

## AND THE HOLOCENE ARRIVED: POST PALEOLITHIC ROCK ART AROUND THE WORLD

Hipólito COLLADO GIRALDO, *ACINEP - Asociación Cultural Instituto de Estudios Prehistóricos, Spain*

José Julio GARCÍA ARRANZ, *Universidad de Extremadura, Departamento de Arte y Ciencias del Territorio, ACINEP - Asociación Cultural Instituto de Estudios Prehistóricos, Spain*

Manuel BEA, *Área de Prehistoria. Dpt. Ciencias de la Antigüedad. Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain*

Contact email: [hipolitocollado@gmail.com](mailto:hipolitocollado@gmail.com)

Frequently, we have read that the most important and fruitful stage of prehistoric rock art finished with the end of the Palaeolithic Age. This is due to traditional research and the people in general, having the tendency to have a higher value for the indisputable aesthetic criteria and the greater antiquity of Palaeolithic rock art, in contrast to the more synthetic and conceptual expressions of post-Palaeolithic rock art.

However, against this simplistic assumption, this Session addresses those aesthetic values of post-Palaeolithic rock art manifestations around the world and also its intrinsic values as cultural expressions of human groups. Over the last 10,000 years human groups were able to surpass hunters-gatherer economic bases to reach new productive systems, linked initially to agriculture and livestock and further on to the increased exchange of surpluses and the new technological achievements in the exploitation and use of metals (copper, bronze and iron), that will lead to increasingly complex societies.

Social, technological and cultural evolution/revolution closely linked to different rock art expressions are unique in every part of the world but have common interpretative and functional value. A lot of questions arise: Is it possible to observe thematic and stylistic analogies depending on the socio-economic bases of each group in different parts of the World?: What factors could influence the artistic expression of each group in each period and in each territory?: Are Naturalism and Schematism tendencies different stylistic responses according to particular socio-economic developments, or are they styles associated with evolution and cognitive development processes?; Is it possible to observe the same evolution (stylistic, symbolic, functional) in post-Palaeolithic art all over the world or can we find some aspects evolving in response to regional factors?

This session, aims to be a pooling of this worldwide post-Palaeolithic rock art research, a platform for the presentation of new and important findings, a discussion forum to address interpretative, terminological, chronological, technical aspects to improve our knowledge about every one of these forms of expression.

## Survey in East Africa: the rock art of the Tigray (Northern Ethiopia)

Luca BACHECHI, *Università  
degli Studi di Firenze -  
Dipartimento di Biologia*  
Contact email:  
luca.bachechi@unifi.it

**Keywords:** rock art, Tigray,  
northern Ethiopia

In November 2013 and February 2017, the Department of Biology at the University of Florence and the Museum of Natural History of the Maremma in Grosseto organized two archaeological missions in Tigray (northern Ethiopia). The expeditions, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Institute of Prehistory and Protostoria, were carried out on the direct request of the local authorities and were undertaken in the context of the research program on rock art sites, evidence of prehistoric archeology and the ethnological survivals that the University of Florence and the Museum of Grosseto have begun to implement since 2002. During the missions, a survey was carried out to identify new sites with rock art and to document, through the application of the latest techniques, the artistic manifestations previously known in the specific archaeological literature. The successful outcome of the explorations, during which many new rock site sites have been identified, allows us to present a complete description of the rock art of the region.



Fig. 1 - Ba'atti Barud, Tigray, Ethiopia.  
(photo L. Bachechi)

Fig. 2 - Ba'atti Barud, Tigray, Ethiopia.  
(photo C. Cavanna)

## New approaches to post-Palaeolithic rock art in Aragón in light of new discoveries

In the last five years, new discoveries have come to light in the northern zone of the Guadalupe and Matarraña basins (Teruel, Spain). The number of known sites within this traditional rock art nucleus has increased, filling a large territory. Two main post-Palaeolithic styles (Levantine and Schematic) are represented, giving interesting data about prehistoric occupation of the space and their own cultural landscape considerations. The style and themes depicted within these sites (one of them part of a recently defined phase: macro-Levantine) can be compared with those already known and geographically close, but also with a number of other sites located on the Eastern part of the Levantine rock art distribution area (Castellón, Tarragona). All together these demonstrate an interesting and complementary distribution of the decorated spaces throughout different stylistic phases, pointing to distinctive landscapes based on different human occupational patterns, relating to either the hunter-gatherer or food producing groups in the area.

Manuel BEA, *Area of Prehistory, University of Zaragoza, Spain*  
Paloma Lanau, Pilar Utrilla  
Contact email:  
manubea@unizar.es

**Keywords:** Middle Ebro basin, Post-Palaeolithic art, Levantine, schematic, territory, hunter-gatherer





## Chronicle on the performance of rock art as memory and tradition. From hunting and gathering societies to current ethnic groups, Mexico

Maria del Pilar CASADO LÓPEZ  
 Contact email:  
 mpilar.casadol@gmail.com

**Keywords: Rock art, temporal sequence, Mexico**

Time and space are the silent referents of archeological conception. Since these two depend on each other we can introduce rock art within time and we are enabled to better understand the emerging groups of expression (fig. 1a). The objective of this article is to present, through temporal sequencing, the phenomenon of transmission and the surviving of rock art as an essential factor of memory preservation for cultural groups.

In Mexico, rock art is found throughout the country with a temporal range that spans from a thousand years to the present without a loss of continuity. The first examples are assigned to the hunting and gathering groups overlapping with the imaginary of semi-sedentary and sedentary groups as points of learning and tradition. The great Mesoamerican cultures permeated and imposed, a specific cultural set of iconographic motifs (fig. 1b-c). Subsequently, the arrival of the Europeans brought with them a colonial world view and cosmological understanding, the beliefs and traditions of which were delivered and imposed on the indigenous populations. The ethnic groups assumed these traditions and impregnated them with a cosmology adapted to their own experiences (fig. 2).

