Hand figures in the rock-art of Portugal: an introduction

Mila Simões de Abreu * and Gioconda Simões de Abreu **

Summary

Painted and engraved hand figures are fairly scarce in the panorama of the rock-art in Portugal. No hand stencils are known, but several rock-shelters have notable painted finger marks or so-called ‘digits’. Out of the engraved figures, Mão do Homem near Vila Real is an outstanding site. Overall, most of the hand imagery seems to have been made during the Iron Age or later.

Riassunto

Nel panorama dell’arte rupestre del Portogallo il numero di figure di mani dipinte o incise è piuttosto ridotto. Non si conoscono esempi di mano realizzate in negativo ma, curiosamente, sono presenti in diversi ripari sottoroccia vari esempi dei cosiddetti “digitì”. Tra gli esempi incisi spicca la roccia della “Mão do Homem”, un sito nei pressi di Vila Real con diverse figure mani. Cronologicamente la maggior parte delle figure di mano sembra essere stata realizzata nell’età del Ferro o nei periodi successivi.

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ALLA SCOPERTA DI ANTICHI CONTESTI: SPUNTI DA FOPPE DI NADRO

Cristina Gastaldi * e Silvana Gavaldo *

Summary
The paper submits some achievements about last researches on the rock art of Foppe di Nadro (Valcamonica, Italy) and focuses especially on most ancient phases, i.e. from Late Neolithic to Bronze age. The Authors try to enhance the possible interrelation between rock art and landscape context. During this phase the monumental area around rock 30 seems to have been the focal centre of the complex, with a clearing right before the engraved boulder and a little stream flowing that passed by some engraved surfaces. All around and strictly related to this landscape are located topographic scenes, Copper Age compositions (inverted U shape), weapon figures and ploughing scenes. The Authors also try to enhance patterns in the dispositions of the engravings and to study rock art, archaeological data and context as a whole.

Riassunto
L’articolo illustra alcuni risultati delle ultime ricerche sull’arte rupestre nell’area di Foppe di Nadro (Valcamonica) e si sofferma in particolare sulle fasi più antiche (tra tardo Neolitico ed età del Bronzo) evidenziando la possibile interrelazione tra arte rupestre e contesto ambientale. Si sottolinea, per questa fase, la centralità dell’area monumentale della r. 30 e della radura antistante, percorsa da un ruscello che lambiva le roccie istoriate. Intorno e in stretta relazione a questo ambiente si dispongono le incisioni di elementi topografici, le composizioni calcolitiche a U rovesciata, le figure di armi e le scene con aratri. Vengono notate ricorrenze nella disposizione delle incisioni e si tenta uno studio integrato tra arte rupestre, dati archeologici, contesto.
A CHRONOLOGY OF SAUDI ARABIAN ROCK ART

Robert G. Bednarik* and Majeed Khan **

SUMMARY
The traditional chronology of Saudi Arabian rock art is examined in the light of the ongoing scientific dating project of this vast corpus of petroglyphic rock art. A series of radiocarbon, microerosion and optically stimulated fluorescence dates from various parts of the Kingdom is presented and discussed. The inconsistencies of the traditional model are explained and age estimates of epigraphic manifestations are also expounded in an endeavour to introduce a scientifically based chronology of Saudi Arabia. This replaces the timeline derived from presumed stylistic sequences and subjective interpretations based purely on photographs.

RIASSUNTO
L’articolo riesamina la cronologia tradizionale del vasto corpus dell’arte rupestre dell’Arabia Saudita alla luce dei moderni metodi di datazione; dati ricavati da analisi al radiocarbonio, microerosione e fluorescenza ottica, raccolti da progetti di ricerca attivi in diverse zone del territorio, vengono presentati e discussi. Le incongruenze con il modello tradizionale sono argomentate nel tentativo di introdurre una cronologia fondata sull’analisi scientifica che sostituisca la linea temporale derivata da presunte sequenze stilistiche e interpretazioni soggettive basate unicamente su fotografie.

