

Did homo neanderthalensis exploit frontal approach for copulation ?

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Abstract

In "*The Human Revolution*", C.H.Hockett & R.Ascher (1964) &
"*Le paradigme perdu: La nature humaine*" E.Morin (1973) claimed:

*the frontal approach for copulation
must have first become possible and it
was doubtless immediately exploited.*

For the video version of this talk, click on:
<https://www.archaeometry.org/neanderthal.m4v>

1/ Homo neanderthalensis excelled for sure in artcraft,
but were they artists? How did they behaved sexually?

My curiosity on this topic was triggered
by a comment of *Edgard MORIN* dealing with
the emergence of face to face love-making. He was
referring to the 1964 paper of *HOCKETT & ASHER*
entitled *The Human Revolution*.

They related the frontal approach for coitus
to the efficient upright posture of Genus homo.
In *Comprendre les origines de la sexualité humaine*,
the sexologue *Serge WUNSCH* stressed that
there is a *break* in the evolution of mammals:
starting from pan paniscus,
their sexual activities became dissociated
from the hormonal cycle.

Let's then have a closer look at the evidences testifying
for face to face copulation by those *homo eroticus*.

DNA: XX =HomoNeanderthalis XY=HomoSapiens



2/ Here is a jaw unearthed at a rock-shelter called Riparo di Mezzena near Verona. The 1st analysis of the mitochondrial DNA of this bone suggested that the owner was a female-hybrid, neanderthalensis-sapiens; i.e.: that 35 ky ago, a female Neanderthalensis and a male Sapiens interbred. Those results from this Italian site are now obsolete, nevertheless such *hybridations* have taken place, e.g.: at the Romanian site of Peștera cu Oase.

As *Serge WUNSCH* phrased it, *traditional societies have sexual practices influenced by the cultural norms.*

Then, to the question “How has been those sexual encounters?”, I would bet 2 to 1, *by the rear!*

Let me explain this bet.

2/3 dorso-ventral,

1/3 ventro-ventral

**(with 10%
starting dorso-ventrally
initiated by the female.)**



3/ Giuseppe MAZZA reported that, although bonobos practice mostly dorso-ventral copulation, nevertheless a third of the studied cases was ventro-ventral

- including the few position changes initiated by the female after a dorso-ventral start.



4/ And what do we know about the
face to face copulation by sapiens ?
Again 35 ky BP, some Palaeolithic sapiens
decorated their caves with engravings.
Those graffitis have been disentangled
by *Jean-Pierre DUHARD*
into scenes of lovers couples
indulging in face to face copulation.



5/ For another scene *Jean-Pierre DUHARD* assumed that, next to the finely carved bison's head, is also depicted a scene of copulation. More recently, 10 ky ago, the ritual scene on the walls of the Addaura cave stimulates hypothesis: homosexual initiation or sacrificial ? Even more recently, i.e.: after the -1430.11.15 total solar eclipse depicted nearby, this open-air engraving at Coren del Valento reminds us the wide diversity, for *males* at least, in the choice of their sexual partners.

