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Pour tout ce qui concerne la rédaction du

**BULLETIN
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VARIA

Homage to C. Bicknell

**ROCK CARVINGS OF THE MERVEILLES
AND LITTORAL ARIDITY**

by

L. BARRAL and S. SIMONE

*Belief in Promised Land becomes alpine
poverty, whereas the Coast was hungry...*

As you know, among the known wholes of ancient rock carvings, one of the most famous is located in the northern part of eastern Alpes-Maritimes.

In this area of Alpes-Maritimes – from Nice to Vintimille – the Alps, when they raise above the Mediterranean, make a wall, sometimes steep, looked for a long time as impassable along the coastline. The first road was built only about 1870. The cliffs of the mounts Boron and Alban, Cap-Roux, Èze, Cap-d'Ail, Vistaero, Grimaldi plunge steeply into the sea, from the altitude 100m. Mounts Leuze and Bastide, La Revère, Tête de Chien, Pointe de l'Arme, Gros (between 500 and 680m. up) stand slightly in the background (1,500m. from the coastline as the crow flies).

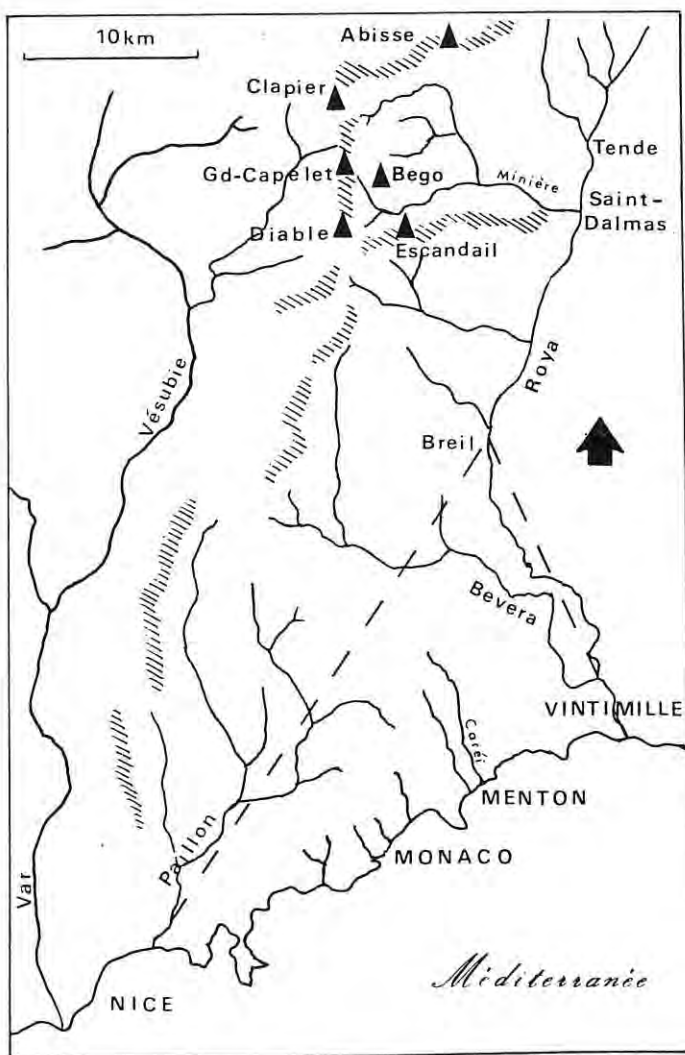
Very happily, this redoubtable first step is cut by torrents running down towards the sea, so the penetration towards the hinterland is less difficult. From W to E, we find the following mountain streams: the Paillon, the gully of Saint-Laurent, the Gaumates, the Noix, the Ramengao, the Borrigo, the Caréi, the Roya... The small torrents between Paillon and Roya rivers may appear as secondary ones, but they form a lucky breach through this "Mediterranean wall".

The Roya torrent is a royal way to go towards the Merveilles; it has its spring near by the pass of Tende (1,871 m.).

From this redoubtable littoral step, the maritime Alps, by set of great scarps, raise towards jagged tops – Gélas, 3,143 m.; Clapier, 3,045 m.; Roche de l'Abisse, 2,755 m. – which constitute the watershed between France and Italy.

