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WADI BUZNA ROCK ART GALLERY IN CENTRAL SAHARA

ABSTRACT: *Neolithic Rock Art Gallery at Wadi Buzna, Libyan Sahara is described and analyzed. The transitional features between two regions, that is the southern one of Messak Settafet and northern of northern Fezzan are recognized. The gallery site served as a quarry for the raw material for pottery production. Three principal parts of the gallery represent the chronological stages of local rock art.*

KEY WORDS: *Sahara – Fezzan – Rock Art – Neolithic.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1977, 1978 and 1979 I visited the Wadi Buzna rock art site described preliminarily by A. Pesce (1967). Because A. Pesce has published only some of the representations from the central part of the gallery I publish here the complete documentation and comparative analysis of the whole site.

The gallery with engraved figures is situated near the top of a "gara" (a flat-top mountain) in the mouth of the wadi, i.e. the place where this wadi enters Wadi Ajal (Figs. 1, 2 and 3). It may well be seen from the road between Ubari and Germa, from the village of El Greifa. In the uppermost part of the gara there is a vertical cliff surrounding the summit; the studied gallery is on its northern face – facing the mentioned village of El Greifa and the Ubari – Germa road.

At the foot of this 3–6 m high cliff there are traces of quarrying the soft loamstone. Soaked for one or two days in water, it was used for pottery production. The recent digging places used by the recent population are situated much lower, at the foot

of the slope near the village. The quarrying place at the foot of the gallery is no more in use.

It is evident that the gallery is located in a very convenient place, being in the shade for the whole day. No wonder that the rock art gallery and the quarrying place were situated there.

Two other archaeological features should be mentioned. In the central part of the Wadi Buzna mouth there is a Neolithic site with rich surface finds, fireplaces and stone tool workshops (Fig. 3). The other fact is that on the top of the neighbouring gara, separated from the rock art gallery only by a shallow saddle, there is an Aterian living site.

On the slopes of the rock art gara and everywhere in the neighbourhood there are hundreds of garamantic stone mounds, i.e. the graves (Fig. 2).

The age of the rock art gallery can only be considered by the degree of weathering, kind and degree of patina, the kind of animals, objects and signs represented, by the technique of rock carving and the style of represented features. Only exceptionally some superposition of figures is found. According to the mentioned aspects the central part of the gallery (partly described by A. Pesce) might be

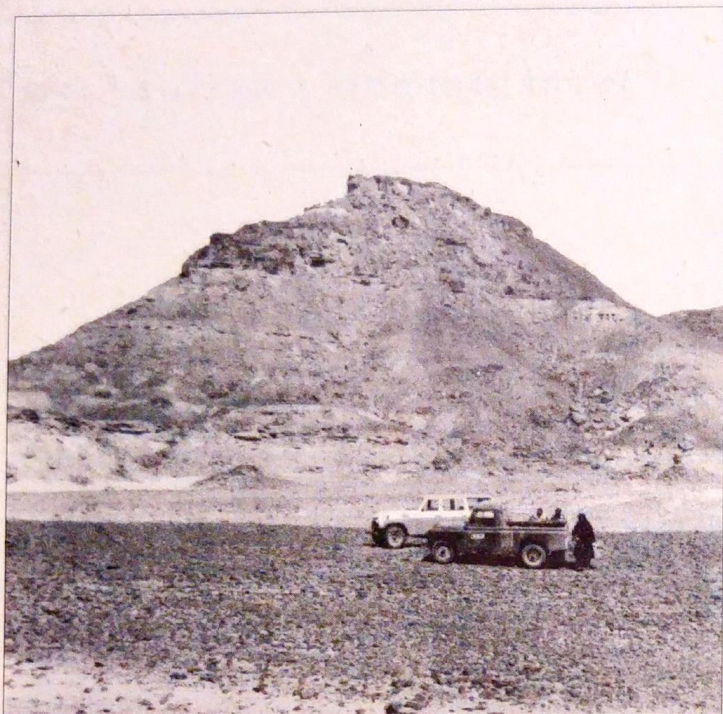


FIGURE 1. *Flat-top residual mountain (gara) with the rock art gallery in its upper part. Western view from Wadi Buzna.*

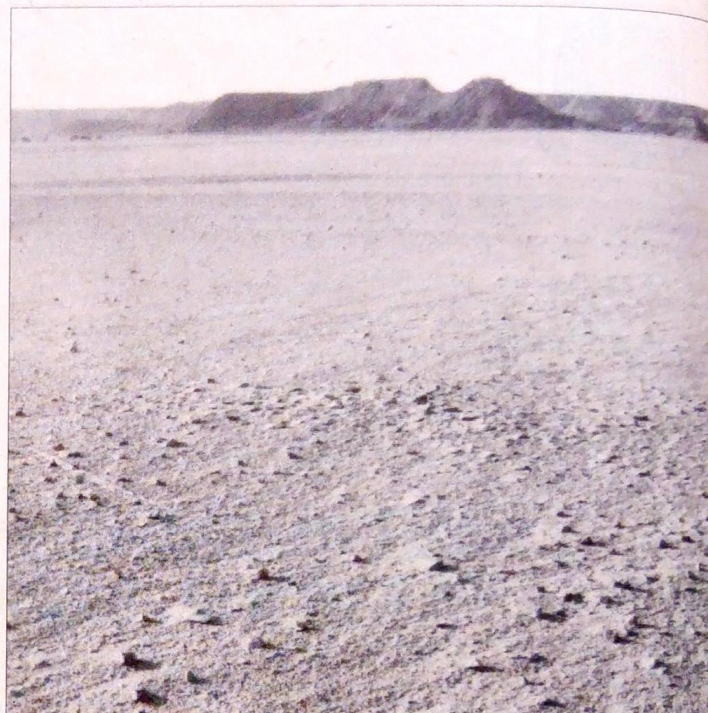


FIGURE 3. *A Neolithic stone tool site at the mouth of Wadi Buzna. In the background there is the mountain with the gallery (right) and with an Aterian site (left).*

FIGURE 2. *Looking down at Wadi Buzna (western direction) from the westernmost part of the rock gallery. The small mounds on the slopes are garamantic graves.*



the earliest one, whereas the other parts seem to be of later date.

When climbing up the gara you first reach the saddle with a few garamantic graves. From there you reach the gallery from the eastern side. The whole gallery is approximately 70 m long and consists of four parts: I the eastern part with two rock faces, II the central part, III the third part, IV the western part.

INVENTORY OF THE FIGURES SO FAR RECOGNIZED

Part I - Eastern part

1. first large elephant, 245 cm long (*Figs. 9, 10*)
2. uncomplete giraffe (?) head of inferior quality (*Fig. 4*)
3. well carved ostrich figure (*Fig. 5*)
4. remains of some engraved pattern
5. uncomplete (front) part of an animal figure
6. another figure representing probably a bull

Part II - Central part

7. cattle figure, 38 cm long (*Fig. 6*)
8. cattle figure, 39 cm long (*Fig. 7*)
9. small elephant figure, 64 cm long (*Fig. 8*)
10. small antelope below the legs of the first large elephant
11. small antelope below the legs of the first large elephant
12. an archer between the trunk and forelegs of the first large elephant, breadth 39 cm (*Fig. 11*)
13. some badly weathered patterns and a triangular sign between the hindlegs of the first large elephant
14. a badly weathered human (?) figure following the first large elephant, 40 cm high
15. second large elephant (*Fig. 12*)
16. circular sign below the head of the second large elephant, 11 cm in vertical diameter
17. finely engraved theriomorph figure below the head of the second large elephant, 27 cm high
18. cattle figure below the forelegs of the second large elephant
19. heart-like sign below the hindlegs of the second large elephant (*Fig. 12*)
20. pecked outline of an elephant (30 cm long) and of an antelope on a flat stone bank below the first large elephant (*Fig. 13*)
21. badly weathered remains of the third large elephant (?) (*Fig. 14*)
22. two heart-like signs behind the second large elephant, the first being 46 cm and the second 40 cm high (*Fig. 14*)
23. bull figure with pointed head, 78 cm long (*Fig. 15*)
24. giraffe with a large head, breadth 85 cm
25. human figure with a heart-like sign in place of the head, 28 cm long (*Fig. 15*)
26. animal figure (antelope?) with a long neck, 51 cm long (*Fig. 16*)
27. giraffe and a fine cattle figure (*Figs. 17, 18, 19*)

28. bull with a pointed head and a deformed horn, 80 cm long (*Fig. 20*)
29. two giraffe figures, the first being 90 cm high from the end of the hindleg to the end of the raised tail, while the second is uncomplete (*Figs. 21, 22, 23*)
30. man with a heart-like sign in place of the head (*Fig. 24*)
31. three small cattle figures (*Fig. 25*)
32. pecked figure of a man with a heart-like sign in the hand, 31 cm high (*Plate II*)
33. pecked bird figure, 36 cm high (*Fig. 28*)
34. group of pre-pecked figures, with three human ones and one animal; the vertical human figure is 30 cm high and the animal figure (lion? bull?) is 42 cm long (*Figs. 27, 29*)
35. two doubled circular signs (*Fig. 30*)
36. 20 cm high object (a knife?) (*Figs. 30, 33*)
37. 34 cm high object (a knife?) (*Figs. 31, 33*)
38. 34 cm high object (a knife?) (*Figs. 32, 33*)
39. small polished figure of a bull (?), 20 cm long
40. disintegrated, deeply engraved figures of a bull, ostrich and uaddan; the first part of this carving, from the "horns" to the head of the ostrich, is 63 cm long (*Fig. 34*).

Part III

41. simple uaddan figure, 42 cm long (*Fig. 35*)
42. simple ostrich figure (*Fig. 36*)
43. first giraffe with mane, 110 cm high (*Fig. 37*)
44. second giraffe, 105 cm high (*Fig. 38*)
45. third giraffe, no mane, 84 cm high
46. fourth giraffe, no mane, 105 cm high
47. rhinoceros, 65 cm long (*Fig. 39*)
48. first giraffe figure, 75 cm high (*Fig. 40*)
49. second giraffe figure (*Fig. 40*)
50. third giraffe figure (*Fig. 41*)
51. fourth giraffe figure, 108 cm high (*Fig. 41*).

Part IV - Western part

52. simplified roughly pecked animal (bull?), 68 cm long (*Fig. 43*)
53. flat rock block with scratchings and some animal figures (*Figs. 42, 44, 45, 46*)
54. simplified cattle figure (?), 45 cm long, on another flat rock block (*Fig. 47*)
55. cattle figure with human orant; the cattle figure is 24 cm high (*Fig. 48*).

DESCRIPTION AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE GALLERY

Part I - Eastern part

Starting from the eastern side, on the first rock face there is the head of a giraffe (*Fig. 4*) and a deeply cut ostrich figure (*Fig. 5*), together with some other

unfinished or incomplete animal figures occurring on the same rock face and on the following one. They are only slightly weathered, their lines are slightly engraved and they manifest only poor artistic level. The ostrich figure is undoubtedly the best and the deepest engraving in that part of the gallery.