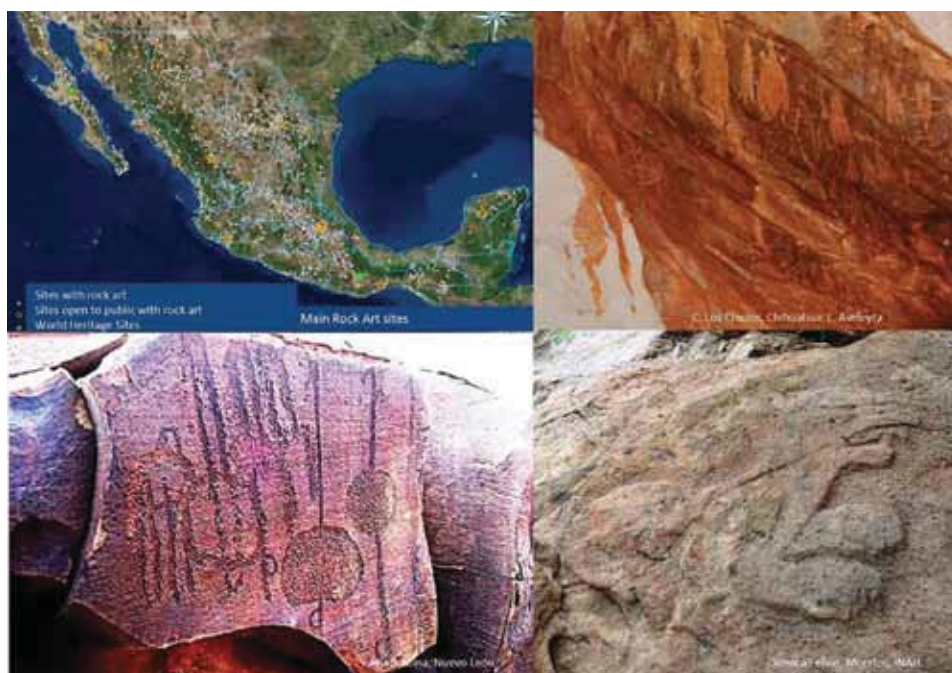


Fig.1 - a) Sites with rock art, México. (Author/Copyright: M.P. Casado);  
 b) Los Chuzos, Chihuahua. (Author/Copyright: L. Aveleyra); c) Mina, Nuevo León. (Author/Copyright: J.L. Encinas);  
 d) Chalcatzingo, Morelos. (Author/Copyright: INAH)  
 Fig.2 - a) C. de las Monas, Chihuahua. (Author/Copyright: M.P. Casado); b) Tamaulipas. (Author/Copyright: G. Ramirez);  
 c) Otomí, Hidalgo. (Author/Copyright: M.A. Hers, Proy. Otomí)



## New shelters with Pre-Schematic rock art in Extremadura

For over a decade, we have been working on the characterization (technical, stylistic and iconographic) of the Pre-Schematic rock art. This rock art style has been defined by the graphic expression of groups with a hunter-gatherer economy during the first part of the Holocene until the start of the Neolithic, that carried with it a new rock art cycle: Schematic rock art. Within the context of this research we present two new shelters where we have located motifs from this pre-Schematic rock art cycle, which serves also to highlight the link between the Pre-Schematic rock art figures painted on the shelters and figures engraved on rocks in the open air alongside the great river basins of the west of the Iberian Peninsula (Douro, Tagus and Guadiana).

Hipólito COLLADO GIRALDO,  
*ACINEP - Asociación Cultural  
Instituto de Estudios  
Prehistóricos, Spain*

José Julio GARCÍA ARRANZ,  
*Universidad de Extremadura,  
Departamento de Arte y  
Ciencias del Territorio, ACINEP  
- Asociación Cultural Instituto  
de Estudios Prehistóricos, Spain*