LOCATION

The geographic data of rock carvings area may be better specified: its septentrional boundaries are the Abisse (2,755 m.), the Scandaillière (2,705 m.), the Clapier (3,045 m.); its western boundaries are the Grand-Capelet (2,935 m.), the Merveilles mount (2,720 m.), the Cime du Diable (2,685 m.); its southern boundaries



are the Macruera (2,556 m.), the Escandail (2,454 m.), the Corne de Bouc (2,414 m.). Towards the E, this huge cirque, drained by the Minière torrent and its tributaries (Valmasque, Castérine, Fontanalbe, Merveilles), is connected with the Roya stream. So, we understand that the ordinary way of penetration follows this stream course. In this cirque (about: 50 km²), archaeological area (*Merveilles* s.l.), is divided into four sites: from S to N, the Merveilles, Vallaurette, Fontanalbe, Sabbione (area: about 12 km²).

Geologically, the area is made by the SE ending of the crystalline block of Mercantour, the sedimentary cover of which, during Alpine orogenesis, makes the folds of Nice and Roya arcs.

SUPPORTS OF CARVINGS

Slabs with glacial polish – rubbed and worn by moving ice of glaciers – were the supports of carvings.

It is not wonderful, as glaciations are presently well-known, that areas, located between 2,000 m. and 3,000 m. up or more, have been recently glaciated (11,000 years before present or B.P.). Owing to study of moraines and peat-bogs, we know that the snow-line was located about 2,000 m. up.

The deglaciation, begun since 10,000 years B.P., has cleared away the area where carvings are found (between 2,000 m. and 2,600 m. up). During this glacial recession, and very classically, ice-smoothed rocks, boulder heaps, rock bars and overdeepened glacial basins, alignments of glacial lakes, scratched slabs and polished slabs progressively occur. These slabs, ideal supports for carvers, perfectly fit when they are made by homogeneous fine-grained rocks. Their scratches and irregularities of surface are slightly greater than deepness and other features of the carvings. The percussion, neither but little crushes them, nor constellate them with impacts, the cutting does not make flakes inside the groove.

Polished slabs of the Merveilles s.l.: schists, fine sandstones or pelites (violet to green coloured, with yellow-orange patina), are very suitable, but of course, there are other suitable rocks in this region. In some measure, permian sequences of Inferno and Merveilles s.s. largely occur only in the SE ending of Mercantour, but younger palaeozoic sequences (Bego s.s., Capeirotto), more exposed towards the W, would also have been carved.

At Fontanalbe, as it was observed with our colleagues J.-F. Bussièrre, S. Primard and P. Simon, drawings very frequently decorate the bedding planes of layers, even they dip in the opposite side to mount Bego.

So, obviously, gravings seem to be located in the Merveilles s.l. area, not owing to its suitable petrographic support, but owing mysterious ins and outs.

The Merveilles have not the privilege to present peculiar rocks

or frequent terrifying thunder-storms, to be the lair of vipers or the most beautiful and imposing mountains. Anyone who has inhabited in mountainous area, likes it for its beautiful scenery, and knows that about 2,000-3,000 m. up, it is more advisable to have a raincoat and Quires balls for the ears. There are vipers, as elsewhere.

The Merveilles, beyond their masterful peculiarity, i.e. to support carvings, are also characterized by many mephitic names: lake and summit of Devil, of Trem, Valmasque, Maledia, Val d'Enfer, Corne de Bouc... This sulfurous toponymy is partly the remnant of the struggle leaded by medieval belief against pagan rites, as everywhere in the christianized world.

Then, we begin to wonder why Man came here, than elsewhere, to do its carvings. We shall later examine this point.

So, it is not possible to testify – according to habit – that our ancestors would have especially choose the Merveilles to do carvings on rocks owing to their irresistible lure. Nothing, except the view towards the Bego from the bridge located to the mouth of the Roya (Vintimille, Italy). Indeed, but it is not the only mount. From this bridge, during propitious seasons, a snowy massif and at least three summits may be seen: the Grand-Capelet (2,935 m.), the Bego (2,872 m.), l'Escandail (2,454 m.). The first two summits are outlined on the horizon; the third one stands out in front of the Bego, and is less discernible owing to its white colour.

The foreigners perhaps may be surprised by the importance granted to the bridge across the Roya (Vintimille), but as it is the keystone of the arguments assigning a holy nature to the Bego, it seems useful to us to say it. Indeed, the view towards the Bego – 40 km. away as the crow flies – uneasy by many high obstacles, is a kind of topographic miracle, the aura of which suffuses the mountain!

