

Rock carvings

The peculiar symbolism of the rock carvings of Las Hurdes has caused numerous interpretations. Focusing on the engravings of Azabal, we will discuss their meaning, as well as the technique that the settlers, thousands of years ago, used to make engravings

Paraje de La Vegacha del Rozo. Azabal



We want that these pages are a brief introduction to the petroglyphs of Las Hurdes. Later we will treat of them carefully.

We have said that the interpretation of rock carvings symbols is difficult in Las Hurdes and it is true, since the researchers and specialists have explained the petroglyphs with different meanings. But let's start with the location: the rock carvings are made on large metamorphosed Paleozoic schists and shales rocks, usually mid-slope and close to a watercourse.

The techniques used in the execution were the incision and knocking with other stone. Taking the words of Dr. M^a del Carmen Sevillano about the second one: "Obtained by knocking with a hammer or chisel on the surface of the rock, contouring or refilling the figure that the artist intended".

As for the technique of incisions: "Obtained by rubbing the rock with a sharp or cutting utensil to mark a groove on the surface outlining the desired figure."

Regards its interpretation, most are geometric or linear figures, although there are other elements such

as human footprints, perhaps some agricultural tools and various weapons. What is different in Las Hurdes is that the set of engravings of Las Hurdes has no narrative character, as with other peninsular stations where hunting scenes, even sacred ceremonies are represented; those aspects turn the engravings of Las Hurdes into something singular. According to general opinion, the themes are mostly sacred symbols and weapons.

The dating of the engravings is another handicap, because most researchers trace its execution to the Iron Age, between 800 B.C. and the Roman conquest. However, the survival of more ancient motives on some carving stations does that a previous chronology could be established, including the Bronze, What would date practically the engravings along both millennia previous to our age

And as a final singularity, the stations of Las Hurdes have very few anthropomorphic figures, but we have seen several in Azabal and, indeed, one has been used as the icon of the petroglyphs in the region, as we mentioned in previous pages.