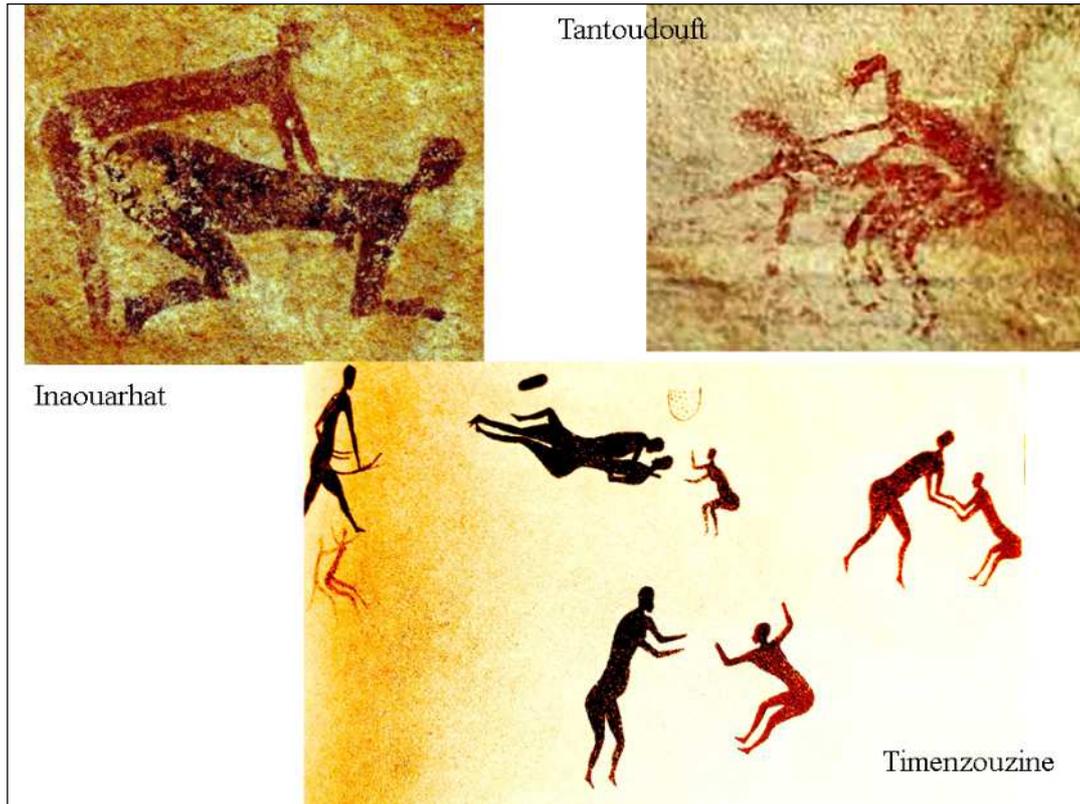


6/ Now, here is a piece of Rock art from Capivara.

In my opinion, this might well be the very 1st occurrence of a palaeoamerican representation of face to face copulation.

This scene takes place in front of an attentive audience, though not sapiens-like.

Other scenes depicted at Capivara suggest alternative positions as observed by bonobos.



7/ Now, lets look at love scenes in the Tassil n ajjer, reflecting again alternative positions.



8/ I would now like to stress that, graphically speaking,
in contrast to ventro-ventral coitus,
dorso-ventral intercourse,
namely coitus by the rear is
quite easy to represent; for example, this
3ky old terra cotta figurine of the Tlatilco culture,
or this rock engraving in Valcamonica
or this aboriginal painting on a large piece of bark.