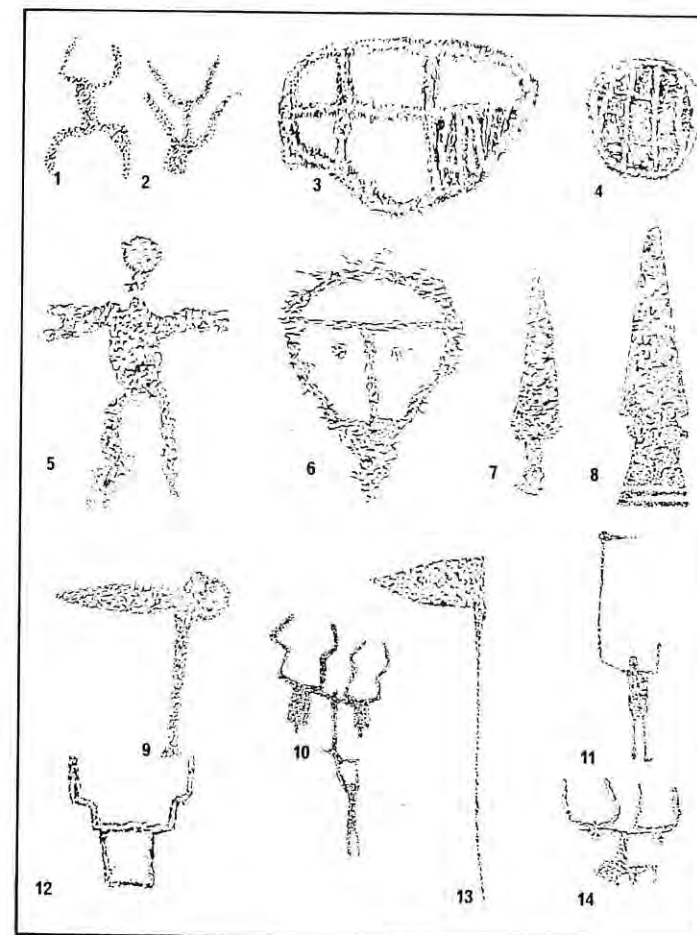
CARVINGS

Presently (1987), more than 100,000 carvings have been counted. This census, realizable only when the snow is molten (end of june to end of october), was carried out, with worthiness (because this exciting work is inseparable of adjoining servitudes: long walkings, glacial nights, lack of groceries), by: C. Bicknell, the discoverer, who has recorded 14,000 carvings since 1885 to 1918; C. Conti who has recorded 40,000 carvings *in situ*, and subdivided the area in twenty zones, since 1927 to 1942; H. and M.-A. de Lumley, M.-E. Fonvielle, J. Abelanet and co-workers who have recorded 100,000 carvings, noted with a very sophisticated method (orientation and description of slabs, determination of styles, possible superimpositions), since 1967.

So many carvings might be subdivided in many classes. Or, nothing of the kind. C. Conti, the most generous discoverer, counts

12 classes; C. Bicknell finds 8 classes. Without distorting these works, the 12 or 8 classes are easily regrouped into 4. With H. de Lumley, so we keep four iconographic topics: animals (only horns), weapons and tools, Anthropomorpha, geometric shapes.

According to H. de Lumley, 30,000 among the 100,000 carvings may not be identified. Among the 70,000 identified, we find 75% hornshaped, single (12) or composite: hardnessed (10,14), opposite (1), fitted in (2); 11% of weapons and tools: daggers (7,8), scythes (13), halberds (9), axes, sickles; 1% of Anthropomorpha and praying figures (5, 6, 11); 14% of geometric shapes: circles, rectangles, scalariforms, reticulated (3,4). What about the others? There are lonely or aligned punctuations, bars or wholes of scattered or juxtaposed points. But these indeterminable carvings are at least 30,000 !...



Presently, we must note that the classification into categories, classes, topics of C. Bicknell (1885) is as good (after some days of work) as the present one, after a century of research.

It would seem, with a first approach, that a too much easier identification of the mark, semiologically speaking, ends to the loss of the status of the mark. According to F. de Saussure, the mark would be conceived as : *an entity with two faces, having a significans (its graphic shape) and a signification (the depicted concept) linked by a conventional connection* (G. and S. Sauvet, A. Włodarczyk). But what subtle distinction may be done when the significans is a pair of horns (a cuckold ?) or a dagger (the death ?)... Therefore, the meaning may be altered by a too great easiness.