Part II – Central part (Plates I, II, III, IV)

The central part of the gallery is situated on the largest rock face with many animal and human figures represented. In front of this rock face is the best place to repose in permanent shade and no wonder that the best figures of the whole gallery have been found here. When A. Pesce published his note on the gallery in 1968 in *Libya Antiqua* (A. Pesce, 1968) he described only some of the largest figures from this rock face.

Some figures are deeply carved, some only pre-pecked and unfinished. The three prominent (largest and deeply carved) figures are those of the three elephants, a small one (*Fig. 8*) and two large ones (*Fig. 10*).

Here are some interesting details, not mentioned by A. Pesce:

When studying the rock face in detail, poor remains of another large elephant figure can be found (*Fig. 14*). From these badly weathered remains only distal parts of the four legs and a tusk can be seen. The position of these elephant figure remains on the rock face respects the first two large elephant figures and joins them in size as well.

These four elephants were probably parts of one frieze and they are superimposed over some other, still earlier figural engravings.

The first small elephant (*Fig. 8*) has well developed tusks and only one foreleg is represented – a simplification unusual in this Saharan region. Usually all the four legs are represented, as it is the case with the large elephants on the site (*Fig. 14*). It may be interesting to note that in northern Algeria the lateral representations of animals with two legs only (one foreleg and one hindleg) are frequent.

Of the two well represented large elephant figures in the Wadi Buzna gallery each has four simple rigid legs and they are far behind the decorative elephants found in Wadi Berdjush (note e.g. Jelínek 1984, *Fig. 4* for In Galguien). Here they have simple ears and simple long trunks. Important are the three small figures round the first large elephant. The small human figure between the trunk and the foreleg is an archer with a feather decoration of the head (*Fig. 11*). Such decoration is known with the Libyan captive warriors, represented in Egyptian reliefs, but it is not known how early this feature appears in Libyan prehistory. The technique of this engraving and the degree of its weathering signal its simultaneous age with the elephants. Another interesting pattern is the triangular shape between the hindlegs of this elephant (*Figs. 9, 10*). Its meaning is not known. A simple, probably human figure is behind the first large

elephant. It is strongly simplified and its position under the elephant's tail is not exceptional (compare Jelínek 1982, *Fig. 35*, L. Allard-Huard 1993, *Fig. 60c/1, 3, or 61*). Two small antelopes bellow the forelegs of the first large elephant (*Plate I*) are simplified and well weathered. They can be compared with similar figures found more to the north in Wadi Deb-Deb (Jelínek 1982, Le Quellec 1987).

The second large elephant (*Fig. 12*) is interesting by its trunk with a circular sign at its end. Another circular sign is bellow the head. Both these signs are good examples of simultaneous use of two symbolic visual systems: of figurative representations and of geometric signs. This is a common feature in human mental capacity represented worldwide in prehistoric art. Between the elephant's head and the circular sign there is a slightly engraved theriomorph figure, 27 cm high (*Plate I*). It is represented in frontal view with an animal head and one arm raised, with a belt and two crossed thongs on the chest. It should be remembered that theriomorph figures are known through a long time period, starting with the earliest engravings in Messak Settafet to the bovidian paintings in Wadi Deb-Deb (Wadi Zreda) (Jelínek 1982, *Fig. 9*), but the characters like the belt and two crossed chest thongs point to an earlier age.

A heart-like sign is situated below the hindlegs of the second large elephant. Another two similar signs (*Fig. 14*), 40 cm and 46 cm high respectively, are engraved behind this elephant and over the poor remains of the third large elephant, signaling that they are of later age. This is supported also by the fact that all these signs respect the second large elephant. It is probably useful to mention in this place also the two other figures (*Figs. 15, 24*) with similar heart-like features. Both of them are human figures. The first one (inventory No. 25), 28 cm long, has the human body and legs in lateral view, but there is a heart-like feature instead of the head which is prolonged in the shape of a trunk. The other one (inventory No. 30), situated a few meters further to the west, is only slightly bigger, deeply cut and less weathered. It has a similar heart-like sign in place of the head. In Wadi El Chel in northern Libya near Mizda town, P. Graziosi (1971) has found a human figure in frontal view touching or holding in the right hand a similar heart-like sign. In Wadi El Chel the figure appeared together with several erotic representations of squatting female figures ("la femme ouverte") with deep vulvar orifices and accompanied with frequent vulvar signs *Fig. 49c*. This site obviously had a strong erotic significance. P. Graziosi mentions the figure with the heart-like sign only superficially, but he considers the other nearby figures with deep vulvar orifices, which are undoubtedly related (according to the position, size, frontal representation and vulvar orifice), to be of long duration, some of them being very early, some other later, even recent. The figure with the heart-like sign in Wadi El Chel is not the earliest one there but also not a late one. According to the deep engraved lines and the degree of weather-

ing it can be estimated as Late Neolithic. Another example of the heart-like sign is mentioned by P. Graziosi from Caf El Metchia (Graziosi 1942) *Fig. 49b*; Le Quellec and Y. Gautier published another example from Messak Mellet (1992/93, *Fig. 5*) where it is again associated with an erotic female figure. In the north Algerian rock art site Hesbaia

I have found another representation of a human *Figure 49a* holding in its raised hand an object similar to the heart-like one that was found in the Wadi Buzna gallery (compare *Fig. 15* and *Fig. 24*). Considering the geographical distribution of these signs, it is evident that the meaning of this sign was originally broadly distributed and well known.

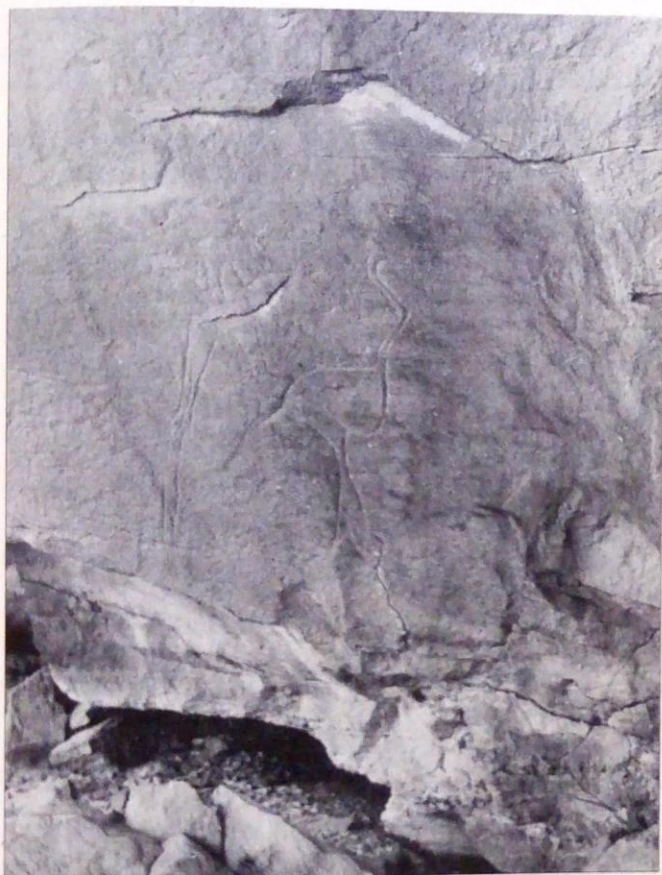


FIGURE 4. *A disproportioned giraffe figure and an ostrich. Note the way how the leg is represented.*

FIGURE 6. *A cattle figure, 38 cm long. The sex is not represented. Note the forward curved horn. First figure in the second part of the gallery.*



FIGURE 5. *Detail of the ostrich figure.*

FIGURE 7. *A cattle figure, 39 cm long. The sex is not represented. Note the forward curved horn of this domesticated animal. Second figure in the second part of the gallery.*



The survey of the Wadi Buzna gallery continues at the principal and central rock face – there, below the legs of the first large elephant, there is an oblique small rock bank with roughly pecked outlines of an elephant (30 cm long) and an antelope (?) (Fig. 13). On the right (west) there is a simplified cattle figure with an unrealistic pointed head, 78 cm long (Fig. 15). This figure was described by Pesce as an ant-eater (sic!). However, there is another similar figure in this part of the gallery (Fig. 20) and a simplified oryx antelope with a similar long and pointed head is known from the main Mathrindush gallery (Jelínek 1984a, Fig. 24). All these are merely distorted features in simplified animal figures – this is not a specific realistic feature of a certain kind of animal. The sex and deformed horn in Fig. 20 in Wadi Buzna prove that this is a domesticated bull figure (80 cm long). In front of the bull (inventory No. 23) there is a weathered giraffe with a curved muzzle and with long horns and ears on the head (85 cm long). Next to this head there is another human figure with a heart-like sign, already mentioned (Fig. 15). The highest figure in this part of the rock wall is a left turned giraffe with a raised and tripled tail, 53 cm broad (Fig. 23). To the right there are poor remains of another similar, but unfinished giraffe figure. Without any artificial construction, the execution of this figure, situated high on the rock face, must have been very difficult and this was probably the reason of its incompleteness. At the foot of this rock face two other animal figures are found. The first one has a long neck and several lines divide the body, as it is frequent with cattle figures. In this case it could be a garanyuk antelope (?), 51 cm long (Fig. 16). The other figure is a giraffe with a long muzzle, the body ground and pecked. The legs are partly covered by the ground soil. In front of its muzzle there is a small and very slight engraving of a quadruped of low quality. The horns suggest the possibility of a cattle representation (Figs. 17, 18, 19).

Further to the west a human figure with a heart-like sign replacing the head (Fig. 25) is found, as well as three small animal figures, two of them being undoubtedly cattle figures with horns curved forward. Next to them are some remains of early engraved lines, and higher up on the rock wall there is a slightly pre-pecked, 31 cm high, human figure holding in one hand a heart-like sign (Plate II) (compare with Figs. 15, 25). Low near the ground there is a pecked bird figure, strongly weathered and of the same colour as the natural rock surface (Fig. 28).

The following part of the rock surface (Plate III) is covered by highly weathered pre-pecked figures. Their pecked outlines are of the same black colour as the original rock surface. Three small human and one animal figures can be recognized there (Fig. 29). One human figure is in horizontal position behind an animal (cattle?, lion?) 42 cm long, touching its tail. The other is standing with raised arms (30 cm high). Higher on this rock there are two small pecked circles, interpreted usually as a two-wheeled vehicle

of the Post-Neolithic Horse period (inventory No. 35). Their patina is lighter (see chronological analysis below).

There follow representations of three oblong objects – 21, 34 and 34 cm high respectively (Figs. 30, 31, 32, 33). Their interpretation is difficult but it should be remembered that some theriomorph figures (some of the earliest ones) found in Messak Settafet are holding similar objects (probably stone daggers) in their hands (van Albada 1992, p. 29, 1993, p. 47, Lutz 1991, Fig. 9, van Albada 1992/1993, Fig. 4, Jelínek 1984a, Fig. 33).

