

Interpretive Misconceptions of Petroglyphs

Browsing through the internet and academic books on the meaning of ancient petroglyphs it is evident that there is a common biased focus. That is, from a modern intellectual understanding of our own cultural icons. Unfortunately this has nothing to do with the true meanings of the petroglyphs. Modern minds are a world away from the ones that carved or painted the glyphs.

Even taking the most discernible icon a circle with lines radiating from it, it's obvious; it has to be the sun. After all, everyone knows how to draw one at the age of three.

The assumption is wrong, as seen from the manuscript below, a recording from a pre modern shamanic mind. Only from the shamanic world can any of the petroglyphs be interpreted, as they see everything through the spiritual and energetic world. To understand them one must be able to feel and see the energy that they talk about.



The interpretations of shamanic images by non shamans has a lot to be desired. Rather than listening to my teacher's explanation of that is being shown I have decided to show parts of a document from an ancient shaman's side.

Excerpts from the book:

THE MIDĒ'WIWIN OR "GRAND MEDICINE SOCIETY" OF THE OJIBWAY.

BY W. J. HOFFMAN.

The result of personal investigations among the Ojibwa, conducted during the years 1887, 1888 and 1889, are presented in the accompanying paper. The information was obtained from a number of the chief Midĕ' priests living at Red Lake and White Earth reservations, as well as from members of the society from other reservations, who visited the last named locality during the three years.

.....From recent investigations among a number of tribes of the Algonkian linguistic division it is found that the traditions and practices pertaining to the Midĕ'wiwin, Society of the Midĕ' or

Shamans, popularly designated as the “Grand Medicine Society,” prevailed generally, and the rites are still practiced at irregular intervals, though in slightly different forms in various localities.

.....The persons admitted into the society are firmly believed to possess the power of communing with various supernatural beings—manidos—and in order that certain desires may be realized they are sought after and consulted. The purpose of the present paper is to give an account of this society and of the ceremony of initiation as studied and observed at White Earth, Minnesota, in 1889.

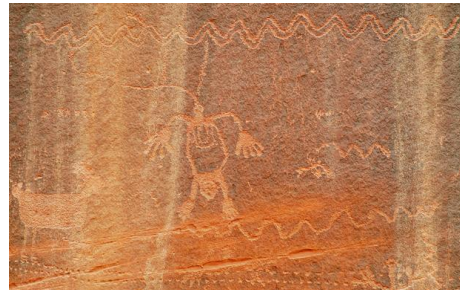
Link to this book, written in the late 1800s.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19368/19368-h.htm>

Here are some classic non shamanic interpretations:



A Super Nova or.....



A chief getting hit by lightning or.....



Arrows or energy.....

From the book; and their interpretations of their own pictures.



Man'-i-dō'-â ni'-o.

My body is a spirit.

The Midē' likens himself to the Bear Man'idō, the magic powers of which are shown by the lines across the body and short strokes upon the back.



Ni'-nān-dē', ē', ō', ya'.

My heart, I am there (in the fullness of my heart).

My heart; knows all Midē' secrets, sensible one.



Ni man'-i-dō ni'-yān.

The spirit has put away all my sickness.

He has received new life, and is, henceforth, free from the disturbing influences of evil man'idōs.



Zha'-zha-bui'-ki-bi-nan' wig'-ē-wām'.

The Spirit says there is plenty of "medicine" in the Midē' wig'iwam.

[Two superior spirits, Ki'tshi Man'idō and Dzhe Man'idō, whose bodies are surrounded by "lines of sacredness," tell the Midē' where the mysterious remedies are to be found. The vertical waving lines are the lines indicating these communications; the horizontal line, at the bottom, is the earth's surface.]



Te-wa'-tshi-me-kwe'-na, ha', na-ke'-nan.

They tell of my powers.

The people speak highly of the singer's magic powers; a charmed arrow is shown which terminates above with feather-web ornament, enlarged to signify its greater power.



In'-do-nā-gāt in-da'-kwo-nan

That which I live upon has been put on this dish by the spirit.

Ki'tshi Man'idō provides the speaker with the necessary food for the maintenance of life. The dish, or feast, is shown by the concentric rings, the spirit's arm is just below i



Rest, after which dancing begins.



Nish'-o-wē' ni-mē'-hi-gō', hē', ni-gō'-tshi-mi'-go-we, hē'.

Have pity on me wherever I have medicine.

The speaker is filled with magic influence, upon the strength of which he asks the Bear to pity and to aid him.



Ki-ne'-na-wi'-in mani'-i-dō'-ye-win.

I rock you, you that are a spirit.

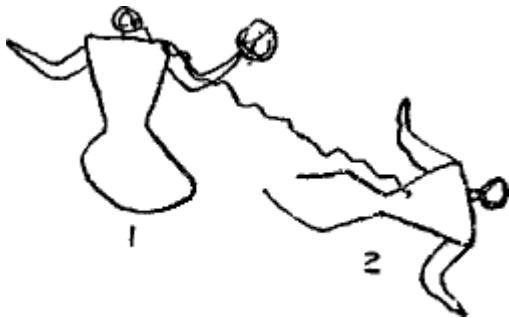
[A midē's head, the lines denoting voice or speech—i.e., singing of sacred things, as the loops or circles at the ends of each line indicate.



