

PETROGLYPHS AND ANCIENT SYMBOLS OF ARMENIAN HIGHLAND

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**YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ARCHITECTURE
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ARMENIA'S CENTRE OF SPELEOLOGY

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Historical monuments are numerous in the Armenian Highland and present an enormous period— 14,000 years, according to the archeological material recently excavated and evaluated. The least explored and perhaps the most ancient among these monuments are petroglyphs, dragon-stones and rock-cut structures with stone doors. Researching these monuments it will be possible to reveal their cultural and civilizational continuity in the Armenian Highland.

A number of scientists, naturalists, researchers and Armenia's Centre of Speleology worked out a program of petroglyphs' research with the purpose of gaining the most complete idea about pre-Mashtots written scripts, written sources of the ancient period of the Armenian history, the written, symbolic, pictorial, pictographic ideographic systems of information exchange. Our aim is realization of the plan of building up the solid basis of an essentially important factual and classified material for Armenian scholars to have the opportunity to get more material relating to the studies of the ethno-spiritual roots of the Armenian nation in the Armenian Highland. The petroglyphs of the Geghama Mountains are studied well compared with the monuments of the same type in the Vardenis, Jermajrer, Artsakh, Tashir and Gugark regions. The reason is that the Geghama mountains are close to the most densely populated regions and there are many acting sanctuaries in this part of the Republic of Armenia. The book by Harutyun A. Martirosyan and Hasmik R. Israyelyan, "The petroglyphs of the Geghama mountains", which in my firm judgment is a step forward to realizing an important mission to introduce a voluminous field of scientific researches.

In 2006-2007 we organized several exploratory survey expeditions to the Geghama mountains and became certain that merely for the work of measurement, description, determination of coordinates and registration of petroglyphs years will be needed.

Besides petroglyphs there are also monuments of archeological value - cromlechs, dolmens, dragon-stones. There are also met the traces of constructions and walls and foundations of fortifications. One of them is a destroyed construction with a foundation and planning characteristic of the temples of the epoch of the Kingdom of Van.

Petroglyphs are especially widely spread to the south-west, in the surroundings of Paytasar, Nazeli, the Vishapasar mountains, etc. Generally it is possible to meet petroglyphs on the slopes of volcanoes and the surrounding terrain.