TECHNICS AND STYLES

On the whole : *The carvings are composed of small cupules made by hammering on the rock with a tool having a stony or metallic blunt point. Cupules are more or less rounded: their diameter and deepness vary from 1 to 5 mm* (H. de Lumley and B. Pichard).

Have been observed :

- the whole sight of the carving : graphic quality, regularity of the outlines, contours of the edges ;
- features of the cupules : shape, deepness, size, laying out ;
- features of near environment ;

H. de Lumley has shown four different styles of carving.

Is there a chronologic meaning in these styles ? Works in progress, at the *Laboratoire de paléontologie humaine et de préhistoire de l'université de Provence* probably will precise that point. Presently, it seems that the oldest shows the following features : a good drawing ; regular edges ; very small, contiguous, rounded, shallow (deepness : 0,5 to 1 mm.) cupules. Predominating topics : hornshaped and daggers, with equal frequencies. The most recent shows : neglected drawing ; irregular contours (burrs) ; spaced cupules, sometimes oval, deep (1 to 3 mm.). Essential topics : hornshaped, reticulated. This evolution towards laxism characterizes not sustained impulses.

We do not count linear cuttings - they were discovered by C. Conti (1940), and were described by G. Isetti (1965) -. H. de Lumley and J. Abelanet have shown that they are more recent than dotted carvings.

Moreover, E. Bernardini and G. Vicino (1973) have found pictures with red ochre, mentioned by G. Martino, in a shelter of the Val d'Enfer.

AGE AND DURATION

The carvings are as old as the objects represented, but no more. Now, according to H. de Lumley and B. Pichard : *The greatest part of the figurations of carved tools noted in the Merveilles valley agrees with weapons typical of civilizations of old Bronze : halberd, dagger with a short triangular blade, dagger with an elongated triangular blade, dagger with a massive haft. And further : Comparison between carved tools of the Merveilles valley and weapons discovered in archaeological sites therefore allows to date the great majority of carvings of old Bronze, between 1800 and 1600 before J.C. (3,800-3,600 B.P.).*

But after, this huge glyptic stock (even there are 200,000 marks rather than 100,000) is diluted inside the analysis. During two centuries of work, from July to October, there were about 20,000 workable days for gravers of Bego ; there was only one carving done by day for five gravers. Whatever the method of counting and whatever the duration may be, output by time unit stayed very weak.

Therefore, the greatest part of carvings would be dated of old Bronze. Without giving as precise indications, the material collected by C. Conti during diggings of Gias del Ciari (1942) : lithic industry, ceramics, metallic chips, shows that the shelter was inhabited during the Bronze Age.

INS AND OUTS

So is disposed the mineral setting of a probably new sketch.

When *M. le Trouhadec* "began to have a debauched life" ? Probably, is it a question of adequate hollow ? Very known, the Merveilles have many gentlemen in waiting. For us, however citizens of our dear Alpes-Maritimes and prehistorians, the pleasure to study the Merveilles is backward, because it is very recently that we have had the hope to consult the drawings of in situ carvings, C. Conti one's. The generous assent given by Mrs. G. Freschi-Conti to our request of consultation gives us great hopes for further studies (classification of marks, analysis of correspondences...). So, we think very much Mrs. G. Freschi-Conti for its kindness.

But, it is not enough to describe and to note, we must also have an hypothesis of research. Some time ago, we have found this assumption : as every organism, the Man, linked to its environment, accepts an idea, and after, had to discern it. He embraces it if the moment is propitious. The more often, the trace is ill-followed. Here, it would seem that our conception arises from connection : Bronze Age-present climate.

Already, since 1964, M. Louis and G. Isetti have connected : Bronze Age-dry period. They have not made an inference such our one's but however we must remember of their pertinent remark :

Indeed, everybody knows that the Bronze Age has been a very dry period, which has forced some populations to emigrate towards more hospitable areas.

The mount Bego, owing to its location, its altitude and also its relatively easy access by adjoining dales, has been probably considered as a beneficent goddess, who distributed this essential water to supply cattle with drink, and for many green pastures on its slopes.

But grass and water may be found elsewhere than the Bego, and besides, a massive migration is problematic; this convenient interpretation seemed so easy that it is not better explained presently. With this peaceful expedient, ideas of the neighbour are willingly valorized...

