



Rock Art as a Source of Knowledge For Ancient Maghreb
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Abstract:

The human sense of beauty is innate, and humans have expressed it in a way consistent with their natural instincts—a fact confirmed by anthropologists through their discovery of human art in archaeological sites. Nevertheless, humans were also driven by various motives to produce such artistic works. These motives may have included magical or ritual purposes, religious aims, the pursuit of art for art's sake, or other objectives that propelled humans toward artistic creation.

Humans have practiced the art of painting since the Mesolithic period, and this art spread widely across the world, most notably in North Africa, particularly in the lands of the ancient Maghreb, which constitute the focus of this study. Rock art extended from the Atlas Mountains in Morocco in the west to the Tadrart Acacus and Fezzan in Libya in the east, and as far as Jebel Uweinat on the Libyan–Sudanese border. A distinctive feature of the sites containing rock paintings and engravings in the Maghreb, compared to other regions of the world, is that they are generally found in open-air settings rather than in caves, with only a few exceptions.

Overall, this study aims to define artistic activity in general, to examine the nature and purposes behind the artworks created by humans of those prehistoric eras, and to provide a chronological classification of rock art in the Maghreb. It also seeks to highlight the role and significance of Maghrebian rock art in conveying a nearly complete picture of the prevailing way of life in these regions during prehistoric times.

Keywords: Rock Art, Rock Paintings, Religion, Woman, Dwelling, Agriculture.

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الرسوم الصخرية من مصادر معلومتنا عن بلاد المغرب القديمة

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الملخص:

إن الإحساس بالجمال شيء فطري داخل الإنسان عبر عنه على نحو مماثل لفطرته وذلك ما اثبتته الأثرولوجيون عند كشفهم عن فن الإنسان في المواقع الأثرية، ولكن وبالرغم من ذلك فقد كان للإنسان ما يدفعه لتنفيذ هذه الأعمال الفنية من ذلك مثلا أن يكون العمل الفني لغرض السحر والشعوذة أو أغراض دينية أو من أجل الفن نفسه أو غيرها من الاهداف التي دفعت الإنسان باتجاه الفن، وقد مارس الإنسان فن التصوير منذ العصر الحجري الوسيط وانتشر هذا الفن في بقاع واسعة من العالم وأهمها شمال إفريقيا وخصوصا بلدان المغرب القديم موضوع بحثنا، إذا انتشر الفن الصخري من جبال الأطلس في المغرب غربا وحتى تدارات أكاكوس وفي فزان في ليبيا شرقا وجبل العوينات على الحدود الليبية السودانية، ومن الأمور التي تميزت بها المواقع التي وجدت فيها الرسومات والنقوش الصخرية في بلدان المغرب عن غيرها من بقاع العالم أنها موجودة في الهواء الطلق وليس في الكهوف الا القليل منها، وعلى العموم فإن هذا البحث يهدف إلى التعريف بالعمل الفني بشكل عام وما هيته والأهداف من وراء الأعمال الفنية التي نفذها إنسان تلك العصور وكذلك تصنيف الفن الصخري في بلدان المغرب من الناحية الزمنية كما يهدف إلى إظهار دور الفن الصخري في بلدان المغرب القديم وأهميته في إيصال فكرة شبة كاملة عن نمط الحياة السائدة منذ عصور ما قبل التاريخ في هذه المناطق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفن الصخري، الرسومات الصخرية، الدين، المرأة، المسكن، الزراعة.

Introduction:

The countries of the ancient Maghreb (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) are among the most significant regions in the world where rock art—both rock paintings and engravings—was widely practiced. Through this art, humans in these areas were able to express their inner thoughts and convey a comprehensive picture to researchers and specialists about life at that time, encompassing religious beliefs, social practices, industry, and agriculture. These artworks also depict both wild and domesticated animals that lived in proximity to humans and were connected to their religious ideas, whether through veneration or through practical use in daily life.

Rock paintings, in many respects, served a role no less important than writing in documenting the life of ancient Maghrebian societies until the emergence of written records, which la

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ter complemented the story begun by rock art. Together, they narrate with remarkable precision the affairs of Maghrebian communities and their various relationships. The scarcity of written documents concerning the history of these lands is largely due to the delayed development of writing systems among their inhabitants.

