

4 - Tendências recentes na pesquisa mundial da arte rupestre

Recent Trends in World Rock art research

Les nouvelles tendances de la recherche en art rupestre

Tendencias recientes en la Investigación mundial del arte rupestre

Coordenado por/Co-ordinator: **Giriraj Kumar & Robert G. Bednarik**

PAPERS

The Ascent of Palaeoart Science

Robert G. Bednarik, Austrália

The emergence of a distinctive branch of science dealing specifically with rock art and similar remains is surely the most incisive and consequential of the recent trends in rock art research. As traditional archaeological approaches continue to fail in yielding plausible, testable or falsifiable interpretations or taxonomies for the products of human symboling, the desire for more reliable information gives way to new trends. These include the introduction of forensic methods; the standardization of the discipline to facilitate scientific operation; the complete re-assessment of cognitive evolution as it unfolds currently; and the replacement of traditional, archaeological and reductionist approaches in rock art studies with more holistic and scientific ones. These developments are illustrated through examples that show that the models, priorities and methods of the past are being superseded rapidly.

Rock Art Theory and Memetics

H. Denise Smith, Estados Unidos da América

Style, and other 'artistic' methodologies, have come under fire in American scholarly literature for the last ten years or so. At the IFRAO Congress in India 2004 the author offered a paper introducing the vocabulary of memetics to the rock art community in response to criticisms of the use of such traditional art-related terms. This paper will summarise the debate and further discuss the controversy surrounding the use of 'artistic' — drawn from art history — or 'scientific' terms — inspired by the methodology of memetics.

Rock art, a constant systemic context. On the use of space and archaeological deposits in site Los Mellizos (semiarid north of Chile)

Pablo Larach Jimenez, Chile

The study of rock art sites is generally approached from a formal perspective restricted to the study of the figure as such and avoiding the context in which it is inserted, considering adjacent deposits only as a referent for the culture-history ascription of the images. According to the

perspective used herein, it is essential to study these deposits as social contexts in which the images are inserted, evaluating the practices and activities that occur in a rock art site. For these effects, the results of archaeological excavations carried out at the site Los Mellizos in the IV Region of Chile are presented in order to determine the kind of practices that took place in the area, evaluating how rock art is related to its social contexts in different periods. Through these excavations it became evident that these sites are constantly used through time, which is materialised in different practices. It is in this sense that rock art sites can be considered as permanent systemic contexts.

Enfoque Neurobiológico para el estudio de las representaciones rupestres

Mónica Nélica Montal & M. Cecilia Panizza, Argentina

Un tema subyacente en la investigación de la ejecución de las pinturas rupestres por los grupos humanos y escasamente estudiado hasta el momento, es la base neurológica que guía dichas acciones, es decir, qué sucede en el cerebro de los individuos que plasman las distintas representaciones sobre el substrato rocoso. Para tal fin nuestros argumentos son sostenidos por distintas evidencias aportadas desde la Antropología y la Neurología. Se enfatiza el rol de la deformación craneana dentro de un contexto de adquisición de nuevos conocimientos o habilidades que posteriormente serían comunicados por medio de las representaciones rupestres.

Understanding the creation of cupules in Daraki-Chattan, India

Giriraj Kumar, India

Recently cupules have been found in the excavations from Lower Palaeolithic deposits at Bhimbetka in Vindhya and Daraki-Chattan in the Chambal basin. Daraki-Chattan yielded 28 cupules and some hammerstones in the excavations. It is one of the richest Palaeolithic cupule site in the world. To understand the technique of cupule production and link it with the recovered hammerstones it is essential to conduct replicative experiments. This will also help in correlating the hammerstones with the creation of specific types of cupules in Daraki-Chattan cave, and in understanding the intellectual and cognitive development of their producers in the Lower Palaeolithic period. With these objectives in mind, the senior author conducted experiments of replication of cupules in 2002 and 2004. In 2004 and 2008, the second author participated in the continuation of these. The authors were able to produce specific types of cupules, recording all details of production. The present paper presents new observations and lessons learned. It also gives an idea that how difficult the task is to produce small and deep cupules on hard quartzite rock, and also about the knowledge, skill, commitment and patience required for that.