On the right side, as the last engraving in this central (second) part of the gallery, there is a complex, deeply carved and disintegrated representation of a bull, ostrich and uaddan (?) (Fig. 34, Plate IV). Some parts of the animals are disproportionate, some lines are common for two animals, some are prolonged or simplified. This makes the disintegration of the composition. The length from the horns of the bull to the head of the ostrich is 63 cm. This kind of disintegrated design is fairly rare in this part of Fezzan. Two other fully disintegrated designs were reported from Wadi Tīlizahren east (Wadi Iblal), second gallery (Jelínek 1985b). Like the complex described in Wadi Buzna, they are also well weathered and with rock surface patina.

Part III (Plate V)

The third part of the gallery (Plate V) is further to the west. There, all figures are only slightly engraved. Also their weathering is evidently weaker than in the majority of figures in the central (second) part of the gallery. Even when situated in two rock faces, they represent one group of individual figures without any superimposition.

The first figure is that of a 42 cm long uaddan (*Amotragus lervia*) in simple outline with well represented characteristic horns. Then, there is an engraved and pecked ostrich, followed by four giraffes. The first one is 110 cm high and in the engraved outline remains of the pre-pecked design, which was then engraved, are still seen. This illustrates the technological realization of the figure (Fig. 37). The mane can be seen on the neck, the skin pattern is represented and the tail is tripled. The second giraffe is 105 cm high. Also this figure has a short mane and the end of its tail is tripled (Fig. 38). The third giraffe is 84 cm high and its tail is simple. The fourth giraffe is 105 cm high, without any tail.

The following rock face shows a rhinoceros and four giraffes. The 65 cm long rhinoceros in simple outline has a large head and its legs are represented in a rather characteristic simplified way (Fig. 39). The four giraffes are in simple outline (Figs. 40, 41) again, the first one is 75 cm high, the fourth one 108 cm high. All the giraffes in the third part of the gallery are simplified, when compared with Fig. 21 from the second part of the gallery. Considering the difference

in style and patina it is clear that the figures in part III of the gallery are of later age.

Part IV – Western part (*Plate VI*)

The fourth and last part of the gallery is situated westernmost, facing the mouth of Wadi Buzna. Here the gara forms its western promontory. All the figures found here are only weakly weathered and fairly simplified, even of negligent style of low artistic value. When coming from the east, the first figure is on a flat surface of a rock block at the foot of the rock cliff. It is a rough cattle figure, 68 cm long (*Fig. 43*). Its patina is quite weak. Several other figures are found on the flat surface of another rock block (*Fig. 42*). In its upper part there is a 100 cm high giraffe with long legs and with an exceptional geometric decoration of the neck (*Figs. 42, 45*). Evidently this giraffe was made in the same way as that of *Fig. 21* (inventory No. 29). The three other figures (cattle) are simple and two of them are partly intentionally damaged by pecking (*Fig. 44*). Note that two characteristic simplified cattle figures are superimposed over the giraffe figure. They are of later date. In the lower part of this rock block face there are three other simple quadruped figures (cattle?), two of them damaged by pecking (*Fig. 46*). All over the block face numerous lines and scratchings are cut. Nearby we find another rock block with a simple cattle figure (45 cm long) and with several more or less deeply carved lines (for brushing or polishing some tools – *Fig. 47*). The slight patina and the geometrical style show this figure as a late one. Interesting is the westernmost block with a 27 cm high cattle figure. In front of it there is a standing human figure with both arms raised (orant). The rock block with the figure is broken (*Fig. 48*).

ANALYSIS OF THE GALLERY

Weathering

The first, third and fourth parts of the gallery are evidently less weathered and some of the engraved figures are only fine and superficial. They are certainly younger than the majority of figures in the second part of the gallery. The colour of their patina is light. Although the individual parts of the gallery rock faces have slightly different inclination, they nevertheless face north, or northwest and they are in the shade all day long.

It can be assumed that all of the figures had been exposed to similar or nearly the same climatic conditions. It is therefore interesting to note that the pre-pecked small figures in the second part of the gallery have the same patina as the original rock surface. This would support their very early age. The same applies to the figures of the oblong objects (inventory Nos. 36, 37, 38) representing probably a personal weapon, and

with all the four elephants. If the fourth elephant figure, conserved only in tusk and distal parts of four legs, was simultaneous with the other elephants, than there would be no reason for a great difference in conservation. It seems more probable that the fourth elephant figure was just started in carving and was never finished. The age of all elephant figures is supported also by two human figures accompanying the second elephant: one just below the tail and the other as an archer below the head of the elephant. Such compositions are well known with the earliest figures in Fezzanese rock art (even with Pelorovis figures) (Huard, Leclant 1980, pp. 365 – 395), but they cover a fairly large time period, as demonstrated by figures with crooked short weapons (compare e.g. Jelinek 1984b, *Fig. 16*).

It can be concluded that the weathering degree identifies the second part of the gallery as the earliest one. There are also some very poor remains of the earliest engravings there, such which cannot be well recognized at present. The figures with fully black patina are some pre-pecked figures (inventory Nos. 34, 36, 37, 38, 33, 20). Slightly less dark patina is found in inventory Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, 23, 26, 27, 28, 31, 39, 40. All these figures are engraved with a deep U-shaped line (in section).

Quarrying

At the foot of the rock faces of the first two parts of the gallery traces of stone digging are seen. The stone is a soft one and when soaked for one or two days in water, it gives good material for pottery production. It is a marl-stone. Nowadays the nearby population does not remember the use of the quarrying site any more. They use other sites near the village down in the Wadi Ajal to cover their need of raw material for pottery production, which survives up to now in its simplest way (hand-made and fired in an open fire). It is important to note that the quality of raw material quarried today near the village is inferior to that of the raw material quarried by Neolithic people at the foot of the gallery. A corresponding difference can be found in the texture of modern pottery, when compared with the Neolithic pottery fragments found at the archaeological site at the Wadi Buzna mouth. The existence of a quarrying site at the foot of the rock art gallery brings up the question of their relationship in Neolithic times. The existence of the quarrying site does not speak for the sacred character of the gallery. It should also be stressed that the limited space in front of the gallery does not give the possibility for any serious gathering of people for some ceremonial reason. The theory that the rock carvings were produced by people having a rest at an agreeable cool place during their quarrying work, seems to be quite plausible. All this waits for other comparative material.

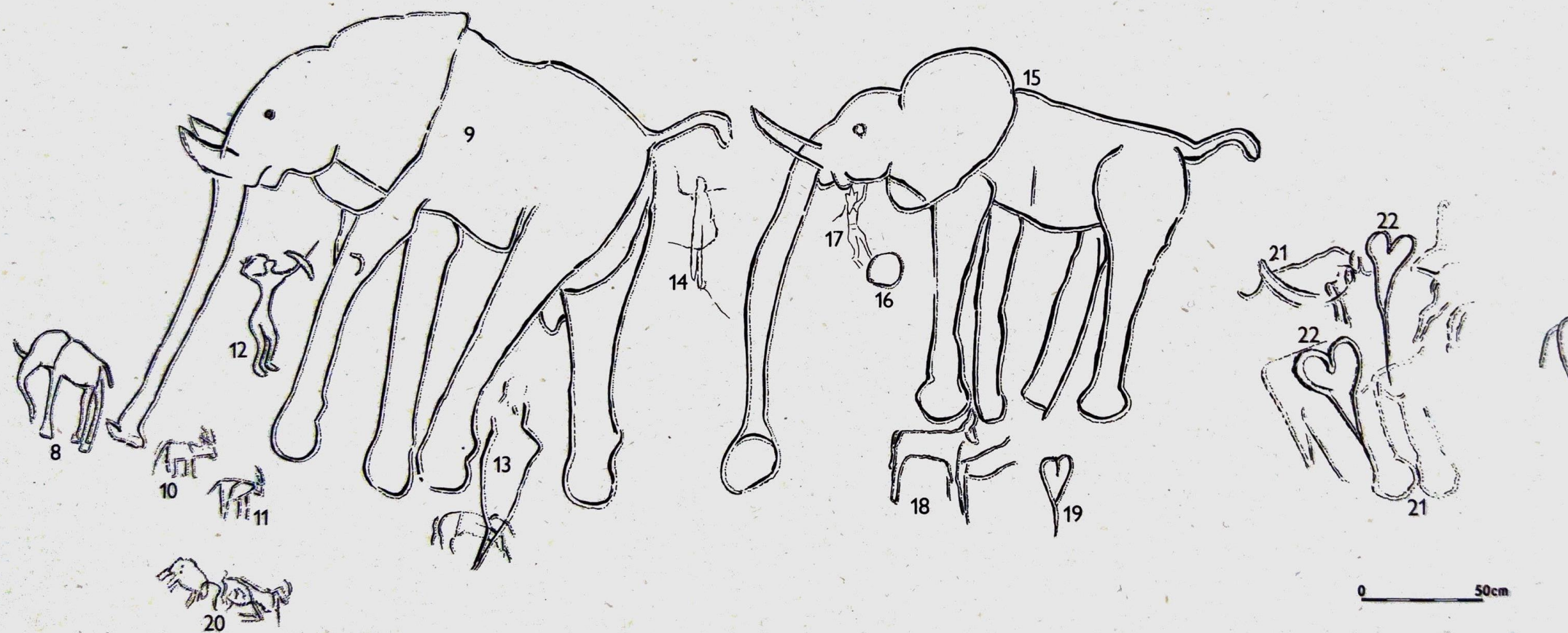


PLATE I. The disposition of figures in the main (second) part of the gallery. Carvings of inventory numbers 8-22.



