

## IFRAO Report No. 26

### Rock art discovery in the Alqueva dam zone of the river Guadiana in Spain and Portugal

The International Federation of Rock Art Organisations applauds the important discovery of petroglyphs by the river Guadiana in Spain and Portugal, in a zone that will be flooded by the Alqueva dam.

A Spanish archaeologist disclosed the petroglyphs in Spain early last April at a course on European pre-Historic art, held at the Polytechnic of Tomar (IPT) in Portugal. His talk was on fieldwork carried out at Cheles during January and February this year (see article on pp. 60-61 in this issue of *RAR*).

IFRAO rock art researchers promptly went to Cheles and confirmed the importance of the discovery. An absence of similar petroglyphs further downstream in Portugal puzzled them. There was not any presentation about petroglyphs like these at last February's archaeology colloquium of the Alqueva Development and Infrastructure Enterprise (EDIA), the agency building the dam that also handles the archaeology and other impact studies.

Then the Liga para a Protecção da Natureza (LPN), a nature protection league founded in 1948, received an anonymous tip-off about petroglyphs just like those of Cheles, except they were spread along ten kilometres of the Guadiana river in Portugal.

In response, members of Movimento Cota 139, a movement aiming to limit the level of the Alqueva dam reservoir level to 139 metres, went to see the petroglyphs on 25 April 2001 and called in Manuel Calado, an archaeologist from the University of Lisbon. An environmental Web site called *Ambiente Online* broke the news of the petroglyphs on 26 April. The following morning, the Portuguese mass media pounced on the scoop.

#### Position of IFRAO

Although people from the international scientific community are delighted by the discovery, they are also very concerned because the dam is nearly finished and it will be difficult to avoid the destruction of this important rock art area. IFRAO, with thousands of amateurs and specialists in five continents that belong to the Federation's organisations, now calls for the prompt nomination of a genuinely independent international commission to

follow the situation and ensure international participation in the exploration and documentation of the rock art area.

The Federation considers the plight of the Guadiana rock art area to be far worse than that of the Côa rock art area, also in Portugal, in 1994-95, for the following reasons:

- Work on the dam is nearing completion.
- It seems that the lesson of the Côa dam was completely forgotten, resulting in an appalling threat to, or loss of, the rock art and a massive burden on citizens and taxpayers that pay the colossal cost of such aborted projects. Today there are bodies that did not exist in 1994: IPA (Instituto Português de Arqueologia), the Portuguese Institute of Archaeology; and CNART (Centro Nacional de Arte Rupestre), the National Centre of Rock Art. These bodies are responsible for keeping an inventory and register of all rock art in the country and advancing the conservation and public awareness of it (Law No. 117/97, 14 May 1997).
- IPA and CNART should have been constantly inspecting what EDIA was doing. The current President of IPA, Prof. Dr João Zilhão, was severely critical of a similar situation during the fight to save the Côa rock art area. IFRAO fails to understand why he does not resign — so showing his total opposition to the destruction of the Guadiana rock art area.
- IFRAO upholds the protection, study and public awareness of rock art in all continents, irrespective of its age or connected traditions. We are therefore once again deeply concerned that an attributed age is once again being used as criterion in determining the importance of rock art and whether or not it is worth protecting.

Rock art areas like the Guadiana, stretching two kilometres in Spain and ten in Portugal, are always of great value and importance. If claims that most of the petroglyphs are Neolithic prove to be true, this corpus would be quite rare because there is very little rock art in Europe attributed to the Neolithic-Chalcolithic period. Rock art of corresponding periods are known in Valcamónica, Italy (UNESCO World Heritage Site), and Mont Bego, France.

IFRAO asks the Prime Minister and Minister of the Culture in Portugal to consider the following points:

- A need for timely action to do everything possible to investigate the petroglyphs with the most appropriate and up-to-date methodology and with adequate time to do so, even if this means delaying or suspending the filling of the reservoir.

- The merit of creating a genuinely independent international commission to assess the importance and value of the rock art. Aside from questions over the competence of IPA, CNART and EDIA, the commission should not fall under these or other state bodies — thus helping to ensure that the integrity of the commission is not compromised.
- State bodies cannot be both players and referees. This was one of the most heavily criticised aspects of the Cõa syndrome.
- IFRAO has formed an emergency delegation with specialists from four continents to monitor the situation. It would be extremely beneficial if this delegation were part of an extended commission with representatives of Portuguese universities, archaeology associations and other groups.
- IFRAO can promptly indicate suitable specialists to organise training courses for all the archaeologists and students who will be needed for the tremendous effort a time-sensitive investigation requires.
- We remember the political courage shown by the Prime Minister, António Guterres, in saving the Cõa rock art area. To enable constructive dialogue, IFRAO requests an audience with the Prime Minister and his Excellency, the President of Portugal.

