

POST-PALAEOLITHIC FILIFORM ROCK ART IN WESTERN EUROPE

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Contents

List of Figures and Tables.....	ii
Foreword to the XVII UISPP Congress Proceedings Series Edition Luiz OOSTERBEEK	iv
Post-Palaeolithic filiform rock art in Western Europe Introduction..... Fernando A. COIMBRA and Umberto SANSONI	v
Late Prehistoric incised rock art in southern Europe: a contribution for its typology Fernando A. COIMBRA	1
Gravures linéaires et schématiques-linéaires de la région du mont Bego (Tende, Alpes Maritimes, France) Nicoletta BIANCHI	13
Filiform figures in the rock art of Valcamonica from Prehistory to Roman age Umberto SANSONI, Cinzia BETTINESCHI, Silvana GAVALDO	29
Threadlike engravings of historical period on the rocks and plaster of churches and civic buildings. Some comparisons and proposals of interpretation Federico TROLETTI	43
The rock art from Figueiredo (Sertã, Portugal): typology, parallels and chronology Fernando A. COIMBRA and Sara GARCÊS	55
The filiform rock art from Kosovo Shemsi KRASNIQI	67
The filiform rock engravings of the Parete Manzi of Montelapiano (Chieti, Italy) Tomaso DI FRAIA	77

List of Figures and Tables

F. A. COIMBRA: Late Prehistoric incised rock art in southern Europe: a contribution for its typology

FIGURE 1. DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURES.....	7
FIGURE 2. FOOTPRINTS, TREE LIKE FIGURES, DEER AND WEAPONS	8
TABLE 1. TYPOLOGY OF THE GEOMETRIC GROUP.....	3

N. BIANCHI: Gravures linéaires et schématiques-linéaires de la région du mont Bego (Tende, Alpes Maritimes, France)

FIGURE 1. ZIV.GIII.R31B2: HALLEBARDES INCISÉES ET COMPLÉTÉES PAR RACLAGE	16
FIGURE 2. POIGNARDS RACLÉS SUR LA ROCHE ZXIV.GI.R1B DU SECTEUR DE VALMASQUE	16
FIGURE 3. ZIV.GIII.R17D: PERSONNAGE RÉALISÉ À MOITIÉ PAR PIQUETAGE ET À MOITIÉ PAR INCISION	17
FIGURE 4. ROCHE DITE 'DES HALLEBARDIERS' (ZXIX.GIV.R13A)	18
FIGURE 5. CORNIFORME LINÉAIRE À CORPS RÉTICULÉ ET CORNES EN ZIGZAG SUR LA ROCHE ZIV.GII.R23A	19
FIGURE 6. ATTELAGES INCISÉS SUR LA ROCHE ZIV.GII.R1C.....	20
FIGURE 7. ROCHE DITE 'DE L'AUTEL' (ZXI.GO.R1)	22
FIGURE 8. ZIV.GII.R12A: COMPOSITION PIQUETÉE COMPLÉTÉE PAR DES MOTIFS SCHÉMATIQUES-LINÉAIRES	24
FIGURE 9. POIGNARD LINÉAIRE ET ANTHROPOMORPHE AVEC ÉPÉE FRANGÉE SUR LA ROCHE ZVIII.GX.R8	25
FIGURE 10. REPRÉSENTATION PROBABLE DE <i>KERNUNNOS</i>	25
FIGURE 11. INSCRIPTION LATINE SUR LA ROCHE ZVIII.GX.R32.....	26

U. SANSONI, C. BETTINESCHI, S. GAVALDO: Filiform figures in the rock art of Valcamonica from Prehistory to Roman age

FIGURE 1A. MAP OF THE ROCK ART AREAS IN THE MIDDLE VALCAMONICA.....	30
FIGURE 1B. MAP OF THE ROCK ART AREAS IN THE MIDDLE VALCAMONICA.....	31
FIGURE 2. SPEARHEADS FROM DOS DI COSTAPETA.....	32
FIGURE 3. TWO HORSEMEN WITH FILIFORM PREPARATION LINES, PAGHERINA R. 5	34
FIGURE 4. FILIFORM HUT/BARN REPRESENTATION AND PENTACLE, FOPPE DI NADRO R. 24	36
FIGURE 5. PANEL REPRESENTING A 'HUNTER' WITH A SPEAR SURROUNDED BY A PAIR OF DEER.....	37
FIGURE 6. A POSSIBLE METALLURGICAL WORKSHOP OF THE IRON AGE	37
FIGURE 7. SORCERER ROCK, PIANCOGNO	38
FIGURE 8. WARRIOR ARMED WITH AN AX, PIANCOGNO, WARRIORS' ROCK	39

F. TROLETTI: Threadlike engravings of historical period on the rocks and plaster of churches and civic buildings. Some comparisons and proposals of interpretation

