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STATISTICS OF ROCK ART IN THE TOM REGION

Enn Ernits

The present article is a revised version of the paper presented in the small conference (Limnology Station at Vörtsjärv, 14. VII 1996) dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the discovery of the rock art locatoin on Cape Swan at Lake Onega.

Let us take a map and travel in our minds to Kemerovo Oblast in the Southern part of West Siberia. The 840 kilometers long picturesque Tom River, a well-known tributary of Ob, takes its start at the western bank of the mountain ridge of Kuznetski Alatau. The banks of the river Tom are high steep sandstone or slate cliffs, on which cedar and pine trees grow. The Devonian sandstone is mainly dark brown, or nearly black in colour.

There are different opinions as to when petroglyphs of the vertical cliffs of the lower course of the river Tom were created. Most probably they come from different times and may originate from the time between the Neolithic Period and Iron Age (Martynov & Lomteva 1994: 18; Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 186, 191). For example, Anatoli Martynov, one of the best-known researchers of this area, has claimed that the elk-like images characteristic to Tom are from the Neolithic (IV–III millennium BC) (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 183). Other researchers have found this claim unsounded, and most often the petroglyphs of Tom are dated to the Bronze Age (see Kovtun 1993: 16 ff).

As to the style and subject matter of the images, rock art by the river Tom resembles more petroglyphs of Eastern Siberia than these of Western territories, but high variability can be found even among the Tom petroglyphs themselves (Kovtun 1993: 47). Nearly twenty different archaeological deposits have been discovered in these surroundings (Barinova 1994: 15).

Several techniques have been used in creating the petroglyphs, there is variation even within one petroglyph. Thus, petroglyphs or en-

gravings of the river Tom can be divided into carvings, engravings and abrasions.¹

Rock art by the river Tom includes four locations, separated from each other by many kilometers: 1) Pisanyi Kamen, 2) Novoromanovo (Novoromanovo I, II and Visiashchi Kamen), 3) Nikolskaia and 4) Tutalskaia. For further subdividing, researchers have used different names; however, the standardisation of these is not the purpose of the present article.

According to published works, 596 ancient figures are found on the cliffs of the Tom.² The actual number exceeds this, as the number of petroglyphs from the five panels discovered in Tutalskaia in 1995 is undetermined; also, some of the data is here presented approximately, because in previous works compositions have often been regarded as a single petroglyph, and without further research on the spot the actual number cannot be specified. Therefore, the actual number of survived images could be around 650, maybe even more. The state of petroglyphs varies vastly: an enormous number of engravings has perished over time.

The biggest location is Pisanyi Kamen with its 320 survived petroglyphs. This makes 53.6% of the total number of petroglyphs found on the banks of the Tom (see Figure 1). Novoromanovo region holds the second place, containing at least 177 petroglyphs (29.7%). Far smaller are the locations of Tutalskaia (74 engravings, or 12.4%) and Nikolskaia (25, or 4.2%).

The statistical classification and significance of petroglyphs by the Tom have not been the subject of research. Thus the present article operates with the number 517 (i.e. 596-29-25-25), as the classifi-

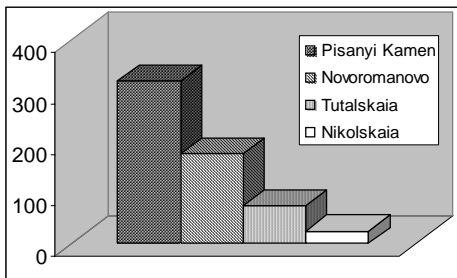


Figure 1. Distribution of images between different locations.

cation of the petroglyphs of Novoromanovo I (29), or that of Novoromanovo II and Nikolskaia (both approximately 25 images) is unknown.

A new terminology is used in this article to classify the rock art of the river Tom. Class names are derived from the Greek root of the prototypes of petroglyphs, to which the suffix *-morph* is added (see Poikalainen & Ernits 1998: 49); in some cases the English *-like* is used, when it is not known, for example, whether a bear-like image is a representation of a natural bear or a bear-like deity.

