back leg is lifted high in the effort of the jump, and it is clear that the artist knew how to depict movement.

At the end of the frieze of little horses we find two facing ibexes, one red and the other black with a quadrangular sign in between them. If one is not aware of Leroi-Gourhan's carefully documented evidence showing the evolution of signs representing sexual symbols (illustrations 6a, b & c), it would be tempting to ascribe naturalistic meanings to these quadrangles. One could say that these are 2 ibexes on either side of a fence and that the jumping cow is participating in an obstacle race. However, by looking at several caves, it becomes obvious that the constant repetition and pairing of signs and their evolution towards abstraction, must have had a deeper meaning. It is doubtful that the prehistoric artist was interested in conveying "naturalism" as we know it. Although he progressively drew in a more natural style, at the same time a kind of shorthand symbology was used. This can be seen in the many incomplete figures like the horse in between 2 bulls in the Axial Gallery. This horse, if drawn fully, would have interfered with the stags underneath it. Thus only its curved backline and neck was depicted.

The two facing ibexes are followed by a bison/horse pairing, and this leads to the upside-down horse, which is usually referred to as "the falling horse". We have already noted that if turned the other way around, the horse stands firmly upon its legs. The example of the leaping cow shows that prehistoric man could depict movement. In front of the "falling horse" is an elaborate pair of stags' antlers and some red dots. The end of the cave, often seen as a womb, is paired with a profusion of male signs in the form of dots, a horse, and some antlers.

On the left the composition starts from the back with the depiction of a horse, bull and cow, accompanied by barbed signs. (Illustration No. 6b B) A black bull is superimposed upon some red cows and is extremely powerfully executed. A thin white ridge has been left open where the front legs meet, also at the nostrils, and at the eye, this being the only means of differentiation. The composition ends with 3 horses and a cow surrounded by signs. The Axial Gallery as a whole consists of 2 alternating groups: cows/horses with quadrangular signs; and bulls/cows with barbed signs; flanked by stags and 2 facing ibexes, and at the back a horse/bison pairing.

A passageway leads to the Apse and Nave. This seems to be the oldest decorated part, and the engravings covering the wall have become very faint. Up to date there is no available inventory of the figures in the passageway, and we have no certainty as to how the Apse and Nave is interrelated. Black is the dominant

colour in the Nave, creating a sombre atmosphere. The major part of the paintings are arranged on the left wall, the right-hand side being reserved for a frieze of little stags in black outline. The stags are visible from only the neck upwards, and seem to be swimming. On the left the decoration starts with engraved ibexes, accompanied by a quadrangular sign, and underneath this 5 horses and a bison with more signs. The first and second horses have spear-like "woundmarks" engraved upon them, and these are surrounded in turn by quadrangular signs. The bison also have several of these "woundmarks". More horses follow upon the bison and amongst them is an enormous cow, which is superimposed upon some red horses. At her feet the cow has two quadrangular signs, which contain a chequer board decoration, the squares being coloured in red and brown. The composition ends with 2 bison, their hindquarters overlapping. They are painted in black, the left-hand one having a red patch on its body. They seem to be gathering speed to push away, their bodies are taut with concentration and their backs highly arched. The highly arched back becomes a typical feature in Style IV, whereas the profusion of quadrangles in the Nave clearly indicate style III. The Chamber of Felines mark the end of the Nave. It is decorated with a multitude of signs and animals consisting mainly of felines. The feline is quite rare in Palaeolithic cave art and they usually appear single. In this chamber we find the typical back-cave composition. A horse/bison pairing is accompanied by signs, plus typical back-cave animals, ibexes, a rhinoceros and felines; as well as the usual red dots.

To the right of the Nave is the Apse and Shaft. The Apse consists of a small round chamber, containing a multitude of unfinished engraved lines. This is a typical feature of most caves. There always seem to be a section set aside for scribbles and unfinished engravings, a kind of "Sketch area". These sections might also have a definite meaning which evades our understanding. The shaft contains the famous "well scene", which we have already discussed in detail on page 4. (Illustration no. 5)

Altamira was the first decorated cave to be discovered and it shows Magdalenian art at its height. The ceiling contains horses and other figures from Period III, but the bison have the maturity of Style IV. The painted ceiling represents the highest attainment of prehistoric art. From a purely technical angle it shows that such concentrated forms were achieved only through a combination of all known means of expressions. The methods used were elaborate and complicated. The aim was not simply to create a naturalistic effect. "We have here an apotheosis of reverence for the animal world, raised to a level never before achieved and orchestrated with all the richness of a long artistic tradition and experience. (Giedion, "the Eternal Present" page 428)

The/.....

