

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

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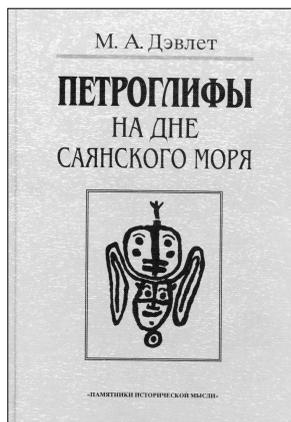
**Tartu 2001**

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Marianna Devlet*

**PETROGLIFY NA DNE SAIANSKOGO MORIA (GORA ALDY-MOZAGA) (Petroglyphs on the bottom of the Sayan Sea (Aldy-Mozaga Mountain). Moskva 1998. 288 pp. In Russian. Summary in English.**

Marianna Davlet, Sc.D, working in Moscow in the Archaeological Institute of the Academy of Sciences, is an experienced rock art researcher who has been making expeditions to Tyva, the Saian canyon on the Upper Yenisei (Ulug-khem), rock art locations since 1967. In 1974–1986 she conducted the Tyva expedition petroglyph work group documenting the Saian canyon rock images. M. Dävlet has published six books on the topic, and her seventh deals with petroglyphs of Mid-Yenisei.



This book treats petroglyphs of the Aldy-Mozaga mountain in the Saian canyon that are now at the bottom of the reservoir of the Saian hydroelectric station. It is interesting to note that the canyon has been inhabited since the Palaeolithic. Unfortunately the book does not include a map of the rock art locations in the Saian canyon.

The intriguing history of the discovering and studying of the petroglyphs of the upper Yenisei starts when the petroglyphs were first discovered in 1881 by the Siberian archaeologist A. Adrianov. However, active research started only in 1956, when in connection with the establishment of the Saian hydroelectric station the region was systematically researched.

The methods used to document the Tyva petroglyphs first numbered every petroglyph-carrying cliff and boulder. It was a difficult process, copying the petroglyphs, searching for the best suitable materials and methods. Self-critically, it is noted on that for sev-

eral reasons there were also methodical mistakes made in documenting. Valuable results were received in systematising the parametres of the techniques used in creating petroglyphs.

There were 152 cliffs and boulders with petroglyphs on the Mozaga-Aldy mountain. These are presented with a description of every location itself and short descriptions of the images. A better overview would have been obtained if numerical data of the total number of petroglyphs of each location and its typological make-up were also presented, for not even the total number of petroglyphs copied from the Mozaga-Aldy mountain is not mentioned directly. All rock art sites on Mozaga-Aldy are presented on a site map and as 152 copies. The general plan and copies of the sites are complimented with the scales. There are also ten black-and-white photo copies of petroglyphs.

Devlet rightly emphasises the importance of differentiating between the identification and interpretation of an image. The main and more interesting part of Mozaga-Aldy engravings belongs to the Bronze Age, but there are also Scythian (7th–3rd c BC), Hun (before AD) and more recent engravings. Most interesting are the 300 images of cult facial masks from the Bronze Age, forming series. Such mask images are also found elsewhere in Siberia, the Far East and Mongolia. Remnants of painting or tattooing the face or body have been found in many prehistoric graves in Siberia, as well as from ethnographic material. This book offers intriguing comparison of material from different regions. In the Saian canyon, among others, there are full-length anthropomorphic figures. The most frequent Bronze Age zoomorphic figure is cattle, depicted both as carrying a load and without one. Most interesting are the figures with solar symbols on the tips of their horns. Davlet has connected with cattle also the unique images that have previously been considered stretched-out skins. Other Saian engravings include habitats, wagons, the Sun, and numerous artificial hollows. In the Scythian period, deer and wild goats in characteristic poses were engraved. From the Hun period come different zoomorphic and ornament-like images (birds, elks, horses, fish, etc.).

Davlet interprets the petroglyphs of the Saian canyon based on the shamanism of the Tyva and other Siberian nations. Presumably the masks depict the souls of the tribe's forefathers that were cut

into rock during initiation rites. There are also traces of the three spheres of the universe, and the cult of the sky and celestial bodies. In the Scythian period, people had other concepts and Bronze Age myth characters were considered dangerous. In this way M. Davlet explains the emergence of the palimpsests. She gives plausible cause to believe that certain ancient rites have been later included into Buddhism in its Northern distribution area and thus became the prototype for the temple holiday's *tsam* (< Mongolian 'dance; the dance of Gods'). Among other things, Davlet considers the dokshits to be fear-inspiring spirits from local religion integrated to the Buddhist pantheon, whose masks resembling the Saian engravings are worn on the *tsam*-festivities.