Rock art, therefore, stands as an authentic expression of human emotions and experiences. Since those early ages—and continuing to the present—humans have consistently found in art a medium through which to convey their feelings and ideas, whether through rock paintings, carvings, drawings, music, or other artistic forms.

First: The Emergence and Beginnings of Primitive Artistic Works

The Artistic Work

An artistic work is any aesthetic creation that evokes in us a special kind of feeling known as aesthetic emotion. This emotion is a unique sentiment experienced when we perceive or savor a work of art from an aesthetic perspective. An artwork also arouses various other feelings and emotions—whether ethical, religious, social, political, romantic, and so forth. Moreover, aesthetic emotion is characterized by pleasure, imaginative openness, hope, and a sense of pride. The depth and intensity of this aesthetic emotion depend on the richness and strength of the aesthetic qualities inherent in the artwork ⁽¹⁾.

The Nature of Artistic Work

It is worth noting that there is no true parallel between prehistoric art and modern art, including children's drawings or the art of many relatively recent so-called "primitive" peoples. Children's depictions and the artistic output of such societies tend to be guided by a cognitive impulse—they draw what they know. In contrast, the prehistoric artist depicted what he felt and what he perceived through his senses. This falls under what is known as impressionistic art ⁽²⁾, marked by spontaneous freedom unbound by elegance or intellectual constraints. Such characteristics have no equivalent in later art history, except with the emergence of modern impressionism ⁽³⁾.

The human sense of beauty is innate, expressed in a way consistent with natural instincts—a fact demonstrated by anthropologists through their discoveries of ancient caves in southwestern France, northeastern Spain, and North Africa, where environmental conditions during those times enabled humans to reveal their artistic capacities.

The Purposes Behind Primitive Artistic Works

Researchers in art and archaeology have proposed several hypotheses concerning the purposes of the artistic works created by prehistoric humans, including:

1. Magic and sorcery
2. Religious and spiritual beliefs

3. Filling the voids of prehistoric life
4. A desire for immortality driven by constant fear of the surrounding environment
5. The pursuit of pleasure
6. Art for art's sake
7. The demands of ritual practices
8. The enjoyment of decoration and ornamentation with squares, shapes, and colored patterns
9. Possibly, a message intended to transcend time ⁽⁴⁾.

Second: Rock Paintings and Engravings

It appears that humans began practicing the art of rock painting as early as the Mesolithic period, carving images of contemporary animals—such as horses, wild buffalo, deer, and others—onto cave walls, often depicting the very creatures they wished to hunt. Scholars believe that the earliest expressions of hunter art were rooted in deeply held beliefs; prehistoric humans may have thought that by skillfully depicting the animals they feared, they could gain power over them, thereby increasing their ability to overcome or capture them ⁽⁵⁾.

Although stone and metal tools discovered from ancient times are considered the earliest roots of primitive art, art in the precise sense of the term did not emerge until approximately 50,000 to 20,000 years ago. Important examples of prehistoric art are concentrated in three major geographic groups: the Eastern Spanish group, the French group, and the North African group ⁽⁶⁾.

Rock art is found in a wide variety of environments across the globe—from the Arctic regions of the Americas down to the southern tip of South America. Large collections of rock art sites also exist throughout India, Siberia, parts of China, Australia, and South Africa, where no fewer than 100,000 rock art sites have been identified ⁽⁷⁾. In North and East Africa, rock painting sites stretch from the Atlas Mountains in the west, descending through Mali and across the central Sahara to the far south near Lake Chad, and further eastward to the Nile Delta. This vast arc represents the grand expanse of rock art in North and East Africa, with major concentrations located in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco and Algeria, the Tadrart Acacus and Fezzan in Libya, the Ennedi in Chad, and Jebel Uweinat on the Libyan–Sudanese border ⁽⁸⁾.

