



## RAR DEBATE

### *The IFRAO Standard Scale: a revision*

By GORI TUMI ECHEVARRÍA LÓPEZ

The IFRAO Standard Scale is at present a remarkable tool for rock art recording at a worldwide level, but its specific function and benefit has not been explicitly exposed, at least for the Spanish-language researchers; for that reason a substantive revision of nature and use is required.

The IFRAO Standard Scale was originally developed by Robert G. Bednarik since 1990 with the intention to serve as comparative tool for the calibrated recording of rock art, that is to say to serve as physical parameter for the standardised documentation of the size and the colours of the cultural marks on rocks wherever these occur. From 1990 this proposal was revised technically, through an extensive consultation process, until a definitive version of the scale was released in 1994 (Bednarik 2007) and distributed worldwide.

Though the concept of 'scale' comparing the size of an object with another is not a new concept, its use as a comparative tool explicitly made for rock art was suggested with the intention to register or to document, in addition to the flat dimension, the variations of colours in the rock art, in the figurative image or in its support.

For this purpose Bednarik used Taylor et al.'s (1979: 306, mentioned by Bednarik 1994) proposal and included a representative element (the black and white 'scale') in the graphic record of rock art, adding four quadrangular spaces (1 × 1 cm) of calibrated colour with reflection densities of 0.0, 0.7, 1.6 and 2.0 (Bednarik 1994, 2007) that can be seen as pure colours of blue, green, yellow and red. These are fixed values that are included in the 'standardisation' concept applied to the scale.

The inclusion of the colours on a comparative matrix (the scale itself) improved the value of the recording tool by incorporating a new fixed dimensional category, the colour, in order to aim at technical calibration; that is to say for the quantifiable measure of hue, value and chroma of colour of the rock art and support to be recorded. This is the fundamental and most important difference of the IFRAO Standard Scale in respect to any common scale, the standardised conventional proposal of the record of the colour in

the rock art.

Since the fixed colours of reference (the colour chips) are numerically calibrated, it is obvious that this can be adjusted regularly; in this way the scale does not only allow to fix precisely the physical situation of the natural or artificial colour of the elements against which it is compared (the rock marks), but it allows to manipulate the numerical values on which it depends. Therefore the scale does not condition the registry to itself, like a physical object, but is a tool for calibration or measurement.

At this level the intrinsic physical conditions of the rock art (like the colour) are irrelevant; the reference of the scale for a basic comparative purpose, technical calibration or regular measurement, is good for estimating, documenting, registering or interpreting the rock art at the moment of recording the image with the Scale by mechanic or digital procedures (photographic in colour with reflex or digital camera).

The uses and benefits of use of the IFRAO Scale have been already considered (Bednarik 1994, 2007) and do not require further explanation. It is quite obvious that the use of a tool of digital calibration that does not depend on the tool itself — that is to say, that is functionally ambiguous — is going to allow the survival of the photographic registry of the rock art practically forever. This is what Bednarik calls 'ultimate conservation method'; nevertheless, that 'ultimate method' only applies to the photos of rock art marks that include the IFRAO Scale, or any calibrated reference of colour that can be measured without depending on the scale itself. Beyond the colour the rock art marks are going to disappear inevitably as consequence of the taphonomic processes that affect them.

Aside from this it is necessary to recognise that the scale is basically successful in its efficiency. Bednarik, on the basis of his extensive field experience, identified a methodological deficiency with implications in the registry and technical analysis of rock art, suggesting from this, as he reports (Bednarik 2007), a technical answer at the same level of the problem implied. The IFRAO Scale is therefore a specific design.

We must notice, nevertheless, that the technical specificity can be obviated by the standardisation and I believe that the use of the IFRAO Standard Scale in other disciplines must be reviewed critically. The IFRAO Scale can be deficient if is not used judiciously,

which does not imply that it contains some intrinsic defects. Its use in archaeology, for example, can not be standardised at any level except when rock art is registered (considered like an archaeological artefact) and even here lacks value when the scale does not imply a technical utility in the proportional reference of the artefact (because the dimension of the artefact is smaller than the Scale itself, or major in very big proportions) than for the Peruvian archaeology case can be mobiliary art or the geoglyphs (mobiliary art and geoglyphs are two variations of the Peruvian rock art according to the technical classification suggested by Eloy Linares Málaga in 1973).

Additionally, the scale of material associations in a regular archaeological excavation, to consider a complex example, cannot be quantified using a regular scale like the one of IFRAO, or when the information about colour on some materials does not meet colour or graphical record of the standard IFRAO type (it does not imply a negative record of the colour). The multiplicity of artefacts and archaeological materials, in Peru for example, goes beyond the precise values of utility of the IFRAO Scale on standards of technical specificity, that in the regular conditions for conventional archaeology are not applied literally.

Nevertheless, the IFRAO Standard Scale is a remarkable tool for the recording and scientific study of rock art and any other archaeological material to which it is applied under technical parameters; this is a clear example of Bednarik's technical rationality and it must be evaluated at that level. Finally, I consider that the technical proposal of the use of a calibration tool in any cultural material implies a key of the conventional archaeology that conditions the scientific value of the objects to its capacity to be measured.

Gori Tumi Echevarría López  
San Marcos University  
Peruvian Association of Rock Art (APAR)  
Plaza Julio C. Tello 274 No. 303 Torres de San Borja  
Lima 41  
Peru  
E-mail: [goritumi@gmail.com](mailto:goritumi@gmail.com)

## REFERENCES

- BEDNARIK, R. G. 1994. Introducing the IFRAO Standard Scale. *Rock Art Research* 11: 74-75.
- BEDNARIK, R. G. 2007. *Rock art science. The scientific study of palaeoart*. Aryan Books International, New Delhi.
- LINARES MÁLAGA, E. 1973. Anotaciones sobre las cuatro modalidades de arte rupestre en Arequipa (pictografías, petroglifos, arte rupestre mobiliario y geoglifos). *Anales Científicos de la Universidad del Centro del Perú* 2: 133-267.

RAR 26-940

## Reply to Echevarría López

By ROBERT G. BEDNARIK

This commentary contains some errors of fact and some questionable suggestions. The four colour chips on the IFRAO Standard Scale are 2 × 2 cm, not 1 × 1 cm, and the quoted reflection densities refer to the four greyscale chips, not the colour patches (0.0 is white, 2.0 is full black). The Scale also bears a millimetre scale with four very small colour chips, intended for close-up photography of small objects or details, which has been used very successfully in calibrated recording by microphotography. Therefore I am mystified why the commentator thinks there is a problem when 'the artefact is smaller than the Scale'. Conversely, mobiliary palaeoart is not rock art, even if Linares Málaga might have suggested so.

The commentator is also concerned that the use of the Scale in other disciplines, such as archaeology, may be problematic. While I applaud his assignment of archaeology to a separate and different discipline, I cannot follow his reasoning concerning the use of the Scale. Colour and colour calibration are issues of many disciplines, and they are uniform in all of them. They apply not only on this planet; they apply presumably throughout the universe, and in all disciplines. Currently the IFRAO Standard Scale is used not only in archaeology, but also in sedimentology, geology, museology, forensics (e.g. by the CIA of the United States), publishing, conservation and many other fields, even in medicine (apparently the precise colour of some internal human organs is critical to diagnosis). The fact that geoglyphs tend to be very large seems irrelevant to me: if one wanted to take an aerial photograph of a geoglyph, one could create a large similar version of the Scale. But this is unnecessary for scientific purposes: it would suffice to record the differences between the patination on and near the geoglyph. Conversely, the largest petroglyph in the world is well over 100 m long, therefore the same issue applies. I cannot see in what sense this invalidates the utility of the Scale, or what remedial action Echevarría López would recommend.

Robert G. Bednarik  
Editor  
RAR 26-941

Please visit the Save the Dampier Rock Art site at  
[http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/dampier/web/  
index.html](http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/dampier/web/index.html)

and sign the Dampier Petition. Thank you!

## The petroglyph recording standards debate

By RICHARD W. MURISON

There is no widely agreed terminology, nor system of recording rock art permanently and reliably. This was discussed during the petroglyph recording standards workshop, sponsored by mining company Rio Tinto, at ANU, Canberra, on 5th and 6th March 2009. In the past there has been an attempt to establish a technology-based classification system by Maynard (1977). IFRAO has adopted a standard terminology for their publications. This terminology is now translated into all major languages by this international organisation that seeks no influence or control.

There is a need to create a visual register and a data base for management and conservation, for both Australian and worldwide agreement. A way has to be found of making photographic records permanent; at present digital image processing is available. The ANU workshop sponsored by Rio Tinto is an attempt to determine standards and terminology for recording on the Dampier Peninsula and elsewhere in the Pilbara (Western Australia).

Two aspects spring to mind from this workshop held in March. Firstly, if the recorder is identifying a motif, such recordings are invariably an interpretation of the petroglyph on the rock, *and not a recording of it*. Secondly, a standard form is not going to be always suitable when recording what is on a rock (Bednarik 2007). In June and July 1997 Bruno David completed a project to assess various types of bias in recording, using multiple recordings to address the influence of experience, expectations, routine and comfort on rock art recording at Ngarrabullgan, north Queensland. Twenty-three non-specialists and three professional archaeologists were trained together for this project. Once this was completed, each person recorded the same newly-found rock art site. At the AURA Inter-Congress Symposium in Canberra, 6–9 February 1998, Bruno David's paper was illustrated with examples of these recordings, almost none of which were the same to the best of my memory. The result of the project showed what each of the twenty-six participants had believed to have seen at the rock art site (AURA 1998).

Classifications of motifs are essentially subjective identifications by a recorder. Objective motif categories are elusive (Bednarik 2007). Nearly every motif can be interpreted differently. Each site as well has an almost infinite number of variables (Institute Workshop 2009). Some of these variables that are of significance to research could escape attention in the design of a site standard form. Bednarik argues that a standard form is not suitable as a source of statistical data, and that it could tend to assist in the creation of 'academic technocracies'. Further, such approach invites statistical misuse of selective, unreliable and incomplete data. With the exception of basic data, most of what rock art study is about is not suitable for boxes on a form (Bednarik 2007: 58).

At the ANU workshop in March 2009 a useful point of departure for discussion was the standard four-page form (tracks, geometric, fauna and anthropomorphs), developed by Ken Mulvaney, and used in part by Jo McDonald in assisting the Federal Government's National Heritage Listing. The workshop's participants seemed to conclude that it would be more objective to record observable individual attributes, rather than interpretive categories. An approach for worldwide recording was put forward early on by Paul Taçon. It is a system for recording ten essential points and a further four additional points, that has potential as a database for researchers and management. A further workshop for recording standards approaches can be expected to follow, dependent upon funding.

Richard W. Murison  
62 Anzac Park  
Campbell, ACT 2612  
Australia

### REFERENCES

- AURA 1998. *Making a mark*, 6–9 February. Abstract by B. David, Believing is seeing.
- BEDNARIK, R. G. 2007. *Rock art science. The scientific study of palaeoart* (2nd edn). Aryan Books International, New Delhi (1st edn 2001, Brepols, Turnhout).
- Institute for Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts 2009. *Petroglyph Recording Standards Workshop*, 5–6 March.
- MAYNARD, L. 1977. Classification and terminology in Australian rock art. In P. J. Ucko (ed.), *Form in indigenous art*, pp. 387–402. Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., London.



## RAR REVIEW

*Cave art*, by JEAN CLOTTES. 2008. Phaidon Press, London and New York, 326 pages, 247 photographs in colour, 6 maps and plans.

'I have planned this book as a kind of museum ...', the author states (28).

In his masterpiece titled '*Le musée imaginaire*' (1947), André Malraux endorsed the benefits of the simulacrum. The mass-produced reproduction of geographically dispersed iconographic manifestations in affordable books would allow generations of students full access in absentia. It would constitute a new museum — *un musée imaginaire*. The two-dimensional structure of this imaginary museum would be made of complex mosaics of simulacra. The scholar could thus construct narratives free of the authoritative museographic hermeneutics. The avid reader became a virtual pedestrian peregrinating freely between the pages of an imaginary museum where the author's voice humbly whispered directional, interpretive possibilities. And this, perhaps, is the most important aspect of this museum — it only generates possibilities! In light of all this, Jean Clottes has successfully permeated the rigid structures of hermeneutics and has provided his readers with a book of exceptional quality and scope. So, without further ado, let us stroll leisurely in the fascinating corridors of his *musée imaginaire*.

A brief glance at the overall structure reveals a very interesting innovation: each image is accompanied with factual caption headers followed by short texts. These contain a mixture of personal recollections, facts and suggestions. Even Malraux did not think of that. Brilliant! The size of the image dwarfs the text and its caption header, thus relegating the hermeneutic impulses back to their humble places: possibilities. Clottes guarantees as unmediated a visit as this imaginary museum can provide. The book is structured like a visit — one will find a concise introduction followed by the following four exhibits:

Exhibit 1: 35000 – 22000 years ago; the age of Chauvet

Exhibit 2: 22000 – 17000 years ago; the age of Lascaux

Exhibit 3: 17000 – 11000 years ago; the end of the Ice Age

Exhibit 4: from 11000 years ago; after the Ice Age

A handy chronology, glossary and bibliography conclude the visit. We can now begin musing freely

between the pages and select a few ideas, comments, suggestions that Clottes has strategically inserted in the book.

*Cave art* — in the introduction Jean Clottes questions the orthodoxy of the word 'art' in the context of its association with the word 'cave'. As the readers know, the conundrum is profound and the term is somewhat inadequate. Following this definitional turbulence, we are projected head first into the storm: chronology and the shortcomings of <sup>14</sup>C. Clottes can only be recommended for his transparent position on these subjects: he warns the reader of the drawbacks, and especially the problem of calibrations. As for chronology, it must be approached as a paradigmatic proposition rather than a scientific fact. Chronology will always be dependent on the elasticity of its defined periods. In this case, we must allow stretching. After sending us into the height of prudence, Clottes provides a gentle landing on the question of geographical distribution. What we find is a complex map where the distribution of anthropic modifications in caves during the Upper Palaeolithic is not evenly spread. Is it because of taphonomy? Unexplored places? One undeniable aspect of this 20000-year-long cultural habit is that it shows an unfathomable consistency in techniques, locations and thematic choices. It shows a durability which is unmatched. These long-lasting cultural habits have generated a fascinating body of hermeneutic attempts — and so far, they are still attempts! Clottes favours a contextualisation of these anthropic impulses to simulate iconographically lived realities in a society where shamanism plays a fundamental ideological role. Others will project these images onto syntagmatic structures, which can be best described as narratives. Be you a dedicated supporter of the animistic, the magical, the syntagmatic or the shamanistic, your approach will be subjected to one common denominator: relocation. No matter what your definitional inclination might be, the individual in the cave was systematically relocated and as such operated in-between two worlds, two realities. Keeping in mind this liminal dimension, we can now proceed to the exhibits.