If the prototype of a petroglyph is impossible to determine, it is classified 'indefinite'. Specified or identified petroglyphs can depict either living beings (biomorphs) or lifeless objects (abimorphs). Biomorphs may represent human beings (anthropomorphs), animals (zoomorphs) or plants.³

Zoomorphs may depict only a part of a human- or animal-like being. For example, we can find images that resemble (probably masked) human faces or the head of an animal (often with a neck). In the present article these are called cephalomorphs.

Tables and diagrams present only the five most frequent types of petroglyphs. The group 'others' contains relatively rare, and therefore especially valuable petroglyphs. Also, a few mammal-like images (theriomorphs), further undifferentiated, are presented in the latter group.

PISANYI KAMEN

Going downstream along the river Tom, the first rock art location is Pisanyi Kamen (in Russian *Painted Rock*) that lies in the delta of the tributary Pisanaia, 60 kilometers from Kemerovo.

According to A. Okladnikov and A. Martynov (1972), Pisanyi Kamen was first described in the 17th century by a Russian traveller.⁴

Pisanyi Kamen includes 10 deposits (I–VII are cliff panels/murals, VIII–X are rock boulders) (see Figure 2). A fair number of petroglyphs there have not survived.

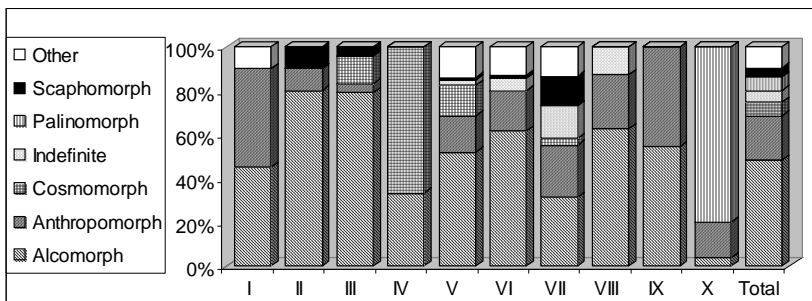


Figure 2. Distribution of motifs at the Pisanyi Kamen rock art location.

Nine out of 20 petroglyphs of the first deposit are elk-like images, or alcomorphs (45% of the total number). Of these, images of the head of an elk (alcocephalomorphs) make up 66.7%. 9 images are antropomorphs (45%). In addition, one bird-like, one dog-like and one bird- or human-like image have been described (see Figure 2).

The second deposit contains only 10 images, eight of which are alcomorphs. The other two are an anthropomorph and an image of a boat (scaphomorph).

In the third deposit (24 petroglyphs) alcomorphs are in majority (19, or 79%), 7 of them depicting cephalomorphs (see Figure 3). In addition to these, there are 3 circle-like images (12.5%).⁵ Finally, there are also an anthropomorph and a scaphomorph in this deposit.

The fourth deposit with its 6 petroglyphs is the smallest. Only 2 alcomorphs and 4 circle-like images (cosmomorphs) are reported from there (see Figure 4).

The fifth deposit (see Figure 5) is the biggest in Pisanyi Kamen (79 petroglyphs, or 24.7% out of the total number of petroglyphs of Pisanyi Kamen). Here, half the images (41) present alcomorphs, with only 3 of them cephalomorphs. This is followed by anthropomorphs (16.4%), including one anthropocephalomorph. Cosmomorphs are slightly less frequent (13.9%).

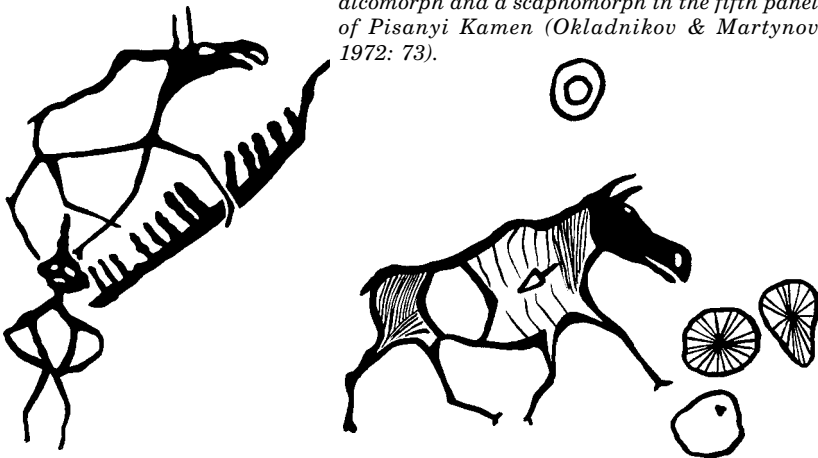
There are also as many petroglyphs classified as ‘others’ in the fifth deposit. Out of these, the following deserve closer attention – 4 bird-



Figure 3. The third panel of Pisanyi Kamen (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 70–71).

