

## MUSIC AND DANCE IN ROCK ART FROM SOUTHEASTERN KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN

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### SUMMARY

Research documented musical instruments and dancers engravings at few rock art sites in Kyrgyzstan and in southeastern Kazakhstan. This paper addresses an inventory of all these depictions, gives them a chronological attribution, and analyses the relation between petroglyphs showing dance and music, and depictions of sunheads, parturients and animals. Furthermore, the gender of the dancers is analyzed in order to understand the symbolical role of men in rock art from the Bronze Age.

### RIASSUNTO

Questa ricerca documenta le incisioni rupestri con strumenti musicali e scene di danza in alcuni siti in Kirghizistan e nel sud-est del Kazakistan. L'autore propone un inventario di tutte queste raffigurazioni, definendone un'attribuzione cronologica e analizzando la relazione tra le raffigurazioni di danza e musica e quelle con teste raggiate, partorienti e animali. Inoltre, il genere dei soggetti danzanti viene analizzato al fine di comprendere il ruolo simbolico ricoperto dagli uomini nell'arte rupestre dell'età del bronzo.

### 1. INTRODUCTION: ROCK ART AND MUSIC, AN ANTIMONY?

As an art of sounds, music should be an antinomy to rock art. However, the creation of engravings implies the pecking of rocks, which engenders sounds. Furthermore, rock art sites are in an environment full of sounds: running water, locusts and birds, the mooing and bleating of livestock, wind and thunder... Rock art sites may also have been cultic places with ceremonies involving dance and music. It is impossible nowadays to prove it, but the presence of dancing scenes and of musicians on some rock art panels let us suppose it.

If depictions of musical instruments can be identified, it is more difficult to interpret the action of some anthropomorphs: are they dancing or worshipping? The depiction of dancers raises the matter of the representation of movement in rock art. For this paper, anthropomorphs are interpreted as dancers when they have at least one folded leg and one arm away from the body, a position which cannot be explained by a hunting activity or another activity. People with folded arms to the sky could be interpreted as worshippers, but not automatically as dancers. If their legs are also folded, we consider them dancers and worshippers. Both activities are not antinomic: a ceremony is a worshipping activity, and eventually includes dance within the ritual. Some panels show anthropomorphs in a line, holding hands. Due to the fact that there is no representation of movement, such scenes are not considered dancing scenes, even if some authors consider them a kind of chain dance (CLODORÉ-TISSOT, KERSALÉ 2010, p. 95; FOSSATI, RAGAZZI 2001, pp. 48-49; RAGAZZI 2012, p. 232).

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Fig. 1 - Main sites; in Kazakhstan: 1. Akterek; 2. Kulzhabasy; 3. Akkainar; 4. Karakyr; 5. Tamgaly; 6. Dege-res; 7. Eshkiolmes; 8. Bayan Zhurek; 9. Kaishi; in Kyrgyzstan: 10. Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2; 11. North shore of Issyk-Kul Lake (Tamchi, Baet and Ornok); 12. Barskoon; 13. Karakol Valley; 14. Kenkol Valley (Tchatchikei, Obo, Tchatchoi, Terek); 15. Ur-Maral Valley; 16. Kara-Too; 17. Suuk-Döbö

In this paper, we also will not speculate about cup marks and pecked stones which could perhaps be interpreted as lithophone. A lithophone is a rock which is used as a kind of drum, and is covered by cup marks due to the percussion of another stone on it in order to produce sounds. An example still in use is known in the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania (CLODORÉ-TISSOT, KERSALÉ 2010, p. 29). Many undetermined impacts on rocks with petroglyphs in Central Asia could be explained as having been made to produce sounds, but also as a technique used by artist to verify the quality of the rock before engraving a drawing. The topic is large and would need further analyses, including verification *in situ* whether these rocks really produce relevant sounds.

The aim of this paper is to provide an initial inventory of music and dance depictions in rock art from Kyrgyzstan and southeastern Kazakhstan, and to try to interpret them by their associations with other drawings.

## 2. LOCATION OF THE SITES (Fig. 1)

The presence of musicians and dancers among rock engravings in Central Asia is very scarce. Usually, in the Bronze Age petroglyphs in Kyrgyzstan and in sou-

theastern Kazakhstan, 15 to 20% of drawings are depictions of anthropomorphs (HERMANN 2017, p. 232), mainly hunters and worshippers. Until now, the author has documented more than 14,000 Bronze Age petroglyphs. However, only seven panels with ten musicians and 55 panels with 162 dancers are inventoried.

#### 2A. Southeastern Kazakhstan

Our prospections and systematic documentations of sites are focused on southeastern Kazakhstan, viz. in the provinces of Almaty and Zhambyl. In this area, 12 sites were documented, even if some of them are currently not completely prospected (Eshkiolmes and Kaishi).

Five panels with seven musicians were found at three sites (two in Bayan Zhurek and in Kulzhabasy; one in Tamgaly), whereas 14 panels with 55 dancers were found at seven sites: six panels in Kulzhabasy, two in Akkainar and in Tamgaly; one in Akterek, in Bayan Zhurek, in Eshkiolmes and in Karakyr. Observing the regional distribution of the dancer depictions, 11 of 14 panels are located in the region of Kulzhabasy-Tamgaly. By adding the musicians, 14 panels are in the region of Kulzhabasy-Tamgaly, four panels in the region of Bayan Zhurek-Eshkiolmes and only one panel in the region of Akterek. For this last site, we should mention that this site is peculiar in southeastern Kazakhstan: only the site of Degeres is in its direct vicinity, but its Bronze Age engravings seem thematically influenced by Tamgaly (located 60 km north) and Akkainar (50 km northwest), and stylistically by Eshkiolmes (290 km northeast) (HERMANN, ZHELEZNYAKOV 2016, pp. 18-19).