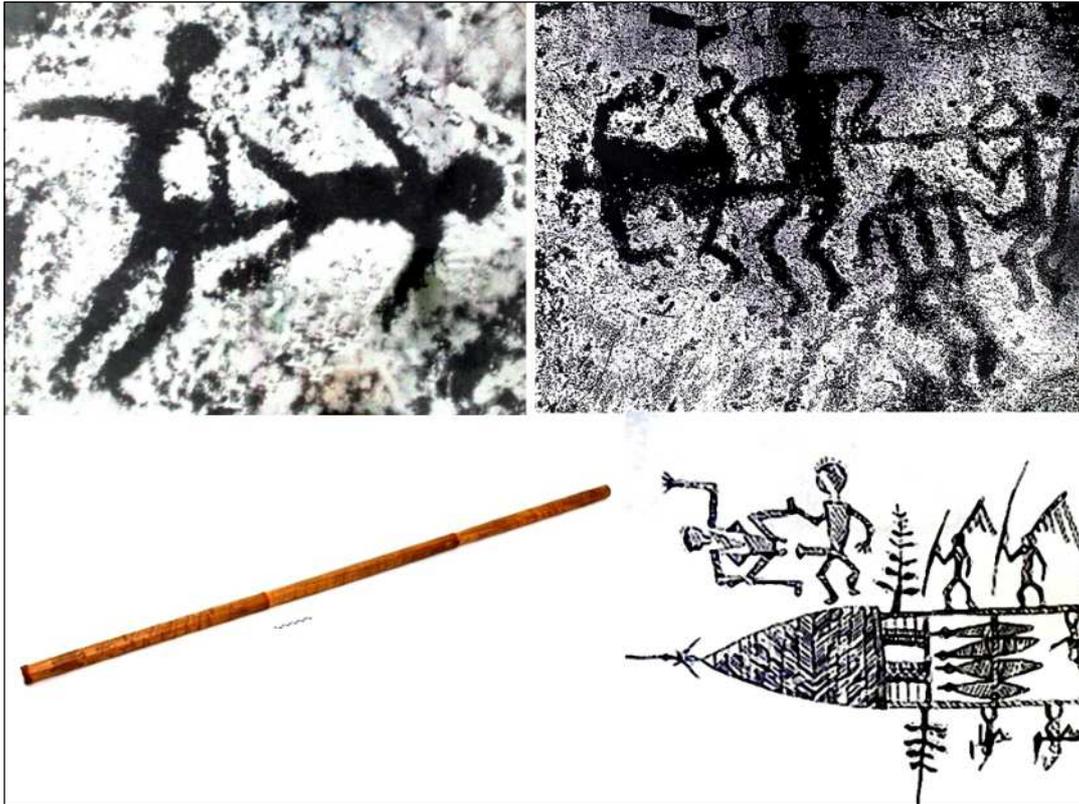


**dorso - ventral
intercourse +**



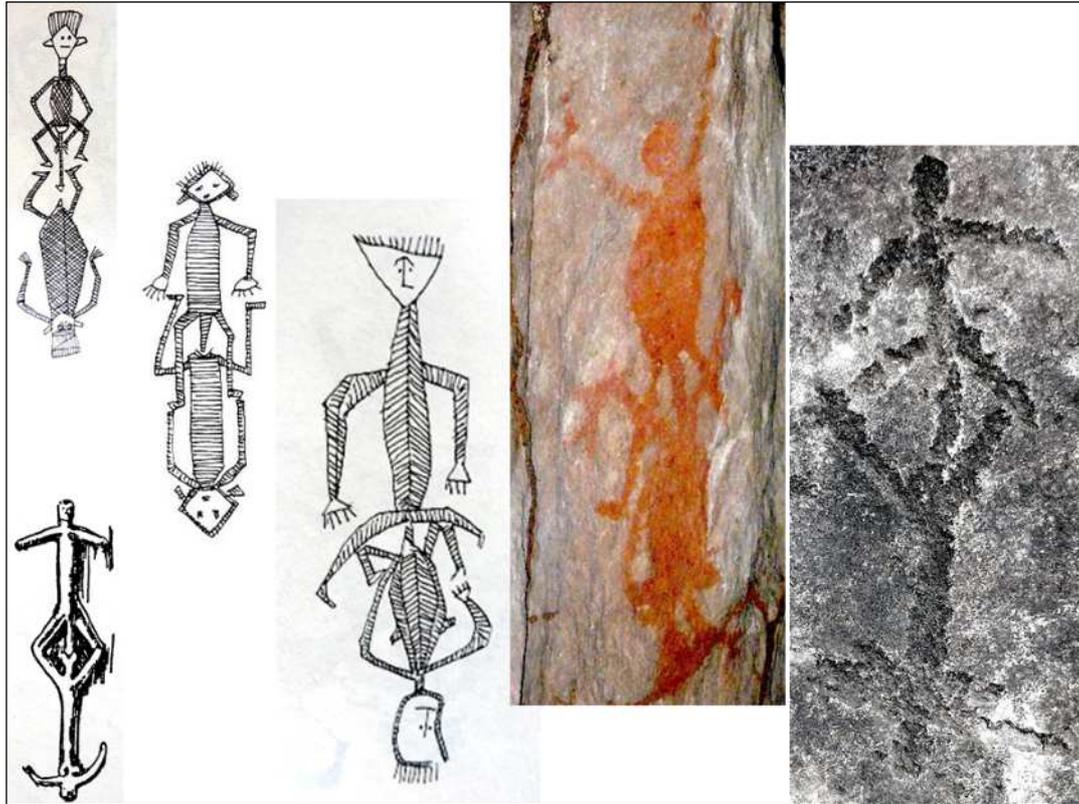
9/ It is interesting to note that 2 ky old sexual scenes had already a commercial value.

