

The first Libyco-Berber inscriptions of the Anti-Atlas

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This site is situated in Oued Cheik Iminirfi, a few kilometres south of Irherm, between the bifurcation of a track to Douzro and the little village of Ouaremdaz. It was discovered in 1934 by Ruhlmann, who pointed out some Libyco-Berber engravings. A few photographs of these were published by Letan in 1966.

The rock art panels can be found at the eastern edge of the dry bed of Oued Cheik Iminirfi, only a few metres from the road. The outcropping stone is a Precambrian gabbro, originally in a pale green colour. The action of oxidation changed the surface into a dark blackish colour, but recent pecked engravings exposed the original pale green. Unfortunately these recent manifestations destroyed a large part of the ancient engravings.

Substantial differences in patina clearly evidence three groups of peckings:

1. Patina as dark as the surrounding rock surface: circles, geometrical motifs, serpentines etc. (Fig. 1).
2. Light brown patina: circles, half circles, human beings and horsemen in a linear style (Fig. 2)
3. Very light patina: Arabic inscriptions, recent dates, foot-prints, wheels etc.

On the right side of the inclined plane of a very large rock a few lines of Libyco-Berber inscriptions can be noted. In the middle of them someone pecked a large «Radnetz» and the date «21.10.92», so that a considerable part of the Libyco-Berber letters was destroyed. Today five lines -consisting of 5-7 letters - can still be recognised, two of them horizontal. Some single circle-like signs (both with and without central dot) could be relics of additional lines.

There are two indications for a comparatively high age of these inscriptions. First of all, the patina is very dark (see group 1), in any case much darker than the patina of the human figures and horsemen, whose style is generally described as Libyco-Berber («guerriers libyens»). Secondly, the inscriptions do not contain the typical signs of the recent tifnagh script.

Even if it is not yet possible to establish an absolute age for these inscriptions, we can assume that they belong to the ancient Libyco-Berber script. A more detailed analysis will be carried out, based on the wider context of all the Moroccan inscriptions.

Références

- LETAN R., 1966. Note sur des gravures rupestres de la région d'Irherm de l'Anti-Atlas. *Bulletin d'Archéologie Marocaine*, p. 59-64.
- RUHLMANN A., 1934. Les graffiti d'Igherm (Anti-Atlas). *Bulletin d'Archéologie Marocaine*, p. 455-460.

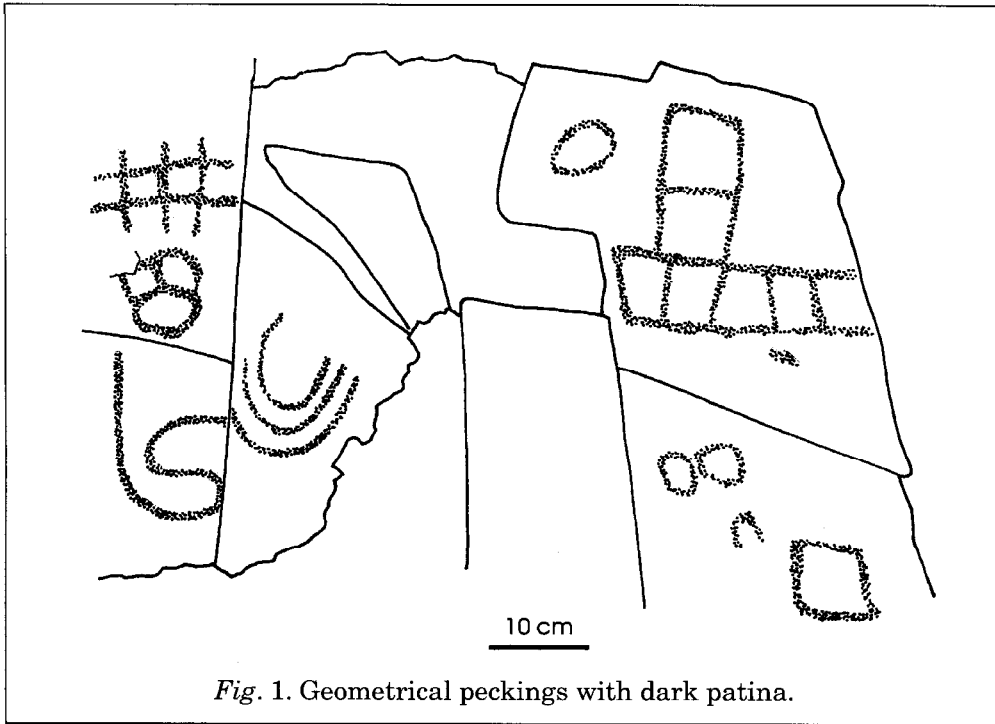


Fig. 1. Geometrical peckings with dark patina.