#### 2B. Kyrgyzstan

24 sites were prospected and documented in Kyrgyzstan. Few parts of the Kara-Too region have yet to be prospected. Some of the sites do not present Bronze Age petroglyphs (Tamchi) or only in a limited amount (Barskoon, Zhaltyrak-Tash as well as the other sites in the Ur-Maral region).

Two panels with three musicians were inventoried in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2 and 41 panels with 107 dancers were documented at eight sites: 22 panels in Saimaluu-Tash 1; eight in Saimaluu-Tash 2, five in Tchatchikei; two in Ornok; one in Baet, Obo, Tchatchoi and Terek. One panel in Saimaluu-Tash 1 showing a musician with two dancers and one panel in Saimaluu-Tash 2 depicting two dancing musicians are numbered in the musicians and in the dancers.

The spatial distribution of the panels shows that 31 of 41 are located in Saimaluu-Tash, eight in the Kenkol valley and three on the northern shore of the Issyk-Kul Lake. The style of the Bronze Age drawings in the Kenkol valley seems to be influenced by the style of Eshkiolmes and of Saimaluu-Tash (HERMANN 2018, p. 28)

### 3. ROCK ENGRAVINGS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS (Fig. 2)

Only seven panels depicting ten musicians are inventoried in Kyrgyzstan and southeastern Kazakhstan. In Kyrgyzstan, there are probably two panels with three musicians in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2 and in Kazakhstan, five panels: two in Bayan Zhurek, two in Kulzhabasy and one in Tamgaly. In Saimaluu-Tash 2, the arms of two dancers are longer than usual and their hands are depicted by two massive fists as if forming a musical instrument like a kind of maracas (Fig. 2C

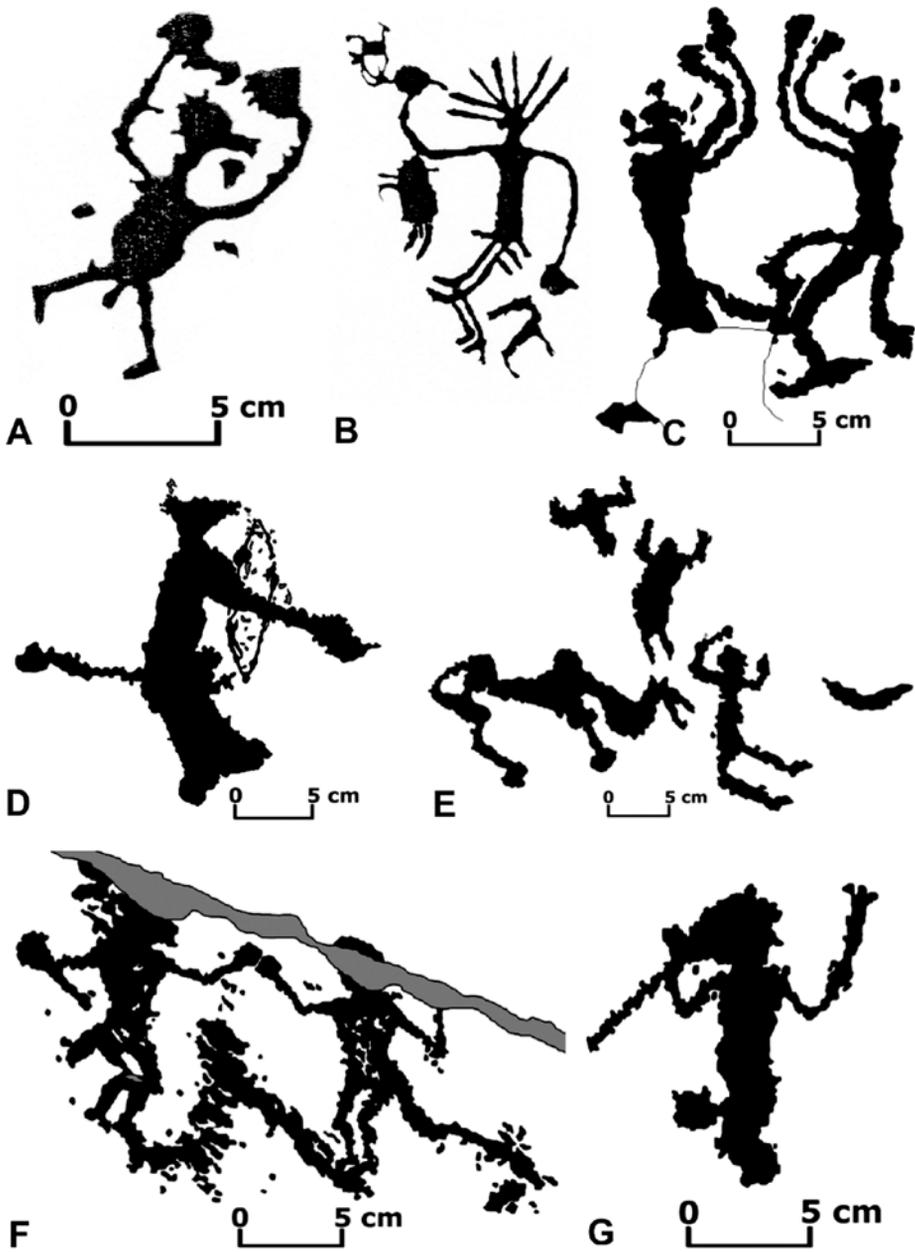


Fig. 2 A-B - Bayan Zhurek (Baipakov & Maryashev 2008: 103ff); C, E: Saimaluu-Tash; D: Tamgaly-Sunkarsay; F-G: Kulzhabasy, Valley 3, same panel

and 16). However, this representation could also be interpreted as a specific hand glove for a shamanic ritual (SHVETS 1999, p. 107).