Figure 4 (below right). An elk-like image and cosmomorphs in the fourth deposit of Pisanyi Kamen (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 48).

Figure 5 (below left). An anthropomorph, an alcomorph and a scaphomorph in the fifth panel of Pisanyi Kamen (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 73).



like images (5.3%) including one owl-like, three bear-like (arctomorphs, 3.8%), one dog- or hare-like, and one mammal-like petroglyph; also, out of abiomorphs one net-like formation and another reminding a compasses are of more interest. Thus, exceptional images are abundant in this site. One more petroglyph needs to be mentioned – an image resembling a special boat made out of a tree trunk.

The sixth deposit is the second largest in the Pisanyi Kamen location. Again, alcomorphs are the most frequent images, constituting 62.3% or 43 items out of the total. Of these, alcocephalomorphs are remarkably plentiful (21). There are 10 (14.5%) anthropomorphs in this deposit, with only 3 of them cephalomorphs. There is also one scaphomorph. The unique biomorphs to be found in the deposit are one ox-, one hare- and one bear-like petroglyph. Four incomprehensible dots (5%) apparently depict abiomorphs.

The seventh deposit belongs to the three biggest in Pisanyi Kamen. Among its 67 petroglyphs, alcomorphs (21, or 31.3%, including 8 cephalomorphs), anthropomorphs (16, or nearly 24%, including 4 cephalomorphs) and unspecified formations (10, or 14.9%) are predominant. In no other deposit of the Tom region are there so many images of boat (9, or 13.4%).

In the seventh deposit, two cosmomorphs have been found. Rarities are a ram-/goat-like, a deer-, a hare-, and a dog-like petroglyph. In addition, a theriomorph, two arctomorphs and two dots are found. In the 18th century even one fish image could be found here (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 96).

Petroglyphs in the eighth deposit have mostly not survived: only 5 alcomorphs, 2 anthropomorphs and one unspecified image have been reported.

The ninth deposit, a relatively small one, consists of 6 alcomorphs and 5 anthropomorphs.

The 25 petroglyphs in the tenth deposit depict elk hunting. Of these, chase-related petroglyphs resembling stakes of a fence (14, or 58.7%) predominate. From the same deposit, 5 images are reported that may represent counting sticks (20%).⁶ However, it is not certain

whether the latter belong to the ancient times. Thus, the cliff under discussion has mostly palinomorphs (stick-like images, 78.7%). Next to an alcomorph we can see two clear anthropomorphs with bow-like formations and two rather vague human-like shapes (or counting sticks?).

All in all, there are 320 petroglyphs in Pisanyi Kamen location, nearly half of which (155, or 48.6%) are alcomorphs. The second frequent are human-like images (64, or 20,1%), only half as frequent. Both percentages correspond to the averages of the Tom region; after all, since Pisanyi Kamen is the biggest location, it largely determines the averages.

Circle and oval shapes, i.e. cosmomorphs (20, or 6.25% of the total), palinomorphs (20, or 6.26%), unspecified images (17, or 5.3%) and scaphomorphs (13, or 4.1%) are more or less equally frequent (with the exception of scaphomorphs) in Pisanyi Kamen. The remaining 31 make up only 9.7% of the petroglyphs of Pisanyi Kamen. These are 6 (1.9%) arctomorphs and 6 images of birds (4 of those from the fifth deposit).⁷

Very rare are engravings depicting a dog, hare, ox or small ruminant. There are only 2 dog-like shapes, and in addition one petroglyph depicting either a dog or a hare in the location. Also, there are only two hare-like images in Pisanyi Kamen, with none found elsewhere by the Tom. Another petroglyph resembling a sheep or goat has been reported from Novoromanovo I. In addition, one unique image is identified as a deer, another as an ox.

