

RUPESTRIAN EXPRESSIONS IN HISTORICAL PERIODS

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In the past few decades, researchers from different disciplines (archaeology, history of art, palaeography, semiotics, and archival science) have been concerned with the determination, identification and analysis of graphic expressions dating to our era-engraved and painted imagery found in rock shelters and caves, on single rocks or clusters of rocks in the open-air, as well as on walls of churches and other buildings. These finds reveal diverse, secular or religious practices and allow us to recall aspects that are sometimes marginalized or little known by local communities.

Studies published so far are still rare and often limited to a few sites or simple themes. The aim of this session is to create a dialogue between different disciplines about documentation and inquiry methodologies, present new sites and disclose their iconographic potential, and devise approaches to the social, economic and historical contexts tied to these vestiges-sets of expressions that go beyond the surrounds of the sites, used and traversed by individuals eager to leave traces of their passage in specific places.

The session will also deal with the evolution of signs that change little in shape throughout the historical epoch, but diversify in terms of their semantic content. It will further probe the consistency and recurrence of the iconography corpus, despite cultural and contextual diversities. Finally, the gathering will contemplate heritage classification projects for these graphic expressions.

Mediaeval warriors and their world: a study in stone

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Keywords: medieval warriors, weapons, crossbows, engravings, France, Alsace, Charente

Amongst the most remarkable of the anthropomorphic representations of the Middle Ages are those depicting warriors. Engravings of mediaeval fighting men are to be found on rocks, within shelters and on the walls of churches, and many of these are located in areas with a turbulent past. Two main types of engraving have been identified, known respectively as pecking and linear style engraving. Whilst such representations are frequently simplified, they still offer sufficient elements that from these ancient figures we can glean much about the dress and armament of mediaeval warriors, as well as gaining a good deal of evidence of how they lived their lives, and from that to be able to make good estimations as to their date of creation. Battlefield scenes exist as well but are rare, what are relatively common are engravings of individual weapons such as crossbows. This particular weapon is widely found, but noticeably not upon church walls. Additionally, we have found many mediaeval engravings in the same locations as much earlier, prehistoric or protohistoric carvings. This study seeks to analyze the features studied on rocks and in the shelters of Ile de France, Alpes (Haute Maurienne) and Occitanie, and on the walls of churches in Alsace and Charente.

Figurative graffiti within a hidden underground tuff granary in the ruined medieval settlement of Morranaccio (Pitigliano, GR, Italy)

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Keywords: graffiti, Middle Age, Morranaccio, barn, granary, Italy

The ruined medieval settlement of Morranaccio is located in a wild wooded territory along the Fiora river, at the border between the Tuscany and Lazio regions. Little is known about the origin and the life of this site apart the date of its destruction in the XIV century. A hidden circular underground granary, carved into tuff stone, has been found by the authors close to the inner side of an external stone wall. The original upper opening is completely closed by stone blocks and the current entry is through a small tunnel at the base of the well. The inner walls are covered by engravings with figurative subjects made in a naive style. There are two large engraved representations of humans, one has a face engraved in contour as a bass-relief and wearing a large necklace, while the other seems to be dressed in a long, decorated tunic. Other engravings concern a tower, a circle with a cross inside, a symbol similar to an arrowhead, a left-handed profile, several anthropomorphic naive figures and the profile of a stylized bird. One hypothesis is that the well may have been used as a prison in middle ages and the engravings might have been created by prisoners within it.