### 3A. Gender of the musicians

Only four musicians have a phallus: the two dancers of Saimaluu-Tash 2; a man with two maracas in Bayan Zhurek and an anthropomorph with the head of a wolf in Tamgaly (Fig. 2D). Furthermore, one anthropomorph in Bayan Zhurek has clothes and a headdress (Fig. 2B) and three musicians on the same panel in Kulzhabasy also wear clothes with an animal tail (Fig. 2F-G).

### 3B. Typology of the musical instruments

The anthropomorph with a wolf's head in Tamgaly carries a kind of a bow (Fig. 2D). Instead of an arrow, there is a large stick ending in a massive head. Furthermore, this bow is not used in a hunting scene. For these reasons, this bow and this stick with head are interpreted as a *kylkobyz*, a traditional Kazakh instrument similar to a violin.

In Kulzhabasy, three anthropomorphs are associated with a bull being attacked by a dog (Fig. 3). One of the human beings carries an ax. The second one also carries an instrument. Due to the presence of the human with ax and due to the general composition with the bull, the second human being was also interpreted as a hunter. However, the instrument in his hand is not an ax. The grip is smaller than the instrument, which forms a 90°-angle with the grip. Furthermore, this instrument has the same width in the whole length and does not end with a point. For this reason, this instrument could be a musical instrument like a ratchet.

The eight other musicians carry a round instrument in their hands, which looks like maracas (Fig. 2A-C, E-G). In Kazakhstan, there is a similar traditional musical instrument called *asatayak*. Only in four cases (once in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and three times in Kulzhabasy) is the grip visible.

Due to the uncertainty of the interpretation, we do not include the following scene in our inventory but it is worthy of note. In Kulzhabasy, a panel shows a woman going to a so-called cauldron (Fig. 4). A man is behind her and seems to pierce her with a lance, and another anthropomorph kneels in front of her and hits her with an axe. The cauldron could also be interpreted as a drum. Some similar examples of drums are known in the Bronze Age in Germany (for example in Horn-Halle and Hornsommern, see CLODORÉ-TISSOT, KERSALÉ 2010, pp. 49-50).

### 3C. Chronology of the engravings

These engravings can be dated by stylistic analogies and by the presence of other drawings on the same panels. Six panels are from the Bronze Age, but the only panel with a musician in Saimaluu-Tash 1 should be dated back to the Early Iron Age due to the presence of a camel with the same patina and made with the same technique as the musician (Fig. 2E). This animal offers similarities with the Saka Siberian style from the Early Iron Age.

### 3D. Associations

The small number of musicians does not allow making relevant inferences about associations with other petroglyphs. In Saimaluu-Tash 2 and in Kulzha-



*Fig. 3 - Anthropomorphs with ax and ratchett, and a bull, Valley 3 in Kulzhabasy*



*Fig. 4 - Cultic scene (detail), Valley 5 in Kulzhabasy, 13,5 x 13,5 cm*

basy, the musicians are associated with a bull, whereas in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and in Kulzhabasy, it is with a camel. For this last association, it is a Bronze Age panel in Kulzhabasy and an Iron Age panel in Saimaluu-Tash 1, however.

The main surprising conclusion is that the musicians are not associated with petroglyphs of dancers, with the exception of a panel in Saimaluu-Tash 1 depicting a musician with two dancers (Fig. 2E), but also of the two musicians in Saimaluu-Tash 2 which are themselves dancers (Fig. 2C).

#### 4. ROCK ENGRAVINGS OF DANCERS (FIG. 5-11)

162 dancers are depicted on 55 panels at 15 sites: 55 dancers on 14 panels at seven sites in Kazakhstan and 107 dancers on 41 panels at eight sites in Kyrgyzstan.

In Kazakhstan, the percentage of dancers is higher in the region of Kulzhabasy-Tamgaly (21 dancers in Kulzhabasy; 16 in Tamgaly; eight in Akkainar and two in Karakyr, viz. 85%) than in the region of Bayan Zhurek-Eskiolmes (9%; four dancers in Eshkiolmes and one in Bayan Zhurek). Three dancers are also present in Akterek (5%).

In Kyrgyzstan, the spatial distribution of the dancers is the following: 75% in Saimaluu-Tash (56 dancers in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 24 in Saimaluu-Tash 2); 15% in the Kenkol valley (12 dancers in Tchatchikei; two in Obo, one in Tchatchoi and in Terek); 10% for the two sites of the northern shore of the Issyk-Kul Lake (nine dancers in Ornok and two in Baet).

##### 4A. Gender of the dancers

Among the 162 dancers, 43 have a phallus and two women are identified by their breasts and longer hair (Fig. 18). Furthermore, two human beings in Saimaluu-Tash have only one leg, but have a kind of a dress around their pelvis (Fig. 5D & 11A). They could also be women.