Contact email:  
hipolitocollado@gmail.com

**Keywords:** Pre-Schematic  
rock art, hunter-gatherer,  
Mesolithic

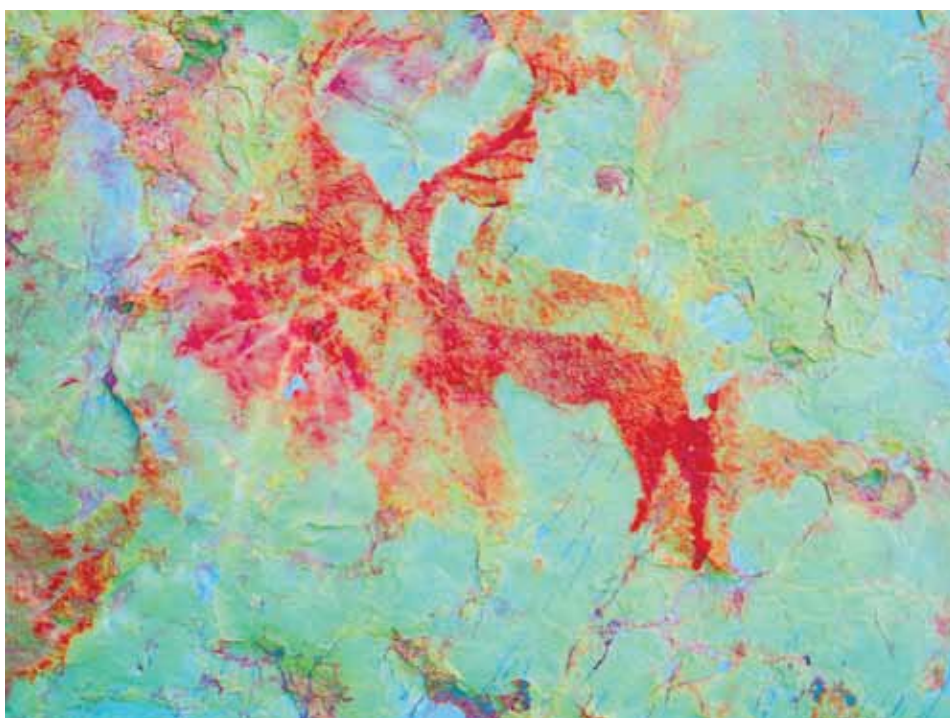


Fig.1 - General view. "Ramones" rock art shelter, Garbayuela, Badajoz, Spain. (author Hipólito Collado)

Fig.2 - Deer painted in red (detail). "Ramones" rock art shelter, Garbayuela, Badajoz, Spain. (author Hipólito Collado)

## Post-Palaeolithic art in the autonomous community of Extremadura (Spain): a panoramic view in light of the latest research

José Julio GARCÍA ARRANZ,  
*Universidad de Extremadura,  
Spain - Instituto de Estudios  
Prehistóricos (ACINEP), Spain*  
Hipólito COLLADO GIRALDO,  
*Instituto de Estudios  
Prehistóricos (ACINEP), Spain*  
Contact email:  
jjturko@gmail.com;  
hipolitocollado@gmail.com

**Keywords:** Iberian Peninsula,  
rock art, Extremadura,  
Palaeolithic, post-Palaeolithic

The Autonomous Community of Extremadura, on the south west Iberian Peninsula, has a density and diversity of rock art. In addition to Palaeolithic rock art, the research carried out over the past decades has enabled the characterization of successive post-Palaeolithic art cycles, which reflect a continuity of graphic use during recent Prehistory and Proto-history. Arising out of the pioneering work of Henri Breuil and Juan Cabré Aguiló, modern research has established a pre-schematic cycle, characteristic of a transitional stage between hunter-gatherer societies of the Upper Palaeolithic, and the producers of the Neolithic period. This is made up essentially of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures, abundant in the Manzaner Mill Rock Art complex (Cheles/Alconchel, Badajoz), with other semi-naturalistic zoomorphic figures located in sets of schematic cave paintings at the Monfragüe or Las Villuercas complexes (Caceres).

In addition, a rock art cycle has been identified, largely on isolated rocks, occasionally located near Iron Age sites:

- Guadiana River Grouping: Iron Age filiform engravings, with an extensive iconographic and thematic repertoire- mainly zoomorphs (including weapons, abstract motifs and anthropomorphs)
- Las Hurdes Grouping: fusiform notched and cut engravings (including weapons and podomorphs).
- La Serena Grouping: fusiform, notched engravings and filiform incisions (Guadalefra river and the Tamujoso stream in Campanario. Badajoz).

## Recent discoveries of petroglyphs at Chitral: clues for reconnecting the ancient Silk Route

Fawad KHAN, *Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*  
Contact email:  
fawad010@yahoo.com

**Keywords:** Proto-Historic Cemetery, rock carvings, Silk route, chronology

District Chitral, located between 71°12' and 73° 53' east longitude and between 35° 13' and 36° 55' north latitude, representing the north-western boundaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, of Pakistan, is the most secluded region of the province, but it is known throughout the world for its rich cultural heritage and scenic beauty. In the recent past the author was leading the excavation of a proto-historic cemetery where the documentation of a number of rock carvings in the surrounding area was undertaken. These rock carvings in the first instance were found to be similar to those found along the silk route. However, after detailed analysis, a vast number of variations in the depictions has been brought to light and links to the geographical landscape and trading paths support the evidence of trade routes that once connected Tajikistan through to Chitral and to the silk route. The presentation will firstly discuss the depicted humans, divinities, animals and hunting scenes and the study of their form and the techniques used to create them. Secondly, correlations will be made with the excavated proto-historic cemetery for a comparative chronology and finally a re-establishment of the evidence of the ancient trade route passing through this area connecting to the main Silk route.





## The first Mesolithic ophidian sculptures from the Steppes of Ukraine

Two serpent-like sculptured stones were found by a joint Swiss-Ukrainian expedition at the Kamyana Mohyla 1 multilayered site in 2016. Their stratigraphic position is related to several Mesolithic horizons lying in light-yellow loess-like loam under an impressive sequence of later cultural deposits. The C14 dates for these horizons encompass a 8540-7380 calBC timespan; a later date seems more probable. The two local sandstone sculptures were modelled to represent snake heads, with their eyes, noses and mouths highly visible. One figurine was ornamented with lines and dots, in one case forming a zig-zag pattern. The site is situated in front of substantial sandstone formations and rocks—Kamyana Mohyla. Kamyana Mohyla is known for its numerous rock-art images engraved on its stones and inside its rock-shelters. The closest analogies for the ophidian sculptures come from Kamyana Mohyla itself (but they are lacking a stratigraphic context). The newly-discovered figurines are the first known sculptures for the Mesolithic period in south Ukraine.