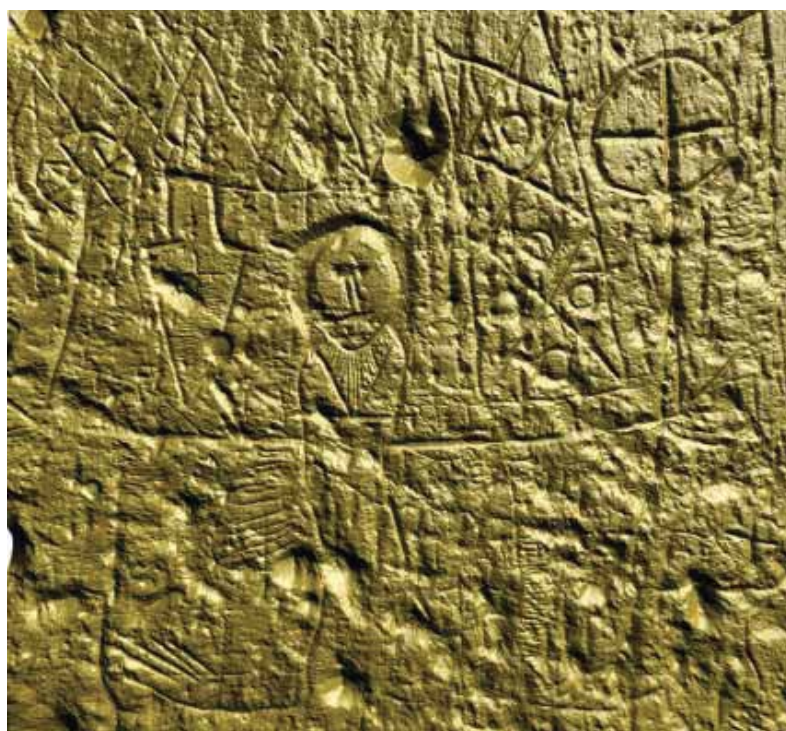


Fig.1 - Photograph with grazing light of a detail showing a human figure with a large necklace. (photo © M. Scataglini)
Fig.2 - 3-D reconstruction of the same detail by Photometric Stereo technique. (© P.E. Bagnoli)

Podomorphic motifs and graffiti on open air sites at the hermitage of San Pascual (rural setting of Canastell, in Crevillent, Alicante, Spain)

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Keywords: podomorphs, graffiti on standing rock, popular religiosity, Alicante, Spain

Herein we present a set of inscriptions and graffiti on open air rock art sites, among them a series of podomorphic motifs, located in the rural setting of Canastell, within the boundaries of the city of Crevillent, (south Alicante, Spain). All the engravings are in the surroundings of the hermitage of San Pascual. We propose that most of these motifs are from a similar time period and they are related to popular religiosity. In the last decades, these types of illustrative features have generated a growing interest among researchers, although very few of these elements have so far been documented in the Mediterranean area and therefore knowledge of them is still scarce.



Fig. 1 - Podomorphs 5 and 6. Rural setting of El Canastell, in the surroundings of the hermitage of San Pascual, Crevillent, Alicante, Spain. (photo Molina, Belmonte y Satorre, 2017)

Fig. 2 - Podomorph 1. Rural setting of El Canastell, in the surroundings of the hermitage of San Pascual, Crevillent, Alicante, Spain. (photo Molina, Belmonte y Satorre, 2017)



A mountain meeting place for oppressed Protestants revealed by the engraved names and religious symbols (17th century)

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Keywords: graffiti, rock engraving, protestantism, emigration, religious buildings, pastoralism

In Val Ferrand (Isère), at an altitude of 2169 m, on the glacially polished surface of calcschist strata, we found engravings covering an area 8.5m in length. It soon became apparent that the site was not merely pastoral but moreover related to a critical period of the regional Protestantism. The engravings were photographed and a reference grid used to note their location on the rock surface. They consist of names, either as initials or written in full, often preceded by a W (for *vivat*), sometimes boxed or inscribed in a heart, and frequently associated with a date. Many engravings have a religious connotation, displaying crosses, christograms, Sacred Heart figures, and sketches of temples. Names which could be identified, by screening and crosschecking genealogical databases of the surrounding villages, turn out to be those of craftsmen and pastors. All of them had emigrated before or after the Revocation of the Edicts of Nantes. This site, which is several hours away from the nearest village, is regarded as a place where victimized Protestants could discreetly meet together. Archaeological excavation of the base of the slab will no doubt contribute further to the research.