FIGURE 8. *Deeply engraved small elephant figure, 64 cm long. Note the tusk, one foreleg and the simplified hindleg.*



FIGURE 9. *The first large elephant figure, 245 cm long. Note the archer figure between the trunk and the first leg, and the triangular object between the hindlegs.*

FIGURE 10. *The two large elephants in their position on the rock wall.*

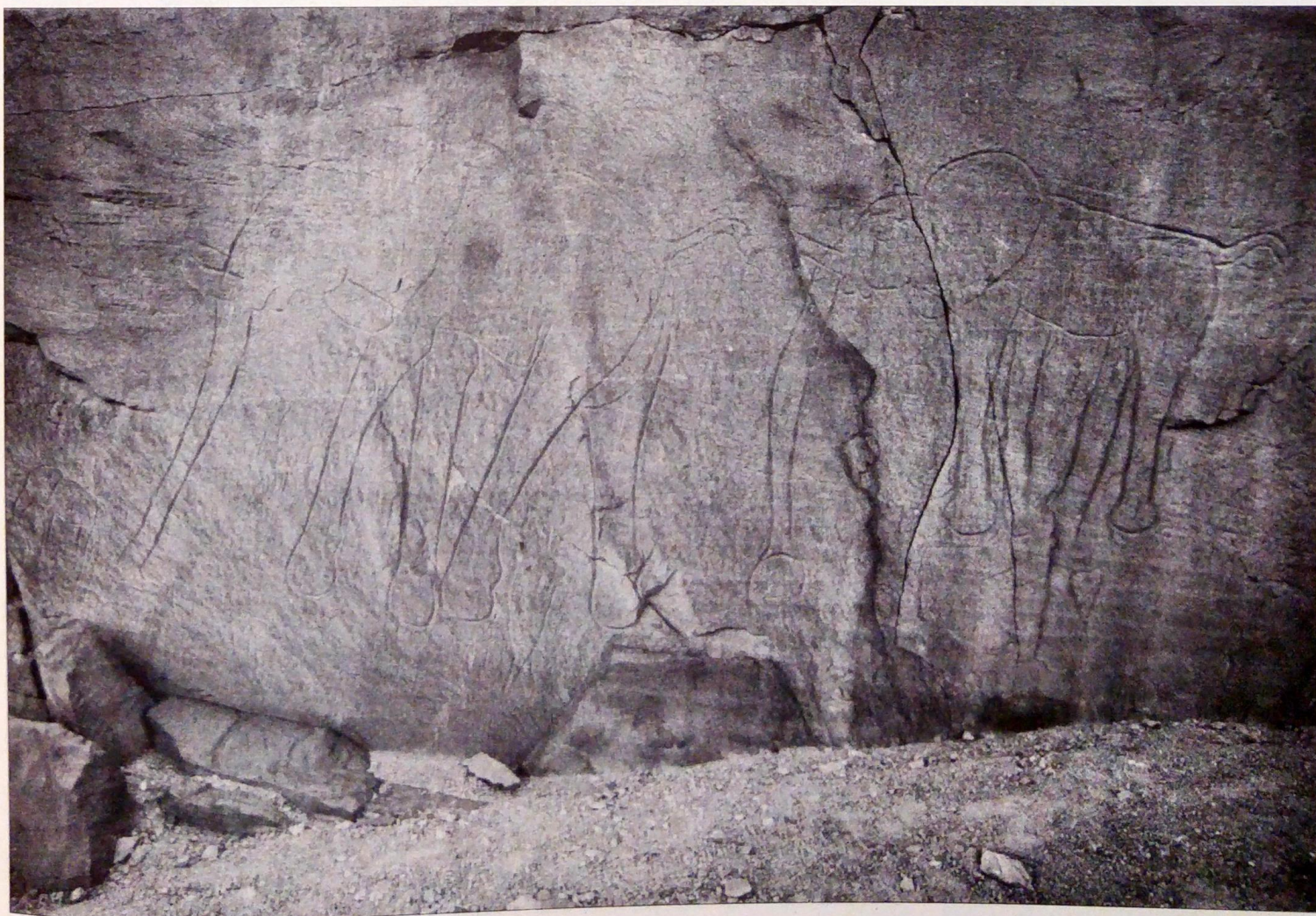




FIGURE 11. Detail of the archer from Figure 9. The breadth of this figure is 39 cm. Note the feather decoration of the head.



FIGURE 12. The second large elephant. Note the two round signs, one below the head and the second at the end of the trunk. A small cattle figure below the first leg and the heart-like sign below the hind legs. Below the raised tail there is a right engraving of a simplified human figure (compare with Plate I).

FIGURE 13.

Two roughly pecked figures of an elephant (note two eyes) and an antelope (?). The former figure is 30 cm long. They are situated on the small rock bank at the foot of the rock wall (compare with Plate I).



FIGURE 14.

The disposition of the third large elephant remains (tusk and two round distal parts of the forelegs – compare with Plate I). The two heart-like signs are clearly visible here. The bigger of them is 46 cm high.



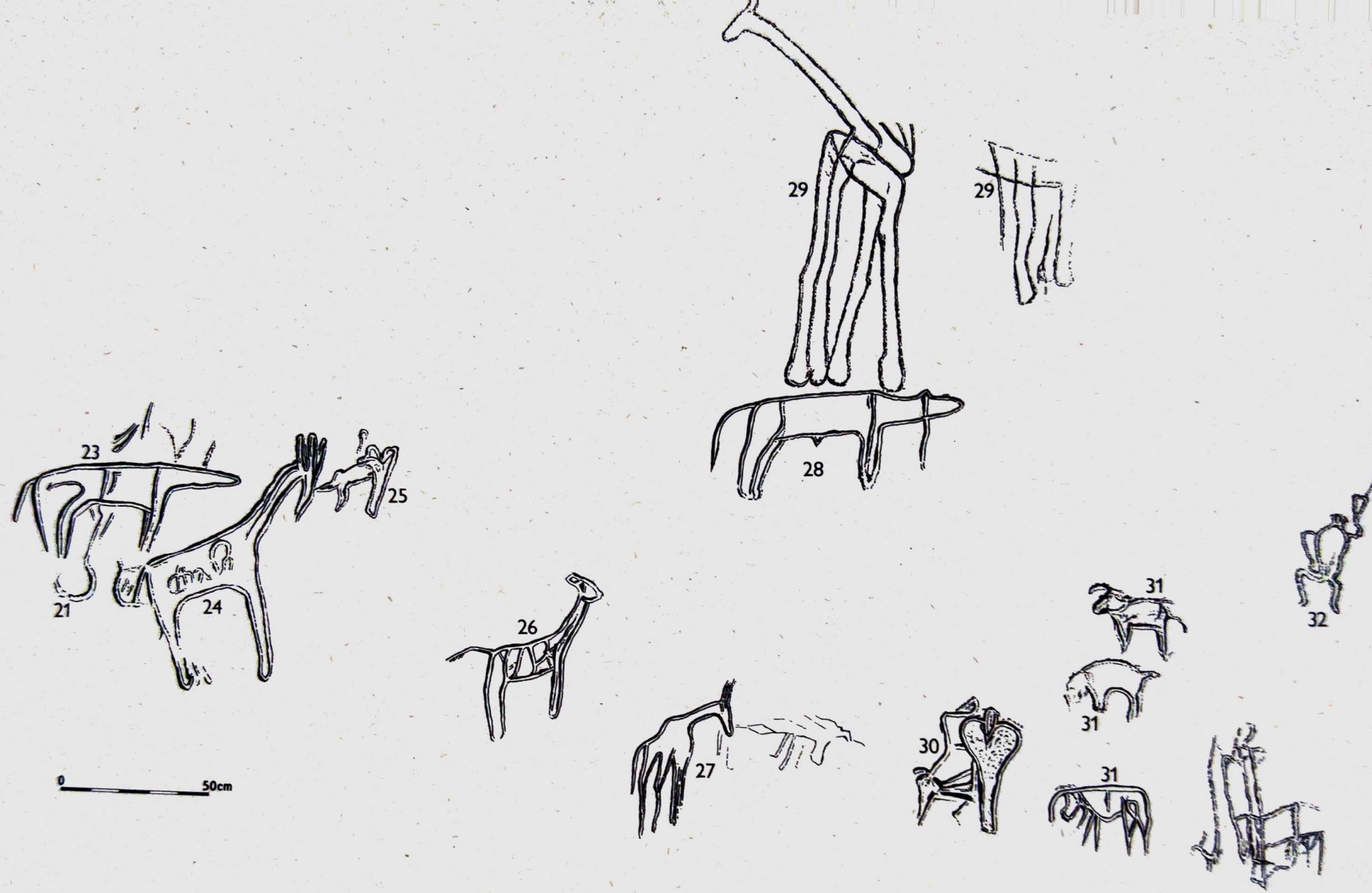


PLATE II. The disposition of carvings in the main part of the gallery. Carvings of inventory numbers 23-32.



FIGURE 15.

The disposition of a cattle figure (with a pointed head), a giraffe and the human figure with the heart-like sign instead of the head. The human figure with the heart-like heads is 28 cm long.



FIGURE 16.

Detail of the garanyuk (?) figure. It is 51 cm long.



FIGURE 17. *The disposition of the garanyuk (?) figure and of the giraffe on the rock wall. The legs of the giraffe are covered with sediments.*



FIGURE 18. *Detail of the giraffe figure once the legs have been uncovered.*

(Next page:)

FIGURE 19. *Detail of the slight engraving of a cattle figure with a forward curved horn. It is situated in front of the giraffe figure (compare with Plate II).*

FIGURE 20. *The cattle figure with the deformed horn. It is 78 cm long.*





FIGURE 21. *Two giraffes – the first with the raised tail, the second incomplete.*

FIGURE 22. *The disposition of the carved figures on the rock wall.*



FIGURE 23. *Detail of the giraffe with the raised tail (inventory No. 29). The head is only slightly pecked as it was too high and too difficult to reach.*

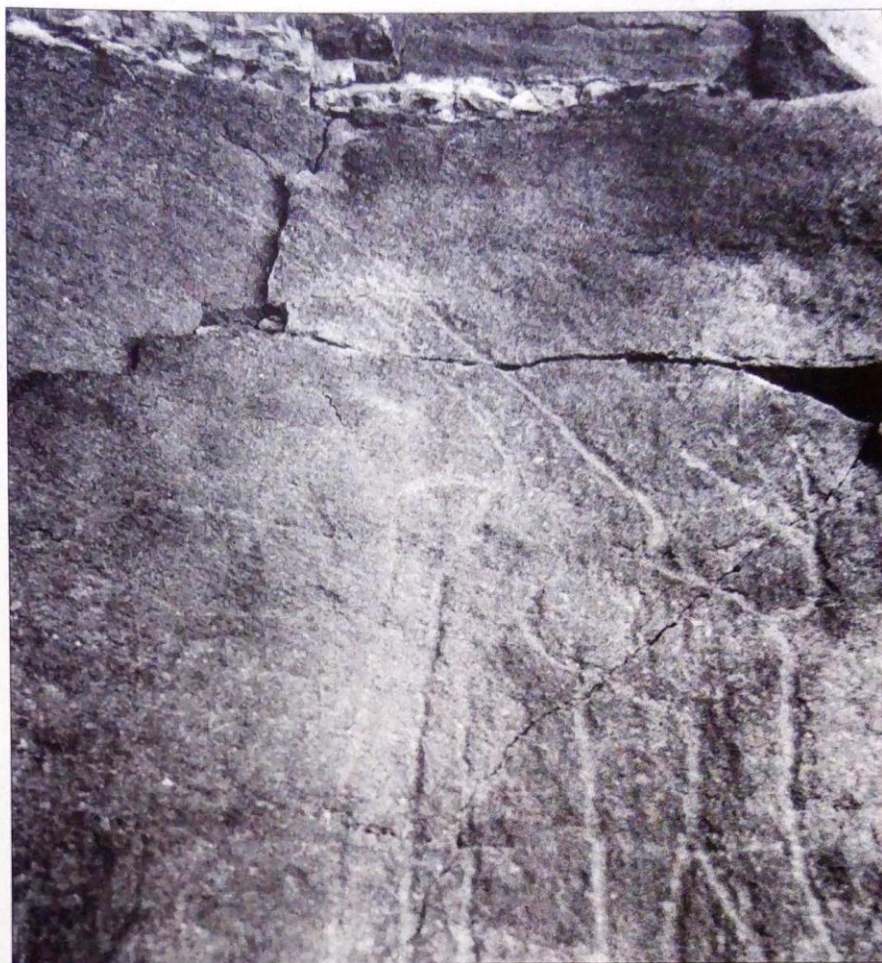


FIGURE 24. *Detail of the human figure with the heart-like sign replacing the head.*





FIGURE 25.
The disposition of the human figure with
the heart-like sign and three animal fig-
ures. Two of them are cattle figures with
the horns curved forward.