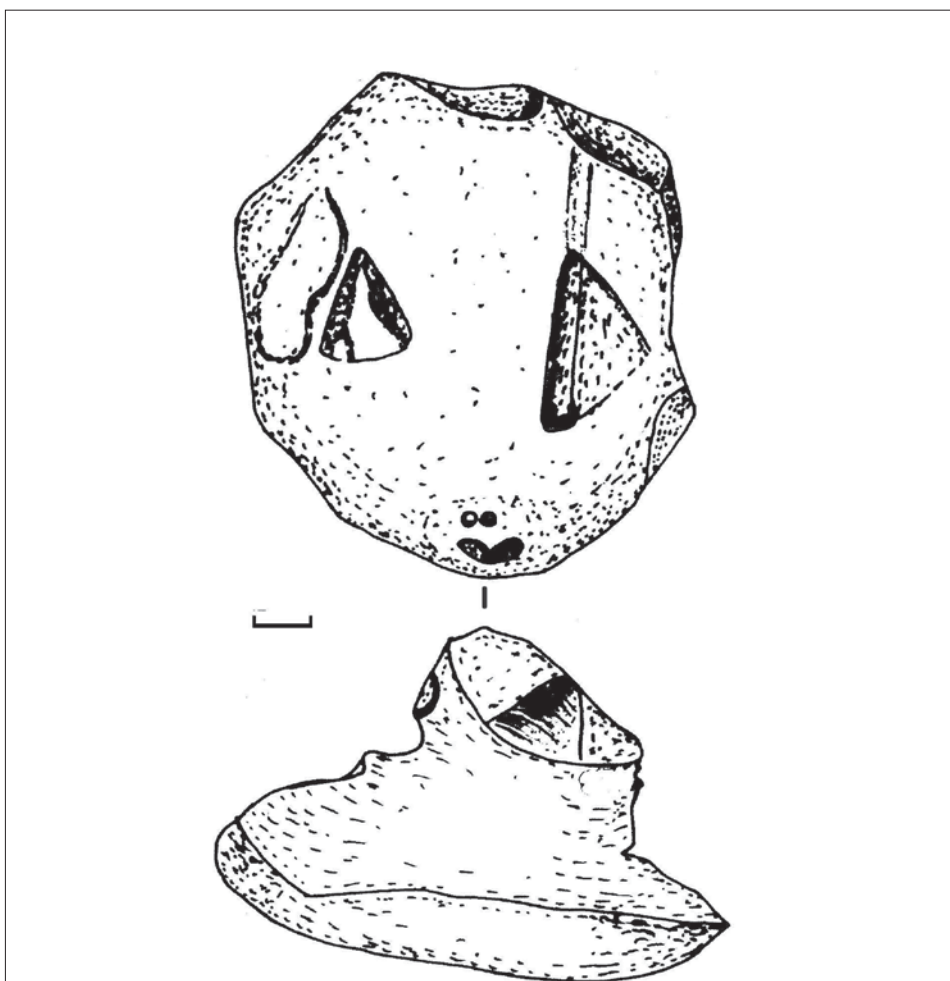
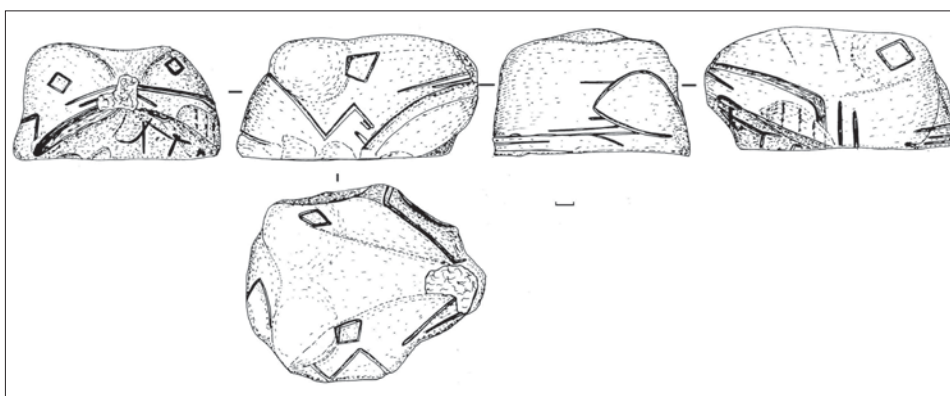
N.S. KOTOVA, *Institute of Archaeology of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine*

D.V. KIOSAK, *Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University, Odessa, Ukraine*

L.A. SPITSYNA, *Institute of archaeology NAS Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine*

Contact email: [dkiosak@ukr.net](mailto:dkiosak@ukr.net)

**Keywords:** Mesolithic, stone figurines, ophidian images, Boreal, engravings





## **What's new in the study of Post Palaeolithic Rock Art in the Southern Pre-Pyrenees? A general approach to new groups and new studies**

Paloma LANAU, *Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain*

Manuel Bea, Rafael Mora,  
Jezabel Pizarro

Contact email:  
palomalanau@gmail.com

**Keywords:** prepyrenees, schematic rock art, Levantine art, Post Palaeolithic art, Prehistory

In the 1980's and 1990's prospecting work carried out by researchers from the Museum of Huesca led to the discovery of several dozens of shelters and caves with Post Palaeolithic paintings or engravings in the Río Vero area (Huesca, Aragón, Spain). At that time, the ensemble of sites was large but seemed almost isolated in the context of the central Pre-Pyrenees. In the following years, thanks to the progress of investigations and above all thanks to chance findings, the discovery of new groups of painted shelters has contributed to demonstrate a wider distribution of Post Paleolithic rock art in this geographical area. The sites recently studied are located in the western section of the Pre-Pyrenees mountain ranges, where the group of sites, Salvatierra de Escá was discovered, as well as in the oriental section, where the new findings such as Cova del Bubu or Abric de la Diva are added to those known for many years, such as Cova del Tabac. Most of the figures correspond to the schematic rock art style but they exhibit regional disparities and the association between groups is yet to be established. This work is part of the doctoral thesis of one of the authors.