Fig. 1 - Engraved rock, Besse en Oisans. (photo © Hugues Chatain)

Fig. 2 - J(ean) C(oint) CHERPENTIER 1684. Besse en Oisans. (photo © Hugues Chatain)

Rupestrian representations from historical times: continuities and ruptures in southwest Chubut, Argentinean Patagonia

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Keywords: Argentinean
Patagonia, historical
rupestrian expressions,
European-indigenous contact,
use of space, historical
periods

Fig. 1 - Casa de Piedra 1 (CP1), SW
Chubut, Argentina. General view of
panel 3 containing historical motifs.
Top: original image. Bottom: modified
image with Image-J Dstretch LAB
(Harman 2015). (photo Florencia Ronco)

Casa de Piedra de Roselló (CP) is located in a ravine in southwest Chubut (Argentinean Patagonia) in an ecotonal area of steppe and forest. CP consists of a main cave (CP1) and two shelters (CP2 and CP3) located at a higher level, all of which contain numerous rupestrian motifs executed by hunter-gatherer groups that inhabited the region. This research area, through different sources of information (excavation, historical documents, travelers' stories), provides evidence of the impact of European-Indigenous contact manifested in the changes in life styles, subsistence, habitational structures, etc. However, there is a continuous tradition of occupation of the same spaces, which seems to transcend the cultural frontiers. This is reflected, for example, in the occupation of CP1 from 9000 cal yr BP to the present.

The aim of this essay is to discuss the role of historical rupestrian expressions as a line of inquiry for: addressing intergroup relationships after contact and new ways of occupying and appropriating space; evaluating the continuity, rupture or neutrality of this (icono)graphic repertoire towards preexisting motifs; and integrating results of the above with local history and evidence of pre- and post-contact sites.



The short-lived and the long-lasting: engravings on trees and sanctuaries

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Keywords: engravings, dendroglyphs, sanctuary, Magdalenian worship, Sainte-Baume, modern and contemporary period

Rock, water and trees constitute three elements which fix and participate of the sacredness of a place. The expression of devotion is often manifest through the marking of rock and tree trunks (dendroglyphs) on or around important or modest sanctuaries. Rupestrian images allow the messages to persist for a long time whilst markings on trees disappear more quickly. Moreover, do these marks express the same content regardless of the surface used or are they complementary? Are there differences influenced by their distance from the sanctuary and/or the volume of site visit frequentation? Even today the worship of Marie-Madeleine in Provence attracts a considerable number of believers. Young people call upon her protection in the area of nuptials and fertility whereas it is a requirement for the 'Compagnons du Devoir' to visit their patron saint during their Tour de France (work related method of gaining experience). In association with the volume of visits to Saint Maximin's basilica and the route that goes up through the forest to the supposed cave that sheltered the saint, numerous wall, rock and tree markings can be found. This analysis focuses on the dendroglyphs, the simplification of messages and the implicit reduction of their presence to only include certain routes and spaces selected for their "loving metaphor".



What is new and what never changes? 20th century rock art in marginal cattle breeding areas (Strobel Plateau, Argentinean Patagonia)

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Keywords: engravings,
historical period, sheep
farming, marginality,
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Over 90 sites with more than 10,000 pre-Hispanic rock art motifs have been documented on the Strobel Lake Plateau, located in the central-western Santa Cruz Province (Argentinean Patagonia) (Figure 1). As a consequence, a population convergence of diverse hunter-gatherer groups has been proposed for this area during the last 2,500 years. Investigations in the region have also revealed a profound change in human strategies since the first contact with populations of European origin around 400 years ago. Later on, at the beginning of the 20th century this plateau began to be re-occupied by populations of European origin. During this period the plateau had a marginal role in processes that occurred at larger spatial scales.

This paper seeks to study the rock art of the Strobel Lake Plateau that was produced in the first half of the 20th century in the context of the new occupations dedicated to sheep farming. The same techniques and, in some cases, the same locations were chosen as those of motifs from previous periods. However, important changes concerning the type of motifs depicted and a more restricted distribution are evident. Thus, both the continuities and discontinuities in relation to the rock art of older periods are explored in order to better understand the changing logics of communication through rock art in Southern Patagonia.