The men with phallus are inventoried six times in Kazakhstan (four in Tamgaly, one in Karakyr and in Kulzhabasy) and 37 times in Kyrgyzstan (23 in Saimaluu-Tash 1; 10 in Saimaluu-Tash 2; two in Tchatchikei and one in Obo and in Tchatchoi).

The percentage of men with phalluses largely varies from one site to another: 41% in Saimaluu-Tash 1, and also in Saimaluu-Tash 2; 25% in Tamgaly; 17% in Tchatchikei; less than 5% in Kulzhabasy and none in Akkainar or Ornok (for the sites where there are more than five engravings of dancers). In Tchatchikei, if we include the two women, 33% of the human beings have a sexual attribution.

##### 4B. Typology of the dancers

Eight panels show a single dancer (three panels in Saimaluu-Tash 1; one in Bayan Zhurek, Kulzhabasy, Saimaluu-Tash 2, Tchatchoi and Terek). In Bayan Zhurek, the single dancer is probably a shaman due to its headdress (Fig. 5A). On a panel in Saimaluu-Tash 1, a dancer is with a chariot and with another anthropomorph (Fig. 7D). The second anthropomorph is not dancing. On this panel, a goat was added in the Late Iron Age. On another panel in Saimaluu-Tash 1, the single dancer is associated with goats, canids and lines. In Tchatchoi, the dancer is also associated with goats, and in Terek, with a canid (Fig. 5E). Only the dancers in Kulzhabasy and in Tchatchoi have a phallus, whereas a single dancer in Saima-

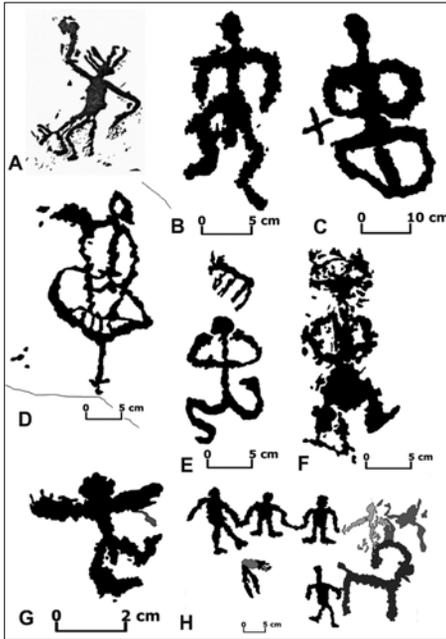


Fig. 5 - A) Bayan Zhurek (BAIPAKOV, MARYASHEV 2008, p. 103); B, H) Kulzhabasy; C-D, F) Saimaluu-Tash; E) Terek; G) Tchon Tchatchoi

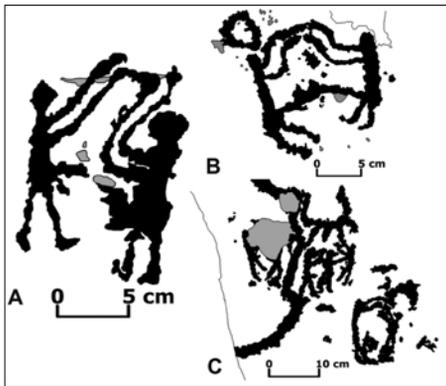


Fig.6 - Saimaluu-Tash 1

19 panels show a couple of dancers. Both dancers are mainly in front of each other, with their arms raised to the sky and with their hands touching the hands of the other dancer (Fig. 6A-B). In Kazakhstan, they were found twice in Kulzhabasy and once in Karakyr; in Kyrgyzstan, ten times in Saimaluu-Tash 1, three times in Saimaluu-Tash 2, once in Baet, Obo and Tchatchikei. 11 of the 38 dancers have a phallus (seven in Saimaluu-Tash 1, two in Saimaluu-Tash 2, one in Karakyr and in Obo). On a panel in Saimaluu-Tash 1 (Fig. 10B), one dancer has three legs, probably in order to depict the movement of the foot by dancing.

23 panels depict a group of dancers, viz. at least three dancers together. In six cases, the groups of dancers are constituted of at least two couples. A total of 115 dancers are numbered for these groups. The biggest groups are in Tamgaly (one group with ten dancers, the second one with six people; Fig. 8H-I), in Kulzhabasy (nine people dancing with weapons; Fig. 9B), in Saimaluu-Tash 1 (three groups each with seven worshippers; Fig. 7E & 10H) and in Saimaluu-Tash 2 (one group with four couples of worshippers). Smaller groups are in Kazakhstan in Akkainar (twice with four people), in Akterek (three dancers), in Eshkiolmes (four people; Fig. 9H), in Kulzhabasy (once with four dancers, a second with three people); in Kyrgyzstan, in Ornok (one group of five, a second of four; Fig. 9F-G), in Saimaluu-Tash 1 (two of four people and two of three), in Saimaluu-Tash 2 (two of four dancers; Fig. 8D) and in Tchatchikei (two of four people; Fig. 18). 29 of the 115 dancers have a phallus: four in Tamgaly, 15 in Saimaluu-Tash 1, eight in Saimaluu-Tash 2, and two in Tchatchikei.