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The volcanic highlands of the Armenian province of Syunik are extremely rich in rock art. Thousands and thousands of rock carvings decorate the dark basalt rocks of the high steppe, which would hardly have changed at all since the last volcanic eruption in the 3rd millennium BC. From 2012 to 2014, as part of a cultural preservation project to survey the prehistoric rock art of Armenia, two areas with rock carvings, measuring over two square kilometres and containing around 11,000 petroglyphs on 3,500 carved stones, were recorded in their entirety. The deserted, uncultivated nature of the landscape, lying above the treeline, meant it could be captured in an uninterrupted survey, produced to scale, using orthophotography. This data set offers an unprecedented opportunity to evaluate all the rock carvings within their landscape context.

**Summary**

The volcanic highlands of the Armenian province of Syunik are extremely rich in rock art. Thousands and thousands of rock carvings decorate the dark basalt rocks of the high steppe, which would hardly have changed at all since the last volcanic eruption in the 3rd millennium BC. From 2012 to 2014, as part of a cultural preservation project to survey the prehistoric rock art of Armenia, two areas with rock carvings, measuring over two square kilometres and containing around 11,000 petroglyphs on 3,500 carved stones, were recorded in their entirety. The deserted, uncultivated nature of the landscape, lying above the treeline, meant it could be captured in an uninterrupted survey, produced to scale, using orthophotography. This data set offers an unprecedented opportunity to evaluate all the rock carvings within their landscape context.

**Riassunto:**

L’altopiano di origine vulcanica della provincia Syunik, Armenia, è ricco di arte rupestre. Migliaia di immagini, incise su rocce scure di blocchi di basalto, distribuite nella steppa, che ripropongono la stessa disposizione e lo stesso paesaggio creato dall’ultima eruzione vulcanica, databile al III mill. a. C. Nell’ambito del progetto per la conservazione dell’arte rupestre in Armenia sono stati completamente documentati due area con arte rupestre di più di 2 km quadrati recanti 11.000 petroglifi distribuiti su 3.500 rocce. Il territorio, al di sopra del limite della vegetazione arborea, oggi non coltivato, ha permesso una completa documentazione con l’aiuto dell’ortofotografia. I dati raccolti offrono l’opportunità unica di studiare le raffigurazioni nel loro contesto originale.

Franziska Knoll * and Harald Meller *

* State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt
ROCK ART IN NORTHERN OMAN. FIRST OBSERVATIONS

Angelo Eugenio Fossati *

SUMMARY
The petroglyphs and pictographs of Oman are little known, but for the last seven years I have been involved in a series of surveys of the Jebel Akhdar Mountains that have resulted in the location of several important sites. Recording these in advance of construction projects undertaken to modernize the country’s transportation network has enabled me to study the rock art in considerable detail for the first time. Using superimpositions, cross-dating with known artistic expressions elsewhere in the region, the known dates for introduction of various objects of material culture, and the presence of certain animals in the rock art (as turtles, oryxes, goats-like, camels) I propose a preliminary chronology consisting of several major phases spanning almost 6,000 years.

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At the 2007 XXII Valcamonica Symposium I gave an early account of a new approach to rock art studies which I wanted to introduce to this—its own—discipline. Without playing down the role of archaeological/anthropological perspectives, I was seeking to formulate a theoretical basis for rock art studies which would not involve historical reconstruction. At the time I characterized this approach as a reception-oriented hermeneutics, i.e. one focussed on present perceptual factors rather than on the attempt to recuperate the original intentions of the makers of rock art. The methodology was to be phenomenological, i.e. reliant on an analysis of perception—the way we see both real and depicted objects and in particular rock art. What I wish to do now is to report on the way in which that initial proposal has developed, especially with the utilization of scientific evidence drawn from cognitive (perceptual) psychology and the neurophysiology of the human visual system. The result continues to represent a new line on the study of rock art, one based on universalist assumptions rather than on historical investigations—in this case one based on the universality of our visual system which has not changed its fundamentals for hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of years.