The first discoveries of rock paintings and engravings in the ancient Maghreb were made by a French military expedition in 1848. These works were found inscribed on cliff faces in the Saharan Atlas and consisted mostly of depictions of elephants and large buffalo. Maghrebian rock art has been given various names, including “murals” and “written stones,” the latter being a local term, as well as the more common “rock paintings.” ⁽⁹⁾ The expression “rock art” itself was first introduced in 1959 and is used

interchangeably with several other terms such as rock sculpture, rock drawings, rock engravings, rock pictures, rock panels, rock records, and rock statues—all of which refer to the markings created by humans on natural rock surfaces throughout the distant past ⁽¹⁰⁾. Unlike the cave art of France and Spain, Maghrebian rock art sites—with only a few exceptions—are located in open-air settings and can be viewed with ease. Even the panels found in rock shelters are generally accessible and not difficult to reach ⁽¹¹⁾.

Rock art in the Maghreb includes two main forms of representation: painting and engraving. Colored rock paintings are widespread in the central and eastern Saharan regions, in addition to the previously mentioned locations, as well as in the Beni Ysef area of far western Morocco. Rock engravings, by contrast, are distributed throughout North Africa, from the Saharan zone and the northern edges of the desert to areas reaching the Mediterranean coast ⁽¹²⁾.

The materials used for painting or engraving are diverse and not limited to caves and fixed rock walls. They also include pebbles, bones, rock slabs, and decorated pottery—objects that could be transported by humans or displaced by natural erosion ⁽¹³⁾. Both engraving and painting rely on the use of rock surfaces to record images, inscriptions, or symbols, forming what can be described as an open book of carved pictures reflecting the concerns and activities of prehistoric humans. These engravings frequently depict animals in various styles and dimensions, and their unique artistic and aesthetic character provides invaluable insight into the activities of prehistoric societies. They also stand as living evidence of the natural environment and, more importantly, serve as a clear indicator of intellectual and cultural maturity and development ⁽¹⁴⁾.

As a prehistoric artistic practice, rock art offers substantial evidence of humanity's earliest artistic and cognitive beginnings. It is found in most parts of the world, from tropical regions to polar zones, in settings ranging from deep caves to high mountains. Indeed, rock art represents the only form of human cultural expression that has been continuously practiced for tens of thousands of years up to the present, across numerous rock art sites worldwide ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Evaluating and interpreting rock paintings is not an easy task, as imagination and conjecture play a significant role in understanding their subjects. Beyond their emotional authenticity, the methods of execution and the techniques employed clearly reveal that the artists who created these paintings and engravings were not mere amateurs; they were skilled professionals who mastered their craft with remarkable precision ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Generally, stone engraving was carried out either on smoothed rock surfaces or on rough, unworked stone. The process involved carving into the rock by incising it with a sharp tool, creating outlines of the intended

figures. This technique primarily allowed the depiction of the main contours or general framework of an image. Consequently, most figures were rendered in profile rather than frontal view, employing two dimensions—horizontal and vertical—while the third dimension, depth, remained largely absent. Nevertheless, some examples show that artists occasionally depicted smaller figures to create the illusion of distance ⁽¹⁷⁾.

The prehistoric artist often used charcoal or other colored materials to outline engravings. Some researchers suggest that the outer lines of an engraving were initially formed through a series of small, separate, conical peck marks spaced closely together. These tiny depressions were then merged to create a continuous outline, with the careful alignment of the holes lending order and beauty to the final image. In some cases, the engraver filled the entire interior of the design with pecking, while in others only certain parts were pecked ⁽¹⁸⁾.

This method is known as pecking or pitting. More specifically, it involved a sequence of repeated blows delivered with a chisel or pointed tool held in the hand and struck with another stone, producing a small indentation. Successive indentations were then combined to create the desired figure ⁽¹⁹⁾.

As for painting, humans also used it as a tool and a means of communication, a visual language through which they expressed their desire to dominate and overcome nature. The paintings of this period are characterized by expressive simplicity and a lack of concern for precise details. Artists relied on external contour lines to convey form and motion, without adhering to the rules of perspective. Spontaneity, repetition, flatness, and transparency are among the key features of prehistoric art and early drawings ⁽²⁰⁾.