The earliest part of the cave seems to date from the Solutrean to early Magdalenian (period III) but with the painted ceiling we are already within period IV, the mature Magdalenian.

Close to the decorated ceiling is an early drawing of a bull's head in the so-called "macaroni" meanders. Some 15 feet of the ceiling is covered in these meanders. They seem to indicate man's first presence in the cave. To the left of this area we find the painted ceiling. The entrance section of the cave extends into a large winding gallery with several lateral extensions, where the "black sequence" is situated. Bison, oxen and horses, accompanied by signs, are drawn in simple black outline. A narrow inner gallery leads to the back, and here is the typical Palaeolithic grouping of animals and signs. The cave ends with the usual male sign in the form of red dots. An interesting feature in this back part of the gallery is the rockshapes, decorated with human features. Man, even when present, is humble and certainly at Altamira where the main ceiling enthrones the animal for once and all. It is an awesome sight to enter into this chamber. The bulls, some life size, and painted on protrusions of the ceiling, seem to come to life and rush at us. The delicately flickering light of prehistoric man's oil lamp must have increased this appearance of movement. The range of colour is limited to bare essentials, most of the figures are red, with black outlines, excepting a yellow hind and boars. The bison is dominant, and is depicted in a great variety of positions, over a stretch of twenty yards. In the centre is a group of curled-up bison, painted on protrusions of the rock, which gives the appearance of sculpture. Their bodies follow the exact irregularities of the rock surface and it was only necessary to add features like horns, manes, eyes and legs. This is a supreme example of prehistoric man's use of natural shapes and of his reverence for nature. A farmer from ^{the} area, upon being shown the ceiling, exclaimed that these curled-up bison were in the process of giving birth. (Ref. "The Eternal Present", Vol. 1 by S. Giedion) At the bottom of the composition is the most majestic of all figures, an old bison, with a magnificently drawn body. Its dewlap extends down to the floor, and the hind legs are placed within a complex clawiform, accompanied by barbed signs. (See illustration no. 6cH) This painting typifies Period IV and the ceiling of Altamira clearly shows the transgression from Periods III - IV. Not only is the bison the dominant figure, but with the hind also the largest. In front of this bison is another clawiform which separates it from a large hind which seems completely isolated from the rest of the scene. She is surrounded by various signs, and under her chin is a small outlined bison. At the top she is balanced by another small hind, which is accompanying a large horse. A rare occurrence in cave art is the two boars, which seem to rush into the composition from both sides. At the top is a bison with an uplifted

head, its entire back as well as its hindquarters being formed by a configuration in the rock surface. The addition of ochre and a few engraved outlines strengthened that which nature had left. In between these figures are vestiges of drawings in faded black line, probably dating from period III, or even earlier. Although the bison and female clawiforms dominate the ceiling, the horse at the top, plus some barbed signs once again create the subtle balance which we constantly find in cave art.

MAGDALENIAN III TO MAGDALENIAN IV

This is style IV and it marks the climax of Prehistoric Art stretching from \pm 12,000 - 8,000 B.C. It represents an extension of Style III and it is fairly hard to determine where the one stops and the other begins.

From this period dates the bulk of decorated objects ("objets mobiliers"): pendants; staffs; spearthrowers; spatulas and discs. The animals depicted on these objects show great similarities with corresponding cave decorations, and as most "objets mobiliers" were found in datable strata, they are useful guides to cave decoration. A good example is the stone plaques from La Colombière. Their very intricately engraved lines, executed on top of each other reminds one of the engravings in Les Trois Frères. Despite the profusion of lines, the animals are easily recognizable. On the 10 pebbles we find a horse/bison, reindeer and rhinoceros theme which seems to correspond with the usual cave pairing, although we have no knowledge of how these pebbles were originally placed.

