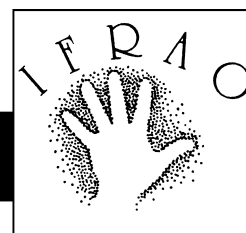


IFRAO Report No. 56



XVIII CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE ARTE RUPESTRE IFRAO 2015: 'Símbolos en el paisaje: el arte rupestre y su contexto' 18th INTERNATIONAL ROCK ART CONFERENCE IFRAO 2015: 'Symbols in the landscape: rock art and its context'

CÁCERES (EXTREMADURA, SPAIN)

University Campus, Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities

31st of August to 4th of September 2015

Website: <http://led.unex.es/IFRAOCaceres2015/index.php?lang=es&op=2>

By HIPÓLITO COLLADO GIRALDO and JOSÉ JULIO GARCÍA ARRANZ

Preface

During the 16th IFRAO International Rock Art Congress, held at the end of May 2013 in Albuquerque (New Mexico, United States), the General Assembly of IFRAO (International Federation of Rock Art Organisations), after assessing different candidates, approved the proposal given by the University of Extremadura and the Institute of Prehistoric Studies by a wide margin, deciding that the 2015 Conference would be held in Cáceres. It would be the first time in the Federation's history that this event would be celebrated in Spain.

IFRAO is, as its name states, an organisation gathering all 54 of the world's associations aimed at research, preservation and management of rock art and is independent and (mostly) non-governmental, or works through the institutions, universities or research centres in the various countries. Besides numerous meetings, activities, publications and its commitment to defend and promote world rock art heritage through its well-known ethics policy, IFRAO has organised, since 1988, international meetings of great importance, always at the same time the General Assembly takes place. As a reference, in the last six years, IFRAO Congresses have been held in São Raimundo Nonato (Piauí, Brazil) in 2009, Ariège-Pyrénées (France) in 2010, La Paz (Bolivia) in 2012, Albuquerque (New Mexico, U.S.A.) in 2013 and Guiyang City (Guizhou, China) in July 2014.

The Cáceres congress: place, dates and organisers

The 18th IFRAO International Rock Art Congress 2015 was held in the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities on the Cáceres Campus from the 31st of August to the 4th of September 2015 (see the conference website: <http://led.unex.es/IFRAOCaceres2015/index.php?lang=es&op=2>). The event was organised by teachers at the History of Art Department of the University of Extremadura, the Culture Foundation of Extremadura and researchers of the Institute of Prehistoric Studies (ACINEP). This last named organisation has been an IFRAO member for more than ten years and comprises researchers of the University and the Regional Government of Extremadura. The infrastructure and the services of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, University of Extremadura were available for the activities. The Conference also counted on technical and academic support of the Research Groups of *Patrimonio&ARTE* (Heritage&ART) and CUPARQ (Culture, Heritage and Archaeology).

Participants

The conference was addressed to researchers, specialists, teachers, curators, cultural managers and cultural heritage professionals, as well as to all others interested in rock art. It gathered 518 researchers, scholars and delegates coming from 49 countries in six continents. They all followed a wide program defined by the work of 730 researchers who individually, and also as teams,

signed a total number of 450 presentations, organised in 32 sessions taking place at the IFRAO Conference 2015 (there were also up to 11 workshops at the same time). They were aimed at the study of diffusion, research and preservation of the world rock art. The aforementioned figures show that IFRAO 2015 has been the scientific conference with the highest international projection organised by the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, and probably by the whole University of Extremadura. It was developed in four official languages: English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. As proof of the international interest it generated, journalists from *National Geographic*, Mexican National Television and the Italian RAI were covering the event on site, and its national and international impact in press, radio and television during the days it took place was unprecedented for this kind of meeting. Articles about the conference in the main bulletins and rock art journals around the world are still getting published. They underline its success in terms of attendance and organisation.

Complementary activities

The conference schedule had numerous complementary cultural activities at the University of Extremadura and in the town of Cáceres. This was to enable its impact both on the town and the areas showing rock art in the provinces of Cáceres, Badajoz and Salamanca, and the Portuguese Alentejo. There were exhibitions and shows held simultaneously in different rooms led by the Provincial Deputation of Cáceres, the local government, the Regional Government of Extremadura and the University of Extremadura, such as the *Palacio de la Isla* building, *Pintores 10* room, the Museum of Cáceres and the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities. All places were showing art or photography exhibitions related to rock art and pre-Historic aspects as follows.

Pintores 10 room: exhibition *Art in the caves* by the painter Maximina Espeso, with paintings reproducing different panels representing Palaeolithic and post-Palaeolithic rock art in the Iberian Peninsula, Europe and northern Africa. The techniques employed resulted in exhibits very close to the real representations.

Palacio de la Isla building: itinerant show *Planetarium trip: World Heritage rock art*, visual tour of rock art in the six continents which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, using some panels or thematic sections and an audiovisual to show rock art from 40 sites around the world. This has been designed by the Museum of Altamira.

Exhibition *From one hand to the other*, by the Cantabrian artist Ludovico Rodríguez Liaño, with paintings representing panels of Iberian Palaeolithic and Post-Palaeolithic rock art, made with natural colorants very similar to those used by pre-Historic 'artists'. This very author also carried out rock art workshops for schoolchildren around the *Palacio de la Isla* building at the end of September, with an outstanding participation

of the schools in town.

Cáceres Museum (Palacio de Las Veletas building): photography exhibition on panels, *The art of light*, with pictures of petroglyphs of the sites of Siega Verde (Ciudad Rodrigo) and Foz Côa (Vila Nova de Foz Côa, Portugal). Itinerant installation organised by the Côa Parque Foundation and the Archaeological Centre and Interpretation Centre of Siega Verde (Villar de la Yegua, Salamanca).

Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities hall: three-dimensional representation of female idols from Palaeolithic until the Metal Ages, some of them originally from Extremadura, by the artist Jesús Vázquez, from Cáceres.

The desk of the General Direction of Tourism of the Extremadura Regional Government offering further tourist information about the region to all participants at the event.

A desk about the European Cultural Route '*Prehistoric Rock Art Trails*', currently established as the main tourist route with European rock art sites and recognised by the Council of Europe as 'European Cultural Route Prehistoric Rock Art Trails'.

Attendees were also given the chance to participate in different fieldtrips on Wednesday, 3rd September, the central day of the conference. These were organised to visit the main rock art sites on the south-west of the Iberian Peninsula, including the most relevant sites in Extremadura: Monfragüe National Park, area of Alcántara, Villuercas Ibores Jara Geopark, the mountains to the south of Mérida, La Serena and Tierra de Barros areas or the International Tagus, besides more sites nearby, in Portugal and Salamanca. These all achieved an important promotion platform. At the same time, these travels also included trips to other, non-rock art heritage sites, such as the Monastery of Guadalupe, the historic site of Trujillo, the Interpretation Centre of rock art painting in Torrejón el Rubio or the Alcántara Roman Bridge. Detailed routes were the following:

Trip 1: Siega Verde – Monfragüe – Torrejón el Rubio (Salamanca – Cáceres)

Collection of rock engravings from Siega Verde and Interpretation Centre (petroglyphs) – cave of the Monfragüe Castle and other decorated rockshelters (schematic paintings) near Rock Painting Interpretation Centre of the National Park of Monfragüe in Torrejón el Rubio.

Trip 2: Geoparque Villuercas – Guadalupe – Trujillo (Cáceres)

Decorated rockshelters of Risquillo de Paulino and Cueva Chiquita, in the Villuercas Ibores Jara Geopark (schematic paintings) – Monastery of Guadalupe (World Heritage Site) – visit to the historic site of Trujillo.

Trip 3: La Calderita – Alange – Mérida (Badajoz)

Decorated rockshelter of the Cornisa de La Calderita (schematic paintings) – Bronze Age granary of the Cerro



Dr Hipólito Collado Giraldo, the new President of IFRAO (on the right), during one of the congress fieldtrips.

de Alange – Roman thermal springs of Alange – visit to the archaeological site of Mérida (World Heritage Site).

Trip 4: Magacela – Campanario – La Zarza – Alange – Almendralejo (Badajoz)

Dolmen and decorated rockshelters of Magacela (schematic paintings and engravings) – petroglyphs from the Iron Age of Piedraescrita (Campanario) – decorated rockshelter of the Cornisa de La Calderita (schematic paintings) – Bronze Age granary of the Cerro de Alange – Tholos of Huerta Montero (Almendralejo).

Trip 5: Mação – Valencia de Alcántara – Santiago de Alcántara (Portugal – Cáceres)

Museum of Prehistoric Art of the Tagus Valley (Mação) and petroglyphs from the Presa de Fratel – decorated shelter of Puerto Roque (schematic paintings) – dolmens of Valencia de Alcántara – Buraco Cave (schematic paintings) – Dolmens and Interpretation Centre of Megalithism of the Dehesa Boyal of Santiago de Alcántara.

In the same way, participants had the chance to do trips organised by the travel agency Barceló Viajes, both before and after the congress. These consisted in visiting the main rock art sites in the Iberian Peninsula, with two main routes in the north and the south.

Finally, some international researchers were voluntarily in charge of workshops or complementary talks during the days of the conference. There were book launches about rock art in Mexico and Australia and a tribute to different people, including the one in memory of Eduardo Hernández-Pacheco, from Extremadura, because of his great work at the beginnings of research in rock art, in the first decades of the last century.

Official publications: session minutes

At the conference, participants were provided with

the minutes taken. These were in a printed book including 750 pages of summaries, and another digital one with the complete articles introduced at the meeting, in the four official languages of the event. This is a work of international scientific importance, comprising 2630 pages. The volume contains global level data that turns it into an essential reference in the international rock art research field. These minutes have been sent to main study centres of rock art in the world in the last few months, in many cases thanks to the participants.

Tributes

One of the most relevant events at IFRAO 2015 was the session and tribute to the Spanish researcher Alfonso Caballero Klink, one of the most important scholars in the study of Spanish schematic rock art, whose

huge scientific work was mainly developed in Castile-La Mancha. This homage was held in the main hall of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities and was conducted by Ramón Montes Barquín, technical director of the CARP International Association (Prehistoric Rock Art Trails). It had a massive attendance from the general public and the congress participants.

International projection

Taking these details into account it is obvious that the congress activity turned the city of Cáceres into the focus of the study of world rock art for a whole week. It subsequently was an excellent opportunity to show the richness of rock art in the province and also in the region of Extremadura to specialists coming from all over the planet, representing the main palaeoart cycles of pre-History and proto-History on the western Iberian Peninsula, from Palaeolithic to Iron Age. It is especially due to its outstanding wealth of schematic paintings (as shown in the conference, we managed to put Extremadura on the World rock art map). Nevertheless, besides the scientific dimension of the event, this was a very special occasion to welcome these visitors with the warm and kind character of the city and the identically named province of Cáceres that we all wished to show. This was by making available for them all means, activities and tourist values the region can offer, and by counting on the advantages given by the declaration of Cáceres as the Spanish Gastronomy Capital of 2015.

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