



Cocev Kamen (Tsoťse's Stone), the excavation site which joins the grounds for sacrificial rituals, a temple, painted rock art and a prehistoric observatory

by Dusko Aleksovski*

ABSTRACT

"Cocev kamen" is one of the most imposing and significant cultural monument (with geographic coordinates N. 42° 05'. 024" and E. 021° 59' and 227" and an elevation of 481m). On the left hand side of the rock, near the entrance of the rock building, a cross, dating back from Bronze Age, was engraved in the cup mark context. As a matter of fact "Tsoťsev kamen" is a significant prehistoric temple and observatory. One of the two paths leads towards a natural cave, which was rearranged for the needs of Paleolithic and Neolithic inhabitants. Gea Mater, a bone, has been discovered near the cave which tells us that the cave was used by Paleolithic people. There were two rows of rock seats engraved inside the cave, which combined with the cave's floor created a structure looking like a theatre. Above this, and until the Bronze Age, there was a smaller natural cave, where the spiritual leaders organized cave warming for spiritual needs. There were tubs with double space: smaller and bigger, similar to the tubs discovered in Pelagonium. The question about the usage of these tubs has been answered: They did not have any practical usage, but one held ritual-ceremonial functions for the God of Wine and the God of Fertility. At the bottom of the cave one made rock engravings in the style typical of the valley, as well as the square type, associated with the God of the Fertility. The engravings (cup-mark associated with small channels) on the rock near the megaliths, suggested that the cave was used to worship the God of Fertility. One part of a broken offering was left in the cave while the other part was brought back home. The second space of the site is more impressive. In front of the throne there was a plateau of 51m² for official people who followed the ceremonies. The excavation site represented a prehistoric observatory. In fact, near the throne there were a few seats built in the rock, which were part of a sophisticated observatory. Megaliths were found more than four hundred meters to the east of these stone seats. There is painted rock art to the west of "Tsoťsev Kamen", the production of a developed prehistoric culture. The presence of the world largest sun symbol made in rock confirms that this site represent an extremely important cultural, historic, ethnological as well as religious heritage. The sculpture with an animal's form is a part of a megalith complex.

RIASSUNTO

"Cocev kamen" è uno dei più imponenti e significativi monumenti culturali (coordinate geografiche N. 42°.05'.024" e E. 021°.59' e 227" e situato a 481 m s.l.m.). Sulla parte sinistra della roccia accanto all'ingresso del monumento rupestre, una croce, risalente all'Età del Bronzo, fu incisa nel contesto delle coppelle. "Tsoťsev kamen" è evidentemente un significativo tempio preistorico nonché un osservatorio. Uno dei due sentieri conduce ad una grotta naturale che fu riadattata per le necessità dei suoi abitanti Paleolitici e Neolitici. Gea Mater, un osso, scoperto vicino alla grotta, è la prova che quest'ultima fu utilizzata dagli uomini Paleolitici. All'interno della grotta vi sono due file di sedili scavati nella roccia che abbinati al pavimento formano una struttura simile a quella di un teatro. Al di sopra di questa, e sino all'Età del Bronzo, era presente una caverna naturale più piccola, nella quale i capi spirituali organizzavano delle sedute per soddisfare i bisogni dello spirito. Vi erano delle vasche a due posti: grandi e piccole, simili a quelle scoperte a Pelagonium. Esse non avevano alcuna funzione particolare, ma venivano utilizzate nelle cerimonie rituali per il Dio del Vino e quello della Fertilità. Sul fondo della grotta è stata realizzata un'incisione rupestre con lo stile tipico della valle, oltre ad un'incisione quadrata, associate al Dio della Fertilità. Le incisioni (coppelle e piccoli canali) sulla roccia, accanto ai megaliti, suggeriscono che la grotta fosse utilizzata per venerare il Dio della Fertilità. Le offerte venivano divise in due parti: una da lasciare nella grotta e l'altra da portare a casa. La seconda area del sito ha maggior effetto. Di fronte al trono c'era un pianoro di 51 mq per le persone che seguivano le cerimonie. Lo scavo ha portato alla luce un osservatorio preistorico con delle sedute ricavate dalla roccia e poste accanto al trono. Dei megaliti sono stati ritrovati a più di 400 metri ad est di questi sedili in pietra. Ad ovest di "Tsoťsev Kamen" sono state ritrovate delle pitture rupestri, produzione artistica di una cultura preistorica sviluppata. La presenza del più grande simbolo solare in roccia conferma che questo sito è un'eredità culturale, storica, etnologica e religiosa estremamente importante. La scultura a forma di animale è parte di un complesso megalitico.

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A few years ago the Rock Art Research team of the World Academy of Rock Art has discovered one of the most imposing and significant cultural monument from the prehistory, in the village of Sopsko Rudare, in the Municipality of Kratovo, (with geographic coordinates N. 42°. 05'. 024'' and E. 021°. 59' and 227'' and elevation of 481m).