With the late Magdalenian the reindeer makes its reappearance on decorated objects and cave walls. Horns and antlers of all animals are now treated in "normal" perspective, and there is generally a striving towards greater realism. Horses have a double shoulderline and wavy modelling of the belly, and they usually appear in movement. Although the manes of bison are exaggerated the quadrangular signs become complex clawiforms, and male signs end up as grouped dots. (Illustration 6c and b; E & D)

Beautifully decorated harpoons appear with finely engraved rows of teeth. Both harpoons and decorated objects were found in well dated strata) In the decoration of the spearthrowers, Magdalenian man achieved as much dexterity as in the decoration of caves. These were usually carved out of reindeer antlers and had to conform to the natural shape of the antler. On a spearthrower from La Madeleine, a bison's head is turned backwards in order to fit in. Its mane is presented by means of beautifully hatched lines, decoration is now an important feature, although it never detracts from the power of representation. On another example from La Madeleine a crouching feline is depicted, its body decorated with a multitude of fine, flowing lines. Nevertheless, the general characteristics of this pose are retained in the lowered neck and on the arching hump, which accords with typical Style IV characteristics.

The engravings at Teyjat were discovered by Denis Peyrony in 1903, and are usually considered as an important guideline to the late Magdalenian. The first composition in the cave consists of a horse/bison pairing, and they are accompanied by a number of reindeer, stags and hinds. Following these are some bison/horse, horse/reindeer groupings, and finally on a vertical slab, some beautifully executed oxen, following a horse. These oxen are engraved in a fine unhesitant line, and shows all the assuredness of the late Magdalenian. The legs are properly attached to the body and drawn in fine detail, and the horns appear in normal profile. The decorations at Teyjat are well within the daylight zone of the cave, and clearly indicates the movement back to the cave mouth, which took place towards the end of Period IV.

The rock friezes at La Chaire à Calvin and Cap Blanc show many characteristics of Style IV. In the course of unearthing Cap Blanc, great damage was caused because the existence of the frieze was unknown to its excavators. Nevertheless, this hardly subtracts from its beauty. It was carved within a natural shelter, and the light pouring in from above must have created a wonderful interplay of light and shade. What strikes us at first glance is the different levels upon which the animals had been carved. They move with great freedom through an unlimited space. We find ample example here of realism and abstraction existing side by side. Several of the animals fuse and become a different specie.

The frieze starts from the left with an unrecognizable head and it is followed by a horse, which has a ring carved over its back. This looks like the hump of a bison. A bison's profile is also faintly visible on the horse's cheek. The ears of the horse replaced the bison's horns. The horse's back is linked to the rock by means of a triangular wedge of stone, and underneath this is the hindquarters of an ibex. Following upon the first horse is a second whose hindquarters recedes behind that of the first. Near to is two hardly visible bowines. Under them is a horse which seems to grow out of a man-made hollow in the rock, which is flattened around its neck. The faintly visible outlines of 2 bison can be seen on this horse. The next group is a fusion of rock surface and hardly visible animals. On close examination we discern 2 horses facing the right and the hindquarters of a bison, out of which the first horse emerges. In front of the second horse is the hindquarters of an animal, its body disappearing behind the horse. Underneath these horses are 2 faintly visible bison. Once again an example of Palaeolithic grouping. Cap Blanc, with the cavern of Commarque, is usually considered as transitory between the Middle and Late Magdalenian periods.

The most important caves from this period are Rouffignac, Commarque, Les Combarelles, Les Trois Frères and Le Tuc d'Audoubert, Font de Gaume, Marsoulas, Montespan and Niaux.

Niaux is a typical middle to late Magdalenian cave, and the decorations extend 1,400 yards beyond the entrance where Niaux merges with the Lombravines caves. Niaux is divided into the entrance Gallery; the Gallery of Cave-Ins; the "Salon Noir"; and finally the Inner gallery which contains the Green- and Terminal lakes.

The Entrance Gallery is rich in red signs which cover an area of over 100 yards. These signs continue up to an intersection, where the Gallery of Cave-Ins split off to the left. These entrance signs lead our eye towards the major galleries. Thus they serve the dual purpose of not only indicating direction, but also of pairing with female signs and thus representing the male.