Abiomorphs are represented only by a few surviving dots (6), incomprehensible in content. Two formations resemble compasses (possibly also categorized as cosmomorphs) and two are unique netlike structures.

NOVOROMANOVO

This location of rock art includes three relatively close sites: Novoromanovo I, II and Visiashchi Kamen ('Hanging Cliff').

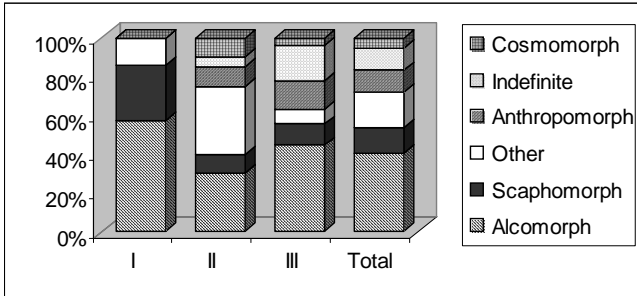


Figure 6. Distribution of motifs of the Novoromanovo I site.

Novoromanovo I

The site of Novoromanovo I (in Russian *Novoromanovskaia Pisanitsa*) lies 26 kilometers from Pisanyi Kamen on the right bank of the delta of the Dolgaia River and was under scientific examination first in 1967 during the expedition run by Martynov. Petroglyphs here are situated within 100 meters, deposits lying 3–4 meters apart. There are 54 engravings described in a monograph by Okladnikov and Martynov; however, this includes several palimpsests or compositions that are related to each other. For example, from the second deposit, 10 petroglyphs were described in the book, while the actual number approaches 20 (cf. Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 129–131). Therefore I have estimated the sum total in 1967 to have been 86.

In the summer of 1991 Novoromanovo was inspected for the second time. New images were found and the contours of earlier findings were specified. Since then, the 72 petroglyphs in 15 panels are divided into four groups (Martynov & Lomteva 1994: 18). However, the within-group statistics have not been presented. Thus, the present survey can only rely on the sum total of 86 mentioned earlier (Figure 6).

From the first deposit, which is the smallest in Novoromanovo, only 7 images have been found, 4 of

Figure 7. Snake-like images in Novoromanovo I (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 128).



these alcomorphs (57%) and one a theriomorph. In addition, two scaphomorphs are described in this deposit.

Of the 20 representations of the second deposit, 6 are reported to be alcomorphs (30%) (including two cephalomorphs), 2 as anthropomorphs (10%), 2 as scaphomorphs, 2 as cosmomorphs, one as a theriomorph and one remains unspecified. Unique are the 6 (30%) snake-like images or ophiomorphs found in one of the deposits (presented in classification in the category of 'others') (Figure 7).

Of the 27 images of the third deposit, 12 are classified as alcomorphs (44.4%), 5 as unspecified (18.5%), 4 as anthropomorphs (15%), 3 as scaphomorphs (11%) and one as cosmomorph. In addition, there are two rare shapes that resemble compasses (cosmomorphs?).

The 18 petroglyphs of the fourth deposit include 7 alcomorphs (ca 39%), 6 scaphomorphs (33%), 3 anthropomorphs and one cosmomorph. The single sheep- or goat-like image is rather uncommon.

In the fifth deposit (14 petroglyphs), the most numerous (4) are boat-like images (29.6%), followed by 3 anthropomorphs (including one cephalomorph), 2 alcomorphs (14.3%) and two indefinite carvings. Noteworthy is an image of a duck or a goose with the egg-like engraving or oomorph.

All in all, the most prevalent from the 86 petroglyphs of the site of Novoromanovo I are, in correspondence with the averages of the Tom region, alcomorphs (31, or 44.4%). Second frequent are scaphomorphs (17 or 19.8%), their frequency exceeds nearly three times the average number of boat-shaped petroglyphs in the territory of the river Tom. Anthropomorphs (12) make up nearly 14% of the total, and there are also 4 (4.7%) cosmomorphs in the site.

