

Prehistoric and early historic cosmological maps - some semiotic aspects

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A considerable contribution to the formation of the cartosemiotic theory can be made not only by research of nowadays traditional cartographic sign systems but also by investigation of prehistoric cartographic sign systems.

The researches of prehistoric and early historic maps have started at the Institute of Cartography of the Dresden University of Technology in the first years of the nineties of the 20th century. The main subjects of interest were:

- classification of prehistoric and early historic maps
 - purposes of prehistoric maps
 - dating of the prehistoric maps
 - prehistoric cartosyntactic models and their properties
- and so on.

Our classification of prehistoric maps is based on the grouping of Delano Smith /1987/ with topographical maps, celestial maps, and cosmological maps. The classification of cosmological maps proposal Wolodtschenko /1999/ comprehends six semantic characteristics:

- world image
- world of the living and the dead
- sun sign
- moon sign
- living space
- others.

On the basis of this classification the selected cosmological maps from the Upper Paleolithic to the year zero are presented and briefly commented.

References

Delano Smith, C.: The Classification of Prehistoric Maps from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa in the Prehistoric Period. In: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean. V.1, (Ed. Harley/Woodward). Chicago/ London 1987, pp.

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Wolodtschenko, A.: Praehistorische Karten. Vorlesungen, Wintersemester 1999. Institut fuer Kartographie, TU Dresden 1999.