FIGURE 26.
One of the three small animal figures, evi-
dently a cattle figure.

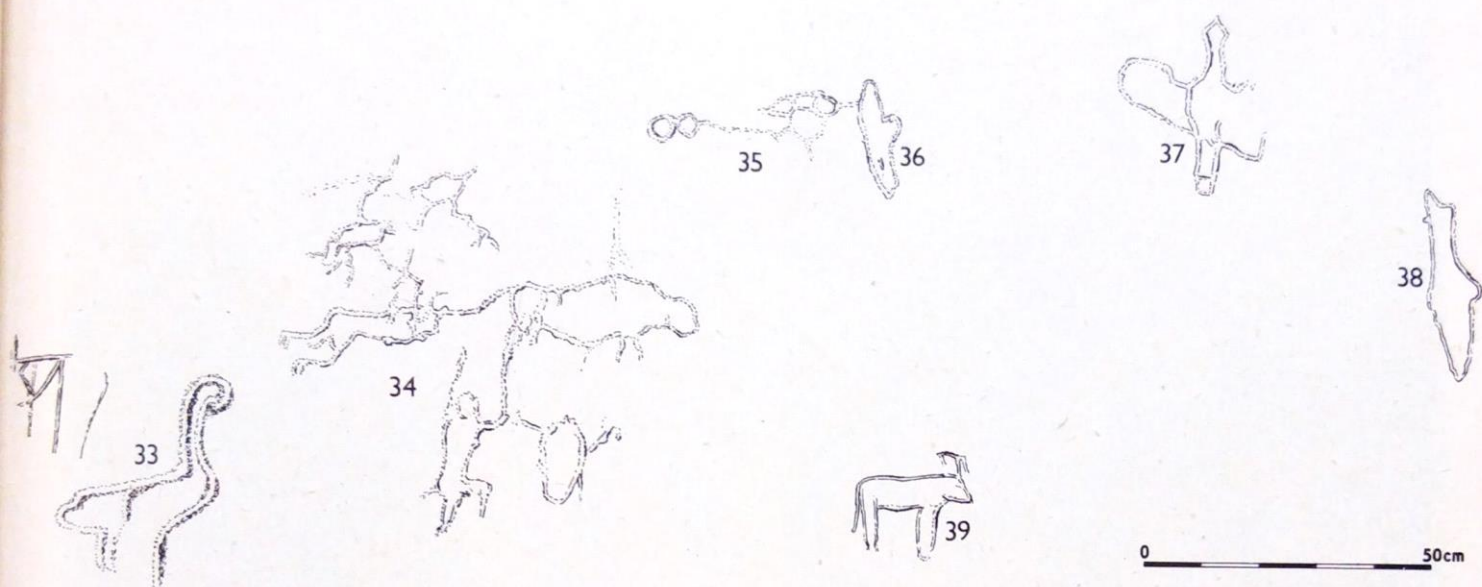


PLATE III. *The disposition of carvings in the main part of the gallery. The carvings of the inventory numbers 32-39.*

FIGURE 27. *The whole disposition of the pecked figures is difficult to recognize (compare with Fig. 29 and with Plate III).*





FIGURE 28. *A pecked bird figure, 36 cm high.*



FIGURE 29. *The group pf pre-pecked figures (three humans and one animal). Compare with Plate III.*

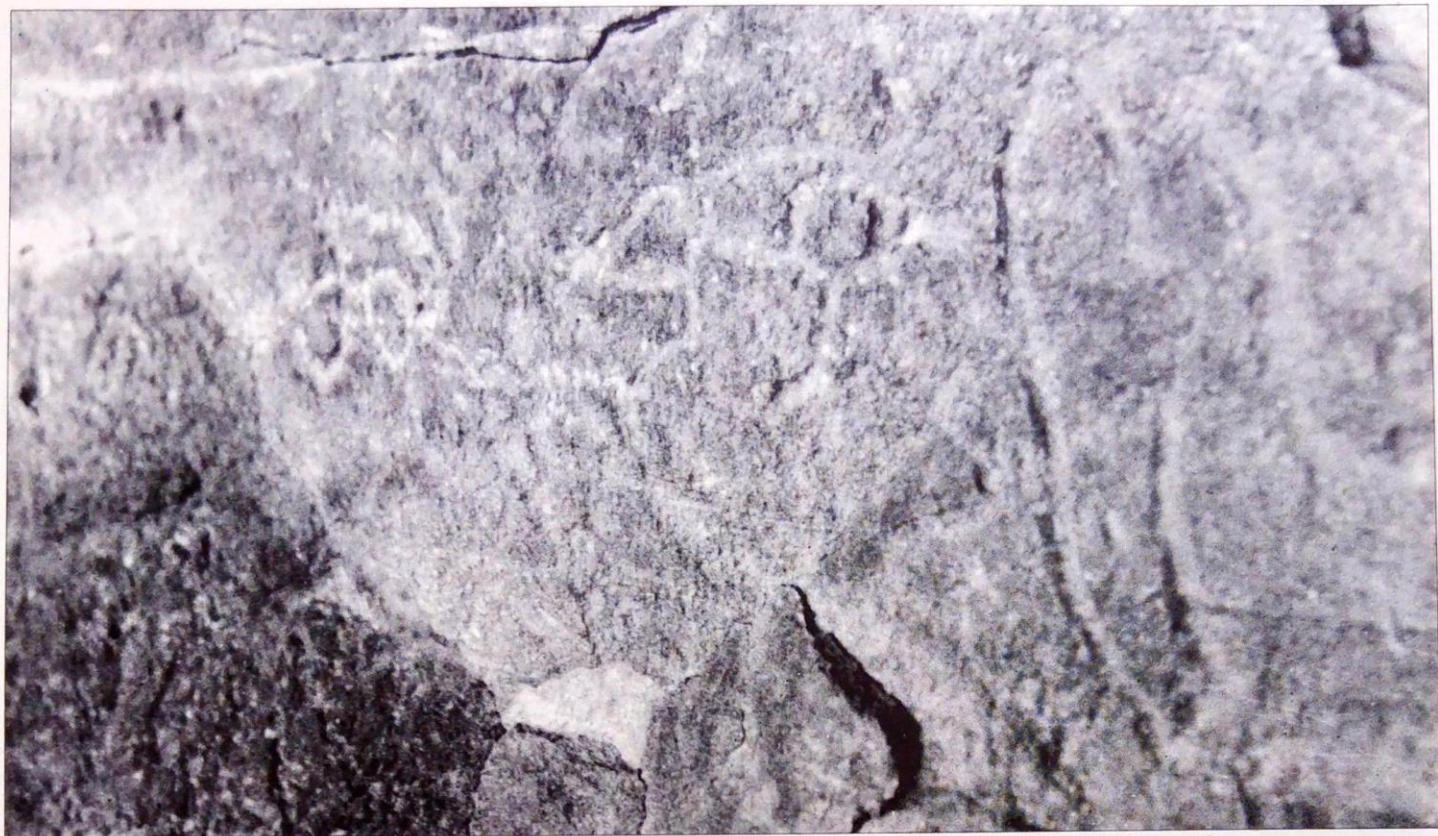


FIGURE 30. *Two pecked double circular signs and the first elongated object (20 cm high).*

FIGURE 31. *Detail of the second elongated object (34 cm high).*

FIGURE 32. *The third elongated object (34 high).*

FIGURE 33. *Compared drawings of the three elongated objects.*

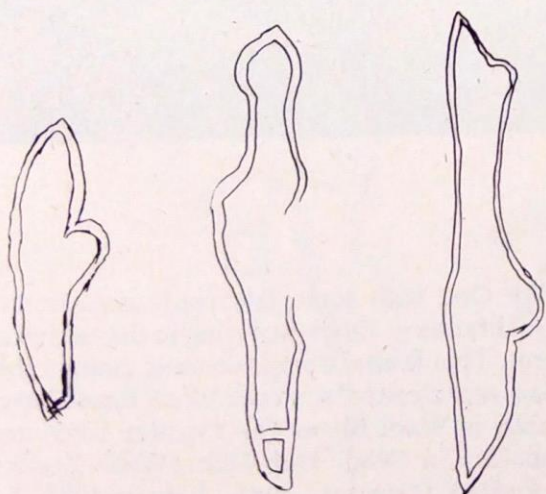




FIGURE 34. Group of complex cattle (?), ostrich and uaddan (?) figures.

Subjects represented

Animals

Only elephants and rhinoceroses are represented, no hippopotamus, no crocodile, no bubalus, no wild bos (aurochs) with horns "en tenaille". Considering the faunal composition, it is obvious that such animals that need large and permanent waters are not represented. Also typical desert or semi-desert animals are not there. Large elephant figures can be seen there, associated to some domesticated cattle figures and some antelopes. They are the earliest recognizable figures there. The later figures are represented by the uaddan, some ostriches and numerous giraffes. All this suggests that two main periods are

represented: One with some late representatives of the great wild fauna – those surviving in the savannah environment. This faunal composition is comparable with animals represented at a rock block found lower down directly in Wadi Buzna (Le Quellec 1985) and in the galleries in Wadi Deb-Deb (Wadi Zreda), northern Fezzan (Graziosi 1981, Jelínek 1982, Le Quellec 1987). This faunal composition is different from the earliest engravings in Wadi Berdjush (Mathrmdush, In Habeter, etc.). No doubt this diversity reflects the different environment conditioned by advanced aridity in the Late Neolithic and later times. It cannot result merely from the different geographical situation or from the neighbourhood of human living centers (e.g. in Wadi Ajal, Wadi Sciati). The