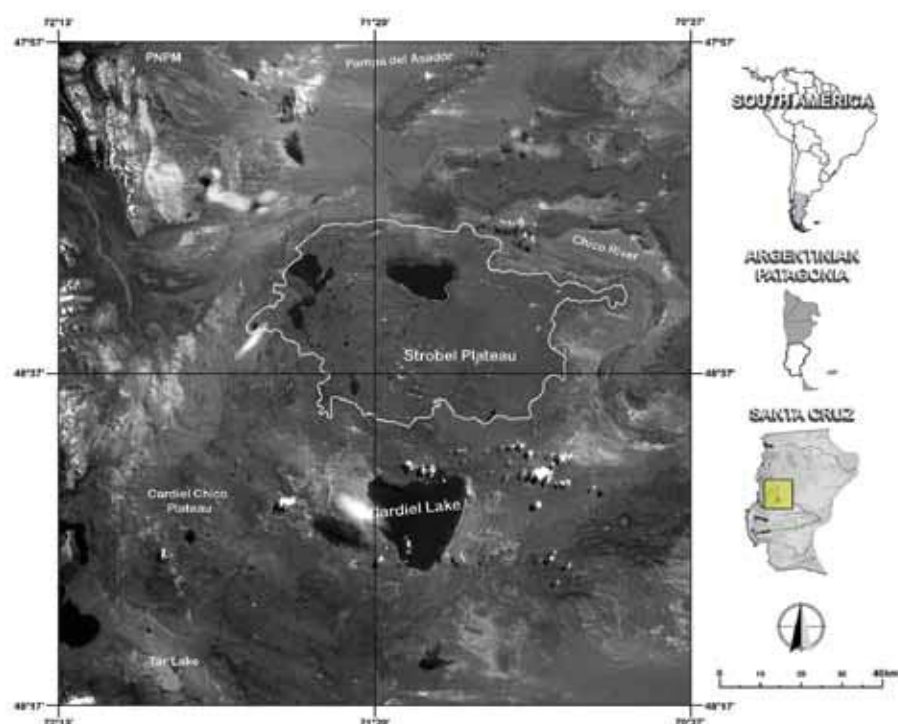


Fig.1 - Location of the Strobel Plateau, Argentinean Patagonia - South America. (author Anahi Re)

Fig.2 - 20th century engravings in the Strobel Plateau (K27, K115 and K145 sites). (photos Anahi Re)

Proto - historical and historic rock carvings in the Val di Lima (Tuscany - Lucca): Monte di Limano and Prato Fiorito

Until 2005 only one site with rock engravings was known in the narrow valley connecting the Garfagnana region to the Apennine passes, it is called "Il Balzo delle Cialde" and its age is unknown. Since then, the area, dominated by Mount Limano (1231m. above the sea level), has been extensively investigated, documented and studied by the *Gruppo Terre Alte* - Scientific Committee of the *Club Alpino Italiano*, that has discovered six more sites featuring engravings from a variety of time periods. The study of these engravings (circles, cup-marks, six-petal rosettes, anthropomorphic figures, geometric signs with net-like design, sun symbols, letters and dates) along with the photo documentation and relevant surveys has taken many years of work to complete. Recently, researches have been studying Mount Prato Fiorito (1297m. above sea level), whose south-western side features imposing rock crags; right on top of the woods, where the rocks start, fifteen vertical rocks have been spotted, which mainly feature threadlike designs. This introductory study, outlined here for the first time, suggests a historic date for the signs, which may belong to the pastoral world, as livestock farming has been the major activity of the investigated area for hundreds of years.