*Exhibit 1:* 35000 to 22000 years ago

Think of the walls of our imaginary museum as perfect simulacra. The texture, the morphology, the hues and the taphonomic details are exquisite. It is a collage of media onto which Clottes has methodically

laid out his photographs. Some, including myself, would want to see more disturbance in this layout — a way to challenge the tyranny of linearity — a mosaic rather than a pleasing line. Imagine a room where the telluric orange, the subterranean grey, and the karstic brown provide readymade canvases onto which iconographic moments were apposed. The contrast between the brownish water-worn surface of a cave wall and a vibrant haematite-based outline of a bear is a powerful tool mastered by undeterred cave users some 35 000 years ago. While the basic palette was restricted to two Stendhalian colours — red and black — the choice of canvas was infinite and our observations should be as much about the drawings, engravings or paintings as it should be about the canvases — the surfaces. In their absence, you need to ‘imagine’ the walls, the floors etc. Helped by Clottes’ descriptions, you can easily draw a mental mud map and by laying out the photographs onto it, you can conceive the architectonics — the way these caves have been modified to contain, diffuse and perform information. But for what purpose? Whatever the answer to this might be, we cannot avoid thinking that these modifications were potentially produced earlier in the biography of the genus *Homo*. *Homo neanderthalensis*? Whoever it was, they knew how to draw! They were masters of the eidetic. They controlled visual impact in a way that is analogous to the way ideas and commodities are publicised today. They seem to know it all already, and that was 35 000 years ago. What will follow will never fully reach this level of expertise. Like the Ice Age, cave art fluctuated and seems to have had many beginnings. In the imaginary museum you will also find portable artefacts that, in many ways, echo stylistically and thematically the iconography. But this analogy will come to a sudden stop when manufacturing techniques and time expenditure will be considered. While the iconography found in the caves does sometimes display impressive techniques, it cannot be compared with the techniques required to extract a mammoth out of ivory. The portable artefact is a time-consuming product that had to be fully integrated within the hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Cave iconography on the other hand was, for the most part, manifestations of well-established templates in simple lines. Portable and parietal — two worlds that Clottes brings together as complementary; two worlds that display clearly the sensitivity and expertise of our Aurignacian and Gravettian ancestors. Leaving behind Chauvet, Les Trois Frères and many other caves displayed on the walls of our imaginary museum, we are ushered to the next exhibit.

*Exhibit 2: 22 000 to 17 000 years ago*

Imagine a surface where amongst all its natural features, sculptures of two fighting ibexes compete with the sculpture of a fleeing man. Imagine the discrete engraving of a horse emerging from a hole.

Imagine the drawing of a wounded bird-man. The Solutrean signs its contribution in multimedia. If Chauvet questions the chronological a priori that have been foundational for over a century, Lascaux puts the bull before the bulla. Indeed, Solutrean iconography in Lascaux challenges the Mesopotamian tamper-proof bulla as the symbol for the emergence of writing (and mathematics). Like the Mesopotamian bulla, the bull of Lascaux is impregnated with a message, but unlike the clay-moulded bulla, the manganese-based bull remains unsealed. We all agree that the Rosetta Stone of Upper Palaeolithic languages is tightly sealed in the spatial arrangements of these most impressive images. It is a palimpsest, and still sealed in its monumental dimension, it is a logic that reminds us of our hermeneutic limitations. In the imaginary museum we can only glimpse at the intricacy of the overall layout and, in the solitude of our reading, we can try to reconnect with a mind that had already mastered complex algorithms. The cave’s architectonics and the situated-ness of the images operate within a system that is not only paradigmatic, but also mathematical. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this body of anthropic manifestations are the abstract signs. Indeed, the geometry is undeniable. Succession of dots at precise intervals, complex rectangles with clearly defined sections, ladders, and exquisite abstract outlines of the observed realities. All in all, the common denominator here is the abstraction of complex entities by means of simple lines. Now, if we recontextualise this geometry in the cave, then we begin to see an assemblage of iconographic manifestations that begs for a philological recognition. What this exhibit shows clearly is that we are indeed in the presence of syntagmatic structures that we ought to define as ‘writing’ — a visual language that finds its resonance in the obscure folds and passages of subterranean landscapes. Esoteric? Exoteric? Why was it written? How was it transmitted? With transmission we are ushered in the sphere of effects and affects — observer and observed. Our imaginary museum is strategically turning an obscure space into a familiar place — an old theatre! But what would the Magdalenian bring to this liminal feast? With this question in mind, we can peruse the third exhibit.

*Exhibit 3: 17 000 to 11 000 years ago*

The acoustics in the salon noir in Niaux are legend. It coincides with a noticeable concentration of images. Perhaps the acoustic dimension is an unfortunate absence in this imaginary museum. But as with the mental mud map described earlier, the reader can construct a mental sound map as well. As soon as the notion of acoustics enters the equation, we begin to question the portrayed simplicity of these image-makers. Who else in the (pre)History of our genus has mastered sight and sound in these most effective ways? The fundamental rules were laid out in these telluric mazes, and everything else after



Lascaux.

this is but a variation on the theme. The templates were there and the image-makers maximised their opportunities. They left blank places between their images, the way Jean Clottes leaves plenty of room between his words. It was 'as if' they knew they would be read! In the spirit of effectiveness, they laid out their 'signatures' along the most obvious routes for future readership. Their messages were indexed into easily recognisable shapes — a franca lingua which has yet to be matched (if only from a temporal point of view). Can you draw me a horse in 44 lines while ensuring that there will be at least one place where my observation will not suffer from parallax? Looking a little more closely at these images, one realises quickly that our imaginary museum is in fact a cathartic collage of red and black — dissected on the operating wall. It is visual medicine that speaks of universal diagnostics. When the tone requires a more private reading, they engraved. The spectrum of techniques for the diffusion of information challenges all our modern innovations. Here the Magdalenian can select, combine, and play subliminal games with their mythogenetic combinations. With the end of the Magdalenian, the retreat of the ice, demographic explosion, territorial expansions, the geometry of survival gradually transformed into the mathematics of exploitation and commodification. We sadly exit the cave and move into the open-air shelter — slowly making our way to the last exhibit.

*Exhibit 4:* from 11 000 years ago

Imagine the changes that took place when the last Ice Age signed its final departure by multiplying ecological opportunities. Imagine a demographic explosion with populations that will need to be kept informed and yet will require new systems of information. While the basic idea of containing information within a re-cognisable form was never

challenged, the content had to be completely reformed. This reformation is beautifully presented in Clottes' imaginary museum. In the space of a few pages, the author manages to illustrate the complexity of the gradual shift from what appears to be an expression of solidarity with the animal world to one of exploitation of a new world. And yet, the mythogenetic content was never fully eclipsed — the rationalisation of this sudden burst of opportunities was still expressed in the ancient language of a time where man and animal, equal in their struggles, cohabited harmoniously. With a little imagination ... we can perhaps still experience some of the motivations behind the iconography found in the caves and shelters of pre-History. That is what an imaginary museum can do ... 'With this work, the reader has at his or her

disposal a sort of imaginary "museum" of Palaeolithic art. As with all museums, it cannot exhibit everything, and it is personal. It does, however, provide an overall view. I hope, too, to have achieved a secondary goal: respecting the spirits of those who ventured into the caves and left testimony of their beliefs and practices, and of their hopes and fears, for so many millennia.' (28)

**Dr Yann-Pierre Montelle**

Christchurch, New Zealand

RAR 26-943

## RECENT ROCK ART JOURNAL

*International Newsletter of Rock Art. Newsletter of the Association pour Rayonnement de l'Art Pariétal Européen (ARAPE).* Edited by JEAN CLOTTE. Bilingual newsletter (French and English). A recent issue includes these research articles:

Number 53 (2009):

POISBLAUD, B., J.-P. CROS, R. JOUSSAUME and R. TOUQUET: Djibouti: Abourma, a new engraved site.

EL GRAOUI, M. and S. SEARIGHT-MARTINET: The discovery of an engraving representing a metallic weapon at the site of Adrar n'Metgourine (southern Morocco).

MARTÍNEZ G., R., L. MENDOZA and R. VIÑAS: Interpretation of the Gran Mural of Cueva de la Serpiente (BCS), Mexico.

FAUCONNIER, F.: The rock art of the Department of Tarija (Bolivia).

CÉLESTIN-LHOPITEAU, I.: A testimony of the present use of rock art by a Bouriat shaman in Siberia (Russian Federation).

## RECENT BOOKS OF INTEREST

*Tramas en la piedra: producción y usos del arte rupestre*, edited by DÁNAE FIORE and MARÍA MERCEDES PODESTÁ. 2006. Sociedad Argentina de Antropología, Buenos Aires, 278 pages, with contributions by 26 authors, illustrated with colour and monochrome plates, Softcover, ISBN 987-1280-04-1.

*Rock art of Saudi Arabia across twelve thousand years*, by MAJEED KHAN. 2007. deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums, Riyadh, 364 pages, profusely illustrated in colour. Hardcover, ISBN 978-9960-9897-7-8.

*Paspardo — tra castagni e incisioni rupestre*, by ANGELO E. FOSSATI and DELIA ORSIGNOLA. 2007. Comune di Paspardo, Breno/Brescia, Italy, 119 pages, profusely illustrated in colour. Softcover,

*Kakadu people*, by Sir BALDWIN SPENCER. 2008. Compiled, edited and published by David M. Welch. Australian Aboriginal Culture Series No. 3, with additional text and photographs by the editor, 272 pages, illustrated throughout with colour and monochrome plates, softcover, ISBN 978-0-9775035-3-7. Available at [www.aboriginalculture.com.au](http://www.aboriginalculture.com.au).

*An uncontrollable child: the autobiography of an Aboriginal artist*, by REGGIE SULTAN. 2008. Compiled, edited and published by David M. Welch. Australian Aboriginal Culture Series No. 4, with additional text and photographs by the editor, 108 pages, illustrated throughout with colour plates, softcover, ISBN 978-0-9775035-2-0. Available at [www.aboriginalculture.com.au](http://www.aboriginalculture.com.au).

*Notes on some native tribes of central Australia*, by HERBERT BASEDOW. 2008. Compiled, edited and published by David M. Welch. Australian Aboriginal Culture Series No. 5, 154 pages, illustrated throughout with colour and monochrome plates, softcover, ISBN 978-0-9775035-4-4. Available at [www.aboriginalculture.com.au](http://www.aboriginalculture.com.au).

*Rock art of the Caribbean*, edited by MICHELE H. HAYWARD, LESLEY-GAIL ATKINSON and MICHAEL A. CINQUINO. 2009. The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL, 285 pages, with contributions by 24 authors, illustrated with monochrome plates and drawings. Softcover US\$ 30.95, ISBN 0-8173-5530-8; hardcover US\$51.75, ISBN 0-8173-1650-7.

*Finding our tongues: mothers, infants and the origins of language*, by DEAN FALK. 2009. Basic Books. A member of the Perseus Books Group, New York, 24 pages, illustrated, substantial bibliography, index. Hardcover, US\$26.95, ISBN 978-0-465-00219-1.

*The bone readers: atoms, genes and the politics of Australia's deep past*, by CLAUDIO TUNIZ, RICHARD GILLESPIE and CHERYL JONES. 2009. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, Australia, 256 pages, comprehensive bibliography, index. Softcover, ISBN 978-1-74114-728-5.

*Gornbun-ya: rock art site record and associated traditional stories of Yidumduma Bill Harney*, by YIDUMDUMA BILL HARNEY, DAVID M. LEE AND BRIAN BIRDSALL. 2009. Published by D. M. Lee, P.O. Box 1111, Bishop, CA 93515, U.S.A., 132 pages, profusely illustrated with colour plates.

*Consolidação estrutural da Toca da Entrada do Pajaú: diagnóstico e proposta de intervenção*, by DIVA FIGUEIREDO and SILVIA PUCCIONI. 2009. Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (IPHAN), Teresina, Brazil, 124 pages, richly illustrated in colour, softcover.

*Capo di Ponte: guida turistica*, by 22 authors. 2009. Comune di Capo di Ponte, Agenzia Turistico Culturale, Capo di Ponte, Italy, 167 pages, illustrated in colour throughout, softcover.

*L'art pariétal: conservation mise en valeur communication*, edited by the Société des Amis du Musée National de Préhistoire et de la Recherche Archéologique (Les Eyzies – France). 2009. Avec le concours de l'UNESCO, du Conseil Général de la Dordogne, du Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, 208 pages, with contributions of 29 authors from all continents, numerous colour plates and other illustrations, softcover, ISBN 2-911233-07-7.

## RECENT PAPERS OF INTEREST

**The consequences of allowing unrestricted tourist access at an Aboriginal site in a fragile environment: the erosive effect of trampling**, by ALANA M. ROSSI and R. ESMÉE WEBB. 2007. *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, Volume 9, Number 4, pp. 219–236.

**Parque Nacional Serra da Capivara**, by NIÈDE GUIDON. 2007. *Patrimônio arqueológico: o desafio da preservação, Revista do Patrimônio, Histórico e Artístico Nacional*, Number 33, pp. 75–94. Ministry of Culture, Brasilia, Brazil.

**A conservação de sítios de arte rupestre**, by MARIA CONCEIÇÃO SOARES MENESES LAGE. 2007. *Patrimônio arqueológico: o desafio da preservação, Revista do Patrimônio, Histórico e Artístico Nacional*, Number 33, pp. 95–108. Ministry of Culture, Brasilia, Brazil.