19 of these 50 panels represent 62 dancers as worshippers (Fig. 7C, E-F): in Kazakhstan, both panels with five of the 16 dancers in Tamgaly and one panel with

two of the three dancers in Akterek; in Kirghizstan, 12 panels with 43 dancers in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and four panels with 12 dancers in Saimaluu-Tash 2. These dancing worshippers are in a group of dancers in ten cases, and nine times are forming a couple. 28 of the 62 worshippers have a phallus: two in Tamgaly in Kazakhstan, and in Kyrgyzstan, 20 in Saimaluu-Tash 1, and six in Saimaluu-Tash 2. We observe that the dancing worshippers are concentrated at three sites: Tamgaly and Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2.

Five panels show an anthropomorph standing on an animal (Fig. 11): four times on a horse in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2 (Fig. 12), and in Tchatchikei, and once on a bull in Saimaluu-Tash 1 (Fig. 11A). Even if the human being does not show any kind of movement in these cases, we consider these engravings to depict a peculiar kind of dance. In Saimaluu-Tash 1, the human on a bull could be a woman, whereas the one on a horse is a man due to the depiction of a phallus. We observe that they are only at two sites directly related to each other (Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2), and at another site (Tchatchikei) at which some stylistic and thematic similarities with Saimaluu-Tash were already observed (HERMANN 2018, p. 28).

#### 4C. Chronology of the petroglyphs

Thanks to the association of the dancers with other drawings or panels it is sometimes possible to suggest a dating to these engravings.

In Kazakhstan, 9 of 14 panels are from the Bronze Age and one panel in Akkainar is from the Early Iron Age. On this last panel (Fig. 7A), the four dancers are associated with a deer and a dog, which can be dated from this

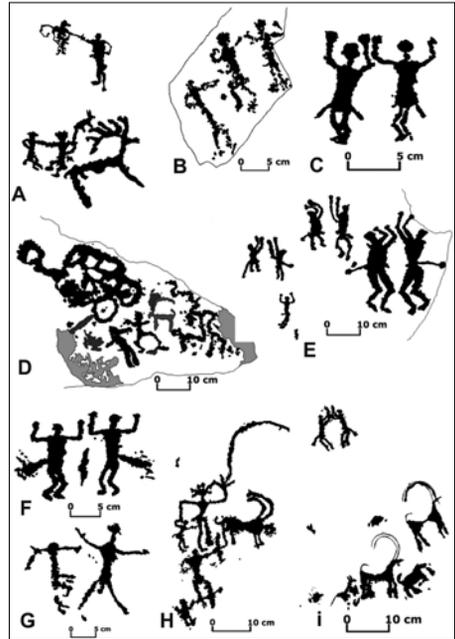


Fig.7 - A) Akkainar; B) Akterek; C-F, H-I) Saimaluu-Tash; G) Karakyr

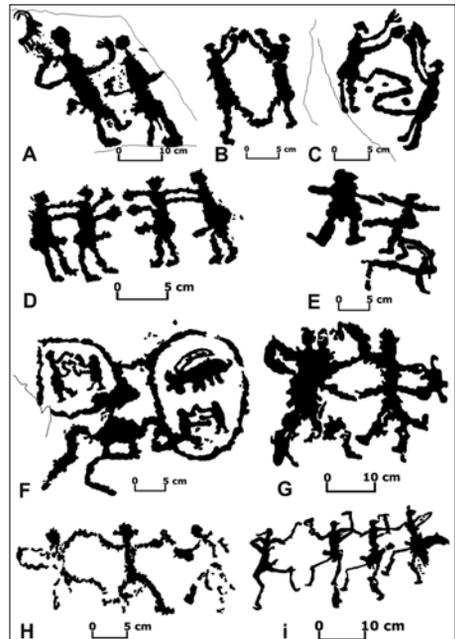


Fig.8 - A-D, F) Saimaluu-Tash 2; E) Tchon Tchatchikei; G) Baet; H-I) Tamgaly, same panel in group III

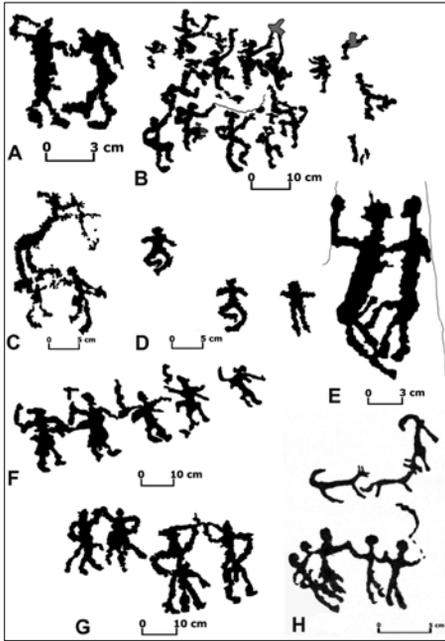


Fig.9 - A-D) Kulzhabasy; E) Obo; F-G) Ornok; H) Eshkiolmes (BAIPAKON et al. 2005, p. 126)

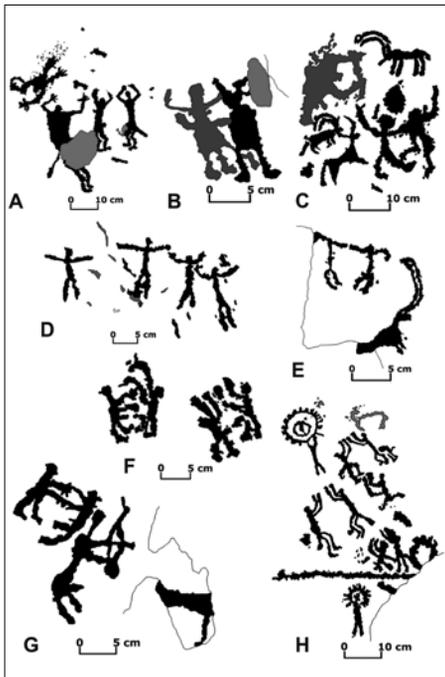


Fig.10 - Saimaluu-Tash 1

epoch. In four cases, a dating between the Bronze and the Iron Age is not possible: in Akterek, in Eshkiolmes and two panels of Kulzhabasy due to the fact that the dancers are not directly associated with other drawings or are associated with drawings of both periods.