All in all, Davlet has written a content-full and matter-of-factly book on the petroglyphs at the bottom of the Saian water reservoir. With this, another ancient art location that is due to be destroyed by humans has been preserved for science.

Enn Ernits, Tartu

***Pekka Kivikäs***

**KALLIOKUVAT KERTOVAT (Pictures on rock are telling). Jyväskylä: Atena kustannus oy, 2000. 124 pp. In Finnish.**

The art teacher Pekka Kivikäs who has become well-known for his work as an active documenter and publisher of Finnish rock paintings, has published another work (hard cover, 124 pp, 101 illustrations) on Finnish rock art. The most noteworthy of his earlier works is the 336-page monograph *Kalliomaalaukset – muinainen kuvaarkisto* (Paintings on Rock – An Ancient Picture Archive, 1995) that was rewarded the prize Finlandia. Another tribute to the author is the 1998 establishment of Rock Art Centre Kivikäs in the Jyväskylä century-old Kuokkala villa projected by Wivi Lönni. The centre features a permanent exposition of Finnish rock paintings, temporary exhibitions, seminars, sale of rock art literature and so far the only Finnish periodical rock art publication *Kalliomaalausraportteja* (Reports on



rock paintings). Another important field of action for both Pekka Kivikäs and Rock Art Centre Kivikäs has been introducing of Finnish rock art at international exhibitions.

In this book, Kivikäs continues the unification of artistic and scientifically important information, benefited by a unique relation with ancient creations and the nature surrounding it. Compared to earlier works, these components are presented in a much more balanced manner. Most of the illustrations were drawn by Kivikäs himself, based on nature photos. The textual and illustrative sides are perfectly balanced, no matter which page you happen to take a look at.

The book starts with a note for the reader (pp. 7–14), giving an in-depth overview via personal experiences and memorates of how Kivikäs became involved with rock art. This is followed by an explanation of the factors determining the locations of Finnish rock painting (pp. 13–14). The 100-page main part (pp. 15–115) introduces the reader to about a quarter of rock art locations and essay-like discussion treat the choice of place, topic, the survival, visibility, interrelations and possible interpretations of images. Presented examples provide an understanding that the identification of certain motifs has taken years, not to mention their documentation and publishing. A lot of attention is paid to the uniqueness and distribution of motifs, as well as to comparison to neighbouring rock art locations. Although not directly based on statistical analysis, the presented connections (e.g. in the case of anthropomorphic images) with rock art locations East and North of Finland are convincing.

Just as interesting is the discussion of variety among the most frequent motifs: anthropomorphic (pp. 30–31, 58–63, 68–81), boat-like (pp. 88–97) and elk-like (pp. 82–87) images. In the case of many images, there is a multitude of possible meanings (pp. 88) and certain regularity in image interrelations (pp. 98–101, 70–71, 56–57, 50–53). I would hereby like to point out the mistake that the joint motif of two-headed swan and anthropomorphic image by Lake Onega (p 108) comes from Kladovets site instead of Peri. As concerns the Lake Onega rock art, most interesting is Kivikäs' observation that one anthropomorph-like painting at Lake Juusjärvi has a bird's head (pp. 24–27). The author considers validation-giving

sources for interpretation to be totemism and shamanism (pp. 58, 62, 70, 80, 108). Novel is the idea that interprets handprints to be the same kind of prayer aspects as adoring anthropomorphs (p 114). The interconnections among motifs, possible identifying and interpretation is treated tolerantly, as is in every way justified in the case of such fragmentary and ancient material.

In addition to dating rock art locations, the relative age of rock art motifs is treated. The oldest are considered to be the leaning cross and the boat motifs. This conclusion is supported by the long-used rock art sites in Astuvansalmi, Laukaa, Värrikallio, etc., where paintings are at different heights and in overlapping layers. The book ends with a list of Finnish rock art sites (as of 1. 09. 2000 – 105 listings) and a list of references (93 sources).

