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## PORTABLE ART AND PARIETAL ART OF THE ROC-AUX-SORCIERS (ANGLES-SUR-L'ANGLIN, VIENNE, FRANCE): Disparities or Common Meanings?

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The shelter of the Roc-aux-Sorciers is of outstanding interest for its monumental sculptures discovered in their archaeological context, and attributable to the Middle Magdalenian. Suzanne de Saint-Mathurin and Dorothy Garrod unearthed an abundance of archaeological material including several pieces of portable art. Hence parietal art and portable art are found together in the same archaeological context.

The study of the parietal art makes it possible to see several episodes in the production of these works. In the view of Suzanne de Saint-Mathurin, the wall saw a succession of motifs which began with the female figures and the bison, and then the ibex ousted the bison. The horses were made in two periods, one of them contemporaneous with the bison, and the other somewhat later. From the technical point of view, she points out that the fine engravings cover the reliefs. In the light of recent studies, we can now confirm the thematic sequence: woman/bison, horse/ibex. On the other hand, the sculptures cut into the parietal engravings. These successive interventions on the wall, both thematic and technical, can be compared with the stratigraphic context. Associated with the various occupations, a portable art “of non-technical use” has been brought to light, including statuettes and engraved objects which are for the most part on stone, such as plaquettes, slabs or blocks.

In this archaeological portable art, several blocks, engraved on every surface and/or with rounded edges can be considered to be mobiliary works. This is the case, for example, with the block bearing a feline head with its outline carved and the anatomical details finely engraved. Two other blocks, of similar size and shape, present primarily horses and reindeer within a confusion of finely engraved lines. Multiple incisions mark some anatomical details like the eyes, the edges of the ears and the coat. Another limestone fragment, which is very different due to its regular thickness and its very smoothed surface, which was discovered by Lucien Rousseau, bears numerous incisions in which one can read a mammoth figure, and a horse head, both of them small. This piece evokes the slabs of La Marche, but because of its morphology it appears to be a “flake” from the wall. The theme of the mammoth is found again on both sides of a small pebble that bears marks of percussion. Moreover, the engraved human figures recall those of La Marche.

Apart from these finely engraved limestone slabs, several limestone statuettes or carvings have been unearthed. One of the finished pieces is a small female statuette, found in the cave Taillebourg, and carved over its entire surface. Another carving was carefully shaped to depict the shape of an expressive bovid muzzle. A fragment from the abri Bourdois presents an unfinished

head with only the left ear carefully carved. Another stone from the cave Taillebourg, whose natural shape evokes an animal profile, has been enhanced with red ochre and white chalk. The interest in evocative natural shapes is also to be seen in the use of a fossil whose human morphology was noticed by the Magdalenians. It is a madrepora on which two eyes have been engraved and marked with black, thus emphasising the human interpretation of this curious object.

The parietal art and the portable art of the Roc-aux-Sorciers display the combined use of different techniques – engraving, sculpture and painting.

The themes and techniques may be the same, as is the case for the female figures, which are found both in monumental and miniature form.

Reindeer are only engraved, and always of identical size and with the same quality of detail on the wall as on the limestone blocks or slabs. The engraved parietal art and the portable art engraved on slab or block are perfectly coherent: same subjects depicted, partial figures (front end, isolated legs), same proportions. Are these engraved works contemporaneous?

The mammoth theme belongs to the category of fine engraving, but we cannot confirm that it is exclusive to the portable art because of its presence on a rock flake that may come from the wall.

The parietal art of the Roc-aux-Sorciers displays sculpture that is perfectly adapted to its support. It can also be the result of a major working of the wall, completely remodelling its original appearance to achieve the desired form.

The portable art includes finished sculpted forms, but also highlights the Magdalenians' particular interest in "pierres figures". This use of natural shapes is also found in Pyrenean Magdalenian sites such as Isturitz or Bédeilhac. Is this unceasing to-ing and fro-ing between reality and the imaginary not a characteristic of the artist at the origin of his creation?



Female statuette of the Roc-aux-Sorciers, height: 3.3 cm (© RMN, photo: T. Ollivier).





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