Regarding the dating of the earliest rock paintings, scholars have proposed several hypotheses:

- G. Flammant suggested that they date back to the sixth millennium BCE and do not extend beyond the Neolithic period ⁽²¹⁾.
- H. L'Hôte believed that the naturalistic commemorative paintings of the Wadi Djerat in the Tassili region also belong to the sixth millennium BCE, if not earlier.
- Solignac argued that the earliest rock paintings date to the end of the Upper Paleolithic ⁽²²⁾.
- H. Breuil, the German researcher, maintained that the Saharan rock paintings belong to the end of the Upper Paleolithic, specifically the period of the Upper Capsian culture. He believed that the depictions of animals that appeared later—found extensively in the Western Oranian group and in Fezzan—might extend into the Neolithic, with some of their motifs gradually reaching back in time through deep layers of history to the subsequent Late Stone Age ⁽²³⁾.

- Researcher R. Vaufrey argued that many of the older, large-scale rock paintings rendered in a naturalistic style represent some of the earliest manifestations of the Neolithic period ⁽²⁴⁾.

Rock art can be classified in several ways: by the appearance and disappearance of certain animals (even though some species, such as the ancient buffalo, persisted into later stages), by the type of art—whether naturalistic or symbolic—or by human activity, such as hunter art versus pastoral art. Another classification is based on stylistic distinctions sometimes referred to as the “White race style” and the “Black race style.” Both rock engravings and paintings are generally organized into the following artistic stages: Ancient Buffalo, Bovidian (Cattle), Horse and Chariot, and Camel ⁽²⁵⁾. For paintings, an additional phase known as the Round-Head Period appears after the Ancient Buffalo stage. These artistic stages correspond not only to artistic evolution but also to specific chronological and climatic periods, each marked by distinctive characteristics and represented by different human groups that may have existed either simultaneously or successively ⁽²⁶⁾.

In general, scholars divide rock paintings into four main phases:

1. Round-Head Period
2. Bovidian Period (Cattle)
3. Horse and Chariot Period
4. Camel Period

Rock engravings, on the other hand, are typically classified into:

1. Ancient Buffalo Period
2. Bovidian Period
3. Horse and Chariot Period
4. Camel Period ⁽²⁷⁾

Based on animal, climatic, human, and stylistic criteria, researchers have attempted to establish a chronological framework for Maghrebian rock art:

- **Animal Criterion:** Certain animal species serve as chronological markers, their appearance or disappearance providing temporal clues.
- **Domestication:** The beginnings of animal domestication are difficult to pinpoint, and distinguishing between the bones of wild and domesticated cattle or sheep is equally challenging.
- **Climatic Criterion:** The study of ancient deposits, human artifacts, and pollen near riverbanks and coastal areas helps determine environmental conditions during different phases ⁽²⁸⁾.

Chronological Stages of Rock Art in the Maghreb

1. **The Wild Animals Period (Ancient Buffalo Age)**

Also called the Babylus Hunting Period (after the extinct African buffalo), this phase dates to roughly the 10th millennium BCE, within the Upper Paleolithic. Artistic production from this era is

scarce, and the few engravings discovered—primarily depictions of wild buffalo—indicate that it predates both animal domestication and the emergence of cattle ⁽²⁹⁾. Hunting scenes dominate the imagery, earning this phase the name Naturalistic Period ⁽³⁰⁾. Animals requiring abundant water and vegetation—such as elephants, giraffes, hippos, rhinoceroses, crocodiles, monkeys, and pelicans—are commonly portrayed. Hunters are shown in groups, using nets, clubs, shields, spears, and throwing sticks, often dressed in animal skins. Climatically, this was a humid period that supported the lush vegetation needed by these large animals ⁽³¹⁾.

2. Round-Head Period

Most paintings from this phase are polychrome and depict human figures with round heads, which gives the period its name. It is further divided into three sub-stages:

- Early Stage: Artists used a single color to outline figures and then filled the background with another color, often yellow, green, or red ⁽³²⁾.
- Developed Stage: Paintings became multicolored, featuring large, muscular figures with no visible necks. The largest figures occupy central positions, surrounded by smaller ones. Body decorations appear, including ornaments inside the head circle, as well as bracelets, feathers, and shoulder or headbands ⁽³³⁾.
- Final Stage: Artists employed composite colors, and human figures exhibit features of sub-Saharan (Negroid) type ⁽³⁴⁾. This stage, sometimes called the Degenerate Phase, is marked by rough shapes, oversized forms, multiple colors, and figures rendered without facial details ⁽³⁵⁾.