In Kyrgyzstan, 39 of 41 panels are from the Bronze Age, but two panels are without the shadow of a doubt from the Early Iron Age: a depiction of a human on a horse in Saimaluu-Tash 1 (Fig. 11C) and a panel with a musician with two dancers on the same site (Fig. 2E). We also observe that these two panels from the Late Iron Age constitute a kind of exception in the general theme of the panels with dancers: one is the only panel with an association of dancers with a musician, and the second belongs to a small group of five depictions of an "acrobat" on an animal.

#### 4D. Associations

27 panels show an association with an animal (two of them with a hunting scene); nine panels have an association with a so-called sunhead (an anthropomorph with a head like a sun, and considered like a divinity. About this topic, see HERMANN 2020b; Fig. 10H), and four panels with dancers are associated with a woman giving birth. One panel associates dancers with a solar symbol.

On 16 panels, the dancers are not associated: six panels in Kulzhabasy, five in Saimaluu-Tash 1, one in Akterek, in Bayan Zhurek, in Karakyr, in Saimaluu-Tash 2 and in Tchatchikei.

##### 1. With animals

Dancers are mainly associated with goats (13 panels) and with bulls (8 panels). In other cases, they are associated with horses (four panels, but three of them depict an acrobat on a horse), with

canids (twice) and with camel and deer (only one panel for each of them). A panel in Saimaluu-Tash associates dances with a camel, and a panel associating dancers with deer is in Akkainar. Both are dated back from the Iron Age. The associations with a horse occur twice in Tchatchikei and in Saimaluu-Tash. In Saimaluu-Tash 1, two dancers are associated with a hunter, but the animal could not be determined due to the frost wedging of the rock (Fig. 10G). In Tchatchikei, another dancing and hunting scene shows a bull as prey (Fig. 17).

There are 38 dancers associated with a goat. Among the 13 panels with dancers and goats, one in Tchatchikei depicts sexual intercourse between a man and a goat on the same panel as four dancers. In Kazakhstan, one panel is in Kulzhabasy and in Eshkiolmes. In Kyrgyzstan, four panels were found in Saimaluu-Tash 1 and three in Saimaluu-Tash 2. The four others depictions are located in the Kenkol valley (two in Tchatchikei, one in Tchatchoi and one in Obo).

There are 23 dancers on the eight panels associated with a bull : one panel in Akkainar and in Tamgaly in Kazakhstan, and in Kyrgyzstan four panels in Saimaluu-Tash 1, and one panel in Saimaluu-Tash 2 and in Tchatchikei (about the panel in Saimaluu-Tash 2, see 4F below and regarding Tchatchikei, see 4G). In Akkainar, the four dancers are in the prolongation of the bull's horns. In Tamgaly, the dancers are not directly on the same panel as the bull, but in direct relation to it.

## 2. With sunheads and solar symbols

Nine panels with 40 dancers show an association with a sunhead. One scene with ten dancers and a parturient is under a composition with two sunheads in Tamgaly. The eight other panels are situated in Saimaluu-Tash 1 (seven panels with 26 dancers) and in Saimaluu-Tash 2 (one panel with four dancers). One of the panels of Saimaluu-Tash 1 shows two dancers like worshippers and a sunhead leading a plough (Fig. 13). In this case, the dance could be considered as part of a ritual for a fertility cult due to the fact that the sun uses the plough. The only panel with a solar symbol (so-called "glasses", see HERMANN 2020b) and seven dancers is also located in Saimaluu-Tash 1.

## 3. Dancers with parturients

In this region of Central Asia, only 16 parturients are documented, but three of them are associated with dancers. In Tamgaly, ten dancers are in a line with a woman giving birth in the center of it (Fig. 14). In Baet, two dancers are on a rock

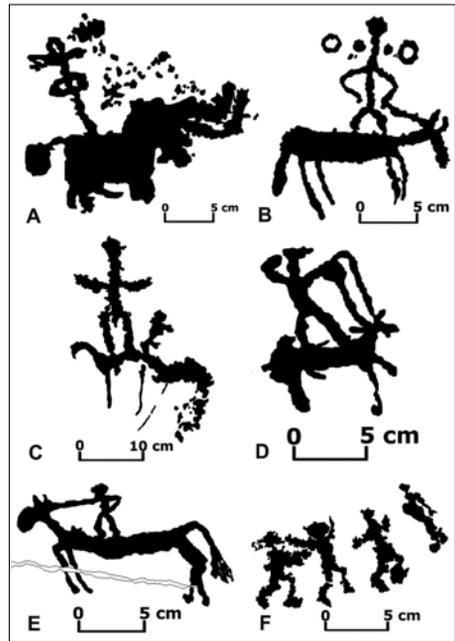


Fig.11 - A-C) Saimaluu-Tash; D-F) Tchon Tchatchikei



*Fig.12 - Anthropomorph standing on a horse, Saimaluu-Tash 2, rock 1173, 15x16 cm.  
Fig.13 - Dancing worshippers with a sunhead leading a plough, Saimaluu-Tash 1, rock 124*

*Next page:*

*Fig.14 - Dancers with a parturient, group IV in Tamgaly, 88x15 cm.  
Fig.15 - Man with bull, Saimaluu-Tash 2, panel 1 on rock 1234, 25x17 cm*





near a parturient. In Ornok, the panel of a woman giving birth is on the same rock than four dancers. Another rock with five dancers is also in the direct vicinity of it. No dancer in these four panels has a phallus.