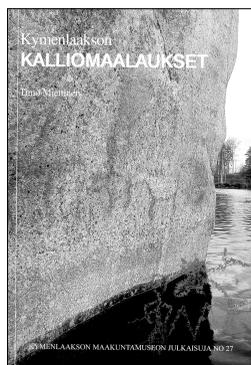
All in all, the book is aimed at the wide circle of readers interested in the ancient culture of Finno-Ugric regions and with the tendency of going into details. Kivikäs considers rock art the silent message of man from behind the thousands of years, to perceive which one needs to relax, listen and see. When we lose the ability to do this, we also lose the possibility to perceive those near us and our environment. This publication should also be read by cultural historians, folklorists, archaeologists, etc. scientists looking for fresh information and impulses to develop their creativity.

Väino Poikalainen, Tartu

### *Timo Miettinen*

**KYMENLAAKSON KALLIOMAALAUKSET (Rock Paintings of Kymenlaakso). Kymenlaakson maakuntamuseon julkaisu no 27. Kotka, 2000. 163 pp. In Finnish. Summary in English.**

The well-known Finnish rock art researcher and archaeologist Timo Miettinen has published a book on the Kymenlaakso (Kymijoki River basin) region rock paintings (soft cover, 163 pp, 120 illustrations). Earlier, he has published several articles on rock art and organised exhibitions of Finnish rock art, introduced and propagated rock art in public events. Timo Miettinen worked until retir-



ing in 2001 in the Kymenlaakso county Museum. The majority of Kymenlaakso rock paintings have been discovered by him and a significant part of archaeological excavations in the same region have been conducted under him. This has given the author a head start at connecting rock art (as the reflector of ancient mentality) with archaeological data (as reflecting the material background of ancient times).

Although the title (rock paintings of Kymenlaakso) refers to just one Finnish region, a quarter of the volume is dedicated to general questions concerning rock art research. The author presents an overview of the content and importance of the field as well as the history of rock art from its Palaeolithic origin. Thorough treatment concerns the Neolithic, the era that most Finnish rock paintings come from. Regionally, more attention is paid to areas neighbouring Finland (East Karelia, North Sweden and northern coast of Norway). Similarities with rock art of the Urals could be considered rather as coming from common cultural background.

The parts of the book discussing the more important trends in rock art research are of wider interest. In the topography of rock art, two aspects are emphasised: the nearness of unique natural forms and water. Concerning dating methods, the Finnish and North-Scandinavian method based on the rising of land in the post-glacial era is explained. Documentation methods cover among others also the method of point-copying, devised by Timo Miettinen himself. He also describes with great concern the dangers faced by rock paintings, dominant among them anthropogenic threats (from unwilling harming to deliberate destruction).

A long section analyses the problems related to interpreting rock art: the difficulties deriving from the different cultural backgrounds of contemporary and ancient man, the possibilities offered by the objective data contained in rock art images, compositions, location peculiarities, etc. material. The use of ethnographic and folkloric material in interpreting is met with certain precaution. An important prerequisite for the truthfulness of interpretations is the interdisciplinarity of research and especially the archaeological data making it possible to determine the evolutionary continuity of cultures. Miettinen considers Finland's greatest archaeological achievement of recent years to be proving the uninterrupted development

from the comb ceramics to date. Ancient images themselves are, most probably, archeotypal signs, that could be analysed with semiotic methods. Unfortunately, the establishment of the preliminary meaning of these symbols is partly an unsolvable problem.

The history of rock art discovery in Finland stated in 1911 and after fifty years of silence has become active again in recent decades. A great deal of space is dedicated to data concerning the topics and local peculiarities of Finnish rock paintings. As Miettinen points out, paintings are only found by inland water bodies, not on the sea coast. More attention is dedicated to human and elk motifs, but a good overview is given of other motifs, as well: boat images, handprints, various geometric signs and less common animals. Only a table or map of their distribution could have made the data more easily understandable. Also, motifs could have been classified not according to their analogousness but the sc. principle of similarity (e.g. instead of elk elk-like, instead of human anthropomorphic, instead of boat boat-like, etc.). Images are compared to those of countries neighbouring Finland, usually leading to several possible interpretations. The chapter ends with an analysis of why the rock painting tradition stopped and a hypothesis of its transformation in the Bronze Age into the figures painted on shaman drums.

