

Rock Art Science Task Group: progress report

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RecordDIM Initiative Partners meeting

Rome, Italy

14-15 May 2006



Schedule and deadline for TG-22

- May 2004 : Creation of the Rock Art Science Task Group, presentation of the involved members, and proposal about producing a Handbook for professionals working in the field of rock art (archaeologists, geo-archaeologists, anthropologists, specialists in conservation, managers, and so on) (Leuven, Belgium)
- May 2005 : First Progress Report. Following discussions, it was decided that TG-22 shall produce a document with Principles and Guidelines for professional in Rock Art instead of a Handbook in Rock Art Science (Paris, France)
- September 2005 : Presentation of a paper about some issues to be adressed with regards to documenting rock art sites at the CIPA international conference (Turin, Italy)
- May 2006 : Presentation of the Progress Report on the Principles and Guidelines in Rock Art Science (RecorDIM meeting in Rome, Italy)
- June 2006 : Proposal to the SSHRC for a grant which aims to help TG22 to go forwards with the production of the Principle and Guidelines
- November 2006 : Presentation of the first draft of the Principles and Guidelines in Rock Art Science to RecorDim Meeting.
- March 2007: Presentation of the second and final draft of Principles and Guidelines in Rock Art Science to RecorDim Meeting after peer-reviewed screening.
- August 2007 : Delivery of the PDF document providing the Standards and Guidelines in Rock Art Science.



Purpose and objectives of TG-22

- The main purpose of this TG-22 is to produce a PDF document simple to read and to handle, and easily accessible worldwide through internet for archaeologists, anthropologists, conservation specialists and managers of rock-art sites dealing with more frequent problems one can face, including discussion about ethical issues such as the relations with living traditions.
- With this document, the objectives of this task-group are mainly :
 1. To propose standardised principles and guidelines in Rock Art Science for better survey, analysing, recording, sampling, and dating the visible constituent elements of rock-art sites.
 2. To present an overview of the state-of-the-art methods used for better preserving and monitoring those sites in the long term.
 3. To encourage exchange of informations through the RecorDIM web site, and to guide colleagues to find useful infos and advices as well as existing professional networks which can help to solve specific problems they are facing.



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PREAMBLE

- What is RecorDIM Initiative ?
- Why a task group on rock art ?
- The objectives of the Rock Art Science Task Group (TG-22 of RecorDIM)
- The PDF Document of TG-22 : a useful introductory guide to rock art studies



INTRODUCTION

- A. Description of what a rock art is.
- B. The importance of a glossary in Rock Art
- C. General presentation of the Principles and Guidelines for a Rock Art Science.
- D. From low-cost to high-cost state-of-the-art practices : HOW, WHY, WHEN, AND BY WHOM ?

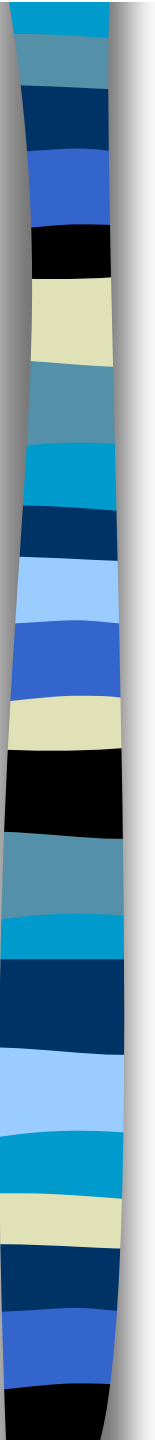


CHAPTER 1 : Ethics and professional duties and responsibilities

- Ethical Issues
- Consideration of regulations and policies when studying a rock art site
- Responsibilities of the professional in Rock Art research and preservation at the time of globalization

Rock art and the ethical issues

- Living traditions, intangible heritage, and rock art sites as sacred places are just a few ethical issues we have to be aware of before starting any research on a rock art site.





CHAPTER 2 : Documenting and Recording a site

- **In preparation for doing fieldwork :**
 - documentary research (combining formal and informed approaches)
 - searching with a database (if available)
 - finding financial support and asking for a permit
- **Fieldwork equipment and technical approaches**
 - Field notes and files
 - Basic equipment
 - Sophisticated equipment and devices
 - Mapping and survey (GPS, SIS, Total station)
 - Visual recording (the IFRAO colour scale, traditional photography, sophisticated photographic techniques, photogrammetry, 3-D laser scanning ; digital processing)
 - Sound recording
 - Excavation logistics



CHAPTER 2 : Documenting and recording a site

– **Sampling techniques and lab analysis :**

- for chemical and physical analysis ;
- DNA analysis of the pigment ;
- Phytoanalysis
- Traceology (reconstructing the ancient techniques of making rock art and the « chaîne opératoire »)

– **The dating methods :**

- relative dating methods,
- chronometric methods

Some examples of what to do (issues related to cave art ; issues related to open-air site) will be given by collaborators to the TG-22.

Looking at the graphic content

- Identifying the morphs, geometric and figurative motifs
- The pigment used
- The types of tracing



Example of a tracing technique

- This low-cost technique of recording consists in the tracing of a rock paintings site with all its visible components directly on a transparency when there is solid evidence of rock accretion and the technique is non-intrusive. This stencil is produced using a mylar paper sheet applied directly to a rock panel with a non-staining tape stuck where there is no decorated surfaces at all underneath; felt-pens of different colors are used for reproducing at the scale 1:1 the visible elements appearing on the panel. Thus in this example, a red-colour felt-pen has been used for tracing the motifs painted in red, whereas black coloured lines has been made for emphasizing the cracks and other exfoliations occurring on that panel, a green coloured line or spot is applied for underlining where lichens and other vegetal features are, and so on. Discriminating colours refer therefore to specific components as they are seen with the human eye, and it is necessary to decide which colour will be reserved for which visible component. The stencil thus produced becomes a useful document for future analysis and conservation, and must be photographed with the IFRAO standard-colour scale.





Recording techniques:
technical photography
with a normal camera

- Such a section will be clearly explained, including the use of the IFRAO standardised colour scale...



Recording techniques: close-up views

- This low-cost technique allows to get good infos about the way a rock art motif has been made, which tool has been used, or how a surface is being eroded at the macroscale.