**The trouble with cupules**, by ROBERT G. BEDNARIK. 2007. In G. Nash et al. (eds), *Landscape enquiries*, pp. 73–79. Monograph 8, The Clifton Antiquarian Club, Clifton.

**The removal of rock art**, by ROBERT G. BEDNARIK. 2007. *Purakala* 17: 135–144.

**Koma: the crocodile motif in the rock art of the Northern Sotho**, by SHIONA MOODLEY. 2008. *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, Volume 63, Number 188, pp. 116–124.

**An historical account of a rite depicted in a painting from the cave at Melikane, Lesotho**, by PIETER JOLLY. 2008. *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, Volume 63, Number 188, pp. 125–129.

**Networks of supernatural potency: San rock paintings of loincloths and aprons in the Central Limpopo Basin, southern Africa**, by EDWARD B. EASTWOOD. 2008. *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, Volume 63, Number 188, pp. 130–143.

**Preliminary report on females' aprons in hunter-gatherer rock paintings of the southern Drakensberg, South Africa**, by DAWN GREEN and EDWARD B. EASTWOOD. 2008. *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, Volume 63, Number 188, pp. 144–150.

**Newly found prehistoric paintings in Val Camonica?**, by BJARNE STIG HANSEN. 2008. *Adoranten*, Volume 2008, pp. 120–121.

**Unesco's World Heritage List and rock art**, by JEAN CLOTTE. 2008. *Adoranten*, Volume 2008, pp. 5–12.

**Rock art**, by ROBERT G. BEDNARIK. 2008. In D. M. Pearsall (ed.), *Encyclopedia of archaeology*, pp. 1940–1952. Academic Press, New York.

**The origins of symboling**, by ROBERT G. BEDNARIK. 2008. *Signs* 2: 82–113.

**El arte del Tejo (Portugal) en el marco de los estudios de arte rupestre en Portugal**, by LUIZ OOSTERBEEK. 2008. *ARKEOS — perspectives em diálogo*, Volume 24, pp. 11–30.

**Emmanuel Esteves (8.8.1945 – 14.6.2008) recordações de um investigador e o estudo da arte rupestre em Angola**, by MILA SIMÕES DE ABREU and CRISTINA MARTINS. 2008. *ARKEOS — perspectives em diálogo*, Volume 24, pp. 199–211.

**Rock art the Riversdale area, Western Cape**, by RENÉE RUST. 2008. *The Digging Stick*, Volume 25, Number 3, pp. 13–15.

**Rock art in the Cango Caves**, by J. F. THACKERAY and H. GERSTNER. 2008. *The Digging Stick*, Volume 25, Number 3, p. 17–15.

**'Beings like themselves'? Anthropomorphic representations in the megalithic tombs of France**, by CHRIS SCARRE. 2008. *ARKEOS — perspectives em diálogo*, Volume 24, pp. 73–96.

**Early beads**, by ROBERT G. BEDNARIK. 2008. In Helaine Selin (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, Part 2, pp. 395–399. Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht.

**Beads and the origins of symbolism**, by ROBERT G. BEDNARIK. 2008. *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* 1(3): 285–318.

**Le rouge et le noir: implications of early pigment use in Africa, the Near East and Europe for the origin of cultural modernity**, by F. D'ERRICO. 2008. In Marlize Lombard, Christine Sievers and Valerie Ward (eds), *Current themes in Middle Stone Age Research*, pp. 168–174. Goodwin Series, Volume 10, South African Archaeological Society, Vlaeberg.

**As gravuras do Mão do Homen (Escariz, Freguesia de Adoufe, Vila Real)**, by MILA SIMÕES DE ABREU and ANABELA BORRALHEIRO PEREIRA. 2008. *ARKEOS — perspectives em diálogo*, Volume 24, pp. 97–110.

**Portuguese rock art in a protohistoric context**, by FERNANDO COIMBRA. 2008. *ARKEOS — perspectives em diálogo*, Volume 24, pp. 111–130.

**Arte rupestre da Serra do Cabral — algumas considerações**, by MUNIQUE CAVALCANTE. 2008. *ARKEOS — perspectives em diálogo*, Volume 24, pp. 169–176.

**Prehistoric fauna archives: hunting knowledge necessity or artistic naturalistic expression? Guidelines for a future research project**, by GEORGE DIMITRIADIS. 2008. *ARKEOS — perspectives em diálogo*, Volume 24, pp. 177–198.

**More on rock art removal**, by ROBERT G. BEDNARIK. 2008. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 63(187): 82–84.





## ORIENTATION

### Capivara 2009: a most enjoyable IFRAO Congress

R. G. BEDNARIK

Here is a brief report of what you have missed if you have not been to the first international rock art congress of ABAR, the Associação Brasileira de Arte Rupestre.

First of all, let it be stated unambiguously that the Brazilian event was the largest rock art congress held so far. This is despite the obvious remoteness of the venue, Saõ Raimundo Nonato: no IFRAO congress has ever been held so far from any major urban centre, which already provides an initial measure of the incredible efforts that characterised every aspect of this event. The attendance at the opening session was approximately 1000 people, seated in an air-conditioned tent of such size that the proceedings at the stage had to be displayed on large monitors of the kind one might see at rock concerts or sport events. Much of the audience could not have visually followed the opening ceremony otherwise, which was presided over by the Governor of the State of Piauí, Wellington Dias (Brazil's first indigenous Governor). The number of people present at the closing concert, held in the natural amphitheatre at the Pedra Furada site, immediately below the huge hole in the sandstone tower that has given the place its name, was even greater. It was confidently estimated to have been about 1600 people (mean of three independent determinations).

These observations may help to convey the scale of the event, but they also provide a glimpse of the complexity of its logistics. The setting, the grounds of the Museo da Homidade Americano and the nearby cultural centre, is a few kilometres from the small town of Saõ Raimundo Nonato, southern Piauí. The area occupied by the numerous facilities extended over several hundred metres, with covered and lit walkways connecting the many lecture rooms, museum buildings, and a multitude of portable buildings housing the reception hall, several exhibitions and poster exhibits, three restaurants to feed the multitudes, two Internet rooms with numerous terminals, police and first aid stations, book exhibits, tourist information and so forth. Therefore structurally the congress site resembled a trade fair or exhibition more than a traditional

scholarly conference, with a correspondingly relaxed atmosphere. This provided the event with a specifically Brazilian ambience, but perhaps more significantly it conveyed the popular appeal rock art is gaining in this country. That was also reflected in the age demography of the attendees, strongly dominated as it was by young people, including many who are deeply dedicated to the country's traditional cultural heritage. This is a particularly interesting phenomenon when it is considered that Brazil, a former colony but one of the world's oldest continuously democratic nations, has matured to the extent that it now embraces its cultural heritage in its entirety rather than selectively. Some other countries, notably Australia, remain immature nations, most of whose public does not regard indigenous cultural heritage as its own, but sees it as 'somebody else's patrimony'. In countries such as Australia, this state remains a major problem in rock art appreciation, management and, most importantly, protection. This stands in stark contrast to mature nations, such as, for instance, France or Britain, whose populations embrace as their own, without hesitation, any cultural heritage on their territory, irrespective of who created it.

This observation may provide a key for why rock art remains so neglected in some parts of the world. Having had the opportunity to work with Niéde Guidon, the congress chairperson, in the Serra da Capivara area in 1987 (Bednarik 1989), it was clear to me that this present state in Brazil is a fairly recent development. Twenty-two years ago Professor Guidon received little encouragement and her support came essentially from her native France. The incredible transformation since then is largely due to her dedication, persistence and, last but not least, personal courage. In 1987, Saõ Raimundo Nonato was a remote village lacking any hotels or restaurants and was accessible only via extremely poor roads. The development that has since occurred in the area is no doubt part of the rapid development of the country as a whole, but to a considerable extent it is also attributable to Guidon's creation of the national parks, museum and research centre, as well as to her extensive social and humanitarian work in the region. She has been awarded the title Brazilian Woman of the Year, her project has become a model for Brazil, and the reverberations of her underlying influence on public attitudes have been far-reaching. They can be compared to the effects of the work of the Leakeys in Kenya. It is perhaps through these effects that today's public attitudes to the indigenous cultural heritage of



**Figure 1.** Professor Niéde Guidon, on the right, with her close colleague Professor Gabriela Martin (photograph by Kay Scaramelli, ANAR, Venezuela).



**Figure 2.** The children's welcome (photograph by R. G. Bednarik).

Brazil need to be understood. Today Guidon (Fig. 1) and her research project, FUMDHAM, enjoy substantial public and governmental support — of which this congress was a telling demonstration — but this has certainly not always been the case. In the sense that she has largely achieved what she set out to accomplish thirty-six years ago she has truly been a pioneer, and in more ways than one.

Thus the historical background of this congress can illuminate several of its aspects. Its distinctively Brazilian flavour was undeniable, universally evident, and included some touching moments — for instance when at the end of the opening ceremony a large contingent of local schoolchildren filed into the front space, each child carrying a different national emblem and holding up a sign with the word 'Welcome' in the corresponding language (Fig. 2). There was the moment when Professor Guidon was requested to inaugurate a new set of postage stamps especially issued for the occasion. I was also astounded when, on the evening of the opening day, the Governor suddenly and entirely unannounced appeared as some twenty of us had their dinner at our hotel, but without his usual substantial security detail, apologising for interrupting my meal and addressing me as the representative of IFRAO. I cannot imagine that such a high-ranking statesman would so casually abandon official protocol in any other major country, but this style may well explain his palpable popularity with the public.



**Figure 3.** A most enjoyable IFRAO Congress: from left Judith Trujillo and Guillermo Muñoz (Colombia), Luiz Oosterbeek and Mila Simões de Abreu (photograph by Kay Scaramelli).

The ultimate substance of the event was much the same as we have come to expect of IFRAO congresses generically: a smorgasbord of hundreds of wide-ranging scholarly presentations. Here they were grouped into a total of some twenty-five symposia, held simultaneously in nine lecture halls. So the choice was never easy for participants. As has become standard practice, the papers covered a wide range of topics connected with rock art or in some ways providing supporting evidence for the study of rock art. Brazilian presenters dominated the program overwhelmingly, but there were also numerous contributions of other Latin American presenters, while those from Europe and North America were somewhat less in evidence. The remaining continents were hardly represented; the number of participants from both Asia and Australia could be counted on the fingers of one hand respectively.

A particularly pleasant surprise at this congress was the high standard of rock art research now being conducted in Brazil, typically by young, bright, innovative and information-hungry scholars. It seems that in contrast to the older research traditions of some other continents, Brazil — and to some extent much of Latin America — is not weighted down so much by tradition and by old models that are propped up by tenacious defence even when in reality they may be superseded. This very young and distinctively dynamic discipline of Brazilian (and other Latin American) palaeoart research is more skewed towards scientific approaches than that of most other world regions. As shown by the academic standards of many of their papers, these young researchers are very well trained, confident and decidedly driven by personal enthusiasm. This is of particular interest in a country in which archaeology is not even a recognised profession. (The previous president of the republic vetoed an application by the discipline for professional status.)

Rock art, on the other hand, is now evidently



Figure 4. Wide artificial dripline above paintings at Toca do Estevo 3 (R. G. Bednarik)



Figure 5. Stabilisation work at Toca do Estevo (R. G. Bednarik).

accepted by the Brazilian public as a significant component of the country's cultural heritage. In that sense it has entered the mainstream of public consciousness, for better or for worse, and has become closely associated with the Brazilian commitment to issues of conservation generally. Again, the projects in southern Piauí illustrate this integration of rock art into public conservation awareness. Many of the rock art sites I had seen in the 1980s have become publicly accessible in this now World Heritage-listed monument, The National Park Serra da Capivara, and conservation measures are evident everywhere. There are extensive artificial driplines at many shelters (Fig. 4), unobtrusive channelling of water is visible to the careful observer, termite control (but avoiding removal of termite tunnels), and the dozens of public sites have extensive boardwalks and established, sign-posted tracks. At sites subjected to laminar mass exfoliation, such as Toca do Estevo 1 and 4, extensive stabilisation efforts of exfoliating substrates are much in evidence (Fig. 5). Although most of the rock art occurs on sandstone facies (there are also limestone and schist sites), these are of considerable textural variability, which together with the wide variety of site morphologies has posed a corresponding variety of conservation challenges. There are strata of poorly cemented, highly friable sandstone as well as more stable deposits; even weakly metamorphosed mudstone occurs at some sites; while layers of more resistant conglomerates are often responsible for the formation of shelters. This variety has engendered a number of tailored responses by the conservators of IPHAN, the Brazilian agency managing the national parks of the area, that are very similar to what one tends to find in other, well-managed semi-arid rock art regions of the world.

In Brazil, the legal framework of cultural heritage management is geared towards the involvement of NGOs, which have considerable judicial rights and have begun to follow the example of Guidon's FUMDHAM, now defined as exemplary by government. While

protective legislation is comprehensive and appropriate measures are in place, its practical application remains problematic. Noteworthy is an emphasis that Brazilian heritage is the property of all, including the people of other countries, supporting the notion of a universal patrimony. Community-based initiatives have begun to appear, such as the project of one small town of just 2000 people, who somehow raised the money to purchase the land on which the Parque Serra Antonio in Minas Gerais is now located. They built their own interpretation centre, re-vegetated a degraded area and provided public interpretation of the site, which in turn has already led to economic benefits.

ABAR, the association of Brazilian rock art researchers, is one of the more recently affiliated member organisations of IFRAO (in 2001; see RAR 18: 134), but this congress has established its unparalleled effectiveness in staging such a large event and in meeting the very considerable logistical challenges it engendered. Most other IFRAO members would not pretend to be able to match this performance, simply because securing public support on such a scale would be impossible for them — at least at this stage. But as this event has demonstrated, public appreciation and concern for rock art can be cultivated as it has been in Brazil, by deeply committed and utterly dedicated, persevering individuals like Professor Guidon. She has shown all of us that there is considerable scope in improving the status of rock art; she has set a new standard and an example for all of us to follow. For this lesson IFRAO is as grateful as for the staging this most enjoyable event. Naturally, Guidon has had to involve many helpers, people such as APAAR representative Mila Simões de Abreu, Chris Bucu and many others. IFRAO thanks them all, as I am sure all participants do.