Livio Dobrez *

* Australian National University, retired
The study examines some sites with rock art, exclusively analysing historical engravings that depict a monstrance for the host. We suggest to evaluate the numerical consistency of these subjects even being conscious of the fact that today an exhaustive catalogue would be impossible to propose; consequently, one generally finds publication on historic rock art to be lacking. We evaluate the typology of the examples of monstrance and propose some hypotheses explaining why these subjects were used. These subjects are mostly concentrated within the chronological period between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Professor Federico Troletti*

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SUMMARY
The “báculo”, pastoral staff or crook is a shepherd’s working tool that, during early prehistoric times among the pastoral societies, acquired a symbolism from as early on as ancient Egypt that led to authority through the ages. In this paper, we explore the staff in the iconography of rock-art and megalithic art in North Africa, the Middle East and Western Europe.

RIASSUNTO
Il pastorale, con i suoi diversi nomi diversi è uno strumento di lavoro dei pastori, ancora nella recente preistoria, nelle prime comunità pastorali. Il pastorale ha acquisito un simbolismo già dal tempo dell’antico Egitto, dove era considerato segno di autorità. In questo articolo si indaga sull'iconografia di questo oggetto presente nell’arte rupestre e in altre forme artistiche. Lo studio comprende il megalitismo o, il Nord Africa, il Medio Oriente ed l’Europa occidentale.

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A systematic surveying of the graffiti left by shepherds on the flanks of mount Latemar-Cornón, has been carried out by the Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina between 2006 and 2012, in parallel to a general patrolling of the old pastoral shelters. This has led to the formation of a database, which is, as of today, 26000 records strong, corresponding to 2681 painted cliffs, which is a considerable contribution to the understanding of pastoralism in the valleys of Fiemme and Fassa in the past four centuries. The survey was developed along five different lines: the documenting of the individual writings, their physico-chemical characterization, the reconnaissance of the minute shelters used by shepherds on the mountain flanks, the collection of material culture, and the interviewing of the surviving shepherds. Research is not yet complete, yet after about a decade the Museum is now in the position to draw a general picture of this extraordinary depository of popular writing, covering an area of about 60 square kilometers. In this perspective, it is intended to give visibility to these writings, for they are evocative, spectacular and also, in some of their deep structural and stylistic features, closely related to prehistoric rock art.

Marta Bazzanella * e Giovanni Kezich *

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ETCHED IN STONE: GAMES, NEVER-ENDING PATTERNS AND LABYRINTHS, FROM THE PURSUIT OF VICTORY TO THE SEARCH FOR ETERNITY

Jorge Rodrigues * and Mila Simões de Abreu **

SUMMARY
From the pre-Roman and Roman mill games and never-ending patterns, to the labyrinths, a symbolical path is crossed by those that sought a spiritual response to their quest. From Italy to France, from pagan figurations to Christian ones and from Roman times to late gothic, we will try to demonstrate how a search for victory turned into a search for Salvation and eternity.

RIASSUNTO
Dai giochi del mulino preromani e romani e dei modelli senza fine, ai labirinti, un percorso simbolico è attraversato da coloro che cercano una risposta alla loro ricerca spirituale. Dall’Italia alla Francia, da figurazioni pagane a quelle cristiane, dall’epoca romana al tardo gotico, cercheremo di dimostrare come la ricerca per la “vittoria” in un gioco, si trasformi in una ricerca di salvezza e per l’eternità.

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Every marking has a universal meaning, directly accessible even when decontextualized: an arrow indicates a direction, a waving hand—a beckoning, a pile of rocks represents something significant, a fence—a barrier. But a symbol can also be completely abstract at times, like the letters in the various Alphabets of the world. The marking may correspond to the final step in the abstraction process; for example, after a long process, the mark of the Bucranium was modified until becoming the letter “A”. Likewise, the meaning attributed to a symbol can acquire autonomous value and move towards its own real abstraction. It lends support to the pure thought, becoming part of a written discourse of infinite combinations, removed from time.