## The EQUUS project: a new paradigm for the rock art of Galicia and Northern Portugal

Eloy MARTÍNEZ SOTO, *Historian and Archaeologist, Instituto de Estudos Miñoráns (IEM), Universidade de Vigo, Spain*

Xosé Lois VILAR PEDREIRA, *Historian and Archaeologist, Instituto de Estudos Miñoráns (IEM), Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain*

Xilberte MANSO DE LA TORRE, *Ethnographer, Instituto de Estudos Miñoráns (IEM), Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain*

Contact email:  
eloymarso@gmail.com

**Keywords:** new paradigm,  
equidae, Galician-Portuguese,  
rock art, Equus Project

In a century of research on the rock art of Galicia and northern Portugal, it has been stated that the most represented animal is the deer, relegating the presence of equids merely as something anecdotal. In this naturalistic style, the presence of equids was usually dependent on representations of deer hunting, the deer being the most highly represented animal within petroglyphs in Galicia. However, there is a shift in the paradigm of zoomorphic representation that has its natural border in the Bay of Vigo, south of which the deer becomes a more minor representation and therefore also the rock engravings representing deer hunting scenes. Deer are pushed into the background in this new scenario by the omnipresence of equids in what can be considered a new model in the hunting scenes in the petroglyphs of the northwestern peninsula. Equids are represented in various scenarios; alone, in groups, ridden, harassed or even hunted by humans. In the same way that the hunting scenes of the male deer are represented, the equids are surrounded by anthropomorphs on foot or on horseback, aided by canines, injured or falling into traps. The same iconographic discourse is observed as that in deer scenes, except that the protagonists change.

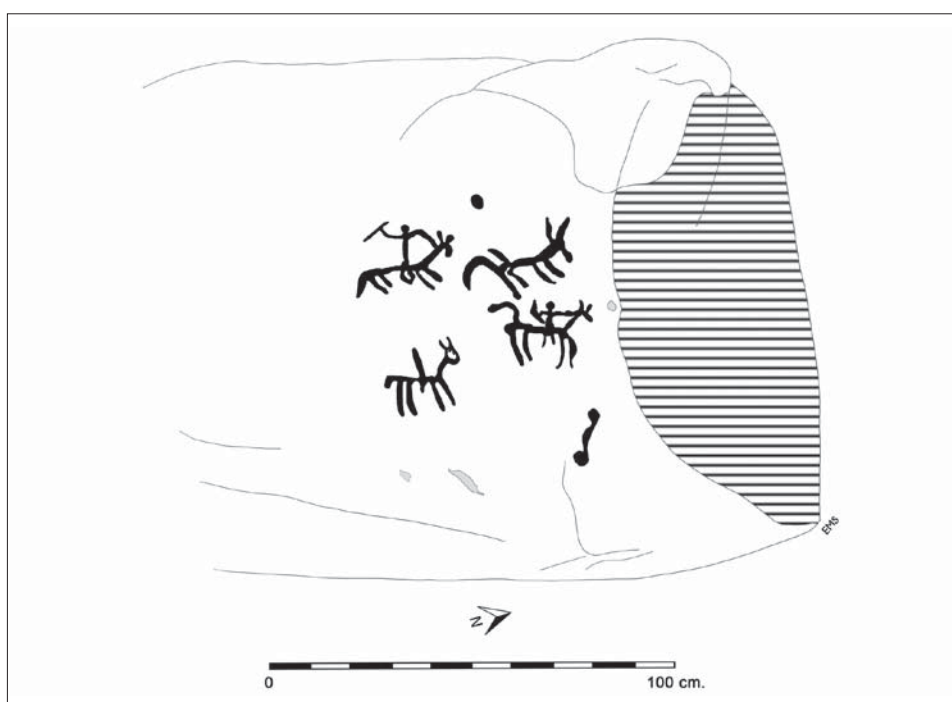
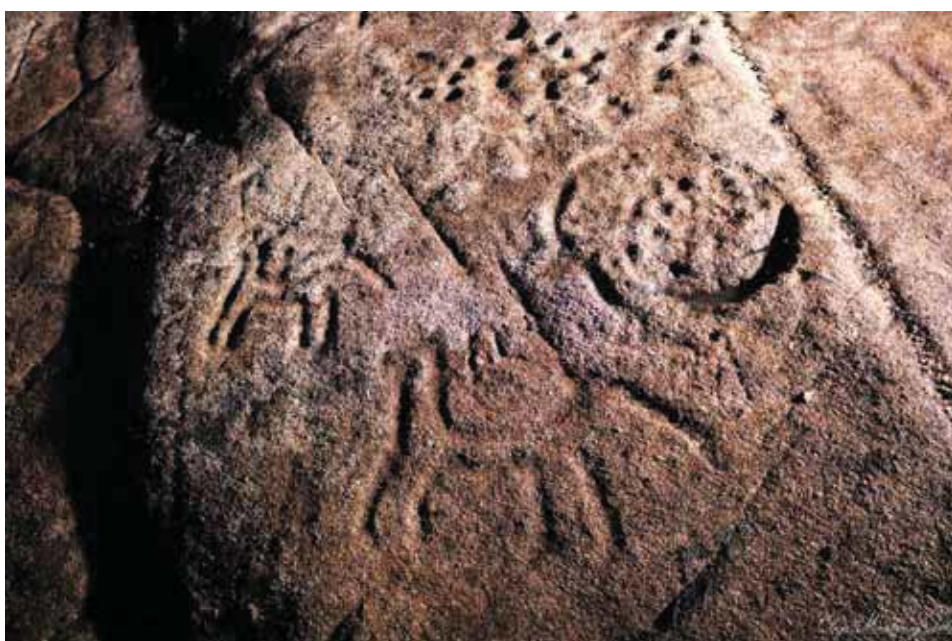


