

Important new information

1. Correspondence regarding the RASI-2004 International Rock Art Congress and associated activities should always be marked 'RASI-2004' as the subject in e-mails. Your co-operation will help dealing with a bulk of junk mail and computer viruses. As a second e-mail address for congress correspondence, please use *rasicongress2004@hotmail.com* instead of *rasicongress2004@rediffmail.com*. The e-mail address *girirajrasi@yahoo.com* is working well.
2. Besides RASI-2004, other big international events are also being held on the same dates in Agra. Hence, participants are strongly recommended to book their accommodation at the earliest possible time to avoid any inconvenience. Advance payment of one night's charge is essential to book the accommodation. For details, please follow the instructions given above.
3. In cases of unavoidable circumstances, the deposits for hotel bookings are fully refundable (minus bank and service charges) up to 5 September 2004. After that date the hotel will withhold the one night's deposit for accommodation booking.
3. Abstracts and full texts of the papers to be presented in the RASI-2004 Congress should be in Microsoft Word, Windows 98, 12 points, simple texts. For illustrations, use PhotoShop 6.5, scan at 600 dpi, select Postscript printer, save in Photo Suite 8.1 as TIFF file.

Abstracts of papers can be sent on or before 10 August 2004, and complete papers on or before 30 September 2004.

FIELD TRIPS

Please note that field trip A, to Bhimbetka and surrounding region, will start from Agra late evening, 2 December, or early morning, 3 December. The tour includes train journey from Agra to Bhopal in AC coach, three days travel to the sites and respective hotels of stay, boarding and lodging in good hotels. The cost will be US\$190.00 for single hotel occupancy and US\$160.00 for shared occupancy. It does not include the cost of cold drinks and beverages, which will be available on payment. Advance booking is necessary as noted in the first announcement (RAR 20: 191).

Field trip C will not terminate at Bhubneswar on the 8th as reported, but will terminate on Sunday, 12th December 2004.

The announcement for field trip D (RAR 20: 192) is cancelled, and the following is now substituted:

D. Khajuraho

To be organised by the congress travel agent (details are being furnished shortly, please check congress web-site). Khajuraho temple complex is another World Heritage site in Madhya Pradesh. The site presents marvels in temple architecture of the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. built by the rulers of the Chandel dynasty. It treasures the beautiful sculptures of damsels, musicians and dancers and erotic figures depicting the intimate moments of lovemaking, some in yogic poses. The temples provide an aura of a balanced worldly and spiritual life. Inquiries regarding this tour may be directed to *travelog@datainfosys.net*.

EIP Project progress report

ROBERT G. BEDNARIK and GIRIRAJ KUMAR

The Early Indian Petroglyphs Project, which began fieldwork in mid-2002 (Bednarik 2001a, 2001b; Kumar et al. 2003), continued its work in 2003. Besides the extensive ongoing fieldwork by the Indian Co-Director, G. Kumar, work is also being conducted in Australia, specifically analytical work of many types. This is a brief report of progress made.

Microerosion age estimates of very early petroglyphs

Among the several sites being analysed, the work has been completed and published for one, Moda Bhata near Ajmer, Rajasthan (Kumar and Bednarik 2002). The work at two other sites, Morajhari and Bajanibhat, again in Rajasthan, is also nearing completion and publications will be produced in due course. The results from these endeavours are literally the first empirical scientific evidence of rock art dating from India, and indeed from anywhere in

southern Asia.

OSL dating of sediments

A series of sediment samples has been removed from three early occupation sites, two of them having very early cupules. These are Auditorium Cave and Daraki-Chattan in Madhya Pradesh. All samples are presently undergoing analyses in the OSL laboratory of the University of Woollongong, Australia. Preliminary results are available, indicating that all samples are of the Pleistocene, and that most will yield results that are reasonably close to prior expectations. However, it is clear that the sedimentary stratigraphy of Daraki-Chattan will need to be considered very carefully, and in conjunction with sedimentary analyses and excavation data. Moreover, the analyst, R. G. Roberts, wishes to re-run all samples with further aliquots before deciding that preliminary interpretations of results were justified. This is particularly so as the importance of these samples is well appreciated, and there will definitely be no premature or questionable announcements from this project.

Carbon-14 analyses of rock art paint residues

This work is conducted by A. Watchman at the Australian National University and at the Lucas Heights Nuclear Facility. Preliminary analyses have been conducted and the nature, nano-stratigraphy and ages of mineral accretions from numerous sites are being studied by various methods besides AMS carbon isotope analysis. The first carbon dates are considered to be preliminary and are roughly from the mid-Holocene period, but the analyst will not release them until there are more data available from the AMS laboratory and he has been able to reliably interpret what they mean precisely, in terms of age estimates of rock art.

Sedimentary analyses

The duplicates and residues of the OSL samples will be the basis of all sedimentary analyses, which can only be done after the OSL work is completed to the satisfaction of the laboratory and the chief analyst.

Excavation of Daraki-Chattan

The fieldwork at the cave of Daraki-Chattan was continued during 2003, when a depth of 1.5 m was reached. Cupule-bearing rock slabs and Palaeolithic stone artefacts continued to this depth. The next excavation season is conducted from 23 May to 30 June 2004. It is expected that bedrock will be reached during this crucial phase of the dig, which will also establish the vertical distribution of the decorated rock fragments, and hopefully provide crucial minimum dating information for the extensive rock art in this cave.

Robert G. Bednarik, *1@ifrao.com*

Dr Giriraj Kumar, *girirajrasi@yahoo.com*

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- BEDNARIK, R. G. 2001b. Progress report of the EIP Project—November 2001. *Rock Art Research* 18: 138.
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- KUMAR, G., R. G. BEDNARIK, A. WATCHMAN, R. G. ROBERTS, E. LAWSON and C. PATTERSON 2003. 2002 progress report of the EIP Project. *Rock Art Research* 20: 70–1.