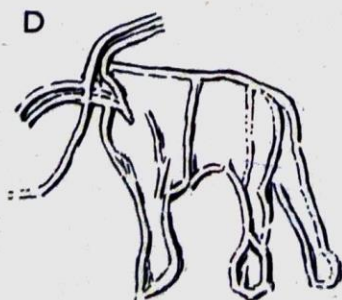
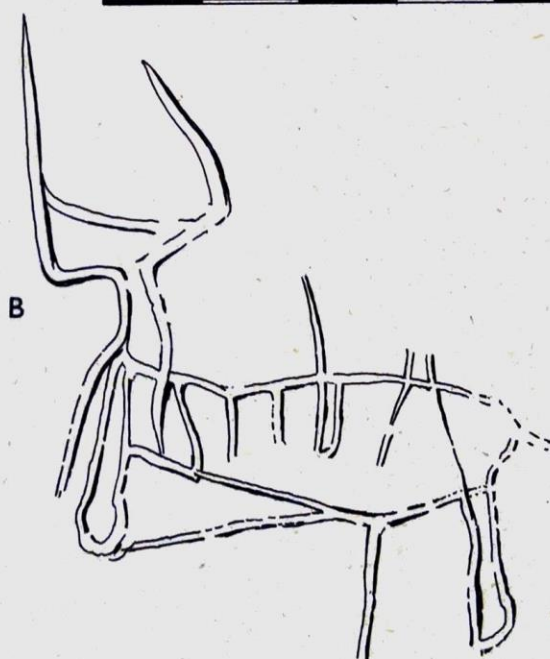
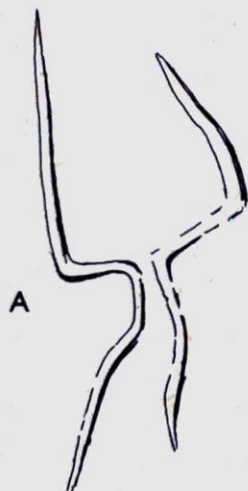
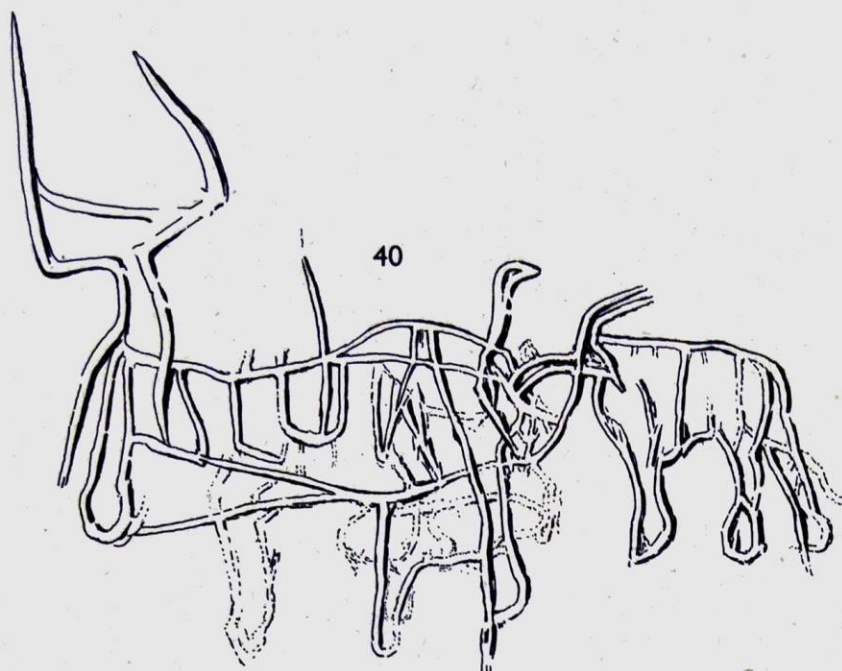
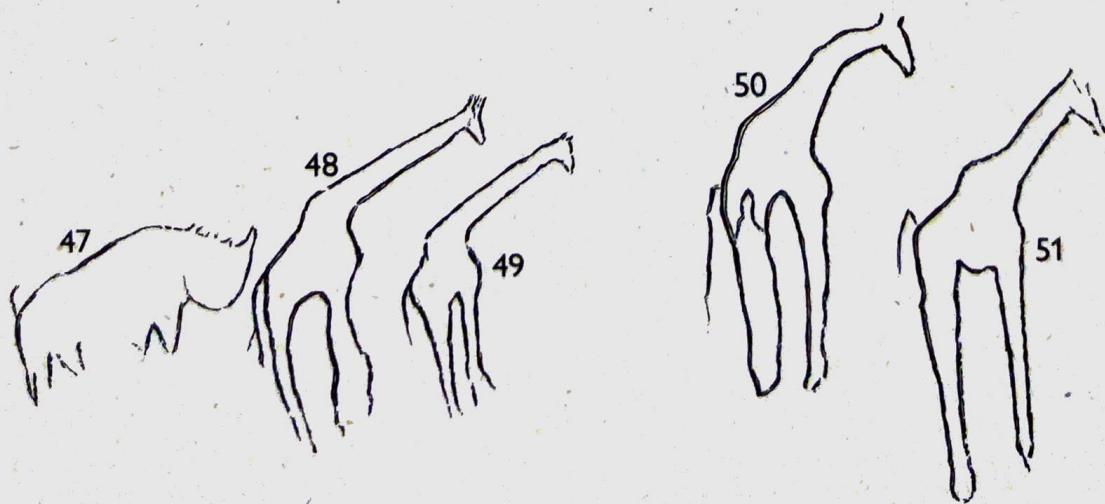
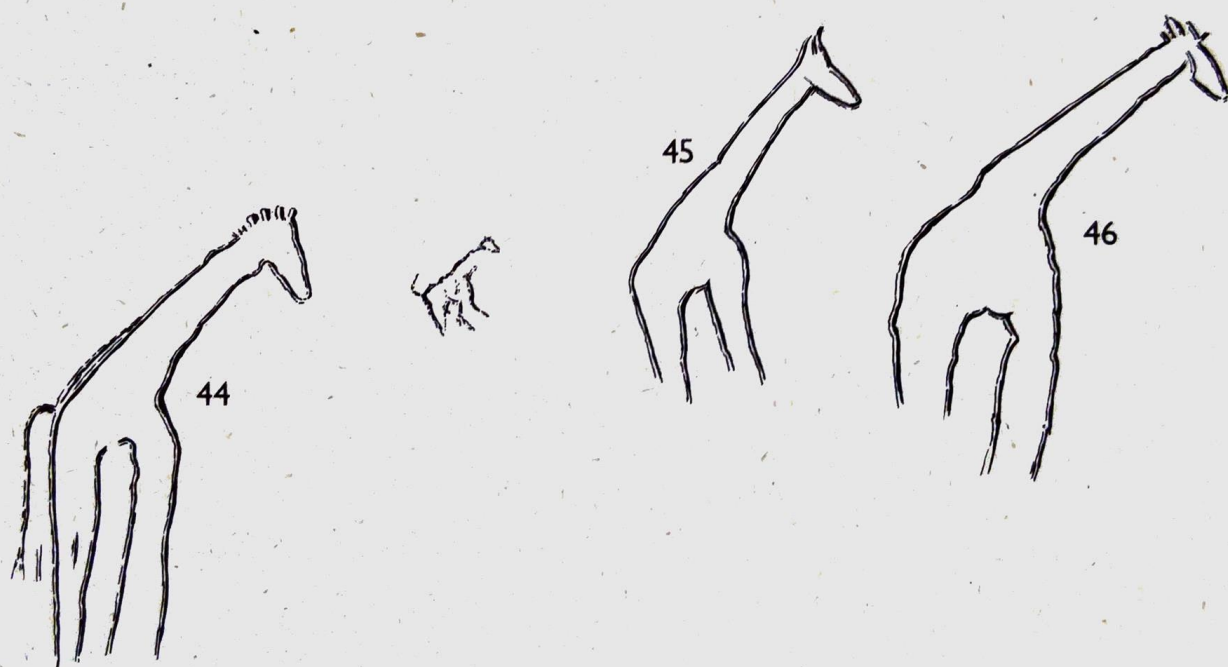
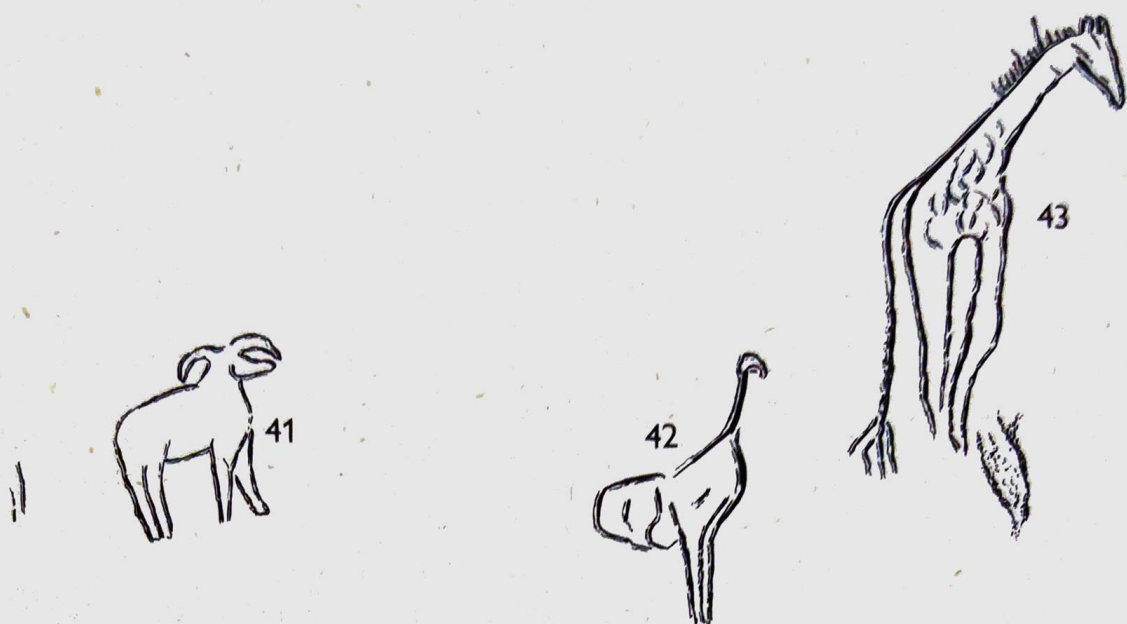


PLATE IV. *Drawing and analysis of the disintegrated group of figures. A: The first part of the cattle-like figure which can be interpreted as "horns" or as a simplified human figure with raised arms. The true approach of the artist was probably much less rational. B: Fully disintegrated bull (?) figure. Note the "hindleg", elongated "body" and several irrational lines. C: Ostrich figure. Some lines of the "hindleg" are used. D: Uaddan. The characteristic horns contradict the massive bull-like body. This composition is superimposed over some earlier pecked lines.*



0 50cm

PLATE V. Figures in the third part of the gallery carved in shallow lines. The patina of these figures is definitely lighter than in most figures of the second part of the gallery. Figures of inventory numbers 41–51 are represented.