Even if only four panels of dancers are associated with a parturient, we observe that three of them are at two sites on the northern shore of the Issyk-Kul Lake, whereas the fourth panel is in Tamgaly, 180 km northwest of the lake. Furthermore, due to the small amount of depictions of parturients, it is remarkable that some of them are accompanied by dancers, which are not directly related to a gender due to the fact that they are without a phallus.

#### 4E. Relations between the gender of the dancers and the associated petroglyphs

Among the 43 dancers with phallus, six are not associated.

Among 40 dancers associated with a sunhead, there are 17 men. However, these 17 men constitute a group of 21 dancers which are not directly on the same panel as the sunhead. No dancer on the same panel as a sunhead has a phallus, but 80% of the dancers associated with a sunhead without being on the same panel as the divinity have phalluses.

There are also ten men among 38 dancers (26%) associated with a goat, and nine among 23 dancers (39%) are with a bull. Furthermore, four men are associated with glasses and only one is with a horse.

It seems that the presence of dancers with a phallus is mostly associated with goats, bulls and sunheads, but in this last case only if they are not on the same panel.

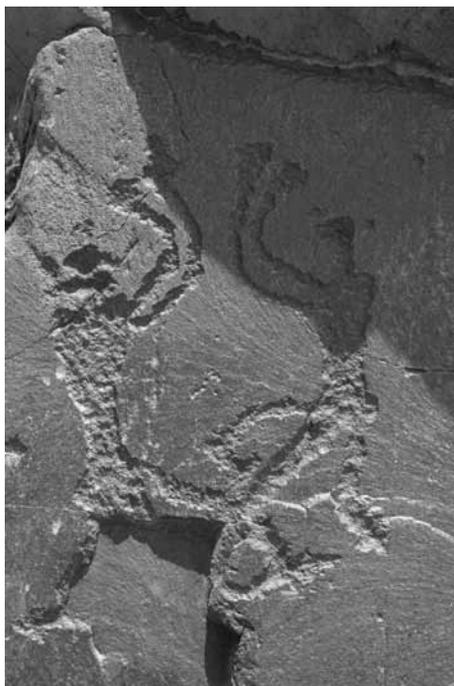


Fig.16 - Dancers with vulture-head, Saimaluu-Tash 2, panel 2 on rock 1234, 16x22 cm

#### 4F. Study case 1: rock 1234 in Saimaluu-Tash 2 (Fig. 15-16)

Three different panels are on this rock, but the relation between them is difficult to establish. A first panel at the top of the rock, oriented to the north, shows a human being with bird-head behind a bull and with an object like a mace in its left hand. The anthropomorph and the animal stands on a line. The second panel, oriented to the west, is ca. 60 cm away from the first panel and 25 cm below it. Two anthropomorphs with vulture-heads (HERMANN 2020a), a big phallus and a tail as part of a cloth, are dancing in front of each other, with their hands raised to the sky in a worshipping attitude. Their arms end in two massive and irregular circles, which are too big to be fists. For this reason, we interpret them as a musical instrument like maracas. The

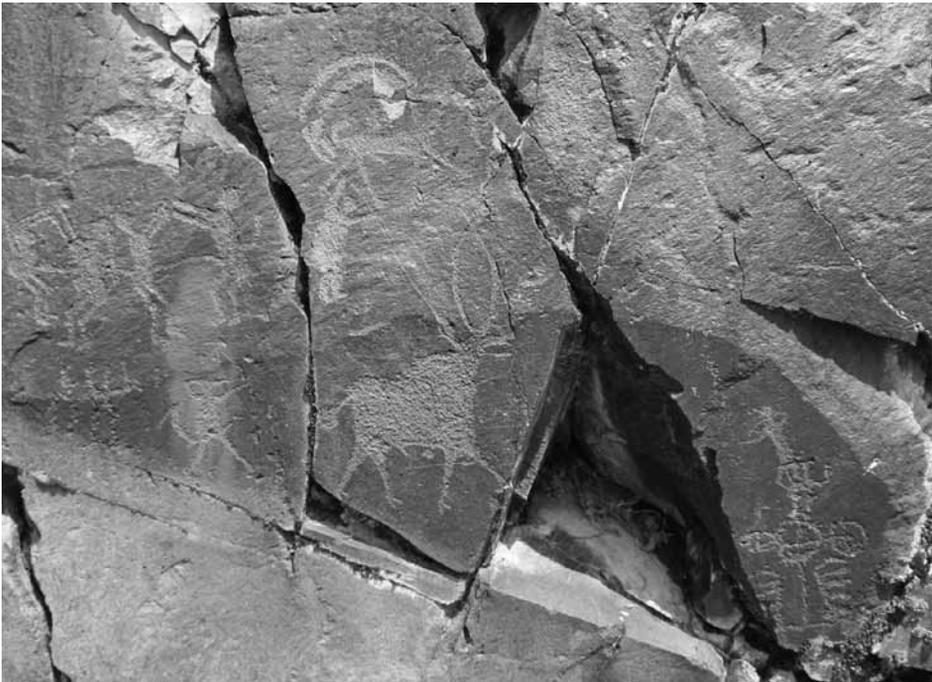
third panel is also oriented to the west, but is ca. 70 cm to the south of the first and second panel. A bull is followed by a snow leopard. A solar symbol called "glasses" (two circles joined by a line) is under them.