As for the kinds of rare petroglyphs this site resembles Pisanyi Kamen. Novoromanovo I is the only site where snake images (6, or 7% of the total) have been found. Also, unique are the zoomorph of a sheep or goat (also found only from the deposit Pisanyi Kamen VII), and an ornithomorph (found also in Pisanyi Kamen and Novoromanovo II). Unique is also an oomorph. Of abiomorphs two formations that resemble compasses can be seen here, just like in Pisanyi Kamen.

Novoromanovo II

Novoromanovo II lies approximately a kilometer from the previous site. It was discovered in the summer of 1993 during the expedition of the Museum Tomskaia Pisanitsa (Barinova & Rusakova 1995). There are 25 petroglyphs in 8 panels in this site. The alcomorphs and scaphomorphs here resemble these of Pisanyi Kamen. Some anthropomorphs and cosmomorphs have also been discovered, as well as one arctomorph and one ornithomorph (Figure 8). The vat-like image is unique. On the basis of the motifs of earthenware pots found nearby it is inferred that the petroglyphs of Novoromanovo II were created at the beginning of the Bronze Age (Barinova & Rusakova 1995: 19).

VISIASHCHI KAMEN

Visiashchi Kamen (*Hanging Cliff* in Russian) was discovered in August, 1991, during the expedition organised by the Museum Tomskaia Pisanitsa. It is located 1.5–3 kilometers (Barinova 1994: 15) downstream from Novoromanovo, on the right-hand rock massive, opposite the Novoromanovo settlement (Kovtun 1993). The petroglyphs, in summer about 1.5 to 4 meters above water level, are dated to the period from the late Neolithic to late Bronze Age, i.e. from the end of the III millennium to the beginning of the I millennium BC (Barinova 1994: 18).

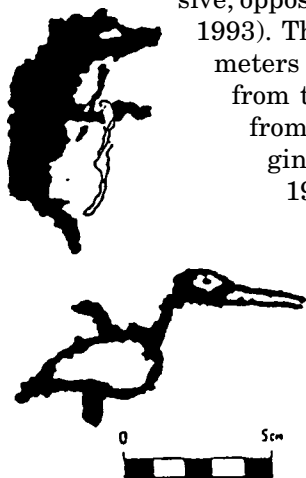


Figure 8. Images of a bear and a bird in Novoromanovo II (Barinova & Russakova 1995: 18).

The four deposits lie 25–120 meters from each other (90–300 m according to Barinova 1994: 15). Petroglyphs have been registered from a stretch half a kilometer long, but most of them are located on a 80–90 meter stretch (Kovtun 1993: 4; Figure 9). In addition, many fragments of petroglyphs have been found here, but researchers have not published these due to their lack of content (Kovtun 1993: 8).

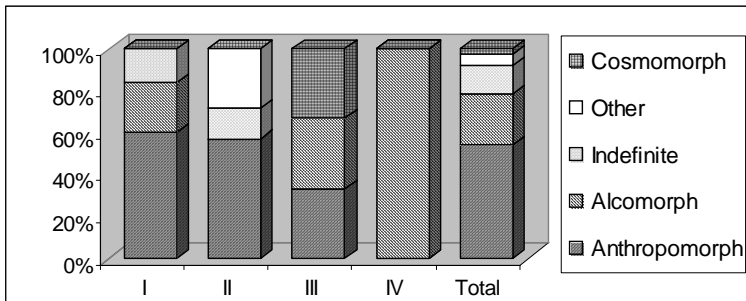


Figure 9. Distribution of motifs of the Hanging Cliff location.

The first deposit consists of 7–8 panels. Of its 25 petroglyphs, most frequent are anthropomorphs (15, or 60%, 12 of them cephalomorphs), followed by merely 6 (24%) alcomorphs and four (16%) unspecified images.

From the second deposit, lying 50–55 meters upstream the Tom, 7 images in two panels have been reported – four anthropomorphs (57.1%), two theriomorphs and one unidentified (due to its fragmentary state).

In the third deposit, located 25–30 meters further upstream, rune letters of recent origin are in majority (81%), but they are not included in the present statistical analysis. From ancient times only an anthropomorph, an alcomorph and a cosmomorph have been found.

The fourth deposit (300 meters upstream) consists of only two alcomorphs.