On the left hand side of the rock, near the entrance of the building, a cross, dating back from Bronze Age, was engraved in the context of a Cup-mark, picture 1. It is a fact that "Tsosev Kamen" is a significant prehistoric temple and observatory. This fact is confirmed by the signs which were engraved near the excavation site.

This rock building engraved with a numerous of holes, leads to the facts that in the Bronze Age and Iron Age as well as the Classical Period, this significant cultural monument was projected so well that people walked along the rock without any risk. This is not a case now days.

There are two paths leading towards the buildings.

The first path leads towards one natural cave, rearranged for the needs of the population who inhabited the surroundings of "Tsosev Kamen" during the Paleolithic and Neolithic. There were two rows of rock seats engraved under the cave, which joined by the platform formed a theater, picture 2. This is the first theater of that kind discovered in the World. Gea Mater, a bone, has been discovered near the cave which tells us that the cave was used by the people in the Paleolithic. There was a smaller natural cave, above this cave until the Bronze Age, when the spiritual leaders of the population who inhabited the surroundings of "Tsosev Kamen", organized cave's warming for spirituals needs, picture 3. The cave was hollowed out 3,35m in the north, 1,25m in the south. That is the way how an ideal flat site was formed for ritual and ceremonial activities. There were tubs with double space: smaller and bigger, similar to the tubs discovered in Pelagonia, picture 4. The riddle of the usage of these tubs is solved. Namely, they did not have any practical usage but a ritual-ceremonial, that is, for the God of Wine and the god of Fertility. For the first time on the territory of Europe at the very end of the cave were made rock engravings from the valley forms type, picture 9, as well as the square type and half - circular hollow type, picture 5, connected to the God of the Fertility. The God of the Wine and the God of Fertility are connected to this cave because near the megaliths in the east of the cave were engraved miniature tubs with double (smaller and bigger). The engravings (cup-mark connected with small channels) on the rock near the megaliths, picture 6, tells us that the cave is connected to the worship of Fertility.

Our prehistoric ancestors went to the cave to bring ceramic, picture 7, stone, picture 8, and bone objects, picture 9. The gift were broken on the same place in the cave. One part was left in the cave and the other part of the gift was brought back to their home. They expected to be protected by the Gods. That is familiar in the professional literature and practice. There were missing parts, picture 8, to all large gifts (tubs etc.). There are stairs at the "Tsosev Kamen", which leads to this cave and continue to the ground of sacrifice, picture 10. It is a wide plateau made in rock with an area of 100m². On the vertical rock in the south, a frame, picture 11, is made with engravings from right and left hand side. According to Prof. Stefan Simik, s writing from 1911 there was a portrait sculpture of an unknown God.

The second space of the excavation site is more impressive. According to the Prof. Stefan Simik's description there is a path which was 2,26m wide at the entrance while at the very beginning was 3,70m wide. Simik explains that there were put larger partly made stones from the left and right hand side in the middle of the path, picture 12.

Also he noticed that the path was cobbled and the length of the path was 21,26m. Two huge stones were put at the beginning of the path of both side. We succeeded to make a complete reconstruction of this path. The entrance was well-kept by armed people who stood of the first and second gate, representing a real bulwark.

That should have contributed for calm trend of the ceremonies and rituals of different type. That rock was worked in order the rock to be hollowed: the throne, picture 13, and a small platform for the people that stood next to the person who was sitting on the throne. There was a door and a small platform for a few people behind the person who was sitting on the throne. There was a plateau of 51m² for official people in front of the throne who followed the ceremonies, picture 14. The reconstruction of the plateau has been made according to the old cobble. The excavation site represented the prehistoric observatory. Beside the throne, there was been made few seats in rock as a part of a sophisticated observatory. The Sun, the Moon and the Stars were observed from that seat. Megaliths were found at the more than hundred meters in the east of these stone seats, picture 15. Large Moons were made near them, picture 16. The megaliths with its additional engravings or on the stones near them are the most thrust worthy witness if something represents an observatory or an imaginary story which lasts for a short time.

The developed settlements near "Tsosev Kamen" from Neolithic and Bronze Age are among the strongest proofs that this part of "Tsosev Kamen" represents the prehistoric observatory.

There are stairs that lead from the plateau, picture 17, towards the highest part of the rock were a big basin for water that was filled manually, was built on the described cave, picture 18. The water was turned on the day determined for ritual bathing. It is risky to get this basin. Our Rock Art research team has discovered a painted rock art in a small cave. I think it is the first painted rock art discovered on the Balkans. Among these painted elements in the middle of the cave dominates the painted orant, picture 19, and on his left hand side it is noticed the painted tree of life, picture 20, where a painted element has an analogy in the carved trees of life upon the ceramics vessels from Neolithic. Red color is used which is deep into the rock. The second cave, with good acoustics represents an ideal concert hall, picture 21.