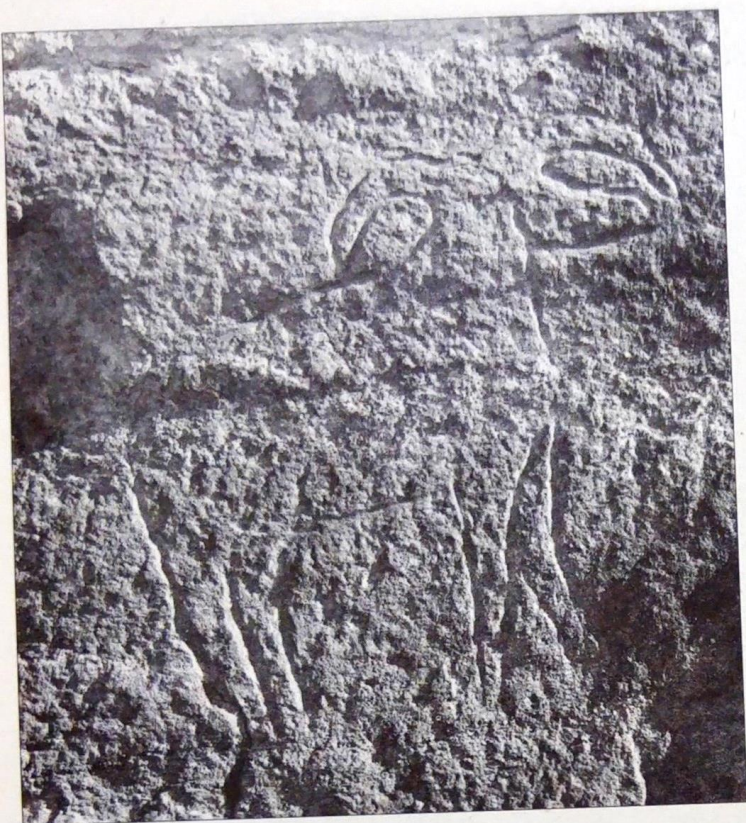


FIGURE 35. *The uaddan figure from the third part of the gallery (24 cm).*



FIGURE 36. *The engraved and pecked ostrich figure.*

FIGURE 37. *The first giraffe (110 cm high). Note the mane, the body design and the end of the tail. The lines had been pre-pecked and then engraved.*



FIGURE 38. *The second giraffe (105 cm high).*

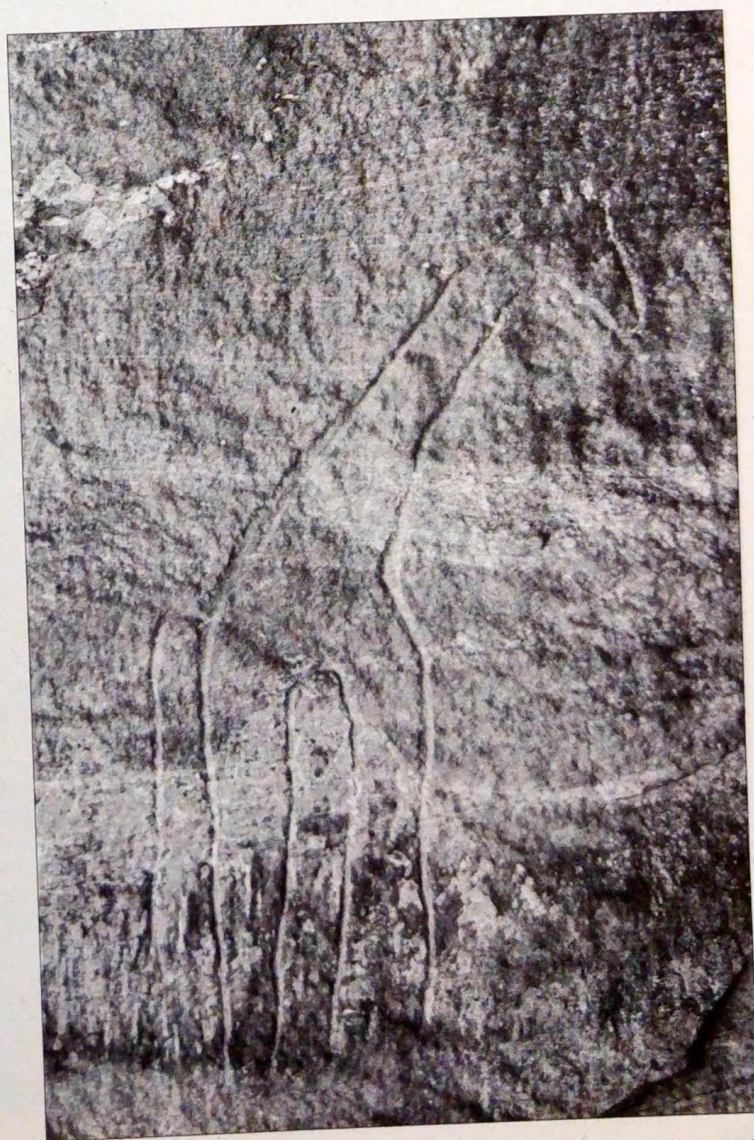




FIGURE 39.
Outlined figure of a rhinoceros (65 cm long) with a characteristic head and simplified legs (compare with the legs of cattle figures in Fig. 42).



FIGURE 40.
The two simple giraffe figures (inventory Nos. 48, 49). The first is 75 cm high.



FIGURE 41.
Two simple giraffes, inventory
numbers 50, 51. The second is
108 cm high.

rock art sites of Messak Settafet are not distant enough to exclude the knowledge of *Homoioceras*, Hippopotamus and other great wild fauna, if they were living only some 100 km to the south, simultaneously and in abundance, as can be seen in rock art. The only possible explanation of this faunal difference is the chronological difference. This idea is supported also by evident difference in style. On the other side some reflection of spiritual life (e.g. the elephant and human figure relations) can survive through long periods of time, as it is evident if the changes in religious ideas are compared with changes of other cultural components (material culture, social relations).

Humans

Two examples of human figures deserve comparative considerations: humans associated with elephants (two large elephants in the second part of the gallery) and a human figure associated with a cattle figure in the westernmost part of the Buzna gallery.

Facing the first large elephant there is a well accomplished archer with a feather head-decoration. Another poorly executed figure is below the elephant's tail. As to the archer attacking the elephant, it should be said that even if poisoned, the arrow is not a reasonable threat for an elephant. Even hunting a giraffe by means of poisoned arrows (even

53/1-10



PLATE VI. Drawing of the composition of the inventory Nos. 53/1-53/10. Note that the figures 53/1 and 53/2 with characteristic legs are superimposed over the earlier figure of the giraffe with an unusual geometrical decoration of the neck. Note also the additional destructive pecking in figures 53/9, 53/10. Interesting is also the advanced figural simplification in 53/6.

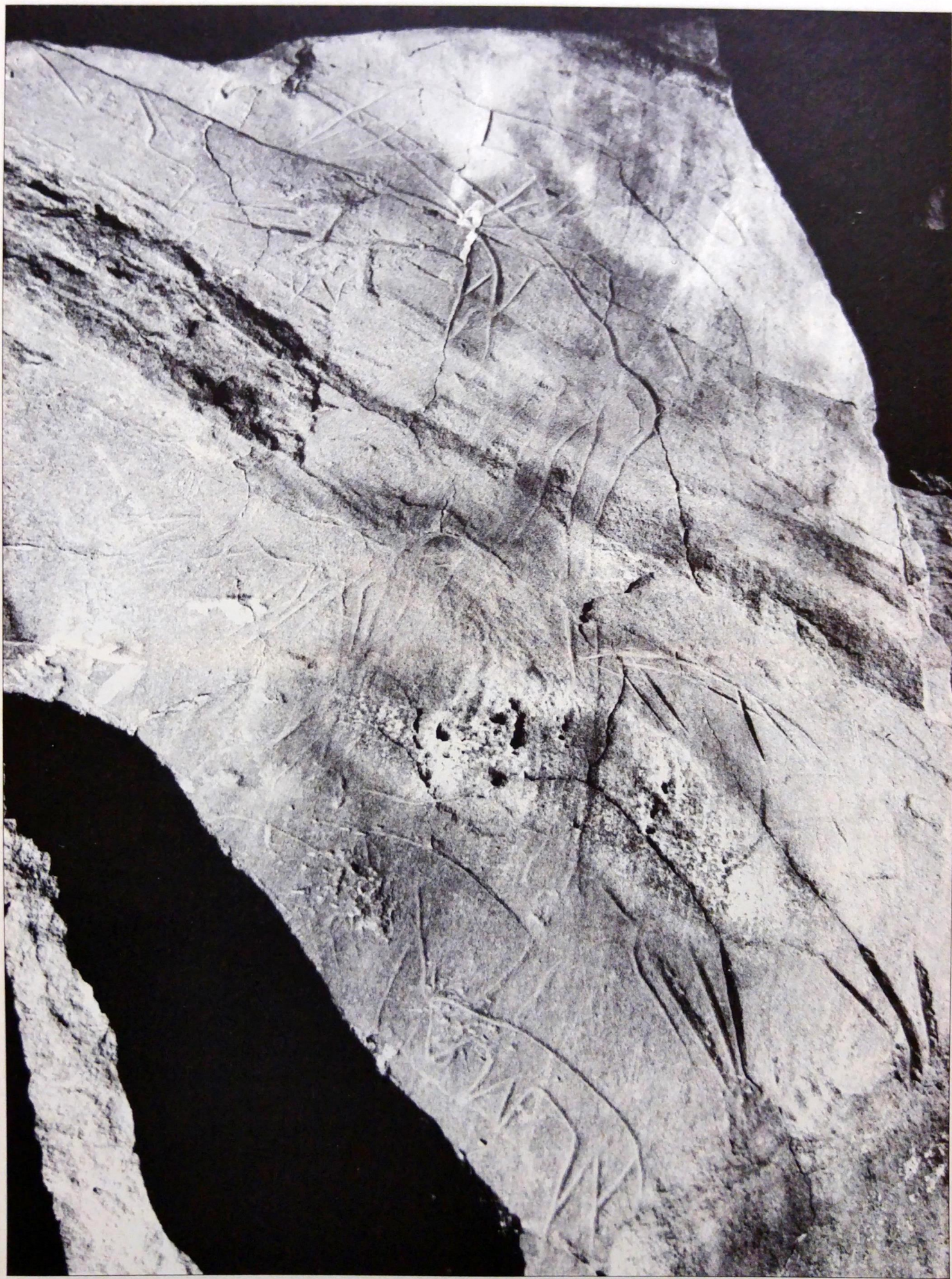


FIGURE 42. *The composition of figures situated on the flat face of the rock block at the foot of the cliff.*



FIGURE 43. *The westernmost part of the gallery (Part IV) – A fairly recent (Horse period?) cattle figure (68 cm long).*

FIGURE 44. *The upper part of Fig. 42 in detail, with inventory numbers 53/3, 53/4 disturbed by additional pecking. Note the simplified characteristic legs in the figure 53/4.*



(Next page:)
FIGURE 45.
The upper part of Fig. 42.

FIGURE 46.
The lower part of Fig. 42. Note the traces of destructive pecking.





FIGURE 47.
A simple cattle figure (45 cm long) on the
rock block face associated with the
grounding scars.