Indeed, the Merveilles s.l., between 2,000 m. and 2,600 m. up, deglaciated at least since 8,000 B.P., have only interested the carver about 4,000 B.P. Why the artistic interest for this mount, which since always may be seen from the mouth of the Roya river, has been only feeled at that time, and why it did not last intensely more than 200 years? Now, the climate has reached the present optimum about 4,000 B.P., and the littoral area of the eastern Alpes-Maritimes is become definitively semi-arid, as presently, at least until the beginning of the next ice-age!...

Now, let us study the distribution of plants.

PLANT ENVIRONMENT

It is necessary to plot the present areas of vegetation, and owing to the published works of J.-L. de Beaulieu, J.-C. Duplessy, J. Labeyrie, J. Miskovsky, M. Ters... about changes of post-glacial climates, to reconstitute the distribution of the plants of the Côte d'Azur for times older than 4,000 B.P. – more precisely between 8,000 and 4,000 B.P.

Present stages of vegetation between the Merveilles and the Coast.

The studied mountainous area has none permanent glacier – the last known within living memory was on the northern slope of the Gélas mount; the present snow-line is located about 3,000 m. up. With fluctuations, according to northern and southern slopes of mounts, there are:

- From 3,000 m. to 2,200 m., the alpine stage, area of meadows with fescues, potentillas..., with swampy lakes. It is the best area for estival grazing of flock, cows and sheeps. On rocky walls, screes, artemisias and saxifrages grow – *Saxifraga florentula*, specific of Alpes-Maritimes, is the conventional sign of the Mercantour National Park.
- Between 2,200 and 1,700 m. up, the subalpine stage and its coniferous forests: pines, firs, larchs, junipers... with clearings in which rhododendrons grow.

- From 1,700 to 800 m., the hilly-mountainous stage, with deciduous forests: chesnut-trees, beechs, oaks, yoke-elms-hops... grasses of underwood and cereal plants.
- The littoral belt, under 800 m., with its typically mediterranean vegetation: olive-tree, carob-tree, fig-tree, holm-oak, pistachio-tree... In this area, there are many fallows, moors and garrigues; instead, arable lands, good or scanty pastures are scarce. Happily, bovines and sheeps do not graze them very much.

How were the vegetation stages at the end of the glacial times, and during the climatic change towards the presente climate?

The Coast, during post-glacial time, between 8,000 and 4,000 B.P.

At the beginning of the post-glacial time, i.e. 8,000 years ago, the snow-line was about 2,000 m. up. As nearby the glaciers the flora does not change, step by step, a simplistic explanation would attribute, without appeal, the present features of the next upper vegetation stage (hilly-mountainous stage) to the littoral belt.

In this time, the Côte d'Azur perhaps was not as the Savoie, owing to the maritime climate, but it was not as much arid as presently! Chesnut-trees, durmast-oaks, beech-trees, norway-pines grew. Animals and people lived, except in the feast – here, only the sun always carouses – but with a wise temperatness, racial feature of the Ligure dictated by a rocky environment.

About 6,000 B.P., the domestication was well settled in our area, as the remains of goats, sheeps, oxen, dogs found in the fillings of local caves (Castellar, Repaire, Barriéra, Spélugues...) show it; cattle grazed in littoral meadows and underwoods during winter, and in low-altitude meadows during summer.

Year after year, slowly as glaciers retreat and consequent warming, the climate was damaged, the boundaries of the hilly-mountainous stage climb up, and a part of the littoral fringe disappeared when the sea-level rised (20 m. during 4,000 years). This transformation may be well noticed in Provence area, especially in the La Couronne village (Bouches-du-Rhône) in which, in four hundred years (4,500-4,100 B.P.), the forest disappeared and was replaced by a steppic landscape. According to J. Miskovsky, who quotes M. Escalon de Fonton: *We may suppose that the drying of the climate and the exhaustion of the soil have forced the inhabitants to desert their village to find better lands.*

During that time, in every place of the southern Alps, the critical threshold of aridity was reached: garrigue with holm-oaks overgrows the Côte d'Azur, and oxen-farming becomes more and more difficult.

THE CÔTE D'AZUR ABOUT 4,000 YEARS B.P.

The climate of the Côte d'Azur, advancing towards present features – especially between the Var and the Roya valleys – would be more and more nice, if our ancestors have had enough food... but they had to eat, if possible everyday, and their cattle had to be fed.