## UNESCO and global rock art

R. G. BEDNARIK

The Dampier Campaign, brought to the attention of the UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage and the World Heritage Centre in 2005, has together with other factors recently led to important developments in the consideration given to rock art by UNESCO. From 5 to 9 September 2005, UNESCO held the International Conference on Rock Art with the Musée national de préhistoire and the Centre National de préhistoire in Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, Dordogne, France, chaired by Dr Jean-Jacques Cleyet-Merle (SAMPRO 2009) (Fig. 1). I presented a discussion proposal highlighting some key issues concerning global rock art, reproduced below (pp. 238–240), and reported the plight of the Dampier Cultural Precinct, where resource companies had been allowed to destroy about 95000 petroglyphs – roughly a quarter of the total rock art of Murujuga (Burrup) that had survived to the 1960s. This coincided with a growing concern by the World Heritage Centre that the UNESCO World Heritage List had become progressively more ‘unrepresentative and distorted’, and was increasingly ‘lacking in credibility’ (Sanz 2008).

It is against this background that in 2008 and 2009 the World Heritage Committee, encouraged by the government of Spain, embarked on a series of conferences exploring the representation of pre-Historic sites and monuments on the World Heritage List (WHL). In an effort to enhance the underrepresented categories of sites and improve geographical coverage, the World Heritage Committee decided at its July 2008 meeting in Quebec to develop a ‘global strategy for a representative, balanced and credible WHL’, and to embark on a thematic study for this purpose, funded by the government of Spain. At its inception in 1972, the WHL List was based on a ‘monumental’ concept of cultural heritage, which in the decades since has evolved through the ways in which different societies perceive themselves. In 1972 the idea of cultural heritage had

been largely embodied in and confined to built heritage. Since then the focus has shifted from outstanding monuments to considering cultural phenomena as complex and multidimensional. UNESCO had already noted since 1994 that the definition of ‘World Heritage’ had to be adapted to changing understanding, to provide a comprehensive framework and operational methodology for implementing the *World Heritage Convention*.

The first international conference of specialists to address this matter was held in Paris from 3–4 November 2008. It defined three thematic areas, rock art, human evolution and pre-Historic properties, all of which were represented by eighteen international specialists (Fig. 2), who met with representatives of ICCROM, IUCN, ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre. Again I presented the plight of the Dampier monument. This meeting resulted in an action plan involving three separate conferences to address the three thematic subject areas. The meeting dealing with the representation of human evolution was held in Burgos, Spain, 21 to 25 March 2009 (20 participants); the rock art specialists met at uKhahlamba/Drakensberg,



**Figure 2.** Some of the rock art specialists consulted by the World Heritage Centre, November 2008: from left R. G. Bednarik, C. Chippindale and J. Clottes (photograph by Giriraj Kumar).



**Figure 1.** The participants of the International Conference on Rock Art, Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, September 2005, in front of a castle. The convener, Jean-Jacques Cleyet-Merle, is on the far left (photograph by Arsen Faradzhev).



**Figure 3.** Chairperson of the World Heritage Commission and Spanish Ambassador to UNESCO, Her Exc. Maria Jesus San Segundo, who chaired the series of conferences for the Action Plan for Pre-History and the World Heritage List.

South Africa, from 3 to 8 April 2009 (44 participants); and the pre-Historic heritage properties were the subject of a meeting in Bahrain from 10 to 14 May 2009 (20 participants) (Fig. 3). Here we are only concerned with the rock art conference.

The conference Rock Art and the World Heritage Convention featured four keynote addresses: 'Origins and diversity of rock art and its global significance' (Benjamin Smith, South Africa), 'Values of the uKhalamba/Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site' (Aron Mazel, U.K.), 'Evaluation of distribution and quantity of rock art themes and traditions' (R. G. Bednarik, Australia) and 'Evaluation of quality and rarity of rock art themes and traditions' (Janette Deacon, South Africa). This led to the division into working groups debating 'Criteria and OUV [outstanding universal value]', moderated by Emmanuel Anati, Italy), 'Evaluation of distribution and quantity' (Bednarik), 'Evaluation of quality and rarity' (Deacon), 'Assessment of authenticity and integrity' (Gisele Daltrini Felice, Brazil) and 'Thematic studies (Ulf Bertilsson, Sweden). Then followed five regional working groups divided in accordance with UNESCO's unusual geographic divisions: Africa (except Arab states, moderated by Deacon), Asia (minus Arab states), Australia and the Pacific (Bednarik), Europe with North America (Bertilsson), the Arab states (Mourad Betrouni, Algeria), and Latin America including the Caribbean (Maria Mercedes Podestá, Argentina).

These sessions were extremely productive in providing a much more balanced account of world rock art than would be gleaned from reports by member states or applications for WHL inclusion. For instance the full extent of the imbalance, which had already been flagged in Paris, became apparent. Most notably, Asia and Australia, which collectively account for at least 60% of the world population of rock art, together



**Figure 4.** The Didima Rock Art Centre, celebrating the San rock art of the uKhalamba/Drakensberg.



**Figure 5.** Theatre of the Didima Rock Art Centre, featuring a massive facsimile of a painted rockshelter, used for sophisticated audio-visual presentations.



**Figure 6.** The South American delegates of the uKhalamba/Drakensberg conference at Giant's Castle main site; part of the extensive system of walkways and viewing platforms is visible. From left: Gisele Daltrini Felice (Brazil), Andrés Troncoso and María Mercedes Podestá (Argentina), and Richard Alcazar (Bolivia).

have only two properties on the WHL nominated specifically for their rock art, compared to the well over thirty in the remaining regions. Moreover, there are dozens of Pleistocene rock art sites from Europe (some as serial nominations) on the WHL, while there is not a single one from the rest of the world, and yet Europe may account for as little as 1% of the surviving Pleistocene rock art sites of the world. North America, another rock art-rich region, has not a single rock art site on the WHL. This kind of statistical evidence not only shows the incredible distortions that have developed in the composition of the WHL, it even explains public misconceptions about, for instance, Europe's priority in cultural development. Moreover, pre-Historic sites and monuments account for only a small number of the 878 properties (in 145 countries) on the WHL as of mid-2008 (although there are now 170 such sites on the Tentative List), yet pre-History covers 2.5 million years of human history and endeavour. The current WHL is dominated by European and by Historical monuments, including whole towns nominated by state members for purposes of tourism. Thus the view of UNESCO, that the WHL lacks credibility because it is not representative of human cultural achievement, is certainly warranted.

## REFERENCES

- BEDNARIK, R. G. 2009. The Dampier Rock Art Precinct, Western Australia. In Société des Amis du Musée National de Préhistoire et de la Recherche Archéologique (ed.), *L'art pariétal: conservation mise en valeur communication*, pp. 187–198. Les Eyzies, France.
- SANZ, N. 2008. Rock art and World Heritage. In N. Sanz (ed.), *Rock art in the Caribbean*, pp. 48–79. World Heritage Papers 24, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris.
- SAMPRA (ed. Société des Amis du Musée National de Préhistoire et de la Recherche Archéologique) 2009. *L'art pariétal: conservation mise en valeur communication*. 2009. Avec le concours de l'UNESCO, du Conseil Général de la Dordogne, du Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Les Eyzies, France.

RAR 26-945

## State of the art summary for UNESCO

R. G. BEDNARIK

In this summary report I shall address two issues: the state of rock art research, conservation and management in Australia; and some thoughts on these same topics from a global perspective.

In terms of its rock art, Australia is a privileged continent. Not only do the researchers of this country have the best access to the traditional ethnographic significance or meaning of its rock art, it also has been

blessed with an unusually large corpus of surviving rock art. The reason for this wealth is not, as often assumed, that most Australian rock art is comparatively recent. Rather it is the result of the predominantly semi-arid country's excellent preservation conditions, the absence of any iconoclastic historical tradition, and the relatively low population density in most of Australia.

As a reflection of the great size of the rock art corpus in Australia, a universal *inventory* of Australian rock art remains elusive, but there are numerous local inventories in existence. If we made adequate allowance for the incomplete coverage of site surveys we could attempt a rough estimate of the overall task ahead. Various estimates have been made by experienced field workers, for instance it has been suggested that there might be about 50 000 sites in Queensland, and similar numbers could pertain to the Northern Territory and the northern half of Western Australia. As a minimal benchmark it seems widely agreed that the country's total number of sites must be well in excess of 100 000, and an estimate of perhaps 200 000 sites may be realistic. Many of these still have to be found, and large concentrations remain inadequately surveyed. Some of these sites comprise tens of thousands of motifs, but the average number of motifs may be more in the order of 500 or 1000 motifs per site. In short, the total number of rock art images in Australia is certainly in the tens of millions.

It follows that the creation of a full inventory of Australian rock art will take many more years, and we may still expect new discoveries to be made. Nevertheless, it can safely be concluded that the largest concentrations are those of, from the west, the Pilbara, the Kimberley, Arnhem Land and Cape York Peninsula. The largest single site complex, which is also the largest rock art complex in the world, is that of the Dampier Archipelago, located in the Pilbara. It has been partially surveyed and is thought to comprise over a million petroglyphs.

It follows from these observations that *documentation* of Australian rock art remains substantially incomplete. Among the minute percentage that has seen any level of recording, levels of documentation vary greatly. In my estimate, three to four million motifs have been photographed to a reasonable archival standard, but a much smaller number, a few tens of thousands, has been well recorded. Most of these reasonably comprehensive records refer to isolated situations, often to the efforts of specific individuals or agencies, and in some cases to the work of consultants working for corporate entities. So these records are scattered over many holdings and there is not much uniformity of standards among them.

Despite the large size of the body of Australian rock art, its *conservation* is in comparison to the rest of the world in relatively good shape. The great majority

of sites are quite remote and of limited access to visitation, and they most often occur on private land. Positive publicity campaigns have prompted many landowners to be quite protective of sites. Only a small number of rock art places have been 'sacrificed' to the public, and these are often well developed for visitation. Access paths have been built, raised walkways and viewing platforms erected, there are 'psychological barriers' as well as physical ones, and good interpretation material and visitor books are widely employed at unsupervised sites. As a result of subtle public education measures, the incidence of site vandalism has been reduced to the point where it may become a thing of the past.

Active conservation work conducted in Australia has included graffiti removal, stabilisation of deteriorating rock supports, widespread installation of artificial drip-lines and other changes to site hydrology, modification of micro-climate, removal of fire hazards in the vicinity of rock art, suppression of dust from visitors or from nearby road traffic, and the installation of various types of barriers, e.g. to keep out animals. Some limestone cave sites have had to be locked because of the fragility of their rock art, and some heavily visited rockshelters have been protected by metal grilles or cages.

Some of the conservation work is conducted at the behest of the rock art's traditional owners, the local Aboriginal communities, often with the assistance of relevant state agencies. Limited state funding has been available for such work since the mid-1980s, i.e. since the Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA) began lobbying for such support. That organisation has been instrumental in galvanising researchers into a discipline, and in raising public awareness about rock art through the media and various public agencies, at both state and federal levels. Perhaps the most important lesson we have learnt in rock art site management is that positive public perception is the key issue in site protection.

Unfortunately, in one state, Western Australia, current legislative protection of rock art remains entirely inadequate, and the principal rock art vandal there is the state itself. This *emergency state* has become especially acute at the huge Dampier petroglyph site complex, where massive industrial development has already destroyed well over 95 000 petroglyphs since 1964. The rest of the large monument is being subjected to gradual deterioration from acid rain caused by a petrochemical complex that could easily be erected anywhere else in the State. AURA and the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO) are engaged in a long-term campaign to have numerous planned new hydrocarbon-processing plants located at alternative sites. This is the only serious case of intentional large-scale destruction of rock art in Australia's history, and IFRAO and AURA solicit the support of the global discipline for their campaign.

Rock art *research* is very well served in Australia, with well-established traditions. AURA is the largest rock art organisation in the world, producing the discipline's major refereed academic journal, as well as two newsletters and a series of monographs on rock art. Apart from survey work, the country's researchers have focused primarily on two areas of research: analytical studies, especially on the dating of rock art; and ethnographic studies involving the traditional owners of Australian rock art. Most of the analytical rock art dating methods currently in use worldwide were initially developed in Australia, and the country continues to be a leader in the field of estimating rock art antiquity. Other research interests being pursued by Australian scholars are conservation or preservation techniques, advanced methods of recording and a variety of specialised analytical approaches. A distinctive feature of Australian rock art research is its multidisciplinary orientation, with specialists in documentation, conservation, ethnography, anthropology, archaeology, cognitive studies, semiotics, geochemistry, geology, art history, geography and other disciplines all collaborating with the traditional owners of the rock art. Such a complex discipline is not the preserve of any particular type of institution, but is a collaborative effort of institutional and private *partnerships* overseen essentially by the common forum of AURA. These practices do not preclude the possibility that this productive system of partnerships could not be expanded further, and in the future various new players may emerge in the field, including corporate interests.

\*

Now I turn to *international* issues — as an Australian rock art researcher who regularly works abroad, and who has conducted extensive fieldwork in all continents except Antarctica.

Efforts to preserve rock art vary greatly around the globe, ranging from the truly exemplary treatment of the outstanding Chauvet Cave in France, arguably the best-protected rock art site in the world, to numerous regions where rock art enjoys no protection whatsoever. While we do have the superb site protection systems of countries such as Saudi Arabia, in many other countries the relevant authorities are simply not aware of their international obligations in respect of the rock art heritage. Examples IFRAO has addressed in the past have occurred in, among other countries, Portugal, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Santo Domingo, Canada, Namibia and India. IFRAO has found that many, even most of the preservation problems due to inappropriate development were the result of local lack of information or *awareness*. There needs to be a much stronger public promotion of the principle that all rock art is part of the common human heritage, and that it is ultimately the property of humanity as a whole. Nation states merely manage this resource on behalf of us all. Allowing



Figure 1. Dampier petroglyph site on Pluto lease marked for destruction by archaeologists, 9 February 2007.