The artistic styles within this period number as many as twenty. The earliest works are monochrome, with figures no taller than 10 centimeters, while later paintings reach heights of five to six meters, painted white and outlined in violet or brown ⁽³⁶⁾. Human figures are volumetric yet faceless, lacking eyes, noses, and mouths. Sexual characteristics are extremely rare, leading some scholars to speculate about possible cultural taboos or religious prohibitions against depicting such physical traits ⁽³⁷⁾.

It is noteworthy that the rock paintings of the Round-Head period depict the use of masks that closely resemble those still used today in West Africa. The Tassili paintings are of great significance because they provide the earliest evidence of the practice of the Cult of Masks (*Culte des Masques*) in Africa. These masks are of two main types: animal-shaped masks and others representing elaborate, decorative hairstyles ⁽³⁸⁾.

Some scholars have suggested that these paintings were influenced by Egyptian art; however, they actually predate Pharaonic art and even the Pre-dynastic period. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as products of Egyptian influence. Although there is a persistent tendency to attribute all cultural innovations to Egypt—consistent with the migration theory that

posits an east-to-west movement—it cannot be excluded that the Sahara itself may have played a more significant role in supporting and influencing Egypt than previously assumed ⁽³⁹⁾.

3 – The Bovidian or Pastoral Period:

During this phase, depictions of domesticated cattle herds appear (see Fig. 2), indicating that the region had become less vegetated due to decreasing rainfall. This period is generally dated between the end of the 6th millennium and the end of the 3rd millennium BCE ⁽⁴⁰⁾. The name derives from the frequent representation of bulls, whether individually or in herds. Other animals portrayed include typically tropical species such as rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, antelopes, zebras, ostriches, and fish (see Fig. 3). Scenes also feature women with their children, cooking vessels, and family interactions, with men sometimes armed with axes ⁽⁴¹⁾.

As for the origins of the Bovidian people, it is believed that they descended from northern regions. According to this view, these herders moved upward from the Algerian and Tunisian Sahara toward the central Saharan highlands, possibly coming into contact with the descendants of semi-nomadic groups who had inhabited the Sudanese Sahara during the Neolithic ⁽⁴²⁾.

4 – The Horse or Chariot Period:

This phase corresponds to the end of the Neolithic and coincides with the extinction of many animal species caused by increasing aridity. It is marked by the appearance of the horse, both in depictions of wild horses and of domesticated horses harnessed to chariots ⁽⁴³⁾, (see Fig. 4). Riders and mounted warriors also emerge during this time, signaling the dawn of recorded history. The artistic style is schematic, with little attention to detail and an emphasis on linear outlines. Alongside horses, artists also depicted ostriches and antelopes ⁽⁴⁴⁾ (see Fig. 5).

5 – The Camel Period:

This stage dates to the first centuries of the Common Era. By this time, desertification had intensified across North Africa, and the camel—“the ship of the desert”—replaced the horse as the dominant animal ⁽⁴⁵⁾. Rock art from this era is characterized by numerous engravings and paintings executed with various techniques, including pecking, incision, and pointillism, in which images are formed by a sequence of small dots that together outline the desired figures ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Through these successive phases, rock art has provided an invaluable source of information about the prehistoric cultures of ancient North Africa. It reveals not only the types of animals that once inhabited the region but also offers crucial insights into past climatic conditions and environmental changes, as inferred from the appearance and disappearance of specific species.

Third: Contents and Themes of Rock Art

Rock art constitutes an essential source of information about ancient history, not only in the Maghreb but also across all archaeological sites where this form of artistic expression has been discovered. Among the key themes conveyed by North African rock art are religious beliefs and rituals. These communities practiced distinctive spiritual traditions, performing ceremonies to commemorate their deities and expressing their devotion through body painting, personal ornamentation, and symbolic dances—such as circular dances or dances performed with game animals to celebrate a successful hunt. Certain animal species, notably the ram and the cow, were also depicted with special adornments, reflecting their symbolic or ritual importance⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Rock engravings further reveal representations of various divinities. Examples include the “Great Deity” at Safar, Mars at Jabbaren, the “White Lady” at Gaiya, and the horned goddess Ouannghet. Images of pregnant women and men with exaggerated sexual organs are interpreted as fertility symbols⁽⁴⁸⁾. Other notable scenes, such as those at Jabbaren, show groups of nearly twenty masked dancers gazing toward the sky in a ritual believed to invoke rain and ensure the fertility of the land⁽⁴⁹⁾.