Finally, IFRAO wants to tell people in Portugal they can and should be proud of this discovery. When people respect the past, there is hope for the future.

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#### Relevant Internet links

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4177255,00.html> - Stone Age find will not halt dam, by Eduardo Gonçalves in Outeiro, Portugal and Giles Tremlett in Madrid, *The Guardian*, Saturday, 28 April 2001.

<http://www.ambienteonline.pt/AANoticias/portal-noticia.asp?id=330&dia=&mes=> - Há gravuras neolíticas no Alqueva. News scoop by João Rabaça, *Ambiente Online*, Thursday, 26 April 2001.

<http://ultimahora.publico.pt/shownews.asp?idCanal=36&id=20647> - Descobertas gravuras rupestres na área do Alqueva. *PÚBLICO Online*, Friday, 27 April 2001.

<http://jornal.publico.pt/publico/2001/04/28/Terra/THCAPA01.html> - Figuras rupestres descobertas no Vale do Guadiana, by Carlos Dias. *PÚBLICO*, Saturday, 28 April 2001.

<http://ultimahora.publico.pt/shownews.asp?id=20913&idCanal=14> - Instituto Português de Arqueologia e Centro

Nacional de Arte Rupestre acusados de negligenciar Alqueva. *PÚBLICO Online*, Saturday, 28 April 2001.

<http://www.ipa.min-cultura.pt/news/noticias/DecGuad> - Descobertas de arte rupestre no Guadiana, Instituto Português de Arqueologia.

<http://www.lpn.pt> - Liga para a Protecção da Natureza (LPN), a nature protection league.

<http://www.rupestre.net/tracce/13/>

<http://is-it-art.net/guadiana/>

<http://pwp.netcabo.pt/0167542401/noticias/noticias.htm>

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*Two petroglyph panels in the Guadiana valley. Images provided by Andrea Arcà, Footsteps of Man, Italy.*

## IFRAO International Workshop on Conservation and Documentation, Tanzania

The Eastern African Rock Art Research Association has

established the dates for the International Workshop on Conservation and Documentation of Rock Art in Tanzania. The dates are from Saturday, 29 September to Sunday, 7 October 2001. The workshop will include two days (30 September and 1 October) of 'brain-storming sessions' led by resource people at the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), followed by four days of field work and finally two days of discussions and conclusions. The field work will take place in the famous rock art areas of Kondoa and Singida in central Tanzania. Participants will be accommodated in nearby guest houses.

The organising committee hopes to be able to subsidise participants' accommodation during the field work. It is recommended that participants coming from outside Tanzania try to fly to Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) which is less than one hour's drive from Arusha, the venue of the conference. They can also fly to Dar es Salaam and take a domestic connecting flight to KIA. Those who wish to fly to Nairobi can travel by road to Arusha. Arusha is a flourishing tourist city in the northern part of the country. The organising committee is trying to raise money to subsidise hotel accommodation for resource people who we hope will come from Argentina, Australia, Portugal, India, Italy, South Africa, United States of America and Tanzania. The organising committee will be pleased to organise private trips to the famous game parks (Manyara, Ngorongoro, Serengeti etc.) after the workshop, but we have to know such requirements in advance.

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## IRAC 2002

The 2002 International Rock Art Congress (IRAC) will take place at the University of Skopje, Faculty of Economy, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from 14 July to 21 July 2002. The Congress is sponsored by the Macedonian government, Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Science and Macedonian Telecommunications. The Macedonian Rock Art Research Association (MRARA) is the national host. The event will be a good opportunity to bring together people interested in all aspects of rock art research, education, conservation and protection. Each author or co-author should be prepared to entertain questions or comments directly after the presentation of papers.

The following symposia are currently planned:

1. Rock art in Macedonia: Saska Aleksovska and Dejan Gabriela (Chairs), *drustvo za nauka*, 91320 Kratovo, FYR Macedonia. E-mail: [rockart@unet.com.mk](mailto:rockart@unet.com.mk)
2. The recording of rock art: Mery Maneva (Chair), *drustvo za nauka*, 91320 Kratovo, FYR Macedonia. E-mail: [rockart@unet.com.mk](mailto:rockart@unet.com.mk)