Here, as elsewhere, everybody was stock-breeder and farmer – since thousands of years – so a minimum of economic security was granted, but it was a very tiring work. Presently, somebody dreams that he is always stock-breeder and farmer, but this hard work is effectively made by others: he dreams also that it was always so. Yes, indeed, the idleness has always existed, but, recently, for the one who have neither cattle, nor plot of ground – which needs unceasing work – it was necessary to take up again the bow and arrows, and also the fuscine and the dagger for the patellas (if he had one!)... or to thief at the expense of the sedentary people!

When we were children, our mothers could not leave during a long time, because they had to fatten up fowls and rabbits. So, they were fastened at home. This food must be enough plentiful to be furnished as provender to pigs, sheeps, oxen. The cattle, symbol of wealth and power, requires rich pasture-lands, true forage instead of straw. Not so long ago, an ancestor put green spectacles on its cow... Now, standing grass or hay became very rare about 4,000-3,900 B.P.

To be sure, since a long time, except since always – according to the old men – supplies of cattle were connected to migrations between winter pastures, near by the sea-shore, and summer pastures, set up more higher (through the valleys or small gullies). But, owing to an unusual drying, the pastures were more and more peeled, so that transhumance became almost useless. Was the exhaustion of the cattle, the only wealth, inevitable? Was the failure of a presumed everlasting system ineluctable? Had the people to die standing? In many littoral or continental areas, agriculture and stock-farming were threaten to disappear. On the whole there was a matchless economic slump...

Of course, travellers said that, in the western shorelines (Var) or toward the eastern area (across the Roya river), the conditions were less dramatic. When there is a shortage towards the boundaries, the scarcity was severe between Nice and Menton (to compare with epoch 1939-1944). But to go beyond the Var and Roya valleys, people had to cross vertical walls, with cattle... More, these littoral areas were inhabited by autochthons – very wicked people! – and by their cattle-wild bulls, and in spite of their courage, it was not possible to eject them in the whole.

Moreover, nobody thinks to leave its poor hut, and its piece of land, except the misbeliever. Only the present stay-at-home type, who says anything, or the uncommon adventurer, who compares everything with himself, believes that all our ancestors emigrated when there was a disaster.

To forsake one's piece of land!... Of course, with the drying up of the springs, the crop was poor... The old women, themselves, armed with a staff to dig, shirk one's job. Goodbye vetches, water-cress, beans, green peas and *mongettes*! In the plots of grounds, rye and corn still grow up, but the ears were sickly and sparse, because the stony and very hard soil has a low content of saps.

The dispenser of emetic-purgative herbs – a vagabond by trade – assured that upper, very upper, there was huge arable lands and that usually the ox was yoked to a kind of heavy plough – a very rare process in the Coast, owing the exiguity of plots of lands – and that, during spring and summer, grass plentifully grew up, so much it was possible to be lost among it, as in the open sea. Of course, this gatherer-dispenser of herbs knew how to eject parasite worms, to stop the colic, to cure a constipation. So, it was possible to believe him.

All right! As it was necessary, people would emigrate towards upper lands. Well, the most adventurer would go towards upper lands. Indeed, these upper lands were inhabited but, according to the dispenser of herbs, the inhabitants were less wicked than the eaters of spinach beets or nearby eaters of prickly pears (*figuns*); moreover, he proposed to be the guide, if cured meat and suckling sheep were given to him. It was a far area, he says, and it was suitable to test the endurance of the cattle.

With the Adventurer I, some young cows and goats, they start on one's way. Very soon, it seems to Adventurer I that it was not possible. He was not afraid by the mountain. On the Coast, every yokel fatigues, owing to the disposition: *Back against the Alps, in front of the Tethys...* but he did not like to drive the cattle in an unknown area and to miss its evening soup. Nevertheless, he persevered.

They met many animals, in green meadows, and much rye on a black soil. There were many great plentiful meadows, but when the lean herd stopped, vociferating people suddenly appears from everywhere, with a surprising manner. Chiefly, the goats exasperate them! Presently, chesnuds and olives decay on the ground, but it is forbidden to collect them!...

The inhabitants of middle land were worthy men, but they do not want that the cattle tramples down soil and eats the crops. They eject them far upper.

Furthermore, according to the guide, upper, population was more scarce. And along tracks, and across scarps, Adventurer I and its guide began the laying-out of the first itineraries. Then, according to the habit, there is nightfall... They press very close together against the goats. These capricious animals, as their name points out, may be also comprehensive... At the dawn, they start out again to upper lands.