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Keywords: pastoral culture, historic rock carvings, Garfagnana Appenine Lucca



Fig.1 - Lac, Monte Limano, Italy.
(photo G. Sani)

Fig.2 - Mount Prato Fiorito, Italy.
(photo G. Sani)

Washa Michael Rock Art: Where older engraving meets Christian paintings

For more than half a century, Ethiopian rock art has only been perceived as pastoral due to the fact that so many rock art sites depict cattle and herders in their panels. The new Washa Michael rock art site in the north central part of the country exhibits completely different themes than pastoral rock art. It reveals depictions of hunting by both humans and animals; Possible conflict between groups; as well as the emergence of Christian church paintings in later periods. The continuous use of the panels up until the current traditional Ethiopian Orthodox church painting highlights the site's importance. This discovery tells us that the rock art from the central highlands is actually different from lowland pastoral rock art. The placement of the art inside a modified cave, which was later converted into an Ethiopian Orthodox Church, implies the importance of the location of the site itself. The animals depicted in the panels are now extinct in the northern part of Ethiopia. We are able to understand a lot from this single cave about the inhabitants' beliefs as well as human and animal interactions within their environment.

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Keywords: Ethiopia, rock art, engravings, hunting, Orthodox Christianity, Washa Michael site



Fig.1 - Engraving on the left side of the wall of Washa Michael church at Wadla Woreda of North Wollo Zone- Ethiopia. (© Tadele Solomon)

Fig.2 - Traditional Ethiopian Orthodox Church painting in the Washa Michael church at Wadla Woreda of North Wollo Zone- Ethiopia. (© Tadele Solomon)

Sanctuaries in the Marche region and divinities between heaven and earth

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Keywords: ethno-anthropology, cave sanctuaries, pilgrimages to rock art sites

Fig.1 - Church of Santa Maria di Pistia (or di Plestia), locality Colfiorito, Serravalle di Chienti, Macerata, Italy
Fig.2 - "Tiratura del solco dritto", locality Dignano, Serravalle di Chienti, Macerata, Italy

This research concerns sanctuaries in the Marche region in which evidence of protohistoric site use and historical cults has been found. The study has involved the cataloguing of various sites, analyzing archaeological data, rock carvings and ethno-anthropological stories. Among the investigated sites are Monte Trella, Monte Tolagna, Monte Prefoglio.



Research methodology between rock engravings and archival documents: an example of territorial demarcation

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Keywords: methodology, boundary signs, historical period, cross engravings, Monticolo di Darfo

Historical rock engravings have often been the subject of sensationalistic interpretations. Some researchers have associated engraved crosses as the process of “re-sacralization” based on a model of interpretation from the 1980’s. This interpretation, without scientific foundation, has become established as it fulfilled an explanatory “need” that reflected the clash between paganism and Christianity over the centuries. However, this vision cannot be adopted for every historical site with a cross or Christian symbol.

Monticolo di Darfo (Valle Camonica) is a good example of one such site. The research is inspired by a notarial act in which there is a legal dispute between two local communities: the study has reconstructed the motivation and the dating for some of the engraved signs on the rocks. Thanks to a notarial document (dated 1462) many of the “signs” have been identified. These are crosses, boundary signs, letters of the alphabet that record (through engraving) the civil agreements for the division of the territory between two communities. The discovery of the document gave voice and understanding of the signs within a civil sphere and an interpretation based on the objective analysis of documents and site work. The same site also has Christian engravings such as, ostensors, coffins, tombstones and religious crosses.

Medieval graffiti in Bergamo: multidisciplinary approach to sacred images studies

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**Keywords: sacred images,
image history, medieval
graffiti, devotional practices,
Middle Ages, Bergamo**

The study of medieval graffiti is trying to create its own path and recognition in the academic world, it still seems quite difficult to conceive of a graffito as a historical document capable of holding information about its author and associated social group. This research aims to put forward a multidisciplinary approach to the study of the various facets to reveal all the possible interactions between use of sacred images, graffiti and medieval society. To support this approach the case study of Bergamo in the late Middle Ages presents a large production of graffiti engraved on XIII and XIV centuries frescoes: different types - iconic or alphabetic - different categories - devotional, funerary and memorial - and differing chronologies; it is possible to find graffiti throughout the medieval city. The disciplines used to study the meaning of graffiti are firstly paleography, the only one that analyses this form of evidence since the 1950's (Guarducci's masterpiece dedicated to wall G inscriptions in Saint Peter's grave in Rome) as well as visual and cultural anthropology, church history and liturgy, semiotic, iconography and iconology and social history. There is an important connection between the role and use of religious images and the custom of engraving them with prayers, requests and other iconic signs.