Vice versa, symbolism adds value to a universally recognised shape. For example, the cow is a symbol of fertility or danger, depending on the context. In terms of its symbolic function, the symbol of the cow only has uses relative to the circumstances from which it emerges and in which it is utilised. The symbol of the divine lamb is full of significance even if the animal in itself does not exist. The lion is replicated throughout Africa for its strength.

Even if from totally different cognitive origins, markings and symbols have similar structural combinations in different parts of the globe. One finds associations between the eagle and the serpent whether in Mexican cultures or Neolithic cultures of the Near East. The Sun has the same symbolic power for all sedentary peoples. The same is true of the spiral, which refers to water when attached to a vessel, and represents vitality. Over the course of time and in different traditions, markings and symbols undergo subtle variations, rhythmically conducting human and social thought; not according to chance, but according to logic.

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Président de la Commission “Paléolithique Supérieur d’Eurasie”; Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques - UISPP; Conseil International de Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines - CIPSH
INCISIONI RUPESTRI PARIETALI IN GROTTE DELLA PROVINCIA DI BRESCIA
(NOTIZIA PRELIMINARE)

Ausilio Priuli *

SUMMARY
The piedmont area overlooking the Brescian valley is rich with caverns, shelters and grottos, many of which have offered evidence of more or less prolonged frequentation for living or cult purposes during the recent Prehistoric era. However, from this evidence, excluding one case the author points out, individual traces of wall art had not ever resulted. Today we can speak about the presence of wall art in this area too. The development comes from two sites: that of Brione – Bus del Fus, not far from Gussago, and that of Nuvolera – Bus de la Cicia known as the Grotto of Ernesto. In both cavities numerous non-figurative spindle-shaped engravings are present, done in quite diverse ways, by repeated scratching, and probably belong to different, but surely ancient, periods. Those of Brione are associated with cup mark engravings and were accomplished in different phases. These small complex engravings deserve particular attention for being some of the absolutely newest developments in that territorial context. The engravings in an antechamber at Bus de la Cicia have offered considerable evidence of Prehistoric material culture, and were highlighted by Allegretti in 1956 and by Manchello and Biagi in 1967, following surface recovery efforts.

RIASSUNTO
L'area pedemontana prospiciente la pianura bresciana è ricca di cavità, ripari e grotte, molte delle quali hanno offerto tracce di frequentazione più o meno prolungata per scopi abitativi o cultuali durante la preistoria recente ma nelle stesse, tranne che in un caso da tempo segnalato da chi scrive, non risulta siano mai state individuate tracce di espressioni grafiche parietali. Oggi possiamo parlare di presenze di arte rupestrre parietale anche in quest'area. La novità è offerta da due siti: quello di Brione – Bus del Fus, poco lontano da Gussago, e quello di Nuvolera – Bus de la Cicia conosciuto come Grotta di Ernesto. In ambedue le cavità sono presenti numerose incisioni non figurative fusiformi, eseguite per graffi ripetuti abbastanza diverse tra loro e probabilmente appartenenti a periodi diversi ma sicuramente antiche: quelle di Brione sono associate a coppelle ed eseguite in diverse fasi. I piccoli complessi incisi meritano particolare attenzione per essere delle assolute novità in quel contesto territoriale e per essere, quelle del Bus de la Cicia, in un’antegrotta che ha offerto vistose tracce di cultura materiale preistorica, segnalate fin dal 1956 da Allegretti e nel 1967 da Manchello e Biagi, a seguito di recuperi di superficie.