All in all, 37 ancient petroglyphs have survived in Visiashchi Kamen. The most frequent are anthropomorphs (20 engravings, or 54%), specifically abundant mask-like anthropocephalomorphs, their number exceeding the average of the whole area nearly three times (Figure 10).

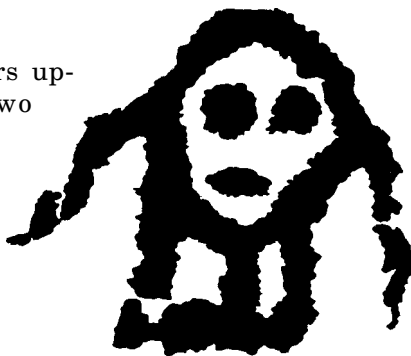


Figure 10. An anthropocephalomorph from Pisanyi Kamen (Barinova 1994: 16).

The second place is held by alcomorphs. However, they are only half as frequent (9, or 24.3%), and also two times below the average for the Tom sites. Only one cosmomorph has been found. The peculiarity of Visiashchi Kamen is the lack of other kinds of images (scaphomorphs, etc.).

NIKOLSKAIA

Going upstream a tributary of Tom, the Nikolskaia, we can find the Nikolskaia petroglyph location that lies 15 kilometers downstream from Novoromanovo II. It was discovered by I. Kovtun in 1991 or by the expedition of the Museum Tomskaia Pisanitsa in the summer of 1993 (Kovtun 1993: 15; Barinova & Rusakova 1995). All in all, 25 petroglyphs in five panels were found: alcomorphs and schematic theriomorphs (hoofed?) so far not found anywhere else, and also scaphomorphs. The image of an archer found here is generally rare. The petroglyphs seem to come from two periods. The frequency of different images is not known to the author.

TUTALSKAIA

Tutalskaia (named after a sanatorium) lies 26 kilometers from Novoromanovo on the right bank next to the small village of Rudnik, opposite the town of Yurga (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972: 143 ff.). Tom makes a sharp turn towards north here and flows from here onwards in a shallow bed. Six deposits are known in Tutalskaia locatoin (Figure 11).

The first deposit was discovered by A. Okladnikov and A. Martynov in the autumn of 1967. The deposit holds 28 images, three of which (0.7%) are badly survived ochre paintings (an alcomorph, a possible hippomorph, or horse-like image, and a theriomorph). A. Okladnikov dated these paintings to the older Stone Age, but this claim has been seriously debated (Kovtun 1993: 23). Alcomorphs are here the most abundant (25, or 98.3%), 5 of them cephalomorphs (20% of alcomorphs). In addition, an anthropomorph and a theriomorph are reported from there.

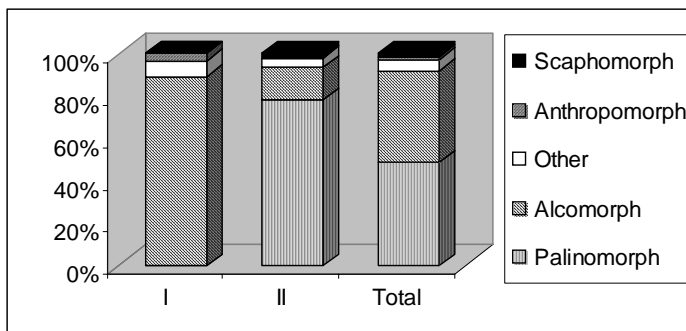


Figure 11. Distribution of motifs of the Tutalskaia region.

The second deposit was discovered by N. Ovchinnikov in 1906. Of the once numerous petroglyphs, only 46 have survived, and the majority of these most is stake-like images (36, or 78.7%), also found in Pisanyi Kamen. Excluding these, alcomorphs are in majority – 7 engravings of the remaining 10. In addition, a scaphomorph and a bear image are present. The latter has also been found in V-VII deposits of Pisanyi Kamen, Novoromanovo II and Nikolskaia.

All in all, 74 petroglyphs can be statistically classified in two sites of Tutalskaia, with stake-like images the most prevalent (36, or 78.7%), followed, as expected, by alcomorphs (32, or 43%; 25% of them partial images or alcocephalomorphs). The percentage of deer-like images is similar to that of the total average of Tom region. There are three times as many alcomorphs in the first deposit of Tutalskaia as in the second one.