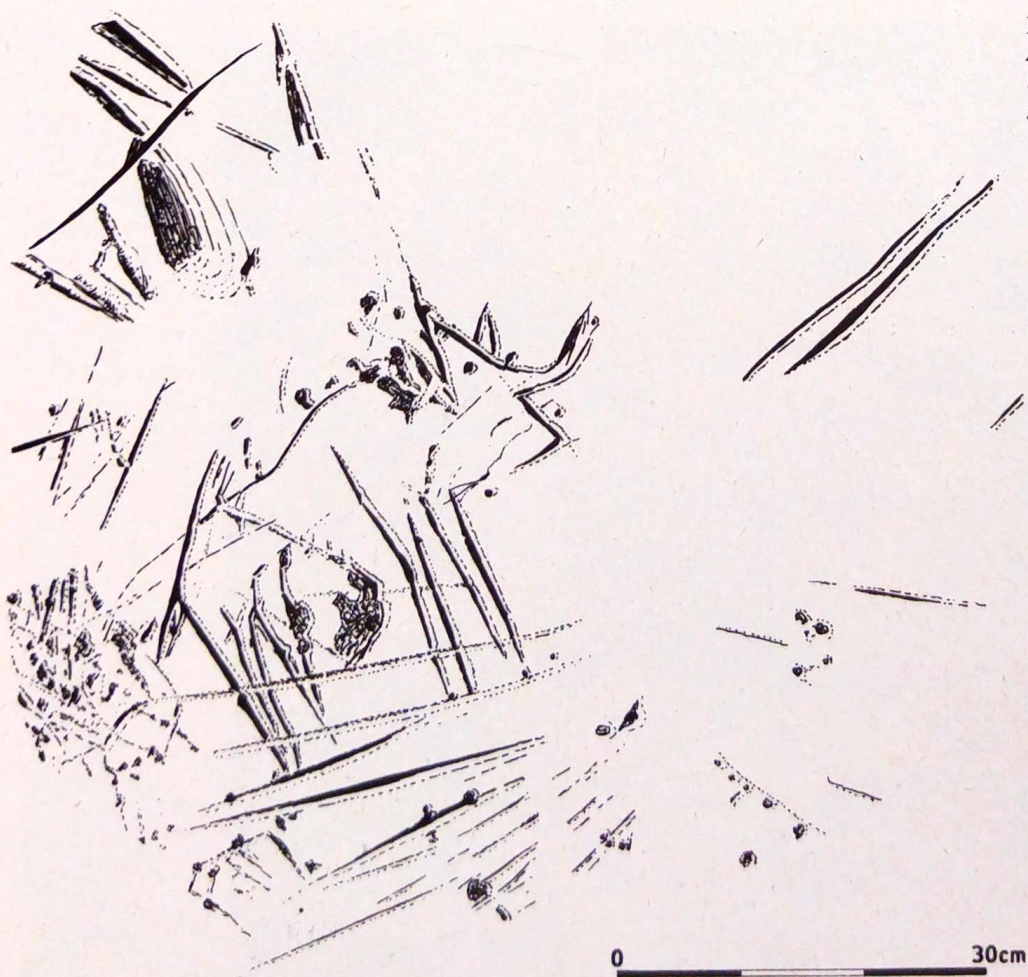


FIGURE 47a.
Drawing of cattle figure from Fig. 47.



FIGURE 48. A cattle figure (no sex), 24 cm high, with a simple human orant. Each figure is executed in different style. Last figure in the western (the IVth) part of the gallery.

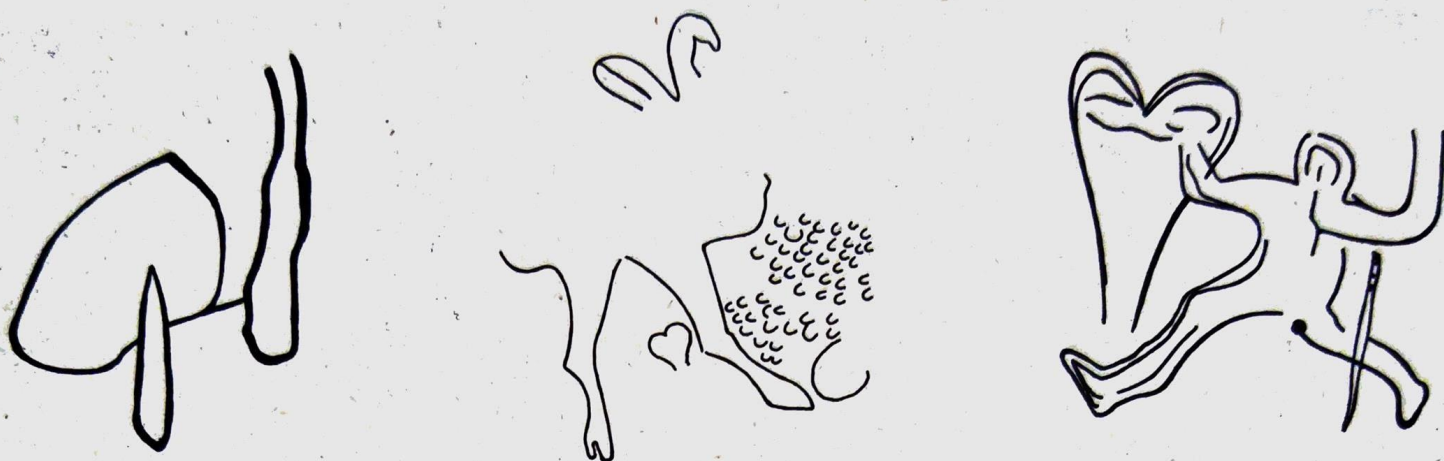


FIGURE 49. Comparative examples of heart-like signs: a) Hesbaia (Algeria), b) Caf El Metchia (Libya), c) Wadi El Chel. (b and c after Graziosi 1942, 1971).

Immediately after the hunters' leaving the killed prey, the cadaver would be consumed by scavengers. The only possibility to kill an elephant was with the help of a trap immobilized by a large stone anchor (Ben Barur stone). However, no such case is represented in rock art. On the contrary the elephant is faced only by a single archer or even by a man with a short crooked weapon, certainly not efficient enough for an attack on a pachyderm (see Jelínek 1985b, Fig. 15, 16). If other human figures are involved, they are usually not in hunting activities. In the present case in the Wadi Buzna gallery the second residual figure occurs below the elephant's tail. An important comparison is offered with the rock block from the bottom of Wadi Buzna, where the elephant (similar in style: rigid legs and trunk and simple ears) is also faced by an archer and by another, probably later figure with a crooked short weapon. Below its tail there is not any figure but a simple vertical line. All this supports the idea that such representations are more symbolic than realistic.

The other site compared is Wadi Deb-Deb (Wadi Zreda of Le Quellec 1987) with two elephant figures associated with small human figures. Again, some of them are in front of the animal and some in other places around. The elephants are represented with stiff legs and trunks and simple ears. The elephants in Wadi Buzna stand as a transition in their shape between Messak Settafet and northern Fezzanese representations. The fundamental features of the composition are comparable.

There is still another human-like figure in the Wadi Buzna gallery. It is the inventory No. 17, representing a slightly engraved theriomorph figure below the head of the second large elephant (Plate I). It demonstrates the links with earlier rock carvings from the south. In northern Fezzan the theriomorph figures are fairly rare (e.g. in Wadi Deb-Deb Jelínek 1982, Fig. 9, Le Quellec 1987, p. 180).

When studying the other human figure associated with a cattle figure in the westernmost part of the Wadi Buzna gallery, some difference can be assessed in the representation of the animal and the man. While the cattle has no horns and no sex represented (the majority of such figures are bulls with

a well represented sex), it is deeply cut in the rock in a U-line, in lateral view, gracefully marching, with some parts of the body polished (one leg, the muzzle and part of the chest) – the human figure is strongly simplified, with the upper part of the body in frontal view with raised arms (orant). The bull figure can be compared (not by size but by concept) to some larger Mathrndush figures.

Adopting this point of view to several small rigid cattle or antelope figures from the second (central) part of the Wadi Buzna gallery, it can be assessed that they accompany the elephant figures in a similar way like in the Wadi Buzna rock block (Le Quellec 1985, Fig. 1) or in Wadi Deb-Deb (Jelínek 1982, Fig. 41, Le Quellec 1987, p. 233).

Signs

Two circular signs should be mentioned, one terminating the trunk of the second large elephant and the second below its head. It is important to stress that a similar circular sign is also near the end of the trunk of the elephant on the rock block in Wadi Buzna, where it is interpreted as a trap sign (Le Quellec 1985). This is a probable explanation, but it remains to explain why this sign is situated as terminating the elephant's trunk – which is a fairly special position.

The heart-like signs, most probably of erotic significance, were considered above in the description of the gallery. (Figs. 49a, b, c.)

Psychological approach

When looking for a possible explanation, some of the individual figures, or groups of figures, should be taken into consideration. The coexistence of the archer with the elephant (Figs. 9, 11) and of the orant with the cattle figure signal the mythological background of the compositions. Even some religious/ceremonial significance can be attached to them. The elephant with the archer certainly does not correspond to a realistic situation. The same applies to the theriomorph figure, inventory No. 17. The

mythological character of this unrealistic figure is evident when compared with numerous similar figures from Messak Settafet and Messak Mellet (van Albada 1994, 1992/93, Muzzolini 1991, van Albada 1994, Gauthier 1994).

Interesting is the composition of three figures (Fig. 34): the bull, the ostrich and the uaddan. All of them combine and re-use some lines of the neighbouring figure and in this way the whole group becomes disintegrated. Strong emotion had undoubtedly been in the background of this artistic activity.

The erotic explanation of the heart-like signs is evident from comparative study of similar signs at other Fezzanese sites. (Figs. 49a, b, c.)

When considering some figurative carvings of some large animals (e.g. elephants), the psychological approach of the artist (self-realisation, the strength, size and respect of the animal) can be considered. The tendency to look for the descriptive informative value can lead to underestimation of the symbolic value of each of these representations.

CHRONOLOGY

When comparing the Wadi Buzna gallery on the gara, which is the object of the present study, and the rock block studied by Le Quellec (1985), it is evident that both sites are of the same tradition, and that their principal figures are contemporary. This is supported by the comparable patina of individual representations, the technique of rock carvings, composition of represented fauna, by representations of elephants and humans and rigid cattle figures, and by circular signs at both sites. A majority of these characters links the Wadi Buzna gallery with north Fezzanese sites described by Graziosi (1981), Jelínek (1982) or Le Quellec (1987). Fewer characters show links with south Fezzanese traditions, as represented in the Messak Settafet sites: the size of elephant figures, representations of elephants and humans, the theriomorph figure, the style of the rhinoceros figure similar to Mathrmdush (Jelínek 1984a, Fig. 23) and differing from the north Fezzanese rhinoceros figures (Jelínek 1982, Fig. 41, Le Quellec 1987, pp. 233, 323). These features, supported by the position of the gallery, by the existence of the quarrying place and of the Neolithic site in the near mouth of the wadi date the gallery to the Neolithic. A different degree of patina and the superimposition of figures (Fig. 42) and different subjects and modes of execution (see inv. numbers 35, 52, 53, 54) signal the prolonged existence of the gallery, at least for two Neolithic periods, reaching to postneolithic horse period.

CONCLUSION

The geographically transitional position of the studied gallery between southern and northern Fezzan corresponds to its relative chronology. The

age is, according to the presented analysis; later than a majority of figures from Mathrmdush (Frobenius 1937, Jelínek 1984a, Fig. 23). An important fact is the coexistence of the rock art gallery and the quarrying place (raw material for pottery production) and their possible simultaneity. This case represents an important impetus for reconsidering the role of this important Neolithic gallery.

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