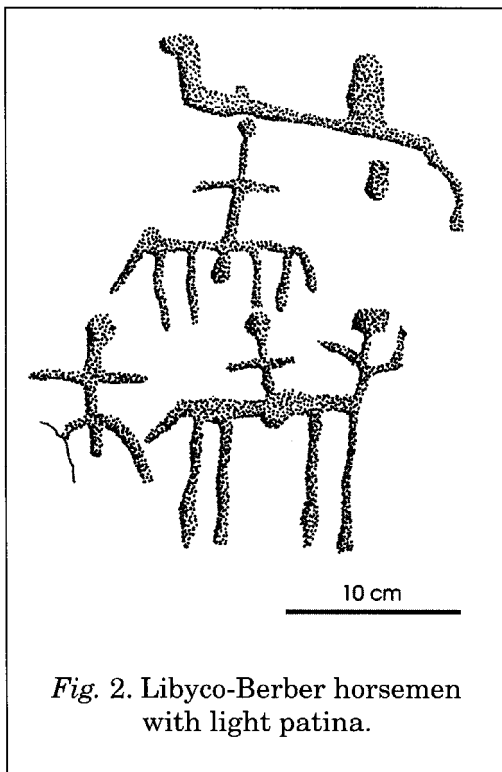


Fig. 2. Libyco-Berber horsemen with light patina.

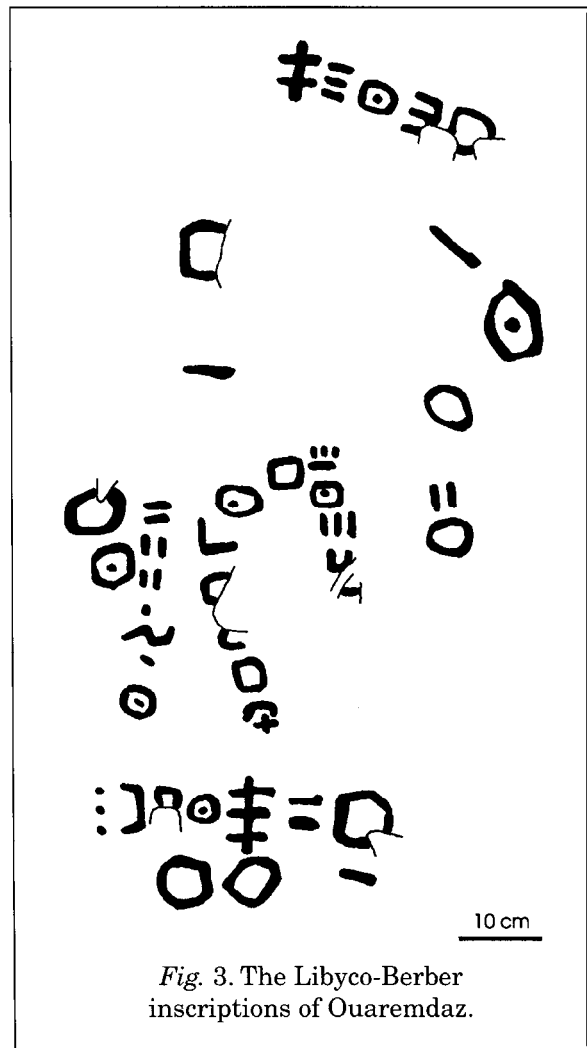


Fig. 3. The Libyco-Berber inscriptions of Ouaremdaz.



Fig. 4. Panel of the site «Ouaremdaz» with position of the Libyco-Berber inscriptions.