I heard that Erotic Etruscan ceramics sold very well in Greek Athens, while the walls of Pompeii's brothels carried similar ornamentations.



10/ Lets now discuss the difficulties encountered
in representing face to face copulation.

I suggest that Rock art engravings from Northern China
and Bamboo engraving from New Caledonia might
awkwardly represent such scenes of face to face coitus.



11/ Another way to represent face to face copulation is by a kind of mirror image.

One proceeds to the opening up of the lovers couple, along a *central horizontal axis*, such as in the erotik kanak bamboos collected by *Roger BOULAY*

or in the Niger wood carvings collected by *Leo FROBENIUS*

or in the aboriginal rock painting & engraving at Brady Creek, in the Australian York peninsula.

Partner's gender is depicted by their sexual attributes.

One recognize the breast of some of the females.



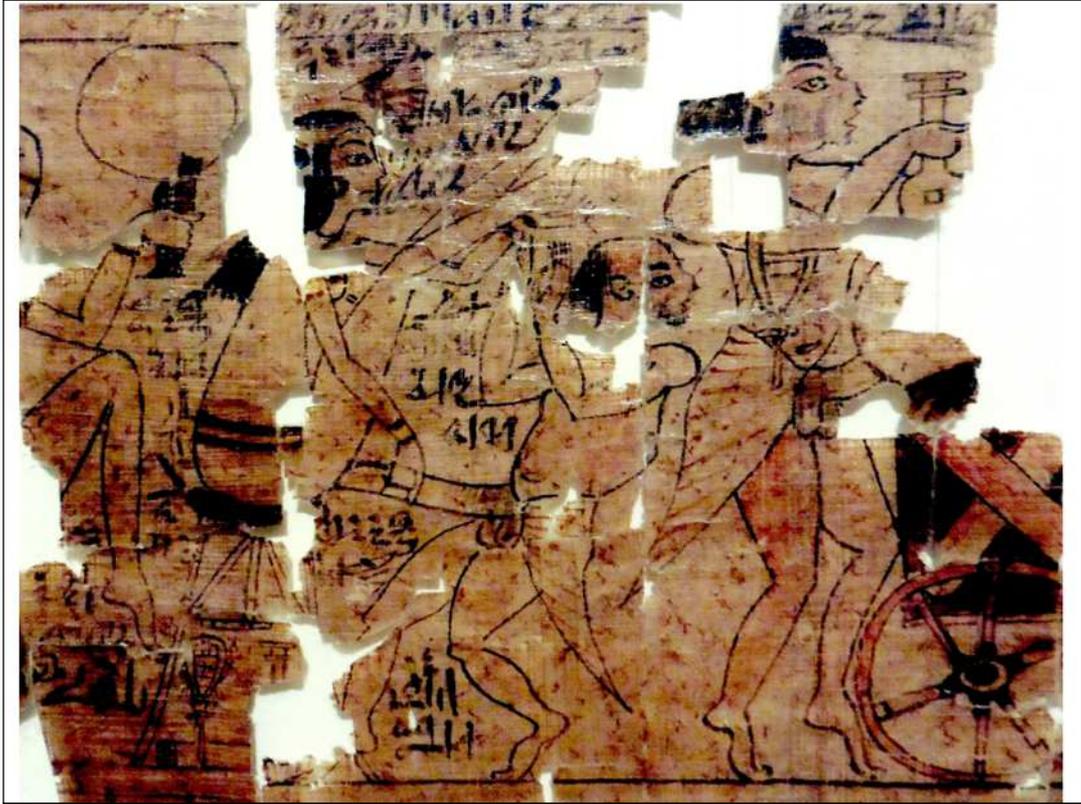
12/ Still another way to represent protagonists is in the upright position such as in Listleby or in Valcamonica.