A corridor leads into the "Salon Noir" and the Inner Gallery. The "Salon Noir" starts with a large panel covered with dots, clariforms and circles. Next follows 2 groups of engraved figures consisting of a bison/horse and ibex pairing. Here we find a sign not hitherto seen. It consists of a circular shape with 5 rounded perforations at the top and is probably another of the abstract female symbols. Paired signs lead to the Inner Gallery. The main composition is divided into 6 panels. On the 1st panel is a bison and an ibex. The bison is headless and has several "arrow wound-marks" and the ibex is accompanied by spearsigns, typical of Period III. (See illustration no. 6b B)

On the floor between the first and second panels, figures are drawn in the clay. The 2nd panel contains black painted figures and is subdivided into a pediment, an arch, an entablature and a semi-dome. On the pediment we find 4 bison, of which 3 are headless. Figures without heads frequently appear in cave art, and it is not always easy to explain their meaning. (At Montespan the statue of a headless bear was found accompanied by a bear's skull, which might have been attached to its neck. The bison on the pediment are accompanied by 2 ibexes and some signs of which most are "woundmarks". On the Arch is 3 bison and a horse painted in black. This is repeated on the entablature. The semi-dome contains 2 more headless bison. Nearby is a hollow in the rock surface and this vulva-like shape had been surmounted by one of the supreme male symbols, 2 ibex horns. The other panels continue the typical horse/bison and ibex theme, accompanied by signs, and the last panels ends with 2 fishes, probably representing the usual male signs which mark the end of a section. These figures are extremely lifelike and the use of line is assured and expressive. Features like eyes and manes, are drawn in fine detail and horns appear in normal perspective. All features of Period IV.

We now turn our attention towards the Inner Gallery, which eventually links up with the Lombravines Caves. At the entrance of the Gallery is an interesting collection of signs, consisting of clariforms and dots, as well as 2 circles of dots, each having a

9

dot in the centre. Next to these signs is a bison in vertical position. The gallery continues with a series of human footprints which were imbedded in the soft clay. These footprints seem to lead to a bison drawn on the clay floor. On the wall, near the bison, are a series of male barbed signs, accompanied by a horse. The drawing of the bison on the floor exemplifies one of the highest achievements of Palaeolithic art. Water dripping from the ceiling had made large hollows on the drawing and man fully utilized these as wounds, accompanying them by arrow marks. Every single line in the drawing of the bison serves a purpose. The variation between thick and thin and the different angles of the lines create a wonderful interplay between light and shade. The mane is vigorously drawn in spikelike lines and the back rises sharply from the tail and becomes part of a crack in the mud. Beyond the bison we find the 2 lakes, a few more figures and a group of paired signs. The evidence of footprints might suggest a ritual taking place here.

At the end of the Magdalenian era ± 8,000 B.C., cave art seems to disappear. The Mesolithic has up to date not shown any evidence of decorated caves. Rock shelters on the east coast of Spain have a great affinity with those at Tassili in the Sahara, as well as with Bushman art. There is the same vigorous sense of movement. Hunters are depicted either fighting their enemies or in the pursuit of animals. These similarities could be explained by the evidence of an isthmus which existed at Gibraltar, linking Europe and Africa. These paintings and decorations all depict man in a new role, that of the conquerer. With the end of European prehistory the animal had lost its elevated position. "Man's" transition from a zoomorphic attitude towards the world to an anthropomorphic attitude constituted the most profound revolution experienced in his destiny. This was the beginning in the separation of man from animal, of creature from creature: the beginning of man's gradual separation from the world in which he was embedded and whose rhythms permeated his being this process of separation probably brought about by the force of circumstances opened the way to man's alienation from those natural laws which govern every living being. Man was uprooted from the natural world order" (Giedion, The Eternal Present" Völ. 1 page 272)

ooooOoooo

... and the ...