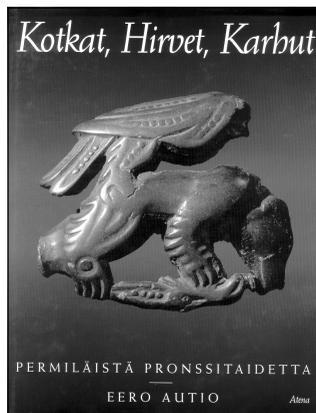
The bulkiest part of the book is taken up by a catalogue of Kymenlaakso rock paintings, starting with a 5-page overview of geographic distribution. Eighteen rock art locations and descriptions of images with illustrations are presented. Each location is characterised by the following data: 1) a short overview (photo), topographic co-ordinates, location on the base map and general description with data concerning its discovery, 2) a copy of the painting groups, its structure (placement) and topic (images, their identification, interpositions and interpretative references), 3) dating, 4) state of preservation and possible threats, 5) data referring to the possible meaning of the paintings. Some of the locations and painting panes are illustrated with colour photos. The catalogue can be considered a good example of systematised presentation. Somewhat disturbing is the lack of scale indication in illustrations, made up by measurements presented in text.

This publication by Timo Miettinen is a wonderful guide to Finnish rock art and a reliable scientific source.

*Eero Autio*

**KOTKAT, HIRVET, KARHUT: PERMILÄISTÄ PRONSSITAIDETTA (Eagles, deer, bears: Permian bronze casts).** Jyväskylä 2000. 228 pp.

The native Karelian historian Eero Autio found time to study Finno-Ugric rock art only after he retired. He has published numerous interesting writings on Karelian petroglyphs and the interpretation of Finnish rock paintings, e.g. in 1993 he published V. Charnoluski's Meandash stories in Finnish and interpreted them from a totemistic point of view, using extensively prehistoric material. The book on Ural rock art has so far remained a manuscript, but this year E. Autio surprised readers with a big-format, amply illustrated publication on Permian animal style bronze casts.



The book begins giving an overview of Finnish scientists since Johan Reinhold Aspelin (1875) who have treated the Permian animal style; Autio also relates how he himself came to be interested in the subject and who have been his helpers.

The Permian animal style covers bronze figurines and pendants created by the forefathers of today's Komis and Udmurts. The tradition was at its prime in 400–1300 AD. Most interesting are three-part compositions, with bird or elk motif in the upper part, an anthropomorph in the middle, and in the bottom part a lizard, or more rarely, a fish or other zoomorphic image. Of special interest are two-headed horse pendants with jingling waterfowl feet attached by means of chain.

The publication presents surprisingly ample photo material – 134 colour photos from the Hermitage, the Moscow National History Museum, Permian and Cherdyn museums of local history, Finnish collections, and the collection of the Estonian History Museum. The book is also supplemented with a map and list of finds, making it easy to localise each one of them. The majority of photos were made

by Antero Kare. Many illustrations are, however, copied from earlier publications.

Although the book is dedicated to Permian animal style, it also discusses Ob-Ugrian prehistoric art. Inspired by Komi and Udmurtian genesis myths where the egg figures a lot, Autio demonstrates how frequent is waterfowl (duck, geese, etc.) motif in Permian and other Finno-Ugric rock art, figures and pottery. Images of waterfowl twice as frequent as of horse. The author gives an overview of the meaning of the horse motif and its use in Permian animal style.

A lot of attention is dedicated to the problems of research and interpretation of Permian bronze casts. The casts are usually found from ancient habitation sites, forts, graveyards, caves, etc., their topics and compositions often similar to those of early Ob-Ugrians. Relying on earlier authors, Autio emphasises that Permian bronze casts reflect totemistic, not shamanistic conceptions. Considering the often contradictory ideas of different authors, he concludes that they are characterised by little variance and the absolutisation of some ancient phenomenon, myth, etc. Autio also criticises approaches based on the Leninist and Marxist dogmas.

A long-time favourite topic for Autio is the symbolics of numbers (3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13) in ancient times. However, this is in some cases unreliable, especially in the cases where the body parts of different animals are counted.

Ancient Finno-Ugric women had ample decorations and created bronze and silver decorations themselves, too. There were contacts between Finnish and Permian tribes, as witnessed by numerous Permian finds in Finland and common features in Permian animal style casts and Finnish rock art. There are also similarities with Karelian hand-towels.

Eero Autio certainly hopes that in the current circumstances both Permian and Finnish researchers can contribute to the study of the precious Permian and Ob-Ugrian prehistoric art.

Enn Ernits, Tartu