Fig.1 - A Coutada petroglyph, As Neves, Spain. (Eloy Martínez Soto / Copyright 2017)

Fig.2 - A Telheira petroglyph, Verdoejo, Portugal. (Eloy Martínez Soto / Copyright 2017)



## Violence as social practice in the rock art of the Tassili and the Spanish Levant - distant but connected?

Harald MELLER, *State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt, Germany*

Roberto RISCH, *Departament de Prehistòria, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain*

Contact email:  
hmeller@lda.stk.sachsen-anhalt.de;  
robert.risch@uab.cat

**Keywords:** Spanish Levant, Sahara, rock art, fighting scene, archer, migration

The earliest representation of physical violence in human history is probably found in the early and middle Holocene rock art of the Sahara and the Spanish Levant. Amongst thousands of depictions known from both areas, a few dozen show combat scenes between small groups of archers. Contrary to the first representations of violence in Egypt and Mesopotamia during the 4th and 3rd millennium BC but also in Bronze Age Europe, these images do not express a glorification or celebration of violence. The similarities between the rock art of the Spanish Levant and that of the Sahara may reflect long-distance communication and migration from the Sahara to the Iberian Peninsula due to the rapid increase in aridity in the Sahara around 5500–3000 BC. However, there are also differences: In the Sahara various different depictions of life and people are represented in rock art, while in the Spanish Levant fighting men predominate. A comparison between the fighting scenes of the Sahara and the Spanish Levant and their chronology allows us to delve into the social background of this first evidence of human awareness concerning violence and its consequences.

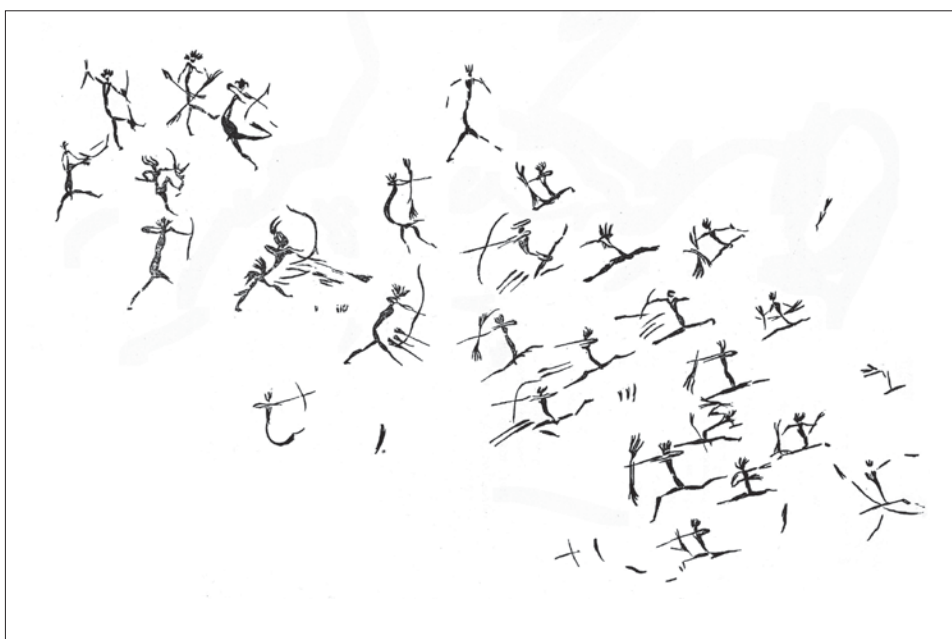
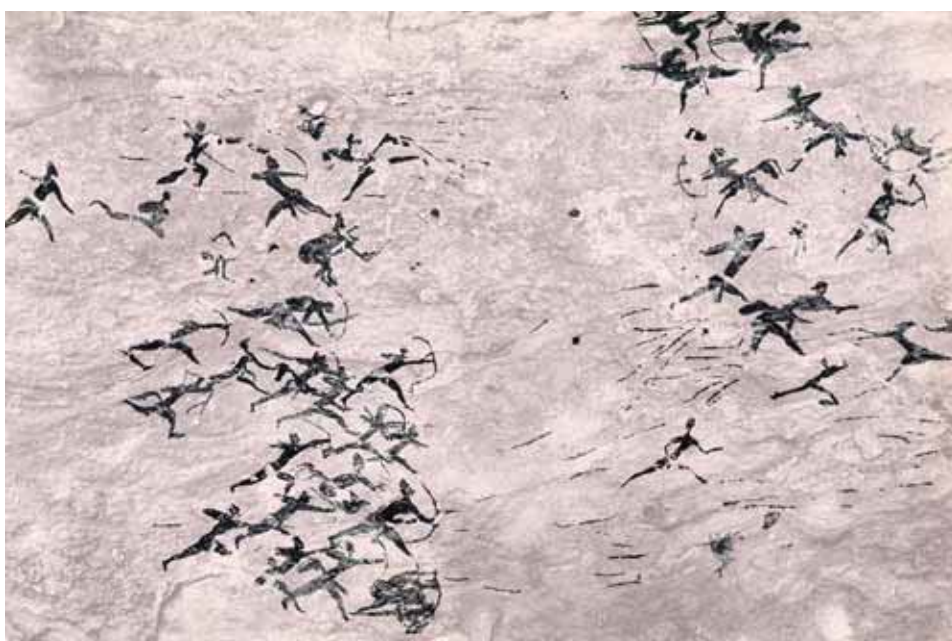


Fig.1 - Sefar, Tassili N' Ajjer, southern Algeria. (Sylvia Gill, based on Lajoux 1962: 160-162)