The number of anthropomorphs (1) is 10 times below the average for the Tom region and rare is the image of arctomorph.

Four deposits (3–6) or panels were discovered by the expedition of the Museum of Tomskaia Pisanitsa in the summer of 1993 (Barinova & Rusakova 1995: 19). Unfortunately, the classification of these is not known to the present author. In three panels elks are depicted in the usual manner; the fourth panel presents some (hoofed) theriomorphs reminding those in Nikolskaia.

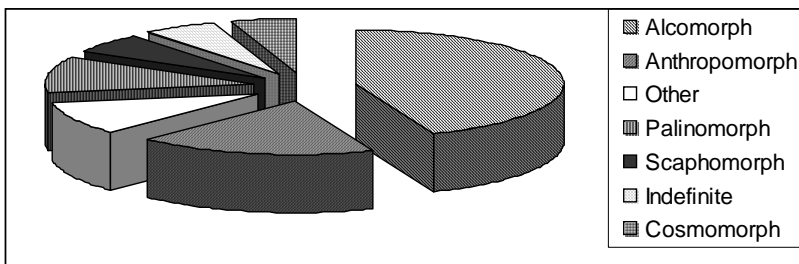


Figure 12. Distribution of motifs of the entire Tom region.

THE ENTIRE TOM REGION

By the banks of the river Tom, numerous petroglyphs have not survived, and about some I lack relevant information. However, hopefully this does not significantly distort the statistics of petroglyphs of the whole area.

In the present survey, only 517 petroglyphs were used in statistical analysis, alcomorphs constituting nearly half of the number (227, or 43.9%; of these nearly 22% head images; see Figure 12). All in all, zoomorphic images make up slightly more than half (51.5%) of the total number of petroglyphs by the river Tom.

Human-like images are second frequent (97, or 18.8%), nearly third of these mask-like. Of animal images, arctomorphs and ornithomorphs are relatively rare (7, or 1.35% each; from two sites and four deposits), as well as ophiomorphs (6, or 1.16%; from one deposit). Unique are depictions of dog-, hare-, sheep/goat- and deer-like images. The sum total of zoo- and anthropomorphs gives us the total number of biomorphs as 363, or 70.2%.

There are 124 (23.9%) known abiomorphs among petroglyphs by the Tom. Relatively frequent are images of stakes related to elk hunting, also these of counting sticks (a total of 56, or 10.8%), scaphomorphs (31, or 6%), and possible cosmomorphs (26, or 5%). The remaining engravings depict rare objects (1–6 items), and 30 (5.8%) indefinite petroglyphs .

In the Lake Onega region, cervine images or elaphomorphs make up 8% (5 times less than alcomorphs by Tom), anthropomorphs 7% (2.7 times) and scaphomorphs 5% (equal to Tom region) (Poikalainen 1999: 63 ff.). In contrast, the majority of petroglyphs by Lake Onega depict bird-like images (42% versus less than 2% in the Tom region) and cosmomorphs (13% versus 5%).

Thus we can maintain that rock art by the Tom differs from that of Lake Onega mainly with regard to the frequency of images. Only the frequencies of boat images and some rare petroglyphs (snake and bear images; in Lake Onega region 0.8% of each) correlates in two areas to some extent. While the main cult object for art creators of Lake Onega was waterfowl, in West Siberia elk cult appears dominant.

Comments

¹ The possible religious background of these is explicated in the monography of A. Okladnikov and A. Martynov (1972: 194 ff).

² This figure does not include runic letters of a later origin.

³ It can be mentioned here in advance that there are no plantlike petroglyphs by the Tom.

⁴ Filipp Johann Tabbert, later known as Strahlenberg, who in 1721–1722 took part in an expedition led by dr. D. Messerschmidt, discusses the site in his book, which was published in Stockholm in 1730.

⁵ Both circle- and oval-like shapes are tentatively classified as cosmomorphs in the present article.

⁶ Tutalskaia location is the only other place where images resembling stakes have been found, while images resembling counting sticks are found only from Pisanyi Kamen.

⁷ Both ornithomorphs as well as arctomorphs have been also found from Novoromanovo II deposit and from Tutalskaia; one ornithomorph is also in Novoromanovo I.

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