It is the only case showing two dancers who could also be musicians. Furthermore, their dancing attitude permits the supposition that they are worshipping something. Two bulls are present on this rock. One is followed by an anthropomorph, whereas the second is followed by a feline, even if the predator does not seem to threaten it. The three anthropomorphs have a bird-head, viz. a vulture-head for both dancers. What is the relation between both dancers and the other human being? Is the dance part of a ceremony during which the bull will be killed by the human being with a mace? And what is the relation with the solar symbol?

#### *4G. Study case 2: rock 351 in Kitchi Tchatchikei (Fig. 17-18)*

The site of Tchatchikei in the Kenkol valley is divided in two groups which correspond of the division of the Tchatchikei River in a large affluent (Tchon Tchatchikei) and in a smaller stream (Kitchi Tchatchikei). The main part of the Kitchi Tchatchikei group with the rock 351 is located in cliffs on the right shore of the river.

The panel is divided in three parts mainly corresponding to the cracks in the rock. Four dancers are in the left part. Two men with phalluses and two women with breasts and long hair are tied by a rope. The men are facing each other, as



*Fig.17 - Hunting scene with dancers, Kitchi Tchatchikei (Kenkol Valley), rock 351*



*Fig.18 - Dancers, Kitchi Tchatchikei, rock 351 (detail), 24x15 cm*

well as the women. Their arms are folded to the sky and the hands of each dancer touch the hands of the dancer in front of him or her. Below them, a hunter with a phallus shoots with a bow at a bull located in the central part of the panel. This bull is pierced by four arrows. Three other arrows are near the bull as if they did not reach it. Above the animal, another hunter with a spear also pierces it. Above this hunter, a goat is in front of a hunter with bow. In the right part of the panel, a hunter with bow shoots at the bull, and below him, another hunter with bow standing in a chariot shoots at the bull. In the left part, a camel was added later to this composition, most probably at the medieval time.

This panel is unique in associating dancers with a hunting scene. Furthermore, the gender of the four dancers is clear, and it is the only example with two women perfectly identifiable. The men dance together, as do the women, but the four dancers are tied by a rope (or a line) coming from the phallus of a man at an extremity to reach the belly of the woman at the other extremity of the group. Does it mean that this dance has a sexual significance or is it a dance to celebrate the victory of the hunters against the bull?

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Music and dance in rock art reveal many antinomies. Petroglyphs are sounds by essence, because pecking a rock to draw something on it automatically includes the producing of sounds. However, the depictions of musicians are quite absent and dancers are very rare. Furthermore, it is surprising that the dancers are mainly not associated with musicians. Or should we interpret other depic-

tions of anthropomorphs as musicians? Were singers depicted?

Dancers and musicians are mostly located at few sites: Bayan Zhurek, Kulzhaby and Tamgaly in Kazakhstan, and Saimaluu-Tash 1 and 2 in Kyrgyzstan. It could signify that these sites were cultic places with ceremonies including music and dance. In contrary, the other petroglyphs sites had perhaps other aims in which music and dance play no role or only a secondary one.

About the chronology, these depictions are mainly from the Bronze Age, but some are also from the Early Iron Age. The few engravings from the Early Iron Age are located in Saimaluu-Tash 1, where we could suggest that the thematic tradition of the Bronze Age subsisted in the next period. Few other panels in Kazakhstan cannot be attributed due to the lack of stylistic evidence. No depictions were found for the Turkic Medieval era.

Dancers are sometimes associated with animals, mainly with goats and bulls, but also with sunheads and parturients. 25% of the dancers have a phallus and dancers associated with a sunhead (but not on the same panel) almost always have a phallus. However, no dancer associated with a parturient has a phallus.

These results suggest that dancers were partially tied to a fertility cult: if it is evident with parturients, it could also be the case with sunheads, as the worshipping of the sun was perhaps tied to agriculture. So, in Saimaluu-Tash 1, two dancers are associated with a sunhead leading a plough. However, dancers with phalluses are not associated with this fertility cult: dancers with a woman giving birth and on the same panels than sunheads have no gender. It suggests that the presence of a phallus has nothing to do with fertility, but much more with power. Dancers worshipping a woman giving birth or a sunhead are asexual, because it is the woman and the sunhead who have the power to bring life. In contrary, dancers with goats and with bulls have quite often a phallus, as if the virile attribute should rival the animals' horns. 80% of the dancers with sunheads, but not on the same panels, have also a phallus, as if they rival the deity's sunrays. However, they are not on the same panels, perhaps because the power of the divinity cannot be directly rivalled on the same rock.

The five dancers on an animal also symbolise power: a human being stands on an animal as if humanity is dominating nature.

Music and dance in cultic ceremonies are a double representation of power: their aim is to gain power over deities and nature by influencing them (for example through a rain dance), because nature and deities have power over human life. The presence and absence of the phallus in dancers seems to be a manifestation of this ambiguity of dance and music: humans are aware of the power of natural elements and the animals, but they are also conscious that they can partially dominate nature and animals through agriculture, and the world of sounds and silence through musical instruments.

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