Fig.2 - Les Dogues, Castellón, Spain. (Porcar Ripollés 1953: 78, fig. 2)

## Rock art heterogeneity and social organization in Southern Chile

In southern Chile (36-42° Lat. South) there are few rock art sites. They exhibit large variability in terms of location, iconography and technology. At the sites being highlighted, paintings can be found, as well as deep and superficial petroglyphs that depict humans, plants and abstract representations. The rock art is located on open air sites, in rock shelters and caves. Such high heterogeneity makes it very difficult to classify them into “styles”. In this work we propose that the rock art characteristics correspond to the type of social organization of the groups within this territory. This reflects communities that were organized at a local level, that had a dispersed and disaggregated use of space and did not have formal political hierarchies. We propose that such social features would lead to the development of local particularisms within the rock art production, while other cultural features such as language and certain pottery styles would help to sustain and reproduce a recognizable regional cultural unit.

Francisca MOYA-CAÑOLES,  
*Centro de Estudios  
Arqueológicos e históricos  
Aiken, Chile*

Renata Gutierrez, Roberto  
Campbell

Contact email:  
franmoya.c@gmail.com

**Keywords:** Southern  
Chile, heterogeneity, local  
communities, rock art





## The Guanaco's space: rock art in the basin of General Carrera lake, Chilean Patagonia

Camila MUÑOZ, *Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales (CMN), Chile*

R. CORDERO, *PhD candidate, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain*

D. ARTIGAS, *Universidad SEK, Chile*

F. FERNÁNDEZ, *Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales (CMN), Chile*

Contact email:

camila.munoz.soto@gmail.com

**Keywords:** Rock art, guanaco, use of space, significance, Chilean Patagonia

The study of rock art in the Aysén region, Central Chilean Patagonia, began in 1970 (Bate 1970, 1971; Niemeyer 1979-1980). The first research in this area was focused on various valleys, especially the valley of Jeinimeni and the Ibáñez River valley, both associated with the basin of the lake General Carrera, Buenos Aires. The lake covers areas in both Chile and Argentina. Currently in the area of the Jeinimeni valley, there is no excavated archaeological context that allows for temporality of the rock art to be determined. Therefore, the association to other occupational deposits in the area allows for the inference of a chronology that extends the concerned period from approximately 7,000 years B.P. to historical times. These sites exhibit remarkable figures described as zoomorphic motifs and interpreted as guanacos, that have been created in various locations and forms by hunter-gatherers. As such, from the systematic recording of three sites from the Jeinimeni River Valley and research at the Ibáñez River Valley, we can suggest an initial interpretation. The research suggests that representations point to a distinction in the use of space in terms of its significance and that this can occur in two ways; simple space and composite space (Boschin 2009).



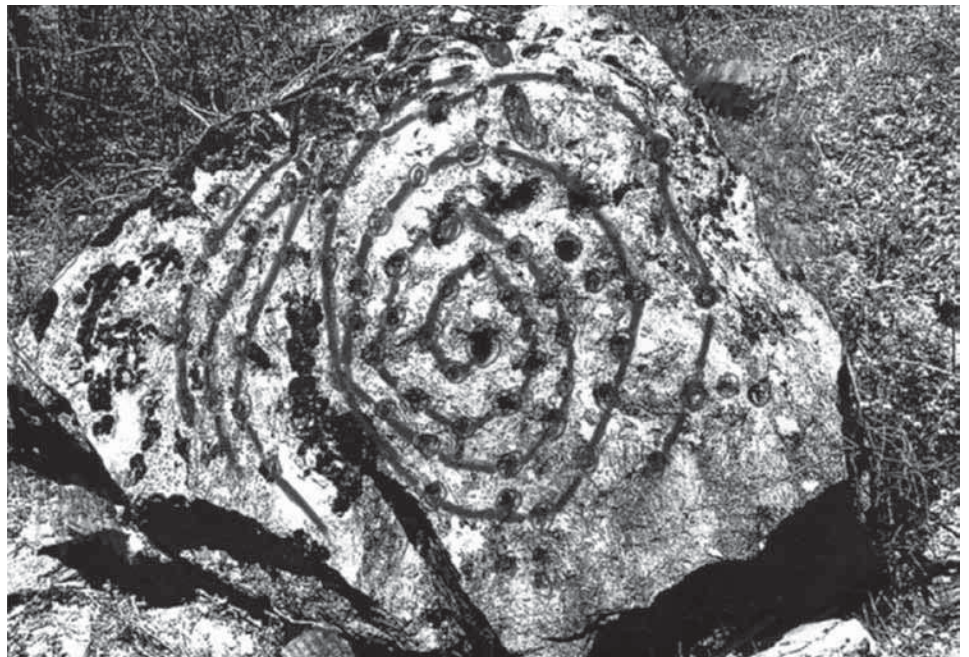


## The rock with the footprints and the spiral

One of the most interesting engraved rocks which I have found in the Shara Mountain in R. Macedonia, is a rock with footprints and cup marks in the form of a spiral. Somewhere below middle of the rock there is a bigger, central bump – a groove around which numerous cup marks are positioned in several rings. In this way, a large spiral is created which stretches upon the biggest part of the rock. On the upper part of the rock, there are two human footprints (fig.2), both of them representing the right footprint, which are positioned vertically one under the other. These art elements point to cosmological symbols: the cup marks represent the stars in the sky and may represent the first astral maps of our ancestors, and the footprints are a symbol of the eternal comings and goings from this world. The time period represented is most likely the Neolithic to the Bronze Age. From this composition and research there are the inevitably questions which arise: How could our distant prehistoric ancestors know about these cosmological aspects? Did they discover it by themselves or did they have assistance from somebody else? If so who?