3. The archaeo-astronomy of rock art: Leo Dubal (Chair), Laboratory of Archeometry, P.O. 5914, 3001 Berne, Switzerland. E-mail: [rchleo@bluewin.ch](mailto:rchleo@bluewin.ch)
4. Landscape, place and rock art: Angelo Fossati (Chair), Cooperativa Archeologica 'Le Orme dell'Uomo', Piazzale Donatori di Sangue 1, 25040 Cerveno (BS), Italy. E-mail: [Fossati@numerica.it](mailto:Fossati@numerica.it)
5. Rock art in the world: Jean Clottes and Jean-Loïc Le Quellec (Chairs), 11, rue Fourcat, 09000 Foix, France. E-mail: [j.clottes@wanadoo.fr](mailto:j.clottes@wanadoo.fr)
6. Human figures in rock art: Arsen Faradjev (Chair), Ramenki Street 11/1-33, 117607 Moscow, Russia. E-mail: [farajev@hotmail.com](mailto:farajev@hotmail.com)
7. Rock art protection and conservation: Ben Swartz (Chair), College of Science and Humanities, Ball State University, 47306-0435 Muncie, Indiana, U.S.A. E-mail: [01bkswartz@bsuvc.bsu.edu](mailto:01bkswartz@bsuvc.bsu.edu)
8. Cupules — the most numerous petroglyphs: NabuhiroYoshida (Chair), P.O. Box II, Koburamishi Postoffice, 803 Kitakyushu, Japan. E-mail: [jps@qd5.so-net.ne.jp](mailto:jps@qd5.so-net.ne.jp)
9. Semiotics, signs and symbols: Dusko Alksovski (Chair), *drustvo za nauka*, 91320 Kratovo, FYR Macedonia. E-mail: [rockart@unet.com.mk](mailto:rockart@unet.com.mk)
10. Computer technology as an aid to rock art research: Sasho Manasov, Sasho Aleksovski and Vancho Georgiev (Chairs), *drustvo za nauka*, 91320 Kratovo, FYR Macedonia. E-mail: [rockart@unet.com.mk](mailto:rockart@unet.com.mk), [karpumet@mt.net.mk](mailto:karpumet@mt.net.mk)
11. Rock art education: Dario Seglie (Chair), CeSMAP, Viale Giolitti, 1, 10064 Pinerolo (TO), Italy. E-mail: [CeSMAP@cesmap.it](mailto:CeSMAP@cesmap.it)
12. Dating, pigment analysis and geological applications: Robert G. Bednarik (Chair), AURA, P.O. Box 216, Caulfield South Vic. 3162, Australia. E-mail: [auraweb@hotmail.com](mailto:auraweb@hotmail.com)
13. Rock art — basis of cultural, historical, linguistic, ethnographic and religious-philosophical heritage: Aleksandar Apostolov (Chair), *drustvo za nauka*, 91320 Kratovo, FYR Macedonia. E-mail: [rockart@unet.com.mk](mailto:rockart@unet.com.mk)
14. Classification of rock art according to its geographic position: Bogorodaka Aleksovska and Meri Maneva (Chairs), *drustvo za nauka*, 91320 Kratovo, FYR Macedonia. E-mail: [rockart@unet.com.mk](mailto:rockart@unet.com.mk)
15. Origin and development of rock art: Dusko Aleksovski (Chair), *drustvo za nauka*, 91320 Kratovo, FYR Macedonia. E-mail: [rockart@unet.com.mk](mailto:rockart@unet.com.mk)

### Academic Committee

The Academic Committee of the IRAC 2002 consists of: Robert G. Bednarik, IFRAO Convener, Australian Rock Art Research Association; Prof. Dr Aleksandar Apostolov, University of Skopje, FYR Macedonia; Dr Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, University of Paris, France; Dr Jean Clottes, Association pour le Rayonnement de l'Art Parietal Européen, France; Mario Consens, Centro de Investigación de Arte Rupestre del Uruguay; María Mercedes Podestá, Comité de Investigación del Arte Rupestre de la Sociedad Argentina de Antropología; Nabuhiro

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### Field trips

The IRAC 2002 field trips offered have been planned and organised by the Macedonian Rock Art Research Centre and the National Tourist Office. Congress participants will pay only US\$10 per day including a lunch.

#### Field trip No. 1

Departure from Central University Place on 16 July at 8:30 a.m., return 11:00 p.m. A bus and walking tour of the Trnovetz rock art site. The Congress participants can see different kinds of petroglyphs and will visit the small town of Kratovo near an ancient volcano. After a brief visit to the town they will view the only rock art 'arcuform' site in Macedonia, named 'Written Rock'. In the evening a concert of folk songs will be organised in a pre-Historic cave at Sopsko Rudare, near Kratovo. The field trip involves long walking.

#### Field trip No. 2

Kriva Palanka rock art sites on 19 July, depart Central University Place at 8:30 a.m. return at 4:00 p.m. Visit of the town Kriva Palanka and have lunch there. This field trip involves long walking.

#### Field trip No. 3

Desovo and Gorno Selo rock art sites, near the town Prilep, featuring different kinds of cupules. Depart 24 July at 8:30 a.m., return at 10:00 p.m. There is no long walking involved. Lunch at Prilep. In the evening the delegates will follow the National Festival of Folk Song.

#### Field trip No. 4

Rock Art of Pena valley near Tetovo, 25 July. Depart at 8:30 a.m., return at 4:00 p.m. A recently discovered rock art site will be viewed. Lunch at Tetovo.