In a way, the lovers couple is like an open book, as if it would have been opened-up along the vertical axis.

The sexual attributes of the camunian female are not only represented by her breast but also by her gravid belly.



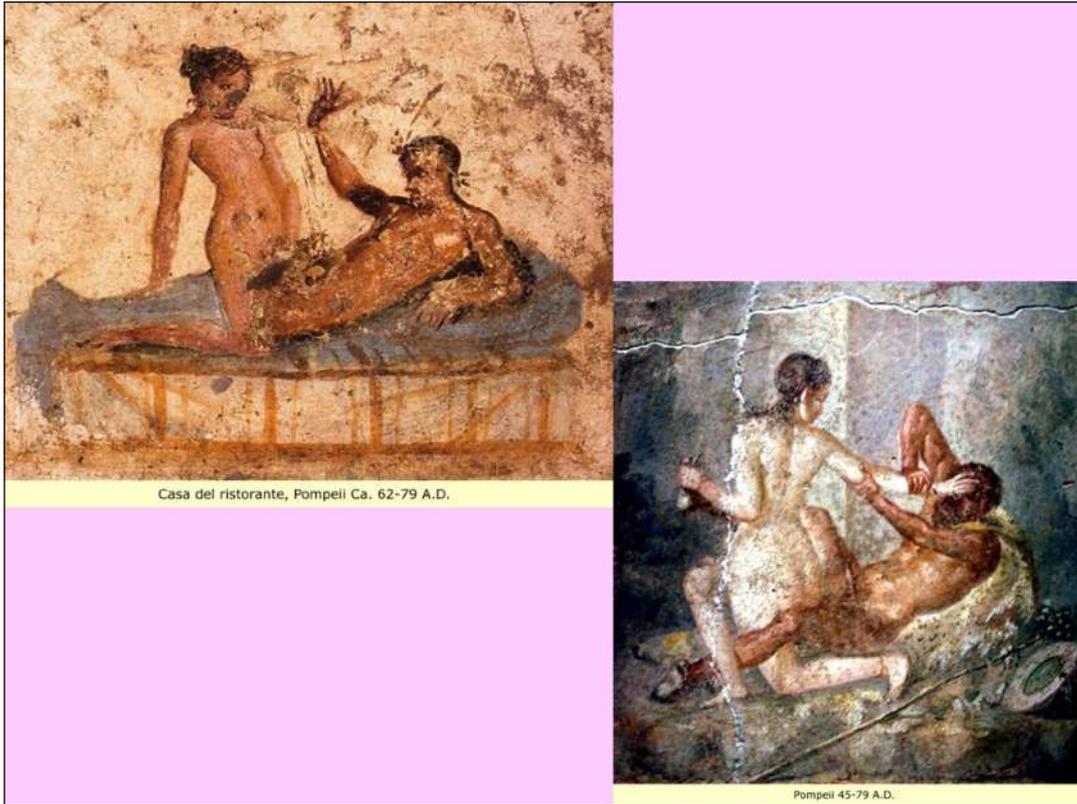
13/ To represent a frontal view of a lovers couple,
with one partner being in front of the other,
is easy in 3D, like in the Tlatilco figurine,
but is very ambiguous in 2 D monocolor representation
like the one in Valcamonica.
In one way, this ambiguity does stimulate imagination...