FIGURES 1-2. BERZO INF., S. LORENZO CHURCH	44
FIGURE 3. CAMPANINE OF CIMBERGO, R. 26, WARRIOR	45
FIGURES 4-5. CAMPANINE OF CIMBERGO, R. 98, KEY OVERLAP A THREADLIKE KNIGHT.....	46
FIGURE 6. CAMPANINE OF CIMBERGO, R. 6 SOLOMON KNOT	47
FIGURE 7. CAMPANINE OF CIMBERGO, R. 6, STAR	48
FIGURE 8. NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, <i>THE INTERIOR OF THE BUURKERK AT UTRECHT</i> , 1664	51

F. A. COIMBRA and S. GARCÊS: The rock art from Figueiredo (Sertã, Portugal): typology, parallels and chronology

FIGURE 1. NET-PATTERN CONSTITUTING A POSSIBLE TOPOGRAPHIC ENGRAVING	56
FIGURE 2. POSSIBLE REPRESENTATION OF A VULVA	57
FIGURE 3. BUNDLE OF LINES	57
FIGURE 4. DETAIL OF THE TRACINGS ON ROCK 2.....	58
FIGURE 5. ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURE DONE IN MULTIPLE TRACE.....	58
FIGURE 6. NET-PATTERN FROM THE CAVE OF ESCOURAL, PORTUGAL	62
FIGURE 7. DEPICTION OF AN AXE MENACED BY CRACKS ON THE ROCK.....	63

S. KRASNIQI: The filiform rock art from Kosovo

FIGURE 1. THE FILIFORM ROCK ART IN ZATRIQ.....	68
FIGURE 2. THE SYMBOL OF FERTILITY.....	70
FIGURE 3. THE SUN AND THE TREE	71
FIGURE 4. THE FISH WITH TWO HEADS	72
FIGURE 5. THE TREE AND SQUARE	72
FIGURE 6. THE SYMBOL OF NET IN KRILEVE.....	73
FIGURE 7. FILIFORM ROCK ART IN AQAREVE.....	73
FIGURE 8. FILIFORM ROCK ART IN PAPAZ	75
TABLE 1. TYPES OF SYMBOLS IN ZATRIQ, KOSOVO.....	69
TABLE 2. TYPES OF SYMBOLS IN AQAREVE, KOSOVO.....	74

T. DI FRAIA: The filiform rock engravings of the Parete Manzi of Montelapiano (Chieti, Italy)

FIGURE 1. W FRONT OF THE RIDGE THAT SEPARATES THE TOWNS OF MONTELAPIANO AND VILLA SANTA MARIA.....	78
FIGURE 2. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: FIGURE PAINTED IN BLACK AND A PROBABLE DATE SLIGHTLY ENGRAVED	78
FIGURE 3. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: AREA WITH ENGRAVINGS DURING THE DRAWING ON TRANSPARENT SHEET	78
FIGURE 4. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: THE LEFT PART OF THE AREA WITH ENGRAVINGS	79
FIGURE 5. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: FISH WITH THE HEAD INSERTED INTO AN OBJECT DIFFICULT TO READ	79
FIGURE 6. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: PAINTED FIGURE AND SOME OTHER FIGURES COPIED ON TRANSPARENT SHEET	80
FIGURE 7. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: SOLOMON'S KNOT AND FISH.....	80
FIGURE 8. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: FISH	81
FIGURE 9. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: VARIOUS ENGRAVED FIGURES, INCLUDING A PROBABLE HUMAN FACE....	81
FIGURE 10. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: THE LEFT PART DURING THE DRAWING	82
FIGURE 11. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: FIVE-POINTED STAR.....	82
FIGURE 12. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: VERY IRREGULAR STAR AND A SERIES OF CURVED LINES CONVERGING.....	83
FIGURE 13. MONTELAPIANO, PARETE MANZI: FRAME WITH AN OPENING AND VARIOUS SIGNS INSIDE	83

Foreword to the XVII UISPP Congress Proceedings Series Edition

Luiz OOSTERBEEK
Secretary-General

UISPP has a long history, starting with the old International Association of Anthropology and Archaeology, back in 1865, until the foundation of UISPP itself in Bern, in 1931, and its growing relevance after WWII, from the 1950's. We also became members of the International Council of Philosophy and Human Sciences, associate of UNESCO, in 1955.

In its XIVth world congress in 2001, in Liège, UISPP started a reorganization process that was deepened in the congresses of Lisbon (2006) and Florianópolis (2011), leading to its current structure, solidly anchored in more than twenty-five international scientific commissions, each coordinating a major cluster of research within six major chapters: Historiography, methods and theories; Culture, economy and environments; Archaeology of specific environments; Art and culture; Technology and economy; Archaeology and societies.

The XVIIth world congress of 2014, in Burgos, with the strong support of Fundación Atapuerca and other institutions, involved over 1700 papers from almost 60 countries of all continents. The proceedings, edited in this series but also as special issues of specialized scientific journals, will remain as the most important outcome of the congress.

Research faces growing threats all over the planet, due to lack of funding, repressive behavior and other constraints. UISPP moves ahead in this context with a strictly scientific programme, focused on the origins and evolution of humans, without conceding any room to short term agendas that are not root in the interest of knowledge.