These artworks also provide evidence of early agricultural practices. At Tassili, for instance, paintings at Safar depict individuals holding long reeds shaped like winnowing forks, while another scene shows two men working the soil. In Jabbaren, a composition portrays masked women with bird-like headgear carrying sheaves of grain, a possible indication of the veneration of agricultural goddesses. Numerous other scenes with agricultural motifs reinforce the significance of farming in the lives of these prehistoric peoples⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Rock art additionally offers valuable insights into types of dwellings used by these ancient groups. Among the structures represented are:

- Oval-shaped dwellings, typical of the early “Bovine Phase,” often associated with figures depicted with dark faces.
- Semi-circular or bean-shaped dwellings, also characteristic of the Bovine Phase.
- Half-oval dwellings, likewise linked to the same period.
- Circular dwellings, observed during the Tassili n’Ajjer Bovine Phase and associated with people of lighter facial depiction.
- Rectangular dwellings.
- Square dwellings, more common during the Equine Phase in several Tassili n’Ajjer sites⁽⁵¹⁾.

Another recurring theme is the representation of women, depicted in a variety of roles and conditions: the pregnant woman, the goddess, the wife, the adorned woman, and the mother. Certain images focus on specific body

parts, such as decorated hands and feet, highlighting the symbolic or aesthetic importance of feminine figures in these societies ⁽⁵²⁾.

The art also abounds in anthropomorphic forms. Among the earliest are round-headed figures, abundant in the Tassili region. Other human representations include masked figures—possibly hunters using camouflage or dancers engaged in ritual performances. Some researchers interpret masking itself as a manifestation of spiritual or magical power. There are also naturalistic human figures, often rendered at a scale larger than life, as well as abstract, highly stylized depictions that are simplified, exaggerated, truncated, or modified to a striking degree ⁽⁵³⁾.

In conclusion, the rock art of North Africa represents the inevitable outcome of prehistoric human communication in the absence of writing. These engravings and paintings were a means for early humans to interact with their peers, especially since specialists have yet to determine whether spoken language existed in these remote times. At the same time, these images stand as testimony to the innate creative abilities of prehistoric humans—talents that could find expression only through visual art before the invention of writing.



(Figure 1) Rock Art – Giraffe

Source: Al-Mangoush, Warda Ali. Rock Art in the Sahara: Phases and the Problem of Interpretation and Dating, Scientific Journal of the Faculty of Education, Misurata University, Libya, Vol. 1, No. 11, 2018, p. 279.



(Figure 2) Rock Art Depicting the Emergence of the Round-Head Style
Source: Al-Rubaie, Jabbar Hamidi. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