14/ The 31 cy old love scene depicted
on the Turin Erotic Papyrus
at the local Museum
is famous.

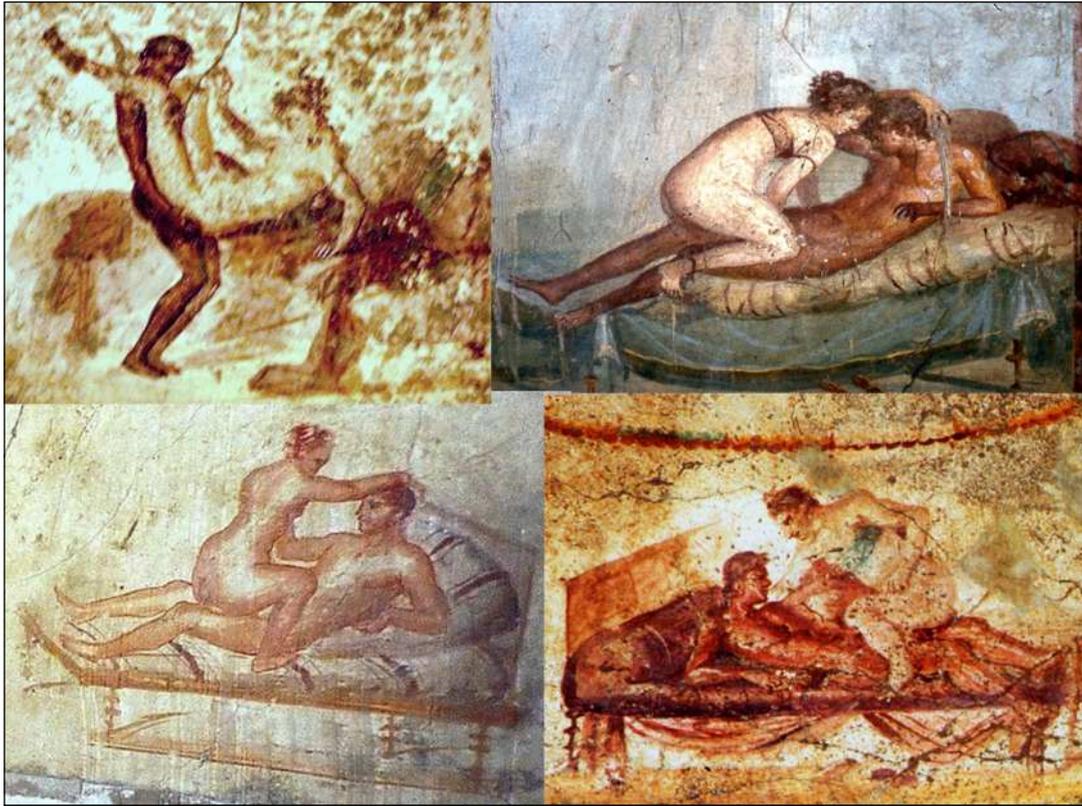


15/ Let's now look at an intimacy problem
bound to eye contact during coitus.
Alike paniscus female, sapiens females might be
more interested than males
to look at their partners,
a complicated task during a copulation by the rear !
In this Tlatilco figurine the partners are striving
for eye contact,
while in this Pompeii's paintings,
the stretched arm of the male might aim
at patting his partner,
or, perhaps, at preventing her to look at him ??



16/ A stretched right hand in love affairs,
is, in my opinion, bound in some way
to eye contact.

This *unconscious* gesture might come
from the male as well as from the female.



17/ Some walls of Pompeii ravish us with their exquisite scenes of full eye contact.