Fig. 1 - St. Agostino church. St. Anthony
Abbot and St. Catherine, graffiti.

Fig. 2 - St. Francesco church. Virgin
Mary, graffiti.

Graffiti of Boats from the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods in the Judean Foothills, Israel

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Keywords: graffiti, boats,
Hellenistic period, Roman
period, Judean foothills, Israel

In the Judean Foothills, a hilly area stretching eastward for 30-40 km from the Mediterranean, there are thousands of artificial cavities and chambers hewn out of the chalk bedrock. Throughout history, these caves served the local residents in various ways: agricultural installations, quarries, water cisterns, underground stables, columbaria and storage facilities for agricultural products. Many of them were hewn out during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Most of the underground facilities in the area of our study were joined by narrow tunnels only accessible by crawling on all fours and incorporated into hiding systems under residents' homes in the Jewish villages that existed in the region until the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-136 CE). This paper focuses on the graffiti of boats, incised on doorposts or lintels of underground chambers, incorporated into these underground complexes from the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. Pictorial graffiti are especially interesting because of their informal, private and often unplanned character. Graffiti mirrors the inner feelings and emotions of people, being free from the imperatives of organized codes of art. Therefore, they may reveal to some degree their creators' cognitive world. We will discuss the purpose of the underground chambers and complexes; we will also try to date the graffiti and consider their symbolic significance.

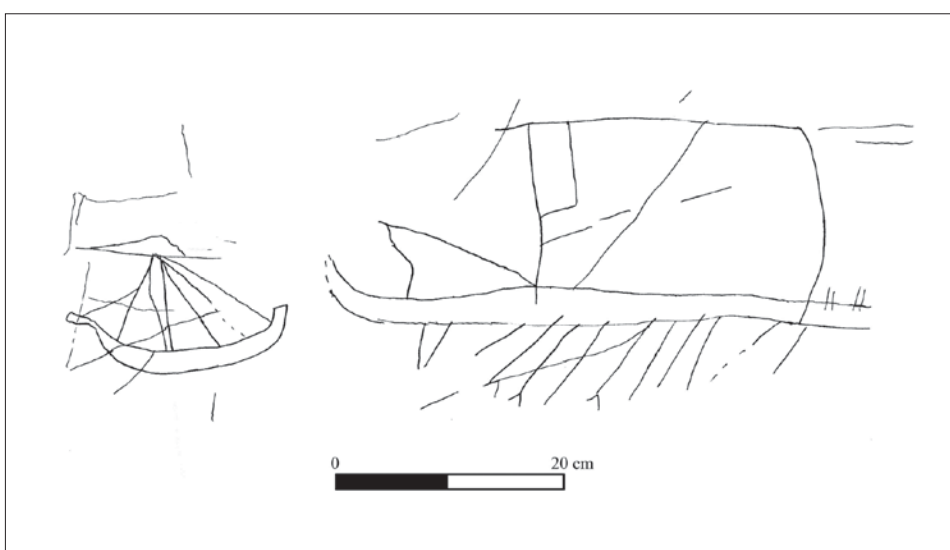


Fig. 1 - Photo of maritime scene graffiti, incised on wall of underground chamber B, in hiding complex at Horvat Ribbo. (photo E. Klein, © Zissu and Klein)

Fig. 2 - Drawing of maritime scene graffiti, incised on wall of underground chamber B, in hiding complex at Horvat Ribbo. (tracing E. Klein, © Zissu and Klein)