At last, they came into huge pastures, as far as the eye can reach with everywhere gleaming water, and heaps of huge boulders which

astound even the mountaineer. How to find one's way? The Adventurer I carves a mark... the first of the 100,000 others. The last man who knew it is dead about 614 A.D. Do you believe that?

When they came back home, they related their achievements. Some people believe them. Anyhow, month after month, other people follow the tracks.

Whatever the way followed, the Paillon valley, the small gullies or the Roya valley, they climb and go down to climb again, or they always climb, but always they lead to the mark or to its neighbourhood. So, whatever the place from which they started, they went towards upstream between Paillon and Roya, always towards the inevitable mark.

It was possible to climb up more higher, to reach the jagged summits, but grass was scanty. Beyond the mountains, downward, there was a huge plain. Soon, some people maintain that men have been seen climbing from that plain. They were few, but they climb. It was said that they were like haunches of he-goats, and so that they had only one eye!

With time, there was a greater crowd, and people of littoral areas agree, without agreement with middle people, that, for the intermediary halts, they had to clearly declare (*bandire*, in Italian) where their cattle had pastured – as far as possible – and to undertake to no divagate too much in the future... so everybody would have a pasture. So, we interpret, perhaps unthinkingly, the origin of some rights of *bandite* (pasture rights). The specificity of that right of *bandite*, in the only county of Nice, existing since ever, seems to be a propitious argument for our thesis. These rights, which have caused damages to the ground landlord, have been abolished only in 1963! To maintain a right, nowhere registered, during thousands of years, might seem quite stupid, except if one reminds that the shepherd has always been pushed ahead at the expense of the farmer.

CONJECTURES AND REALITIES

Therefore, obviously, these high lands were the kingdom of gods of grass and water. *So, our ancestors knew how to interpret the shapes and the events of the nature as the result of kindly or adverse but never indifferent and never completely extraneous strenghts* (J. Monod). The present success of the astrology shows that certainly nothing was changed.

So, the near danger seemed averted. In upper lands, animals had subsistence, food and drink for a long time, and there were huge and rich lands for the growing of the rye. But, if the occult powers suddenly decided to cast a bad fate such as the Coast's one (aridity)? One never knows, with the gods. Their ways are unfathomable. Doing nothing, oneself feels guilty. People had to try to gain their good will and to homage them.

Although our ancestors would not have a good meaning of time, they felt that the supplications and the prayers were very fugacious. They had to represent clearly the things which they wished to protect, in order that the Lord of the country would accept to look at them; and the promised in return things had also to be figured, with the unpretentiousness of human promises. So, they display all their wealths, facing to the sky, by carvings on the rocks, in order that the divine mansuetude should identify them: the animal (otherwise the master) to preserve of imminent total exhaustion, the field to preserve of a complete drying, and with less insistence, but without forget it, the peculiar homage that they wished to offer, i.e. the precious dagger!... It was an hypothetic gift, a true treasure, owned by very few people... and a dream for the others. But are the gods as much satisfied by a symbol as by a true gift?

And they made many carvings: hornshaped, reticulated, daggers, which were in a manner a kind of ex-voto. This latter displays the miraculous rescue, the favoured thing, and not the object of worship, as it is usually said; the offering is minimized: i.e. a burning candle, or the gift of some coins in the collecting-box.

According to this view, the worships for bull, reinder, ram, seem to be registered. In every kind of matter, there is at least a duet at the outset: the invisible protector (object of worship) and the "protected", which is shown (he offers the worship). It is possible that after they merge into one person. Is not one trio of famous example?

On the whole, we want to say that, whatever the symbols – nothing, except the habit, forces us to try to explain that – an iconographic feature, at least in its first stages, before the obliteration of its motives, wants exorcize the calamity or glorify the favour. Economic pressure has transformed man into an artist...

We want find some examples, among others, in a part of cuttings of Val Camonica, linked to deglaciation, with occurrence of swamps in the low valleys (E. Anati); in the chief features of rock drawings of Hoggar to Aïr connected with the drying of Sahara... beginning of desertification (J.-P. Roset)... In extreme situations, people who suffer too much, forced by the environment, try to find an answer.

So, with the aridification of the littoral (4,000 B.P.), the inhabitants of the Coast with carob-trees (between Paillon and Roya rivers), and their near neighbours, in danger, have emigrated towards the Merveilles to find pastures, and have carved the rocks.

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