Poor copy of IV (with I)



Poor copy of VI (with VIII)

Poor copy of VI (with XIII)



Poor copy of VII (with III)



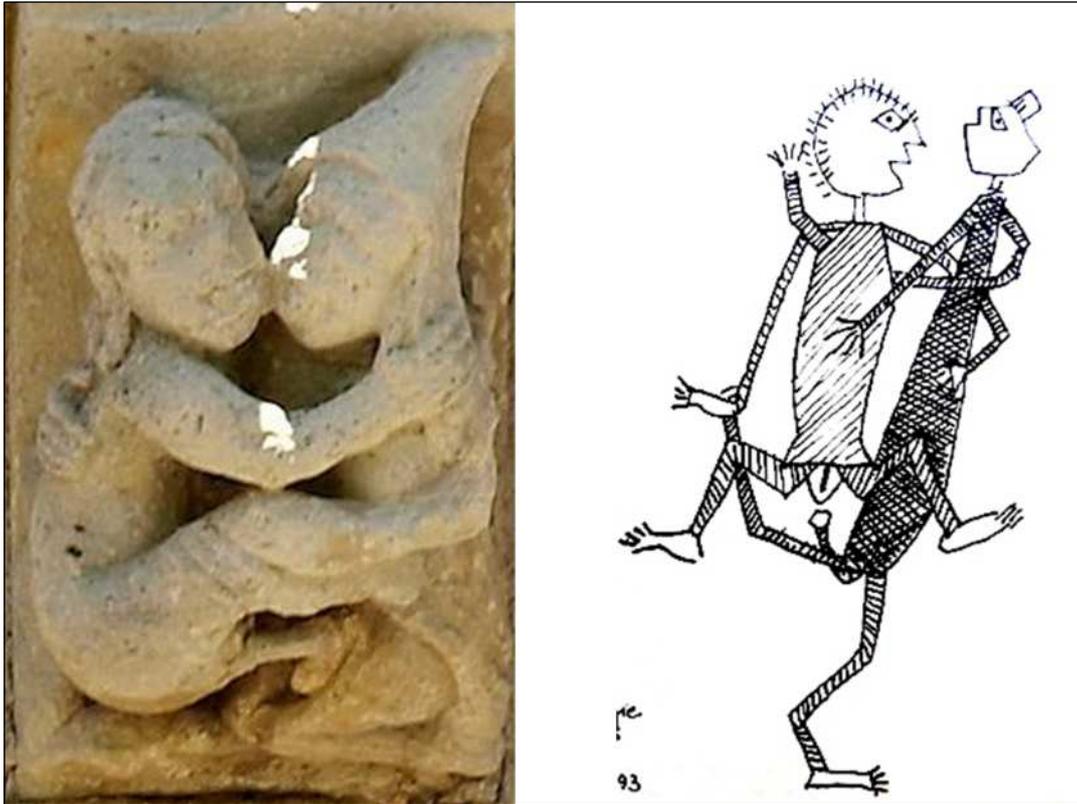
Poor copy of XI (with XII)



Poor copy of XIV (with XIII) ?

17b. Spintriae – The Roman brothel's token

In order to prevent the use of coins carrying the profile of the Emperor to pay brothel's fees, token called *spintriae* depicting on their face a sexual act and on their reverse its value have been found as far as Brittany. For non-english speaking legionaries it might have help to avoid confusion about the actual deliverable which was looked for. Some «poor» copies testify for low reading ability of roman numerals by the amateur mint masters (e.g.: confusion between II, V and X).



18/ Here is an exceptional snapshot, in Pompeii, of a fatal intercourse, *face to face* for eternity.

A touching charm emanates from the vision of those lovers.

Another face to face, full of petulance is the one of those partners depicted on the bamboo engraving from the erotik kanak portofolio collected by *Roger BOULAY*.



19/ Those magnificent scenes from
America, Africa and Europe
exhibit the enjoyment of both partners,
though the quality of the feminine pleasure
remains difficult to survey.
I would like to conclude this communication
by saying that, all over the world,
in matter of sexual relations,
Sapiens sapiens satisfied him-self & her-self
by barely enriching the Know-How,
they inherited from Sapiens neanderthalensis.