
Rock art in Central and South America: An assessment about the relation between rock art and social differentiation

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Résumé

Archaeological research in hundreds of rock art sites through Central and South America have consistently proved that the practice of painting and engraving rocks was present since the beginning of the peopling of the continent. Although dating rock art has been particularly difficult, nowadays there are many of this sites whose chronology is properly known, and as a result it is feasible to trace its variation through time. As expected, transformations in modes of living were in accordance with changes in the rock art as well. For instance, it has been documented how changes in the economic sphere, specifically in food procurement –from appropriation economies to production economies-, elapsed parallel to new depiction techniques, different iconographic patterns and diversification on the location of rock art. However, the way as rock art changed as a product of its active manipulation in the political arena is yet poorly understood.

In this presentation an assessment about the variety of contexts of rock art related to sociopolitical changes will be outlined. It will focus on the transformations of ritual activities in which rock art was probably involved, and the different archaeological traces they left. Some examples from different areas of Central and South America will be analyzed in order to propose some pathways in which rock art was actively used as a mechanism of social differentiation.

Mots-Clés: Rock Art, Central and South America, Social Differentiation

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