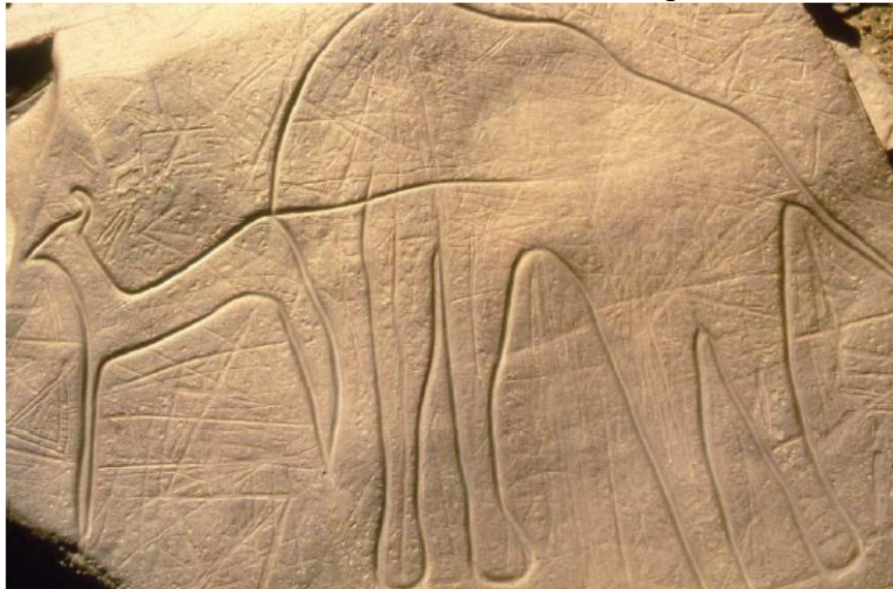
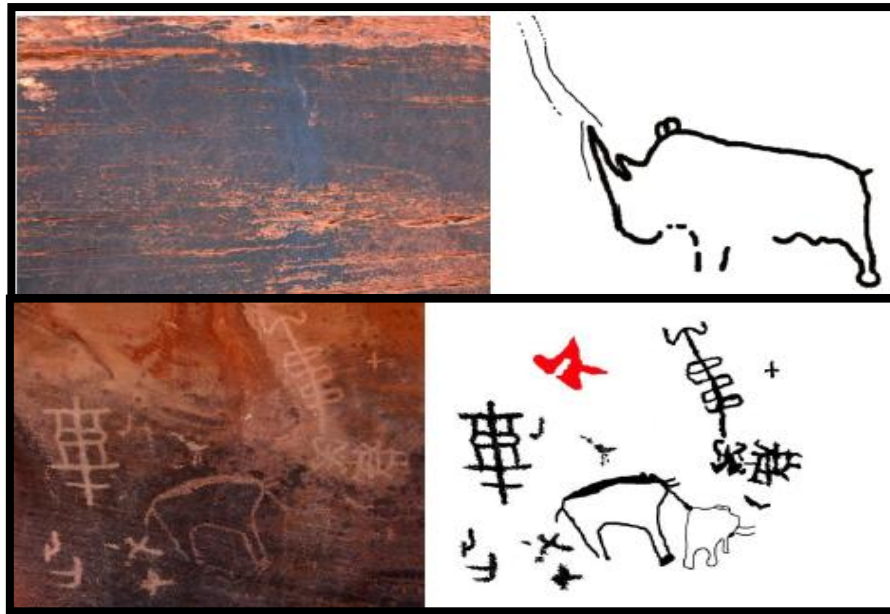


Figure 3) Rock engravings illustrating the Bovidian Period through depictions of domesticated animals.
Source: Searight, Susan, *Morocco's Rock Art: Age and Meaning*, Arts, Vol. 2, 2013, p. 37.



(Figure 4) The upper image depicts rock art of a rhinoceros, while the lower image shows an elephant preceded by a calf.
Source: Abdelkhalek, Lemjidi, and others, The Rock Art of Figuig and Ich (Eastern Morocco): New Data, Journal of Materials and Environmental Science, Vol. 7, No. 10, 2016, p. 3729.



(Figure 5) A scene depicting horsemen dating to the Equid or Chariot Period.
Source: Abdelkhalek, ibid., p. 3728.



(Figure 6) Rock art depicting an ostrich.

Source: Quéléc, J-L.L., Une Sceau Miniature Incise A`Ti-N-Taborak (Akakus) et ses Implications pour la Chronologie des Gravures Rupestres du Sahara, Sahara Journal, Vol. 15, 2004, p. 76.



(Figure 7) Rock art illustrating the layout of dwellings of the ancient inhabitants of Tassili.

Source: Ou Brahim, *The Dwelling through Rock Drawings...*, *ibid.*, pp. 12–14.

Conclusions:

1. Rock art represents an important source of knowledge about the civilization of the Maghreb countries, particularly during periods when writing was not yet known.
2. In general, art has been associated with humans since ancient times, dating back to the Stone Age.
3. Rock engravings have helped researchers identify the types of animals that once lived in North Africa and their distribution.
4. Through rock art, researchers were able to determine the areas where humans concentrated for settlement.
5. One of the primary motivations that led ancient Maghrebian humans to practice art was religious beliefs.
6. The discovery of Maghrebian rock art sites was facilitated by their prevalence in open-air and exposed locations.
7. During this stage of human development, individuals were able to express their emotions and thoughts with remarkable sincerity through art.
8. Maghrebian rock art served as an important source not only for understanding religious life but also social life, as it depicted the role of women in society, the tasks assigned to them, agricultural and industrial activities, and construction practices by illustrating the forms of the dwellings they inhabited.

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