Aleksandar V. NASTESKI,  
*Independent researcher*  
Contact email:  
nasteski@gmail.com

**Keywords:** Neolithic, Bronze age, human footprints, cup marks, spiral, astral symbols





## Absolute chronologies of shelters with schematic rock art in Alentejo - Portugal

Jorge de OLIVEIRA, *Laboratório de Arqueologia; Universidade de Évora - Portugal*  
Contact email: [joli@uevora.pt](mailto:joli@uevora.pt)

**Keywords:** absolute dates, shelters, schematic rock art, Portugal

As a result of the research project “Rock Art in Serra de S. Mamede”, which took place between 2009 and 2015, it was possible to carry out archaeological surveys in three shelters which have painted rock art. Two of these shelters provided different dates situated between the late Palaeolithic and the Middle Ages. It should be noted that two dates obtained which are attributable to the beginnings of the Chalcolithic are properly contextualized with the pictorial elements from within one of the shelters. In this paper we will try to understand and contextualize the absolute chronologies obtained and situate them within the environment and sites with painted rock art.



## Another prehistoric charcoal drawings in the caves in the Slovak Republic

Alena ŠEFČÁKOVÁ, *Department of Anthropology, National Museum - Natural History Museum, Bratislava, Slovak Republic*

Vladimir A. LEVCHENKO, *Accelerator Mass Spectrometry Centre for Accelerator Science Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, Kirrawee, Australia*

Contact email:

alena.sefcakova@snm.sk;

asefcakova@hotmail.com;

vladimir.levchenko@ansto.gov.au

**Keywords:** Prehistoric rock art, caves, radiocarbon dating, signs, Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Early Middle Ages

In Slovakia, just in the area of the Slovak Karst, there are over 1,000 caves, from which many archaeological finds from various periods have been found. The best-known are most probably the geometrical drawings from the Domica cave. Over the course of the last ten years, the walls of some other caves have been examined, and in at least ten of these charcoal “signs” can be found. These consist of simple assorted lines with combinations, clusters, plain schematic shapes, sketches or smearing traces of torches, mainly in less accessible locations. Sometimes individual charcoal signs can be found in abysses, mainly in the back of caves. Over the past years, we have been able to obtain a number of charcoal samples, taken directly from the walls, for dating. This was carried out not only in Domica, but also in Ardovská, Silická ľadnica and the Čikova Diera caves. Although there were problems and complexities associated with sampling the thin charcoal layers, we were able to obtain some interesting data. The samples come from very simple schematic drawings; some of them resembling human figures or animals. The date range obtained from the samples ranges from Neolithic to the Early Middle Ages.



Fig.1 - Sampling in the Ardovská Cave. (photo František Engel)

Fig.2 - The sign from Silická ľadnica Cave. (photo František Engel)



## A prehistoric cupule representation recovered from Sri Lanka

Raj SOMADEVA, *Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

A. Wanninayake, D. Devage, R. Fernando

Contact email:  
rajsomadeva@gmail.com

**Keywords:** cognitive archaeology, prehistoric symbolism, landscape archaeology, cupules, Sri Lanka

Dealing with isolated and non-figurative symbolic expression created by non-literate communities in an archaeological perspective, poses number of theoretical and methodological problems at the interpretative level. This paper discusses a symbolic manifestation found on a natural rock boulder situated in a rock shelter occupied by prehistoric communities during the mid/late-Holocene (5000-3500 BCE). This symbolic record contains 659 individual minuscule cupules hewn into the rock surface and scattered in an irregular pattern. The regional distribution pattern of the prehistoric sites and the archeological material excavated from five prehistoric cave shelters in the area, are taken as proxy data to contextualize the social and ecological fabric of this symbolic record. It is hypothesized that the rugged terrain in the surrounding area was inadequate to maintain an increasing population within a limited area, thus compelling the decision makers in the prehistoric groups to share their memories and experiences of the landscape they utilized, in order to control the competition for food. The preliminary analysis allows for the formulation of a working hypothesis which proposes that these symbolic representations manifest the imaginary landscape of the immediate surroundings of the prehistoric communities of the area.



Fig.1 - A view of the Badahena galge cave in Opanayake of Sabaragamuwa Province (from East). (photo Raj Somadeva, 2018)

Fig.2 - The rock contains cupules engraved on its surface (a vertical view). (photo D. Devage, © Raj Somadeva, 2018)



## From abstraction to realism - a pan-Saharan phenomenon

Andras ZBORAY, *Independent research*

Contact email: andras@fjexpeditions.com

**Keywords:** Sahara, pre-pastoralist, pastoralist, abstract, naturalistic

Traditionally “Saharan rock art” referred to the prolific artistic traditions of the central Saharan massifs (SE Algeria and SW Libya). However, in the past decades new finds have shown that several other areas of the Sahara are equally rich in both petrographs and petroglyphs.

Studying the regional artistic successions, a uniform pattern may be discerned despite the seemingly unrelated stylistic traditions and large their geographical displacement. In the widely separated Tassili-Acacus, Tibesti and Gilf-Uweinat regions one may observe two distinct phases of paintings: an earlier phase (lacking clearly identifiable domesticates), with several styles, exhibiting a high degree of abstraction, including unnatural depictions of the human figure and of fauna, on occasion accompanied by imaginary or composite beings. These styles are superseded in all mentioned areas by a range of naturalistic artistic traditions, all made by cattle pastoralists, with realistic depictions of humans, cattle and other animals.



Fig. 1 - Karnasahi, eastern Tibesti (photo by author, enhanced with DStretch YBK filter)

Fig. 2 - Oued Tasset, central Tassili N'Ajjer (photo by author, enhanced with DStretch YRD filter)