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS:

- ANTON F. - The Art of Ancient Peru, published by Thames and Hudson.
- ART OF THE WORLD - The Stone Age by Bandi, Breuil, Holm, L'Hote and Lommel - published by Metheun.
- BERGER J. - A Painter of our time - published by Penguin
- BATAILLE G. - Lascaux and the Birth of Art - published by Skira.
- BLEEK W.H.I. and LYODD - Bushman Folklore - published by George Allen and Co. Ltd.
- BREUIL ABBÉ H. - Four Hundred Centuries of Cave Art - published by Centre d'Études et de Documentation Préhistoriques/ Montignac 1952.
- CARPENTER, VARLEY, FAHERTY - Eskimo - published by University of Toronto Press.
- CHARBONNIER G. - Conversations with Claude Lévi - Strauss - published by Jonathan Cape Editions.
- CLARCK HOWELL F. - Early Man, Life Nature Library - published by Time Life International.
- COOMARASWAMY ANANDA K. - The Transformation of Nature in Art. - published by Dover Publications.
- DIÓZEGI V. - Tracing Shamans in Siberia - published by Anthropological Publications.
- DOUGLAS F. & D'HARNCOURT RENÉ - Indian Art of the United States - published by Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- FRASER D. - The Many Faces of Primitive Art - published by Prentice Hall Inc.
- FREUD S. - Totemism, Civilization and its discontents - published by Hogarth Press.
- GARCIA L.P., GALLOWAY J. LOMMEL A - Prehistoric Primitive Art. - published by Thames and Hudson.
- GIEDION S. - The Eternal Present
Volume 1 - The Beginnings of Art
Volume 11 - The Beginnings of Architecture
published by Oxford University Press.
- HENRI R. - The Art Spirit-published by J.B. Lippincott Company
- JUNG - Man and his Symbols - published by Aldus.
- KHAN H.I. - The Sufi Message Vols. 1, 1V & X - published by Barrie and Rockliff.
- KLEINGELDER F. - Animals in Art and Thought - published by Rontledge & Kegan Paul
- KUPKA K. - Dawn of Art. Paintings and Sculpture of the Australian Aborigines - published by Angus and Robertson.

- LANG A. - Myth, Ritual and Religion - two volumes - published by Longmans Green and Co.
- LEROI-GOURHAN A. - The Art of Prehistoric Man in Europe - published by Thames and Hudson
- LÉVI-STRAUSS C. - The Raw and Cooked - published by Jonathan Cape.
- Totemism - published by Beacon Press
- The Savage Mind - published by University of Chicago Press
- LÉVY-BRUHL L. - Primitive Mentality - published by George Allen and Unwin
- The Soul of the Primitive - published by George Allen and Unwin.
- MACALISTER R.A.S. - The Archaeology of Ireland - published by Methuen
- MARSHACK A. - The Roots of Civilization - published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- MIDDLETON J. (Edited by) - Myth and Cosmo - published by National History Press
- MOULIN - Prehistoric Painting - published by Frank and Wagnalls, New York.
- NIETZSCHE F. - The Philosophy of - edited by G. Clive - published
- PAGER H. - Ndedema - A documentary of the Rock paintings of the Ndedema Gorge - published by Akademische Druck. Graz/Austria.
- QUENELL M. & C.H.B. - Everyday life in Prehistoric Times - published by B.T. Batsford Ltd.
- SANDERS N.K. - Prehistoric Art in Europe - published by Pelican.
- TORBRÜGGE WALTER - Prehistoric European Art - published by Harry N. Abrahams.
- WATTS ALAN W. - Nature, Woman and Man - published by Thames and Hudson.
- YUTANG LIN - The Wisdom of Lao-Tse - published by Modern Library, New York.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

LAROUSSE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MYTHOLOGY - published by Paul Hamlyn.

LAROUSSE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PREHISTORIC AND ANCIENT ART - published by Paul Hamlyn.

MAGAZINES AND PUBLICATIONS

COURIER - DECEMBER 1965: Primitive Art.

DISCOVERING ART : PRIMITIVE ART NOS. 1 - 12

MAGAZINE FOR ART AND SCIENCE. August 1972.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BLOEMFONTEIN PUBLICATIONS:

A PREHISTORIC EUROPEAN BANTU CULTURE IN THE LYDENBURG DISTRICT by Dr. I.R.E.N.C. van Hoepen M.I.

THE BUSHMAN AND HIS CULTURE by Dr. I.R.E.N.C. van Hoepen M.I.

WITCHES : An Inaugural lecture delivered at Rhodes University 1954 by Prof. P. Mayer.

ooooOoooo