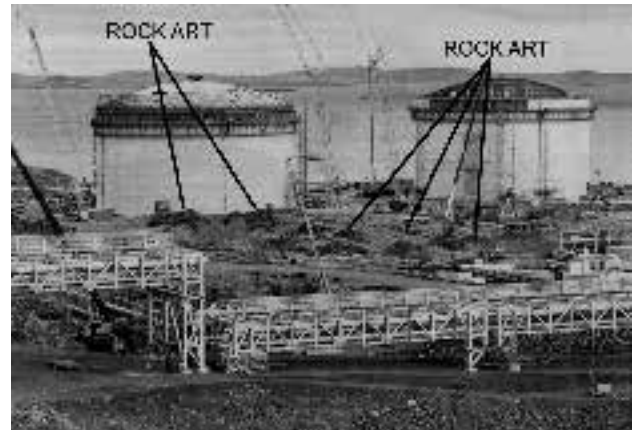


Figure 2. Dampier Pluto plant in 2009.

its destruction contravenes international law, and the *UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage* could be reinforced (especially Article VI) or better promoted among those who are effectively managing rock art in the various member countries. It is clear from my experience that most of the officials theoretically responsible for the protection of rock art around the world — who might be attached to forestry departments, cultural management offices, heritage or land management departments of various types — simply have limited awareness of what their responsibilities concerning the immovable cultural heritage entail. This is not necessarily a condition endemic to developing or badly governed countries; it can be just as profound in developed countries. The example of Portugal could be cited, or the fact that the vandalistic treatment of petroglyph sites in Scandinavia (e.g. by painting them) is still being continued in some regions.

It is also apparent that in those parts of the world that possess particularly famous archaeological tourist attractions (e.g. Egypt, India, Mexico, the Andean countries), rock art tends to be more neglected than in other, comparable countries. Again, awareness programs would seem to be the answer. Another issue is that there has traditionally been a reluctance in most Moslem countries to recognise the importance of rock art, essentially because of religious bias, but this, fortunately, is now being overcome by Saudi Arabia taking a strong lead in rock art preservation, and protection is also improving in Morocco, Algeria and Libya. It is to be hoped that other Islamic countries will follow these examples in the coming years.

The global inventorying of rock art is not only important for research or site management, but also for protection: it is impossible to effectively protect a resource that remains unrecorded. IFRAO has been very successful in eradicating damaging recording practices that were still widely used by researchers up to the 1990s in several major rock art regions. It has also facilitated the development of modern recording techniques and digitised processing and manipulation of data by introducing an international

standard scale for rock art recording. Moreover, IFRAO has been quite effective in the implementation of improved research standards in most parts of the world, and in the introduction of a scientifically standardised terminology for the discipline, by creating a rock art glossary and translating it into nine of the major languages.

But perhaps the most spectacular success of IFRAO has been its role as the world's foremost advocate for the protection and preservation of rock art. In this work, IFRAO has found itself opposed by many interest groups, ranging from local administrations, developers and industrial corporations to national governments. All of these confrontations have resulted in better appreciation of the need to take care of rock art, and most of them have brought about the preservation of rock art that would otherwise have faced certain destruction.

However, the most intensive such confrontation in history is currently taking place in Western Australia, where the state government has been engaged in the gradual destruction of the world's largest concentration of petroglyphs, the Dampier Rock Art Precinct. Since 1964, between 20% and 25% of the magnificent monument at Murujuga ('Burrup') has been lost to unnecessary development, through appalling planning and severe state vandalism. Although some significant concessions have been made over the past three years, the destruction of rock art and megalithic stone arrangements is continuing at Dampier, and the campaign is in desperate need of international promotion. The state government of Western Australia is the world's worst cultural vandal, exceeding in its fervour the former Taliban regime of Afghanistan. The producers of the Dampier rock art, the Yaburarra tribe, were the victims of police-perpetrated genocide, when they were extinguished in a series of incredible massacres taking three months, commencing 17 February 1868. Only six survivors were recorded. No compensation has ever been made to the Aborigines, nor have any of the murderers faced a court. Today this historical incident is such an acute embarrassment to the state government of Western Australia that it is



keen to see the cultural patrimony of the Yaburarra eradicated as well.

This example shows that there is often more at stake than just cultural values. Rock art is frequently the work of those who were dispossessed, destroyed or defeated — history's 'losers'. It is contingent upon civilised society of the present century to ensure that the destructive powers of the 'winners' are limited. If we fail in this, we have no right to consider ours a civilised society.

Robert G. Bednarik, Convener and Editor of IFRAO  
June 2005  
Presented to UNESCO September 2005  
RAR 26-946

## AURA Committee

As reported in RAR 25: 239, in accordance with the *AURA Constitution*, a postal ballot has become necessary to elect a new Executive Committee. Nominations have been received as reported in *AURA Newsletter* 26: 13, which have resulted in only one nominee-accepted nomination for each position available. Therefore the new AURA committee comprises the following members:

President: Professor John Campbell, JCU, Cairns  
Australian Vice-President: R. G. (ben) Gunn, Lake Lonsdale, Victoria  
Overseas Vice-President: Professor Giriraj Kumar, Agra, India  
Secretary: Robert G. Bednarik, Melbourne  
Treasurer: Elfriede Bednarik, Melbourne  
Committee 1: Dr Yann-Pierre Montelle, Christchurch, New Zealand  
Committee 2: Lance Syme, Picton, NSW  
Committee 3: Dr Graeme Ward, AIATSIS, Canberra

The incoming AURA committee thanks the previous committee for its work, and for remaining in office well beyond its constitutional requirements.

## AURA Honour List

Individuals who have continuously been members of AURA for more than twenty years deserve to be distinguished for their loyalty and dedication. We have therefore established a special Honour List of them, which reveals a most encouraging trend in the demography of the AURA membership. The Australian Rock Art Research Association Inc. has a significant proportion of long-term loyal members. The following founding members of AURA, who joined us between November 1988 and October 1989, have remained members continuously for over twenty years. I ask you to join me in honouring them;

the long-term members are the major source of core strength of AURA, which has been an inspiration to all of us who have worked to make this organisation what it is. As the founder of AURA, I thank each and every one of the following members personally, and from the bottom of my heart. They, and those previously listed (RAR 21: 204; 22: 222–3; 23: 282; 24: 271; 25: 241), have made my work worthwhile.

R. G. Bednarik

Lionel R. Baker, Engadine, NSW, Australia  
Charles Darwin University Library, Milsons Point, NSW, Australia  
Kenneth Mulvaney, Dampier, WA, Australia  
Jennifer K. Burden, Port Willunga, SA, Australia  
Professor John B. Campbell, Cairns, QLD, Australia  
Dr Tilman Lenssen-Erz, Köln, Germany  
Louise Coleborn, Springwood, NSW, Australia  
Julie Drew, Paddington, NSW, Australia  
Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Woodview, Ontario, Canada  
University of Western Australia Library, Crawley, WA, Australia  
Dr Gro Mandt, Bergen, Norway  
Dr Kalle Sognnes, Trondheim, Norway  
Bob Edberg, Pomona, CA, U.S.A.  
Bjarne S. Hansen, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Universitetsbiblioteket i Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway  
Dr Marianna Devlet, Moscow, Russia  
Professor Katja Devlet, Moscow, Russia  
Andy Spate, Hall, ACT, Australia  
Robert I. Wilson, Peoria, IL, U.S.A.  
Queensland Museum Library, South Bank, QLD, Australia  
J. Mikilani Ho, Kaneohe, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Jill L. Ruig, Rockyview, QLD, Australia  
Daniel F. McCarthy, Riverside, CA, U.S.A.  
Glenn Murcutt, Mosman, NSW, Australia  
Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY, U.S.A.  
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL, U.S.A.  
Universitätsbibliothek Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany  
Anthropology Library, The British Museum, London, U.K.  
Dr James Harrod, Portland, ME, U.S.A.

## Donations made to the Rock Art Preservation Fund

Further to the announcement of the Rock Art Preservation Fund Inc. (RAPF; see RAR 24: 271), the following donations have been made to it, primarily to keep the Dampier Campaign going:

Meg Taylor, \$100.00  
Dr Helen Dauncey, \$120.00  
Andy Spate, \$400.00

We thank the donors for their generous support.

Readers are most cordially invited to help with this effort to secure better protection for rock art. The bank account details of the Rock Art Preservation Fund are:

Westpac Elsternwick  
422 Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick, VIC 3185,  
Australia  
BSB No. 033-047  
Account No. 40-0459  
Account name: ROCK ART PRESERVATION FUND

Please advise us when you make a direct bank transfer donation, so we can send you a receipt for taxation purposes. Donations can also be made by cheque or credit card, to AURA.

### Academic ranking of RAR

The Australian Research Council has recently released its ranking of about 10 000 international academic journals in the physical sciences, chemical sciences, earth sciences, humanities and creative arts, ranking the world's leading journals according to their academic quality. *Rock Art Research* has received an A rating, being a heavily refereed and peer-reviewed scientific journal using the debate system. This means that *RAR* is considered to be among the top 20% of the world's academic journals.

### New Editorial Board member

We are pleased to welcome Professor John Campbell from James Cook University of North Queensland, Cairns, as a new member of the Board of Editorial Advisers of *RAR*. Professor Campbell, a great supporter of AURA, has recently become AURA President as well, and the journal is fortunate in securing his support in maintaining the academic rigour of *RAR*.

### Electronic format of RAR

*Rock Art Research* is now available electronically from several commercial providers:

The H. W. Wilson Company, 950 University Avenue,  
Bronx, NY 10452, U.S.A., [www.hwwilson.com](http://www.hwwilson.com)  
EBSCO Publishing, 10 Estes Street, Ipswich, MA 01938,  
U.S.A., [www.ebscohost.com](http://www.ebscohost.com)  
Thomson Reuters, 3501 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA  
19104, U.S.A., [scientific.thomsonreuters.com](http://scientific.thomsonreuters.com)  
RMIT Publishing, 449 Swanston Street, Melbourne,  
VIC 3000, Australia; [www.rmitpublishing.com.au](http://www.rmitpublishing.com.au)

This has significantly increased the circulation

of *RAR*, and it is intended to create AURA's own electronic outlet of the journal in the future, beginning with the early issues, which are now out of print. Issues beginning with November 1988 are still available in print form, and complete sets of *RAR* can be purchased for \$A330.00 (within Australia).

### Forthcoming events

**International colloquium 'The Signs of Which Times? Chronological and Palaeoenvironmental Issues in the Rock Art of North Africa'**, Brussels, Belgium, 4–5 June 2010. This colloquium will be organised by the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences in Brussels [<http://www.kaowarsom.be/>] on 4–5 June 2010. As is evident from the title, the colloquium focuses on the dating of Saharan rock art, both chronometric and relative dating, and palaeoenvironmental issues and their relevance for north African rock art studies (and vice versa). Among the registered speakers are (in alphabetical order): P. Bahn, B. Barich, C. Dupuy, F. Förster, M. Gatto, Y. Gauthier, M. Hachid, S. Hendrickx, R. Heckendorf, D. Huyge, S. Ikram, S. Kröpelin, A. Mikdad, J.-L. Le Quellec, T. Lenssen-Erz, H. Riemer, S. Searight, A. Skounti, J. Soler, P. Storemyr, Y. Tristant, A. Van Albada, D. Vandenberghe, A. Zboray, and A. Zerboni.

There is probably no more room for additional lectures, but all those interested in the subject of the colloquium are kindly invited to attend. The Academy is not able to assist with travel expenses and/or accommodation costs, but admission to the colloquium will be completely free of charge. For more information, please contact: Danielle Swinne, Permanent Secretary of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences ([kaowarsom@skynet.be](mailto:kaowarsom@skynet.be)), or Dirk Huyge, co-chairman of the colloquium ([d.huyge@kmgk.be](mailto:d.huyge@kmgk.be)).

**Pleistocene Art of the World.** IFRAO pre-Historic art congress 2010, to be held at Foix and Tarascon-sur-Ariège, France, 6–11 September 2010. Join J. Clottes (Immediate-Past IFRAO President), R. G. Bednarik (IFRAO Convener) and G. Kumar (previous IFRAO President) in this landmark event and view the region's classic sites by special arrangement. The event will include symposia dedicated to the Pleistocene arts of all continents. For details of symposia and calls for papers, see the IFRAO Report No. 43 in this issue, pp. 247–251.

**Archaeology and Rock Art — 25 years SIARB.** IFRAO Congress to be held in La Paz, Bolivia, in June 2012.

**Fourth AURA Congress: Thirty years of AURA.** Australia 2014.

## Hans (Juan) Schobinger 1928–2009

One of the most distinguished personalities in South American archaeology and rock art research died on 11 July 2009 in Mendoza, Argentina: Professor Dr Hans (Juan) Schobinger. Many colleagues will remember his friendship, loyalty, his numerous important publications and outstanding editorial work. I will present here a brief summary of Schobinger's life and work. Major details can be found in the publications by Lagiglia (2004–2005) and Barberena (2009).

Juan Schobinger was born in Lausanne (Switzerland), and came to Argentina at the age of three years. He studied at the University of Buenos Aires and in 1953 wrote his doctoral thesis on the subject of archaeology of Neuquén province. In his early years as student and investigator, he was influenced by his professor, Osvaldo Menghin, and his colleagues Carlos Gradin and Jorge Fernández who became close friends and shared his fascination with rock art.

From 1956 till 1993 Schobinger was professor of prehistory and archaeology at the National University of Cuyo at Mendoza. He also taught courses in anthropology (1956–1974) and history of the ancient Orient (1974–1993). After retiring, he still gave lectures and taught courses as *Profesor Emérito* and continued to advise his students.

Schobinger was a pioneer in the investigation of archaeological sites in the high mountains in the Andes. He organised the rescue of an Inca mummy on El Toro mountain (1964), at an altitude of 6130 m, the second such find after the discovery of the mummy on El Plomo mountain (Chile). Later he ascended Aconcagua mountain in a similar project and investigated another Inca mummy. He directed these research projects by a multi-disciplinary team and achieved the detailed publications with extraordinary results highlighting Inca religion, sacrifices and customs. In 2002 he still directed work on an Inca sanctuary located on the Chuscha mountain in north-east Argentina.