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The Serra da Capivara National Park is located in the Brazilian state of Piauí. Since the 70s of the last century intensified research there. The cave paintings were the triggering of scientific investment on site. This allowed to the Park National and international recognition. Becoming universal heritage of humanity recognized by UNESCO since 1991. The research carried out in this space are many areas of knowledge and demonstrate that human presence has been long in that region. Part of this story told in the rock paintings. They present a multitude of shapes and scenes. Note the sex scenes, childbirth, wanderings, collective struggles, breastfeeding, animals and plants of the most varied. These writings highlight scenes with anthropomorphic appear where the male and female genitalia. The female genitalia were characterized in the region, by a semicircle beneath the legs. Already the men are blatantly declared between the legs of anthropomorphic. Our objective, when the search for the theme of representations of genitals, grasp the leading artists / communicators to paint these scenes. Therefore, scenes will appear in cave paintings in a brief selection to the end of the text.

Michel Justamand *

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AT CANYON DE CHELLY, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES: THE PERSPECTIVE OF ROCK ART

Jessica Joyce Christie *

SUMMARY
The purpose of this essay is to reconstruct the cultural landscapes of the canyons now included in Canyon de Chelly National Monument in the state of Arizona, United States, through their successive occupation phases by means of archaeological materials and the abundant pictographs and petroglyphs. The canyons were settled by Basketmaker peoples (c. 0 - A.D. 700), Ancestral Pueblos (c.A.D. 700 - 1300), and the Navajo who first came to Canyon de Chelly in the late 18c. The discussion links archaeological and iconographic reconstructions of ancient landscapes with the political challenges of contemporary constructions of tangible/physical and intangible/spiritual heritage by the Navajo.

RIASSUNTO:
Lo scopo di questo saggio è quello di ricostruire i paesaggi culturali dei canyon ora inclusi nel Canyon de Chelly, nello stato dell’Arizona, Stati Uniti, attraverso le successive fasi di frequentazione alla luce dei materiali archeologici, dei pittogrammi abbondanti e dei petroglifi. I canyon sono stati occupati dal popolo Basketmaker (c.a 0-700 d.C.), Ancestral Pueblos (c.a 700-1300) e Navajo che hanno occupato il Canyon de Chelly alla fine del 18 sec. La discussione collega la necessità di creare ricostruzioni archeologiche e iconografiche di antichi paesaggi alla sfida politica dell’identità Navajo ricostruita attraverso sia i resti materieli/fisici che culturali/spirituali di questo popolo.

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DISEGNI SUI TRONCHI DEGLI ALBERI E ARTE RUPESTRE: RICORDI DI UNA SOCIETÀ DI CACCIA
tori-raccoglitori del Brasile

Maria Mirtes dos Santos Barros *

SUMMARY

Interpretation of rock art as an expression of fun starting from art indigenous Kaapor. Analysis of spontaneous drawings of the
indigenous Kaapor, ethnic group of hunter-gatherers who inhabit the tropical forest in the Amazon Maranhao, investigating
whether this kind of art occurs in other ethnic groups. Comparison of these designs with the reports of archaeological sites lo-
cated in the regions of north, northeast and central-west Brazil. It is reminiscent of a widespread hunter-gatherers who live in the country.
These designs, in the context in which they were collected, do not express content of magical-religious order, but they fit into the category
of expression made in moments of relaxation, spontaneously or at the request of the researcher Darcy Ribeiro, between the years 1949 to
1951. The Kaapor already drew on bark figures resembling those that have achieved on paper. It is assumed that they have also drawn
on rocks during the marches that have taken up to when they were “pacified” between 1925 and 1930. The paintings and cave drawings
allow us to understand the dynamics of the movements of indigenous people from one region to other. Since the spread of this habit, the
fact of drawing animals and human beings of a more or less naturalistic, not only on the rocks but also on the trunks of trees, leads us to
think that this practice is not restricted to the past, but also permeate indigenous societies today.