In the long run, which is the terrain of knowledge and science, not much will remain from the contextual political constraints, as severe or dramatic as they may be, but the new advances into understanding the human past and its cultural diversity will last, this being a relevant contribution for contemporary and future societies.

This is what UISPP is for, and this is also why we are currently engaged in contributing for the relaunching of Human Sciences in their relations with social and natural sciences, namely collaborating with the International Year of Global Understanding, in 2016, and with the World Conference of the Humanities, in 2017.

The next two congresses of UISPP, in Melbourne (2017) and in Geneva (2020), will confirm this route.

Post-Palaeolithic filiform rock art in Western Europe

Introduction

Fernando A. COIMBRA and Umberto SANSONI

Session coordinators

The so called filiform rock art is characterized by having very thin grooves, just scratched on the rock surfaces, being produced either by stone or metal tools. In Western Europe it appears with a similar typology of motives in countries such as Portugal, Spain, Andorra, France and Italy. However, these very same motives are frequently found produced with larger grooves, after the use of a 'polissoir' technique, being first incised on the rock surface and then polished with repeated movements. This way it's crucial to distinguish engravings made with thin grooves (the true filiform carvings) and others done with medium/thick grooves, which often doesn't happen in the published bibliography.

Except some Palaeolithic cases, this kind of art was first considered as belonging to historical periods and therefore, in a general way, it didn't deserve much attention by the part of rock art researchers. Meanwhile, new discoveries and research carried out regarding Post- Palaeolithic filiform rock art, in several different countries, proved that it has many examples dating from Iron Age and also from Bronze Age, if not even earlier.

Engravings with this typology can be found usually on open air schist greywacke surfaces, but it's also present on the walls of several caves from central Spain, some of them with an archaeological context.

The already mentioned similarity of motives can result from possible contacts of different peoples in Protohistory. However, in the present level of knowledge about this art, it's difficult to understand who influenced who, because there are also differences in the typological characteristics of the engravings from one country to another.

Filiform rock art appears as a spontaneous technique, more simple and immediate than pecking, good either for autonomous strands of expression, or for sketches and first drafts regarding works of painting or pecking.

According to the order of presentation of the session's papers during the XVII IUPPS (UISPP) Conference in Burgos, the articles published here are the following: *Late prehistoric incised rock art in southern Europe: a contribution for its typology*, by Fernando A. Coimbra, where the author presents a preliminary typology of this kind of rock art, divided in two groups (geometric and figurative), approaching not only common themes to several countries, but also some examples that have only a regional character; *Filiform rock art in mount Bego (Tende, Maritime Alps, France)*, by Nicoletta Bianchi, which analyses some cases where pecked carvings overlap filiforms, therefore pre-dating pecked engravings and studies the interaction of the two carvings tradition; *Filiform figures in the rock art of Valcamonica from Prehistory to the Roman age*, by Umberto Sansoni, Cinzia Bettineschi and Silvana Gavaldo, that provides a general *corpus* of the figurative incised rock art of Valcamonica with a quantitative and qualitative approach, by considering the typological variety, the long-lasting chronological dating and the strong relation with the local pecked rock art of the Camunian filiforms; *Threadlike engravings of historical period on the rocks and plaster of churches and civic buildings. Some comparisons and proposals of interpretation*, by Federico Troletti, which presents the incised engravings exclusively of historical time located in some sites of Valcamonica – the area of Campanine di Cimbergo and Monticolo di Darfo; *The rock art from Figueiredo (Sertã, Portugal): typology, parallels and chronology*, by Fernando A. Coimbra and Sara Garcês, focusing

on the description of the engravings from three carved rocks with incised motives from the place of Figueiredo, in central Portugal, which were studied during different fieldworks.

Two other papers of researchers that couldn't attend the Conference were also presented: *The filiform rock art from Kosovo*, by Shemsi Krasniqi, which presents recent findings from Kosovo with a similar typology of figures from other European countries; *The filiform rock engravings of the Parete Manzi of Montelapiano (Chieti, Italy)*, by Tomaso Di Fraia, which analyses the problematic of incised rock art from a rock shelter in the centre of Italy.

After the presentation of all the papers there was a productive final discussion, which led to some conclusions:

The engravings produced trough incisions on the rock surface resulting either in a thin groove (filiform) or in thicker grooves (polissoir) should be mentioned generally as incised rock art.

The analysis of scenes and contexts regarding this kind of art also identified many panels with a ritual or symbolic value, which reveal a great autonomy and conceptual and artistic dignity, allowing considering the technique of filiform engraving much more than secondary.

It was emphasized the uniqueness of the number, of the chronological and typological range of the Camunian filiform examples.

Finally, it was considered that regarding chronology there's still a lot a work to be done about Post-Palaeolithic filiform rock art. Indeed, there are known examples dating from Late Neolithic, from all the Metal Ages, and even from historical periods, until the Middle Ages and more, reaching some examples the 20th century.