He was a very industrious writer and accomplished more than 150 publications, including specialised studies as well as articles and books for the general public. The publication of his book on South American pre-History (*Prehistoria de Suramérica*, 1969; 2nd up-dated and expanded edn 1988) is a landmark in studies of the peopling of the Americas. Schobinger was one of the few scholars capable of writing books on the archaeology of all of the Americas (*The first Americans*, Erdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994; *Arte prehistórico de América*, México, D.F. 1997; *The ancient Americans: a reference guide to the art, culture, and history of pre-Columbian North and South America*, 2 vols, Armonk, NY, 2001). His work as educator of the general public is remarkable and includes several publications in which he refuted the theories put



Photo credit: Sociedad Argentina de Antropología

forward by such popular and immensely successful authors such as Jacques de Mahieu and Erich von Däniken. He was also a very conscientious editor of the influential journal *Anales de Arqueología y Etnología* (Univ. Nac. de Cuyo) from 1956 to 1993.

His publications on rock art are substantial, for example his study of rock art in Neuquén (1956) and his book — written together with his friend Carlos Gradin — *Cazadores de la Patagonia y agricultores andinos. Arte rupestre de la Argentina* (Madrid 1985).

Due to his interest in the ancient cultures of the Old and the New World, he travelled extensively and participated in congresses in Europe and Latin America. For example, he assisted the five symposia organised by the Bolivian rock art research society SIARB in 1988, 1989, 1991, 1997 and 2000. I also met him at the 6th international rock art symposium held at Jujuy, Argentina in 2003.

In October 2008, Juan Schobinger received a tribute at the III Symposium of Peruvian Rock Art held at Huaraz, and in May 2009 another homage in the *Jornadas Arqueológicas Cuyanas* at the university at Mendoza. SIARB will dedicate its International Congress of 2012 to this remarkable friend, teacher and scientist.

**Matthias Strecker,**  
SIARB, La Paz, Bolivia

### REFERENCES

- BARBERENA, R. 2009. Vida de un arqueólogo. Petroglifos y santuarios de alta montaña: entrevista con el Dr. Juan S. Schobinger. *Relaciones, Sociedad Argentina de Antropología* 33 (in press).
- LAGIGLIA, H. A. I. 2004–2005. Juan Santiago René Schobinger. Arqueólogo. *Anales de Arqueología y Etnología* 59–60: 7–27.

## IFRAO Report No. 43



### Chinese rock art museum opened

The Yinchuan World Rock Art Museum has been established and opened recently. It is located in Helankou, Yinchuan, Ningxia. Its grounds extend over an area of 72 000 square metres, of which the building occupies 4106 square metres. The exhibition area covers 2000 square metres, which includes the Hall of World Rock Arts, Hall of Chinese Rock Arts, Hall of Petroglyphs of Helan Mountains, Hall of Primitive Arts and Special Hall. There is also a lecture hall, an expert research laboratory and a restoration room. On exhibition are photographs, rubbings, moulded replicas, oil painting replicas, and actual objects of outstanding rock arts of Helan Mountains.

The museum collects, curates and exhibits photographs and materials of rock art from various parts of the world, and systematically introduces outstanding world rock art legacies. Professional and academic communication with foreign rock art experts and organisations are useful. The research results of the Helan Mountains petroglyphs are displayed to popularise the knowledge of pre-Historic arts, to enrich people's spiritual life and to advance the further study of rock arts. Academic communication and science popularisation activities of various types and multiple levels are conducted. The museum will become the most influential rock art information centre, exhibition centre and research centre in China. The Helankou



*The Yinchuan World Rock Art Museum, China  
(photograph by Liu Yongping).*

rock art site with its 6000 petroglyphs (including 700 'masks') is located behind the museum.

The address is Yinchuan World Rock Art Museum, Yinchuan Helan Mountain Rock Art Administration, 25 South Zhongshan Street, Xingqing District, Yinchuan, Ningxia, China. The e-mail address is *hlsyanhua@163.com*.

Professor Chen Zhao Fu  
Curator of the Yinchuan World Rock Art Museum  
IFRAO Representative, Rock Art Research  
Association of China

RAR 26-948

### Minutes of the 2009 IFRAO Business Meeting

Museo da Homidade Americano

São Raimundo Nonato, Piauí, Brazil, 1 July 2009

**Organisations present:** American Rock Art Research Association (ARARA), represented by Evelyn Billo (U.S.A.); Archivo Nacional de Arte Rupestre (ANAR), represented by Ruby De Valencia (Venezuela); Asociación Cultural 'Colectivo Barbaón' (ACCB), represented by B. Hipólito Collado Giraldo (Spain); Associação Brasileira de Arte Rupestre (ABAR), represented by Niéde Guidon (Brazil); Associação Portuguesa de Arte e Arqueologia Rupestre (APAAR), represented by Mila Simões de Abreu (Portugal); Association pour le Rayonnement de l'Art Pariétal Européen (ARAPE), represented by Robert G. Bednarik by proxy (France); Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA), represented by Robert G. Bednarik (Australia); Cave Art Research Association (CARA), represented by Robert G. Bednarik (Australia); Centro de Investigación de Arte Rupestre del Uruguay (CIARU), represented by Mario Consens (Uruguay); Centro Studi e Museo d'Arte Preistorica (CeSMAP), represented by Dario Seglie; Comité de Investigación del Arte Rupestre de la Sociedad Argentina de Antropología (CIAR-SAA), represented by Matthias Strecker by proxy (Argentina); East African Rock Art Research Association (EARARA), represented by Dario Seglie by proxy (Tanzania); Eastern States Rock Art Research Association (ESRARA), represented by Denise Smith (U.S.A.); Grupo de Investigación de Arte Rupestre Indígena (GIPRI), represented by Guillermo Muñoz (Colombia); Hellenic Rock Art Centre (HERAC), represented by Dario Seglie by proxy (Greece); Institutum Canarium (IC), represented by Inge Diethelm (Switzerland); Japan Petrograph Society (JPS), represented by Dario Seglie by proxy (Japan); Le Orme

dell'Uomo, represented by Angelo Fossati (Italy); Mid-America Geographic Foundation (MAGF), represented by Dario Seglie by proxy (U.S.A.); Moscow Centre of Rock Art and Bioindication Research (MCRABR), represented by Arsen Faradzhev (Russia); Rock Art Association of Manitoba (RAAM), represented by Dario Seglie by proxy (Canada); Rock Art Society of India (RASI), represented by Giriraj Kumar (India); Sociedad de Investigación del Arte Rupestre de Bolivia (SIARB), represented by Matthias Strecker (Bolivia); Société Préhistorique Ariège-Pyrénées (SPAP), represented by Robert G. Bednarik by proxy (France);

The meeting was held at the Museo do Homem Americano, Saõ Raimundo Nonato, Piauí, Brazil, on 1 July 2009, and it commenced at 11.30 a.m. In the absence of the President of IFRAO his nominated representative, the Convener, nominated Mila Simões de Abreu to act as chair. The minutes were recorded by Robert G. Bednarik.

1. *Apologies and declaration of proxies.* There was one apology from Jean Clottes, the IFRAO President, who was unable to attend. He nominated the IFRAO Convener to represent him. Eight proxies were declared as listed above.

2. *Confirmation of previous minutes.* The minutes of the previous IFRAO Business Meeting (Lisbon, 8 September 2006) have been published in *Rock Art Research* 23(2): 286–288, 2006. They were accepted unanimously.

3. *Matters arising from these minutes.* No matters arising from the previous meeting were discussed.

4. *Report of the IFRAO President.* The President had provided a detailed report of his extensive activities in the service of IFRAO since 2006, and for the betterment of rock art generally, which was read out by the Convener and was accepted.

5. *Report by the IFRAO-UNESCO Liaison Officer.* A brief report was presented by the Liaison Officer concerning progress of deliberations with UNESCO personnel.

6. *Report by the IFRAO Convener:*

6.1. The Centro Regional de Arte Rupestre 'Casa de Cristo' of Murcia, Spain, has been elected unopposed as a new member of IFRAO. Contact details are Armando Lucena, Carretera de Campo de San Juan, Km. 6, s/n, 30440 Moratalla (Murcia), Spain, [rupestre@museosdemurcia.com](mailto:rupestre@museosdemurcia.com)

6.2. IFRAO has been approved as an affiliate with UISPP at the Lisbon congress.

6.3. The issue of global rock art protection: this is an ongoing concern and in the last few years the Convener has attended to direct threats to rock art sites in various parts of the world, including cases in Chile, Bolivia, Peru, U.S.A., Italy, France, India, China and Australia, among others. The most serious direct and immediate threat to rock art remains that to the Dampier Rock Art Precinct in Australia.

6.4. The developments in prioritising World Heritage listing criteria are reported. This is an issue that

is being pursued energetically by the President, Immediate-Past President and Convener. A brief report was provided on the progress of this endeavour.

7. *Reports volunteered by IFRAO Representatives:*

7.1. ESRARA held its bi-ennial meeting at Red Top Mountain, Georgia, in March 2009. At this meeting a revised constitution was submitted to and approved by the membership. The membership also approved incorporating ESRARA as a non-profit incorporation in the state of Illinois. Such incorporation will enable ESRARA to establish a permanent archive for documents and photographs relating to the study of the rock art of the eastern United States within the special collections department of the library of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

7.2. SIARB is organising an international congress on archaeology and rock art to be held at La Paz, Bolivia, preliminary information is available on the web site [www.siarb.congress.org](http://www.siarb.congress.org). SIARB maintains its regular web page [www.siarb-bolivia.org](http://www.siarb-bolivia.org), which includes information on rock art in Bolivia, Mexico and Central America (an updated version of the book edited by Martin Künne and Matthias Strecker on rock art of East Mexico and Central America may be downloaded free of charge). Long-term projects to create or improve archaeological parks with rock art are under way in several departments of Bolivia: Santa Cruz (Paja Colorada, Mutún), Chuquisaca (Incamachay-Pumamachay), and Potosí (Betanzos). SIARB is grateful for the co-operation received by international experts: Ian Wainwright and Mati Raudsepp, Canada, analysed pigments of Paja Colorada cave paintings. Robert Mark, U.S.A., undertook photographic recording and image enhancement of several sites. Robert Bednarik, Australia, accompanied us to sites near La Paz and commented on cupules.

7.3. AURA (Australia) has an extensive publishing program in print (*RAR*, *AURA Newsletter*, *Cave Art Research*, Occasional AURA Publications) and electronically (AURANET), and collaborates also with other publishers. Campaigns relating to the preservation of rock art at Dampier and in Tasmania are in progress. The next AURA Inter-Congress Symposium will be held in Broken Hill on 17–18 October 2009, and the possibility has been mooted that the Fourth AURA Congress might be held in 2014.

7.4. CeSMAP continues to conduct the three main activities of the past 45 years: (1) research in the field of pre-Historic archaeology in the western Alps; (2) the present main project, in Morocco since 2002, is to set up the natural and cultural Jbel Sarhro National Park, in the country's south-east from the Atlas to the Sahara. This project is a joint activity by INSAP of Rabat and CeSMAP of Pinerolo, and other international partners. The main focus is about rock art; (3) the Museum of Prehistoric Art of Pinerolo management, exhibition, congress, conference, publications. Didactic activities and courses for the schools and universities.

7.5. The MCRABR's recent activities were (1) student



*IFRAO Business Meeting 2009: Angelo Fossati of Orme dell'Uomo, on left, presents item 10.5 of the Minutes; chairperson Mila Simões de Abreu of APAAR turned to camera (photograph by Kay Scaramelli, of ANAR).*

lectures at Moscow State University; (2) presentations for children at the State Darwin Museum in Moscow; (3) a radio interview that was broadcast throughout the Russian Federation (with information about the central Indian sites and Dampier Archipelago); (4) publication of 'Palaeoart chronicles' in *Art Chronicles*. The MCRABR spent a lot of time and effort to establish the useful relationship with the Russian Federal Agency for Culture in Moscow.

7.6. The 13th Congress of RASI was organised in collaboration with Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya in Bhopal on 31 October and 1 November 2008. The next RASI Congress is being held at the University of Rewa in December 2009. The RASI Secretary has participated in the UNESCO Prehistory and World Heritage Convention in Paris, in November 2008. RASI conducted research at Daraki-Chattan as a part of the EIP Project.

7.7. ANAR maintains the National Inventory of Venezuelan Rock Art, and is involved in two programs to help preserve Venezuelan rock art that is under threat. Another role of ANAR is its involvement in school education programs, at primary and secondary levels. *Oni Maapë* is a multimedia exhibition of Venezuelan rock art developed by ANAR, and another of its initiatives is the design and development of the Geo-Spatial Data Base of the country's rock art.

8. A discussion is held to decide the *IFRAO Presidency*, which results in the unanimous election of Niéde Guidon of ABAR as the new President of IFRAO.

9. CeSMAP proposes the creation of a *World Rock Art Encyclopaedia* (WRAE), 'polycentric' Internet web structure in which all the IFRAO Organisations play the role of peripheral 'nodes'; access is to be free.

10. *Any further matters raised by delegates:*

10.1. MCRABR reminds the IFRAO Council that several great scholars have passed away recently.

10.2. GIPRI raises issues of indigenous peoples in Colombia.

10.3. CIARU proposes the formation of regional groupings of member organisations within IFRAO.

After a brief discussion it is decided that thematic groupings might be preferable, depending on each organisation's main interests. The issue is to be considered by the member organisations and Mario Consens is elected to compile a report to be tabled at the 2010 IFRAO Business Meeting in France.

10.4. APAAR proposes that the IFRAO homepage, established and maintained by CeSMAP in Italy, is to be upgraded significantly within one year. The motion is seconded by ARARA, and is accepted unanimously.

10.5. Orme dell'Uomo reports that the member states of UNESCO often fail to provide the required reports on the state of the cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. As a remedial measure, it is proposed that IFRAO creates a questionnaire for the members concerning the state of listed rock art sites.