Wa'-a-so'-at wēn'-ti'-na-man, ha', ha,

The spirit has put life into my body.

The speaker is represented as being in the Midē'-wigân, where Ki'tshi Man'idō placed magic power into his body; the arms denote this act of putting into his sides the mī'gis. The line crossing the body denotes the person to be possessed of supernatural power.



Curing a man



Man'-i-dō, hē', nē'-yē', man'-i-dō, hē', nē', yē',
ēn'-da-na'-bi-yēn wen'-dō-bi'-yēn.

A spirit, a spirit, you who sit there, who sit there.

[The singer makes a spirit of the candidate by thus giving him new life, by again shooting into his body the sacred mīgis. The disk is the dish for feast of spirits in the dzhibai' midē wigân—"Ghost Lodge," the arms reaching towards it denoting the spirits who take food therefrom. The signification is that the candidate will be enabled to invoke and commune with the spirits of departed Midē', and to learn of hidden powers.]



Pī-nē'-si ka'-ka-gī'-wai-yan' wen'-dzhi man'-i-dō' wid.

The bird, the crow bird's skin is the reason why I am a spirit.

Although the crow is mentioned, the Thunder-bird (eagle) is delineated. The signification of the phrase is, that the speaker is equal in power to a man'idō, at the time of using the Midē' sack—which is of such a skin.



O-wē'-nēn bē-mī'-sēt.

I am flying into my lodge.

Represents the Thunder-Bird, a deity flying into the arch of the sky. The short lines denote the (so-called spirit lines) abode of spirits or Man'idōs.

ng flame radiating from
m each eye. The white



Ni-mī'-gi-sīm' man'-i-dō'-we, hwē', hē',
Sha'-go-dzhī'-hi-na'.

My mī'gis spirit, I overpower death with.

[His body is covered with mī'gis as shown by the short lines radiating from the sides, and by this power he is enabled to overcome death.]



He'-a-we-na' ni'-we-dō',
Man'-i-dō' we-a-nī'
Nī'-ka-nā' nī'-na-nā'.

He who is sleeping,
The Spirit, I bring him, a kins



Ai-ya'-swa-kīt-te', hē', he',
 He'-ā' se-wī'-kīt-te', hē', hē'
 Na-se'-ma-gōt' nin-dē'.

It is leaning,
 My heart breathes.

[The phrase refers to the mī'gis within his heart. The short radiating lines indicate the magic power of the shell.]



Me'-ka-yē'-nīnk te'-a-yē-am'-ban.

I, too, see how much there is.

His power elevates the Midē' to the rank of a man'idō, from which point he perceives many secrets hidden in the earth.



O-ni'-ni-shīnk-ni'-yo.

The mī'gis is on my body.

The magic power has been put into his body by the Midē' priests.



Ni-ka'-nin-ko'-tshi'-ha ni'-ka-na

Ni-ka'-na-nin-ko'-tshi-ha.

Midē' friends, I am trying, Midē' friends, Midē' friends, I am trying.

[His hand and arm crossed by lines to denote magic power, in reaching to grasp more than four degrees have given him; he has in view a fifth, or its equivalent.]



Tschi-nun'-dōn', he', he', he', he',

I was the one who dug up life.

The Otter Man'idō emerging from the Midē' wigân; he received it from Ki'tshi Mani'dō.



PLATE XVIII. JĒS'AKKĪD' REMOVING DISEASE.

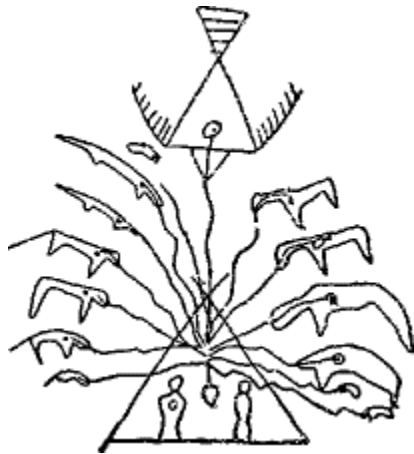


FIG. 27.—JĒs'sakkân',
or shaman's lodge.

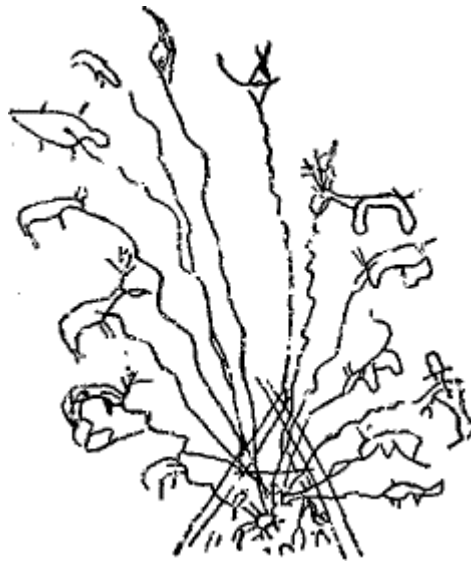


FIG. 28.—JĒs'sakkân',
or shaman's lodge.



FIG. 26.—JĒs'sakkân'
or shaman's lodge.

