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PLEISTOCENE ART OF THE WORLD

Short articles



FOREWORD

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The Symposium sought to occasion new ideas and innovative research, to afford fresh theories and bold hypotheses together with unpublished information and recent discoveries relative to the study of Pleistocene Art in general and in particular to the philosophies and practices it implies. The Symposium thus has provided an open and fruitful opportunity to discuss the roles played by Iconography and Myth in Palaeolithic times. This has been obtained utilizing a multiplicity of perspectives and approaches, among which emerges the light which can be shed by insights from the anthropological study of peoples whose material life-styles and assimilated mentalities can be plausibly paralleled to those of our prehistoric forebears.

There is no third way beyond conscious or unconscious ethnocentrism. It must consequently be recognized that anthropology and archaeology with their respective categorizations of empirical reality (amongst which “Art” and “Prehistory”, “Ritual” and “Myth”) are pure products of recent Western history. This recognition, rendered creative as well as critical, could lead, far beyond the usual interdisciplinary syncretism, to radically new hermeneutical systems able to attribute less ambiguous meanings to the very terms under discussion such as “artistic production”, “the Pleistocene”, “prehistoric religion” and “hunter-gatherers”.

In particular, such issues as the following were debated:

- problems emerging with regard to the archaeological and anthropological documentation of art sites with special reference to palaeo-archaeo-anthropological data;
- the correlations, synchronic and diachronic, between palaeo-ethnocultural areas at different periods and in various places;
- the iconography of Pleistocene art as a reflection of prehistoric cultural representations;
- ceremonial aspects and underlying meanings of material culture; the possible role and function of Pleistocene art in keeping with eco-social-cultural changes;
- data from sites that are still in use, insofar as they can be related to Pleistocene art sites.





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Bilingual review of prehistory