10.6. CI reports that the organisation has recently celebrated forty years of its existence, thus being one of the oldest members of IFRAO.

11. *General matters, discussion and resolutions:*

11.1. ABAR requests the support of IFRAO to petition the President of Brazil to remove the presidential veto on forming a profession of archaeology in Brazil. This veto was placed by the previous President because at the time there were no archaeology courses conducted in the country. It is pointed out that, at present, there are five post-graduate courses and several master degree courses. The motion is seconded by AURA and passed unanimously, and is to be conveyed to the President of Brazil as a petition from IFRAO.

11.2. SIARB proposes that IPHAN, the responsible agency in Brazil, be requested to expedite the nomination to World Heritage of the Peruaçu rock art site in Minas Gerais, Brazil. The motion has universal support and a letter on behalf of IFRAO is provided by the IFRAO Convener soon after the meeting, requesting IPHAN to proceed with this nomination.

11.3. ARARA proposes that the web-pages of the IFRAO members be updated as required, and specifically that the abstracts of all papers of IFRAO Congresses be published on the Web prior to the event.

The motion is seconded by ABAAR and is accepted unanimously.

11.4. RASI proposes a vote of thanks to the host organisation, ABAR, for the enormous and universally acclaimed effort that has characterised the present congress, and this is expressed by the delegates' applause.

11.5. ABAAR informs the meeting that ABAR will issue four types of diplomas at the conclusion of the ABAR Congress: (1) to the Governor of the State of Piauí, who opened and closed the congress, for his great support of the event; (2) to FUMDHAM, the NGO that operates the museum and research facility at São Raimundo Nonato, for its immense contribution; (3) to the three oldest surviving guides in the National Park Serra da Capivara, as representatives of all the guides who have worked in the park; and (4) to the four local councils over whose territory the National Park Serra da Capivara extends, for their collaboration over the years.

12. *Adjournment.* The meeting is adjourned at 1.00 p.m. precisely.

\*

## Resolution of Capivara Congress

The representatives of the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO) request that the Federal Government of Brazil considers this petition to bring about a much-reinforced protection of the rock art heritage of this country.

We, the rock art researchers from thirty countries represented in the IFRAO Congress held at São Raimundo Nonato in June/July 2009 are surprised at the richness of rock art in Brazil, in terms of its relevance, quality, expressiveness and great number of sites. At the same time we are saddened by the cases of vandalism and destruction of sites.

We respectfully request that the Federal Government of Brazil give special attention to this heritage, unique in its characteristics. We draw attention to sad cases such as the very serious damage done to the sites in the Park of Catimbau Valley.

We urge the Brazilian Government to develop very strong preventive policies and measures to counteract impunity in matters of rock art protection, through a strengthened set of policies for registering and managing the many rock art sites that have suffered from neglect up to the present.

# Pleistocene Art of the World

## IFRAO Congress, France

6 – 11 September 2010

The 2010 IFRAO Congress will take place from 6 to 11 September 2010 in Ariège and Pyrénées (France), essentially in Tarascon-sur-Ariège and Foix. Its base will be the Prehistoric Park at Banat (near Tarascon-sur-Ariège).

### Scientific Committee of the Congress:

Jean Clottes France, IFRAO and UISPP)  
Robert G. Bednarik (Australia, IFRAO and AURA)  
Giriraj Kumar (India, IFRAO and RASI)  
Ulf Bertilsson (Sweden, CAR/ICOMOS)  
Yann-Pierre Montelle (New Zealand, AURA)  
Luis Oosterbeek (Portugal, IFRAO and UISPP)

### Organisational Committee:

Conseil Général de l'Ariège: Joëlle Arches, Jacques Azéma, Emmanuel Demoulin, Pascal Alard  
Service régional d'Archéologie: Michel Vaginay, Yanik Le Guillou, Michel Barrère  
Agence Départementale Touristique (ADP): Frédéric

Fernandez  
Jean-Michel Bellamy  
Jean Clottes  
Robert and Éric Bégouën (cavernes du Volp et Musée Bégouën)  
Régis et Jean Vézian (grotte du Portel)  
René Gailli (grottes de Bédeilhac et de La Vache)

### Permanent Committee:

Jean Clottes, Jean-Louis Athané, Pascal Alard, Joëlle Arches, Emmanuel Demoulin, Jacques Azéma, Yanik Le Guillou, Frédéric Fernandez

### Participating agencies and associations:

Ministère de la Culture, Service Régional d'Archéologie  
Conseil Régional de Midi-Pyrénées  
Conseil Général de l'Ariège  
Municipalité de Tarascon-sur-Ariège  
Agence Départementale Touristique Ariège Pyrénées

ARAPE (Association pour le Rayonnement de l'Art pariétal)  
 IFRAO (International Federation of Rock Art Organisations)  
 CAR/ICOMOS (Comité international d'Art rupestre de l'ICOMOS)  
 Centre Émile Cartailhac (Toulouse)  
 Laboratoire PACEA, UMR 5199 (CNRS - Université Bordeaux 1 - MCC)  
 Office de Tourisme du Pays de Tarascon-Videssos  
 Société Préhistorique Ariège-Pyrénées  
 UISPP (Union internationale des Sciences préhistoriques et protohistoriques: Commission 9 Art préhistorique)  
 Bradshaw Foundation

## CALLS FOR PAPERS

The congress *Pleistocene Art of the World* will comprise nine symposia. The submission of paper titles and abstracts is now invited for the following symposium subjects. The deadline of submissions for all symposia is **28 February 2010**.

### Pleistocene art of Asia

Recent discoveries and scientific investigations have yielded new evidence about the Pleistocene art of Asia, the most significant of it being produced by the multidisciplinary project 'Early Indian Petroglyphs: Scientific Investigations and Dating by an International Commission' (EIP Project). It has demonstrated the occurrence of numerous exfoliated petroglyphs, and the hammerstones used in making the rock art, in Lower Palaeolithic strata at central Indian sites. Other but much more recent evidence of Pleistocene art, always in the form of mobiliary palaeoart, has been reported sporadically from Siberia, China, Japan, Afghanistan, Israel and also India. Therefore, palaeoart has been in use for a great length of time in Asia, but relatively little evidence of it has been reported so far, especially in comparison to Europe. It is the purpose of this symposium to place the extraordinary finds from India within a pan-continental perspective, to disseminate new claims for Pleistocene palaeoart, and to consider the limited available data in the context of scientifically based models of the cognitive and cultural development of hominins. The 2010 IFRAO world congress on the global palaeoart of the Pleistocene offers a unique opportunity to consider these subjects in a comprehensive form.

Research papers on the above and related topics are invited from the international community of palaeoart researchers. Subjects of interest include rock art as well as mobiliary palaeoart of Pleistocene Asia; materials and techniques used in their production; find contexts and dating issues; what this corpus might tell us about the development of art-like practices in Asia; patterning in the way graphic evidence appears to present itself temporally and spatially; and how it might relate to Holocene palaeoart. Please send

the titles of proposed contributions, together with abstracts of 50–100 words, to one of the two chairmen of this symposium:

Professor Giriraj Kumar (India), e-mail: [girirajrasi@yahoo.com](mailto:girirajrasi@yahoo.com)

Professor Majeed Khan (Saudi Arabia), e-mail: [majeedkhan42@hotmail.com](mailto:majeedkhan42@hotmail.com)

### Pleistocene art of Europe

Europe is without a doubt the continent where most Pleistocene art sites have so far been studied and published, whether in caves and in shelters or on rocks in the open. Even though, as a consequence, Upper Palaeolithic cave art seems quite familiar and well-known, this is probably a misconception as each major discovery (e.g. in the past twenty years, Cosquer, Chauvet, Foz Côa, Cussac) changes some of our ways of thinking. The problems that may be addressed during the Symposium (or that it would be helpful to address) should be instrumental in answering various aspects of the main queries — admittedly all related to one another — that are: Who? When? What? Where? How? Why?

**1. Who?** The coexistence of Neanderthals and modern Humans for thousands of years may pose the problem of Neanderthal art for the period considered. But even before Modern Humans arrived in Europe, what hard evidence have we of art made by Neanderthals or their predecessors. 'Who?' may also apply to the persons who made the art in caves and shelters: were they men, women, children, persons of a particular status?

**2. When?** This is the ever-present thorny problem of dating the art: newly acquired dates; dating methods; validity of styles to establish a chronology.

**3. What?** Not only what did they represent, but also what did they do around the art, in the caves and in the shelters, what can we say from the traces and the remains they left?

**4. Where?** This relates to the choices that were made: geographically, topographically, nature of the sites, choices of particular panels, surfaces and reliefs.

**5. How?** This is probably the problem most often addressed in the past, i.e. the techniques used, the way(s) to represent animals or humans.

**6. Why?** Conversely, the reasons why they made their paintings and engravings are very rarely addressed/argued seriously and dispassionately as they should.

Research papers on the above and related topics are invited from the international community of Pleistocene art researchers.

Please send the titles of proposed contributions, together with abstracts of 50–100 words, to one of the two chairmen of this symposium:

Dr Jean Clottes (France), e-mail: [j.clottes@wanadoo.fr](mailto:j.clottes@wanadoo.fr)  
 Prof. Manuel González Morales, e-mail: [moralesm@unican.es](mailto:moralesm@unican.es)



### Pleistocene art of Africa

As regards Pleistocene art studies, Africa has long been a somewhat 'neglected' continent. The best known finds in this respect are the figuratively painted rock slabs found in 1969 in the Apollo 11 Cave in southern Namibia that date back to about 26 000–28 000 BP, and the incised pieces of bone recovered from Border Cave in South Africa, that are over 100 000 years old. For a long time these have been more or less isolated finds and few further discoveries of art were reported, although pigments have been recovered from various sites in Zambia and South Africa that are up to several hundreds of thousands of years old, possibly pushing back the history of art in Africa to the Middle Pleistocene. Recently, however, spectacular new discoveries have been made that attest to the presence of sophisticated geometric Late Pleistocene art and various other evidence for symbolic behaviour in South Africa at around 70 000 years ago and beyond (Blombos and Wonderwerk Caves). Virtually nothing is known about Central Africa, apart from some finds of mobiliary art in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Ishango and Matupi Cave), and the existence of Pleistocene art in North Africa has been a subject of debate since Fabrizio Mori first attributed some of the Saharan art to the Pleistocene, which continues to be rejected by some. Several recent finds in northern Africa, however, particularly in Egypt (Qurta and related sites), Morocco (Ifri n'Ammar) and Algeria (Afalou Bou Rhummel), now seem to present much more solid evidence for a Late Pleistocene art phase, that includes mobiliary as well as highly developed parietal art. Similarly aged rock art also seems to occur in some caves in northern Libya (Cyrenaica). Most recently, Pleistocene petroglyph sites have been found in the Kalahari Desert.

It is the purpose of the 2010 IFRAO congress to upgrade the status of research into Pleistocene art in Africa, to present a new *status quaestionis* in this respect, and to investigate the possible temporal and thematic relationships between this African legacy and the Pleistocene art of Eurasia. Research papers on the above and related topics are invited from the international community of Pleistocene art researchers. Subjects of interest include: rock art as well as portable art of Pleistocene Africa; materials and techniques used in their production; finds' contexts and issues related to dating and patterning in the way in which graphic evidence appears to present itself both temporally and spatially. Please send the titles of proposed contributions, together with an abstract of 50–100 words, to one of the two chairmen of this symposium:

Dr Peter Beaumont (South Africa), [se@museumsnc.co.za](mailto:se@museumsnc.co.za)

Dr Dirk Huyge (Belgium), [d.huyge@kmgk.be](mailto:d.huyge@kmgk.be)

### Pleistocene art of the Americas

Evidence of Pleistocene art has been reported sporadically from South America (e.g. Serra da Capivara and Minas Gerais, Brazil) but remains controversial. Information of rock art of the Pleistocene-Holocene transition is often included in archaeological reports from all over South America. Rock paintings from the central plateau of Santa Cruz (Argentina) are a very good example of this period. This shows that palaeoart has probably been a cultural manifestation from the very beginning of the peopling of South America. The Pleistocene-Holocene transition was a critical time for the dispersal of human societies all over the continent. At Epullán Grande Cave in northern Patagonia, Palaeoindian bedrock petroglyphs of at least 10 000 years BP have been found. A similar case has been reported from Lapa do Boquete, Peruaçu, Brazil. In north-western Argentina rock art paintings of Inca Cueva are also thought to be around 10 000 years old and could be related to naturalistic rock art paintings of northern Chile and southern Peru. Cupules are another kind of palaeoart widespread in South America that has been assigned to the early palaeoart evidence.

Similarly, there is no widely accepted Pleistocene rock art known from North America although final Pleistocene examples may occur. The best-dated early palaeoart is the substantial series of portable engravings from the Gault site in Texas. Other claims for final Pleistocene portable art have appeared occasionally, some are fakes and others have not been convincingly authenticated.

Research papers on the above and related topics are invited from the international community of palaeoart researchers. Subjects of interest include rock art as well as mobiliary art of the Pleistocene and Pleistocene-Holocene transition; materials and techniques used in their production; dating issues; iconic and non-iconic art manifestations and regional distribution of evidence. Please send the titles of proposed contributions, together with abstracts of 50–100 words, to one of the three chairpersons of this symposium:

Alice Tratebas (U.S.A.), [ATratebas@aol.com](mailto:ATratebas@aol.com)

André Prous (Brazil), [aprous@dedalus.lcc.ufmg.br](mailto:aprous@dedalus.lcc.ufmg.br)

María Mercedes Podestá (Argentina),  
[mercedespodesta@yahoo.com](mailto:mercedespodesta@yahoo.com)

### Pleistocene art of Australia

It has long been suspected that rock art of Pleistocene antiquity occurs in Australia, but for much of the 20th century, 'conclusive proof' remained elusive. The first substantive but still indirect evidence was secured in Koonalda Cave, on the Nullarbor karst plain, in the 1970s, followed by solid proof from a series of petroglyphs at Early Man shelter, near Laura, Cape York Peninsula, in 1981. A series of limestone caves near the continent's southern coast yielded direct

dating results, some of the Pleistocene, at about the same time, and the notion of a significant Ice Age component of Australian rock art was accepted. More recently, research in northern Queensland has provided spectacular and substantial direct dating information about rock paint residues, while in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, the presence of major early corpora is implied by direct dating of petroglyphs. It has been proposed that all Pleistocene rock art of Australia is non-iconic, just as is the case in most of the rest of the world. Moreover, all of the continent's early rock art is attributed to the core and scraper tradition, a Mode 3 ('Middle Palaeolithic') technocomplex, which in the case of Tasmania continued up to European colonisation. Since it has been estimated that between 10% and 15% of Australia's petroglyphs are of the Pleistocene, and since the continent's total number of petroglyphs is at least 10 million motifs, it follows that there is many times more Pleistocene rock art in Australia than there is in Europe. So far this has been largely neglected and it is hoped that this symposium can correct this status.