Isolation And Evolution Are Strange Bedfellows

Kaye McPherson, Australia

In Tasmania the crumbling remnants of 'rock art' uncovered as dunes shift show the same design of spirals, circles and abstract forms, which were recorded as drawn onto bark in 1802. While the same design, and representing the same story, the two sites were made more than a thousand generations apart. The ancestors who drew on the bark had never seen the 'rock art' even though they drew the same symbols as their ancestors. Tasmanian Aboriginal artefacts are much discussed and debated even today. An Aboriginal perspective offers a very different view of not only the rock art, but of the age of the rock art itself. The isolation of Tasmania's Aboriginal people and the continuation of their cultural knowledge shows that knowledge shared through stories and petroglyph are indelibly linked. Tasmanian Aboriginal 'rock art' can offer a broader perspective for the understanding of other petroglyph sites.

Cognitive and Creative abilities of Lower Palaeolithic Hominis in India

Giriraj Kumar, Índia

Recently India has produced key evidence to understand the cognitive and creative abilities of Lower Palaeolithic hominins. It comes in the form of quartz crystals from Didwana (Rajasthan), a circular disc from Maihar (Madhya Pradesh), haematite nodule with straight striation marks from Hunsgi (Karnataka) etc. But the most remarkable evidence comes in the form of a deep cupule and an engraved meandering line from Auditorium cave, Bhimbetka (Vindhya Hills) and 28 cupules and two engraved lines from Daraki-Chattan on Indragarh hill in Chambal basin in Madhya Pradesh. These have been obtained from the excavation of Lower Palaeolithic sediments. These evidences are capable of throwing sufficient light on the appreciation of geometrical forms of crystals, designing and shaping a circular disc and creating cupules on the very hard quartzite rocks by Lower Palaeolithic hominins. In Daraki-Chattan cave, more than 500 cupules are found which are basically of four types. These achievements indicate that the Lower Palaeolithic hominins were intelligent and creative enough, and that a modern form of human cognition might have developed during the reign of *Homo erectus*.

Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Palaeoart of the World

Robert G. Bednarik, Austrália

The discovery of Lower Palaeolithic rock art at two sites in central India immediately raises two questions: what is the global context of such extremely early indications of cognitive sophistication in hominins, and how was it possible that the orthodox model failed to detect evidence contradicting its gradual development, claiming instead that such complexity in human behaviour was exclusive to the Upper Palaeolithic. This paper summarises the currently available relevant evidence from around the world and demonstrates that the rich Indian evidence is entirely consistent with what has been observed elsewhere. It warns, however, against simplistic interpretations of this evidence by also pointing out that the pattern being observed in these finds is fully predictable by taphonomic logic. This means that what is being observed is not the oldest palaeoart evidence, but only that type of such evidence that has the greatest potential longevity.

Chronology And Typology Of The Rock Art Of The Uncompahgre Plateau In Western Colorado, U.S.A.

Carol Patterson, Estados Unidos da América

This presentation addresses the stylistic changes through time from the Archaic, to the Formative and proto-Historic eras. Supportive evidence for this typology comes from age determinations made from close observation of the rock surface, pecking techniques, and the relative patina and algae growth. Diagnostic time markers include the atlatl with humans hunting animals during the Archaic, the bow and arrow with humans during the Formative, the stylised bear paw during the proto-Historic and the horse for the Historic. Stylistic transitions occur with the appearance of mythological creatures and symbols for religious concepts, creation stories, bear dance ceremonies and spirit animals. Political and historical events dominate the themes during the Historic era. In the final days of cultural conflict and relocation, expediency is evident in 'scratch glyphs' showing village scenes, hunting parties and battle scenes. Animals become abbreviated using stick bodies and two legs instead of four. The culmination of five years of study in this area has found superimposition sequences supporting the proposed typology and chronology. A well-illustrated chart with over 100 rock art sites drawn in detail reveals a complicated but fascinating picture of how three very different cultures utilised the Uncompahgre Plateau in western Colorado over a period of five thousand years.

Rock Art of Angola

Cristina Martins, Mila Simões de Abreu, Luiz Oosterbeek, Portugal, Portugal/Reino Unido, Portugal

Rock art research in Angola faced, in the most recent decades, a major obstacle for its advance: the military conflict. New fieldwork is being prepared now, attempting at contributing for a long-term, stable and continuous action with two main guidelines: rock art and its material culture context. Attention will also be devoted to the conservation of the art panels, subject to natural and anthropic processes of decay. An exhaustive bibliographic survey enabled to create the basis for this new stage of studies, which will need to revisit sites previously located but poorly described or contextualised. The paper presents the selected area of intervention, the theoretical/interpretative framework and the methodology of study.
