

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SYMBOLS “M” AND “W” AND THE SYMBOLIC LINK WITH THE CASSIOPEIA CONSTELLATION

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The Cassiopeia constellation appears in the sky forming the “M” mark and the “W” mark, and this fact has certainly provoked the attention of the ancient shamans. In the rocky picture of Rocca Cavour (3500 B.C. - Piedmont, Northern Italy) (Fig.1) the constellation at M size which is above the head of the shaman woman has been identified by archaeologists as “antropomorfo con cappello” that is anthropomorphic with a hat (Barale, 2001). In the euro-asiatic shamanism there is a sky zone in which spirits grow and after they descend from heaven to the earth, as it is said in the “Caldean Oracles”-fragment 115: “..from there it has been sent the soul, covered with intense feeling...” (Tonelli, 1995). This Transcendence concept appears in the two specular images of Cassiopeia under the breasts of the shaman statuette of Passo di Corvo (5300 B.C. - Puglia, Southern Italy) (Gimbutas, 1990) (Fig.2). This concept is completed by the two butterflies below, which are symbols of the psycho-pump animal (Bellatalla & De Toffol, 1999) which, after death, takes back spirits to the constellation of provenance. Marija Gimbutas defines it as “the embodiment of the principle of Transformation” (Streep, 1994). This same interpretation is also to apply to the feminine face of the vase of Porto Badisco, which has three W marks, one under each eye and one under the nose, and which has been presented in the show titled “Antichi segni dell’uomo” (Ancient Signs of Men, Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria (2005) (Fig. 3).

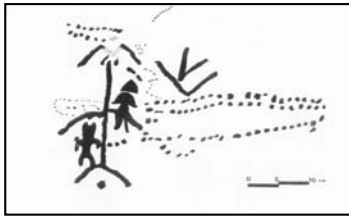


Fig.1 - The Rocca Cavour painting



Fig.2 - The shaman statuette of Passo di Corvo



Fig.3 - The feminine face of the vase of Porto Badisco

Another image of three marks of Cassiopeia is in the “Grotta dei Cervi” (Porto Badisco - Neo-eneolithic Age) (Maraschini, 1999) (Fig.4) and also into the engravings of the Vinkovci vase, identified by prof. Aleksandar Durman of the Zagreb University (Vucedol Culture, 2600 B.C.) in which the Cassiopeia constellation is shown in the Summer mark (as M size) and in Winter mark (as vertical size) (Gironi, 2001) (Fig. 5 - 6).



Fig.4 - The Cassiopeia's marks in the Grotta dei Cervi



Fig.5 - The Cassiopeia's constellation of the Vinkovci vase

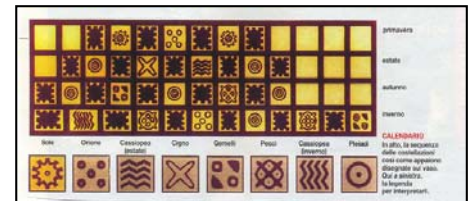


Fig.6 - The Vinkovci vase representation

In the cap of the funerary vase of Grotta Barche (Etruria, Central Italy, Last Bronze Age) there are two both opposite sizes (M and W marks) (Negroni Catacchio, 1995) (Fig.7). In Sas Concas (Sardinia, 2700 B.C.) (U.I.S.P.P., 1996) the Cassiopeia constellation is represented like M, either in the hemicycle of the hypogeam, or out the hypogeam (Fig. 8 - 9).

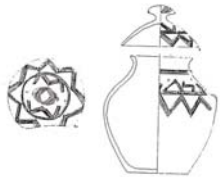


Fig.7 - The funerary vase of Grotta Barche



Fig.8 - Inside the Sas Concas hypogeam



Fig.9 - Outside the Sas Concas hypogeam

In the engravings of Dos Dulif (Val Camonica) (Fig. 10) Cassiopeia is placed side by side to the Rosa Camuna (Iron Age) (Fossati et alii, 1991). Some vases with both marks (M and W sizes) have been studied in Rumania by prof. Lazarovici Gheorghe Corneliu (Blaa University, Sibiu) and he writes that the marks M and W which appears on the caps of the vases are to explain as astral motives (“La Parta semnul W sau M apare pe crested de capace de va...de astra data sigur ca semn astral motive”) (Lazarovici, 2002) (Fig.11). Another mark of Cassiopeia is in the “Grotta Scritta” of Olmeta (Cape Corse) (2000/1500 B.C.) studied by Roger Grosjean, in which are some images similar to the upturned anthropomorphous of Sas Concas (Acquaviva & Cesari, 1990) (Fig. 12).

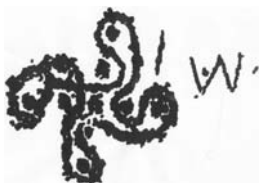


Fig.10 - The engravings of Dos Dulif

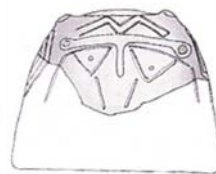


Fig.11 - The Cassiopeia's constellation in the vase of Bucovatz

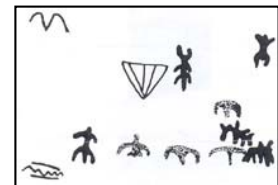


Fig.12 - The engravings of Grotta Scritta dell'Olmeta

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