"Tsoitsev Kamen" is a part of a developed prehistoric culture. The excavation site has attracted experts' attention in the field of archaeology, paleolinguistics, archaeo mythology, and archaeo-astronomy, who was delighted by the imposing building. "Tsoitsev Kamen" was visited by university professors from: Saudi Arabia, Russia, Italy, US of America and Japan, who were delighted by the sight that they have seen on the Locality and its surroundings. This site has its significance after recording the written clay tablets, picture 22 and 23, as well as by discovering the clay and stone sculptures representing goddess bird, picture 24, 25, 26, 27, 29.

The main megalith was made in the form of a semi-moon, picture 30. The sunrise is a real adventure for every visitor at the "Tsoitsev Kamen", picture 31. The biggest rock sun symbol reinforces that this site is the real pearl of cultural, historic, ethnological as well as philosophical religious heritage, picture 32.

The sculpture with an undefined animal's form is a part of a megalith complex, picture 33. There are many legends concerning "Tsoitsev Kamen". One of them tells that "Tsoitsev Kamen" is a real source of health and positive energy.

"Tsoitsev Kamen" impress, excites, and gives us a deep sigh of pleasure.

Article:

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2006 Rock Art as the base for faster development of Osogovo, Ed. World Academy of Rock Art, Kratovo 2006, p. 5

Dusko Aleksovski,

2006 "Cocev Kamen" (Tsoitse, s Stone) is the unique excavation site in the world which joins the grounds for sacrificial rituals, a temple, painted rock Art, a prehistoric observatory in one place with all necessary sights-a real pearl of the world's cultural, and spiritual heritage, Editions, World Academy of Rock Art, Kratovo.



fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5



fig. 6



fig. 7

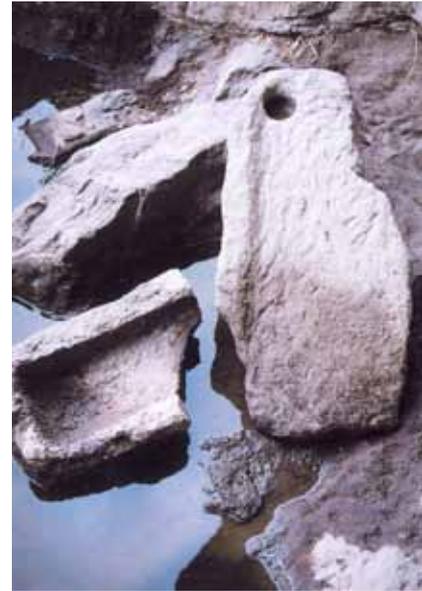


fig. 8



fig. 9



fig. 10



fig. 11



fig. 12



fig. 13



fig. 14



fig. 15



fig. 16



fig. 17



fig. 18

Cocov Kamen (Tsoitse's Stone), the excavation site which joins the grounds for sacrificial rituals, a temple, painted rock art and a prehistoric observatory



fig. 19



fig. 20

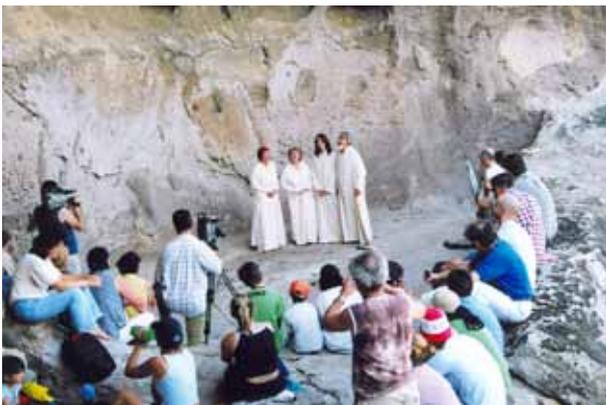


fig. 21



fig. 22



fig. 23



fig. 24



fig. 25



fig. 26



fig. 27



fig. 28



fig. 29

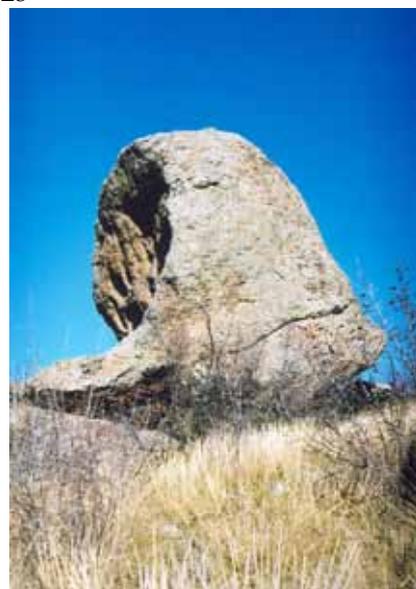


fig. 30

Cocev Kamen (Tsoitse's Stone), the excavation site which joins the grounds for sacrificial rituals, a temple, painted rock art and a prehistoric observatory



fig. 31



fig. 32



fig. 33



fig. 34