Research papers on the above and related topics are invited from the international community of rock art researchers. Please send the titles of proposed contributions, together with abstracts of 50–100 words, to one of the two chairmen of this symposium:

Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), [robertbednarik@hotmail.com](mailto:robertbednarik@hotmail.com)

Professor John Campbell (Australia), [john.campbell@jcu.edu.au](mailto:john.campbell@jcu.edu.au)

### Dating and taphonomy of Pleistocene palaeoart

This symposium is intended to address the important subjects of how the age of rock art and portable palaeoart is determined in order to attribute such material to the Pleistocene, and the equally important topic of its taphonomy. Except in cases of very life-like depictions of species that are known to have become extinct before the advent of the Holocene, and certain cases where Holocene access was impossible to sites, rock art can only be safely attributed to any period through direct dating. Portable palaeoart, by contrast, is much easier to date, usually through the embedding sediment or occupation layer. Therefore, the methods of securing Pleistocene dates for rock art require special attention and will be reviewed in this symposium. Since the effects of taphonomy on rock art increase with greater age, they determine the composition of the surviving sample, particularly of the earliest rock art. Hence, the quantification and understanding of these processes are also of great significance to interpreting the characteristics of what has survived from such extremely ancient times. Taphonomic considerations apply equally to mobiliary palaeoart, and will hopefully be addressed as well.

Research papers relating to these topics are invited from the international community of palaeoart researchers. Subjects of interest include dating tech-

niques for both rock paintings and petroglyphs, and their relative efficacy; recent age estimation projects from around the world; difficulties and controversies with age attribution of the Pleistocene; regional and global patterning of rock art distribution and genres, and its potential reasons; or patterning in the way taphonomic processes determine the characteristics of the surviving rock art and portable palaeoart. Please send the titles of proposed contributions, together with abstracts of 50–100 words, to one of the two chairmen of this symposium.

Dr Jean Clottes (France), [j.clottes@wanadoo.fr](mailto:j.clottes@wanadoo.fr)

Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), [robertbednarik@hotmail.com](mailto:robertbednarik@hotmail.com)

### Applications of forensic techniques to Pleistocene palaeoart investigations

In recent years scientific investigations in palaeoart have increasingly been relying on methodologies and techniques borrowed from the field of forensics. For the most part, the pioneering researchers have operated on the margins of an ill-defined discipline. This symposium will provide an opportunity for these scientists to present their work and establish the preliminary foundation for a standardised methodology based in the applications of forensics techniques in the study of Pleistocene palaeoart. Submissions of papers are invited on a large range of subjects, and may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Reconstruction of the gestures and kinetic activities involved in the production of palaeoart
- Aspects of behaviour at rock art sites deducible from empirical evidence
- Analyses of macroscopic and microscopic traces of palaeoart production
- Sequencing of behaviour traces at sites
- Behaviour traces in the context of site properties
- Empirical evidence and site taphonomy
- Controlled replication experiments of palaeoart production
- Analyses concerning the ages of palaeoartists
- Analytical studies of the tools and materials used in palaeoart production
- Other forensic studies of rock art sites or portable finds

Prospective contributors to this pioneering symposium are invited to submit the titles of their presentations, together with abstracts of 50–100 words, to one of the chairmen:

Dr Yann-Pierre Montelle (New Zealand), [yann\\_montelle@mac.com](mailto:yann_montelle@mac.com)

Robert G. Bednarik (Australia), [robertbednarik@hotmail.com](mailto:robertbednarik@hotmail.com)

### Pleistocene portable art

Portable art is generally defined as art on objects that can be carried about, but, beyond this very general definition, what can we really say about it

when we carefully examine the schemas of production implied, the range of supports used, the variety of raw materials selected, the different associations between representations and specific objects? In fact, present-day research tends to reveal that the choice of materials (be they bone slivers, fragments of cervid antlers, short, long or flat bones, shells, various-shaped lithic supports, tools or weapons) was instrumental in the choices of subjects and composition, as well as in that of the techniques applied.

This wide definition also contributes to blur chronology, particularly as concerns the beginning of portable art. In Europe, such a chronology has long existed even if controversy and changes have occurred about some turning-point periods. But when should we fix its origins? Recent South African discoveries gave very ancient dates; does this mean that they date the birth of portable art? It is now necessary to list all the dates available in order to set up a chronology in relation to the main Pleistocene cultures, which will open up the problem of artistic cultural traditions: do they systematically exist? Under what forms? How do they evolve as concerns schemas of production, techniques, styles, motifs? How were they transmitted, insofar as we can access this process?

At the end of the Symposium, we shall propose a debate about the role and place of portable art within the different cultures that created it. As a link with other symposia, we shall particularly stress its relationship with wall art: what kind? Do we have a chronological framework accurate enough to deal with the problem? Would the representations on portable art in certain painted caves be a sort of sketch of the wall art? Would their purpose be the same? Or different? Etc. Please send the titles and abstracts of your proposed presentations to one of us:

Aline Averbough (France), [averbough@yahoo.fr](mailto:averbough@yahoo.fr)

Valérie Feruglio (France), [feruglio@free.fr](mailto:feruglio@free.fr)

### **Signs, symbols, myth, ideology – Pleistocene art: the archaeological material and its anthropological meanings**

The symposium seeks to occasion new ideas and innovative research, to afford fresh theories and bold hypothesis together with unpublished information and recent discoveries relative to the study Pleistocene art in general, and in particular to the philosophies and practices it implies. The symposium thus provides an opportunity to discuss the roles played by iconography and myth in archaeological times thanks, in part, to the light which can be shed thereon by insights emerging from the anthropological study of peoples whose material life styles and assimilated mentalities can be plausibly paralleled to those of our pre-Historic forebears.

There is no third way beyond conscious or unconscious ethnocentrism. It must consequently be recognised that anthropology and archaeology with their respective categorisations of empirical

reality (amongst which art and pre-History) are pure products of recent Western history. This recognition, creative as well as critical, could lead, far beyond the usual interdisciplinary syncretisms, to radically new hermeneutical systems able to attribute less ambiguous meaning to the very terms under discussion – art, pre-History and the Pleistocene. In particular, such issues as the following will be debated:

- The emerging problems of the archaeological and anthropological documentation of art sites with special reference to palaeo-archaeo-anthropological data.
- The correlations, synchronic and diachronic, between palaeo-ethnocultural areas at different periods and in various places.
- The iconography of Pleistocene art as a reflection of palaeo-ethnic traditions.
- Ceremonial aspects and underlying meanings; the possible roles and function of Pleistocene art in keeping with eco-social-cultural changes.
- Data from sites that are still in use, insofar as they can be related to Pleistocene art sites.

Dario Seglie (Italy), [CeSMAP@cesmap.it](mailto:CeSMAP@cesmap.it)

Enrico Comba (Italy), [enrico.comba@unito.it](mailto:enrico.comba@unito.it)

Mike Singleton (Belgium), [singleton@demo.ucl.ac.be](mailto:singleton@demo.ucl.ac.be)

\*

*Congress address:* Congrès Art Pléistocène dans le Monde, Parc de la Préhistoire, 09400 Banat, France. E-mail: [ifrao.ariège.2010@sesta.fr](mailto:ifrao.ariège.2010@sesta.fr); Tel. +33 561 055 040.

*Hotel information and bookings:* Centre départemental du Tourisme 'Loisirs Accueil'. Reservations will be accepted from December 2009 at e-mail [ifrao.ariège.2010@sesta.fr](mailto:ifrao.ariège.2010@sesta.fr)

*Visits of caves* (Niaux, Bédouilhac, Le Mas d'Azil, Gargas) and Palaeolithic art museums (Le Mas d'Azil, Musée Bégouën) will be organised both during (on 8 September) and at the end of the Congress (on 11 September). The official congress languages will be English, French and Spanish (no instant translation).

*Congress registration fee:* 100 euros for participants; 60 euros for accompanying persons and for students.

Enquiries:

Dr Jean Clottes  
IFRAO Immediate Past President  
11, Rue du Fourcat  
09000 Foix,  
France  
E-mail: [j.clottes@wanadoo.fr](mailto:j.clottes@wanadoo.fr)

Robert G. Bednarik  
IFRAO Convener  
P.O. Box 216  
Caulfield South, VIC 3162  
Australia  
E-mail: [auraweb@hotmail.com](mailto:auraweb@hotmail.com)

The web-page of the 2010 IFRAO Congress is at <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/pawc/web/index.html>

## Five new IFRAO members

The applications for affiliation with IFRAO of the following five organisations — from Cuba, United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal and France — have been ratified by postal ballot:

The **Grupo Cubano de Investigaciones de Arte Rupestre (GCIAR)** is a national multidisciplinary association formed in 2006, developed from the project 'Cuba and its Rock Art' since 1990, and forming a Permanent Working Group of the Cuban Institute of Anthropology of the Science Ministry (CITMA) in Cuba. The members of GCIAR include archaeologists, heritage conservators, geographers, biologists, geologists, speleologists and artists, among others. They have worked with the rock art of Cuba, Peru, Mexico and Dominican Republic, and have provided an impressive list of achievements covering recent years, of more than four pages. These include numerous scholarly publications by members, expeditions, regular meetings, public education, exhibitions, rock art conservation and participation at international rock art conferences. The Code of Ethics of GCIAR is essentially identical with the IFRAO Code of Ethics, and GCIAR has a detailed eight-page constitution.

The senior executive person and IFRAO Representative of GCIAR is M.Sc. Racso Fernández Ortega, and the postal address of GCIAR is Calle Amargura No. 203 entre Aguiar y Habana, Habana Vieja, La Habana, Cuba; e-mail: [itibacahubaba@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:itibacahubaba@yahoo.com.ar)

The **Welsh Rock Art Organisation (WRAO)** has been founded in 2002, evolving from the Anglesey Rock Art Project. Based on numerous rock art discoveries it was considered important to establish a rock art research organisation in Wales. It is run by a democratically formed committee, convened by Dr George Nash and Adam Stanford who have been democratically elected in November 2008. The website is managed by Adam Stanford, published artwork and editorial is managed by Abby George. The basic aims of WRAO are to educate, to record and promote the ancient and modern rock art of Wales. There are currently around sixty rock art sites known in Wales, the majority are on exposed surfaces and many have only received superficial attention. WRAO has adopted and amended (to suit the rock art sites of Wales) the IFRAO Code of Ethics. In 2007 and 2008, the WRAO Convener wrote and presented a series of programs for the BBC, one of which covered sites in Anglesey and North Wales.

The proposed IFRAO Representative is Dr George Nash, SLR Consulting Ltd, Mytton Mill, Forton Heath, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 1HA, United Kingdom; e-mail: [gnash@slrconsulting.com](mailto:gnash@slrconsulting.com)

The **Asociación Cultural Instituto de Estudios Prehistóricos (ACINEP)** was established in June 2002 as a cultural and scientific, non-profit non-governmental association. In view of its work in the study of rock art, ACINEP wished to become affiliated with IFRAO. The Association has a constitution and its activities include archaeological excavation, fieldwork in Spain as well as abroad, participation in international conferences, and rock art research at numerous sites, in Spain, Italy and Morocco.

The IFRAO Representative is Professor José Julio García Arranz, of the Universidad de Extremadura, and the official postal address is c/ John Lennon, nº 3, 06800 Mérida (Badajoz), Spain; e-mail: [turko@unex.es](mailto:turko@unex.es)

The **Centro Europeu de Investigação da Pré-História do Alto Ribatejo (CEIPHAR)** was established in 1994 as a non-profit, scientific, non-governmental organisation, and was gazetted as such in March 1996. CEIPHAR has been involved in various research projects involving rock art ever since. Currently, CEIPHAR has the scientific supervision of the Museum of Prehistoric Art of Mação, and co-ordinates the project RUPTEJO, a research program on the rock art of the Tagus valley, approved by the Portuguese Ministry of Culture. CEIPHAR has collaborated with IFRAO members in the past, and has a comprehensive constitution. It applied to become affiliated with IFRAO at the Capivara IFRAO congress.

The IFRAO Representative is Professor Luiz Oosterbeek, and the postal address of CEIPHAR is Instituto Politécnico de Tomar, Estrada da Serra, 2300 TOMAR, Portugal; Tel. +351 249 346 363; Fax. +351 249 346 366; e-mail: [loost@ipt.pt](mailto:loost@ipt.pt)

The **Association de Sauvegarde, d'Etude et de Recherche pour le patrimoine naturel et culturel du Centre-Var (ASER)** has been active in the study and protection of the material and immaterial patrimony in the Var district, south-eastern France, for about thirty years. Its wide range of interests include archaeology and rock art and related subjects: Neolithic schematic paintings or engravings, medieval lineal schematic engravings, graffiti of used or disused prisons, modern tags and graffiti, engravings on trees near sanctuaries etc. The committee of ASER is elected annually; the present President is anthropologist Philippe Hameau. ASER is a non-political, non-governmental association that has decided that it wishes to affiliate with IFRAO.

The IFRAO Representative is Professor Philippe Hameau, the postal address of ASER is Maison de l'Archéologie, 21 rue République, 83143 Le Val, France. Tel. 0494 863924. Fax. 0494 864812; e-mail: [aser2@wanadoo.fr](mailto:aser2@wanadoo.fr); Web-page: <http://asercentrevr.free.fr>