ANDROLOGY

Brief Report

Recent discovery of phallic depictions in prehistoric cave art in Asia Minor

Anadolu'da tarih öncesi fallus betimlemeleri içeren yeni buluntu mağara çizimleri keşfi

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ABSTRACT

It was more recently announced by archeological society that cave art about human being dated back to 8,000 years ago had been discovered at southern Asia Minor. The primitive human figures involved the phallus pointing the ground almost the same size with legs. The cave artists represented their masterpiece without any exaggeration with the exception of extraordinary phallus. The erected penis is regarded as the symbol of giver of life and linked with the creator of the Universe in the initial period of art. In this article, the recent archeological findings were discussed in the light of andrological literature.

Keywords: Cave art; history of urology; phallus.

ÖZ

Yakın zaman önce, arkeoloji topluluğu Güney Anadolu'da 8.000 yıl öncesine dayanan insana ait mağara resimleri sanatı bulunduğunu duyurdu. Bu ilkel insan resimleri yere doğru uzanan bacakla aynı boyda fallusu da içermekte idi. Mağara devri ressamları bu şaheserleri sıra dışı fallus dışında hiçbir abartıya yer vermeden betimlemişlerdi. Sanatın öncü devirlerinde, erekte penis yaşamın başlangıcı ve yaratıcı ile bağlantı olarak sembolize edilmekte idi. Bu makalede, arkeolojik yeni buluntular tarihi androlojik literatür eşliğinde tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mağara resimleri; üroloji tarihi; fallus.

Introduction

The news about discovery of fantastic archeological findings is not so surprising for citizens of Asia Minor known as *Anatolia* inside the borders of today's Turkey because they were regarded as usual events. In regard to the link of Andrological science with Archeology, it should be emphasized that the phallus has been frequently appearing figure of antique art. Thus, archeologist specially named erected penises as ithyphallic figures.

It was more recently announced by archeological society that cave art about human being dated back to 8,000 years ago had been discovered at southern of Asia Minor in the city of *Mersin (Greek Myrsini)* located along the East Mediterranean coast just somewhere in the center of old world.[1,2] These caves, named as *Akyapı (AlaKapı)* are located at a height of 750 meters above the sea level inside "Taurus" mountains.[3] The archeologists of the excavation area, Durukan M. and Girginer S. from Mersin and Cukurova Universities respectively, reported that these simple cave paintings had been drawn with red ocher composed of iron oxide and iron binding liquid that applied to rock via bare fingers or with simple tools.[4] In the archeological point of view, they also claimed that these findings of *Cilicia* region of prehistoric Anatolia were involving of the almost complete ten human figures while they were dancing for celebrating the onset of spring or the start of harvest season as a reflection of the belief system of the time and, in connection to this theory, caves harboring the rock art were supposed to

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be "cult centers" of 6000-5000 BC.[2] However, the authors were pointing to the difficulty of timing of drawings due to the lack of any known timely definite construction around these recent findings yet. Nevertheless, it was well known that the similar examples of Anatolia had been related with the Neolithic age of these periods.[3]

The figures of the cave were mostly destroyed during natural disasters. There were 10 human figures total or partially preserved with a size of 10-30 cm. The primitive human figures composed of head, trunk, limbs and surely the phallus pointing to the ground almost the same size with legs (Figures 1, 2). It was not illogical to reach a perspective that the present cave artists represented their masterpiece without any exaggeration with the exception of extraordinary phallus.

Ithyphallic figures are common images of all over the caves such as *Lascaux* cave in Dordogne-France, Zimbabwe-Africa and the *Kakadu*- Northern Australia where the prehistoric humans were settled.[5] Matelaer JJ., after reviewing related publications, concluded that prehistoric phallic presentations had been supposed to link strongly to the terms as 'strength' and 'power' and addition to 'virility' and 'fertility' and reported that the early known examples of phallic image in the pioneer human art were dated back about 30,000 years ago.[5] Neolithic period is regarded as big revolution of human social life that means the beginning of the settlement period of mankind. Despite of its variability by means of timeline in connection with the geographic location, neolithic process was discernible in the period from 11,000 to 6,000 BC for Anatolia.[6] The earliest known "Cult center" *Göbeklitepe-Sanliurfa* (10-9,000 BC) that dealt with sexual themes dated back to the beginnings of this period just relatively closer –300 km Eastern- to the location of the present cave art.[7,8] Anatolian cave artists did not hesitate to draw even women with phallus (Bafa –Latmos, 8,000BC, 400 km Western of zero point).[9]

Despite of their simplicity, present cave paintings had the detail of phallus and even in a big size if it compared with other parts of the body and it was pointing to the ground. It was almost clear for the archeologists that they were celebrating something possibly harvesting season because of the hands-up representation but not a hunting party due to the lack of hunted animal figures around. According to Mattelaer JJ., erected penis is regarded as the symbol of giver of life and linked with the creator of the Universe in the initial period of art.[5] Thus I think that, present artists reflected their points of view that the erected penis via ejaculation vitalizes the soil as in the form of agricultural products. The lower limbs and the penis were at the same ground level so that there was a close relation between the ground and the tip of penis (Figure 1). The creative contact between them seemed to be inevitable. In addition, hands-up to the sky and the phallus downward to the ground depiction might be connector position of men between the creators that located at the sky and the fields that supply goods such as agricultural products and hunting animals for men. The symmetry of upper and lower parts of the body as more likely a mirror image seemed to be reflecting the same



Figure 1. Cave art involving a simple drawing of a human being. Notice the phallus and its downward position with the same ground level as the legs (6000-5000 BC)
P.S. The figures were replicated with the courtesy of Girginer S., Durukan M. from the reference no. 3



Figure 2. Cave art about a human being (6000-5000 BC); Simple and symmetric with its lower and upper sides
P.S. The figures were replicated with the courtesy of Girginer S., Durukan M. from the reference no. 3

respect for both sides of the world and may represent human body as the adaptor tool to transmit the energy in either direction. Furthermore, in my opinion, the simplicity of the depicted figures might not reflect the unskilled artistry but the way to emphasize the insignificant role of human being between the sky gods and their benefactions as plenty of life sources of the earth. However, despite of the tiny role of human being in the creation process, phallus seemed to be the relatively main actor for all these life drama.

Herein, I tried to speculate the more recent discovery of archeology in Anatolia through an eye glass of Andrology. While the caves were the accommodation sites for the prehistoric neolithic communities for the long dark nights, they also supplied depiction platforms for the early artists to express themselves. With their masterpieces in their natural shelters, primitive humans tried to understand and make sense of what had happening around this bizarre huge wonderful world and the role of his weak and small but interesting and incredible body. All in all, despite of many unanswered questions or speculations of excavation areas the key role of phallus is undisputed. I think, multidisciplinary approach is appropriate for almost all scientific studies even in archeology and Andrology.

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