RIASSUNTO:

Lo studio si occupa della rilettura dell’arte rupestre come espressione del ludico a partire dall’arte indigena Kaapor. Analisi
dei disegni spontanei degli indígena Kaapor, gruppo etnico di cacciatori-raccoglitori che abitano il foresta tropicale, nell’A-
mazzonia maranense, indagando se questo tipo di arte ricorre fra altri gruppi etnici. Comparazione di questi disegni con i
referti archeologici di siti localizzati nelle regioni nord, nordest e centro-ovest brasiliani. Si tratta di reminiscenze di una diffusa società
di cacciatori-raccoglitori che abitano nel paese. Questi disegni, nel contesto in cui sono stati raccolti, non esprimono contenuto di ordine
magico-religioso, ma si inseriscono nella categoria di espressioni realizzate in momenti di rilassamento, spontaneamente o su richiesta del
ricercatore Darcy Ribeiro, fra gli anni dal 1949 al 1951. I Kaapor già disegnavano sulle cortece degli alberi figure similari a quelle che hanno
realizzato su carta. Si presume che abbiano anche disegnato su rocce durante le marce intraprese fino a quando sono stati “pacificati” fra
il 1925 e il 1930. Le pitture e i disegni rupestri ci permettono di capire la dinamica degli spostamenti dei popoli indigeni da una regione
all’altra. A partire dalla diffusione di questa abitudine, il fatto di disegnare animali ed esseri umani di forma più o meno naturalistica, non
solo sulle rocce ma anche sui tronchi degli alberi, ci induce a pensare che questa abitudine non sia ristretta al passato, ma permei anche
le società indigene attuali.

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RECENT DISCOVERIES OF ROCK ART IN BIHAR
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KAIMUR REGION, INDIA

Sachin Kumar Tiwary *

SUMMARY
This paper highlights general aspects of the Bihar rock art with special reference to Kaimur, its distribution and description and also classified its nature and typology in its region. This article provides an interesting and innovative approach to the classified the rock art of Kaimur, and it will benefit both the novice and the professional of the Bihar. The author combed the field report as well as the interpretation of the rock art. The results are assembled and well illustrated in this article under district of the Bihar with representations or meanings as given by the authors of the reports. The concentrates on the explored sites, general features and subject matter of art, style notation, orientations, chronology etc. These evidences may provide statistical data for future research in subject of rock art in the study area. The above description provides my interpretation and understanding of this old yet previously unstudied rock art.

RIASSUNTO:
Questo articolo mette in luce gli aspetti generali dell’arte rupestre di Bihar con particolare riferimento a Kaimur, esaminando la sua distribuzione e descrivendo e classificando anche gli aspetti ambientali della regione. Fornisce un approccio interessante e innovativo per la classificazione l’arte rupestre di Kaimur, e costituisce un approccio metodologico sia per i principianti che i professionisti che lavorano nel Bihar. L’autore ha esaminato le relazioni di scavo e l’interpretazione dell’arte rupestre. I risultati vengono incrociati e ben illustrati in questo articolo che si concentra sui siti esplorati, le caratteristiche generali, i reperti artistici, le notazioni stilistiche, l’orientamento, la cronologia ecc. Queste evidenze possono fornire i dati statistici per future ricerche in materia di arte rupestre nell’area in studio. L’articolo ha un approccio interpretativo e presenta materiali inediti.
How to decipher petroglyphs: examples from Italy, France, Portugal, Scotland and South Africa

Stuart L. Harris *

**SUMMARY**
Using examples from five countries, this paper describes how to read petroglyphs written as rebuses, first by decomposing into Old European syllabary, then by deciphering into Finnish, lastly by translating into English. The first step separates a rebus into basic syllables by referring to a chart of syllable shapes. To easily read these syllables requires a Finnish dictionary spelled like Old European. Scribes employed a number of ways to simplify spelling, such that they could write 1500 words with one syllable, or 8000 words with two syllables. The oldest example comes from Bilzingsleben in Germany. The next four are Aurignacian in France, Camonican in Italy, Tartessian in Portugal and Pictish in Scotland.

**RIASSUNTO**
L’articolo prende in esame cinque gruppi di incisioni di diversa provenienza geografica - Francia, Valcamonica (Italia), Portugallo e Scozia - offrendo spunti di decrittazione delle figure rupestri.

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