#### Field trip No. 5

Orizari rock art sites, different kinds of engraved crosses near the town of Kotchani. Depart 26 July at 8:30 a.m., return at 6:00 p.m. Lunch at Kotchani.

Dr Dushko Aleksovski  
Chairman of IRAC 2002  
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## IFRAO-Brepols

The Editorial Committee of the *IFRAO-Brepols Rock Art Series* comprises the following members:

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It is the role of this committee to safeguard the highest academic calibre of the books to be published under the IFRAO-Brepols imprint. The *IFRAO-Brepols Rock Art Series* is to be a major series of books about rock art and related subjects, and the imprint is to be seen as a seal of approval by IFRAO.

The first four books being published under the new IFRAO-Brepols imprint will be the following volumes:

- 1. ROCK ART SCIENCE: the scientific study of palaeoart**, by Robert G. Bednarik.
- 2. GLOSSARY OF ROCK ART RESEARCH: a multilingual dictionary**, edited by Robert G. Bednarik, Mario Consens, Alfred Muzzolini, Jakov Sher, Dario Seglie and Mila Simões de Abreu.
- 3. THE PETROGLYPHS OF EL-HOSH (UPPER EGYPT)**, by D. Huyge, M. De Dapper, E. Marchi and A. Watchman.
- 4. ROCK ART AND EPISTEMOLOGY: courting sophistication**, edited by Robert G. Bednarik

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## THE EARLY INDIAN PETROGLYPHS PROJECT (EIP)

### Rationale for an international commission

During the 1990s, several extraordinary observations were reported from India, suggesting that the earliest known rock art may exist in that country. First, it was noted that two of the eleven petroglyphs in Auditorium Cave, Bhimbetka, were covered by undisturbed upper Acheulian

occupation deposits, indicating their Lower Palaeolithic age, and that the remaining cupules in that quartzite cave were of a similar antiquity (Bednarik 1994). Next, a large concentration of cup marks was discovered in Daraki-Chattan (Kumar 1996), and again there were indications of a very great age. Finally, two granite shelters, Bajanabhat 1 and 2, were located and their similar markings seemed to be of comparable age.

These propositions are of the utmost importance to world archaeology, to hominid evolution and to profound questions of the origins of culture, cognition and art-producing human behaviour. Extraordinary claims deserve extraordinary care in their consideration and scientific testing, and it is the purpose of this project to conduct such testing. This project will assemble an international commission to review the claims concerning four central Indian petroglyph sites. The EIP Commission, assembled by the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations and various other scholarly bodies, will investigate these matters thoroughly, using methods such as carbon isotope analysis, optically stimulated luminescence dating, microerosion dating and archaeological excavation. The Commission will report its findings to the international research community and then to the public. It will consist of more than twelve geologists, archaeologists, rock art scientists and archaeometrists, especially from India and Australia. This Commission will conduct research in the four sites concerned, to be followed by laboratory work over several months, before publishing its findings and subsequent recommendations.

Fieldwork is commencing in 2001 and will peak in the early months of 2002. Reports will be presented by late 2002 and in 2003. Over the next few years, this is considered to be one of the most important projects in the World in this field of scientific endeavour.

This Commission operates under the auspices of IFRAO (the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations) and will be directed by Robert G. Bednarik

(AURA) and Dr Giriraj Kumar (RASI).

Participating organisations will include:

The Australia-India Council  
 Rock Art Society of India (RASI)  
 Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA)  
 Indira Gandhi National Museum of Man  
 Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts  
 Archaeological Survey of India  
 Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad  
 Indian Archaeological Society, New Delhi  
 Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra  
 State Archaeology Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh  
 State Archaeology Department, Rajasthan  
 James Cook University, Townsville  
 University of Melbourne  
 Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, Sydney

The Australian members of the EIP Commission are:

Robert G. Bednarik (AURA, Co-Director of project)  
 Dr Alan Watchman (James Cook University, Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Sociology)  
 Dr Ewan M. Lawson (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation)  
 Dr R. G. (Bert) Roberts (University of Melbourne, School of Earth Sciences)

They thank the Australia-India Council for underwriting their travel costs.

Robert G. Bednarik  
 President and Convener of IFRAO

#### REFERENCES

- BEDNARIK, R. G. 1994. The Pleistocene art of Asia. *Journal of World Prehistory* 8: 351-75.  
 KUMAR, G. 1996. Daraki-Chattan: a Palaeolithic cupule site in India. *Rock Art Research* 13: 38-46.

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Visit the IFRAO HomePage on <http://www.cesmap.it/ifrao/ifrao.html>

Visit the AURA Homepage, by Cliff Ogleby, on the World Wide Web at  
<http://sunspot.sli.unimelb.edu.au/aura/Welcome.html>